

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.

Welcome to the October edition of the West Wilts BKA newsletter.

After such a productive local show in Bratton, here's hoping for a large number of entries from WWBKA at the show on October 7th

See the note on page 11

Goodness – what a year for beekeepers (and the bees)! Let us all hope for a more stable season next year – I hope your beekeeping preparations for the winter are going according to plan?

The photo this month is of a honey bee on bramble blossom. At the end of my garden the ivy grows strongly on the fence, I am always tempted to cut it back, but it provides an enormous focal point of activity at this time of the year. This month I have seen a substantial number of red admiral butterflies sipping the ivy nectar beside bumblebees, mason bees, solitary bees, and wasps – and this year for the first time I have been fascinated to watch European Hornets.

Diary of events

October 2023

Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day – 7th October (Saturday), Devizes Corn Exchange, 10 am – 4 pm

WWBKA Social – Skittles evening. The Organ Inn, Warminster 13th October 7.30pm

National Honey Show – 26th-28th October (Thursday to Saturday), Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey

November 2023

WWBKA AGM, confirmed for Tuesday 7 November at 7pm, Bratton Jubilee Hall – please see chair's article on page 5

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.

Roger Patterson - The Patterson Unit

Thurs 19 Oct 2023

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

Good to know

What a year!

Read below, the reflections of our Apiary Manager, Den Pictor, on the current year of beekeeping –

What a difference a year makes to beekeeping, for example at this time of year over the past couple of years I have been pulling frames of honey out of strong colonies brood boxes and replacing them with frames of drawn foundation to give the queens room to lay those all-important eggs for winter bee production.

Not this year with the awful summer we've just had, I wish I had those frames of honey I had taken out back then, to put back in, as having to feed like mad to get the queens to lay anything and enable the bees to be able to feed and rear the brood, plus I'm trying to build up their winter stores. Let us hope the weather stays good so the bees can get out and work the ivy while it is in flower.

A reasonable amount of summer honey has come in but nothing like the past two years. Thank goodness the spring crop was so good. Wasn't the Hawthorn fantastic this year? The trickiest thing was getting it all off and extracted before it crystallised in the frames as around my apiary and the club apiary there was a lot of rape.

Things are much the same at the club apiary all supers are off, honey extracted, and in buckets with the majority sold which is very pleasing.

All colonies have had their treatments so just a matter of building up their stores and then it will be fingers crossed.

I find it disappointing that our fantastic facility is ignored by so many of our members – they really are missing out – if you haven't visited our fantastic apiary facilities it's worth the effort to have a look – make sure you watch the newsletter for next year's apiary meet dates so that you can add it to your diaries.

Den Pictor (Apiary Manager)

West Wilts Honey Show Success

The annual West Wiltshire Beekeepers Honey Show, held in the Jubilee Hall, Bratton on Saturday 23 September saw strong competition from both new and established beekeepers with a massive 145 entries. Show judge Bridget Knutson from Somerset was impressed with the standard of entries and a number were praised for the high standards achieved gaining a special recommendation to enter the prestigious Bath and West Show next year.

This year's cup winners were Katie Carrington for Best Beginner (Kate Forbes Trophy), Alex Sparke (Chairman's Cup), Chris Rawlings (Dick Mills Challenge Cup), Elaine Irvine (Sister Lucie Cup and Walt Conway Cup) and Sue Rawlings (Aldo Cup) with beginner Katie Carrington also achieving the ultimate honour of the Geraldine Lenert Excellence Award for Best in Show for her honey – a remarkable achievement in her first year as a beekeeper. Unfortunately, Katie was unable to attend the show due to family commitments.

We would like to thank all those who took part and hope that it will encourage members to compete in the Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day in The Corn Exchange, Devizes on the 7 October.



Read on for an important message from our chairperson David Raines –

West Wilts BKA Annual General Meeting – in the Jubilee Hall, Bratton BA13 4RN

7pm Tuesday 7th November 2023

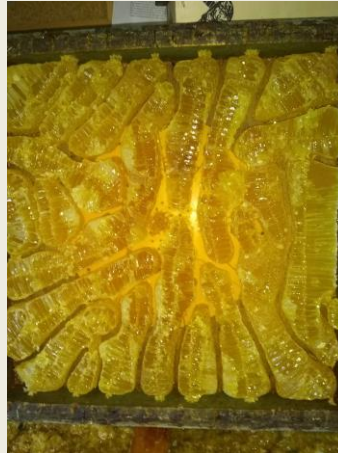
“As your Chair, may I strongly encourage you to attend the Annual General Meeting where we not only review our annual activities, how we spend your money, and present the prizes and awards, but also elect the officers and Committee members for the coming year. We warmly welcome and listen to new members on the Committee, so please do consider whether you might wish to contribute more directly to what is after all – YOUR hobby club. Our Branch Rules stipulate that written notice of any resolution for consideration at an AGM, with the names of the proposer and seconder, must be received by the Chair or Secretary not less than thirty days before the AGM. This year, that deadline for resolutions is Saturday 7 October – the same day as the County Honey Show! The meeting is being held at 7pm on Tuesday 7 November 2023 in the Jubilee Hall, Bratton BA13 4RN where we held and enjoyed our successful Branch Honey Show last month. The final agenda with all formal reports and supporting papers will be circulated to individual members no later than Tuesday 24 October 2023, but if you have any questions whatsoever on the running of your Club, please contact either me or any Committee member directly. Please do consider joining us on Tuesday 7 November”.

