

West Wilts BKA

News

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



IN THIS ISSUE

Diary of events **page 2**

Need to know **page 2**

This is your 'go to' section that will describe the things that you need to know about.

Good to know **page 3 - 11**

The 'fun bits': news and reports.



A couple of weekends ago I grabbed the chance to dash down to my two nuc's to replenish the fondant. I put all I needed quickly into a bag and coerced my husband to give me a lift to the "off-site" bees. I had all I needed. (Fondant, clean gloves etc. etc.) When I went to put my gloves on, I realised that they were both for the left hand – but not to worry – there was another tucked in the corner of the bag. Yes, you guessed – that was also for a left hand.

Needless to say, I managed.

Welcome to the November edition of the WWBKA newsletter. Have you had a busy competition season? There have been some highly successful entrants this year – well done everybody!

If you didn't get round to participating in the honey shows this year perhaps you will be involved next year – I have already found the dates for both the Bath and West Show and the National Honey Show 2024.

Diary of Events

November 2023

WWBKA AGM, confirmed for Tuesday 7th November at 7pm, Bratton Jubilee Hall

April 2024

BBKA Spring Convention 12th – 14th April (more information in the next edition)

May/June 2024

Bath and West Show 30th May to June 1st, 2024

October 2024

National Honey Show 24th to 26th October 2024

Need to know

Lectures

Off-season lectures have already started - all to be delivered on Zoom; links will be sent to members about a week before each session is scheduled to take place. The broad range of topics should provide interest for members of all levels of experience.

Bob Smith - Beyond the Basics

Mon 20 Nov 2023

Roger Patterson - Observation: Interpret What You See

Wed 17 Jan 2024

Bob Smith - Keep It Clean

Weds 20 Feb 2024

HAVE YOU SEEN... (from a recent email drop)

Microscopy classes 0930-1230 (Easterton Village Hall SN10 4PS)

Sunday 5th Nov 2023

Good to Know

COME AND HAVE YOUR SAY AS A MEMBER OF WEST WILTS BKA

Message from David Raines (Chairperson WWBKA)...



The Annual General Meeting of your hobby Club is being held at 7.00pm in Bratton Jubilee Hall BA13 4RN on Tuesday 7th November when we will be reviewing our activities over the last year and discussing what the membership would like to see in the coming year.

All members have received both the agenda and its supporting papers, so please do not put these papers to one side as boring bureaucracy. Each report is written by a fellow beekeeper who is reporting back to you on their particular area of responsibility within the Club. I commend all of them to you including one that reports a reduction in your subscription fees and an income of £573 in Gift Aid as a result of the Club becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Another highlights our need to have a more formalised plan for the arrival of Asian Hornets in our area ...and there is more if you care to open and read these reports!

Please come along and have your say. The meeting will open with the presentation of trophies and awards from our own remarkably successful Branch Honey Show with the Geraldine Lenert Excellence Award for the Best in Show going a 14-year-old young lady. There will also be refreshments. Once the formalities of the AGM and election of your officers and Committee are complete, there will be an opportunity to catch up with fellow beekeepers and compare notes about your colonies. I look forward to seeing you there. David Raines (Chair)

Skittles evening social.

Around eighteen members met up on October 13th at The Organ Inn Warminster, for a great night of skittles, supper, and a chat. The event brought out the competitive side of some members and others produced some pretty impressive results (I think I might be forgiven for saying that some people were quite surprised by their success!), I qualified for the wooden spoon but had great fun.



Read on for Liz Gwinnell's update on her first year of beekeeping....

Preparing for Winter

Although this year has been a strange year weatherwise, it is inevitable that winter will arrive at some point. I have only had bees for four months, but I know that winter challenges even the most experienced of beekeepers.

During what has been a mild autumn, I reduced the hive entrances, created a crude wasp trap by putting water, jam and vinegar in a jam-jar, treated with Apivar and at the beginning of October, attached mouse guards with drawing pins. I have also been feeding the bees since September due to the wet July we had in the UK which kept the bees indoors and caused them to consume most of their supplies.

Now we are in October and the weather has again surprised us with a mini heatwave: weather more reminiscent of the July we did not have. I have removed the Apivar strips and stopped inspecting. My aim now is to get my bees through the first winter.

