

Roger Patterson.

Beekeeping Presentations list 2021(D).

The title of this list has changed from "lectures" to "presentations". I have been uneasy about the word "lecture" for some time. I have looked at the dictionary definition and I am even more uneasy! I don't consider that I lecture to anybody, I simply pass on the practical knowledge I have gleaned by keeping and observing honey bees since 1963, where I have listened to and watched bees and beekeepers. If for publicity purposes organisers wish to call my presentations "lectures", then I don't mind at all.

I try to help beekeepers keep their bees better and encourage them to enjoy their hobby. Some of the methods I use have come from older long-time beekeepers, or been developed/modified by me, but they are simple and they work. Many won't be taught by modern teachers or found in books. For that reason, I'm sometimes seen as "controversial", but I'm not controversial at all, I just tell beekeepers what bees have told me for well over half a century, not what I have read in books. Many organisers find my subjects fit in well with the scientific topics of other speakers, especially for a conference or convention. That gives attendees the chance of hearing from a beekeeper who has actually seen and done things, as well as researchers with the latest information.

Many of my titles can be presented as webinars.

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email:- roger-patterson@btconnect.com **Telephones:-** 01403 790 637 or 07976 306 492, preferably the former. No texts please - they won't get read! You may need to leave a message, as I am often out of signal range or away from home. I am rather nomadic and very busy, so I may not respond immediately. If you don't get a reply within a few days, then please chase me. Email is favourite, as I don't correspond by letter due to lack of time.

Titles of indoor presentations

Title 1. "Improve Your Bees and Beekeeping – Simply"

Some simple suggestions for beekeepers of all abilities, that may help to improve managing and handling techniques and the characteristics of the bees they keep. The intention is to encourage beekeepers to look at what they are doing, in the hope they can make changes, which should increase their own enjoyment and possibly avoid others being stung.

Title 2. "Let's Keep Beekeeping Simple"

Beekeeping isn't complicated, but some beekeepers seem to make it appear so. Some of the colony management techniques often advised will tell you that. This presentation encourages beekeepers to manage their bees in a simple way using the minimum of equipment. There are some suggestions for modifying existing equipment or making simple items.

Title 3. "New Queens – Using Simple Methods"

Our bees often give us opportunities to improve the quality of our stock, without the need for a queen rearing programme, or specialist queen rearing equipment. This presentation encourages beekeepers to use these opportunities, but also gives advice on overcoming some of the pitfalls. There are two versions of this talk, one lasting about 40 – 45 minutes and the other 1hr, but with more detail.

Title 4. "The Patterson Unit" formerly called "A New Approach"

This simple system evolved following several years of problems with queens (see Title 5), where I had to interfere with other colonies, often honey producers, to remedy a problem. It is really only a modification of what I was already doing, but is a different way of managing an apiary, treating it as a whole, not as several individual colonies.

It uses small groups of colonies in "units" for honey production, with "support" colonies to help them. It is suitable for all beekeepers, however many colonies they have. Examples are given of some ways of dealing with common situations we all face in a season, such as comb changes and replacing queens. This is a very flexible system that has far more benefits than was originally intended. It uses no specialist equipment, but keeps honey producing colonies productive.

Title 5. "What is Going Wrong With Our Queens?" (Formerly "Queen Problems")

An overview of the current queen problems that are detailed on <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/queenperformanceproblems.html> with some suggested ways of dealing with them.

Despite denial by some "experts", many beekeepers worldwide are experiencing unexplained queen failures, queens "disappearing" and the supersedure of young queens during the summer. The latter could mean that colonies may swarm on supersedure cells. If not dealt with problems can be terminal for the colony. These problems have only recently appeared at a high level, since about the turn of the century. Newer beekeepers regularly see problems and don't understand they aren't natural.

There has been little research done and the best the beekeeper can do is recognise the symptoms and manage their bees accordingly. This presentation is regularly updated and gives examples of real cases.

Title 6. "Where are Bees Kept?"

This presentation takes a look at different apiaries, mainly at home with a few abroad. It gives advice on siting hives and comments on the various issues raised. The content is changed regularly.

Title 7. "Bees and Honey"

A well illustrated presentation mainly for non beekeepers on honey and honey bees. There is also a description of similar insects that are often confused with honey bees. Honey bees are the only bees that store honey, which is their main attraction to humans, but their main value is as pollinators, where they can be managed by beekeepers taking them to crops to increase seed set.

Honey bees are popularly stated to be in decline, but this is often fuelled by the media. They have more problems than in the past, but with careful management these can be kept to a minimum.

***Title 8. "Basic Beekeeping"**

This is aimed at beginners and potential beekeepers. It is in four parts, each 1¼ hours long, that can either be delivered in four sessions or a whole day. It largely follows the BBKA Basic syllabus and covers everything that a beginner or non beekeeper needs to know in order to start beekeeping. It has been used at the annual Wisborough Green BKA Introduction to Beekeeping day since 2006. This is a way of giving information to potential beekeepers in one day instead of several evenings.

Title 9. "Making Colony Increase"

There are many ways to increase the number of colonies you operate. This presentation explores several of them, many not seen in books, and includes ways of providing queens to head them.

Title 10. "My Simple Approach to Bee Improvement"

The vast majority of beekeepers only have a small number of colonies, so it is not easy for them to compare their bees with others. Many get very confused by bee improvement, so consequently do nothing, which may result in them keeping poor stock. "My Simple Approach to Bee Improvement" gives ideas on how to judge a colony of bees and some simple ways of improving them, so they are better equipped to survive our conditions.

