



West Sussex Beekeepers' Association



Hosted by South Clwyd Beekeepers' Association BIBBA's 50th Anniversary Conference in association with their European partners SICAMM will be held between 26th and 28th September 2014. The venue is the Pavilion in Llangollen, North Wales and the facility enjoys good access by road, rail, ferry and air. Even though you may think that Llangollen is a long distance, can I suggest you open the links and have a look at the programme?

The conference will feature 40 UK, Irish and International guest speakers on a variety of practical and scientific topics with the aim of improving your bees and beekeeping. Subjects will include bee breeding and queen rearing techniques with management systems explained for native and near-native bees.

I have arranged much of it, so I can be accused of being biased, but I think it's the best and most comprehensive beekeeping programme that has been assembled in my time in beekeeping, so it is unlikely an event like this will be staged again. It would be a pity to miss it. There is plenty for everyone, whatever their interests or ability and I have already been told it is 'awesome'. The intention is to give information to help beekeepers understand their bees more so they keep them better.

The speakers have been chosen because they are knowledgeable and experienced in their subjects, not like so many who read books and tell you what you can read yourself. Some of these speakers are unlikely to be heard in the U.K. again and it would be a pity to miss them. There are several lectures that are new for the event and it would be a pity to miss the opportunity to see them.

How about having a chat with your friends and sharing transport? Non-beekeepers will not be forgotten with a number of local attractions to enjoy.



Roger Patterson

For further details visit www.bibba.com/conference_2014.php
Booking can be secured via the internet at <http://goo.gl/uCBLf8>

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An Opportunity To Support Your Executive

Following Roger and Marion Brooks' decision to retire as Examination Secretaries at the end of this year an opportunity exists to coordinate the BBKA learning across the four Divisional Associations in WSBKA.

Responsibilities of the role include communicating with the BBKA Examination Secretary, Divisional Exam Secretaries and Examination candidates; booking Assessors and venues for the practical and written Examinations and Assessments; receiving applications from members to take BBKA Examinations and Assessments and promoting and publicising the examination programme. Attendance at the regular Executive Committee Meetings is not necessary but a brief report for each meeting and at the end of the year is appreciated. This is an honorary position although out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

***'Examination Secretary
Wanted'***

If you have the time and are interested in supporting your Association please register your interest with the Secretary at secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk no late than 17th August. Further details will also be provided on request.

Spider Venom Used In New Pesticide



As recently reported in the ***Daily Telegraph*** a pesticide made from spider venom has been found to kill insects without harming honeybees.



Researchers at Newcastle University combined venom from the Australian funnel-web spider and lectin from snowdrops to create a 'bio-pesticide'. The new pesticide will allow bees to forage and pollinate without harm, scientists at the University's School of Biology believe.

It is thought that neonicotinoids harm honeybee populations by attacking their nervous system, which disrupts learning and memory so that they cannot locate pollen or find their way back to the hive. During the study researchers found the pesticide did not affect the bees' memory, even in high doses.

New Online Bee Book Site

While many members will purchase bee books from their local bookshop - or Amazon, you may be interested in a new site just launched by Northern Bee Books - www.northernbeebooks.co.uk

It lists a very wide selections of titles.



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

Saturday 12th & 26th July - Apiary meetings at Peas Pottage teaching apiary 11am - 1pm.

Sunday 13th July - Barbecue 'Meet & Eat'. 12pm at the BBQ area of Southwater Country Park. Bring your own disposable BBQ and food.

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

Chichester Division

Details of the Division's activities from Henrietta Currey: secrtery@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

Saturday 5th & 26th July - Apiary meetings at 1:30pm.

Wednesday 16th July - Apiary meeting at 6pm.

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

Worthing Division

Sunday 13th July - Apiary meeting at Holt Farm. 2pm.

Saturday 19th & 26th July - Apiary meetings at Holt Farm. 2pm.

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

... and Dates for your Diary

Saturday 12th July - Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects (LASI) Open Day at University of Sussex. Article in April newsletter.

Friday 26th - Sunday 28th September - BIBBA 50th Anniversary Conference. Lead article in this newsletter.



Possible UK Derogation on the use of a Neonicotinoid



You may have read in the press or been contacted and requested to sign a petition concerning an application made by *Syngenta* to obtain derogation from the UK government to enable them to use their active substance (thiamethoxam) on oil-seed rape. This had been reported as the UK government seeking to break the EU wide ban on the use of neonicotinoids.

We understand that the company made an application for a limited use of the product because of problems in the control of flea beetle on oilseed rape. Flea beetle is also resistant to pyrethroid insecticides which are an alternative choice to neonicotinoids for the control of flea beetle.

In order to obtain the derogation the company has to go through the specified regulatory process including the Chemicals Regulations Directorate, the Advisory Committee on Pesticides before Ministers consider granting permission.

We do not know the precise nature of the derogation being sought (for example it may be for limited geographical areas or there may be additional product stewardship requirements to be met).

We understand a number of other EU countries either have already granted derogations or are considering applications for derogation.

We will communicate further information as soon as we receive it.

