



WISBOROUGH GREEN BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

A DIVISION OF WEST SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

MAY 2017

Website: www.wgbka.org.uk

Officers and Contact Information:

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DIARY OF EVENTS



APIARY MEETING EVERY SATURDAY (unless notified as cancelled)

First scheduled Wednesday meeting 3rd May. See page 2 for meeting dates and details.

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

Brinsbury Country Fayre - 21st May See the WG bees on display!

Full details on the College website <https://chichester.ac.uk/brinsbury-show>

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.*

May	June	July	August	September
6th	3rd	1st	5th	2nd
13th	10th	8th	12th	
20th	17th	15th	19th *	
27th	24th	22nd	26th	
		29th		

*19th August: Extracting.

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

May	June	July	
3rd	14th	5th	<i>Please remember to sign-in when attending meetings.</i>
24th		26th	

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

May

- 6th** *All:* Shook swarm.
Group: The BBKA Basic Assessment.
- 13th** *All:* Queen problems - Identification and remedy.
- 20th** *Group:* Clipping and marking.

June

- 3rd** *All:* Colony increase.
- 10th** *All:* The colony post OSR.
Group: The BBKA Assessment system explained.
- 17th** *All:* Observing the colony.

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.

WGBKA Library

Did you know that the WGBKA has its own library?

It is kept at the apiary during the active season and is available at each meeting.

Any member can borrow a book (or books), all we ask is that they are returned once read (in the same condition as when you borrowed them please).

A full list of the books available accompanies the email distributing this newsletter.

How do you borrow a book?

1. Select a book from the box (making sure all other books are placed back in the box).
2. There is a record sheet to record borrowings. Please ensure the book is signed out by you, recording the date it is borrowed.
3. Once you have read the book, please ensure it is signed back-in by Sue (or another committee member in Sue's absence) on return.



Happy reading!

Apiary Teas

Tea will be served at apiary meetings **only** if we have enough volunteers. **We are short of volunteers and so will be unable to provide tea at all meetings.** If you want to see this facility continue please send an email to Jeremy offering to take a turn at the apiary teas.

Jeremy.Windwood@Tesco.Net .

May	Volunteer name(s)	July	Volunteer name(s)
Sat 6th	Meriel	Sat 1st	-
Sat 13th	Neil Beer / Jeremy	Sat 8th	-
Sat 20th	Geoff Wadge	Sat 15th	-
Sat 27th	Mike Ollis	Sat 22nd	-
		Sat 29th	-
June		August	
Sat 3rd	Chris Edwards	Sat 5th	-
Sat 10th	David Croxon	Sat 12th	-
Sat 17th	-	Sat 19th	-
Sat 24th	-	Sat 26th	-
		September	
		Sat 2nd	-

As you can see from this list, there are lots of meeting dates when there will not be any tea. If members do not come forward, you can still stop for a chat but you will need to bring your own flask of tea, a cup and biscuit.!



Endangered species !

Patterson In Print



Nell and friend

Richard Gibby sent round an email about a situation we had at Dounhurst. I have had several comments from members saying they found it helpful, even though they weren't in the group. I happened to mention it to Sharon Blake, BBKA News Editor and in a slightly modified form it will appear nationally soon. It does highlight the value of coming to meetings where more experienced beekeepers can pass on information that won't be found in books.

The April newsletter was a marathon effort of 16 pages, which is probably the largest issue I can remember. It reminds me of how the newsletter has changed since the first one I received in June 1963, which was a single side of duplicated foolscap. Our Assistant Secretary at the time was Allan Dugdale, who was the biology teacher at the Weald School at Billingshurst that was responsible for introducing me to beekeeping. George Wakeford was the WG Secretary, but he was far too busy to write the newsletter, so Allan did it, attributing it to George. It was typed and duplicated in the office at the Weald School.

Several members have taken on the job of editing and producing the newsletter, all putting their own stamp on it. Yes, that does include me for a time and I well remember turning the handle of the "Emgee" duplicator once a month. Those of a certain age will no doubt know what "trees" are and half a dozen sheets of paper going through at once!

The nature of newsletters has changed, but is still a very important part of a BKA, as they inform the members about what has happened, what is planned and can provide advice and information. If you rummage around the Internet you may find some newsletters with real gems of information.

