

Wisborough Green Beekeepers Association

Newsletter – September 2019

Website: www.wgbka.org.uk

Facebook Group: www.facebook.com/groups/486401598062884

Officers and Contact Information:

Life President: Roger Patterson	01403 790637	roger-patterson@btconnect.com
Chairman: Murray West	01798 867048	murray@mt-w.co.uk
Hon. Secretary: Tess Clarke	07773 413025	secretary@wgbka.org.uk
Hon. Treasurer: Richard Gibby	01403 588092	treasurer@wgbka.org.uk
Membership Secretary: Richard Gibby	01403 588092	membership@wgbka.org.uk
Newsletter: Tamsin Farthing		newsletter@wgbka.org.uk

Table of Contents

<i>From the Editor.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Dates for your diary</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Apiary meetings</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Asian Hornet Week – 9-15 September.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Annual Bee Supper - 28th September, Wisborough Green Village Hall.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>All Day Winter Learning – 3 and 24 November.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Asian Hornet Week</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Improve Your Beekeeping</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Wisborough Green Honey Show</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Bee Health Day</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Patterson in Print.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Apiary and Learning</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Beginners' Packs</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>The New-Bee Experience – July and August double issue!.....</i>	<i>11</i>

Contributions for the October newsletter should be received by Friday 27 September.

From the Editor

Thank you to everyone who has contributed this month, it is a real bumper issue, with reports on recent events as well as notice of things to look forward to. Please pay particular attention to the information about Asian Hornet Week and the annual Bee Supper, which both take place this month, and be sure to book your place on our Learning Days in November.

Tamsin



Image by Lisa Park

Dates for your diary

Apiary meetings

Saturday 14 September at 2pm – to apply the second dose of verroa treatment

Saturday 28 September at 2pm – to remove the verroa treatment trays

Asian Hornet Week – 9-15 September

See further information below.

Annual Bee Supper - 28th September, Wisborough Green Village Hall.

The annual supper has been booked for Saturday 28th September, commencing at 7pm.

Please book tickets through Daisy: wellingtondays@hotmail.co.uk or on 07980 280852. The ticket price is held at £7.50 again this year.

Please indicate whether you would like to bring a salad or a pudding. As usual, the Division will provide the meat and wine/beer.

If you haven't been before, the supper is a great social evening and usually lots of fun with very good food too! With lots of new members this year, it would be especially good to see some of you there.

Anyone wishing to provide some entertainment for 15 minutes or so, please let Daisy know.

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.

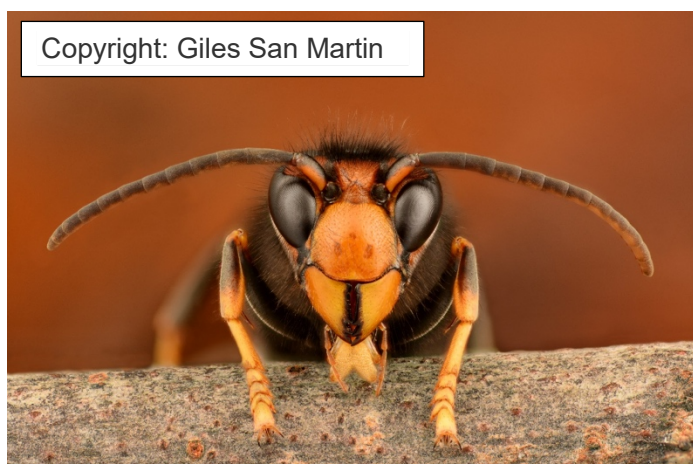
Asian Hornet Week

September 9th-15th 2019 - information from the BBKA <https://www.bbka.org.uk/2019-asian-hornet-week>

I could be coming your way – are you ready?

We are asking everyone to be vigilant in looking out for this alien species, the Asian Hornet, *Vespa velutina*. This hornet could decimate our pollinators including our honey bees, it is important to have everyone actively looking for it.

Now is the time for trapping and spending a little more time watching to see if hornets are hawking your hives in your apiary, put an hour aside to watch each day for hornets during Asian Hornet week.



See it, Snap it, Send it

Asian hornets are rather like large black wasps with a single yellow band, orange face and yellow tipped legs. If you see it, report it to the [Non-Native Species Secretariat \(NNSS\)](http://www.nonnativespecies.org) <http://www.nonnativespecies.org>.

If possible take a photo or video and send it with the specimen, if it is dead, to the NNSS.

