

West Wilts BKA News

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



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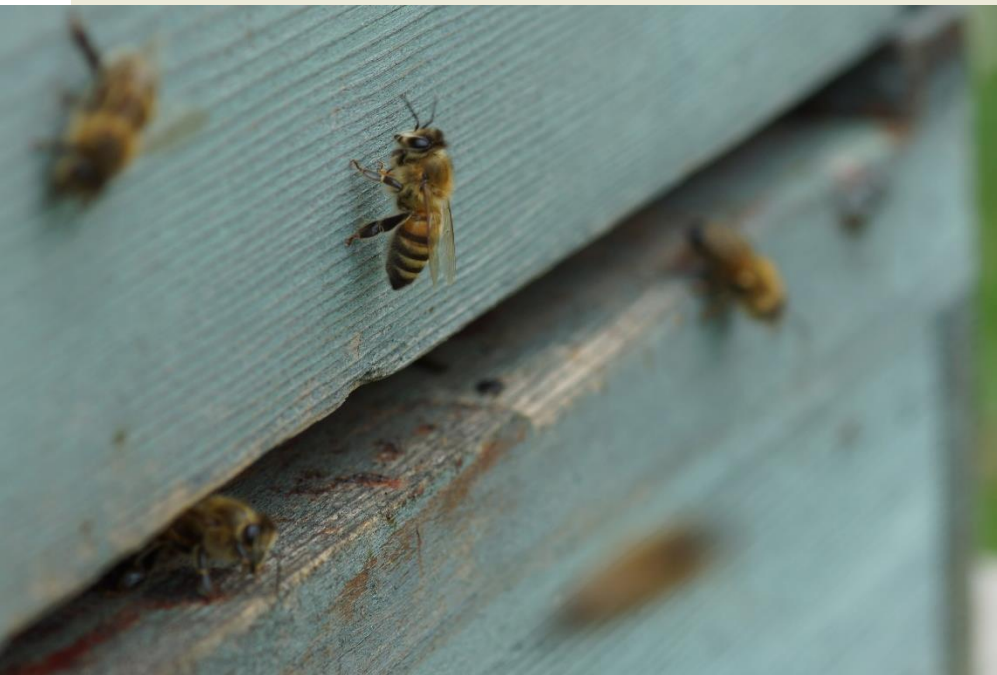
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The 'fun bits': news and reports.



Review of the year

We are in the final parts of the West Wiltshire BKA administrative year and are about to hold our Annual General Meeting to set a new committee and set the priorities for the year ahead. We hope you can attend as this is a chance to meet up in person and discuss what you want from your club and a chance to tell us what was good, what was not so good and what you want to do. The official business should be expeditiously completed so that we have time to discover your thoughts on the club at the gathering immediately afterwards.

There will be some change over the coming months. After the huge effort in getting the apiary moved, we are looking for a new Apiary Manager. This is a great opportunity for someone to increase their experience of dealing with bees and, of course, a great chance to increase understanding with the lessons at the apiary. Also, my personal circumstance have changed so I will struggle to commit to producing the Newsletter and will have to stand down from the committee as I cannot do as much I would like and as much as the role deserves.

Diary of events

November 2022

West Wilts BKA Annual General Meeting – 7th November (Monday), 7.30 pm; Bratton Jubilee Hall

December 2022

WWBKA Lecture – 20th December (Tuesday), 7.30 pm by Zoom; Martin Hann and Clare Densley (Bee Department Buckfast Abbey), What the books don't tell you and why bees change their minds

June 2023

Royal Bath and West Show – 1st-3rd June 2023, Royal Bath and West Showground, near Shepton Mallet

Need to know

Monday 7 November – WWBKA Open Forum Meeting

After all the many and various changes over the last two years due to Covid, virtual meetings and an apiary move involving the creation of a brand new training and meeting facility, your Committee is keen to get feedback and identify what you as members want from your hobby club. It is therefore intended to hold an open forum meeting for all members in Bratton Jubilee Hall straight after the Annual General Meeting at 7.30pm on Monday 7 November 2022 over refreshments.

To this end, it is intended to complete the formal business of the AGM as expeditiously as possible before moving on to an open discussion about what activities the membership wants – or does not want. Your committee has an open mind. Please put the date in your diary and join us to voice your opinions at this open forum – face to face!

Membership

You are reminded that the membership year runs from 1st October – 30th September each calendar year. If you have already renewed, thank you. If not, please read on...

We do hope that you will renew your membership, and look forward to seeing you in the coming year at branch meetings, and at Branch apiary sessions next spring and summer. If you have any questions, please send the Membership Secretary an e-mail on Membership-WWBKA@outlook.com and she will get back to you. Otherwise, we look forward to receiving your renewal promptly, so that we can make sure your various insurances are up to date.

Lectures

What the books don't tell you and why bees change their minds, Clare Densley and Martin Hann (Buckfast) – 20th December by Zoom

A return of Clare and Martin from the Bee Department at Buckfast Abbey where they provide education and support, particularly on teaching beekeepers and running courses for those who wish to start beekeeping or simply want to learn about bees. A Community Apiary scheme has been developed with the intention of opening beekeeping to all at the Abbey.