***Title 11. "All Day Study"**

These are all day events at three different levels. The interactive approach finds out how much attendees already know. Any gaps are filled in and this gives the attendees a chance to study areas they need to work on. Questions will be asked but there will be no embarrassment caused. If someone doesn't know the answer or I feel there is more to discuss I ask the next person. The minimum number of attendees should be about 6 and maximum 12-15. This works well and makes it a good learning day for everyone. Feedback is always good with lots of positive comments. This often works well as a winter midweek event.

Group 1. From raw beginners up to about BBKA Basic level.

Group 2. This was originally intended as a revision day for the BBKA Basic where the syllabus is largely followed. The assessment is discussed, although the day is suitable for those who do not wish to take the "Basic". Although the content stays the same, the level varies depending on the knowledge of the attendees and it can go way above the needs of the "Basic".

Group 3. This is for more advanced beekeepers and may include some topics raised in Groups 1 and 2, although to a greater depth. There are often some surprises as there are methods that people have worked out for themselves, but haven't told anyone else about.

Title 12. "Twelve Month Beekeeping"

This was prepared when I was asked to lecture on “Seasonal Management” (previous title) at FIBKA Summer School at Gormanston in 2011. A colony of bees has to survive all year, not just during the active season. Beekeepers need to think about how they are going to manage their colonies, so need to plan in advance. This talk covers many of the things I do during the year and explains the reasons why.

Title 13. “I’ve Got My Bees - Now What?”

Many new beekeepers are immediately confronted with problems soon after acquiring bees. The level of support for new beekeepers varies a lot, depending on the resources available locally. There are suggestions of what to be aware of and what to study in the early stages of beekeeping.

I was asked to do a workshop on this title for the 2015 National Honey Show, so there is a longer version that lasts about 2 hours, which could be useful for helping to develop beginners.

Note: **Title 56. “I’ve got my bees (or about to). Now what?”** covers similar topics, but is also aimed at those who don’t have bees yet or have only just got them.

***Title 14. “Bee Improvement is Easy”**

In my opinion bee improvement is an area that is overlooked by all but the more serious beekeeper. The vast majority of beekeepers only keep a few colonies and are constantly told they can’t improve their bees – so they don’t bother. I see many colonies that could be improved and bad temper is often a major issue. Sadly, some turn to imported queens that are often reasonably pure, but in my experience, it is these that often cause aggression when bred from. I often hear that good tempered bees have turned bad tempered when imports have been introduced into the area.

There are several presentations to suit different situations, varying from 1 hour to 1 day. It can include several methods of obtaining queen cells and mating of queens. Colony assessment and selection are covered.

Title 15. “Honey Bees and Energy Lines” (formerly called “Honey Bees and Ley Lines”)

I have changed the title of this talk slightly, substituting "energy" for "ley". They are straight lines of energy in the ground that are in a random pattern.

Since being made aware of them in 2009, my observations suggest they may be influential in the behaviour of honey bees. I believe they may be using them to help with navigation, select a place to cluster when swarming and to choose their own nest site.

This presentation has developed as I have made more observations and includes other topics including animals, with a version that I have for non-beekeepers. There is a demonstration on trying to find energy lines in the venue. I have only been beaten once!

I have had several very enthusiastic lecture secretaries who have wanted to book it, but they have been discouraged by the sceptics, hence the title change. What a pity there are so many closed minds in beekeeping? Read more here <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/leylines.html>

Title 16. "Swarming and Swarm Management"

The understanding of all aspects of swarming is an important part of colony management. This presentation covers much of what the beekeeper needs to know about the swarming colony, how to try to prevent it, as well as hiving and maintaining a swarm. There are many methods of dealing with a colony that is preparing to swarm, but only simple methods are used here.

Title 17. "A Little Bit of Swiss Beekeeping"

In 2012 I attended and lectured at the SICAMM conference in Switzerland, then stayed on for a few days and visited local beekeepers. This presentation tells you a little about what I saw of Swiss beekeeping in the German speaking area. Many of the colonies are kept in bee-houses and topics include some of their beekeeping methods and training.

Title 18. "Simple Mead Making"

With a few pounds of honey, something to ferment it in and equipment that is found in every kitchen, good mead can easily be made. This presentation lasting about 45 minutes will not be complicated and will help those who would like to try making this delightful drink.

I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I don't give samples. I have had too much good mead poured down the drain! One person even put a spoonful of sugar in what I considered to be a good medium sweet mead!

Title 19. "Colony Increase and Swarm Management"

This is an all-day programme suitable for all beekeepers who have a reasonable knowledge of the workings of a colony. Much of the information needed for both subjects is the same and there are many similarities.

Many beginners aren't sure how to increase from their first colony, or how to manage a colony that is preparing to swarm. They are often confused by the many methods available. There are just two simple methods of swarm control described and a few methods of colony increase. This programme includes lots of information that isn't found in books.

Title 20. "Setting up and Running a Teaching Apiary"

A teaching apiary is an important part of a BKA teaching programme. Beekeepers of all abilities can be taught handling and management techniques and theory can be put into practice. There are many other benefits too.

This presentation is 2-2½ hours long, but can be shortened or extended depending on requirements. It can be delivered to one BKA where the points raised can be discussed to suit the local situation.