They are actively out foraging on these warm days and coming back to the hive laden with bright orange pollen. A quick look on the internet suggests this is ivy pollen, one of the last forages of the year for the bees.

I am as ready as I can be for the wet, chilly weather that will come. I am all too aware that damp and cold are the biggest threats to a colony. I have sheets of radiator insulation ready to put under the lids of the hives and I have stocked up on fondant. I have dehumidifiers to soak up excess damp. I have wrap around insulation to go around the outside of the brood boxes.

The lazy summer afternoons of gentle inspection are behind me. Luckily, my bees have a very laid-back temperament and have tolerated my ham fists and clumsy fingers so far. I am keeping everything crossed that they will survive the winter and that when I open them up next Spring, I can look forward to sharing their honey.

Liz Gwinnell

Asian Hornet monitoring.



At the risk of boring members with repetition, the Asian hornet (and monitoring them) is an important subject, worthy of emphasis. I am including in this November newsletter, a mailshot received from the National Bee Unit, regarding monitoring and recording of Asian Hornets.... We are asked to continue monitoring until the end of October – but with current mild weather conditions – well – who knows... Advice seems to be to continue into November.

I quote "The National Bee Unit (NBU) is writing to all beekeepers to request that you continue to monitor for Asian hornets in all areas. To date this year, sixty-six nests have been located and destroyed in 50 locations, across ten counties: Devon, Dorset, East Sussex, East Riding of Yorkshire, Essex, Greater London, Hampshire, Kent, North Yorkshire, and Surrey. The known distribution highlights that no area can become complacent regarding the threat of an Asian hornet incursion.

Analysis of nests this autumn has confirmed the presence of gynes and drones in some nests. Gynes have also been identified from lone samples. The NBU are skilled at tracking, locating, and destroying nests, but can only respond to sightings with sufficient evidence, such as a photograph or sample.

How can beekeepers help?

- If you have not yet done so, please monitor insects in your local area now. Image 3 in the below blog shows the easiest way to monitor for hornets without damaging native insect populations:

<https://aphascience.blog.gov.uk/2021/09/08/asian-hornet-week-hunt-for-asian-hornets/>,

other simple monitoring solutions can be found on BeeBase:

<https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/assets/PDFs/3 Resources for beekeepers/Fact Sheets/Fact 01 Asian Hornet Monitoring.pdf>

(National Bee Unit contd.)

- If you are already monitoring, thank you and please continue until at least the end of October (members are advised in our WhatsApp chat to monitor at least until November).
- Monitor at home or near apiaries; wherever is most convenient: Asian hornets like ivy, fallen fruit, are attracted to solar wax melters and apiaries

Android – https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.ac.ceh.hornets&hl=en_GB

iPhone. <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/asian-hornet-watch/id1161238813>

- If you're unsure of the identity of an insect, please use the [ID sheet](#)

Please report any suspect sightings

- with your smart phone or tablet, by using the 'Asian hornet Watch' app:
- online at: http://www.brc.ac.uk/risc/alert.php?species=asian_hornet
- by email to: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk. Please include as much information as possible in your email; where you saw the sighting, your name and contact details and if possible, an image.

The National Bee Unit does not promote the use of kill traps, as this can damage native populations of insects, however, selective traps are now available commercially. For further information on Asian hornet, please see: <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/diseases-and-pests/asian-hornet>

Please note that during outbreaks the NBU receives a high number of calls and emails. To reduce processing time, it is helpful if you report sightings via the app or online form.

Thank you for your continued support and ongoing vigilance."



LANGSTROTH EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

4 x Langstroth Brood boxes –

unused and built of hardwood, complete with 10 wired frames in each box.