Here is a link to a page on the BBKA website where we have put the pdf for an Asian Hornet banner we designed in the office and have used at Shows.

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/blog/asian-hornet-week-2019-blog-post>

You can use the pdf to have your own banner printed by downloading it to your computer and then uploading it to this website. Banners are in the region of £30/40 - <https://www.solopress.com/roller-banners/> (other websites are available!)

We have also attached the latest Asian hornet poster from the Government which you can display anywhere you think might be useful in your locality (local shops/ allotment site / work notice boards). *(See covering email, and Judy's request for help last month – Ed.)*

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 3rd 2019. "The Early Years"

Sunday November 24th 2019. "Intermediate/advanced"

For further information and to book (essential) please see www.wgbka.org.uk

Wisborough Green Honey Show

Well, what a scorcher on Monday 26th August, when we held our honey show in the marquee on the village green!

Entries totalled over 150 from 25 members meaning that we had to find another couple of tables to accommodate them all. And all classes were covered except the dark honey, but that's down to the bees and what they have been foraging on. The honey classes were very well supported, 14 entries in the medium honey and 11 for the honey for sale class, for example.

Our Judge Tex Garbutt did a great job and even commented that a lot of the honey had been entered at a very high standard. He was pleasantly surprised. Now, I urge any of you who won a class in the honey to have a go at the National Honey Show with it later in the year - if it's good enough here, it'll be good there too.

A summary of the points is listed below, but well done firstly to **Meriel Bottle** who won both the P N Burch Cup and the George Wakeford Memorial Rose Bowl for the member with the highest number of points and the member with the best exhibit. It was a jar of honey entered into Class 8 - honey for comment - that won the award for best exhibit, the judge saying it was outstanding both in its presentation and flavour. Very well done, Meriel!

Martin Hill was awarded the Roger Patterson Novice Cup for his entry into Class 6. Remember, the judging is all done anonymously you guys!!

After tasting 16 cakes and then finding out the Judge has a gluten intolerance, I felt a little wave of guilt so maybe we should change the recipe next year to a gluten free cake? We'll see.

Anyway, I must thank our Judge, Tex Garbutt, Roger Patterson for providing the observation hive, my brilliant stewards on the day, Mel Robertson and Lisa Baker, Martin Hill for all the running around and most especially all of you who entered, what a lovely day it was and thank you.

I thoroughly enjoyed my first year as Show Secretary, see you all at the National Honey Show.

Daisy

Results:

Meriel Bottle - 45 points - P N Burch Cup and George Wakeford Memorial Rose Bowl

Mike Bunyan - 37 points

David Croxon - 34 points

Martin Hill - 32 points - Roger Patterson Novice Cup

Sally Reay - 28 points

Judy Knight - 21 points

Ann Bullen - 20 points

Richard Gibby - 11 points

Angus Farquhar - 10 points

Bee Health Day

(in conjunction with Bee Inspectors from the National Bee Unit (NBU) SE Region)

The WGBKA Bee Health Day saw over 60 people attend this event, with some driving up from as far as the New Forest.

The day was broken into 4 sessions, covering:

- Varroa control options;
- The Asian Hornet;
- Specimen Frames exhibiting notifiable diseases AFB and EFB plus frames with minor brood disorders such as chalkbrood; and finally
- Pest and disease inspection techniques which took place at the WGBKA Teaching Apiary.

The day was pretty intense, filled with very useful and important information regarding Bee Health plus some eyebrow raising moments at the Teaching Apiary when we were shown what Bee Inspectors look for when inspecting hives. The day was also good for meeting up with fellow beekeepers, swapping interesting stories and best practice.

Should you not have had the opportunity to attend this event and would like to find out more, there is all the information you might need on the BeeBase website. <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm>

It really was a most informative day and thank you to everyone who organised, the NBU and Inspectors plus all the lovely people who came on the day.

Lisa Park

Some photos of the day:



Patterson in Print

Wasps are a major problem this year, probably because spring conditions were good for queens to get nests established. Throughout the country I have heard of colonies being robbed out. Individually wasps are much tougher than bees and will relentlessly attack weak colonies. Queenless colonies soon lose morale, so make sure your colonies are strong and queenright, with small entrances to help bees defend their home.

