



WISBOROUGH GREEN BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

A DIVISION OF WEST SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2018

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DIARY OF EVENTS



SCHEDULED APIARY MEETINGS WILL RESUME IN THE SPRING

Ad-hoc meetings will be advised by email.

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

- * **Demonstration: 'Making good use of your beeswax' - 9th, 10th, 11th February**
See November newsletter for full details.
- * **West Sussex Convention - Saturday 24th February**
- * **WG Beekeepers AGM - Tuesday 13th March North Hall Loxwood - 7.30pm**

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.

WSBKA Annual Convention

24th February 2018

Final Reminder & Chance to Book

Venue: *The Lodge Hill Centre* near Pulborough

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we have a renowned group of speakers and an impressive mix of lectures and seminars with something for everyone.

Please note there are speaker amendments to the seminar programme. David and Celia Rudland will each run a seminar in place of Jean Mozley. They are well known to us in West Sussex and excellent speakers. The updated details are available on the WSBKA website.

A simple lunch will be included and there will be many opportunities to catch up with fellow beekeepers from around the county. As always, *Paynes Southdown Bee Farms* will bring a range of equipment and books to the convention for you to purchase.

Special bonus for Beginner Beekeepers! In conjunction with *Paynes*, we are pleased to offer a £10 *Paynes* voucher to the first 10 beekeepers from WSBKA who book a place at the convention in 2018; and who have attended a beginners' training course at any division of the WSBKA during 2017. It is a special opportunity to make a beekeeping purchase with a high discount! Qualifying members will have received a separate email notification.

See last month's newsletter or the West Sussex Beekeepers' Association website for booking form.

Patterson In Print



Nell and friend

The weather can be very variable at this time of year. On Saturday 27th January I gave a "Bee Improvement for All" day in Somerset. In the morning I woke up at a farm B&B near Weston-super-Mare to see snow on the nearby hills. On the following day I arrived home in Slinfold at about mid-day to be greeted by a carpet of crocus with the temperature at 15°C on my car thermometer. Crocus is a good source of pollen in the early part of the year, returning bees with large pellets giving beekeepers an indication that the queen is laying. For those interested in photography bees on crocus make a good subject. Bees always seem to be excited when working them, probably because of the copious amount of pollen they can quickly collect.

The 120 acre farm I stayed on belongs to North Somerset Council, the tenants having a 12 months rolling contract. They have just lost 20 acres to make way for a road; the rest is earmarked for over 700 houses. Looking at the flat fields there is a lot of history. There are drainage ditches and clear evidence of ridge and furrow ploughing. I haven't the benefit of seeing written records, but it looks as if in a few hundred years, what was probably marsh was turned into productive farmland to produce food and a livelihood for many families; became a farm to provide income for a much smaller number of people; soon to be homes for several hundred families whose income will come from some distance away.

This change of use has meant different forage for bees; with marshland only providing very little, then pasture, hedges and trees probably increasing forage considerably; soon to be replaced by many gardens with a different forage pattern. Much as I dislike seeing mass development, it is likely there will be far more forage for bees in that area than there was 500+ years ago.

I am probably accused of being repetitive when I say there are a lot of myths and false logic in beekeeping, but I regularly come across beekeepers who tell me what they have read or been told. At one recent event I had two such cases. One lady told me that someone she named, who is a holder of the National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB), had told her that if you go to a colony and they give off the smell of pear drops to leave them alone because they will be bad tempered. I have heard and read this from several other sources and I have no idea where it originated. I have kept bees for nearly 55 years and handled far more colonies than the average beekeeper. I think I have a keen sense of smell, but I have never experienced it. At the same event I stated that if a colony is in the right condition and the weather is favourable bees will swarm leaving queen cells of all types, i.e. swarm, supersedure and emergency. During question time a man asked me if I was sure of my facts, because he had read in a Welsh Beekeepers Association booklet that bees won't swarm on emergency cells unless the colony is in the swarming mood. All I could do is to state what I have experienced and suggested that he took a few queens away from colonies during the summer to see what happened.

I will stick to my guns and suggest challenging what you read or are told, as that man did with me. Experiment yourself if you can, rather than simply accepting what you are told. Very often you will find the "standard" information may not always be correct, as I often have.

On Monday 22nd January I visited the Dounhurst apiary to check on the hives. One of the poly nucs that had a brick on top was tipped over. At first I thought an animal, probably a deer, had used it as a scratching post, so knocking it over. I looked on the ground for footprints, but found nothing and there was no animal hair on the nuc. It had been soon after a windy spell, so I came to the conclusion it was blown over by the wind. This is the first time I have seen this happen, so keep an eye on polyhives and weigh or tie them down.

Roger.

WGBK AGM

The official notification and all necessary documentation for the Annual General Meeting will be included with the March newsletter.

Nell In Print

Thank you to those who made nice comments and sent emails after my last NiP. I even had one from a 19 year old cat called Fred. He seemed to think cats are above dogs; they usually are, especially when they have been chased up trees.

If you have left a feedhole open to allow ventilation, you can close it up about the middle of the month. Look at entrances to see if the bees are flying with vigour and purpose. If they are bringing in large pollen pellets the queen is probably laying, but if they aren't bringing in any or the pellets are small there may be a problem with the queen.

On a warm day it will be O.K. to give a quick inspection if you think there may be a problem. If you take the crown board off and the bees don't roar, they probably have a queen; if they have a prolonged roar they may be queenless. Smoke the bees down to see if there is any sealed food; if there is plenty, then close up and leave them alone. If you are in any doubt take a few frames out from outside the brood nest. If there is plenty of food then close up. Have a look at the cappings; if they are a lightish colour the stores may be granulated, if darker, they may be liquid. Uncap a few cells, so you learn what to look for.

If you have open mesh floors you can put the tray in for a day or so. Remove it gently and look at the rows of debris with a magnifying glass. Much of this will be cappings. You should be able to tell the difference between stores and brood cappings. The number of lines with brood cappings will tell you how many seams the bees have brood on. If you do this every couple of weeks you should see the colony expanding.

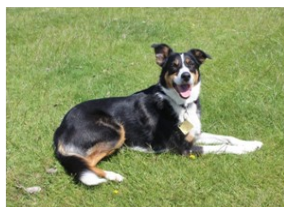
All the videos of the lectures at the National Honey Show are online now.

See <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lecture-videos.php>.

If you look closely you will see a picture of me, and I wasn't allowed to go!

Dad will be speaking for a whole weekend in Scotland in March. The round trip is over 1,000 miles, so he decided to fly, hire a car and find a B&B. He has been caught out before when local pubs don't sell food on Sunday, so he checked online and one local pub kitchen hours are "Monday -Thursday 10am-9pm Friday - Sunday 10am-9pm". Someone has a sense of humour! I have never been to Scotland so I'm disappointed not to be going.

A slight bit of fun for you at my Dad's expense. He bought a packet of dried pasta. When he got home he looked at the label. It was made in Latvia!



I hope to see you all at one of Jim Ryan's wax days. Jim has asked Dad to get lots of different ingredients, so it looks like you will be in for a real treat. Don't forget to bring your lunch - and a spare sandwich!

Nell.

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 **March edition** no later than the **25th February**.

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

Caroline