



WISBOROUGH GREEN BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

A DIVISION OF WEST SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2017

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DIARY OF EVENTS



APIARY MEETING EVERY SATURDAY (*unless notified as cancelled*)

If possible please arrive at meetings early this helps the meeting leader to arrange the right number of groups and allocate colonies. Please sign the attendance book.



Please monitor your email for apiary meeting updates.

Scheduled Wednesday meeting 14th June. See page 2 for meeting dates and details.

EVENTS 2017

Loxwood Village Fete - Saturday 10th June, 11am - 4pm.

South of England Show, Ardingly - 8th -10th June inclusive.

See the June edition of the West Sussex newsletter for details.

The Cranleigh Show - Sunday 2nd July. <http://www.cranleighshow.co.uk>

See the West Sussex BKA Newsletter for events organised by other local divisions.

To help reduce the carbon footprint, parking and traffic on the roads we ask members to share vehicles if possible when attending meetings.

We advise all beekeepers not to purchase bees and queens that may have been imported. This is to reduce the risk of importing pests and diseases. Very often they are unsuitable for our climate and it is possible that aggression may show in subsequent generations.

Dounhurst Apiary Dates

The following apiary meeting dates have been scheduled for 2017.

Saturday meetings: *Gather from 1.30 p.m. Notices at 1.50 p.m.*

June	July	August	September
3rd	1st	5th	2nd
10th	8th	12th	
17th	15th	19th *	
24th	22nd	26th	
	29th		

Please remember to sign-in when attending meetings.

*19th

August: Extracting.

Wednesday meetings: *Meetings will start at 6.00 p.m..*

June	July
14th	5th
	26th

Don't forget to take a look at the WGBKA Library - there are lots of interesting books to borrow.

Read at your leisure.

No borrowing fee!



The following topics are planned for Saturday meetings during June & July

June

3rd *All: Colony increase.*

10th *All: The colony post OSR.*

Group: The BBKA Assessment system explained.

17th *All: Observing the colony.*

July

1st *All: Viruses - Identification and remedy.*

8th *All: Varroa monitoring - Alcohol wash.*

22nd *Group: What varroa treatment shall I use this year? **

26th *Group: * The above topic will be repeated on Wednesday 26th July.*

Please read the updates in each addition of this newsletter and continue to check email regularly for any amendments to existing dates or times, and ad-hoc meetings.

A Message of Thanks

Many of us will know Tom Weston and we will all be aware of Roger's recent message advising us of Tom's diagnosis with a brain tumour. I have spoken with Tom and he has asked me to publish the following message. I know you will all join me in wishing Tom well as he continues with his treatment. Ed.

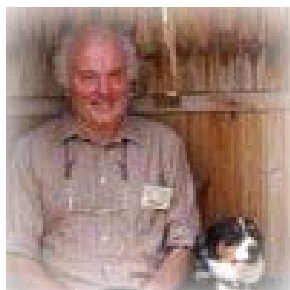
I would like to thank the many Wisborough Green members who have sent messages wishing me well, and also to thank Roger for getting a list of members willing to offer me help.

There have been a lot of hospital appointments and I have already completed six sessions of radiotherapy, with a further four sessions to go, and am feeling a lot better now. I have an appointment for a scan this week and I then start my chemotherapy on 14th June; the plan is for six treatments undertaken every 21 days.

Thanking you all very much. Hope to see you again before the end of the summer.

Tom Weston

Patterson In Print



Nell and friend

The kindness of beekeepers has recently been shown twice, when I had a stay in hospital having my appendix and an intestinal abscess removed; and shortly afterwards Tom Weston was diagnosed as having a brain tumour.

I would like to thank all those who sent messages and helped me by inspecting my bees and looking after me when I was discharged. I sent a message asking for offers of help for Tom and received responses from about 15 members. Thank you all very much. I had a much speedier recovery than expected and I hope Tom enjoys the same.