The electronic age has made production much easier, so instead of retyping what someone has scribbled on the back of something else, misreading it, then applying correction fluid to the stencil, we can now simply copy and paste what someone else has written - even dogs have been known to make contributions! The presentation can be enhanced by the addition of photo's, maps, etc.

We have a monthly newsletter, which I think is right for us. I can't remember an issue being missed, or if so, it won't be more than a handful, meaning I have received approaching 650 WG newsletters. There are many BKAs who have a quarterly one, some none at all, so I guess they find other ways of contacting members.

One complaint that has been heard on many occasions is the lack of copy. I have checked back and the first "Patterson in Print" appeared in January 2005, because the then newsletter editor had no contributions and I said I would do something to fill up a page. Tell me when you have had enough!

I tend to get a lot of emails, usually 50⁺ every day, often over 100. Many of them are bee related, some not and some partly, such as this one:-

"Topic: Advice on Bumblebees Potentially Nesting but I Need to Remove Rats From Garden

I would be grateful if you could please provide me with your thoughts and advice on the following.

I have been clearing out our shed and discovered that we have rat(s) who have moved in over winter. I have therefore completely emptied the shed and garden of anything that they can hide under / any potential food sources / water etc.

I was about to move the shed itself to check for any rat runs underneath it, when I saw a bumblebee flying in and out of the shed (where there is a hole the rats have been using) and underneath it. I realise therefore that there may be a bumblebee nest underneath it. However, I wondered if it might be a queen bee looking for a place to nest? Do you think that the queen bee would have already nested by now or is it the start of the nesting season for bumblebees?

I am trying to work out if we can still move the shed - I want to remove all attractive areas for rats as soon as possible and this is particularly important to me because I have a toddler and other young toddlers who visit and use the garden. Also, my house is also brick and part wood (cheap 1960's build) and therefore potentially easy for a rat to enter if I don't get them out the garden soon. However, I don't want to disturb any bumblebees, especially as they usually nest in our garden.

Any thoughts would be very welcome please. Thank you."

With an email, it's not always obvious where someone lives, so I asked. The answer was "Aylesby, near Grimsby"!

This gave me the thought that if our members received this email, what would their response be? Perhaps you can send it to Caroline for inclusion in the June newsletter. Let's see if we can beat the 16 pages of the April issue!

Roger

Bee Improvement and Queen Rearing

As keepers of stock, I think it's important that we have bees that are "good doers" that will survive with minimal medication, supplements, etc. Bees should be docile, productive and suit the environment. That is what I have tried to achieve throughout my time in beekeeping, but in order to do this we sometimes have to replace queens. Raising queens from our better colonies is a simple way of producing replacements that can either be done by individual beekeepers or in a group.

Queen rearing need not be difficult; in many cases the bees are doing it for us. Every year at Dounhurst we raise queens, either for use in the apiary, or for distribution to members. It is another interesting aspect of the craft.

If you would like to be involved, either to have queens for yourself or simply for the experience, then please email me at:

roger-patterson@btconnect.com



Photograph courtesy of LASI

2017 AGM Report

The annual AGM was held on 14th March 2017.

Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting had been previously circulated and they were passed and signed by the President.

Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2016 had been previously circulated and a Financial Statement, prepared by the Treasurer, was readout at the meeting. The treasurer thanked Tom Moore and Gordon Allan for their efforts in the processing, bottling, labelling and assistance in selling of the Associations honey. The Vice Chairman's Report had also been circulated and all present at the meeting were in favour adopting both reports.

This was followed by the election of Officers. The present holders were prepared to stand for re-election; and **Graham Elliott** was voted as the new Chairman, with **Gordon Allan** taking the position of Vice Chairman; following a 12 month period without a nominated Chairman.

All other members were prepared to stand for re-election, with the exception of Anne Dennig and Tom Weston who had decided to stand down. There were no new nominees for committee members. The following members were re-elected to the committee:

Martin Hill
Maggie Turner
Caroline Drewett
Jerry Windwood
Richard Gibby
Roger Patterson

Stephen Boyce had agreed to continue to act as auditor of the annual accounts and all present were in favour.

As detailed in the April edition of the Newsletter, Judy Knight was presented with the George Wakeford bowl for Best in Show at last year's Honey Show; and Eric Slade was presented with the BBKA Certificate for 70 years of beekeeping.

