



WISBOROUGH GREEN BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

A DIVISION OF WEST SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2017

Website: www.wgbka.org.uk

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DIARY OF EVENTS



APIARY MEETING EVERY SATURDAY (unless notified as cancelled)

Meetings have now been scheduled for September, October & November See page 2

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.

EVENTS 2017

Wisborough Green BKA End of Season Supper - Saturday 23rd September.

See page 11 of this newsletter

'Bee Improvement for All' - Sunday 19th November

See page 11 of this newsletter

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
September, October, and November.

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

September October

2nd 7th

9th ***Please remember to sign-in when attending meetings.***

16th **November**

23rd 4th *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.*

30th

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



86th National Honey Show 26th - 28th October 2017



See this month's edition of the West Sussex newsletter for full details and links to the website.

Entry Forms can also be downloaded and returned to the Entries Secretary
no later than 9th October.

Patterson In Print



Nell and friend

As promised I will let you know a little about my annual trip to Gormanston. The guest speaker, German bee researcher Ralph Buchler, was excellent, being a very good English speaker and giving a lot of information. Many overseas researchers are reluctant to pass on much information and seem unable to speak for their full hour. There were no problems with Ralph, in fact he was rather forthright, which I like.

Although the vast majority of attendees were Irish, there were those from as far afield as USA, Denmark, Germany, South Africa, Japan and New Zealand. They all seemed pleased at what they learnt, although some may not have suited their conditions.

As well as presenting two lectures, I gave a handling demonstration on a very docile colony of native bees. They were a tribute to the commitment of Irish beekeepers in improving their bees. Of course most attendees were fully "booted and suited", which I found disappointing when the bees were so brilliant to handle. I just wore my usual veil and my friend Brian Dennis from Northampton wore nothing protective, simply because he forgot to take his veil. He did wear sandals and no socks! We both got the usual comments of "won't you get stung?" Of course we will if the bees are bad tempered, but surely it's better to improve the temper of your bees than protect yourself. Ironically the only two stings were because people wore gloves, so didn't feel the bees.

I thought the visit of Seasonal Bee Inspector (SBI) Diane Steele went very well, with some members attending who we don't see very often. In introducing Diane, I made the point that Bee Inspectors are focussed on finding disease, so may be more invasive on a colony than the ordinary beekeeper may expect. I have seen many Bee Inspectors do the same demonstration that Diane did, often being what I consider to be very rough with colonies, two of them on the same day at our apiary several years ago, when I can't remember seeing as many bees being crushed. Based on what I have previously seen, I politely warned members what to expect, but there was absolutely no need to. I was very impressed with the calm way that Diane handled the bees, showing that the rough methods used by some of her colleagues aren't necessary. I thought Diane did really well and in my opinion it gave both her and members a chance to meet each other; and her calm friendly approach gave members the confidence to call her if they suspect a disease problem with their bees.

The extracting has been done, with around 360lb of honey taken. This is lower than last year, but it must be remembered that we have a teaching apiary where colonies aren't always treated as full honey producing colonies. We also had fewer production colonies this year. I thank everyone who responded to the call for help. We had 11 attend on the day and I had to reluctantly turn some more away. This is always a pity, but too many usually means that some are under-employed. The response shows that members will offer to help if asked, for which I am grateful. I'm sure the day was a learning experience for our newer beekeepers, so they feel more comfortable when they have to extract their own honey.

My own colonies produced well over 100lb average this year, one colony had 6 supers on for the main crop. This area is traditionally rather ordinary for honey crops compared to some others. It really is down to selecting your bees that suit the area by using very simple techniques. This topic will be covered in the forthcoming Bee Improvement for All (BIFA) day on November 19th, so

please book with Daisy now.

On the point of extracting, many beekeepers from around the country are reporting that sealed honey has a high water content this year; some around 20% or more, which takes it very close to the point where it is illegal to sell it. This of course may lead to early fermentation, which is always more likely with granulated honey. The air space in buckets should be kept to a minimum as honey absorbs moisture from the air. If possible, don't leave large surfaces of honey exposed for more than a few hours. To reduce fermentation it is better to keep the honey cool to retard the wild yeasts that are in honey. The worst place is to store it in the shed or garage, as the temperature may rise and fall. A few days of warm weather can cause problems. Most beekeepers who have been in the craft for any length of time have a story to tell.

