

# West Wilts BKA News

News, the planned activities and some advice for members of West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association



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This is your 'go to' section that will describe the things that you need to know about (because it is the stuff that spends your money)!

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The 'fun bits': news and reports.

## Spring is here!

Last month was "the apiary is here" and this month is "Spring is here". Along with the change in the weather, the colours appearing and the bees becoming active we have a change in emphasis in this edition of the Newsletter. Previous editions have had the 'Need to Know' section (page 2) ram-packed with news about the apiary move, and Charitable Status and some really serious stuff needing decisions. This month, however, is somewhat different...I even thought of disposing of the 'Need to Know' because we didn't have anything that serious, but I have filled it with club things for you...so it is closer to a 'Should really know' section this month.

We have had a very productive April; the apiary was opened for business on 2<sup>nd</sup> April and used for real on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. There is a report in the Good to Know section (page 3). There is a reminder for the Royal Bath and West, some news on a pollinator corridor in this area that you can help with and World Bee Day to look forward to.



# Diary of events

## May 2022

WWBKA Lecture – 10<sup>th</sup> May (Tuesday), 7.30 pm by Zoom. Opening a Hive – Why, When and How by Enid Brown

World Bee Day – 20<sup>th</sup> May; everywhere!

## June 2022

Royal Bath and West Show – 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> June; nr Shepton Mallet

## September 2022

Wilts BKA Honey Bee Health Day – 3<sup>rd</sup> September (Location to Be Confirmed)

West Wilts BKA Honey Show - 10<sup>th</sup> September 2022; Bratton Jubilee Hall

## October 2022

Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day – 8<sup>th</sup> October (Saturday); Corn Exchange, Devizes

National Honey Show – 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> October; Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher

## November 2022

West Wilts BKA Annual General Meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> November; Bratton Jubilee Hall

# Need to know

## Lectures

We have two lectures in the pipeline over the coming months (a link will be sent to members):

### **10<sup>th</sup> May: Opening a Hive – Why, When and How by Enid Brown**

Enid is a Scottish Beekeeper Association (SBA) and BBKA Honey Judge, she is a Judges Referee at National Honey Show and a Director of World Beekeeping Awards (Apimondia). Enid has been keeping bees now for 27 years, following in the footsteps of her father and grandfather. She runs about 40 colonies, all of which are in Smith hives. She is President of the two Fife Associations, Fife Beekeepers' Association and also Dunfermline and West Fife Beekeepers' Association and she is the SBA Publicity and Shows Officer, which involves organising the Honey Tent at The Royal Highland Show and running The SBA National Honey Show.

### **June (date to be confirmed): A Comparison Between Beekeeping Practice in U.K. and Africa - Bees Abroad.**

# Good to know

## Royal Bath and West Show 2022

The Royal Bath and West show is on again this year over the Jubilee weekend. Please visit <https://www.bathandwest.com/bees-honey-competition-for-more-details>.

It doesn't matter whether you are a new beekeeper or an 'old hand' you are likely to find the Bees and Honey tent a fascinating place. There is usually a range of exhibition hives, some really great entries (remember it is one of the regional shows that is only one step down from the National Honey Show) as well as some of the most experienced beekeepers in the country to ask advice.

But the Royal Bath and West isn't all about bees. It is one of the premier agricultural shows in the Country and a great celebration of Great British entertainment, food, drink and the countryside, so have a look at <https://www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show> to plan your visit.

## Branch Bees at work

No Branch-bees aren't a new strain of bees, but the bees at the branch apiary!

Anyway, after the Grand Opening on 2<sup>nd</sup> April there was a plan to use the Apiary for people who had attended the Introduction to Beekeeping course as well as those preparing for their Basic Assessment on 9<sup>th</sup> April, however a cold-snap and the colonies needing a bit more time to build up meant that had to be postponed: the bees health and welfare come first...and it really was a miserable day anyway!

