



Wiltshire BKA

# Honey Bee Times

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## ***Wiltshire BKA to Request Charitable Status***

At a Special General Meeting (SGM) held on 8th March 2022 members of Wiltshire Beekeeping Association (WBKA) decided to apply to the Charity Commissioners to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

The meeting was run from The Corn Exchange, Devizes with 25 members present in the room, 25 attending online and a further 48 had submitted their votes by post. 24.93% of the total number of members eligible to vote.

There were six resolutions:

1. **Conversion to charitable status.** It was proposed that WBKA becomes a charity.
2. **New CIO resolution.** Our existing constitution not meeting the requirements of the Charity Commission, a new compliant constitution has been prepared.
3. **Registration at the Charity Commission and Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC).** The Charity Commission will be asked to approve the new constitution and register WBKA as a CIO. HMRC will be asked to register the charity so that WBKA can claim Gift Aid.
4. **WBKA to adopt the new County Rules.** The Constitution is a public document and not easily amended. The County Rules are private to WBKA and are designed to satisfy the specific needs of the four branches within WBKA.
5. **Electing Officers**

The following officers were elected:

President:	Chris Rawlings (WWBKA)
Chair:	Sophie Butcher (KBKA)
Vice-Chair	Peter May (KBKA)
Treasurer:	Ceri Gosling (KBKA)
General Secretary:	Amanda Leworthy (WWBKA)

**All five of these resolutions were carried by a large majority, with only a simple majority being required. The meeting was quorate.**

**6. Transfer of Assets.** The CIO being a new organisation, the current assets of WBKA will need to be transferred to the CIO in due course. This resolution allows that to happen at a time agreed between the WBKA's Council and the Trustees of the new CIO.

**This resolution required a two thirds majority and was also carried by a large majority.**

Sophie Butcher closed the meeting by thanking all those who voted and offered special thanks to Tony Awdry and his sub-committee members for all their work in drawing up all the necessary papers to enable us to reach this position.

Applications will be sent to the Charity Commission and HMRC shortly but it could be three to six months before they respond.

## ***Wiltshire BKA Council Meeting - 15th March 2022***

Council met on Tuesday 15th March for its second of four meetings scheduled for this year.

**Webmaster and AHAT Co-ordinator.** These roles are currently vacant.

**Webmaster.** Sophie Butcher is covering the webmaster role but a volunteer with deeper knowledge would help make best use of the site's potential.

### **AHAT Co-ordinator.**

All four branches have established AHATs. However in the event of an Asian Hornet nest being discovered in the county they would be required to work together in support of the NBU's bee inspectors. There is also the need for training which is best done collectively. Peter May is currently considering how this role might be developed to cover other threats to bees such as pests and poisoning.

Action. Any member interested in volunteering for either of these roles should contact Sophie Butcher, WBKA Chair.

**Conversion to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).** The application is well underway.

### **Bath & West Show.**

- This year's Bath & West Show is being held over the Jubilee Weekend 2nd to 4th June. Entries are now being accepted for the Honey Show with details available on the Show's website.
  - If you would like to help man the WBKA stand in the Bee Tent contact Chris Rawlings.
- [After Note: See articles that follow.]

### **Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day 2022**

Preparations are well underway. A sponsor has been secured. A printing company is still required - any suggestions to Emma Morley.

An enjoyable part of the day is to engage with the public and answer any questions they may have about beekeeping and the products of the hive. If you would like to volunteer to help on the day please contact your branch representative or Sophie Butcher.

## The Royal Bath & West Show

After two years we are back to a normal Show, but it is like starting anew; new challenges, new faces and new schedule.

I will be looking for **volunteer stewards** to fill roles on a half or full day basis, half day will receive an entry ticket and full day will receive entry ticket and a pack lunch.



There is an option to stay in your own caravan or tent for the 3 days of the show helping out where required.

### Our Wiltshire Beekeepers display stand is the first Challenge

Experienced persons needed to set up Candle making from moulds and show new volunteers how to make them. Inexperienced people required to make candles from moulds.

Set up and man the display area (demonstration Boards and 2 tables)

Provide commentary and information at the Observation Hive. (Experienced beekeepers on a rota basis)

If you have completed a beginner's course you know more than the general public and there will be experienced beekeepers to help out if needed.