Our **apiary honey** has been extracted and is now stored in buckets until we need it. Much of it is sold to new members without bees and at shows we attend. The extraction process is a useful way of teaching members. This is the whole process including putting on clearer boards, uncapping, extracting, straining, putting into buckets and returning the supers to the hives for the bees to clean up. I counted 22 members who attended the day, which I think is as good as we have ever had. This was a mixture of new and experienced beekeepers and I hope that everyone learnt something. Many thanks to everyone for their help.

When **storing supers** with combs in make sure they are kept in the cold to retard the greater wax moth. In a shed is suitable, but I stack mine outside in the open, making sure the wind can't blow them over. Wherever you store them make sure you leave no gaps for mice to gain entry, otherwise you will have combs ruined. A queen excluder on the top and bottom of the pile is useful.

Now is the time to **plan for next year**. Reflect on what has gone right and what has gone wrong. Don't be frightened to do things differently if you think you can make an improvement, but of course you need enough knowledge and experience to decide if something will work, which is one of the purposes of our teaching. There are other sources of information. I don't get involved in social media, but I'm reliably informed that as well as sound information there is some awful drivel. How do you know it is drivel? Because you have enough experience and knowledge to detect it, otherwise you believe it and get into trouble, then blame the bees for not reading the book!

The **National Honey Show** <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/> is a good opportunity to learn and buy things you may need. There is a good range of lectures and workshops to suit everyone, with a lecture programme on the Saturday for beekeepers in their early years, so if you have just started beekeeping this will be pitched at your level. There is an opportunity to attend the world's largest honey show free in exchange for half a day's stewarding. I quote from an email from Bill Fisher, the Chief Steward, that is sent to stewards *"It is anticipated that you would Steward for either a morning or an afternoon, allowing you the other half of the day to listen to lectures, visit the trade stalls, take part in the workshops or view the Show exhibits. As a Steward, you are entitled to free entry to the show on that day and given £5.00 towards refreshments."* I reckon that's a good deal. Bill works well with people, so if stewards have a preference, he is very accommodating. A trick is that if you want to listen to a particular lecture then ask to steward that. Effectively it gives you more time doing what you want to. If you are interested, then please email Bill ASAP steward@honeyshow.co.uk and say you are from Wisborough Green BKA. I have told him I have asked for stewards on his behalf, so he is expecting a deluge.

I recently attended the **Irish Summer School** at Gormanston for the fifteenth year running. I have been invited to speak at every one, this year more presentations than ever. The Irish organisation is a shade on the casual side. I was asked to do one lecture, then I saw the draft programme online where they had me down for two lectures and two workshops! I have had this before on several occasions, so I was prepared for it. One of the workshops was on "Bees and Energy Lines", where I did a demonstration on finding them

on a large lawn. I found a point where at least 5 energy lines crossed, so ideal for placing a bait hive. I was pleased that I managed to place markers on each energy line with 5-6 markers over 40-50 yards all being in line. I did this when being blinkered by a couple of attendees, so I couldn't see the other markers. I have never done this before, so it has convinced me that energy lines do exist. I had 42 attend the demonstration. There was so much interest that I was asked to repeat it in an evening where there were over 30 attended.

The guest lecturer was David Tarpy, a leading bee scientist from the U.S. One of his lectures was on "Queen Problems", something I have been trying to highlight for the best part of 20 years. He mentioned virtually all the problems we have experienced, but he came from the interesting angle of not blaming the queen. It was interesting there were three people in the audience who see themselves as being high up in British beekeeping and have repeatedly said these problems don't exist!

Attendees came from far and wide, with a group from California, that included a couple who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary at Gormanston. One speaker from Scotland was 88 years old!

Like everywhere else, there are the usual petty politics in Irish beekeeping, which is a great pity. There has recently been one split and it looks as if there is another looming. Individually the Irish are very friendly and welcoming. Every year I see many Irish people who remember my name, even though I can't remember having seen them before!

On the last day an Irish beekeeper I have known a long time offered me a lift to the airport in his van. He has a problem with his neck, where he can't turn it very far. When he drives up to a "T" junction or cross roads he can't look left or right, so he uses an old rear-view mirror that he holds in his hand!

