



Wiltshire BKA

Honey Bee Times

2022 Happy New Year 2022

Important Meeting - WBKA AGM 2022

Why we need you at the AGM this year

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and a splendid New Year.

Traditionally the New Year heralds changes and this year is no exception at the WBKA. You may know that the WBKA Council has been working towards converting to a charity, as many BKAs up and down the country have done already. Among other reasons, the branches will benefit from gift aid, where HMRC boosts any 'donation' (your membership fees are classed as a 'donation') by 25p for every £1 you pay. It also makes it easier to raise grants to help finance large county-wide projects.

There will be/have been presentations in your branch about this where you will find out more.

To make this happen we need your help. At the AGM at 7pm on 20 January we need your vote to make minor changes to the existing constitution (the agenda and papers have been emailed to you already). This will enable us to smoothly fold the existing Association into a charity should you, the members, decide to vote for this at a later Special General Meeting at 7pm on 8 March. Whether or not the members decide to convert to a charity, we still need those changes to facilitate things like postal votes, which will make it easier for you to interact with the WBKA in this mad covid world.

The meeting on 20 January will be face to face, with a Zoom link for those shielding, although we will move to a full Zoom meeting if Omicron forces us to. **To entice you to come out to Devizes in the cold, we have invited Marin Anastasov, a top bee expert, to speak after the AGM on how to make the most of the spring build-up this year (see below).**

Please save both those dates in your diary. To allow us to plan for all eventualities covid throws at us, **please Register for the AGM here:** <https://bit.ly/wbka-agm21>

Winter Lecture “Preparing for successful Spring Buildup” by Marin Anastasov, Master Beekeeper, NDB

As the seasons go from autumn to winter, and from winter to spring, the colony undergoes significant changes in the physiology of its inhabitants. This ensures the bees have all they need to survive the winter and provides the foundations for productive colonies the following spring. There are a number of operations that we need to complete (and sometimes avoid) to ensure our colonies have the best chance of survival through the winter and come through it ready for the spring build up. This talk covers common reasons for winter colony losses, the common reasons for colonies failing to build in the spring, and some of the important management operations in the autumn, winter and spring to ensure our colonies remain healthy and productive. [Note: Marin also has an article on Pollen in January’s BBKA News.]



Marin holds a BSc in Animal Science and an MSc in Organic Farming. He is passionate about sustainable food production and his entire working career has been in organic food and farming. Marin is a Master Beekeeper and gained his NDB in 2017. He currently manages 30 colonies in Gloucestershire. He is a trustee of Gloucestershire Beekeepers’ Association and Chairman of the BBKA Examinations Board. He is an assessor for the Basic, General Husbandry, and Advanced Husbandry certificates, and has contributed to the development and running of the General Husbandry and Advanced Husbandry training programmes for the BBKA. Marin is co-author, and led the implementation, of the BBKA Certificate in Honey Bee Breeding, including providing the training and support to both future candidates and assessors.

Beekeeping Tips

Weather. We are past the winter solstice and it is unseasonably mild but on occasion very windy. The mild weather and the longer days will encourage colonies to bring the queen back into lay. The strong winds make it prudent to check your hives once a fortnight or so to ensure they are upright and secure.

Varroa. As the queen may now be laying again, now is your last chance to treat for Varroa while most of the mites are on the bees and not in the comb where the oxalic will not reach them.

Feeding. When visiting your hives check their weight by hefting front/back or left/right. If light add some fondant over the hole in the crown board.

Planning. Check your records. What went wrong last year? What do you want to achieve this year? Make a plan. Buy in any equipment while the sales are on.



Dates for the Diary - County and Branch**Wiltshire BKA**

WBKA AGM and Winter Lecture. 7pm on Thursday 29th January at the Devizes Corn Exchange.

WBKA Special General Meeting. 8th March 2022.

Royal Bath & West Show. 2-4 June 2022 at the Bath & West Show Ground, Shepton Mallet.

Honey Bee Health Day. 3 September 2022 (tbc).

Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day. 8th October 2022 at the Corn Exchange, Devizes.