It is based on the successful Wisborough Green BKA apiary that has been in existence since the mid 1960s, but includes other examples. The aim is for the BKA to have the facilities they want and this will vary depending on a number of things. Some of the usual problems and solutions are discussed.

Title 21. "Dave Cushman – A Man and His Website"

Dave Cushman was in poor health in the last few years of his life and unable to work, so he spent much of his time building and maintaining what is considered to be the world's most comprehensive beekeeping website. It is so good that it is accessed by beekeepers of all abilities throughout the world, apparently scientists too. Dave left it to me in his will and I continue to enhance and maintain it in the same way that he did.

This presentation was prepared in response to a request to deliver it as the Dave Cushman Memorial Lecture at FIBKAs summer school at Gormanston in 2014.

Title 22. "Honey Bees in the Wild – What Can we Learn From Them?"

This presentation was prepared for the BIBBA/SICAMM conference in Llangollen in Sept 2014. I had previously written a page for Dave Cushman's website <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/natbeenest.html> based on my experiences of removing several hundred wild colonies from trees and buildings, many of them pre-varroa. In doing so I have learnt a lot about how bees live and behave naturally. The information gathered has convinced me that perhaps we should rethink some of our "standard" management methods, as bees often don't do what we are told they do and we may be working against them.

Title 23. "Observation: Interpret what you see"

Lateral thinking and observation are two of the most valuable assets a beekeeper can possess. There are many things an observant beekeeper will spot during a colony inspection that others will miss. This ability does come with experience, but the key is to know what is normal, so you can spot something different. A colony of bees is telling you something all the time. The best teachers of beekeeping have 6 legs and 4 wings, not two legs and no wings. Good beekeepers are able to interpret what the bees are telling them and what may happen in 2, 5 or 10 days time. This presentation shows some things that may not be taught or seen in books or videos.

Title 24. "Beekeeping - can we make it pay?"

This popular wide ranging presentation looks at a number of ways in which beekeepers may be able to reduce the costs of their hobby and perhaps produce a surplus. Suggestions given are based on experience that has been gleaned from over 50 years of beekeeping with up to 130 colonies. There are tips for those who wish to expand their hobby into a semi-commercial operation, with suggestions to make savings in time and expense as well as using simple and efficient management techniques.

Title 25. "Understanding Queen Rearing Methods"

"Queen Rearing" lectures often confuse beekeepers, so they don't rear their own queens because they think it is complicated. "Understanding Queen Rearing Methods" will explain what the beekeeper is trying to achieve when using one of the "artificial" methods of queen rearing. All we are doing is to help the bees produce queen cells in a controlled way, that makes it easier for the beekeeper to manage. The presentation will be given in a step-by-step manner that is easy to understand, in the hope that it encourages beekeepers to produce their own queens.

Title 26. "A look at Native and Near-Native Honey Bees"

For a long time, native bees (*Apis mellifera mellifera* - *Amm*) have had bad publicity, often perpetuated by beekeepers simply repeating what they read and hear, not from their own experience. Native bees evolved to suit our climate and although they are not available to many beekeepers in a pure form, their characteristics can fairly easily be encouraged in the mongrels that most beekeepers have.

Title 27. "Dead Bees Don't Buzz - Surviving the Winter"

This talk could have simply been called "Wintering", but so many speakers have that title, often just giving the impression that wintering is something you don't think about until the autumn. Bees are preparing well before winter and this title encourages beekeepers to do the same, but from a position of understanding how a wild colony does it. Before varroa, bees survived the winters very well. They had to, as the survival of the species depended on minimal winter losses.

In managed colonies winter losses are much higher than they should be. Why is that? Are beekeepers doing something wrong? What can we do to lessen the chances of losses? Should we try to reduce losses? Are losses a good thing? These are all questions that successful beekeepers should be asking themselves.

There are many things beekeepers can do to help the colony survive into spring, some are mentioned in this thought provoking presentation.

Title 28. "Beekeeping Competence" (Title may change in the future but content will stay the same)

What is a competent beekeeper? You know what happens when you ask a certain number of beekeepers a questionwell, if that was about beekeeping competence it would probably result in the same thing.

This presentation will not be available until at least the spring of 2019. Please check first.

Title 29. "An Hour (or more!) With Roger Patterson" (Title to suit the organiser)

This is almost the opposite of a presentation! I take questions or points from the audience and expand from that. If they are sound and don't harm bees, I respect methods that other beekeepers use. Although I may ask questions to find out why they use a method, or perhaps to think through what they are doing a bit more. I try to avoid discrediting anybody.

These events I find very enjoyable, as I get the audience to participate. It is a good way of giving an audience the information they want, not what I decide they are going to have! If I'm asked a question I don't know the answer to, I will say so, I don't fudge anything. Topics can be anything of a practical nature where I give my thoughts openly. Questions rarely dry up and I'm quite good at expanding on what has already been discussed. I can talk about bees for weeks if needed!

I do not need a screen and there is no PowerPoint! I usually bring a few bits and pieces to help discussion, but if the organisers or audience wish to bring items, they are welcome to do so.

Title 30. "The Coming Season - Are You Prepared?"

A winter presentation, probably only suitable for presenting between early November - End of March. Many beekeepers switch off as soon as they bed their bees down for the winter, then put their feet up, only to panic in the spring.

