



Happy Christmas



A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS to West Sussex BKA members. Hopefully you and your bees will be enjoying a well earned break over the Christmas and New Year period. My sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to this Newsletter again this year - please keep your contributions coming.

It's been a great year for beekeeping for most of us and our bees certainly appear to have benefited from an early spring and good summer. The honey harvest was good and it's been a most enjoyable year. Let's just hope we can keep the Small Hive Beetle away from our shores; our bees already have more than enough to cope with.

Enjoy the festive season while you look forward to getting close up and personal with your bees again in just a few short weeks.

Inside this issue:

<i>Des Res for Bees</i>	2
<i>General Husbandry with Surrey Beekeepers</i>	2
<i>BBKA's Online Shop</i>	2
<i>Wax Workshops with Jim Ryan</i>	3
<i>Around the Divisions & Dates For Your Diary</i>	4
<i>Inter-Division Quiz Night Success</i>	5
<i>Canine Partners' Appeal</i>	5
<i>WSBKA Annual Convention</i>	5
<i>Jim's Jottings</i>	6
<i>West Sussex BKA website</i>	7

Des Res For Bees

A landowner living near Fittleworth is keen to have honeybees on her property. So if you are seeking a new or additional home for your bees please contact me in the first instance. The estate includes pasture, meadows and extensive gardens with easy vehicle access and storage area.

A second site has been offered in Bognor Regis. This is a small private garden in the Rose Green area of the town.



Artist's impression only

Graham

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

General Husbandry with Surrey Beekeepers



Surrey BKA is arranging a training day on Saturday 17th January 2015 for those considering taking the BBKA General Husbandry Assessment next year or in 2016. The venue is East Horsley Village Hall, KT24 6QT starting at 10am until 3:45pm.

So if you have kept 5 colonies of bees for 4 years or 4 colonies of bees for 5 years and passed your Basic Assessment why not consider the next step? This training day will provide you with information regarding the syllabus, how the assessment is carried out and handy hints and tips with plenty of audience participation!

Led by Master Beekeeper, Alastair Welch, the programme includes interpretation of the syllabus, what to expect in the assessment, and practical and theory aspects of the assessment with audience participation.

Places are limited and with refreshments and a light lunch included represents good value at a cost of £25 per person.

To reserve a place please email Sandra Rickwood at rickwoodsuka@gmail.com or telephone 01932 244326.

The Pollen Basket



Are you still in need of inspiration for those all-important Christmas gifts? If so then take a look at the BBKA's online shop, The Pollen Basket. Gifts start at just £3.50 and when you spend £50 or more post and packing is free.

www.bbka.org.uk/shop/

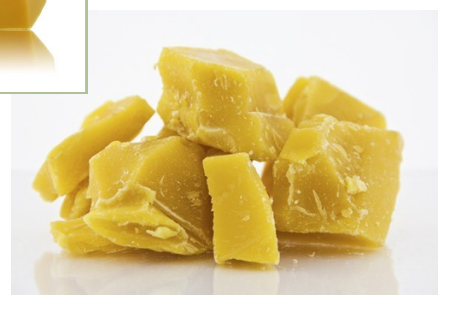
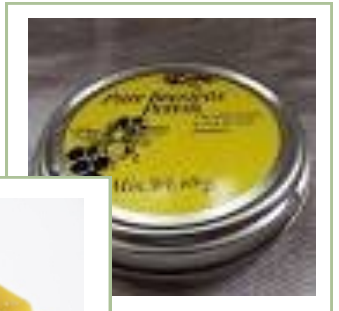


Making Beeswax Products - workshops with Jim Ryan

Wisborough Green BKA is arranging workshops with Jim Ryan from Thurles, Co. Tipperary. The venue is Hampers Green Community Centre, Petworth, GU28 9NL and a map can be accessed here: www.chichester.gov.uk/article/25181/Petworth---Hampers-Green-Community-Centre

Jim is well known as a very good demonstrator of making beeswax products. His methods are simple and he has a very good way of showing you how easy these items are to make, using minimal equipment. Demonstrations will now take place on **Sunday 1st, Monday 2nd, Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th February** from 9:30am (for 10:00am prompt start) and the days will finish around 5:00pm.

Most beekeepers accumulate beeswax, either from cappings or melted combs, which could be sold or exchanged for foundation, but many only have a small amount, so they just store it in the shed and don't know what to do with it.



There are a number of products that can be simply made with quite small quantities of beeswax. These can be used by you and your family or can make useful and unusual presents. The good thing is you know what the ingredients are.

The content of each day may be different, but Jim will begin all by cleaning wax, then making such things as furniture polish, furniture cream, lip balm, skin cream, moisture bars, soap, etc. He will also look at using honey in recipes – honey lip balm, honey soap, etc. There may also be some alternative recipes that do not contain nut oils.