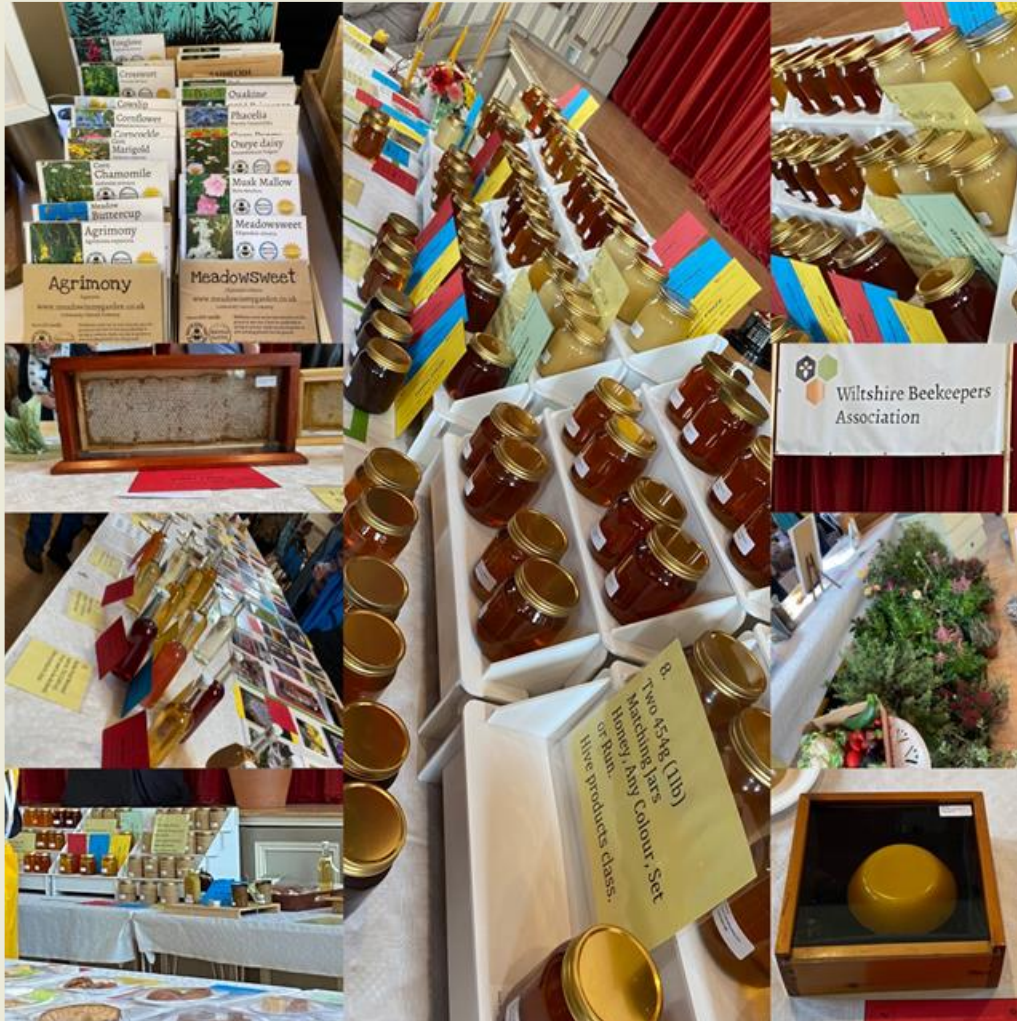
Also included are 3 x wooden floors. £40 the lot.

Please contact Fiona on 07787 241433 or
Email: staff57@gmail.com

Report from the Honey Show and Bee Day, The Corn Exchange, Devizes October 7th, 2023

What a fantastic event with a great turnout!

Were you up late the night before conducting last minute preparations for your exhibits? Perhaps you were assisting by volunteering to man one of the many stands? So many people were involved at all levels. Thanks are extended to everyone involved for enabling the event to run so smoothly.



No matter how prepared you are, there are always some things that cannot be done until almost the last minute (like baking for instance). Packing the car can be a challenge too – for example jars and exhibits need to be transported carefully and often loaded in a specific and precise manner. If you were unable to exhibit this year or felt a little overwhelmed by the thought of exhibiting, I really hope you found viewing and meeting fellow members encourages you to participate in similar events next year. Support and advice are always readily available through members and club meets.

(Honey Show and Bee Day contd.)

The excellent selection of speakers and topics was inspiring. I understand there were around 250 entries from all over Wiltshire at the show. Below is a list of the winner of Cups and Trophies.