Refractometers are now quite reasonably priced and it makes sense for every beekeeper to have one. They do need calibrating, which can be done quite easily following instructions in the usual place <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/refractometercalibration.html>. Water content can be reduced by using a dehumidifier. Get it down to 17-18% water if you can. Don't forget that thin honey will rise to the top of the bulk if left to settle, which is why bottling tanks are also called "ripeners". They don't ripen honey, they simply allow the thin honey to come to the surface along with scum, so thicker honey of lower water content can be bottled off from the bottom. Scum is only tiny air bubbles, so there is nothing wrong with it and many beekeepers use it for cooking.

I recently dropped in to see Vic and Jackie Newman at their home in Pulborough, something I haven't done for some time. They have been involved with WG for many years, but haven't kept bees for some time. Vic is over 90 and still drives. They very quietly did a huge amount for us, including helping with the apiary where they did work between meetings, including cleaning/repairing the equipment and fed the bees; organised our Honey Show and sent out newsletters in the days when they were all posted, so folding the newsletters and anything else that had to go out, addressing all the envelopes by hand and sticking on the stamps. They reliably did many other things besides. They produced a lot of honey and were successful at shows, where Jackie has her name on cups at the National Honey Show for her wax exhibits. This couple are what the craft of beekeeping should be about - very quietly and efficiently getting things done, without arguing about how to do it or worrying about whether they were noticed doing them. We still keep in touch by sending them a newsletter and they were certainly up to speed with what is happening, although they know few of our members now. With a constantly changing membership it is so easy to lose track of what has been achieved by very quiet hard working and conscientious people, who have helped us to get where we are now. There are many others who have made great contributions to WG too and it would be a pity to forget them.

I have previously alerted you to the programme of lectures and workshops at the National Honey Show. The workshops have now been displayed on the website, but unlike the lectures they need to be booked online. Booking opens on 1st September, but I warn you the popular ones will fill up very quickly, often within a couple of days.

A couple of years ago we invited Jim Ryan from Ireland to demonstrate using beeswax to make things like polish, hand cream and lip balm. He will be returning early next year and I hope to have dates for you next month. Those who attended last time had very good tuition, several I have spoken to wish to attend again. Details to follow later.

The National Honey Show is in need of stewards to perform a number of tasks. In return for half a day's stewarding they offer free entry to the show and £5 towards refreshments. This gives half a day to browse the trade stands and attend lectures. If anyone would like to take advantage of this offer please email me and I will send details. I know the Chief Steward very well and he will try

to give people something they are comfortable with, so if you want to hear the lectures, volunteer for stewarding these!

This is being written the day after our honey show. I understand from the Judge, David Sandwell, that in general the standard was high, so well done everyone. Our members aren't so interested in shows as in the past and we have many who are fairly new to the craft. If you had comments by the judge on your card and you don't know how to get over the problem, or you wish to know more about presenting your exhibits for show, then please ask a member with reasonable experience.

Two things that may not be obvious to the beginner at this time of year are that if you use Apiguard the bees often migrate the brood nest to one side of the box. This needs centring when treatment has finished; by taking frames of food out of one side of the box and placing in the other side, but turning the frames 180°, as bees usually put more pollen on the side nearest the brood. Ivy honey granulates solid and can cause problems for bees during the winter if there is no liquid food, where starvation can be a problem. Gently feeding with syrup at the same time will help, as the bees usually have something liquid available when they need it.

I apologise for not indicating apiary dates for September onwards - things have crept up on me!

At this time of year we need to consider how to prepare colonies for winter, which includes feeding and varroa treatment, so it is those we will consider from now on at the apiary. There are many views and theories on how to successfully winter bees, just spend a little time in front of a screen for proof of that! The success of these isn't judged until the spring. Winters vary and what suits one winter may not suit another. What we should do is to reduce the chances of failure, which we will discuss at remaining meetings.

See page 2 of this newsletter for the apiary dates.

Lastly, I look forward to seeing as many members, family and friends as possible at the supper. We are returning to Wisborough Green Village Hall, where we had the first supper. Daisy has worked hard to organise it, so please support her.

Roger

2017 BBKA Modules

An important message from our BBKA Exam Secretary.