Accommodation is in sparsely furnished rooms with three bunk beds. In my room was John Gowar from Worcestershire aged 78, Chris Slade from Dorset and myself who are both 71. The three of us have a combined age of 220 with 139 years beekeeping experience between us, John 40, Chris 43 and me 56. In addition, we have all **driven bees**, something I doubt if many beekeepers know about, so I will tell you. Many skeppist beekeepers killed the bees in the skeps they wanted to harvest honey from. This was done by digging a hole in the ground, lighting a fire in it, then sprinkling sulphur on the fire. The skeps were placed over the top, so killing the bees. "Driving" was an alternative where the bees were saved. The skep was placed upside down in some sort of receptacle to hold it firmly, such as a bucket or large preserving pan. An empty skep was placed above it with two driving irons to keep the skeps apart on one side. When set up, the bottom skep with the bees in was rhythmically tapped (drummed) on the sides. The bees leave the bottom skep and take up residence in the top skep, leaving the bottom one free of bees, so the combs can be removed.

The lunchtime food queue at Gormanston can be rather long, but it is a great place to chat to other beekeepers and learn. There were three boys aged about 13-15 who were on the beginner's course, but they preferred to play football on the lawn outside until the queue had reduced. On one day the queue was particularly slow, so I decided to join the boys! This didn't go unnoticed and I think there are several photos that may be used for publicity purposes!

During September I will be attending the **Apimondia conference in Montreal**. Apimondia is the international organisation for beekeepers that has been in existence since the back end of the 19th century. I have never had the time to attend, not that I have now, but when you get to a certain age you run the risk of running out of time! Like going on holiday, it usually takes a day or so to find your way around, which no doubt I will have to do. Apimondia's secretariat is in Italy, which doesn't seem to be very efficient (like

Italian bees?). My guess is the staff may not be beekeepers, as they are incredibly slow at answering emails. I was originally invited to make two presentations. I don't know where they got their information, but they were specific in what they wanted, which was "Honey bees in the wild" and "Queen Problems". All my presentations are 1 hour long, but they insisted on 30 minutes! My experience of reducing the time is that the presenter is asked questions either at the end of the presentation or afterwards on what was left out. This and several other issues made it very difficult to give a sensible presentation, so two fingers went very firmly skywards, telling them I was declining. Several weeks went by then they asked me to give two poster presentations instead. The same two fingers gained altitude again! I have enough to do with my time without being messed about.

In publicising our "Improve your Beekeeping" courses in November I spent about 10 hours trying to find contact details for **beekeeping associations** within a reasonable distance. I found it incredibly difficult, as few people put their email addresses on their websites. If I was a new or potential beekeeper I think I would give up and not join a BKA. At WGBKA we are open, but take precautions to avoid spam. What is the point of having a website where it is difficult to make contact? Sounds like another topic for Patterson's Page in BBKA News!

The **Wisborough Green BKA honey show** has been running for over 40 years, apart from 2018, when it was cancelled. Daisy has taken over the organising for 2019 and has done a splendid job. Apart from a few tweaks she has retained our schedule and without much arm twisting she has managed to attract about 150 entries from 26 entrants, both as high as I can remember in recent times. At one stage we had several good show people from the other WSBKA Divisions, mainly Chichester and Worthing, who entered in our show, when the total entries were probably higher, but those days are long gone and we now rely on our own members, so it is a great achievement. Well done Daisy and thanks to all those who entered and took part on the day. Recently I have detected a great improvement in both the interest of members and the atmosphere at meetings. This is an example. Despite the high temperature inside the tent, there was a lot of fun and banter when exhibitors were setting up their exhibits in the morning and during the afternoon. Despite us letting Wisborough Green Horticultural Show down in 2018 we were welcomed back and they were very helpful, so thanks to them too.

I am in the process of writing material for the website about one of our past members, **George Wakeford**, who was a tremendous influence on beekeeping in the Wisborough Green area and WGBKA for a long time. I hope to get it online fairly soon. Interestingly I saw his daughter, Josie Curtis, at the show and we had a chat about her father. With Josie was her daughter Sally, who hasn't seen me for around 50 years when she was 10 years old. Apparently when some way down the tent she said to her mother "There's Roger down there"! I promise I have not always looked like I do now!

"**Patterson's Page**" in BBKA News was an idea that was hatched in 2011 where I wrote a few articles to use by the editor as something to replace an article that didn't arrive in time or was deemed unsuitable. It has now become a regular feature and I get a reasonable amount of response, mainly because it is different from the usual articles. I have even had beekeepers who tell me that's all they read!

In the September issue of BBKA News they published an article I wrote about queens escaping from a queen catcher that I bought online. I used it to keep a queen captive until the marking paint dried. I mentioned this at a WG meeting where Mel Robertson said she had the same problem.

