



Wiltshire BKA

Honey Bee Times

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EFB looms: book now for Honey Bee Health Day

With European Foul Brood on our doorsteps again this year, you will want to book a place (FREE) at the Honey Bee Healthy Day on **Saturday 3 September** at Market Lavington Community Hall.

The day includes talks on bee diseases, updates on the latest Varroa treatments, and workshops in which you will be able to view frames contaminated with AFB and EFB up close so that you will be better able to identify these diseases should they appear in your hives.

Limited tickets (FREE) remain so book here now. <https://bit.ly/beehealthwilt>

Doors open 09.30 for a 10.00 start. Finish by 16.00. Tea and coffee available. Bring a packed lunch.

If you are coming, we'd appreciate some volunteers to help with teas and coffees and with car parking. Contact: Richard Oliver, raoliver.64@gmail.com

Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day – part 7

The Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day which takes place on **8th October 2022** at the Corn Exchange, Devizes. Do put the date in your calendar. As well as the chance to have a catch-up with fellow beekeepers and visit the trade stands, there are always some interesting talks by renowned specialists in their field. 2022 will be no exception - the line-up this year looks like this:

Bob Smith will be covering a couple of subjects:

- **Managing the Workers (Improving Productivity, Managing Good Industrial Relations and Avoiding Disputes)**

As beekeepers, we have responsibilities to the livestock in our care responsibilities that we discharge through active management of the bees. This talk looks at various aspects of the ways we can work successfully with our bees, recognising their needs while keeping within the constraints we might have set. What are the key issues we need to be aware of? What are the key skills we need to develop a successful partnership? This talk aims to make you think about what you want from your bees, and to set you on a path to achieving that.

- **Botany for beekeepers**

If you have a dog, a cat, a hamster or a parrot you will expect to buy them the food they require and feed them every day. If you have pigs, sheep, cattle or maybe a horse then you expect to provide them with grazing or in some other way, provide for their nutrition. If you have 50,000 bees in a box, it is not automatically the case that their nutrition is down to them alone. Okay, bees can fly up to 3 miles to locate suitable food but in some parts of the country, there may be nothing suitable in the immediate vicinity at certain times of the year. Accordingly, the location of your apiary is fundamentally important – does it allow year-round access to sources of nectar and pollen or are there going to be gaps? This is where botany for beekeepers comes in – not all plants are good for bees and those that are, have limited flowering periods so it is important for beekeepers to have at least some knowledge of their local forage, whether there is a continuous supply of pollen during the spring and whether there are good nectar plants that will give an excess of stored honey. This talk will explore some of the important families of flowers for bees, whether they be weeds, in herbaceous borders, or exist as shrubs and trees. The overall aim is for a beekeeper to assess the suitability of a possible apiary site, before putting in a colony of honey bees.

Bob has been keeping bees since the late 70's, currently managing 9 colonies in 14x12 WBC's, in 3 quite different apiaries. He was a Seasonal Bee Inspector for 6 years, is a holder of the NDB and the person with responsibility for education and training within the Medway Beekeepers Association. He is particularly involved in providing training opportunities for "Improver" beekeepers through both theoretical and practical handling courses. Bob's scientific training as an analytical chemist impacts his whole approach to beekeeping; experimentation and record-keeping are fundamental to chemistry and beekeeping!

Dr. Guy Parker: "The Future of the Bumblebee in the British Countryside"

Guy will focus on the bumblebee species, a little about their ecology, distribution and habitat needs - some of the species have some pretty specialist feeding methods. He'll cover their threats - habitat loss and pesticides, before moving to what can be done at the garden / field scale, including solar farms and some interesting research about the value of pollinators on these. Finally, he'll share some research studies with us together with a few case studies of successful reintroductions / population increases within the UK. Guy is founder and co-director of Wychwood Biodiversity Limited. He started his career in wildlife conservation in Africa and has been working with land managers in the UK since 2009, promoting biodiversity on private and public land. He is the UK's leading ecologist specialising in research into biodiversity management within solar farms.

