



Spring Has Sprung! (or has it?)

1st March signals the arrival of Spring. However, some might argue that the vernal equinox around 20th March is the true start of Spring. Nonetheless, the bees have been flying strongly - a great sight to see as we all plan for and look forward to another year caring for them.



Annual General Meeting

The WSBKA is holding its AGM this month in Pulborough Village Hall. All members are welcome to the event which is on Tuesday 27th March commencing at 7:30pm.

The formal notice and agenda, minutes of last year's meeting, chairman's report and the Association's annual accounts are attached to members' copy of this newsletter.

Members wishing to raise an agenda item may only do so in advance of the meeting by advising the Association Secretary no later than 20th March.

Graham Elliott grahammt@tiscali.co.uk

Honorary Secretary West Sussex BKA

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Annual Bee Market & Auction

A reminder that our auction is just over a month away. The first lots have already been received for the event at **Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough on Saturday 14th April 2012**. A copy of the Entry Form is attached to this newsletter.



Auction in full swing - 2011

Thanks to those of you who have already offered your help on the day, but the event needs additional support from the membership and we are looking for enthusiastic and willing **VOLUNTEERS** to help with a variety of tasks including administration, assisting the Auctioneer in the Ring and serving refreshments.

For further details contact me on email at grahammt@tiscali.co.uk telephone 01403 752493 or mobile 07761 349281

Graham

February's Annual Convention

Gordon Allan reviews the event. Photos courtesy of Christine Stevens.

We had a record attendance at the West Sussex Beekeepers' Convention this year – which is not a surprise, given the quality of the speakers. There were three lectures and two seminars with choices of topics.

The first lecture was given by Dinah Sweet on *'Swarming and How to prevent it'*. She explained and demonstrated how to do an artificial swarm, and a variation which could be used if you cannot find your queen. Copies of the handout are available from Christine Stevens.

The second lecture, given by Dr Ivor Davis was titled *'Winter Preparation Begins Now'*. He started by telling us that winter losses were not necessarily a bad thing – it can be nature's way of eliminating the less fit bees. Over many years the average losses are about 10%, though (as with all averages) individual years can be much higher or lower. His message was that we need to establish a plan for the coming year and what our priorities are. For example, high honey yield could be the goal for the year, or improving the quality of queens, or increasing the number of hives. Each one of these will require a different plan, and the state of the bees at the end of the season will be different – hence the needs will be different.



Dr Davis at the Convention

This was followed by the first seminar (preferred choice submitted in advance). Alastair Welch spoke on the General Husbandry exam, the minimum qualifications to take it, what preparation was necessary (a lot!), the process for taking the exam and the evaluation process for determining a pass or fail, emphasising that the focus of the exam was practical but had to be supported by a good knowledge of bee-keeping.

Continues

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At the same time Dinah Sweet was speaking about *'Pollen Examination in Honey'* using a microscope (very inspiring) with tips on preparing your own reference slides, and Carol Gilbert spoke about *'Risks and Responsibilities from Hive to Jar'*. Carol is a Trading Standards Officer (married to Alan Byham) and was able to point out the requirements of the regulations, maintaining good hygiene and how to avoid getting on the wrong side of the law.

Lunch was provided this year, so we gorged on delicious sandwiches, fruit and juice, and did not have to retire to our cars as we have done in previous years. After lunch there were two concurrent seminars. Dr Ivor Davis spoke on pheromones, giving us insight into what pheromones actually are, the different types and how they affect behaviour (did you know that the pheromone emitted by larvae indicating that it is time to be capped is also detected by varroa who then enter the cell for reproduction, just before the cell is sealed?). Alan Byham spoke on *'Upcoming Issues'* bringing us up to date on bee health problems, particularly the Asian hornet which he believes will arrive in the UK this year.



Dr Couvillon at Lodge Hill

After the tea break, Dr Margaret Couvillon from Sussex University spoke on *'Mechanisms of Guarding and Nestmate Recognition in Bees'*. She outlined experiments to determine the basis of recognition (i.e. the presence of a desirable trait or absence of an undesirable trait – the second is the actual cause), and whether the tolerance of guard bees to deviation from the norm can be increased (it can). Experiments to determine whether the presence of alarm pheromone can affect the acceptance threshold surprisingly proved negative, but further work is still required in this area.

Paynes were in a side room selling beekeeping kit, books and sundries, and offering their usual helpful advice. The facilities at Lodge Hill are superb and the situation at the top of a hill gives spectacular views across Sussex in all directions. Everything worked together to make a highly successful Convention – all made possible by Christine Stevens and her team of volunteers.

We can already announce the date of **23rd February 2013** for next year's Convention, so that you can put the date in your diary now to be sure not to miss out. We will again be covering a wide range of topics, including *'Treating Varroa without Chemicals'*. Be sure to book early as it could be a sell out.

