

# Wisborough Green Beekeepers Association

## Newsletter – October 2019

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Facebook Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/486401598062884](https://www.facebook.com/groups/486401598062884)

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### Table of Contents

<i>From the Editor.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Dates for your diary .....</i>	<i>2</i>
Winter Meetings .....	2
National Honey Show 24-26 October.....	2
All Day Winter Learning – 3 and 24 November.....	2
<i>Improve Your Beekeeping .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>The Apiary and Learning .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Nell and Rosie in Print.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Patterson in Print.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>A couple of appeals to members .....</i>	<i>5</i>

**Contributions for the November newsletter should be received by Friday 25 October. If anyone wants to report on the National Honey Show, however, let me know and I will keep a space in the newsletter until Sunday 27 October.**

### From the Editor

Writing this the day after the Annual Bee Supper, we seem to have taken an abrupt turn from Summer into Autumn. As the weather cools and the light fades, there are still plenty of opportunities to learn about our bees. The first two winter meetings have been scheduled, and make sure that you don't miss out on the free *Improve Your Beekeeping* sessions in November; the National Honey Show also provides plenty of learning opportunities for all levels of experience.

*Tamsin*



Image by [Hans Braxmeier](#) from [Pixabay](#)

## Dates for your diary

### Winter Meetings

**22 October at 7.30pm** in the Emmanuel Fellowship Chapel, Spy Lane, Loxwood.

The speaker will be our very own Daisy Day who will be talking on the "Rise and Fall of the Colony throughout the year and our possible responses, as beekeepers, to the changes". This promises to be an absolutely fascinating presentation and certainly one not to be missed.

**26 November at 7.30pm** in the Emmanuel Fellowship Chapel, Spy Lane, Loxwood.

This will be very much a fun event and it's all about food! Looking back through the last 10 years' worth of Newsletters, it would appear that the last time we had such a meeting must have been about 15 years ago. It's a relaxed evening where you are invited to bring a dish of comestibles to share - provided of course the food includes honey. It can be a starter, main, dessert, cake, biscuits or even sweets. Hopefully, there will be enough for everyone to have a taste and there will be a short slot for you to describe how it was made, how easy it was to make and so on. If you are short of ideas, then there are loads of recipes on the Wisborough Green website and follow the related links button to the Patterson Recipes page!

*Ray Noakes*

### National Honey Show 24-26 October

Please see <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk> for schedule and ticket information.

### All Day Winter Learning – 3 and 24 November

See further details and booking information below. Please note that these sessions are FREE for WGBKA members.

**If anyone attending either session would be prepared to help by making teas and coffees, please let Roger know.**

## Improve Your Beekeeping

Wisborough Green BKA are organising two one day courses that will cover some of the information that beekeepers need to know in order to manage their bees efficiently, with care and understanding.

Tuition in the apiary with a colony of bees in front of you is valuable for honing practical skills and putting theory and management techniques into practice. It is better if the beekeeper has a reasonable knowledge and understanding of what is being demonstrated, otherwise they are shown how to do something without knowing why, but where do they learn that essential information? These courses fill those gaps and are packed full of good sound information that is not always easy to teach at apiary demonstrations.

They will be held early in the winter, so those who feel they have gaps in their knowledge will have plenty of time for further study.

There will be two levels, "**The Early Years**" and "**Intermediate/Advanced**". This is to suit all beekeepers although it is expected that many will attend both. If you aren't sure which one is for you then ask Roger.

**The tutor:-** Roger Patterson

**Cost:-** FREE to WGBKA members inc refreshments. Bring your own lunch. There is a fee for non-members, so on the booking form state that you are from "WGBKA" and £0 fee.

**Venue:-** Rudgwick Village Hall, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, West Sussex. RH12 3JJ

**Dates:-**

**Sunday November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019. "The Early Years"**

**Sunday November 24<sup>th</sup> 2019. "Intermediate/advanced"**

For further information and to book (essential) please see [www.wgbka.org.uk](http://www.wgbka.org.uk)

## The Apiary and Learning

Scheduled meetings have come to an end now, although there will be ad hoc meetings during the winter. Feeding and Apiguard treatment should be completed soon. We will have a meeting to bed the bees down for winter, so keep checking emails as this may be organised at short notice to suit the weather.

The **ivy** is coming into bloom and at the time of writing the bees are very busy during warm spells. Ivy is a good late nectar and pollen source, but the honey granulates very quickly and very hard, so unless there are additional liquid stores available, then starvation is possible during cold spells.

Don't forget the **"Improve Your Beekeeping" days** (details previously sent). Please don't think you already know it all, so there is no need to attend. All beekeepers have gaps in their knowledge. Bees are teaching me something new all the time and there is always plenty to learn to help us understand our bees more, so we can manage them better. These days are intended to teach what is not very easy to teach at the apiary. Some of it has been gained from handling bees for over half a century and may not be found in books.