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Trophy/Cup</u> | <u>Awarded for (and notes)</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Elaine Irvine | Methuen Trophy | Most individual points |
| Sophie Butcher | King Shield | Best honey in show |
| Sue Rawlings | Kennet Perpetual | Best non honey |
| Elaine Irvine | Norman Lovegrove Trophy | Best mead |
| Chris Rawlings | David Wicks Trophy | Best frame for extraction |
| Karie Carrington | Novice Cup | Best novice class winner (run honey) |
| West Wilts Branch | Applegate Trophy | Most Branch points |
| Chris Rawlings | Teal Cup | Service and Achievement |
| Sophie Butcher | Geraldine Lennert | Best wax exhibit |
| Elaine Irvine | BBKA Blue Ribbon | Best entry in show |



Planning an “Out-Apiary”? – (thoughts on hiving your bees outside your own property).

When you initially started out on your beekeeping journey, how many hives were your target? Did you have a garden within which you could accommodate your hives?

...what happened next? Have you branched out further?

I wonder how many beekeepers have expanded from keeping hives on their own property or gardens - to keeping hives away from their own premises. I think it may be something considered but not always acted upon. I have read that two hives are always better than one with regard to management, (and I have also read that four is a respectable number to have) – I wonder if it is possible to have too many hives, I must ask our own apiary manager for an answer to that question!

Given my issues of restricted mobility, one of my main concerns is access. I am more stable on a flat and even surface (let's face it – who wants to fall over onto a hive full of bees). There are occasions when it will be necessary to move equipment around on the site and to get it to the site itself. For me, flat terrain is important, as is access from the car to the site. Would a shed on site for your storage be important? I suspect that would indeed be a luxury, and those with an “out apiary” are most likely to transport what they need in a car to the site on the day. However, knowing what equipment is necessary in advance can be a bit of a conundrum. I like to load up the car myself for such trips – then I can check off that I have put all I need into the car before I drive away. The blame for anything forgotten then stays entirely with me. (As with day I mentioned earlier in this newsletter when all my gloves were “left hands”).

An ideal out apiary site (as far as I can work out from reading about this and talking to others) would ideally have water close by, shelter from prevailing winds, and be an east-west perspective, away from footpaths and neighbours, and with good access for car. Security is also an issue. The cost of an apiary, bees and equipment is not small, and I have read far too often of incidents where equipment and bees have simply been loaded onto transport and driven away by unscrupulous people. If you can find a site meeting all required criteria, then you are indeed lucky. Practical aspects such as adequate insurance cover, and to be registered on “BeeBase” require consideration. An allotment seems an attractive option, meeting many specifications but the collective agreement of all those with allotments on the site is necessary.

There are a variety of opinions about what is an acceptable “rent” for an out-apiary site. I have read articles suggesting one or two jars of honey per hive per year are the acceptable rate. I hope the “landlord” understands that some years that may be an unreliable agreement! However, I think that those willing to have hives on their land are often more interested in the altruistic aspect than collecting rent. Good-will frequently seems to play a large part in the beekeeper landowner relationship. Bees bring wider advantages than honey for the beekeeper – for example, the increased pollination of crops and hedgerows and this in turn has the knock-on effects of seeds and fruits for birds and mammals . If you are offered land where livestock are resident, the onus may be upon you (rather than the farmer – though of course with his agreement) to safely fence off the area you have been allowed.

Knowing that bees will fly up to 5km away from their hive to forage seems a comfort that the bees will find

(Planning an Out-Apiary"? contd.)

food (nectar, pollen, and water) "somewhere" – yet this still needs to be considered when looking for a site to house your hives. Of course, it is not a good idea to put hives where there has been a history or a likelihood of flooding.

It is vital that the landlord understands the needs of the bees for a permanent site before agreement is reached. Bees cannot be moved "willy nilly" at the whim of the beekeeper or the landowner. It is useful to have an "emergency site" in mind for extraordinary events. I confess I was truly shocked to read online about an incident where bees were – with the agreement of the farmer – hived on scrubland. The bees were regularly inspected until one day the beekeeper went along and the hives were gone. Reading further, the farmer had found a use for the scrubland, and without prior discussion, moved the hives. The result was, being unable to find their way "home", most of the bees had died. Shocking! Reading about this incident has emphasised to me the importance of ensuring points such as this are discussed and well understood. It is easy to assume that others have a similar understanding of bees and their needs as beekeepers do, when in fact upon deeper questioning the knowledge and understanding of others might be scant.