There is a lot to think about. What went wrong last year? How can we overcome the problems and improve next year? What can you study so you understand your bees better, so make fewer mistakes? What other management techniques can you use? Can you make your bees more productive and healthy? Can you enjoy your beekeeping more?

This presentation is packed with suggestions for improving your bees and your beekeeping.

Title 31. "What Would You Do?"

This could best be described as "An Interactive Learning Scenario", that came about as an idea for an evening at my local BKA.

On a screen I put a situation that has happened to me and may happen to any beekeeper. Some information is given that is also on paper. The audience is split into groups who discuss how they would tackle it. When ready, each group states what they would do, then there is a general discussion on that topic. Groups of 4-6 works well, preferably with mixed ability and knowledge.

It is surprising how many good ideas come from these sessions, very often from quite inexperienced beekeepers. The time taken can vary considerably depending on the number of groups, but discussion can often be had on other relevant topics.

Title 32. "My 50+ Years of Beekeeping"

In over half a century of beekeeping there have been many changes in the craft and associated subjects. I cover a wide variety of topics including how I came into beekeeping, the changes in beekeepers - their attitudes, expectations and methods, the public perception of beekeeping, equipment, legislation, communication and some of the things I have been involved in.

Title 33. "Honey Bees - Their Value and Threats"

This presentation is aimed at both beekeepers and non-beekeepers and I have presented it to mixed audiences. It covers identification of honey bees and other insects that may be confused with them, the workings of a colony, hive products and uses, pollination, pests and diseases, etc.

Title 34. "Why Don't Bees Read The Books?"

We often hear the well worn comment that "bees don't read the books", but is that because they do and realise books are often wrong, so don't take any notice? Beekeeping is riddled with myths that are simply copied and pasted from elsewhere, often by inexperienced beekeepers, then bees get the blame for not doing what bees don't often do anyway!

In over 50 years of beekeeping I have observed a lot of colonies. I have also done some simple experiments. I have become appalled at some of the "information" and advice that is regularly peddled, which often misleads beekeepers, beginners especially. This presentation should encourage beekeepers to observe their bees, interpret what they see and understand their bees more. Perhaps they will realise why bees don't read books.

I hope this presentation will be completed during the 2016/17 winter. Please check before booking.

Title 35. "Improving the bees we already have"

There is renewed interest, especially among newer beekeepers, to keep bees that are healthy, productive and suit the environment. Our native bee *Apis mellifera mellifera* evolved to suit our conditions, but due to importations many beekeepers have mongrels, which are often variable. This presentation encourages beekeepers to assess their colonies and select for characteristics that suit their area, with a view to producing a more stable population. Using very simple techniques it is possible for beekeepers to improve bees that are already in the area, by raising their own queens rather than bringing in stock from outside.

Title 36. "The Journey to Sustainability"

Ever since honey bees were commercially imported into the U.K. in the mid 19th century the kind of bees that are favoured has been one of the most argued topics in beekeeping. Opinions vary for a variety of reasons, often eagerly offered by beekeepers without much consideration given to conditions outside their own locality, which can often be very different only a short distance away.

The different sub-species evolved with characteristics to suit the environment they inhabited, with variations to suit local conditions. This is not always understood when a beekeeper buys a queen that came from outside their area, resulting in many colonies that are not best suited to the region they have been brought into, often needing excessive intervention just to keep them alive, let alone thrive and prosper.

This presentation will highlight some of the problems that beekeepers continually face. Routes will be suggested that should develop local bee populations to be sustainable long term without continued dependence on large scale importation.

To make progress we need to embrace all beekeepers, as we all need to take responsibility, not sit back and leave it to others. This needs education, understanding, tolerance and co-operation.

This rather hard hitting presentation was first given to the "*Sustainable Beekeeping: A future without Imports*" conference at the Eden Project in February 2018, where I think I must have said what a lot would like to say, to the point where I got a standing ovation!

Title 37. "Keep Control of Your Colony Numbers"

Many beekeepers don't seem to have much control over the number of colonies they have, especially if their swarm prevention and control techniques are a little suspect. There is an excuse for beginners, but not those who have kept bees for more than a year or two. The usual reason for the number of colonies going out of control is because existing colonies swarm and there is no plan to deal with them, apart from buying more kit and filling more boxes with bees. This often means weak and unproductive colonies that may not have the required amount of care, resulting in heavy losses.

This presentation encourages beekeepers to decide how many colonies they want and gives ideas on how to manage their apiary to maintain those numbers. It will give some simple ways of colony increase and reduction and indicate the knowledge required to do so.

This presentation was new for the 2018 BIBBA Conference in Cirencester.

Title 38. "Small Scale Queen Rearing"

I have heard many "Queen Rearing" lectures where the presentation is about three levels higher than the vast majority of beekeepers are able to understand or need. The vast majority of amateur beekeepers have 5 colonies or less that I reckon is about 75% of them, so what is the point of describing methods that will produce hundreds of queens? All it does is convince the ordinary beekeeper that queen rearing is complicated and not for them, so they don't bother and buy a queen, which may be unsuitable for their location.

This presentation will satisfy the beekeeper who wants perhaps 1-20 queens a year, yet the methods described will still suit those who may want more. There is little or no specialist equipment needed, all being part of the kit that most beekeepers have or can improvise. The use of natural queen cells will be described, together with some simple "artificial" methods. It will also take advantage of some common situations that beekeepers regularly face, such as a queenless colony or one with a failing queen.