David Raines – Chair, West Wilts BKA 07711 018440

Even the experts do not always get it right!

Den Pictor has kindly shared the following photos to include in this edition of the newsletter – he tells me he does not always get things “right” with his bees! Here is an example he has kindly shared with us...

I am told that the photos below show the result of forgetting to take off the bee escape – just take a look at that wild comb – you cannot help but admire it – so incredibly beautiful!



What do you do with your honey harvest?

Having gathered the golden rewards of a successful beekeeping year what do you do with it? After entering jars of your yield into the honey show what next? I have discovered not all beekeepers enjoy the taste of honey... I like a spoonful or two but find it overly sweet. I like to savour a little of the different flavours produced by those clever bees, but I eat it very sparingly. I am fascinated by the behaviour of the bees and looking after them – the honey (if there is ever any to spare from my few hives) is a bonus. My very first honey harvest was decanted carefully into eight-ounce jars (to eke it out – if you will excuse the pun) I added specially designed labels and proudly shared it amongst family and friends for Christmas presents.



Uncooked honey.....

How do you like your honey? A slice of home-made crusty bread spread with a little butter and honey used to be a treat for us when we were children. (My grandad was a master baker, and his bread was the best accompaniment for honey). My dear Dad used to drizzle a little honey onto vanilla ice cream – I think the flavour and smell of the honey is enhanced by the cold ice cream (though Dad sometimes added a spoonful of whisky with the honey too!)

Perhaps you store your honey away? How long for – although we add a “best before” or “consume by” notice on our honey labels it is a well-known fact that honey was found in the burial chambers of King Tutankhamun’s tomb in the pyramids of Egypt – but I hope you are not going to store it away for that long! I expect some of you will be selling your golden gains to fund your hives – beekeeping is not necessarily a cheap hobby is it!

What else can you do with your bounty? Well, the benefits of honey are well published. It seems that those suffering with allergies and hay fever may seek local honey to enable reduction of their symptoms. The application of Manuka honey to wounds is proven to facilitate healing and there is recognition of

(What do you do with your honey harvest? contd...)

associated anti-fungal effects (though if you are producing manuka honey in Wiltshire I will be surprised).

If you have a cough, the humectant effect of taking a spoonful of honey, may help to lubricate a dry throat, some might add this to the juice of a lemon with hot water and find this a comforting winter remedy.

"Uncooked" honey can be used in a variety of products to use on the body – recipes for face and body lotions, potions and hair treatments can be found if you search the internet. Honey is also a frequent addition to marinades and salad dressings.

While searching the internet for information my attention became diverted and I ended up looking at a range of cocktails using honey as an ingredient. I found cocktails such as "Bees Knees, Gold Rush, Spicy Bees Knees, Tequila Honey Bee, Honey-Rose Old Fashioned, Honey Lime Margarita, Honey Mojito, Honey Martini, Honey Bourbon Sangria" all citing honey as an ingredient. There was a strangely named "Penicillin Cocktail" apparently first made in New York – a mix of scotch, honey, ginger, and lemon juice. I found the idea of these intriguing, evoking hopes of experimenting in the garden on a warm summer afternoon – sharing cocktails with friends – though they would have to live locally as I don't envisage anybody wanting to drive home after a few of those cocktails.

Heated honey....

The use of honey in baking encourages swifter browning and a browner crust. If you have entered the baking sections of honey shows, it is likely you have followed recipes for various cakes and biscuits using honey. It is a shame though, that heating honey denigrates some of the recognised benefits. Heating honey may alter both texture and colour. However, although some ingredients become weakened and ineffective (as heat has a negative effect on enzymes minerals vitamins and other components of honey), heat does not make honey toxic in any way. Excessive heat degrades beneficial enzymes and also has an effect upon the flavour.

One of my favourite recipes using honey is home-made baked granola – though I must confess I don't make it too often – it's a tasty way to start the day topped with a spoonful of thick Greek yoghurt – but one tablespoon of granola can turn into two and if you aren't careful and exercise a modicum of self-control it is easy to become a little greedy with it! Have you tried spiced honey roasted mixed nuts? They are amazingly easy to make and a really nice gift to give for Christmas.