Having mentioned access, it is also important for the beekeeper to point out to the landowner that free access is necessary. Beekeeping is not a 9-5 Monday to Friday occupation. The weather forecast can be a major influential factor on the need for unfettered access – as can the status of the bee colony, the beekeeper has no influence over these.

What I have written here is built on my thoughts, personal experience and information gleaned from reading books and listening to other beekeepers. If you have other experience or advice to offer – drop me a line - It would be great to hear from you.

WWBKA Newsletter Editor: Newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com

Elaine Mairis

DID YOU SEE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT MESSAGE IN THE OCTOBER NEWSLETTER?

Asbestos recall – SMOKER....

<https://www.gov.uk/product-safety-alerts-reports-recalls/product-recall-large-stainless-steel-beehive-smoker-2308-0055#:~:text=Summary>

EpiPen – do you recall past discussions about use of an EpiPen in case of anaphylactic shock as a result of extreme response to bee sting? The Club now has a training EpiPen without the needle which normally penetrates the body when used in emergency. In a beekeeping setting there is a possibility of suffering anaphylactic shock when stung. Members should inform the apiary manager if they have been prescribed such a device. Visitors must make the same declaration before joining a training session at the apiary. The training pen can be reset. There will be an opportunity for a look at this and for practise when apiary meetings recommence in 2024.

Here's an important message from Den Pictor our Apiary Manager –

The club has Hive Alive and Bakers Fondant in stock. Den reminds us of the bee's struggles this year in respect of collecting enough food stores. He thinks it would be a good idea to err on the side of caution and add some fondant before winter really begins to bite! He adds that you can save yourselves some red-faced embarrassment next spring, so you won't have to say that your bees have starved. Contact the treasurer by email (WWBKA Treasurer: Treasurer-WWBKA@outlook.com) to make payment and then Den Pictor Apiary Manager (WWBKA Apiary Manager: Apiary-WWBKA@outlook.com) to arrange collection. Go on – you know it makes sense!

And finally -

HOT OFF THE PRESS!

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW RESULTS 2023

Congratulations to the following successful West Wilts members:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| Class 55 Display of beeswax flowers – 1st | Sue Rawlings |
| The Liz and Mike Duffin Cup for wax flowers | Sue Rawlings |
| Class 60 Dry mead – Highly Commended | Chris Rawlings |
| Class 63 Megelithin – Commended | Chris Rawlings |
| Class 82 Decorative design in honeycomb – 2nd | Chris Rawlings |
| Class 107 WWBKA Newsletter – Highly Commended | |

(thanks to all WW members who contribute to the newsletter, also the previous editor and the current editor).



Beekeeping supplies.



For Your Beekeeping Supplies

Your local supplier providing a service for:

- All Thorne's supplies
- BBWear suits – try before you buy
- Second hand kit bought and sold
- Available to attend your association, apiary meetings
 - Supporting Trainers, Improvers, Newbies
 - Payment by BACS, card, cash, cheque
 - Deliveries – subject to distance, order size

Please email your order or phone so we can arrange an appointment for you to visit to discuss what you need.

sales@thebeedepot.com

07879 811967

01373 430458

Diane Sleigh

The Apple Garden, Buckland Dinham, Frome, Somerset, BA11 2QP
what3words poetry.unto.driveway

Contacts and services

Contact details for committee and officers

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WWBKA Chair: Chair-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Treasurer: Treasurer-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Secretary: Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Apiary Manager: Apiary-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Honey Show Secretary: HoneyShow-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Membership Secretary: Membership-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Asian Hornet Action Team Coordinator: AHAT-WWBKA@outlook.com

WWBKA Newsletter Editor: Newsletter-WWBKA@outlook.com

Services available to members

The following services are provided by West Wilts BKA to members:


Bee Bank (for sale or purchase of queens, nucs and colonies). Contact the Branch Secretary at Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com

Bookers Wholesale Customer Card. Contact the Chair at Chair-WWBKA@outlook.com or 07711 018440 for details.

Equipment loan (microscopes, extractors, etc.): Contact the Branch Secretary at Secretary-WWBKA@outlook.com

Library: Contact our Librarian (either direct or through the Secretary)

Swarm Collection Register: Contact Branch Swarm Coordinator (David Newell 01373-825560 or sj007g0836@blueyonder.co.uk).

Find us on  :West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association