By 27th August I had a couple of responses from readers. David Parker from East Lancs BKA suggested the BBKA should specify the maximum and minimum size of hole. I pointed out that the size of queen excluder slot will be adequate. I also had an email from Terry McAuliffe - Chairman: Devon Beekeepers' Association

(Plymouth Branch). I share with you an article he wrote for the Plymouth branch members. It was also published in August's "Beekeeping" the Devon county magazine before my article appeared:



A WARNING TO ALL BRANCH MEMBERS – BADLY DESIGNED QUEEN CATCHERS - 24 May 2019

A few weeks ago, Valerie and I had a 'near miss' when, during a colony inspection, we caught our queen in a standard clear plastic queen catcher and put her down on top of the stack of supers. While going through the brood box, we turned around and noticed that our queen had managed to get out. Why? Because the spring had gone and we hadn't noticed; so lesson one was "check the spring." Fortunately, I had put the QX on top of the stack of supers, so she was easily recovered and returned to her brood. However, as a result of this experience, we decided to go for something a little more durable and we bought a stainless-steel queen catcher as shown in the picture above (this is exactly the same as mine. R.P.). We used it last week without a problem, but while going through a colony in our second apiary this morning everything went pear-shaped. I caught the queen in the new catcher and rested her on the super stack as normal and carried on with the inspection. On finishing, I picked up the queen catcher to reintroduce her only to find her head and thorax poking out through one of the holes; her abdomen was too big to follow so she was trapped. Despite all our efforts, we could not get her "into reverse." The more we tried to persuade her to go back the more she struggled. Trying to pull her back would have meant handling her by the abdomen with considerable pressure so that was out of the question. After several minutes of trying we had run out of options so I killed her as quickly as I could. So; thanks to an appalling piece of design (and our lack of foresight) we now have a brand new queenless colony. We can only hope that they can successfully replace her.

You might ask why we bothered to catch the queen at all. The answer is that we recently attended a presentation from a master beekeeper who advised that this was good practice as it reduced the risk of harming the queen during colony manipulation; especially with double brood, which was the case with our colony this morning. The advice might have been well-intentioned, but we will be reverting to our old method of leaving the queen on the frame in future and just being extra careful!

My question is, who is the genius who designed these queen catchers with ventilation holes of sufficient diameter to allow a queen to get her head and thorax through? I would have some choice words to say to them if I could find out. It would have been so easy to reduce the diameter of the holes and increase the number, so why, why, why didn't they do it? These catchers are widely available. My advice is to avoid them like the plague.

Terry

I include the above as many beekeepers use these queen catchers for a variety of reasons. Queens are valuable enough without causing avoidable problems. I have bought a couple with slots and they seem fine.

Now for **a little cheek to finish with**. With the move to the new apiary I would like to set up Apidea mini nucs in 2020 for getting queens mated. I want to set them up with combs that are populated with brood and food, as I have previously had problems when using empty frames. One way is to set them up in a standard frame in the brood box of a full colony, to let that colony draw out combs and fill with brood and

food. Neil Mariner has organised this in BS brood frames for National hives, but you can only fit 2 in a frame. In a Commercial 16x10 frame you can fit 6, so being more efficient. The external sizes of Commercial and National are the same. I have one Commercial brood box of my own, but the colony has gone queenless, so I want to run two. Has any kind member got a 16x10 Commercial brood box and/or some 16x10 frames they wouldn't mind parting company with please? If so, please email me roger-patterson@btconnect.com.

Sorry it's longer than usual, but there is a lot going on at the moment. Nell and Rosie are furious they can't get to the computer!

Roger

The Apiary and Learning

I have been asked by some members if we have spare **queens** at the apiary to replace their own poor queens, but I have been unable to satisfy them. It isn't easy introducing queens at the end of the season when thymol treatments are being administered. In my experience the rejection levels are higher than normal. We will have "spare" queens, but most of them aren't very good and I will be culling them when uniting colonies later to reduce numbers. Unless for an emergency to get a colony through the winter there is no point in keeping poor queens or replacing one poor queen with another.

In recent years we have suffered from our queens mating with drones that I think have come from imported stocks that are kept by local beekeepers. I have spotted a lot of yellow drones in our colonies that I haven't seen for 15 years or more. Each year we have a few of our own queens that head quite spikey colonies. I think the aggression is caused by undesirable mating.