### The Honey Show

Wiltshire needs you to pull together and put any entry(s) in The Honey Show. We have been privileged to have good experienced show people putting in many entries in the past, however now is the time to have ago or increase your entries to support Wiltshire. Somerset are pushing their members this year as they sense a chance to win the Challenge Shield because we are now in a weak position having lost Geraldine. [See more details below.]

The closing Date for entries is 2<sup>nd</sup> May on the Bath and West web site <https://www.bathandwest.com/bees-honey-competition>

Please contact me by Email [Chris-Rawlings@virginmedia.com](mailto:Chris-Rawlings@virginmedia.com) If you would like to Steward or for any other information.

**Chris Rawlings**

## ***Royal Bath and West Show 2022 - More on the Honey Show***

Not only is the Royal Bath and West show on this year, but entries are OPEN! Please visit <https://www.bathandwest.com/bees-honey-competition> remember if your entry fees come to £12 or more (inc VAT) you get a free ticket, but hurry...entries close on 2<sup>nd</sup> May!



It doesn't matter whether you are a new beekeeper or an 'old hand' you are likely to find the Bee 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.

**A.H**

## ***Dates for the Diary - County and Branch***

### **Wiltshire BKA**

**2nd - 4th June - Royal Bath & West Show.** Bath & West Show Ground near Shepton Mallet. See separate articles.

**21st June - WBKA Council Meeting** - Bishops Cannings Village Hall.

**3rd September - WBKA Honey Bee Health Day.** Market Lavington Community Hall.

**13th September - WBKA Council Meeting.** Broughton Gifford Village Hall.

### **Branch Events**

#### **Kennet BKA**

**6th April - 7.30 at Bishops Cannings Village Hall.** Talk by Richard Peterson on "The Demaree Method".

**4th May - 7.30 at Bishops Cannings Village Hall.** Talk by Richard Oliver on "Swarm Prevention and Swarm Control".

**1st June - 7.30 at Bishops Cannings Village Hall.** Bee chat.

#### **Melksham & District BKA**

**25th April - 7.00 at Broughton Gifford Village Hall.** Images of Wild Life & Insects of Wiltshire by Alan Benson.

#### **Swindon & District BKA**

**28th April - 7.30 at Hayden Wick Club.** Talk by Avril Earl, Seasonal Bee Inspector.

**26th May - 7.30 at Hayden Wick Club.** Skittles Evening.

#### **West Wilts BKA**

**2nd April -** Opening of the new branch apiary.

**12th Apiary -** "Getting to grips with swarm control". A talk by Bob Smith on Zoom.

## Dates for the Diary - National

**8th - 10th April - BBKA Spring Convention.** Harper Adams University, Shropshire TF10 8NB.  
<https://www.bbka.org.uk/Pages/Category/about-spring-convention>

**27th -29th October - National Honey Show.** Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey

## Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day – part 3

In this third of a series of articles on the Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day you can find out about the wonderful Honey Beer that was produced last year by Wadworth Brewery - arguably a key part of the show, and about what makes up the bulk of the exhibits – the honey itself.

### Honey Beer

For a few years, we've managed to persuade Wadworth brewery to make us some bespoke Wiltshire Honey Beer. We provide them with some honey and they work their magic and deliver two casks of beer for us to sell. Sometimes they even deliver it to the door on the day, on a cart pulled by shire horses (sadly not possible in 2021 but fingers crossed for 2022!).

Last year, the beer seemed to be very popular – even more than in previous years as someone came up with the ingenious idea of pouring it into bottles, rather than just plastic cups. More than a few people bought a cup to drink there and then, with a take-away measure drawn carefully into a bottle for later. If there is any left, it gets shared amongst the helpers on the day... although last year we sold out.

We are trying to negotiate more honey beer from Wadworth for 2022. In case you missed the show last year, here are the Honey Beer tasting notes to whet your appetite:

*“Four pots of honey from Chippenham brewed into a tea and primed into this rich bitter, featuring a strong malt backbone with bready and biscuity notes developing into subtle roasted notes.”*

I can promise you that it was just as tasty as it sounds.



### Honey Show – Honey

April may seem a bit early to start thinking about preparing your honey for the Honey Show, but that's not the case at all. As we enter a time when some of us will be faced with crops of Oilseed Rape, now is the time when we need to be thinking about what we will do with it.