If we are rearing queens they should come from good stock, so some simple selection techniques will be discussed. There is little point in raising physiologically good queens from poor stock.

Title 39. "Why Did My Bees Die?"

The death of bees, either individually or as a colony isn't always investigated by beekeepers, even though the signs are often obvious. The loss of a colony is rarely seen as a loss of individual bees, though that is what it is.

This presentation will not be available until at least the spring of 2019. Please check first.

Title 40. "Sound and Simple Beekeeping"

This is a new presentation for the 2019 National Honey Show Beginners Programme to help and encourage newer beekeepers to look beyond the often rigid "standard" teaching, so they can understand and manage their bees efficiently and with care based on knowledge they have gleaned themselves.

Rather than simply doing what they are told or what the book says, attendees will be encouraged to learn the "basics" so they have enough information to understand their bees and to challenge what they are told, as often advice is given without the person offering it knowing much about the location, bees or methods used. Observation, lateral thinking and common sense are important skills needed to be a successful beekeeper. Knowing what is normal in a colony will allow you to spot a possible problem, so you can deal with it at an early stage.

This presentation has several hints and tips that should encourage you to develop your management system to suit your bees and your own situation. It should also provide guidance for more experienced beekeepers.

Title 41. "Sustainable Bees and Queens for Everyone"

The use of imported bees and queens is widely discouraged for several reasons, including the possibility of introducing pests and diseases, unsuitability to our climate and aggression in subsequent generations. It is BBKA policy to discourage importation.

There is reluctance by some beekeepers and BKAs to produce their own bees and queens, often resorting to buying imports. This talk will show that by using simple well tried techniques and little or no extra equipment it is easy to produce bees and queens from local stocks at the same time as producing honey. Beekeepers can make increase or replace winter losses and BKAs can produce bees and queens to satisfy demand from beginners. Please see **Title 54. “Free Bees and Queens for Everyone and Plenty of Them”** below for an adapted version.

Title 42. “Challenge what you are told.....”

In beekeeping, there are a lot of people who are keen to give advice, whether it is verbally or the written word in the form of books, leaflets, newsletters or the computer screen. There are a lot of myths and misinformation, often “cut and pasted” from other sources, which may simply be copying someone else’s mistake, who copied someone else’s mistake and so on. The same thing is then seen in different places and because it’s in print it’s believed to be correct, but is it? Inexperienced beekeepers may have difficulty separating the wheat from the chaff, but the more experienced a beekeeper gets, the more they realise that some of what they have been told, sometimes quite forcibly, may be unreliable and have alternatives. This presentation highlights a few topics that may not always be as we are told. It doesn’t rubbish the “standard information”, but gives experiences that have been acquired during over half a century of practical beekeeping. There is a lot more in my book “Beekeeping: Challenge what you are told”.

Title 43. “Some management techniques we all need”

To manage bees with care and efficiency every beekeeper needs to develop their own system. Initially they will probably closely copy their tutor. When they have gained more knowledge and experience they will probably modify their system to suit their own circumstances. In beekeeping, there are often many ways of achieving the same thing. They may all work, but in different circumstances. The important thing is to bring ideas together to make your system work well for you and your bees.

Good beekeepers understand bees, have open minds and are capable of lateral thinking. This allows them to assess what they have been told and shown or have thought about themselves, so they can decide if the possible changes will be an improvement or not.

This presentation will discuss some simple management techniques that we all need to perform at various times. They have been learnt from watching bees and beekeepers for over half a century. They may not be found in books and may not fit your system, but with a little tweaking, they may be suitable. This is how we learn and develop our own management systems to help improve our standard of beekeeping.

Title 44. “A little bit of Canadian Beekeeping”

In September 2019 I attended the Apimondia Congress that was held in Montreal. I also had the opportunity to visit two Canadian commercial beekeepers. This presentation will show a little of Apimondia and some of the short visits to the two very different beekeeping operations.

Title 45. “Keep Your Swarms to Yourself”

This will help the beekeeper to understand what is happening in a colony when it is preparing to swarm, so they can understand what the various swarm control methods are trying to achieve. Triggers for swarming will be discussed, including some that are often overlooked. A simple method of swarm control will be described that doesn’t result in extra colonies, as many swarm control methods do.

Title 46. “Queen Cells. Their Recognition and Uses”

Beekeepers often decide what type of queen cells they have in their colonies by where they are placed on the comb, because that is what they are taught or read in books. This can be very unreliable, often resulting in the wrong action being taken, often leaving the colony hopelessly queenless. There will be some clear guidance on what to look for, so they can manage colonies accordingly. There will be tips on how to use queen cells.

Title 47. "Simple Colony Increase"

Beginners are often told to have more than one colony, but aren't always taught how to do it. If you have a queenright colony, there is no need to buy another colony, as there are many opportunities and methods to make increase. This presentation is aimed at the beekeeper who is in their early years. It includes simple and well tried methods of making increase, together with information that will help attendees to understand and overcome possible problems.

Title 48. "The 2 frame nuc"

Using this simple method, I have made hundreds of nucs since the mid 1970's. It is not well known because many beekeepers dismiss it as being too small, although in recent years more beekeepers are using it successfully, since I started to publicise it. It is economical on bees, being one frame of food and one of brood, yet it can be built up into a full colony to over-winter. This method of increase is so simple and versatile that it can be understood and used by experienced and inexperienced beekeepers alike.