We are expecting this to be popular and as places are limited you will need to book early. If you are available on the weekdays we would prefer you took one of those options, to make more spaces for those who work and may only be available on Sunday. This is a rare opportunity to see a top demonstrator.

Booking is essential with Maggie Turner on email at maggie501@btinternet.com or by phone 01243 545696 or mobile 07752 847631.

The cost is £10 per person to cover expenses and payment is in cash on the day. If you book and are subsequently unable to come please tell Maggie, so someone else can take the place. Refreshments will be provided, but please bring your own lunch.

Roger Patterson

Due to the popularity of these workshops they have now been extended to FOUR days.



Around the Divisions

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

Central Sussex Division

Details from Melvyn Essen: chairman@centralsussexbka.org.uk or the Central Sussex website: www.centralsussexbka.org.uk

Chichester Division

Tuesday 2nd December - *'Honey Tasting Christmas Social'*. 7:30pm at the Fishbourne Centre, Black-boy Lane, Fishbourne, Chichester, PO18 8BE.

Further details from Henrietta Currey: secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk or the Division's website: www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk

Wisborough Green Division

Tuesday 9th December - *'How Our Bees Work - a look at their structure and function'*. Presentation by Daisy Day at the Loxwood Village Hall, Loxwood at 7:30pm.

Further details from Sue Elliott: sj.elliott@ukgateway.net or website: www.wgbka.org.uk

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

Worthing Division

Thursday 11th December - *'Hive Differences and Preferences'* - Ferring Village Hall at 7:30pm. Further details from Phil Carter: philange5180@btinternet.com or the WBKA website: www.worthingbeekeepers.org.uk

... and Dates for your Diary

Saturday 17th January 2015 - Surrey BKA *'General Husbandry Workshop'*. See article in this Newsletter.

Saturday 31st January - *'Bee Improvement For All'*. Training event organised by BIBBA in conjunction with Surrey BKA. Cobham Village Hall 09:30am - 5pm. See article in the November Newsletter.

1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th February - *'Making Beeswax Products'*. See article in this Newsletter.

Monday 16th February - Lecture by Michael Palmer *'The Sustainable Apiary'*. Loconfield Hall, Petworth. Full details to follow in next month's County News.

Saturday 28th February - WSBKA Annual Convention. Watch for details here and on the website.



Inter-Division Quiz Night Success

The Quiz Night in November organised by the Chichester Division became a head-to-head between Wisborough Green and the hosts. It was a very wet night but Chichester still managed to make up two teams and Wisborough Green, three.

A mix of General Knowledge and Beekeeping questions were presented by Chichester Chairman, Jim Norfolk and Secretary, Henrietta Currey.

The visitors presented themselves well but lost to the host team by a narrow margin. It was a fun evening and all those who participated enjoyed themselves before setting off home in the rain!

Thanks to Chichester for a fun evening.



Canine Partners' Appeal for Stamps



Members made a significant contribution to this charity last year by donating used stamps from Christmas cards. This generosity has helped to train Pat and other assistance dogs for the disabled at their training centre in Heyshott near Midhurst.

So if you can continue to help this charity please save the stamps from Christmas cards (and other correspondence) and send to - Canine Partners' Stamp Appeal, PO Box 638, Fareham, Hampshire, PO14 9JJ.

This is an ongoing appeal and more details are available on the charity's website - www.caninepartners.org.uk

WSBKA Annual Convention - 28th February 2015

Final touches are being made to the Convention programme and, yet again, we have an impressive combination of lectures and seminars with something for everyone, beginner to expert. You will be sure to find talks to interest you and so please book the date in your diary now for Lodge Hill, Pulborough.

It will be our privilege to welcome the main speakers in 2015 - Dan Basterfield, Heidi Herrmann and Ron Hoskins. Dan and Ron will both be presenting a seminar as well as their main lectures and, as usual, there will be other seminars to choose from - Max Watkins on '*Hornet Floors & the latest Varroa treatments*', Dr Terry Allan on '*Bee Sting Allergies*', David Sandwell on '*Showing Honey and other things*' and Monica Lucas on '*Bee Friendly Flowers*'.

As in recent years a light lunch will be provided and Paynes will again be on hand. Further details will soon be available on the WSBKA website and will be sent out with the Booking Form attached in next month's County News.



Chairman, Jim Norfolk continues his jottings for the County News



The module exams are over and my cramming of facts on honey bee reproduction has stopped. How much of it will I remember I don't know, but that is not the point. The point is that it made me pick up and read books I would not otherwise have read and try to build an understanding of honey bee genetics and all the various ways of breeding and rearing bees. So if someone suggest I use a Cloake board for queen rearing for example, I may well have forgotten the precise details but will probably remember where to look them up or I could go back to my notes.