Richard Rickitt: "So you think you want to keep bees"

This talk is included in the schedule to appeal to potential beekeepers amongst the non beekeeping audience at the show. An entertaining talk that will answer all those questions for anyone who is thinking about keeping bees. Richard lives in Corsham and keeps about thirty colonies of honey bees. He is the co-editor of BeeCraft and a member of Kennet Beekeepers Association.

We need you!

The whole event is only possible if volunteers get involved. We are still looking for people to help out on the day so that everyone has the best day possible. Jobs are split into separate areas and hourly slots so that the more people who get involved, the less there is for everyone to do. Even if it is only for an hour so that someone can have a lunch break, we need everyone to do their bit to help. The following is a list of the areas we still need volunteers for:

1. Tea and coffee
2. Children's corner
3. Candle rolling
4. Wiltshire Beekeepers Association stand and Hive Experience
5. Honey sales
6. Honey Beer sales
7. Handing out balloons

If you'd like to put your name down for a one hour slot, or even longer, please email Sophie Butcher (wiltshoneyday@gmail.com) so that we can start getting organised.

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

3rd September - WBKA Honey Bee Health Day. Market Lavington Community Hall, SN10 4DG. See details above.

8th October - WBKA Bee and Honey Day. The Corn Exchange, Market Square, Devizes. SN10 1HS. See details above.

Branch Events**Kennet BKA**

Wednesday 3rd August - 7.30 pm at Bishops Cannings Village Hall. Talk by Chris Rawlings on "Preparing honey and bee products for show".

Wednesday 7th September - 7.30 at Bishops Cannings Village Hall. Branch Honey Show judged by Claire O'Brian. While the show is being judged the film **Honeyland** will be shown. Hatizde with her ailing mother in the mountains of Macedonia, making a living cultivating honey using ancient beekeeping traditions.

Wednesday 5th October - 7.30 at Bishops Cannings Village Hall. KBKA AGM.

Melksham BKA

See website for details of meetings: <https://www.mbka.org/mbka-meetings>.

Swindon & District BKA

25th August - 7.30 Haydon Wick Club. Apiary Preparation for Winter- How to prepare for cold months.

29th September - 7.30 Haydon Wick Club. Annual Honey Show.

West Wilts BKA

10th September - Bratton Jubilee Hall. Annual Honey Show

National Event

27th-29th October. National Honey Show, Sandown Race Course, Esher, Surrey.
<https://www.honeyshow.co.uk>. The schedule is now available to download.

Visit to Bulford St Leonard's Primary School – July 2022

In 2021 Wiltshire Beekeepers were asked to provide a talk to a class of pupils at Bulford St Leonard's Primary school covering bees and pollinators. Unfortunately, due to illness and Covid the visit had to be postponed until this year. One beautifully hot day in July saw Kennet's chairman, Robert Carpenter Turner and myself travel across to meet with a class of 6 and 7 year old children who were impeccably behaved.

The visit started with an introduction to bees and pollinators generally, sharing the knowledge amongst the children of what pollinators do for us and what we in turn can do for them. The group learned about how the flowers attract the bees and how the bees very kindly move the pollen on their bodies as they travel from flower to flower. Great excitement ensued when we discussed and demonstrated a waggle dance. I have to say that there was some great dancing taking place in that classroom despite the soaring temperature.



The children found it interesting to learn about the types of bees in the hive and the fact that there are so many female workers compared to drones and just one queen! Or at least this is how it should be in the hive.

The second part of the presentation was a much more hands on experience for the children as Robert very carefully explained the component parts of the hive and how it assembles together. The parts were passed around the group to experience the touch, feel and smell of wax and the smoker caused the most interest of all. During the course of explaining the hive parts there were many questions asked by the children which was

encouraging to see their total engagement with the presentation.