Title 49. "Colony Increase: The Roger Patterson Method" (Formerly "Colony Increase for the Established Beekeeper")

Established and larger scale beekeepers often need a constant supply of nucs, so they may use different techniques than the beekeeper with only a few colonies. Included in this presentation is a method, where in good conditions 10 or more colonies that are strong enough to go into winter can be made from one strong colony that came out of last winter. It can also be used by local BKAs to provide nucs for beginners. It is very versatile and can also be modified to provide fewer nucs if required. This is accompanied by my book of the same title.

Title 50. "Some Important techniques"

There are many colony management techniques that all beekeepers need to perform regularly. Many are usually described in "textbook" manner, a sort of "beekeeping by numbers", but often there is no explanation of what we are trying to achieve, or what the response of the colony is likely to be. Although this selection is aimed at beginners, the presentation may be suitable for more experienced beekeepers too.

Title 51. "Beekeeping. What's it all about?"

This is a 1 hour presentation that gives the absolute basic information to help potential beekeepers decide if they should go further. Topics covered will include: - Time needed, costs, suitable site, sound information sources, etc. This presentation should help avoid people starting beekeeping with no knowledge of the commitment required, as happens on a regular basis.

Title 52. "Where we are, how we got here and how we can move on....."

As with other things in life, beekeeping has changed. The modern beekeeper has access to "information" and bees that may not be appropriate to their region, where beekeepers in the past used bees that survived best in their district and managed them to suit.

Many beekeepers think that all bees are the same, but they aren't, with some considerable differences, often with the same advice freely given, irrespective of the type of bee or the conditions. A colony of bees is telling

you something all the time, the skill comes in interpreting what they are trying to say, which of course comes from observation and experience.

Many beekeepers judge their bees by the size of the honey crop, but is that always advisable? There are several reasons why a colony may produce more or less honey than another colony in the same apiary. We should also take into account the time taken on inspections and the amount of feeding required.

A colony of free - living bees is subject to the forces of natural selection, which is often masked by beekeepers who, as a matter of course, over – feed, insulate and medicate their bees, just to keep them alive. Close observation of free - living colonies has shown me they are often quite different from many managed colonies. The reasons for this will be discussed with a view to encouraging the keeping of bees with similar characteristics. What suits nature should suit us.

Title 53. “Some Fresh Ideas for Teaching and Learning”

This presentation is not intended to tell teachers and BKAs what to do, it is to help them include significant information in their teaching and courses. Much of beekeeping teaching and advice, especially to beginners, is based on management methods that are more suited to exotic bees than those that do well in our climate. This is for a variety of reasons that are well documented elsewhere, aggravated by the “cut and paste” mentality, where methods that are used in Florida or California can quickly be accessed online, even though they may not work well elsewhere.

Under discussion will be some of the myths and misinformation that have crept into beekeeping in recent years that have become part of mainstream teaching. BKAs are now the main source of teaching at a local level, with no effective appraisal of the skill and knowledge levels of those doing the teaching. I believe that BKAs should be better supported in their teaching role, so they can provide good sound teaching.

Title 54. “Free Bees and Queens for Everyone and Plenty of Them”

This presentation is based on **Title 41. “Sustainable Bees and Queens for Everyone”** and retains some slides. It was adapted for the National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP). Please enquire about content before booking.

Many beekeepers and beekeeping associations buy bees and queens because they feel it is difficult to produce their own. Once you have a colony of bees, there is no need to ever buy bees again, as it is very easy to produce more, with opportunities often presented to cover the needs of small scale beekeepers during the summer. For larger scale beekeepers or BKAs, a little planning is needed, but rapid increase can be made. Queens can also be produced quite easily.

This webinar explores some possible options and benefits of producing bees and queens locally, which if done by BKAs will provide great opportunities to teach their members, as well as perhaps being an income stream. There is the added benefit of producing stock that is known to be survivors in the locality.

Title 55. “Colony Increase for All Beekeepers”

There are elements of other presentations used here. It briefly explains methods from simple increase for smaller beekeepers through to methods to suit larger beekeepers.

Title 56. “I’ve got my bees (or about to). Now what?”

Many new beekeepers are immediately confronted with problems, or what they may think are problems, soon after acquiring their bees. The level of support for new beekeepers varies a lot, depending on the resources available and the quality of them. Raw beginners often have masses of questions, but are the answers always reliable? Just because someone has kept bees longer than you, or has a flashy website, doesn't mean they know more, but how do you know that? If you know enough to make good judgement, then you know enough not to have asked in the first place. This presentation addresses some of the issues that new beekeepers have, with some ideas on what to learn in your early stages.

Note: **Title 13. “I’ve Got My Bees - Now What?”** is similar, but assumes listeners already have bees.

Title 57. “Learn the Basics”

The learning of a few factual things will go a long way to helping you solve many of the common issues that you will experience. You may then be able to solve problems yourself, or at least have a little knowledge, so you can understand what the advice you are given is trying to achieve.

Title 58. “My Second Colony”

Beekeepers are often advised to have a second colony quite quickly, to help the first if there is a problem. This is sound advice, but where do you get a second colony if you don't have the knowledge to make one yourself? The usual answer is to buy one, but this may be headed by an imported queen that may have problems that are well known and documented. This presentation shows some simple ways of acquiring a second colony and how to care for it, that will provide a good learning opportunity for the new beekeeper.