Although jam can be made using honey, I certainly could not bring myself to use honey as a replacement for sugar when making my own jam – though I have been known to add a little to chutney – I just feel that the labour of all those wonderful honeybees deserves more consideration, don't you?

Elaine Mairis

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: fstaff57@gmail.com



HAVE YOU SEEN THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT MESSAGE?

Asbestos recall – SMOKER....

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

Dorset BKA have asked for information about their Dorset Beekeeping Convention to be shared. The event will take place on Sunday October 29th – venue The Blandford School (Postcode DT11 7SQ)

Tickets are now available on the following link <https://buytickets.at/northdorsetbka/>

Membership renewal.

It is now time to renew your subscription for the forthcoming year 1st October 2023 - 30th September 2024.

Please renew promptly to ensure you stay up to date with all our activities and news! It will also ensure continuity of your various insurances and your eligibility to vote at the AGM (coming soon – November 7th).

You should have received an email reminder with a link to renewing your membership. For any queries about membership, please contact Membership-WWBKA@outlook.com.

Membership Renewal

You will find a link in your membership email to enable renewal of your membership. On completion of the form, (link within the Treasurer's message to your email address) you will be taken to a page which displays bank details, so payment can be made online – (the preferred and most efficient method of payment).

- Full Registered membership subscription includes £10,000,000 public and product liability insurance, BDI covering 3 hives as well as BBKA News delivered to your door once a month.
- Those without bees should choose the Local membership which excludes public and product liability insurance and BDI.
- Those within the same household, who are members as full/partner/local/junior members, are required to renew individually; a notice will be sent to the email address we hold for each of you.

Please either opt in or opt out of the annual declaration with regard to Gift Aid.

Swarm Collection List

Please be aware if you select "Yes", on the option to be listed on the BBKA swarm collection list, the Branch committee checks swarm volunteers to ensure only those with suitable experience are endorsed. Also be aware that if approved to be on the BBKA online swarm list, your name, phone and/or mobile phone number, and first five letters of your postcode will be included.

Members' Contact List

The contact list is made available to branch members and provides the names and contact information for each member who has opted in. Members have found the contact list useful when they have

(Membership renewal contd.)

wanted to contact other local beekeepers. Your details will not be included in the list if you opt out of the contact list..

It is hoped you will renew your membership. We look forward to seeing you in the coming year at branch meetings, and at Branch apiary sessions next spring and summer.

Data Sharing with NBU Beebase

Your email gives you the following information about BeeBase - a valuable beekeeping resource maintained by the National Bee Unit (NBU). In addition to providing information to beekeepers, it maintains a voluntary register of beekeepers in England, Wales, and Scotland. Most associations encourage their members to register with BeeBase. This register enables the regional and seasonal bee inspectors to know where beekeepers and their apiaries are located and allows them to make contact in the case of a disease outbreak, with a view, if necessary, to undertaking a disease inspection. The inspectors are experienced beekeepers, and their visits often provide valuable training for the individual beekeeper.

Should a beekeeper have an outbreak of a notifiable disease, and have cover provided by BDI, the inspector will validate the insurance claim on their visit. More details can be found: <https://www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk/ereturn/linking-er2-to-beebase>.

Don't forget our Skittles evening!

On Friday 13th October at 7.30p.m. we are looking forward to seeing members at The Organ Inn Warminster (49) High Street Warminster (BA12 9AQ). There's plenty of parking at Warminster Civic Centre Car Park with a "cut" through to the High Street. See you there!



So, there you have it for the October newsletter –

.....**but - just one more thing before you leave.**

...if you can find time in your busy week, please consider entering the **Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day** – 7th October (Saturday), Devizes Corn Exchange, 10 am – 4 pm, but **DON'T FORGET, THE CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES IS 2ND OCTOBER – SO YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME TO GET YOUR ENTRIES IN...**

Go on – get out there in between the clouds and the wind, find a sunny break and take a snap or two to enter into the competition - you've still got time to get your photos processed to meet the entry requirements – but don't forget to read the rules appropriate to the class you're entering...

Then put on your aprons, get out the kitchen scales and turn on the oven, get out your polishing cloths for jars and bottles and do not forget to buy your paper plates!


To repeat the message from our secretary

“Those of you who entered for classes in our branch show last weekend are very well placed to enter the honey and hive products classes in the County Show - after all, you have everything prepared already! We are keen to hang on to the Applegate Cup for the branch with the most points in the County show, and we can only do that if our members put in entries. The deadline for entries is fast approaching - 12:00 noon on 2nd October. Entries submitted after the deadline will not be accepted, so please get them in on time!”

[Here is a link to the Wiltshire BKA website page](#) that provides information about the show, including essential details about how to enter, the deadline for entries, and the schedule.

Good luck to you all!

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

WWBKA President: President-WWBKA@outlook.com

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: Library: Contact our Librarian 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