Gordon Allan

Thanks to Christine, Gordon and Pauline Ford for such a well organised and inspiring event - Ed

Remember to Register on BeeBase



Those members with bees are advised to register on BeeBase. Fera has recorded that 5528 new beekeepers registered last year bringing the countywide total to over 25000.

Registered members continue to benefit from the wealth of information and advice available on the website. They also receive timely information on outbreaks of disease in their area with advice on what to do with their own colonies.

Don't put your bees at risk - register on BeeBase now.

How to register - go online at www.nationalbeeunit.com ; email nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk ; or telephone 01904 462510.

Around the Divisions

All Members are welcome to attend any Divisional meeting, but please advise the organiser if you plan to attend.

Chichester Division

Tuesday 20th March - AGM followed by '*Don't let them swarm (and collecting swarms)*' - Pauline Ford and Guy Wheatley from Worthing BKA. Meeting at the Boxgrove Village Hall, The Street, Boxgrove, 7:30pm.

Further details from Nigel Dedman secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk or the Division's website www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk

*'Share your Division's
activities with readers of the
County News'*

Wisborough Green Division

Tuesday 20th March - AGM followed by '*The BBKA Basic & Beyond*' - Daisy Day will provide information and encouragement to Members thinking of taking the Basic Assessment in 2012 or moving on to sit Modules. Meeting at the Chapel, Spy Lane, Loxwood, 7:30pm.

Further details from John Glover glover.flethingshollow@gmail.com or website www.wgbka.org.uk

Worthing Division

Thursday 8th March - Guest speaker, Pam Hunter - '*Is Natural Always Nice?*'. Meeting at the Ferring Village Hall, Ferring Street, Ferring, 7:30pm.

Further details from Phil Carter philange5180@btinternet.com or website www.worthingbeekeepers.org.uk

County Events

Tuesday 27th March - Annual General Meeting, Pulborough Village Hall, 7:30pm (See documents attached to Members' copy of this Newsletter). All members welcome. Please advise items for the agenda to the Association Secretary by 20th March, please - grahammt@tiscali.co.uk

Saturday 14th April - Annual Bee Market & Auction, Brinsbury Campus, Pulborough. Further details from Graham Elliott, email: grahammt@tiscali.co.uk, Telephone 01403 752493 or Mobile 07761 349281.

Further details of both events can be found on the West Sussex BKA website.

More from Moore - February, the quiet month?

Chairman, Tom Moore, shares his thoughts from his apiary in West Sussex.

February could be thought to be the quietest month of the beekeeping year, since in a normal season the bees would be tightly clustered through the worst of the winter, and the humans would be keeping warm indoors. Not so this year! Despite some colder times, there were a lot of warm days and a great temptation to have a look in the hives, as the bees have been flying strongly. More on that in a moment.

Of course we also schedule all those other bee-related activities into the quieter months, so here in West Sussex we have had the superb Convention (thank you Christine and team) and several training days in my 'home' Wisborough Green Division and elsewhere. Add to that the monitoring of hive weights, cleaning up supers and other equipment ready for the season ahead, and making bookings for the BBKA Spring Convention, and February actually turns out to be as busy in beekeeping terms as any month.

There is some disagreement on the merits or otherwise of opening the bees on mild days in what is, after all, winter. On the plus side, you get a better insight into the size of the colony, the true level of stores, and whether the queen is laying. As a minus, there will be disturbance and loss of heat at what could be a critical time, and if you see a problem with the queen there is really nothing you can do. On balance, we decided to look into a few of our hives, for some reassurance as much as anything. At least on those we have an idea of the current state, and it may be the last chance for a look should it turn really cold through March – and some of us are old enough to remember that it can be cold with snow in April, sometimes.



*Drone in the hive
29th February 2012*

Now to a question to which I don't know the answer, but no doubt some of you reading this will. We opened four hives on 17th February. They were all stronger than we expected, with a good level of stores and the queens starting to lay well. Three had a little sealed brood, but in the fourth there were only eggs and larvae on that day. The big surprise in that last hive was to see two drones. We learn that drones are not retained through the winter, so my first thought was that the queen had become a drone-layer. With no sealed brood at that time, we couldn't tell, but it did raise the question..... If a queen becomes a drone-layer in winter, do the workers evict the drones on emergence? If yes, and this queen had become a drone-layer, that could explain seeing them, as they could be the last to go from brood raised before the winter brood break. If she is not a drone-layer, or they would keep drones if she was, why were there just these two drones in the hive? To help work out an answer I first needed to know whether the new brood was worker or drone, so today (29th February, as I type this) we opened the hive again. All the sealed brood is good worker brood, not a drone cell in sight. However, bold as you like, there on a central frame was a big fat drone – and I had the camera ready to take his photograph. So, back to the question. Why/how are there drones present in the hive in February?