We have beekeepers booked from some distance away including London and Jersey.

Don't forget that the days are **free** to WGBKA members.

*Roger*

## Nell and Rosie in Print

We are getting concerned about our Dad. Recently he had a hearing test and an ECG on the same day. He will soon be going for an operation on his left eye. There isn't much of him that works properly anymore! He is getting so old that we are worried in case he will have to go on life support.

## Patterson in Print

Tamsin has been our Newsletter Editor for a year now. In my opinion she has done an excellent job. She can only edit material that is sent to her, so please send her copy if you can, so she can continue to produce a newsletter we can look forward to reading. Even if you don't want to write very much there are always snippets that are seen elsewhere you can share. There is the incentive that if more is sent to Tamsin I can write less! Go on, give it a go.

I usually make notes for PiP during the month, but sometimes right up to date. I am slipping this paragraph in the day after the **supper**, which we have held for around 45 years. I hope there will be a report in the November newsletter, but yet again we had an excellent evening with the opportunity to bring family and guests. We even had two well behaved children who brought their parents! A strong organisation has a social side and this was a great example. Brilliant company, brilliant food and brilliantly organised by Daisy. Well done all.



Meriel Bottle pictured at the Annual Bee Supper, following the presentation of the P N Burch Cup and the George Wakeford Memorial Rose Bowl. Meriel also wins the prize for most topical tee-shirt.

*Tamsin*

I recently had a 'phone conversation with another member and we both agreed how well things are going at WGBKA at the moment, the above being two examples. Despite there being disruption with apiary meetings we have done a lot including the Bee Health Day that was a sell-out. All gatherings have been vibrant and there is still more in the pipeline. As apparently I keep saying "**Beekeeping is fun**"!

Most of my time in beekeeping has genuinely been fun, not least when in the company of a man called **George Wakeford**. He was a great influence on my beekeeping development and was a tremendous character, who was well respected by those who knew him. He was influential in the first 30 years of WGBKA, but there are few left who knew him. I was concerned that his contribution to local beekeeping would be forgotten, so as I mentioned last month I have written an article about George that is now on the website. Interestingly, within 24 hours of it being uploaded I had an email from a beekeeper I know from the Isle of Man, who told me she had read it and as a result had ordered the book about George that I mention, by member Geoff Lawes.

I had a good time in **Canada**, but I won't say much as I hope to give a short talk later in the winter programme, but I will mention a few things. In an earlier PiP I mentioned that 40% of the honey sold on the world market is fake or adulterated. This was a big topic at Apimondia, where 47% of the exhibits in the honey show were rejected before being judged. They were tested for HMF, diastase, other sugars, chemicals and antibiotics. There were 22 entries in the commercial class with 16 being rejected!

There were 5,600 attendees, some of whom I know, so it was good to meet up again. There were others who had heard me speak or recognised me from the videos on the National Honey Show website and Dave Cushman's website. Within an hour of being there and before I had registered, a couple with Australian accents said "Hello Roger". It turns out they run a teaching apiary in Australia and when they took it over had searched online for ideas. They came across Dave Cushman's and WG websites and apparently look at our newsletter to see what we are doing. The world really is quite small.

After the conference I visited two commercial beekeepers, spending a few days with one. If Ray Noakes can fit it into the winter programme I will reveal more about my Canadian adventure.

I am still learning about bees as they keep teaching me something new. In the past I have experienced queens going off lay for a couple of weeks when treating with Apiguard, with about 50% **migrating their broodnest** to one side. This has been consistent over the years, apart from this year. In checking my own colonies at home (19+ 2 nucs, a few not being treated), I found there was no brood break in any and only two had migrated their broodnest. This is why some of the rigid information and teaching seen elsewhere needs to be treated with caution. You can't say that bees do this or that based on one season or a small number of colonies.

*Roger*

## A couple of appeals to members

We will soon be moving to the **new apiary** in time for the 2020 season. Much of the preparatory work has been done, but there is a bit more to do. We could do with some physical help and also some materials as follows please.

**Physical help** to move bees, stands, etc and final site preparation. If you are willing to help please **email me** and I will try to arrange times to suit those who respond.

We also need **materials** such as: -

- **Paving slabs.** Small numbers can be used for stands, if more they can be used for a hard standing.
- Concrete blocks. Again, we can use singles or more if available.
- Wooden **fence posts** (about a dozen)
- **Barbed wire.** A part roll should be sufficient.
- Sawn or prepared **timber.** Any size for making such things as hive stands. Previously used may be suitable. External plywood will also be useful
- Strong items such as **garden furniture** to stand nucs and mini-nucs on. Now the summer is over I'm sure there are items like garden tables that are likely to be discarded.

If you have any of the above that is unwanted please **email me** to see if it is suitable. I don't want to have the problem of disposing something that may not be suitable. We all often see things that are being discarded by others, so please keep an eye open, but make sure you have the permission of the owner!

*Roger*