



## WISBOROUGH GREEN BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

A DIVISION OF WEST SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

MAY 2018

Website: [www.wgbka.org.uk](http://www.wgbka.org.uk)

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## DIARY OF EVENTS



### REGULAR APIARY MEETINGS

*Please see scheduled meeting dates on page 3 of this newsletter.*

*If possible please arrive 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 2018

- \* **Brinsbury Country Fayre - 20th May** - Brinsbury Campus, 11am to 4pm.  
<https://chichester.ac.uk/brinsbury-show>
- \* **South Of England Show - 7th, 8th, 9th June** - See page 7  
*The email distributing this newsletter includes poster for this event.*

*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.*

# Andrew Shelley

## An Appreciation

There has recently been an email about the passing of member Andrew Shelley, who gave up beekeeping several years ago. He quietly did a lot for Wisborough Green BKA and I feel that members who didn't know him should be aware of the part he played in our history.

Andrew lived at Cox Green, Rudgwick, where he had a large garden that backed onto farmland, so was ideal for an apiary. When he started keeping bees he was introduced to us by long time Rudgwick member Helen Griffin. Andrew attended meetings regularly, after a time becoming our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, a position he very efficiently held for several years. He was also West Sussex BKA Treasurer for some time. On committee he was a calming influence and a voice of reason.

I always found him to be very pleasant, generous, thoughtful, reliable and helpful and that is how I will remember him. He had some large snowdrops in his garden and I know of several people he passed them on to. When he gave up beekeeping he had 4 stocks, one he gave to a member, the other three he donated to Wisborough Green BKA. At the following auction he saw how much bees and hives had sold for and realised he had probably donated well over £500 worth of bees and equipment to us. After the sale he came up to me with his usual beaming great grin and said something like "I'd have been better off putting them in the sale and giving you a hundred quid!" There is absolutely no way he meant it and I'm sure he was pleased to have helped us when our apiary was at a low point.

Andrew's wife Joanna, predeceased him by several years. On a very hot day I took the dogs, probably Meg and Jess for a long distance walk along the Downs Link bridleway towards Cranleigh. At that time there was a pub, The Thurlow Arms at Baynards, that had tables and chairs out for hikers to rest. I took advantage of these and very soon Andrew appeared, dripping in sweat. He told me that Joanna had a group of ladies she knew from her younger days who lived in different parts of the country, each hosting a walk in their locality every year. Andrew was carrying on in Joanna's memory and was doing a dry run.

Soon after Joanna died Andrew told me that he needed to downsize. He had identified 8 properties in Rudgwick that he liked and he would wait until they came on the market. He never moved.

Andrew asked my advice about a non-beekeeping matter at a meeting. He had an idea for "The Rudgwick Magazine" that others apparently weren't particularly supportive of. He showed me a couple of sheets of paper where he had worked out that by selling advertising he could get the magazine into every house in Rudgwick free of charge. I don't know all the circumstances, but it went ahead and has been very successful. I read it when I get a chance. I have No. 269 in front of me, 44 A5 pages of it, on one there is one line announcing the date of Andrew's funeral. I hope to see more about the contribution that Andrew made in the next issue as he certainly deserves it, but how many people remember the first issue?

I knew that Andrew was a military man and occasionally he would tell a story, usually amusing, but it shows the sort of man he was that it was much later I discovered he was a Major.

***Roger***

## Interested in Bee Health?

The BBKA Examinations Board has introduced a new assessment this year aimed at beekeepers who wish to expand their skills in the area of bee health (the Bee Health Certificate). It covers all aspects of apiary hygiene, foul broods and other brood diseases, adult bee diseases, viruses, pests and statutory requirements.

Like the Basic, no writing is required. The Assessment is taken at the hive – usually at a Divisional apiary (not with your own bees). You will be asked to carry out a full health inspection of a colony, and some other tasks such as a Bailey comb change or a shook swarm. There will also be some question time, and the whole thing should be over in 90 minutes.