Tom

The Swarming Season is not far away!

The BBKA is currently producing its annual list of Association-approved Swarm Collectors for inclusion on its website. And again this year the BBKA has asked Divisions to record the number of swarms handled by their members.

Your Divisional Secretary will be handling nominations and records.

Worthing BKA Training Event



Worthing Beekeepers are offering an *'Introduction to Beekeeping'* course for beginners in the craft.

The course will take place at Ferring Village hall on Thursday evenings from 7 - 9pm commencing on Thursday 19th April 2012.

There will be five two hour evening sessions and two practical sessions at a beehive. At the end of the course you will have a basic understanding of the life of the hive and its required management throughout the year. Subsequent to the course you will be able to follow and take part in the management of a hive at our Club Apiary under the supervision of experienced beekeepers where practical skills can be developed further.

The course fee of £60.00 includes Associate membership of Worthing Beekeepers, course notes, a monthly newsletter and an invitation to join fortnightly beekeeping activities throughout the summer and monthly meetings during the winter months. The fee for members of any West Sussex Beekeeping Division will be £45.00.

For more information or to request a place on the course please contact Worthing President, Pauline Ford paulineandmartinford@talktalk.net 01903 242708.

And Finally.....

Fera is publishing guidance notes on the production and selling of nucs. Buyers will also find the information of interest as it explains what to expect from your purchase. The document is still in the consultation stage, but will be published in BBKA News, BeeCraft and on BeeBase shortly.

MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all this month's contributors. If you would like to contribute to future newsletters please send articles and photographs to:

Graham Elliott, Hon. Secretary, no later than the 20th of the preceding month.

grahammt@tiscali.co.uk

We're on the web:

www.bbka.org.uk/local/westsussex

And for those of you with a Smartphone scan the website's QR Code



WEST SUSSEX BKA BEE MARKET & AUCTION
BRINSBURY CAMPUS, PULBOROUGH
SATURDAY 14th April 2012



ENTRY FORM
Closing date for entries 04th April

Please return form to Graham Elliott, Robins Croft, Chalk Road,
 Ifold, Loxwood, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 0UB
grahammt@tiscali.co.uk

I wish to enter the following for sale in the above auction and confirm my acceptance of the rules stated

Quantity	Description	Official Use

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Bank Details – Sort Code _____ Acct No: _____

Acct Name _____

Please continue on additional sheets as necessary.

To save on the cost of raising cheques payment will be to your nominated bank account only.

A regular feature of the Auction is the **PLANT STALL** organised by Sue Cooper. There is usually a wide range of plants available, and these come from a variety of donated sources. So, when you are taking cuttings, dividing plants, or transplanting seedlings, please remember the stall and keep some spares aside. Please contact Sue on 01798 870 461 for more details.

For Rules and Guidance Notes see website www.bbka.org.uk/local/westsussex/auction/index.shtml or contact Graham Elliott

WEST SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION



President: **Mr Ray Noakes**
Chairman: **Mr Tom Moore**
Vice Chairman: **Mr Roger Patterson**

Hon Secretary
Mr Graham Elliott
Tel: 01403 752493
Email: grahammt@tiscali.co.uk

Hon Treasurer
Mr David Coutts
Tel: 01903 784542
Email: davidleoco@btinternet.com

Life Vice-Presidents: **Mr R Patterson, Mr R Noakes**

NOTICE is given to all Members of West Sussex Beekeepers' Association that the 39th Annual General Meeting is to be held in Pulborough Village Hall, Pulborough, on Tuesday 27th March 2012, commencing at 7.30pm.

It is hoped that as many Members as possible will attend to support the Association.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the AGM, held at Pulborough on 23rd March 2011
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Chairman's Report
5. Election of Officers. All Officers with the exception of the President who has reached the end of his two year tenure are prepared to continue if re-elected.

Present Holders:

President – **Ray Noakes**
Chairman – **Tom Moore**
Vice Chairman – **Roger Patterson**
Treasurer – **David Coutts**
Secretary – **Graham Elliott**

6. To appoint the Accounts Scrutineer for 2012
7. Any Other Business (as notified to the Secretary)

**MINUTES OF THE 38th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WEST SUSSEX
BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION HELD AT PULBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL,
PULBOROUGH, WEST SUSSEX ON WEDNESDAY 23rd MARCH 2011 AT 7.30 pm**

Present : 14 members attended.

The Chair was taken by Mr R Patterson.

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Mr R Noakes and Miss P Tilney.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 24th March 2010 were read, approved and Signed

3. Treasurer's Report : Accounts for the year 2010 were circulated showing a trading profit of £1,311.00 and assets totalling £7,880.00. The Treasurer reported that there would be a small amendment because of an overestimate of interest of £4.05. The report was adopted.