After listening to the talk, the class split into small groups of 6 or so pupils who then moved outside to where the bees were safely located in the shade to prevent them over-heating. Much enjoyment was expressed when the queen was spotted wandering about across the frame. Whilst it is not mandatory to bring live bees to a school visit it does certainly enhance the experience and enjoyment for the children.

Back in the classroom, the remaining groups set about desktop activities with word searches, colouring, and other educational worksheets that I had downloaded from the BBKA website. The additional attraction of trying on bee suits and veils whilst holding smokers, hive tools and frames proved to be one of the highlights of the afternoon and even more successful than I had hoped for.

In a blink of an eye the afternoon had passed and it was time to pack up and return the bees to the apiary. I can honestly say that it was as enjoyable for us as it was for the children. To spare a few hours, engaging in the company of such lovely young well behaved people was a pleasure and the school and their teacher Mrs Finlay, should be immensely proud of them. Well done Bulford St Leonard's.

School visits are truly a rewarding thing to do, so if you would like to become involved, regardless of which branch of WBKA that you are a member of, please do not hesitate to get in touch with our chair, Sophie Butcher at Sophie@activeinfo.co.uk where your interest in visiting schools can be registered.

The Treasurer's Account

I suddenly find myself a Trustee of the Wiltshire Beekeepers Association, not something I ever imagined for myself. What follows is just a light hearted, personal reflection on that change.

Three years ago mortar bees move into our home. While figuring out how best to live with them, I happened across a beekeeping for beginners course. My daughter and I went along, hoping for an entertaining weekend, but not intending to keep bees. We were both swept up in the fascination of life in the colonies, the intimacy of handling bees and the invigoration of Fiona Robinson's cheerful expertise. Since then, the enthusiasm hasn't waned, although my limitations as a beekeeper have been exposed.

I take heart from academic studies which suggest that expertise in any complex skill takes about 10,000 hours of practice. So it is not surprising that I still fall short as a beekeeper. But when I was young I did my 10,000 hours with a large accountancy firm, and collected the qualifications. This was the platform for a career managing manufacturing and engineering. So while I am not yet a competent beekeeper, I trust myself as a competent book-keeper.

When I joined my local branch I mentioned that I am a Chartered Accountant and thought I might, in time, be asked to be the Treasurer. The invitation to be the County Treasurer came rather quickly. In my experience, when someone provides a flattering job offer you didn't expect, there is always a snag. As an accountant, the snag is usually that they have run out of money and hope that you have some magic trick that allows them to keep spending what they don't have. So when I said I was willing to be the Treasurer, I anticipated an empty bank balance and lots of demands on the funds.

What I actually found was quite different. WBKA didn't make huge claims on the money it had, and the bank balance was healthy enough. As far as I could see, most beekeeping related activity went on in the branches, also financially secure, and the County Association's primary activity was as a conduit between the branches and the BBKA. To be fair, Covid put a stop to some important activities, but at that time the major issue exercising the minds of those running WBKA was the possibility of conversion into a charity.

There are pros and cons in being a charity, and these deserved consideration, but the tone of the debate was producing more heat than light. I sensed we weren't going to make headway on any other topic until we could clear this up. I didn't, then, know enough about WBKA to judge the merits, but I knew I could help explore the issues with a level of expertise. So I volunteered for the sub-committee tasked with advising, chaired by Tony Awdry, a beacon of calm reason. With his background in the law and a bit of input from me, we could answer most questions.

In the end that sub-committee concluded that conversion made sense. Later, the Council came to the same conclusion. Finally, our Members had the chance to vote, and thought the same. As I write, we have undertaken most of the steps to put this into practice, we are just dotting Is and crossing Ts. So when you next pay your annual membership, if you pay enough income tax and choose to tick the box on the renewal form, we can claim gift aid on your BBKA, WBKA and branch capitation.