It is primarily for those who have already passed their BBKA Basic assessment and have been keeping bees for 3 years or more. However, if you do not meet these criteria, or are interested in learning without taking the assessment, you might be still be interested in studying for this Certificate.

Some of the tasks will be performed at the Division's apiary this season.

The next assessments for which you can apply will be held next year between May and July 2019, so there is plenty of time to do some study. I can give some reading suggestions. As well as the demonstrations at the apiary, I would be happy to host some revision sessions during the winter.

If you are interested, would like a full syllabus or further information, please email me on [petworthgordon@btopenworld.com](mailto:petworthgordon@btopenworld.com).

**Gordon**

## Scheduled Apiary Meetings 2018

Meetings will normally start at 2pm.

May	June	July	August	September
5th	2nd	7th	TBA	TBA
12th	9th	14th		
19th	16th			
26th	23rd			
	30th			

**Please check emails regularly for changes and additions.**

# East Surrey Bees Training Days

Celia and David Rudland are running the following courses.

Both days start at 10am and finish around 4pm and include a ploughman's lunch.

## **Queen Rearing Day Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

Experience a variety of queen rearing methods; for those with some beekeeping experience. An expanded version of the queen rearing delivered at the Spring Convention.

## **Disease Day Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June**

A practical day including demonstrating how to look for disease in a colony and tackling varroa, chalk brood and nosema. We have a licence to handle live frames of notifiable disease and will be looking at these to develop recognition skills.

If you are interested in either course please contact them direct for further information and costs.

[www.eastsurreybees.co.uk](http://www.eastsurreybees.co.uk)

Office 01883 622788

Mobile 07798 915480

## Bee Crawl

Calling all sociable, party animals.

Do you remember Roger telling you that beekeeping should be fun? Well, after the AGM when I asked you to write on the 'ideas' board what you wanted to see or do, the Bee Crawl seemed a popular theme.

Basically, it's a group of beekeepers touring around and visiting about four or five apiaries. It's not a critical look, but a learning experience, where both the visitors and hosts learn.

I'll be trying to recruit an organiser and hosts at the weekly meetings; you have been warned! I can pass on template emails and advice to anyone interested in organising a bee crawl; and anyone keen to host a visit, or participate, is very welcome to come and have a chat. One of the more experienced beekeepers can come along, if you wish, to go through the bees if the hosts would like a little assistance.

It may sound daunting but it's actually a really fun day out; usually rounded off with a barbeque where you can invite partners and families. So come on and get involved in your association; let's have a bit of a social scene as well as the beekeeping. I can act as a focal point for collection of names, and then I'll hand them over to a volunteer organiser to fine-tune the event.

***Maggie Turner***

0775 284 7631

maggie501@btinternet.com

## Patterson In Print



*Nell and friend*

Meetings are now well under way, with every colony spring cleaned. The stronger ones have been supered, some with brood boxes of foundation to provide new combs. We have lost 3 nucs out of 12 and 5 colonies out of 22, all to queen failure, including one nuc that was knocked over, probably by deer, but I think it was queenless anyway. I have lost 3 of my own colonies, all to queen failure. One didn't come into lay, one drone layer and one that disappeared a couple of weeks after one at Dounhurst did. This is much better than some beekeepers have seen, some experienced beekeepers having quite heavy losses. One very good beekeeper I know in Lampeter, Wales, has 40% losses (see Nell in Print). He has a few queen failures, but he is suffering from bee farmers dumping large numbers of colonies headed by imported queens in his area for the summer. Their drones mate with his largely native type queens, making them unsuitable for the harsh climate, so they simply succumb.

The importation of queens is becoming an issue and thankfully there is a movement against them, unfortunately 150+ years too late! The Editor of BBKA News asked me to write an article for the July issue suggesting ways of addressing the need for early queens that is often the reason given for using imports. I suggested that July was too late for some areas and June would be better, so I only had a short time to write the article and find suitable photos. All this while the editor was on holiday! You will read my suggestion of overwintering more colonies or nuclei than you need, obviously including the queens. Some beekeepers have reasonable success with overwintering mini-nucs, but I have never tried that, so as there was a request to see mini-nucs used for mating queens I intend trying it this year. We have several members with small numbers of colonies who have had failed queens, and it would be nice to supply them all. This will involve WGBKA in a small outlay, but how else do you learn? This prompts a quick reminder. If you haven't responded to the email about queen rearing, then please email me [roger-patterson@btconnect.com](mailto:roger-patterson@btconnect.com).