4. Chairman's Report was circulated. He pointed out that there was a risk that the Association's website would merely become a list of Divisions and officers which clearly was not the intention and should be guarded against.

5. Election of Officers

President : Mr R Noakes - Proposed Mr T Moore, seconded Mrs C Stevens

Chairman : Mr T Moore - Proposed Mrs C Stevens, seconded Mr G Elliott

Vice Chairman : Mr R Patterson, Proposed Mr T Moore, seconded Mr D Coutts

Treasurer : Mr D Coutts - Proposed Mr T Moore, seconded Mr J Glover

Secretary : Mr G Elliott – Proposed Mr T Moore, seconded Mrs C Stevens

6. Appointment of Accounts Scrutineer : Mr N Child – Proposed Mr L Lewis, seconded Mr G Wheatley

7. Any Other Business – None notified

There was a vote of thanks for John Glover the retiring secretary

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.50pm

West Sussex Beekeepers' Association Chairman's Report 2011-12

On becoming Chairman of West Sussex BKA last March, I was not sure quite what to expect. It has been an interesting year, with the main activities of our Association extremely successful, and some frustrating moments along the way. I have enjoyed attending meetings of all the Divisions and getting to know more of the members.

So much of the day-to-day beekeeping activity we are all involved in centres around the three Divisions, Chichester, Wisborough Green and Worthing. This makes it all too easy to lose sight of the fact that we are all part of the bigger Association, and through that of BBKA. That is a shame; it is all too easy to become insular and lose the benefits that can come from working together for the benefit of us all. My wish is for cooperation rather than competition, and this can be seen to work well in those activities that we do undertake jointly.

The West Sussex Committee has met regularly to plan events, exchange information and deal with aspects of beekeeping that are best tackled at county Association level. The Auction in April 2011 was a record event, largely due to the huge amount of effort put in by Graham Elliott, assisted on the day by a large team of volunteers. Similarly, the Convention on 25th February 2012 was a record event, organised with faultless efficiency by Christine Stevens and her team. Graham has also expanded and improved the monthly WSBKA News as a part of his role as Secretary. I would like to give special thanks to both Christine and Graham for their tireless work for WSBKA, while at the same time thanking all the officers and committee members for their continuing support.

I was pleased that in the year under review the percentage of West Sussex members taking the BBKA Basic Assessment rose from 2% to 8%, and I congratulate those who took this assessment and as a result will have increased their knowledge and improved their beekeeping. Additionally several member took and passed BBKA Modules, with two brave members also taking the General Husbandry and becoming Qualified Beekeepers. While exams and certificates are by no means essential, we will all benefit from the greater pool of knowledge within our Association. We are pleased to have a new Exams Secretary coordinating County entries with BBKA.

It was decided that on-going training events and lectures would be held on an ad-hoc basis when appropriate topics and speakers were available, rather than filling a fixed programme.

Delegates attended an Associations Day in London, organised by our Regional Bee Inspector Alan Byham to bring together representatives from all the Associations in his area. Jim Norfolk (Chichester) attended the BBKA Annual Delegate Meeting as our representative. Both these occasions help to bring us into contact with other beekeeping groups.

All three Divisions have seen an increase in membership, and both Chichester and Worthing Divisions have made progress in developing their teaching apiaries. All Divisions have held winter lecture meetings, and honey shows and/or tasting sessions, increasing our understanding of the end product of our activities!

Perhaps the biggest issue on which we have made little progress is in finding appropriate ways to use Association funds to further beekeeping. Support is being given to a group studying for the General Husbandry, and has been offered to subsidise an intensive study weekend on pollen. Other activities will continue to be considered .

I hope that 2012-13 year will see us all working closely together in successful and rewarding beekeeping.

Tom Moore
29th February 2012

West Sussex Beekeepers' Association

Income and Expenditure Account - Year ending 31st December 2011

Income

WSBKA Capitation	£ 351.00	
Convention Surplus	£ 248.90	
Auction Surplus	£ 1,283.53	
		£ 1,883.43

Expenses

Grant to Branches	£ 250.00	
Pulborough Hall Hire	£ 135.12	
BBKA meetings delegate expenses	£ 124.80	
National Honey Show	£ 25.00	
Course in a case	£ 50.00	
Treasurers Expenses	£ 18.28	
	£ 603.20	
		£ 603.20
	Surplus	£ 1,280.23

BALANCE SHEET

Current Assets

Bank Account	£ 1,380.80
HSBC Bond	£ 7,500.00
Cash	£ 65.55

Total Assets **£ 8,946.35**

Financed by:

Accumulated Fund	£ 7,666.12
Surplus	£ 1,280.23
	£ 8,946.35

Hon Treasurer: David Coutts Dated

The books and receipts produced have been examined by me and found to be in accordance with the income and expenditure account and balance sheet.

Hon Scrutineer: Neville Child Dated