David Aston

Chair BBKA Technical and Environmental Committee

Still Time to Subscribe to the Beekeepers' Quarterly

There is still time to take advantage of Northern Bee Books' substantial discount to West Sussex members on the annual price of the Beekeepers' Quarterly magazine. You can subscribe for just £20 p.a - a saving of £10 on the normal charge. View <http://beekeepers.peacockmagazines.com/read-sample> for a sample of the publication.

Subscriptions must be through WSBKA to ensure you receive the discount, so if you are interested in subscribing, renewing or cancelling your subscription please let me know.

Graham

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



Chairman, Jim Norfolk continues his jottings for the County News



WARNING - some of this is controversial and even speculative!

We should all have seen and heeded the warning from FERA to check *Varroa* this spring, since winter treatments with oxalic acid may not have been that effective due to brood rearing continuing through winter. I am sure this was the case with some of mine, but apart from one colony, I am currently finding almost no *Varroa* on the counting trays. I will come back to that high *Varroa* colony but want to speculate on what may happen in spring to explain the low counts. There is no doubt that judging from tray counts, several of my colonies had significant *Varroa* in February and March, so much so that I was thinking I would have to buy some MAQS, but then the *Varroa* drop fell, so that I now only see the occasional one. Looking back at previous years, late springtime low *Varroa* seems to be the norm for my bees. I was looking for a mechanism and came across a dissertation by Jasna Kralj written in 2004 in which among other studies, a video camera was set up to watch bees leaving and returning to the hive. She found that those returning had fewer *Varroa* on them than those that went out, and went as far as to suggest that during the foraging season as many as 3% of the *Varroa* in the colony could be lost in the field each day, either dropping off or dying with the bees. So what might be causing the *Varroa* to fall off bees? We know that icing sugar and other powders, such as talc, make it harder for *Varroa* to cling on to bees and are used to knock *Varroa* off, to fall through open mesh floors. Pollen grains are in the same size range and it is common to see returning foragers yellow with pollen in springtime, both from willow and later from rape. So maybe pollen dusting knocks mites off foragers who may even spread the pollen about on to other bees back in the hive!

I would like to stick my neck out further and propose a second mechanism for reducing spring *Varroa*. In two colonies in which *Varroa* was high in spring but later declined to zero, there were quite a lot of Deformed Wing Virus bees with shrivelled wings found on the landing board and on the ground in front of the hives, as well as dead pupae. Most were drones, which we know are invaded preferentially by *Varroa*. I have also noticed this year but haven't checked in the past, that high spring *Varroa* colonies rear drones earlier than low *Varroa* colonies and it may just be that this helps reduce *Varroa* in a colony. If invading mite numbers per drone cell are high enough, the pupa dies and with it the mites, while lower multiple mite invasions produce proportionally fewer daughter mites per mother. I know we are told that drone brood is a *Varroa* factory and should be culled but I am not convinced, since I have not seen a *Varroa* problem in colonies where I have boosted drone production, but have seen the reverse, increasing *Varroa* drop in new colonies which have yet to produce drones.

Over the years I have had the occasional colony in which *Varroa* just keeps increasing in spring with attendant high incidence of Deformed Wing Virus bees. The mite drop is linear going higher and higher until something is done about it. This year I decided to see what happens mainly because I had put a Bee Gym into the hive and wanted to see if it actually helped reduce the high *Varroa*. The process was interrupted by the appearance of swarm cells, so the queen was removed to a nuc and they then reared a new queen from one of the cells. Before the queen was removed mite drop had risen steadily to an average of around 25 per day but then after she left, fell as the amount of emerging brood declined. During the 'brood break' mite drop fell to low single figures. However, once the new brood emerged, the daily mite count shot up again. The first wave of new brood dropping an average of 16 per day but with the next wave the numbers are back up above where they were before the brood break exceeding 50 per day. This is all on worker brood as there is currently no drone brood. So based on this one result, it doesn't look as though a brood break helped control *Varroa*. I guess it's time to treat. What of the Bee Gym, well I am sorry to say, it does not appear to have controlled *Varroa* in this colony, but I can't say what the

outcome would have been without it. One other observation is that I find the mite count the day after an inspection increases threefold on average, although the variability is large. Presumably smoke, shaking frames and general disturbance all help to knock mites off bees and through the mesh floor or maybe more bees emerge in the disturbance. Another reason why mite numbers drop in spring perhaps, we inspect more. I am not claiming any of my observations are definitive but are merely my observations in my colonies. Others may have similar or even different results, such as bees, and it would be interesting to hear about them.

Jim

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



And Finally...

Can You Help With LASI Research?

LASI is on the look out for colonies of bees which have definite signs of *Deformed Wing Virus* for a research project. So if you are based within an hour's drive of Sussex University, and have one or more colonies with at least 3 or 4 bees on frames showing signs of the *DWV*, then please get in touch with Hasan at ha214@sussex.ac.uk. We need both the queen and a small nuc's worth of bees, but will replace the queen and bees with a healthy colony. Thanks.

Karin Alton, LASI

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.