When we move to the new apiary we will be more settled than we have been this year, so we can get some queen rearing going early in the spring. Those who want queens can learn how to raise their own, rather than buying. Bought queens are often sourced from abroad (although I'm told that some suppliers aren't honest about that) and may not be best suited to our climate. They may produce gentle colonies to start with, but very often subsequent generations can be quite aggressive. The usual advice is to buy replacements, but this is unsustainable.

Aggression is a problem in many places I go. Due to marketing by suppliers, "**Buckfast**" bees are becoming popular, but they are getting the blame for much of the aggression. Many beekeepers think that Buckfast are a breed of British bee, but that isn't the case. The genetics are very different, depending on where they came from. They are certainly not stable, as I have seen many colonies that I have been told are Buckfast that have worker bees of varying colours.

One of our members has aggression problems with some colonies they acquired. The bees are at least 100 yards from the house, but they are what are called "followers". After one inspection they kept flying at the windows of the house. An enquiry has found they were Buckfast. It's interesting that at Buckfast Abbey they don't use Buckfast bees any more, preferring to use local mongrels the rest of us have.

Returning to the aggression issue, at a recent West Sussex BKA meeting all four Divisions reported increased aggression in their bees. This is unfortunately getting a worse problem.

We have recently had the **Bee Health Day**, that overall was a great success, with beekeepers coming from some distance away. Probably the furthest was a carload from the Brockenhurst area in the New Forest. Verbal feedback was generally excellent, with compliments about what attendees learnt, the organising by

WGBKA and the friendliness of our members. Thanks to those members who helped. I was at the apiary for the hive inspection demonstrations. The bees behaved brilliantly, with very few stings. Several attendees mentioned that some of the handling would have been discouraged by demonstrators at our own meetings. It is difficult for me to make comment at the apiary, as we shouldn't undermine the Bee Inspectors, but I didn't see much different from what I see throughout the country. We are lucky that our level of tuition is high, something a couple of members mentioned at our honey show.

Roger

Beginners' Packs

For several years we have had a beginners' pack that has started many members beekeeping. It is intended for those who have never had bees before, with three options, some with hives, but all include a 5 frame nucleus of bees that the recipient makes up themselves from the colonies at the apiary. There are a few basic rules, so we all understand how the system works.

This is an excellent opportunity for new beekeepers to acquire a good colony of bees and a hive if needed at below market price. All we ask is that the applicant attends meetings regularly, is progressing well and has somewhere to keep bees.

If you would like to start in 2020, please register your interest by emailing Murray West Murray@tropman.co.uk who administers the beginners' packs.

The New-Bee Experience – July and August double issue!

July – no longer Zen Bees 😞

July has proven to be an interesting Bee Month for me and my little Zen Tribe. A definite learning experience First Lady, despite still laying, was definitely displaying 'faulty firing' (I believe that is a technical term for not laying consistently!)

On regular inspection of my colony, there were very patchy brood in the frames. Poor First Lady was not displaying overly visible problems but the bees definitely weren't happy, not to mention that they didn't take to her right from the outset.

I had to remove several Emergency Queen Cells, plus I had two Virgin Queens emerge... and disappear! (The Dave Cushman site mentions that this can happen in smaller colonies where there is a problem with brood). I also then found further Queen Cells and a Supersedure Cell. I understand that natural supersedure is where the colony replaces an old or damaged queen with a younger one, normally without a brood break. I have now also, first hand, learned what supersedure looks like. I think in my case, where First Lady didn't integrate fully from the very beginning the colony decided that First Lady had to go. I'm learning....

So finding First Lady was a quest in itself! It was also almost as if she knew!!! An hour and half was spent playing hide and seek with her!! But eventually I did and stood on her!! First time I've done this and I have to say... it didn't feel all that great!

Roger was also in the process of 'Queen Rearing' at the apiary, another amazing learning experience! So we inserted a grafted QC into the colony. Timing, as I'm learning more and more, is absolutely of the