My recovery was such that I was admitted on May 2nd and was operated on the next day. I had to cancel a presentation with Harlow BKA and I was due to fly to New York on 21st May for nine days of teaching with Hudson Valley beekeepers. I immediately thought this will have to be cancelled, but on 15th June I was passed fit to travel by a local G.P. This shows that the NHS isn't always as bad as it's made out to be and the recovery of a fairly fit human body can be quite rapid.

The staff at St Richards were brilliant, especially as they are working under what are clearly difficult conditions. A couple of examples are that on admission my details were written on a what appeared to be a paper towel, certainly not a form, presumably because they had run out. The light above my bed didn't work because there was no bulb. The answer wasn't to replace it, but to take one out of a lamp on another bed.

It amused me slightly when I was weighed - well sort of weighed! I don't normally worry about such things, but on admission I was told I was going to be weighed. For some reason there weren't

any scales available, so they asked me what my weight was! I seem to remember that last time I was weighed, several years ago, I was 14st 6lb, which is what I said. After I had the operation I was weighed again, but this time they had found some scales. Perhaps they were sharing them with Brighton and Worthing Hospitals and it was St Richards' turn to have them on that day. I was told I weighed 91.5kg, which I found out when I got home was a bit close to my guess. This is all very well, but it doesn't give the accurate weight of an appendix and an intestinal abscess, so why put a patient through the stress of being weighed twice?

I never complain about food, but many would have done. The first day I had a cup of "coffee", that I wasn't keen on, so the next time I asked for tea. On taking a sip, I told the attendant I had asked for tea, to which the response was "It is. Tea is in white cups, coffee in red". It might have been, but it tasted the same to me. I had chocolate after that. Now I'm out of hospital I'm feeling great and I still have a sense of humour!

As I will be away when I normally scribe PiP and Nell has gone on holiday to Scotland for a week before staying with her sister, and so is unable to fill in for me, this will be a bit shorter than usual.

There are a couple of events coming up later in the year that you might like to make a note of in your diaries. The National Honey Show at Sandown Park Racecourse from Thursday 26th to Saturday 28th October. I have an interest and perhaps a little biased, because I have arranged the lecture programme, but have a look on <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lectures-and-workshops.php> where I hope you will find an interesting programme that is a mixture of scientific and practical beekeeping. There is also a day for beginners on the Saturday. If you look carefully you may see a couple of familiar names and faces.

On Sunday 19th November there will be a "Bee Improvement For All" (BIFA) day at Rudgwick Village Hall. This is run by BIBBA and hosted by West Sussex BKA. See <http://bibba.com/event-info/>. In the last three years there have been over 40 BIFA days throughout the country. They are popular and feedback is good. Due to problems with imported queens there is a very definite movement amongst the more caring beekeepers to keep bees that suit their environment well, are healthy, docile and don't need lots of food to help them survive. The day is full of information to help beekeepers do that.

We have had a few problems with colonies swarming at the apiary, that I think have been caused by queen cells that have been overlooked; and the colony has swarmed with the first queen to have emerged. If there isn't a thorough inspection the overlooked queen cells may be small, resulting in small and poor queens. For some reason there seems to be reluctance by some members to shake bees off combs when looking for queen cells. Seeing a swarm 30ft up a tree and receiving a few calls from local people about swarms in their chimneys may encourage closer inspection. The message is clear - shake, and if anything looks a bit suspicious, cut it out, leaving one good Q/C.

We are adding to the topics at meetings. Richard Dyer has been monitoring colonies for varroa at the apiary for several years. We have seen some strange things happening with the figures that we can't always explain, so for three Saturday meetings running we are going to concentrate on this. On 24th June Richard will place trays in a small number of colonies; based on recent results and what has recently happened in the colonies. On 1st July they will be counted. On 8th July we will do an alcohol wash on the same colonies, so demonstrating the technique. We will also uncap drone brood, making three methods of assessing varroa levels. We will be looking for consistency, more than actual counting.

Roger

Des Res For Bees

We have received two enquiries offering land for potential apiary sites.

26 acres of land in Plaistow is on offer to someone who would like to keep a couple of beehives there. Planting of a meadow is planned by the owner who would like the bees on their land for pollination.