There are many reasons for sitting exams, and we have all been forced from an early age through an education system geared to sitting a sequence of them. Some people are forced off the escalator, some choose to leave and some stay to the end, to accrue the burden of student debt. Even in adult life, training and exams are an essential requirement of being able to progress in one's job or even work at all. Exams are a fact of life, so it is understandable that when asked to sit yet more exams for a hobby such as beekeeping most people say no.

So why sit beekeeping exams? By reading widely to study for an exam, we can increase our understanding of what our bees might be up to, tapping into the experience of others. That should enable us to not only identify and react to problems as they arise but also to work out strategies for the future. Then there is the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake. People involved in a hobby usually want to learn more by reading, attending meetings etc. Perhaps one of the main reasons to study in beekeeping is that it can become a social occasion. We have held revision sessions in pubs and people's homes, mostly talking about beekeeping. So on the basis of my having sat a few BBKA exams, here are my ideas.

For the Basic visit several apiaries and see how different people handle bees. I was fortunate to be able to visit the division apiaries of both Worthing and Wisborough Green and picked up useful tips on handling. Download the syllabus and write down what you know about each topic and what you need to know, then go and seek the missing information. The Basic is in three parts and you need to attain at least 50% on each. Manipulation which includes opening a colony and answering questions on it can be daunting with someone watching, so that is why you need to practise. Oral and Practical involves making a frame and answering questions on practical aspects of beekeeping such as swarming or overwintering. Learn one simple way for each aspect on the syllabus is usually enough. Diseases form a whole section and perhaps represent the most difficult part. You just have to learn them, but then if you have done a training course, read a few books and attended a few meetings you should be most of the way there. The pass rate on the Basic was 99% last year and if you get stuck the assessor will guide you through. It really is the most user friendly assessment.

The module exams of which there are 7 are significantly harder, with the pass mark of 60% being achieved by 73% of entrants across all modules last year. 26% achieved a credit with a mark above 70% and 9% gaining a distinction at above 80%. A lot of a module exam is down simply to exam technique. One of the trickiest things to manage is time and there isn't time to think. The paper is made up of three sections. Section A is answered in one or two words or a short phrase for 10 marks. I always start with this section and go through as quickly as I can leaving any I am not sure of to come back to later. Section 2 gets a bit harder and here you have to answer 4 questions out of 5 for 15 marks each.



Since they are all answered on separate sheets of paper you can do them in any order and I choose the one I think I know most about first. You don't have to write a lot and short notes can mean just a list of bullet points, not an essay. Any diagrams you draw should be large enough to fill at least half a page. Section C is more of an essay and you have to answer one question out of two. The best way to prepare for section C is to have a go at writing answers to all the questions ever set in past papers. So how much time? Spend a few minutes looking at the paper and mentally ticking off which questions you like and which you rather they hadn't asked. In future, they are planning to allow this 5 minutes before you actually start the 90 minutes, so use it wisely. They also allow you to put candidate numbers and page numbers on the sheets, either before you start or after you finish, so don't waste question answering time on that. 90 minutes for 100 marks amounts to 5 minutes for Section A, 10 to 15 minutes for each of the four section B questions and 30 minutes for section C. Then 5 to 10 minutes to check back on the gaps you might have left. Its amazing what comes back to you as you relax towards the end. I know that adds up to more than 90 but the place to save time is Section B. Aim for 10 minutes a question, but maybe some will take 15 minutes. Look at the marks awarded for each part of a question. So if it is only two marks don't write more than two or possibly three points. Similarly if it says list... and offers 6 points then list at least 6 relevant points for one mark each. Finally, if you need it Exam Additional Support is available, ranging from extra time for modules to an amanuensis. Just make sure you tick the box for extra help. It's no good saying you needed extra time if you didn't ask for it.

Roger Patterson has been running his one day winter learning groups for a number of years. These are ideal revision for the Basic. For modules set up a study group, which can be as few as two. Work out where to meet and how many sessions you will have. There are several people who you can ask for help and advice maybe for a session or two but the best study is the study you do. Take it in turns to present a topic to the others in your group, preferably picking a topic outside your comfort zone. Good luck! We won't force you to take exams and assessments, but I think it will add to your success and enjoyment as a beekeeper, if you do.

Jim

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



We're on the web:

www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all this month's contributors. If you don't have access to the internet and want further details of anything in this newsletter, please contact the Editor & County Secretary. Likewise, if you would like to contribute to future newsletters please send articles and photographs to:

Graham Elliott, Editor & County Secretary, no later than the 20th of the preceding month.

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Previous newsletters from the last 12 months are available on the website.