At the meeting on 29th April it was so cold the bees weren't flying, even though there was a field of OSR across Skiff Lane to tempt them. Although we were unable to do the intended demonstration we still had a successful meeting, with a "dry run" on a shook swarm and a lot of questions answered. This raises the point that we may not always be able to do the intended demonstration. Perhaps the weather is unsuitable or we have no colonies in the required condition. It is possible to simulate some conditions, but not all. We will try to email any changes with as much notice as possible, so please check your emails.

As you all know I was unwell for a short time. Thanks for all the messages and help from members. I think I'm fully fit again.

Apart from the odd occasion when other beekeepers have taken over for short spells, I have been the auctioneer at the WSBKA auction for quite a long time. I have been increasingly more concerned about the possibility of me not being available, something that concerned others too, especially when I was ill; so a professional auctioneer was sounded out. We have had two professionals in the past, neither of which was particularly successful, so I am not keen on having another one. You need to know a bit about what you are selling, including its value, use and a bit of history. It is helpful to know buyers, so you can advise them and of course to exchange a bit of banter. WG member Angus Farquhar told me he was willing to help if I wasn't fit. In his working life he has selling experience, so we shared the selling. I think he did really well, so perhaps we have a back-up in case I fall over permanently.

I know I have mentioned it before and as I am organising it will probably be accused of pushing it, but I will repeat the BIBBA conference in Cirencester from the evening of 6th - 9th September. I

I attach a link to the programme. You will see there are three presentations at any one time plus workshops and seminars. "Room 1" is for bee improvement, queen rearing, etc, "Room 2" is for general beekeeping and "Room 3" is for "Beginners and Beyond", so for the beginner who wants to learn more. Workshops include microscopy, pollen identification, anatomy, foul brood recognition, etc. You can attend whichever presentation you wish. I have used up a few favours to get over 30 presenters, many of whom you may have never heard of. I have gone for people who have learnt by observing what happens in a beehive, not recycling what they have read in books. Booking will open soon and I think you will find it as good a programme as you will ever get in one place. You may even recognise a few names! Further details on <https://bibba.com/event/bibba-conference-2018/>

## **Roger**

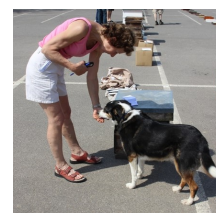
# Nell In Print

After dealing with incompetence I told you about last month, I'm pleased to tell you that Dad has got a new passport. I had a quick look at it and his photograph looks very similar to the old one, certainly not 10 years difference. I suppose some will say he hasn't aged much, but probably most of you will say he has always looked old. I'm not nine years old until July, so I didn't see him 10 years ago, but it might be useful to know which of the two options are correct. If you have a view can you please email our new secretary Tess Clarke [secretary@wgbka.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wgbka.org.uk) and tell her. I like Tess because she gives me biscuits. I like everybody who gives me biscuits.

At meetings this year Dad has asked members not to wear protective clothing when they park their cars. There are several cases of theft beehives elsewhere and he thinks it will telegraph to passing people that we have bees nearby. We are quite isolated.

I have a busy month in front of me where I hope to see lots of beekeepers. I'm going to Lincoln, and then straight across to Wales to help set up an isolated queen mating station on the Sennybridge MoD ranges (the reason is above). I will see my Border collie friend "JJ", who shares his dinner with me. I'm also going to Epping Forest and Norwich where I have been before, then Colchester.