Title 59. “Some Simple Things You May Not Have Been Told”

Some modern teaching is done by rather inexperienced people, who teach “mainstream thinking” from books or training material, rather than from their own experience. That may leave a lot of gaps that the new beekeeper has to fill themselves. This presentation discusses some of these that will help the beekeeper in their early years.

Title 60. “Some Things I Need to Be Aware of”

In beekeeping there are a lot of things that are stumbled upon as beekeepers progress in the craft, that more experienced beekeepers are aware of and assume that everyone knows. It covers a wide list of topics.

Title 61. “Swarming and What Swarm Prevention and Control Methods are Trying to Achieve”

Many beekeepers panic when they see queen cells, probably because they don't understand what is happening in a colony when it is preparing to swarm, or when it has. Some blindly follow “the book” on what to do, without understanding what the selected method is trying to achieve. This presentation will discuss a little about the history of some swarm control theories and the process in a colony, but relevant to some of the more common methods of swarm control.

Title 62. “Keeping a Colony Alive”

Colony losses occur during both summer and winter and at a higher rate than they should. A loss of a colony isn't just something to be easily accepted, but a queen that could be good, a colony of bees, probably considerable stores and next years crop. It is annoying for an experienced beekeeper, probably more so for a beginner, who may not know the reason. Many losses are the fault of the beekeeper, although some will deny it. This presentation covers the major colony losses and gives advice on how they may be reduced.

Title 63. “The Next step”

There are many beekeepers who, when they have finished their first year, are left to learn themselves. If there is no tuition locally, they often stay at the same level or seek help from sources that may be inappropriate, often taking advice from the screen. Without guidance, it is often in the second and subsequent years, when beekeepers get into trouble.

This presentation has been arranged to help that very important group with a few suggestions on how they can move to the next level.

Title 64. “Bee Improvement. How I did it”

Following a spell out of active beekeeping for family and business reasons, on my return I soon discovered the bees in my area had degenerated from gentle bees that suited my district to yellowish stingy mongrels that were very unpleasant to handle. This was caused by a local beekeeper who imported queens from Australia and New Zealand and selling them cheaply.

Rather than requeening from outside stock, I raised queens from the better colonies to replace the queens in the poorer colonies. I have basically used the same simple techniques ever since. This presentation is the story of what I have achieved.

Title 65. “BKAs – How they can help improve the nations bees”

Beekeeping Associations are important parts of the beekeeping community, although they probably don't always realise how they can influence the standards of bees and beekeepers in their own catchment areas. Much of beekeeping teaching is performed by local BKAs, both theoretical and practical. The former can be done by courses, the latter by practical demonstrations in teaching apiaries. What is taught and how it is taught can make a great difference to the knowledge and skills of beekeepers locally. Teaching apiaries are great for showing members how good bees can be, with the opportunity of helping members to produce their own bees and queens.

Title 66. “Bee Improvement in a Group – Some Ideas”

Bee Improvement Groups are easy to set up and run, but there may be many different circumstances. Are they one or more individuals? Are they part of a BKA? Are they formally constituted? Are they simply an adhoc group of interested beekeepers? Do they have sufficient knowledge within, or do they need help? Do they have a site, or use an existing one? Is there local opposition? These and other questions will be addressed in this

presentation that will be aimed at all beekeepers, whatever their level of expertise. In a group situation, even the least experienced beekeepers can play a part, as well as learn a lot from others.

Title 67. "Colony Assessment and Selection for all Beekeepers"

Beekeepers are often advised by speakers and books to have a long list of characteristics they should consider when selecting colonies from which to rear queens. This is usually far too long for all but the serious breeder, so understandably gets ignored. Others will tell you to raise queens from your "best" colony, without indicating what that might be. It is then taken to mean the one that produces the most honey, but that might not be the best to breed from.

This presentation will cover a few simple criteria that should suit both bees and beekeeper. They are within the capabilities of all beekeepers, however many colonies they have. Some well tried and tested colony selection techniques will also be discussed.

Title 68. "The teaching apiary: A brilliant resource"

A well organised teaching apiary is probably the greatest teaching resource a BKA can have. It can be used to invite non-beekeepers as a sort of open event, so they can see what is involved in the craft. For beekeepers, it can be used for teaching all levels, right from new beekeepers to the most experienced, with all the usual techniques demonstrated. If the apiary is stocked with good local bees it will show members how good bees can be, perhaps with a queen rearing element. This presentation is based on one successful teaching apiary and information gleaned from many others. It is a "must see" for all! It is also the title of another of my books.

Other presentations - workshops and demonstrations

On behalf of the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) <http://www.bibba.com/> I am one of several beekeepers who give workshops and presentations on bee improvement topics.

Even though we don't realise it we are all bee breeders, because every time we keep or cull one queen cell over another we have made a decision based on selection. The obvious example is artificial swarming.

These events are intended to encourage beekeepers to be more positive in improving bees, either on their own or in a group situation using simple selection criteria. This could be at home, in a dedicated queen breeding group or as an extension of the local teaching apiary where queens can be bred for members.

Currently there are "Bee Improvement For All" days and 1 and 2 day courses "Improve Your Bees by Raising Your Own Queens". Please ask for further details.

Colony handling demonstrations

I am a practical rather than a scientific beekeeper and am happy to do handling demonstrations. This is one area I feel many beekeepers are weak in. Very often bees get the blame for bad temper when it can be poor handling that is the problem.