Any members interested should contact Sue Elliott in the first instance.

A further two plots in the Loxwood / Plaistow area.

Any members interested should contact Graham Elliott in the first instance.

Teaching Apiary Safety

Safety at the Teaching Apiary

We take our 'Duty of Care' responsibilities seriously. Members and visitors are advised that natural hazards are present at the apiary, as you would expect in any natural location. It is the responsibility of all attendees to take all reasonable precautions to ensure the wellbeing of themselves and those in their charge. Head protection should be worn when close to the bees. Any accidents and injuries should be notified to the Demonstrator in charge of their group.

Children should remain within eyesight. Parents and Guardians are advised that it is their responsibility to supervise and monitor any child in their care at all times while in the apiary or within its vicinity.



WGBKA Executive Committee

Smoker Fuel Required

We are currently short of smoker fuel at the Teaching Apiary. We could do with a mixture of fuel including hay, wood chippings, touchwood and dried grass mowings. Touchwood needs to be light and easily broken up.

So if you can bring any of these along to the next few Apiary meetings it would be a great help to rebuild the stock.



Tales From An Out-Apiary

Caroline Drewett shares the joys and frustrations of running an out-apiary.

I have been struggling with a damaged ligament in my back since September 2016 and last month it was finally getting to the stage whereby I could do day to day things fairly easily. Then on Sunday 21st May disaster struck when I tripped up the stairs (it makes a change from the more usual falling down the stairs) and jarred just about every part of my back that it is possible to do so. Fortunately the many physio sessions attended in recent months have armed me with various techniques to try and keep mobile. Some of my colonies were overdue being checked and so, only a couple of hours after my mishap, I went to the apiary to inspect the hives.

The previous day I had quickly inspected the original brood box from the artificial swarm performed on 'Sweet Pea' on 7th May; the new queen had emerged and there were sufficient stores. I noted that there were a lot of drones returning to the adjacent hive.

I had intended to take a quick look inside 'Buttercup' as there had been a sealed queen cell on 10th May. On approaching the hive I noticed the activity to the front wasn't quite what I was expecting; I approached cautiously. Bees were clustered on the front of the hive. I stood back and watched in an attempt to determine what they were up to; it wasn't hot so overheating was not the cause. After 20 minutes I decided to leave them to whatever they were doing and inspected 'Cowslip' instead. When I left the apiary at 4pm the bees were still on the front of the hive.



15:59hrs 20/05/017

On arrival at the apiary on the Sunday the first thing I did was to carefully approach 'Buttercup' to see what was happening at the hive entrance.



11:58hrs 21/05/017

The bees were still clustered on the front of the hive; it was mid-day. Oh well, leave them for the time being. Despite the pain I was in I managed to inspect 'Sweet Pea' (containing the original queen from the previous artificial swarm). Unable to lift the three supers, I had to take each frame from the top super and place them into a spare box. The empty super was then removed to one side and the frames from the next super transferred into it. This process was repeated for each super before I could inspect the brood chamber. Then the process was reversed in order to close the hive again. By the time I put the roof in place I was unable to straighten my back and was walking at a 70° angle; and there were more hives to inspect. I lay on the ground to release the spasm in my back and managed to straighten enough to have another go. It was 2pm and I had only managed to check one hive, it was going to be a very long afternoon. I looked at 'Buttercup' and found the bees were still clustered at the front; so I began to inspect 'Borage' (four supers and double brood box!). This hive is managed using

the 'Hallgate Method' of frame rotation and on this occasion I swapped three frames between the brood chambers, to increase laying space in the bottom chamber. By the time I was closing the hive every movement brought a tear to my eye and I was beginning to wonder how I was going to get it all back together again; it is amazing what you can do when you have to. It was 4pm and so I took another look at the front of 'Sweet Pea' and found that the cluster of bees was no longer there. Had they gone inside the hive, or had they flown off? As I had been working on the other side of the apiary, with my back to this hive, I doubt I would have noticed if they had flown. I decided to go and lie down on the grass for 40 minutes and then decide what to do.