WGBKA Executive Committee

BBKA Membership Cards

The British Beekeepers' Association
BBKA - supporting bees and beekeepers

Name: John Smith

Membership No: 12.3.45

Class: Registered member

Signature: *John Smith*

Not Transferable

The June edition of BBKA News will include our BBKA annual membership cards. It is so easy to throw them away not realising what they are.

Please make sure you sign yours and keep it safe.

Tales From An Out-Apiary

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

When I wrote April's article I had inspected three of my colonies for the first time during the final week of March; but there was one I had not checked. *'Buttercup'* had been queenless at the end of last season; and had been united with the small nuc from Cowdray Golf Club on 15th November. They had been given a supply of fondant during the winter and this had been replenished as required.

As I had hoped, Sunday 2nd April was warm enough to undertake hive inspections and I set off to the apiary to have a look at *'Buttercup'*. The queen was seen, well attended by workers, and there was brood in all stages across five frames; they'd even raised a few drones. They had come through the winter well; a good start. There were some fresh stores and plenty of pollen. Interestingly, they had completely cleaned the natural comb that Tom & Gordon had tied into frames, and were only using the comb drawn from foundation. I wanted to replace the old combs and removed six frames, adding frames of foundation in their place; the foundation was left over from last year. I placed a feeder above the crown board as they would need syrup in order to draw the combs.

I opened the hive again six days later, on 8th April. They had been taking the syrup and were drawing two of the combs. Once again I saw the queen ambling across the comb; she is not yet marked, a task for another day. I moved a couple of frames to centralise the brood nest and moved an old comb towards the edge; hoping to replace it at a later date.

The next opportunity to open the hive was on Monday 24th April. They had emptied the feeder of the last of the syrup; they have had four litres in total. The queen was being elusive and I could not see her but there were eggs and the brood was across nine frames, so they are building up nicely. They are still drawing two frames of foundation. What a mess they are making of the job! In places they are drawing the foundation as we like to see it; in others they are building natural comb out from the foundation; they can walk between the new comb and the foundation, which is possibly where the queen was hiding. Obviously they are not keen on last year's foundation. When the weather settles I will assess the state of the combs, but I will leave them alone for the time being. The bees were foraging well, with plenty of pollen and fresh nectar coming in. I added a super of drawn comb so the extra space is there if they need it.

On the weekend of 8th and 9th April I also inspected my other three colonies. All were expanding nicely; the single brood boxes had brood across nine frames. *'Sweet pea'* had two supers; the others three each. On 16th April I nipped into the apiary and added a third super under the crown board of *'Sweet pea'*.

As is so typical of springtime, the weather during April was changeable, with chilly winds, and no two days the same. All the warm 'beekeeping' hours seemed to be when I was working, typical! I was helping at the auction all day on Saturday 22nd; when Roger left at approximately 6pm he said "you can go and check your bees now Caroline"; if only.....!

I managed to check *'Sweet pea'* on the 24th, but my visit to the out apiary wasn't long enough to inspect the remaining two hives. Despite several beekeepers telling me stories of swarm cells in their colonies, this colony was showing no sign of building any; 16 days since the last inspection. I have no doubts that they will enter 'swarm mode' soon, and weekly inspections will be required

in order to prevent losing a swarm.

The afternoon of 29th April was spent at Dounhurst, helping Gordon run a Nosema testing session. I finally got to my own apiary at 6pm. The earlier sunshine had been replaced by cloud, the temperature had dropped and most of the foraging bees had returned to the hives. Ordinarily I would not have opened a hive at that time of day until the warm balmy days of summer, but ‘*Cowslip*’ hadn’t been inspected since the 8th and so it had to be done.

The first thing I spotted when removing the queen excluder was a queen cell. I had a poly nuc by my side and so I made the immediate decision that as soon as I saw the queen I would put that frame into the poly nuc, to keep her safe; I took the opportunity to mark her (now that my previously non-working marking pen has started working again). There was brood in all stages across 10 frames; I was working quickly and am not confident enough to say whether or not the egg laying rate had reduced. There were a total of three queen cells, on three frames, near the centre of the brood nest; each cell was at the top of the frame. All were unsealed and I estimated them to be the same age; classic supersedure cells. The bees were not impressed at being disturbed on a chilly evening and I decided not to shake the frames, as I was sure there were no other cells.