The Oilseed Rape honey will granulate very quickly and with a fine grain. If left to its own devices, it will set like concrete. Of course, you can make mead (see February's article in this series), or instead, you can work with its properties and work it into a nice soft-set honey.



If you've never tackled soft set honey before and want to give it a go, the following instructions are a fairly idiot proof way of turning a bucket of finely granulated honey (oil seed rape which has set like concrete) into a soft set honey with a buttery consistency, fit for showing, with nothing more than a potato masher:



1. Warm the bucket of honey in the warming cabinet or oven at 40°C until it is soft but not runny. Test by squeezing the bucket sides - this could take several hours. Be careful of the oven temperature - you don't want to overheat it!
2. Cut into sections with a pallet knife to ease mashing
3. Macerate with the potato masher to break up the lumps.
4. Bottle immediately

There have been several excellent articles by BBKA News in recent years and these have been pulled together in the 'Honey' Special Issue of the BBKA News ([Link to Special Issue page of BBKA](#)), which tells you how to produce quality products. There is also an article on heating honey without harming it - very useful to know when it comes to the runny honey classes where the contents of the jar should be as clear as possible (easy to test with a powerful LED torch) and where incipient granulation is the downfall of many an exhibit in these categories.

Several of the classes in the honey show concentrate on jars of honey: run, soft set, matched pairs and chunk honey so there should be a category to suit everyone.

A word of warning: Before you go bottling your precious gold, make sure you have the correct sized jars with the right type of lids. Some branches buy these in and sell them to their members specifically so that they can enter the show. So, if you don't have any of your own jars of the right shape/size, it might be worth asking your branch secretary. Your entry - whatever it is - will be disqualified if it does not comply with the container rules.

If you'd like some more information, there is some excellent advice on exhibiting honey, from Carys Edwards on the BIBBA youtube channel at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fy34w9Msd\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fy34w9Msd_A)

### **Get involved**

The Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day is run by volunteers across the membership of WBKA and although the organisation of this year's event is well underway, we always welcome newcomers who would like to get involved. This is your show and your contribution, however small, will be very welcome.

We are a small, jolly team of beekeepers who like to get stuck in and do our bit. There are plenty of jobs from designing/printing marketing materials, organising trade stalls and writing editorials, through to the more public facing roles of coordinating honey show exhibit entries, stewarding and staffing stands on the day.

If you'd like to join our little team, please email Sophie Butcher ([wiltshoneyday@gmail.com](mailto:wiltshoneyday@gmail.com)) so that we can find the best role for you. You never know, you might even have some fun!

**Emma Morley**

## ***Beekeeping Tips for April***

**Inspections.** Start regular weekly inspections if the weather is suitable - we had snow on 6th April last year! We are still in the danger period when there is more brood than bees to care for it so take care. However if a colony has expanded quickly and drone brood is seen, action is needed. (There is an excellent article on First Inspections by Lynfa Davies NDB in the March edition of BBKA News page 91.)

**Make space.** The warm spell in March resulted in a few swarms being reported across the southern half of the country. If drones are seen and/or the brood box is full of bees, give the colony some space by adding a queen excluder with a super above. If there is oil seed rape within range perhaps add two supers.



**Replace old comb.** Each time a larva pupates it weaves a cocoon so over time the cells get smaller. They also get darker, are more prone to harbouring disease and make it very difficult to spot eggs. It is good practice to change comb every two years. This can be done all in one go with a shook swarm or Bailey Comb change. For most it's easier to remove a few dirty frames as they become available and replace them with new or recycled frames with foundation.

**Mark (and clip) the queen.** If you have an unmarked queen in a colony then now, when there are fewer bees, is the best time to find and mark her. It could save much frustration later in the season when finding her is a must. If you expect to find it difficult to conduct weekly inspections then clipping your queens will give you a few days flexibility. Practice on drones first to get your eye in. **Richard Oliver**



## ***Book Review***

### **English Pastoral**

By James Rebanks. Published by Penguin £9.99 285 pages

James Rebanks' family has been living and working in the Lake District for over 600 years. James left school at 16 and went to work on his father's rented farm in the Eden valley. Whenever he could he escaped to help his grandfather on the family farm in Matterdale 17 miles away. *English Pastoral* explores how his grandfather's traditional way of farming compares to the ever changing modern methods his father adopted in order to make sufficient profit to sustain both his farm and his family.