When I could walk again, I checked the entrance; the bees were displaying normal activity. I decided to open the hive. A previously sealed queen cell now showed signs of the queen having emerged; and I saw a new queen racing across a frame, at the bee equivalent of 100 miles an hour. I also found another two sealed queen cells; having confirmed there was a queen present, I cut these out and continued with the inspection. When I had finished, I opened the two cells, found them to contain live queens and ran them both into the hive entrance. The bees will sort it out.

I next carried out inspections on 28th May, doing as much as I could without straining my back, which meant not lifting supers and resting between hives. The new queen from the previous artificial swarm had started laying, hopefully she will continue to do so without any problems. A quick look in '*Buttercup*' but I didn't see a queen; I hope one of the three queens is still there and will be laying eggs next time I look. I also checked for signs of a new queen in '*Cowslip*', but found none; but it's early days, so no panic. I inspected '*Borage*' on 31st May (10 days since the last inspection) and found everything as before, with no signs that the bees are preparing to swarm. This time I rotated four frames to prevent congestion of the brood nest.

So far the apiary activities are running to plan. The next thing I need to do is work out how to extract the honey crop while still nursing a dodgy back. I think I had better find someone to help with lifting the full supers.

Caroline



How To Book The Division's Extractor.

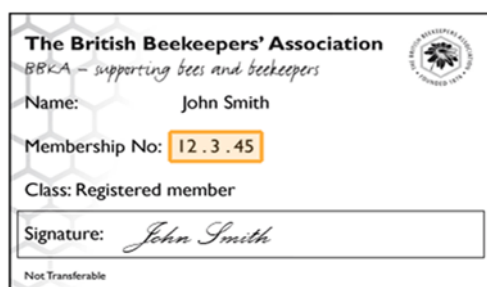
Please note the change in contact details for arranging to borrow this equipment.

The Division's extractor and associated equipment is available for loan. If you wish to 'book' anything, please contact **Graham Elliott** by E-mail at grahammt@sky.com.

Equipment available:

3 frame manual extractor
50kg bottling tank with strainer
Plastic uncapping tray

BBKA Membership Cards



The **June** edition of **BBKA News** included our BBKA annual membership cards. It is easy to throw the letter away not realising the card is there.

Please make sure you have signed yours and keep it safe place.

Equipment For Sale At The Apiary

As usual we will have supplies available for members at apiary meetings this year. Because we buy in bulk you will find that our prices are generally lower than from anywhere else, and with no carriage charges! This is a valuable service to members, but does take volunteer time so please read below about ordering. All available at apiary meetings (subject to stock).

How to order

As meetings can be hectic please **email orders in advance** to Tom at stone.house@btinternet.com so that they can be ready for you. If you leave it until the day you must be prepared to wait until there is a convenient time to collate your goods, which may not be until the end of the meeting, or if I am not carrying enough stock with me, you may have to wait until the next meeting!

All prices are PER SINGLE ITEM unless stated otherwise and are correct at April 2017 for current stocks. We reserve the right to vary prices if there are changes from suppliers.

Frames (unassembled) **all 60p**

DN1 for National and WBC brood chambers

SN1 for National and WBC supers

Frame nails small bag (approx 80 grams) **£1.00** or full box (500 grams) **£5.00**

Foundation for the above

Wired Brood **£1.05** (some available in drone base for culling/varroa control, or drone breeding)

Wired Shallow **65p** (*please specify worker cell or drone cell*)

Un-wired Shallow (for cut comb) **45p**

Spacers (to suit National hives)

Castellated spacers (metal) in 9, 10 or 11 slot **£2.00/pair**

Narrow plastic ends **10p (20p/pair)**

Sundries

Hive tool steel, yellow, British made **£8.50**

Hive strap orange, 3 metres **£4.00**

Payment can be made in cash (*easiest for us*), or by cheque.
Please make cheques payable to **WSBKA Wisborough Green Division**.



Thanks to this month's contributors. If you have similar articles or beekeeping experiences you would like to share, please supply articles and any photographs for the **July edition** no later than the **26th June**.

If you need any help submitting an article, please give me a call.

Caroline