General

All my presentations are practical, as I believe most beekeepers want to know how to keep their bees better. There is no “padding”, and all indoor presentations will last an hour or more if needed, but are designed to be stopped at any point. They are all of a suitable standard for conventions, but will also suit local BKA meetings.

Some titles may slightly overlap others and for that reason I am happy to advise on what to book if more than one presentation is required. I am happy to fit in with other presenters in order to help event organisers produce a balanced programme. Providing I have the required knowledge and material, I am prepared to speak on other subjects, but I may need time to prepare the presentation, which is how my titles have evolved. I do not speak about something I have little knowledge of and I do not have one presentation and a dozen titles!

Having organised events myself, I am aware how embarrassing it is to use a presenter you have not heard before, only to be let down by poor performance or presentation. For those who have never heard me speak I am able to give references if needed.

I have lectured or demonstrated in many parts, including Scotland, Orkney, Isle of Man, Wales, Channel Islands and Ireland. I have been a regular presenter at FIBKA Summer Course at Gormanston. I have lectured at SICAMM conferences in Scotland, Switzerland, Holland and Finland. In 2016 and 2017 I presented several lectures and 2 day bee improvement workshops in the Hudson Valley, NY state of U.S. Apart from my own BKA, I give many presentations a year to others: since 2013 this has been to over 60 each year, many of them all day events. This was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, when some were replaced by webinars.

Most of my presentations are fully illustrated and on PowerPoint, mainly with my own photographs. I have my own laptop and projector, but would rather they were supplied. If these are provided, please let me know and I will only bring a memory stick. I currently use PowerPoint 2003. I have a small sample programme that can be emailed to check compatibility. I will always need a screen or suitable white wall.

As an alternative, I offer most of the PowerPoint presentations as webinars. Please ask me if this interests you.

I don't charge a fee, but expenses of £0.25/mile travelling + £40 per 1 hour presentation except those marked *. This helps to offset the cost of buying and replacing equipment. For an evening event I would appreciate an evening meal or directions to a fish and chip shop, I don't mind. If accommodation is required I am happy to stay with a beekeeper and I am not fussy where. I could easily do a presentation on the various places I have stayed in!

My dogs, Nell and Rosie (see below) usually come with me, but are no problem. They are very friendly, attention seeking border collies. Nell is the older and is probably the best known dog in beekeeping. Providing there is shade, they will stay in the car if dogs aren't allowed in the venue.

About Roger Patterson (Please use for publicity)

Roger started keeping bees in 1963, soon after the hard 1962/3 winter, and at one stage kept 130 colonies for about 15 years. He is a practical beekeeper, concentrating on the basics and keeping things simple. He has

always been heavily involved with his local and county BKA's and manages the local BKA apiary where there are usually 30-40 colonies for instruction, which has reached as many as 68. He has been a demonstrator there since the early 1970's and believes beekeeping should be fun.

For business reasons Roger had a break of about 15 years without bees of his own, but kept involved with his local BKA as a demonstrator. On his return he noticed problems with queen performance, the main ones being early supersedure of young queens, early failure of young queens and queens "disappearing" during the summer. He has highlighted these and written on the subject in the bee press.

Roger is a regular contributor to "BBKA News", "Bee Improvement and Conservation" and "An Beachaire" magazines, as well as an occasional contributor to others.

He is BIBBA President, past BBKA Trustee, retiring after serving a full term of 8 years in January 2016, BDI Vice President, Chairman and Life Vice President of West Sussex BKA and Life President and Apiary Manager of Wisborough Green BKA. In 2016 he was appointed the Lecture Convenor of the National Honey Show and in 2018 the Programme Secretary of the Central Association of Beekeepers.

Roger his own honey recipe website www.honeyrecipes.org.uk.

In 2011 Dave Cushman bequeathed his website <http://www.dave-cushman.net> to Roger, who will continue to maintain it as probably the world's most comprehensive and respected beekeeping website.

Roger Patterson is the author of: -

"Beekeeping: A Practical Guide", which is aimed at non beekeepers and beginners, although beekeepers of much longer standing say they get a lot from it.

**"Colony Increase: The Roger Patterson Method"* that is a simple system that incorporates several techniques that can be used on their own by small-scale beekeepers, or as a whole system that can rapidly increase the number of colonies to suit BKAs and commercial beekeepers.

**"The Teaching Apiary: A brilliant resource"* describes many of the things that can be done in a teaching apiary to help improve knowledge and skills of beekeepers. It is suitable for all beekeepers, including demonstrators, apiary managers and BKA officials.

**"Beekeeping: Challenge what you are told"* encourages beekeepers to do just that. We have all heard things that bees are supposed to do, but when they don't, we blame the bees, rather than question the information or advice that may be unreliable or inappropriate.

**"Queen Rearing Made Easy: The Punched Cell Method"* This is an old, but little used method of raising queens that is suitable for the small to medium scale beekeeper.

The four marked * were all published in 2021.

Photography and recording presentations

There is a general feeling that the continuous photographing of the screen during presentations annoys many attendees. This topic raises other issues too.

It should be remembered that material is the intellectual property of the presenter if they have written or designed it themselves. I am happy to negotiate with event organisers about photography and recording. I do not normally allow attendees to do so, unless they ask permission.



Left: Nell having a fuss made of her by Maggie during a demonstration

Below: Rosie looking thoughtful