Branch Events**Kennet BKA**

Wed 5 Jan: Discussion to include WBKA's move to charitable status.

Wed 2 Feb: Kevin Pope talk on how the weather affected beekeeping in 2021.

Melksham & District BKA

Mon 31 Jan: Social evening to learn about the plans for MBKA & WBKA in 2022.

Swindon & District BKA

Thu 27 Jan: Tony Awdry to discuss plans for WBKA's move to charitable status.

West Wilts BKA

7 Jan: Special General Meeting to discuss charitable status.

18 Jan: Branch Dinner

20 Jan: AGM

Dates for the Diary - National**BBKA**

12 Mar: BeeTradex 2022. NAEC Stoneleigh

8-10 Apr: BBKA Spring Convention. Harper Adams University, Shropshire TF10 8NB

National Honey Show

27 - 29 Oct: Sandown Racecourse, Esher, Surrey KT10 9AJ

Important Beekeepers

The BBKA's Examination Committee has made some major changes to the syllabus of the Modules. Not least they have moved most of the historical aspects of beekeeping from Module 8 into the most relevant module for each individual historical contributor. For Module 3: Honey Bee Diseases, Pests and Poisoning, which a number of WBKA members are currently studying, the three listed beekeepers are Annie D Betts, Leslie Bailey and Brenda Ball. Their contribution to beekeeping will be covered in a series of occasional articles in future editions of HBT starting with Annie Betts.

Annie Dorothy Betts - 22 November 1884 to 8 September 1961

Annie Betts came from a line of civil engineers. It seems that she was educated privately but attended The University of London and gained her BSc in 1906, almost certainly in mathematics.

Throughout her life she had an interest in engineering. While her paternal ancestors had made and lost their fortune in railway engineering, Annie applied her degree to the design of propeller blades throughout WW1. She was also hands on and for many years owned and maintained a motorcycle, which she used to ride to work.

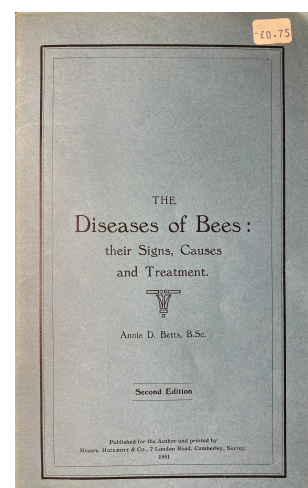
Annie started beekeeping in 1900, presumably at the family home in Surrey, (she was living with her parents in Camberley in 1911). In 1908 she started to research the fungi she found in the hive publishing her findings in "The Fungi of the Bee-Hive" in The Journal of Economic Biology in 1912¹. In this publication she describes the discovery of *Pericytes alvei* found in stored pollen. In 1972 *P alvei* was given a new combination as the newly described genus *Bettsia* named in her honour². (It is part of the Ascosphaeraceae family.)

Other publications followed including "The Consistency of the Pollen-collecting Bee"³ and "Practical Bee Anatomy"⁴. In 1934 she had published "The Diseases of Bees: their Signs, Causes and Treatments" which she updated and had reprinted in 1951. Aimed at practical beekeepers she describes American and European foulbrood, sacbrood, chalk brood and addled brood. She covers adult bee diseases including acarine, nosema, amoeba, paralysis, spray and other poisoning as well as starvation. No doubt this would have been essential reading had the BBKA modules then been in existence.

Annie Betts took an active interest in the Apis Club from its formation in 1919 and in 1929 was appointed its director and editor of its journal Bee World, a post she held until handing over to Eva Crane in 1949. In addition to her editorial duties she contributed 170 of her own articles. "All her readers knew that any article bearing the initials ADB would contain something new and original, something breaking new ground"⁵. She was a very competent linguist able to read several European languages so was able to include articles from across the continent thus greatly expanding the international appeal of the journal. During WW2 the journal was reduced in size and printed on poorer quality paper owing to rationing but was published on schedule.



MISS ANNIE D. BETTS, B.Sc.
Editor of *The Bee World*.