A colony shouldn’t swarm on a supersedure cell, but sometimes they do (they like to keep us beekeepers on our toes). The weather forecast for the following two days was cool, with intermittent rain. You won’t find my next course of action in a book, but I have done it before with success. I put a second brood box above the queen excluder, with another queen excluder between that box and the supers; I placed the frame with the queen together with another frame of stores and brood into this second chamber, and added a spare frame of drawn comb; replacing the two frames from the original brood box with two frames of foundation. This holds the queen in the hive and discourages the bees from raising emergency queen cells; which they would most certainly do if the queen was unexpectedly removed.

Today is the first day of May. The forecast on the 29th was correct as there have been plenty of showers during yesterday and today; not good beekeeping weather. Yesterday I took the opportunity of a wet couple of hours to stand in the shed making-up frames; without the foundation, as this will be added at the time the frames are needed (keeping the foundation in its plastic wrapping will hopefully keep it fresh for longer). The forecast for tomorrow is much better with warmer air temperatures, despite a NNE wind. My plan is to get to the apiary at lunchtime, between jobs, to inspect ‘*Borage*’. This is the hive on a double brood system with three supers, and is a strong colony; it needs to be checked when most of the foragers are away from the hive, otherwise there are just too many bees. I usually undertake weekly inspections as my queens are not clipped, but this one is unintentionally overdue; last checked on 9th April. I will go prepared for all eventualities!

We are now at a point in the season when things can move very quickly and before you know it the bees can raise swarm cells, catching the unprepared beekeeper on the hop. Both swarm prevention and swarm control (there is a difference) require regular inspections of colonies if a swarm is to be avoided. Time and vigilance are required during inspections as it is easy to miss something, especially if you are in a rush. Beekeepers who have clipped queens shouldn’t be complacent; clipping a queen is a safety net in case the beekeeper’s swarm control plan goes wrong, it doesn’t mean they don’t need to understand the swarming process and have a plan in the first place.

As soon as the warm weather takes hold it will be ‘all systems go’ in the world of beekeeping. Make sure you’re ready for the busy time ahead. And remember - unlike beekeepers, bees don’t read books.



Caroline

See page 10 for a last minute update.....

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

Foundation Price Increase

Early stocks of foundation in the apiary shop have been sold and on re-ordering I found that there has been a 10% price rise. We are still a lot cheaper than some of the main suppliers and you have no carriage to pay.

Please note the amended prices on the Apiary Sales page as follows:-

Brood wax increased from 95p to £1.05p

Wired super increased from 60p to 65p

Cut comb super increased from 40p to 45p



Tom

Sandra Gray has been appointed as the new Regional Bee Inspector for the South East region. To contact Sandra e-mail: sandra.gray@apha.gsi.gov.uk or telephone: 07775 119430.

Diane Steele is now the Seasonal Bee Inspector for the region.
E-mail: diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk or telephone: 07775 119452 .

Storage Facilities Required

Storage of the division's extracting equipment

The equipment used for extracting the honey crop from Dounhurst is stored at a location away from the apiary, as there is no suitable storage onsite.

A member of the committee has been storing the equipment on our behalf, but can no longer spare the space. We urgently need to find an alternative location as the equipment cannot go back to its current location at the end of the next extraction day. The storage space needed is estimated at 8 - 9 cubic metres.

If you have storage at home that you feel you can offer to the committee; or if you know of rentable storage in a suitable location (and at a reasonable rate); then please contact Sue in the first instance. secretary@wgbka.org.uk

WGBKA Executive Committee

How To Book The Division's Extractor.

The Division's extractor and associated equipment is available for loan. If you wish to 'book' anything, please contact John Glover by E-mail at glover.flethingshollow@gmail.com.

Equipment available:

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

To avoid disappointment, please book well ahead of your requirements. Equipment will be loaned for a maximum duration of 3 days at any one time, and must be collected and returned to John's home address in Loxwood, unless otherwise agreed.

Tales From An Out-Apiary 2

A brief update, 2nd May.

At two o'clock this afternoon I inspected 'Borage', 23 days since the last inspection. I took with me a spare floor, brood box and brood frames, just in case I needed to undertake an artificial swarm; they are still in my car. The bees are showing no signs of swarming, with not even a queen cup in sight.

There were 11 frames of brood in the bottom brood chamber; five of these were swapped with frames from the top brood chamber (which is above a queen excluder) to create laying capacity within the brood nest. As usual, the queen was seen slowly ambling her way across a frame.

Caroline

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*)

*Revised foundation prices!
May 2017*

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 **June edition** no later than the **26th May**.

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

Caroline