As the postponement for two weeks meant that two training sessions, coincided with the visit by the Seasonal Bee Inspector as well as the final moves of making sure the new colonies were fully settled. Whilst this sounds like a recipe for chaos it actually meant that it was very productive and a day of all round learning:



- The beginners had a chance to see inside a hive or make the obligatory frames that we have all had to do, hopefully making things seem real now.
- Most of the beginners also had a chance to meet their mentors.
- The people studying for the Basic Exam had a chance to put into practice some of the content of the winter lectures.
- The more experienced beekeepers had a chance to learn what the Seasonal Bee Inspector does during their examination and be a little less frightened of the 'visit from the Ministry'. I am sure they all learnt something about the identification of diseases, the processes and some of the hygiene considerations.
- The recently arrived bees all got new homes to prepare for the season ahead.

Overall, the apiary got well and truly used with over 30 people doing a wide range of tasks and we can start to get used to a way of working. The first day was a huge success...especially as the morning weather was so poor (12 degrees C, overcast and windy) – as you can see from the photos it cleared up very well.

## Pollinator-friendly corridor for West Wiltshire

Over many years lots of habitats have been destroyed in this country. Our pollinators, honeybees, solitary bees, wasps, moths and any other creatures that go from flower to flower, rely on these areas to collect pollen and nectar. Pollinator corridors are a really good way to increase this important habitat for these creatures. We need to look after and encourage more of these habitats as many crops grown for our food also rely on pollinators, so this is a really important step to take.

Westbury Area Board in Wiltshire Council have agreed to a Councillor led initiative - 'Pollinator Friendly Areas' project with a grant. Suzanne Wickham the Councillor for Ethandune has submitted this proposal and got support from Edington, Bratton, Heywood, Dilton Marsh and Westbury Councils and they will be looking to put forward several small areas of land that they would like to be considered.



Wiltshire Wildlife Trust will then arrange to visit each Parish to survey the areas and produce a report, suggesting suitable seeds/plants, and most importantly the required planting and maintenance scheme for each area.

This is where you can all play your part by contacting the Parish Council with any areas that you would like to suggest – even if your parish council isn't currently involved. You may also want to get involved with the preparation, sowing and maintenance, which will include some weeding and a cutting programme relevant to the specific plot. This shouldn't be too onerous as the patches won't be too large.

We all know what a wonderful place West Wiltshire is, but there is now a scheme that could make it an even more colourful place to live.

We think this could be a brilliant community project which we could all enjoy for years to come.

Residents should get in touch by emailing the Clerk at their local council.

## World Bee Day

20<sup>th</sup> May is World Bee Day as designated by the United Nations <https://www.fao.org/world-bee-day/en>. There are a variety of events organized to celebrate World Bee Day (although I am not, at the time of writing aware of any locally!) and the Food and Agriculture Website of the United Nations says:

*“For centuries bees, among the hardest working creatures on the planet, have benefited people, plants and the environment. By carrying pollen from one flower to another, bees and other pollinators enable not only the production of an abundance of fruits, nuts and seeds, but also more variety and better quality, contributing to food security and nutrition. Pollinators such as bees, birds and bats, affect 35 percent of the world's crop production, increasing outputs of 87 of the leading food crops worldwide, plus many plant-derived medicines. Three out of four crops across the globe producing fruits or seeds for human use as food depend, at least in part, on pollinators.”*

...so maybe 20<sup>th</sup> May is the day to give your bees a day off, read them a story or show them pictures of their favourite flowers as a bit of a thank you! I am of course, kidding, but World Bee Day is observed to raise awareness on the essential role bees and other pollinators play in keeping people and the planet healthy, and on the many challenges they face today. It is a chance to drop the day into communications to keep the subject current.

20<sup>th</sup> May was set as World Bee Day because it is Anton Janša's Birthday. He is regarded by many as the pioneer of modern beekeeping and was born in 1734 in Carnolia (now Slovenia).

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## Contact us

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### Newsletter content

We will try to send this out as close to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month as possible. We will have a copy date of a week before to give us time to get everything together, and we would really like to hear from you. If you want to include anything please send an email to [Newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com](mailto:Newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com).

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