Members who intend to sit the November 11th modules should send their completed and counter-signed application forms, with the appropriate cheque made payable to BBKA, **to ensure they are received by the exam secretary no later than 20th September.**

Please send to the following address:

Kaz Powell,
71 Cuckfield Crescent, Worthing, BN13 2EB

examsecretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



VARROA TREATMENT

Available now from Tom

Further to the article in the August newsletter, we now have available a number of thymol-based treatments, as detailed below.

Apiguard - thymol (12.5g) in a gel base that allows for controlled release over a period of time. Requires two packs per full hive, applied at a 2 week interval giving a 4 week treatment period.

For more detail see www.vita-europe.com/products/apiguard/
 Price £2.20 per sachet or £20.00 per pack of 10 (to treat 5 hives).

ApilifeVar – thymol (8g) plus eucalyptus oil, levomenthol and camphor in the form of a brittle foam strip from which the active ingredients vapourise (**** note that the oils in ApilifeVar will dissolve polystyrene ****). Requires two sachets per full hive, applying half a pack (the strip is pre-cut) each 7 days over a 4 week treatment period.

For more details see www.bees-online.co.uk/resource-downloads/APILIFEVAR.pdf
 Price £2.20 per sachet or £20.00 per 10 sachets (to treat 5 hives). (Limited stock)

Thymovar – thymol (15g) in a thin fibrous cellulose base; it is applied in two stages 3 weeks apart giving a 6 week treatment period. Only supplied in a pack to treat 5 hives (**** note that the oils in ApilifeVar will dissolve polystyrene ****).

For more details see <http://www.thebeebusiness.co.uk/thymovar.php>
 Price £20.00 per 5-hive pack.

Please order in advance for supply at the apiary (or if you can't get to an apiary meeting, then by arrangement to collect from Tom in Petworth). To help you decide which to use, see the separate article in the August newsletter. Rates of application are based on a full colony; you should adjust for nuclei and very small colonies.

Email orders to Tom on stone.house@btinternet.com

Potential home for hives

We have received the following enquiry.

I am inquiring to see if any experienced local beekeeper would be interested in keeping some hives on our land. We live in a rural location just outside Ashington off the Billingshurst Road and have several acres of field with about one acre of garden. We have a number of users of our land (animals and people!) so it would be useful to review with someone the best location on-site.

Please contact Graham Elliott if you are interested in the above site:
 Tel: 01403 752493 email: grahammt@sky.com



WG Honey Show Review

August was a rather damp month, so the big question was would it rain on August Bank Holiday weekend, or would the sun shine for our annual honey show?

Amazingly, the bank holiday weekend was a bright and sunny one, and the warm weather ensured there was a large crowd at the Wisborough Green Fete and Horticultural Show; with lots of visitors to the marquee where we hold our Honey Show.

Entries were up on last year, with a total of 66 jars of honey on display, and 7 wax exhibits; with Mike Bunyan providing a beautiful display of wax roses for the *Exhibit Using Wax* class. Mike always manages to produce something interesting for this particular class and he earned a well-deserved first prize for his efforts. We also had some bottles of mead this year, which we don't always manage to get, as for many members mead making is a venture too far due to the fact they don't like it.

David Sandwell judged the show and was pleased with the overall standard of the exhibits. At past shows we have had classes where no prizes have been awarded, as the judge felt that none of the entries merited an award; but this year all classes had exhibits that were of a high enough standard for an award to be given.

Not surprisingly, the *Medium Honey* class was well supported with 14 entries; compared to 5 entries in the *Light Honey* class; there were no entries for the *Dark Honey* class, as dark honey is usually the late crop (and generally attracts fewer entries). The colour of the honey depends on the available forage and so it's all down to *location, location, location*.

The *Honey for Comment* class was judged after lunch, when the marquee was open to the public. This gives members the opportunity to see the judging process and to learn more about the preparation required to show honey; exhibitors were able to ask David any specific questions they had about their exhibits. I know that both experienced and new members found this very interesting and several were making notes they would be able to refer to next year. I even noticed a member of the public listening intently to the judge's comments. David Sandwell used the scoring system he introduced two years ago for this class, which adds extra interest. This scoring system is not without its difficulties and I am grateful to David for taking the time to do this.