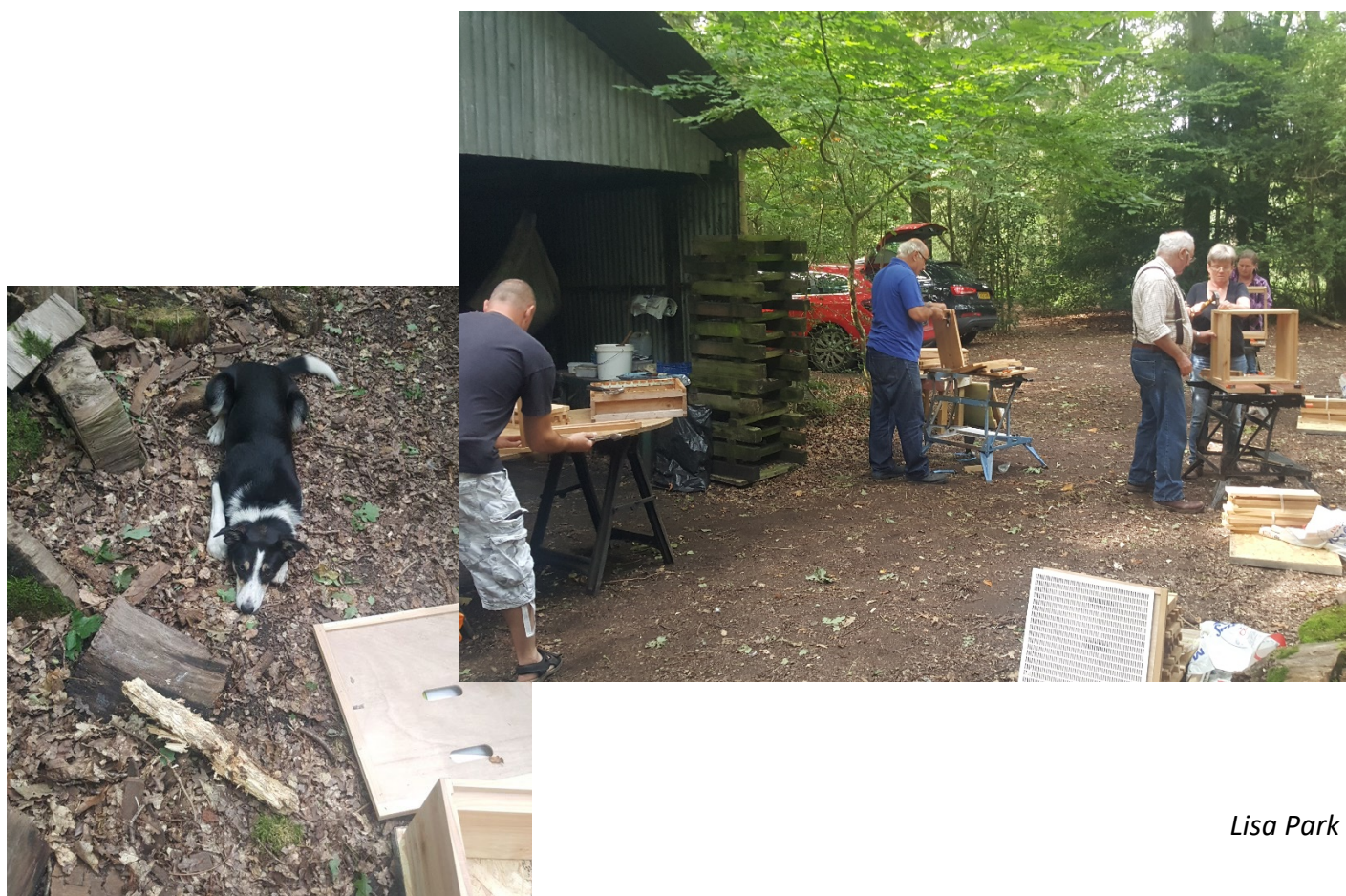
essence. Knowing the life cycle and timing of Queens, Drones and Workers is imperative. Plus I think experience is as important – I am definitely learning!!!

So, I now have a new beautiful Queen, she'd emerged and I hope has settled down. She looks beautiful and strong (thank you Roger) and I will be inspecting my colony again in a week's time to see how things are getting on.

If like me, you are new at beekeeping, I can't recommend the Dave Cushman website highly enough for information. <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/textlinks.html> Plus, the obvious hands on too. Please feedback or write in any experiences too, it'd be great to hear from other beekeepers!

August - Hive Building Day

Having had my colony for a while now, despite the challenges with my Queen and worries about my little Zen Tribe, I was very excited to finally be able to build my own hive. When I say 'build my own hive'.... not being the MOST practical person around, my husband did most (all of it) of the construction. It was a good day, 5 of us having a laugh, building our hives under Rogers patient guidance and Rosie's supervision – and fabulous hives at the end of it!



Lisa Park