For everything which is written down about bees there are exceptions where the bees seem to ignore what they are supposed to do and do something weird to confuse you. Bees are not devious though and there is often a reason for the seemingly aberrant behaviour. An insight into the complexities of the superorganism logic even when it is difficult to fathom!

West Wilts BKA Clothing!

We have had our first deliveries of West Wiltshire BKA clothing. These include polo shirts, sweat shirts and baseball caps. There are all made by a quality clothing manufacturer and embroidered by a local company.

The baseball caps have been chosen so they will go under a 'fencing hood' beekeeping veil to keep the veil away from the face and provide some shade for your eyes so you can see what you are doing on those sunny days.



We have gone for Navy blue polo shirts and sweatshirts, but other colours are available if you particularly wish.

The baseball caps come in a range of colours. If you would like any of these, please let us know at Newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com and we will put an order in. If you are interested we can email you the specification sheet so you can make sure you order the right size.

Some of the items will be on display at the AGM if you want to see what they look like in person.



Good to know

Funny honey petition (i.e. honey adulteration)

A petition has been put to the UK Government demanding that honey labels reflect all countries of origin of the honey. The petition states:

“Currently the country of origin on labels can be replaced, if the honey originates from multiple countries, with ‘blend of EU/non-EU/EU and non-EU honeys’. We believe this is insufficient to allow consumers to make an informed choice. All countries where the honey originated should be listed.

To meet demand, around 90% of the honey we eat in the UK is imported. There is legitimate concern among UK beekeepers and honey producers about honey imports from countries where honey may be adulterated on an industrial scale. This can significantly impact the perceived value of honey in the consumer’s eye and result in unfair economic competition against UK producers. Labelling with full country of origin would enable consumers to choose honey from sources where adulteration is less likely.”

The petition is available to sign at: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/624402/>

Please send this link on to anyone you think might be concerned and may hold a view.

Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day – 8th October

Saturday 8th October saw the Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day held at the Corn Exchange in Devizes. It was attended by over 500 people with stalls from a variety of companies and organisation, as well as beekeeping lectures, natural history lectures, Wadworth’s Honey Beer, representation from the constituent branches of Wiltshire Beekeeper Association and the annual County Honey show.

After a reduction in the number of exhibits at the County show last year, we were back to more normal levels this year with over 300 entries; many from West Wiltshire. Again West Wiltshire BKA managed to walk away with some of the biggest prizes, including the much-coveted Applegate Trophy for the Wiltshire branch with the most points in the show.



Members of West Wiltshire BKA also won the Methuen Cup for the individual with the most points in all classes, The Geraldine Lenert Trophy for the best wax exhibit, the Norman Lovegrove Memorial Trophy for the best bottle of mead and the Kennet Shield for the best non-honey exhibit.

We were lucky enough to have a very experienced lead judge who is also a National Honey Show judge. She was very impressed with the quality of the exhibits, so well done for everyone involved and we hope to give Somerset a run for their money at the Regional Championship at the Royal Bath and West Show in June. Start thinking about what you want to enter for that, and remember, if you enter enough classes you get a day ticket at about half the cost of the full entry price!

A short review of the year

It is very easy to think that the last twelve months have been back to normal, but for West Wiltshire BKA, they have been anything but 'normal', and it has been an exceptional year, which started with the tragic loss of one of our stalwarts before the year even got going, the need to move apiary and the change to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation also landed this year. In any year, coming to terms with one of these could be a challenge, but we have addressed them all this year.

The apiary move has been a huge success, so thank you to the team that undertook that. We have a fantastic facility and despite having a few issues getting the bees into a productive state, the apiary manager worked his magic and we have a setup that we can use for a variety of training needs. In this embryonic year we have managed to undertake some queen rearing, deal with laying workers, requeen some colonies with virgin and supersedure queens, dealt with a particularly awkward colony and demonstrated methods of varroa testing, as well as undertaking the routine inspections!

We continued the annual cycle of training of an 'Introductory course' for people interested in taking up Beekeeping as a hobby, and a 'Basic course' preparing members to take the BBKA Basic Certificate (with a very high success rate!), so well done to everyone who succeeded at that. We also offered some extraction training, but there was no take up for that. We hope to continue with a range of training in future years.

As we came to the annual show, we needed to print some prize cards and we thought it would be a nice feature to have a logo for the club. We did some research and found that the current incarnation of the club started in 1974 so produced the logo you see on this newsletter. This has also enabled us to produce a range of club clothing so that we can show a 'corporate' image.

The branch show was a great success with over 100 entries and included a revamp of our awards and the introduction of a new award for the Best in Show called the 'Geraldine Lenert Certificate', to recognise the work of Geraldine, both at the show bench and her contribution to this branch.

We revamped the Newsletter and produced 13 editions (one per month and a 'showing special'). Through the year we have run a couple of themes, one on improving beekeeping skills and the other on showing/exhibiting. The newsletter itself has tried to include a range of stories and articles including book reviews and 'question and answer' sections to increase the content.

In addition to all of the above, the branch also runs a swarm collectors register, runs a Bee Bank for surplus queens/nucs, held a Branch Annual Dinner and holds a Bookers Wholesale card for the bulk purchase of sugar (and anything else you may need!).

Contacts and services

Contact details for committee and officers

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