Extracted honey clear		
Colour 10 points	Typical for class; light-clear to pale straw, medium-light to dark amber, Dark-brown to black	8
Density 30 points	Thickness of honey varies with source and water content	15
Flavour 25 points	Aroma when jar opened, flavour characteristic of honey type with no off flavours	23
Condition 20 points	Includes clearness freedom from froth, air bubbles, suspended matter and granulation	8
Appearance 15 points	Quality of jar pair, label neatness, cleanliness of jar general attraction	10

From 'The Practical Bee Guide' J.G. Digges



Exhibits in 'Covered jar' Class

There were 16 exhibits in the *covered jar* class, which is a record in the six years I have been organising the show; I didn't have any more covers, so it's a good job there wasn't another late entry! This class is judged on taste only, so if you entered in the class this year, why not try the *Honey for comment* class next year, as you receive feedback not only on the taste but on the condition of the honey also; and what can be done to produce a better looking honey in the future. Late in the afternoon I removed the covers so that the jars were on view; it was interesting to see the varying colours on display.

The day before the show is a busy one and includes me dashing over to Wisborough Green to get the marquee set-up; luckily Graham and John help with this. I also try to get some entries of my own ready to exhibit. This year I thought I was ahead of plan, as I had put aside six jars of honey when bottling a bucket of this year's early crop in July. However, it still takes time to 'finish' the jars, especially when entering the class for *Honey presented as if for sale*; making sure the honey looks it's best, that the three jars are identical, correctly filled to the same level, and labelled so that the labels are straight! The last thing you want to happen when you print your own labels is for the ink cartridge on your printer to run out - which is exactly what happened to me on the Sunday morning when I was printing a copy of the exhibit numbers to take with me to the marquee! I envisaged a trip to Chichester, but luckily a supermarket at Pulborough had a cartridge on their shelf (but double the price I pay when ordering from an online supplier). Preparing my exhibits also involved a trip to the local allotments at 9:40pm in search of flowers to arrange in a honey jar. I should have taken a torch! Luckily there was an allotment with a few weeds and plenty of borage, and some ivy just coming into flower on the wall. Unfortunately, they all looked a bit limp by the time I got them to the marquee. Flower arranging is not a gift I have been blessed with, and every year I say I'm not going to do it again, and every year I do! But not next year.....

Prior to my night-time trip to the allotments, I was at the apiary at 7pm searching through supers to find a comb to exhibit (I have yet to extract my late crop). There were two colonies I thought would have a suitable frame, and yes you've guessed it, I chose to look at the wrong one first. I then had to visit Tom and Gordon to borrow a case to display it in. But it was worth the effort as I won a third prize in that class. In order to maintain some sanity I decided I didn't have time to make the cake or fudge, despite a special trip to the shops on Saturday to buy the ingredients. I thought I would still have a go after the show, but as yet have been too busy post-show to do it.

On the morning of the show there were a few late or amended entries to deal with and the stewards were kept busy completing the 'tickets' for the changes to exhibitors entries; these enable me to keep track of any last minute adjustments. There was a hic-up in proceedings when I realised I hadn't printed Judy's entry form and consequently had not prepared her exhibit cards and labels! Fortunately I have this process down to a fine art and by the time she had arranged her flowers in a honey jar, I had written all the required entry cards and labels. The level of concentration required when there are several exhibitors making amendments to their entries is quite intense and so I always take five minutes to 'chill' once the judging starts; before I have to start keeping track of the results.

The full show results can be found on *page 10*, with special congratulations to the winners of the Honey Show trophies as follows:

P.N. BURCH CUP - FOR MOST POINTS IN SHOW
AWARDED TO **JUDY KNIGHT**.

GEORGE WAKEFORD BOWL & *BLUE RIBBON* - FOR BEST EXHIBIT
AWARDED TO **JUDY KNIGHT**
(for two jars medium honey)

ROGER PATTERSON NOVICE CUP - FOR THE WINNER OF THE NOVICE CLASS
AWARDED TO **MEL ROBERTSON**.

The trophies will be awarded at the bee supper on 23rd September.

As Honey Show Secretary, a lot of time is devoted to ensuring the show runs as it should, but it takes a team of volunteers to make it a success. My heartfelt thanks go to those who worked hard

and gave freely of their time on a Bank Holiday to help make the show a success; and ensured that everyone had a good day. John Glover once again provided the transport to move the staging and other essential items from the new lockup to the show marquee (and back again!). Graham Elliott helped at every stage; beginning with retrieving what was needed from the store, to setting up with me on Sunday morning; helping on the Monday morning and assisting writing the prize cards; dismantling at the end of the show and helping to get everything back to the lock-up and stored safely until next year.