In her day Annie Betts was recognised as an eminent bee researcher in her own right. But perhaps her biggest contribution was as editor of *Bee World* bringing her own experience and knowledge plus that of other prominent bee researchers to an international audience. She was a woman of great energy and broad interests. Sadly she was very deaf and found attending meetings and conferences difficult.

In summary: Annie Betts was a British apiculturist, bee disease expert, author and editor. She made scientifically significant observations of honey bees, wrote books on apiculture and edited the journal *Bee World*.

[Wider Family. Annie Betts's father, grandfather and great grandfather between them were involved in constructing hundreds of miles of railway line in the UK and Europe in the 19th century. Her uncle Morton Betts was a successful sportsman in the late 19th century. On 6th March 1872 he scored the only goal in the first ever FA Cup final when Wanderers beat the Royal Engineers 1-0 at the Kennington Oval. He also represented England at football and played county cricket for several counties.]

References:

For family information: ancestry.co.uk and the internet.

- (1) *Journ. Econ. Biol.* December 2012, vol vii, No. 4
- (2) *Skua* 1972
- (3) (1920) *Bee World*, 2(1-4), pp 10-11 via Taylor and Francis
- (4) (1923) *The Apis Club*
- (5) In Memory of Annie D Betts by O. Morgenthaler in a 1961 edition of *Bee World*
- (6) *Bee Hive to Beekeeper*, Andrew Gibb and Ann Harman, BeeCraft 2020

BBKA Area Association Discussions - Report

Mentoring. 43 area associations were represented at the December meeting to discuss the role of mentoring for beginners. From the discussion:

- It is clear that 'one size does not fit all'; there can be no rigid guidance set on mentoring approaches. Rather dissemination of good (BBKA) practice and a support network are preferable.
- Perhaps this discussion would have been better framed as '*How to provide support to beginners*' i.e., Associations decide on the *support system* they will provide rather than getting hung up on the concept of mentors specifically.

Comment. Within WBKA if any member needs advice or would like to set up a mentoring arrangement, do contact your branch Education/Training officer.

The Basic Assessment. The discussion in January will consider how best to persuade members to take the Basic Assessment.

Across WBKA about 25% of the membership have passed their Basic, which is around the national average. The pass rate in the county is 98%, slightly above the national average.

How best to encourage members to take the assessment? If you have been keeping bees for two years or more and yet to take your Basic, what are the obstacles preventing you from doing so? What could be done at branch level to encourage you to take this one hour, essentially practical assessment designed to confirm that you are a competent beekeeper? **Get in touch.**

WBKA Council Report

The WBKA Council met on 7th December for its final meeting of the year. Topics discussed included:

Treasurer's Report

Ceri Gosling reported that he had recently circulated proposed criteria for prioritising investment in WBKA and asked branches to submit proposals.

Membership Secretary's Report. WBKA had 375 members on the day of the meeting with more expected to sign up or renew before the BBKA's deadline.

BeeCraft Shareholding.

Wiltshire BKA has been a shareholder in BeeCraft since its inception. This role requires the WBKA to appoint two trustees. For the past 14 years our trustees have been Ross Gregory (Swindon BKA) and John Whitford (Kennet BKA). Ross Gregory explained the role to Council and said that he now wished to stand down. Council thanked Ross and John for holding this role over the years and decided that in future these two trusteeships would be tied to the WBKA Chair and Treasurer.

BBKA Area Delegate's Meeting on 15th January. Council considered the agenda for this important meeting and provided voting guidance for David Newell (WWBKA) who will be representing WBKA.

Royal Bath & West Show 2022. Chris Rawlings (WWBKA) will be organising the Bee Tent at this year's show which is planned to go ahead live at the Bath & West Showgrounds over the Jubilee Weekend 2-4 June. The success of all such shows relies on members volunteering to act as stewards so look out for Chris's letter in the new year seeking your help.

WBKA Governance. As reported above, members will be asked to make some key decisions at the AGM on 20th January and the SGM on 8th March regarding WBKA's proposed move to charitable status. Before that happens it was necessary to approve a few minor amendments to the current constitution and rules not least to bring them in line with the trend towards holding hybrid meetings etc.

Production

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