The first of three sections of this book, "Nostalgia", describes the impact of helping on his grandfather's farm has had on James's approach to farming throughout his life. The attention to small detail such as picking up stones after ploughing, repairing stone walls, the rotation of crops and the timing of introducing the sheep and then the cattle onto the pasture. By contrast in the second section, "Progress", we learn of the pressures his father is under continually to modernise, to reduce overall costs by making the best use of modern technology but at what cost to the quality of life in the countryside?

As he leads us through these changing and contrasting approaches, James is seeking to come to terms in his own mind as to how he wants to farm when the responsibility falls to him. What he decides is set out in the final section, "Utopia".

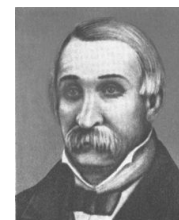
James Rebanks has produced a book that everybody who cares about the countryside should read, especially beekeepers. It has helped me understand some of the pressures faced by our today's farmers, particularly those with only a few hundred acres. There are ways to farming in harmony with the countryside but they are neither easy nor straightforward. **Richard Oliver**

## ***Beekeeping in Ukraine***

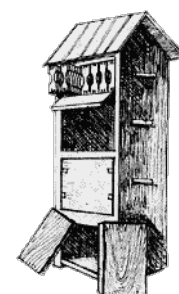
### ***Famous Beekeepers - Petro Prokopovych***

Continuing the series of articles on famous beekeepers, it seemed appropriate to look to Ukraine which boasts over 700,00 professional or hobbyist beekeepers. This is about 1.7% of the population as at the beginning of 2022. Together they produce 75,000 metric tons of honey, the fifth largest producer and the greatest amount of honey per capita in the world. It therefore comes as no surprise to discover that the accepted founder of commercial beekeeping was a Ukrainian.

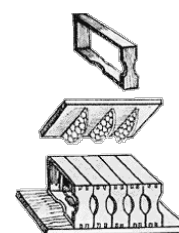
Petro Propokovych (1775-1850) was born near Baturyn about 130 miles east of Kyiv. From 1786 to 1794 he studied at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy before joining the military. He resigned his commission in 1798 and in retirement took an interest in the bees kept by his brother in log hives. Propokovych was fascinated and a year later decided to become a full-time beekeeper. Ten years later he was managing 580 colonies.



From the outset Propokovych sought to improve beekeeping practice so that manipulations did less harm to bees. By 1814 he had developed the first removable frame thus making it possible for the beekeeper to influence a colony's development. A crucial element was the production of the first, albeit crude, queen excluder. [Note: L'Abbé Collin is normally credited with this discovery but his version came 50 years later.] Propokovych's version was made of wood with apertures only passable by worker bees so for the first time pure honey could be stored in the frames above. The drawing shows only the top section of one of his hives having the moveable frames, i.e. in the form that we would now call a super. However movable frames could have been placed in all four sections.



Propokovych also taught beekeeping. He founded a beekeeping school which in its 53 years of existence produced over 700 qualified beekeepers all of whom were aware of the best practice available at the time. In 1855 the school had 2542 colonies! He also published over 60 articles in newspapers and magazines with some of his findings still considered important. For example he used to 'drive' bees into a new hive if they were suffering from foul brood, presumably the equivalent of the 'all apiary' shook swarm currently being used by the NBU's bee inspectors as a treatment for EFB.



Propokovych considered beekeeping the most profitable branch of agriculture: it certainly made him a rich man. At the peak he had 6,600 colonies all of his design. As the drawing shows, these were large structures. The logistics required to build and maintain them would have been significant. Then there is the workforce needed to tend the bees, extract, process and market the honey.

Propokovych's monument is in the village of Pal'chyky, which is the site of his school of beekeeping and his burial place. In 1989 the Ukrainian Institute of Beekeeping was named after him.

The current war in the country will undoubtedly have an impact on overall honey production but let's hope that across most of the country beekeepers are able to tend their colonies. However some will undoubtedly struggle. Ukrainian beekeepers have often entered our National Honey Show and indeed won many prizes. The National Honey Show has therefore set up an appeal to help beekeepers in the country. If you would like to contribute go to:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/National-Honey-Show>. **Richard Oliver**