Steve Boyce acted as an additional steward during the hectic period prior to judging; including staging my exhibits for me. My main stewards for this year's show were Mel Robertson, helping after learning the ropes last year, and Sue Elliott, undertaking this role for the first time. Sue also provided invaluable support during the afternoon by selling the division's honey in the absence of Derek and Liz Ready, who were unable to attend the show this year. Judy Knight offered her help in the afternoon which enabled Sue and me to have a 10 minute break to look at the stalls outside on the green. All helped to clear-up at the end of a very long and hot day spent in the marquee.

Roger organised the observation hive and looked after it during the day. You can't have a honey show without a judge, and David Sandwell once again offered his services with a smile and a wealth of knowledge (and patience).

My thanks to the Wisborough Green Horticultural Society for making us feel welcome and a part of the overall event; and also for providing us with a much needed and absolutely delicious lunch in the pavilion.

There would not be a honey show without exhibits, so a big thank you to all those who entered; and also those members who visited the show during the afternoon; it's great to see you all, especially Tom Weston, who I failed to recognise straightaway (I blame my lack of sleep!).

Caroline

Wisborough Green Honey Show Secretary

Just a thought.....

Did you enter the honey show this year? Would you like to enter some exhibits next year, but are worried you may not have any honey ready in time? The answer is simple....

When exhibiting honey, there is nothing in the rules to say it has to be that year's honey. So if you have honey to bottle from this year, you can save some jars to enter in next year's show. You have a whole twelve months in which to prepare it! Test it now with a refractometer; providing the water content is not too high, the honey will keep perfectly well in the jar and will simply require gently warming a few days prior to the show to ensure it is clear and at it's best.

Not sure what to do? Make a note of who entered exhibits and won prizes this year (details on next page) and ask them for advice.

If you haven't exhibited before, have a go at the next show, it really is good fun!

Looking forward to seeing you at next year's show.

WG HONEY SHOW 2017 – RESULTS

Class No.	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	VHC	HC	C
1 - light	Sue Elliott	Caroline Drewett			Gordon Allan	
2 - medium	Judy Knight	Meriel Bottle	Sally Reay			
4 - crystallised		Judy Knight				
5 - soft set					Meriel Bottle	
6 - novice	Mel Robertson	David Croxson			Peter Thomas	
7 - for sale	Judy Knight	Caroline Drewett	Sally Reay		Peter Thomas	
9 - covered	Gordon Allan	Meriel Bottle	David Croxson	Angus Farquhar	Judy Knight	Sue Elliott
10 - comb			Caroline Drewett			
11 - cut comb	Tom Moore					
12 - wax plain	Sue Elliott		David Croxson			Mike Bunyan
13 - wax decor		Mike Bunyan				
14 - mead dry		John Glover				
15- mead sweet	Judy Knight	John Glover				
16- biscuits	Sue Elliott	Meriel Bottle	Judy Knight			
17 - cake	Judy Knight	Sue Elliott	Mel Robertson	John Glover		
18 - fudge	Sally Reay	Meriel Bottle	Sue Elliott			
19 -wax exhibit	Mike Bunyan					
20 - flowers	Sally Reay	Mike Bunyan	Judy Knight	Mel Roberson		
21- photo	Mike Bunyan	David Croxson				

Exhibitor	No. of entries	No. of points awarded
1. Stephen Boyce	3	
2. John Glover	4	13
3. Mike Bunyan	9	23
4. Mel Robertson	5	13
5. Mo Frampton	4	
6. Angus Farquhar	6	3
7. Sally Reay	10	20
8. Sue Elliott	10	28
9. Meriel Bottle	8	22
10. David Croxson	15	18
11. Gordon Allan	3	8
12. Tom Moore	4	6
13. Alan Pettit	2	
14. Graham Hunt	3	
15. Peter Thomas	6	4
16. Caroline Drewett	7	14
17. Judy Knight	10	39

Congratulations to the following prize winners:

P.N. BURCH CUP – FOR MOST POINTS IN SHOW: **Judy Knight**

GEORGE WAKEFORD BOWL – FOR BEST EXHIBIT: **Judy Knight (for Class 2)**

BLUE RIBBON - FOR BEST EXHIBIT: **Judy Knight (for Class 2)**

ROGER PATTERSON NOVICE CUP – FOR WINNER OF THE NOVICE CLASS: **Mel Robertson**

Entries per class:

Class number	Class description	No. of entries
1	Light x2	5
2	Medium x 2	14
3	Dark x 2	0
4	Naturally Crystallised x 2	3
5	Creamed/soft set x 2	3
6	Novice	7
7	Jars for sale x 3	10
8	For comment x 1 (no points)	8
9	Covered jar liquid x 1	16
10	Comb for extraction	2
11	Cut comb x 2	1
12	Beeswax from plain mould	5
13	Decorative Beeswax mould	1
14	Dry mead	2
15	Sweet mead	2
16	5 Honey Biscuits	6
17	Cake recipe supplied	7
18	Fudge	4
19	Exhibit using Beeswax	1
20	Flowers using jar	6
21	Photo	6
22	Children class	0

Total number of exhibitors: 17

Total number of exhibits entered on the day: 109

Total number of prizes awarded: 47

1st = 14
 2nd = 14
 3rd = 9
 VHC = 3
 HC = 5
 C = 2

Annual Supper

To be held on Saturday 23rd September.

If you haven't already done so, make your booking now.

This year's annual bee supper will be held on Saturday 23rd September in Wisborough Green Village Hall, starting at 7pm.

The cut-off date for booking tickets is 11th September. Please book your tickets with Daisy at wellingtondays@hotmail.co.uk or 07980 280852. Ticket price is £7.50 per person and you can pay on the door.

The Division will provide alcohol and meat/fish - everyone booking tickets to indicate whether they wish to bring a pudding or a salad.

There will be a raffle and hopefully some entertainment during the evening. If you haven't been before it's a lovely evening and a chance to bring partners along if you wish.

Daisy

“Bee Improvement for All”

An all-day event aimed at encouraging all beekeepers to improve their bees.

The purpose is to help all beekeepers to continuously assess their colonies, so they have a good idea of which queens to cull, and which colonies to take queen cells from when they need new queens. There will be tuition on how to raise queens using queen cells that bees often present us with during the summer, as well as some simple “artificial” techniques that may be suitable for the more advanced beekeeper, or those working in groups.

Further details can be found on <http://bibba.com/>

Date: Sun 19th November 2017

Time: 9.00 for 9.30-4.30 approx.

Venue: Rudgwick Village Hall, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, Rudgwick, WSussex. RH12 3JJ.
A map to the venue is available on the BIBBA website.

Cost: £10/head adult. £7/head for under 18, who must be accompanied by a fee paying adult.
Refreshments included, but bring your own lunch.

Bookings and Enquiries to: Daisy, 23 Hayes Lane, Slinfold, Horsham, WSussex. RH13 0SQ.
Tel 01403 790 167 or 07980 280 852

wellingtondays@hotmail.co.uk.

A Booking Form is available to download from the BIBBA website: <https://bibba.com/event/bee-improvement-bifa-day/>

Details of the event are also on the WSBKA website: www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/

Tales From An Out-Apiary

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

The ‘queen issues’ detailed in previous editions of *Tales from an Out-Apiary* have all successfully been resolved; with ‘*Cowslip*’ being the last colony to be sorted out. The original queen had been removed when the colony produced queen cells; but something had gone wrong and after the expected broodless period, all brood was laid as drone. I had not been able to determine if the hive contained a drone-laying queen or a laying worker; and had been waiting for the other two colonies to sort themselves out before doing anything with this one. I promised an update in this edition of the newsletter.

I had inspected the hive on 1st July and then not opened it again until 6th August. On earlier inspections the brood chamber and both supers had all contained drone brood. On this inspection there was only a small amount of brood (all drone) and it was mostly in the supers. There were still a reasonably good number of workers and they were busy foraging. I replaced the crown board temporarily while I worked out a plan of action; the feed holes were open. As I stood there, bees would occasionally pop their heads above the crown board and disappear again. I spotted something out of the corner of my eye - was that a fleeting glimpse of a queen?! I wasn’t quick enough, and the bee in question had disappeared back between the frames. It looked like a queen to me, albeit a small one.