So our association is going to be part funded by our taxes. Obviously, in the scheme of the national debt, the sums involved are tiny, and I have no idea how someone can start to compare the competing merits of, say, the NHS or the war in Ukraine with my clumsy attempts at bee keeping. However, I cannot escape the feeling that with this money comes some moral obligation to use it well.

We have decided that all gift aid claimed will be passed to the branches to spend. That benefit to the branches comes with some expectations. Charities are not meant to hoard money, they are meant to spend it on the charitable cause they work for. So when the branches receive any money, they need to think about how they are going to spend it wisely, and then get on with it. As it goes, that's quite a nice problem to have, I think.

As a charity there are a few rules that WBKA has to follow, but our members need not care too much about that. Enough to say that our old Council has been replaced by a group of "Trustees" who have responsibility to ensure we do follow the rules. At the heart of this governance is a duty to make sure that WBKA and all its branches focus their energy on the stated objectives of the charity, which mirror those of the BBKA;

"..to advance the education of the public and beekeepers in the craft of beekeeping and promote the importance of bees in the environment."

There are 11 Trustees, two nominated by each branch and three officers of WBKA. The Trustees are not delegates of the branches, the law requires that all Trustees are personally responsible for their actions, but the intention is that the Trustees of each branch will try to determine the views of its members and insure these are represented in our work. If any Trustee doesn't do that, the members have the capacity to supersede them, which should keep all of us on our toes.

As the Trustees start to meet and get to know each other, I find my thoughts coming full circle, back to where they were when I first volunteered to be the Treasurer. I am thinking about the purpose of WBKA and its branches, and how best to spend the money we hold.

With the lifting of Covid restrictions, two important examples of WBKA's potential have come back to life:

- The County Honey Show ran successfully last year, we had a high level of footfall from members of the public, which was a great way of getting our message out. WBKA provided some working capital to help the team putting the show together, most of which was paid back after the show.
- We also had a presence at the Bath and West show, alongside contributions from neighbouring counties. Again, a great way to engage the public, and an event that really encourages excellence in our craft.

In both cases the activity only happened because of the efforts of volunteers. We are a small club of enthusiasts, so anything we do is actually done by members who volunteer. The most the Trustees of WBKA can do is to support and foster any enthusiasm. And generally, it would be best to let the members of each branch define what they feel motivated to do, only engaging from county level if we can actually help. So put simply, I think the value of WBKA is probably as a vehicle to coordinate or resource any activities that an individual branch would struggle to do alone.

Which brings me to a request to everyone. We do have a little money in the bank, and we have an obligation to spend this on furthering our charitable objectives. I have been asking around for ideas for the centrally held funds I manage, and have had a few good suggestions:

- Development of an interactive exhibit that could be taken to shows or schools, something exciting.
- Providing framework support for school visits. Offering any resources or guidance needed to make members feel secure working with young people and to make it easy for schools to welcome us in.
- Setting up an innovation fund that members can apply to if they want to trial new techniques or technologies on behalf of the association.
- Sponsoring training in the craft of beekeeping, perhaps refunding fees for successful candidates.
- Funding loans to branches wishing to invest in their apiaries.

I intend to discuss these and any other ideas I can find with the Trustees. I suspect similar exchanges may be happening, or will happen, at branch level.

If anyone is still reading this ramble, and you have any ideas on how we might advance the objectives of our charity by deploying a little money, we need to hear your thoughts. You can take them directly to your branch officers if that makes sense, but if your idea could benefit from a bit of county support, you can discuss these with any Trustee, or email me directly. Don't second guess the strength of your idea, everyone's input is welcome, and your little idea might start a conversation.

Now, I better go and find out how those bees of mine are doing?

ceri.gosling@gmail.com Treasurer WBKA

Beekeeping Tips for August

Winter Preparation. 1st August for some is the start of their beekeeping year as they focus their beekeeping activities towards helping their bees survive the winter months. My first act is to photocopy my records, clean my laminated record sheets and record the details of the most recent inspection.