I have mentioned discrimination before and I have another case for you. The "jobsworths" at Brinsbury, where we have the auction, have decided that dogs must be on leads. One lady being rather unpleasant to my friend Daisy. Why is it that an agricultural college don't like dogs when dogs have more to do with agriculture and probably more knowledge of it than the "jobsworths" do? My Dad had several people say they were unhappy about it and quite right too. I think "jobsworths" should be on leads. Here is a photo of me taking a biscuit from Auntie Mel. I like her too!



## **Nell**

# National Bee Unit husbandry survey 2018

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/survey/honeybeehusbandry2018/>

The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and will be of great value to beekeeping now and in the future. National Bee Unit.



# Tales From An Out-Apiary

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

I did not inspect my hives until the second and third weeks of April and am pleased to report that all four colonies survived the winter. From what I have heard I am in the minority, having 0% winter losses. I have been keeping bees for nine years and as yet have never lost a colony during the winter; but this doesn't mean I won't at some point in the future.

Three of the colonies over-wintered with 2017 queens, but the fourth (*Sweet pea*) has a queen from July 2015; the result of an 'immediate supercedure' of a queen removed from a colony that appeared to have raised swarm cells. She will be three years old in July. Will she survive the season? It will be interesting to see what happens. Many beekeepers replace their queens every year 'regardless', and I wonder if we are breeding out any 'longevity' genes. Nature adapts and evolves over time and tends to reach a balance if 'left alone'; unfortunately we humans have a tendency to interfere and we don't always realise the consequences of our meddling until it is too late.

The weather in April continued to be varied; the Met Office records show a 'feel like' temperature in my locality of -3°C at 3pm on 30th April. Consequently the three hives in my main apiary will not get a second inspection until tomorrow, 6th May. The two smaller hives, *Sweet pea* and *Cow-slip*, were checked on 14th April, 21 days ago. They over-wintered with a super below the brood chamber and during the inspection these were removed and the brood chambers placed directly on the floors; the floors were clean with no debris on them at all. On that day, both colonies had brood on two frames, with bees on five and six frames. Both brood nests contained old and fresh stores. I am looking forward to seeing how much they have built-up since then.

The third hive, *Borage*, contains my largest colony and is managed by the '*Hallgate Method*' during the active season (*see my article in the June 2016 newsletter for details of this*). When I opened the hive on 18th April the first thing I spotted was a drone, so I knew the colony was strong. In total there were 14 frames with brood. Throughout the inspection I was keeping an eye out for the unmarked queen, but did not see her. I retrieved two frames I had removed to create room; I picked up the second frame, there were now few flying bees on it, enabling me to see the queen ambling across the middle of the comb! If I had seen her at the beginning I could have completed the entire inspection quicker. I took the opportunity to mark the queen, as with so many bees in the colony it makes it easier to spot her. This colony will be my main honey producer for this year.

I inspected the hive in my second apiary on 11th and 22nd April. At the first inspection there were four frames of brood and bees on eight frames; at the second, the brood had increased to six frames, with bees on eleven. I hope to find them thriving when I inspect tomorrow.



**Caroline**

## Bees & Honey at the South Of England Show 2018

Daisy and Martin will be working at the South of England show and will be happy to take any entries to the honey show if you would like to enter.

*See the poster accompanying this newsletter.*

# 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

**Please email orders in advance** to Tom on [stone.house@btinternet.com](mailto:stone.house@btinternet.com) so that they can be ready for you. Minimal stock will be available "on demand" at meetings so you may be disappointed if you don't order ahead, and you must be prepared to wait until the end of the meeting.

All prices are PER SINGLE ITEM unless stated otherwise and are correct at April 2018 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** £1.05p

**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 **£5.00**

**Hive strap**, orange, 3 metres **£4.00**

## Varroa Treatments:

Available for August treatment, we will have standard treatments; prices to be announced

**Payment** can be made in cash (easiest for us), or by cheque.

Please make cheques payable to **WSBKA Wisborough Green Division.**

## COST OF 11 FRAMES + FOUNDATION (nails extra)

BROOD - £18.15

SUPER - £13.75

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 **June edition** no later than the **25th May**.

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

**Caroline**