Ask what can be done if a colony has laying workers and the usual response is that the colony is doomed. With suggestions ranging between either destroying the colony, or taking it to a field some distance away so that when the foragers return to the apiary they beg their way into other hives; the idea being that any laying workers will not have been out foraging and, therefore, will not know their way back to the apiary. Uniting is not usually recommended. I decided to unite this colony with the adjacent one (the hive where previously the queen had not laid for nearly 50 days).

I placed ‘*Cowslip*’ to one side, turning the hive so the entrance was now at right-angles to where it had been. I then moved the other colony onto the vacant stand. Returning foragers would go to, and be accepted into, the other colony; reducing the number of bees in the problem hive. I returned to the apiary on 14th August and reduced ‘*Cowslip*’ down to a single super, giving them the best frames with the most stores (by this time all the bees were in the supers and were not utilising the brood chamber). I inspected the other hive to ensure the queen was still present and laying, with a good brood pattern. I left both colonies to settle down.

I returned to the hives two days later on 16th August. I united the two colonies using two sheets of newspaper; with the super containing the bees from ‘*Cowslip*’ placed on top of the other colony, with a queen excluder between. I had no idea if this would be successful; time would tell. The resultant colony would retain the name ‘*Cowslip*’.

I was busy organising the honey show and the weather was ‘intermittent’, so my next inspection of this united colony did not take place until this week; on 2nd September. Success! The queen is still in the brood chamber, the workers are busy foraging, and the super frames have been cleaned up. As I anticipated, there was a pile of dead drones above the queen excluder, having emerged from the super frames. I still don’t know if it was a case of a ‘dud’ queen or a laying worker, either way the problem has been resolved.

My fourth colony ('*Borage*') was inspected on 9th July and frames rotated between the two brood chambers. When at the apiary on 6th August, I noticed a change in activity at the entrance to this hive; the foragers appeared less busy. What was going on? Although I didn't think it would have, there was always the possibility that the colony had swarmed. No spare time that day, an inspection would have to wait. I opened the hive on 10th August; there was no brood, but there appeared to be the same number of bees, plus there were no signs of any queen cells having been raised. I didn't find either the original or a new queen; but the bees were as beautifully behaved as normal. I suspected the lack of any sign of multiple queen cells meant it was a case of supersedure. Unless it was another queen deciding to take a career break! Leave well alone and return at a later date.

I next opened the hive ten days later on 20th August; going straight to the middle frame in the brood chamber, causing as little disturbance as possible. Eggs! Definitely a laying queen. I decided to look at the next frame before closing the hive; and there was a new queen, dark in colour, right in the middle of the frame. I carefully replaced the frame and closed the hive. I was correct in my earlier assumption; they had superseded last year's queen.

Today is 4th September and I have just returned home from my new, second, apiary site. At the beginning of this year I was invited to place a hive in the grounds of a sheltered housing development. I relocated '*Buttercup*' to the new site on Saturday evening. I transferred the bees to a poly nuc prior to the move, as this would be easier to lift than a full hive. The distance between the apiary sites is less than three miles as the bee flies; so I placed some cut lavender across the poly nuc entrance, to encourage the bees to orientate to their new surroundings the next morning. I had planned to transfer them back into a full hive yesterday, but the rain arrived in the morning and stayed all day; so I postponed until today.

In the meantime, I received a text message yesterday morning notifying me that the roof had been blown off the poly nuc (I hadn't bothered to place a brick on top because I didn't think it was going to be windy - lesson number one, always place a brick on top!). I dashed to the site, brick in hand. Luckily there was a fine drizzle and not hard rain; the bees had simply moved down between the frames, and appeared not to be perturbed. I replaced the lid, this time held down with the brick.

The bees were transferred into their full hive at 6pm today. I didn't spot the queen but the fanning at the entrance to the hive told me she had been safely transferred from the poly nuc. It will be interesting to see what the foraging opportunities are at the new site. Will the bees head in the direction of the old site and find the same forage; in particular the water balsam and ivy?

My next job after completing this article is to log-on to *BeeBase* and record the new apiary site. It is important that the Regional Bee Inspector knows where all hives are, should there be an outbreak of a notifiable disease or pest within the area. Have you checked that your records are up to date?

Caroline



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 **October edition** no later than the **25th September**.

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

Caroline