Clearing Honey. Many of you will have already removed and extracted your surplus honey. Having done so do check that all your colonies have sufficient stores especially if this dry spell continues.

Treat for Varroa. With the honey crop removed now is the time to treat for Varroa.

Wasps.

- Wasps are already starting to pester the weakest colony in the apiary. It's a good time to set up a wasp trap preferably a little away from the apiary.
- To deter wasps reduce the entrances to one or two bee spaces so that the bees can defend more easily.

Disease Inspection. It is also a good time to conduct a disease inspection for all your colonies.

Unite Weak Colonies. Finally now is the time to unite any weak colonies but only if they are healthy.

Wiltshire BKA Council Meeting 21 June 2022

Wiltshire BKA Council meet in Bishops Cannings Village Hall on 21 June 22, with four members attending online. The key points agreed are set out below.

Election of Officers

Chair	Sophie Butcher	(KBKA)
Vice Chair	Peter May	(KBKA)
Treasurer	Ceri Gosling	(KBKA)
Secretary	Amanda Leworthy	(WWBKA)

Appointment to Key Roles

Membership Secretary	Alison Daniels	(MDBKA)
Education & Exam Officer	Richard Oliver	(KBKA)
Editor Honey Bee Times	Richard Oliver	(KBKA)
BBKA ADM Delegate	David Newell	(WWBKA). Also rep to South West
Beekeeping Forum		
Webmaster	Post Vacant	
AHAT Co-ordinator & Spray Liaison Co-ordinator	Peter May	(KBKA) wef 1st October 2022

Officers' Reports

Chair. WBKA is now a CIO. Vote of thanks to Tony Awdry and his committee for their work on achieving this goal.

Secretary. Somerset BKA have invited members to participate in their Honey Show in August.

Treasurer. WBKA's accounts would close that evening and re-open as the CIO's accounts the following day. Council agreed the manner in which this transfer would occur allowing for the monies to travel with each branch.

Membership Secretary. Membership is just short of 500, very similar to last year.

Examination and Education Officer. It was agreed that the Honey Bee Health Day on 3rd September would be free to all but should be a ticketed event to avoid overcrowding the hall. Tickets would only be available to WBKA members initially but opened to neighbouring associations nearer the time depending on take-up.

Honey Bee Times. Articles, photos etc for the HBT are welcomed at any time.

Bath & West Show. The event had gone well. Somerset won the inter-county cup so there was an appeal for more entries from WBKA members next year. Candle rolling made £2,000 and honey sales £6,500. Thanks were due to Alan Hepper, Amanda Leworthy and Gloria Pilz for their help throughout the event.

Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day.

Preparations are well under way. Bob Smith, Guy Parker and Richard Rickitt have been confirmed as speakers.

A new trophy to be known as the Geraldine Lenert Trophy will be introduced for the Best Wax Exhibit.

Proposition to be moved by the Chair

It was proposed by the Chair and agreed unanimously that, with effect from today, 21 June 2022:

- (a) the management of the Association is formally transferred to the already elected Officers and Trustees of the CIO created on the 26 April 2022, and
- (b) all those who are currently serving in functional posts for this Association's Council will continue to serve in those same posts and on the same terms for the time being until ratified or otherwise by the Trustees of the CIO.
Note that under the CIO Constitution all paid-up members of the Association are with effect from 26 April 2022 paid-up members of the CIO in their same categories of membership until the end of the 2021/22 membership year, and
- (c) the net assets of this Association will be donated to the new CIO with immediate effect on the understanding the net assets currently controlled by each branch of this Association will be transferred to the control of the corresponding branch of the new CIO.

This therefore was the final meeting of WBKA Council based on the old constitution. There followed the first meeting of the Trustees who in future will convene under the CIO constitution.