



Wiltshire BKA

Honey Bee Times

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Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day 2022

The Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day held in the Corn Exchange, Devizes on Saturday 8th October was the best ever. Over 500 hundred members of the public attended along with scores of beekeepers from Wiltshire and beyond, thus helping Wiltshire Beekeepers fulfil its charitable aim *"to advance the education of the public and beekeepers in the craft of beekeeping and promote the importance of bees in the environment."*

The Talks

For potential and existing beekeepers there was a series of talks hosted by Richard Rickitt (top photo), a member of Kennet BKA and co-editor of BeeCraft magazine.



Bob Smith NDB gave two talks. The first entitled *"Managing the Workers: Improving Productivity, Managing Good Industrial Relations and Avoiding Disputes"*. This talk looked at the ways beekeepers can best work in harmony with their bees. It takes time, skill and experience which can be achieved by taking every opportunity to look at other people's bees.



Bob's second talk was on *"Botany for Beekeepers"*. There is a view that if you train as a beekeeper you are also training as a botanist and entomologist. He made the case for gaining at least some knowledge in the local forage and its availability all year round before covering some of the important families of flowers for bees.

Dr Guy Parker is a leading ecologist specialising in biodiversity management within solar farms. He has worked closely with the event's main sponsor, Eden Renewables, helping them plan the layout of their solar farms for the maximum benefit of the local flora and fauna. His talk this year focussed on helping develop and maintain viable habitats for bumblebees that have been threatened by changes in farming practices in recent years.

In between these talks Richard Rickitt gave the talk aimed at potential beekeepers: *'So you think you want to keep bees'*. This was a no holds barred talk covering the joys of keeping bees but also the commitment required successfully to manage your colonies. Some of those listening may have decided that it is not for them, or at least not just yet. For those that wish to proceed there was active encouragement to enrol with their local beekeeping association.

The Activities

The activities in the main hall provided something of interest for all the family. The highlight for many was the virtual hive with a video of bees at work inside the hive and examples of comb and beekeeping equipment for people to handle. Wiltshire beekeepers were on hand to answer the plethora of questions from the public with the most searching often coming from the younger visitors.

Candle rolling was popular and solved the problem of a Christmas present for a relative. Local beekeepers were delighted by the popularity of their honey recording record sales. The many exhibitors selling bee related artworks, cosmetics using the products of the hive and bee equipment. There was also a number of stands representing charities linked to beekeeping and the environment such as Bees Abroad and the Woodland Trust. Last but not least was the Honey Beer specially brewed for the show by Wadworth's, another of our valued sponsors.

Speaking to many of the stallholders as they packed up, all reported having had a successful and enjoyable day so hopefully we will welcome them back next year.

The Honey Show

Competition was fierce in this year's Honey Show with the number of entries up from 175 to 303. National Show Judge, Hazel Blackburn and assistant Bridget Knutson were very impressed by the standard of the entries which, for some classes, made it very difficult to select the prize winners. After many hours they made their decisions and the Trophy Winners are listed below.

Trophy Winners

- Stephen Double, KBKA- Novice Cup for the best jar of honey by someone new to beekeeping
- Katie Bollen, KBKA - aged 12 won the Junior class with her jar of honey
- Francesca Kimpton, KBKA - The King Shield for the best jar of honey in the show
- Francesca Kimpton also won the Blue Ribbon for Best in Show, awarded by the BBKA judge for her counter display of a minimum of three types of bee product. This is a prestigious award that can only be made by a national show judge when there are over 100 exhibits in the show.
- Alan Hepper, WWBKA - Kennet Perpetual Trophy for best entry in show (not honey) for his three wax blocks



- Chris Rawlings, WWBKA - the Norman Lovegrove Memorial Trophy for the best bottle of mead (Melomel)
- Chris Rawlings also won the Methuen Cup, awarded to the individual with the most points in all classes
- Sue Rawlings, WWBKA - The Geraldine Lenert Trophy for the best wax exhibit. A new trophy, this was carved especially for the show by sculptor Penny Cushman, from Minty, in memory of Geraldine Lenert, who died last year.
- Rob Bottoms, KBKA - The David Wicks Cup for the best frame of honey for extraction
- The much-coveted Applegate Trophy for the Wiltshire branch with the most points in the show was awarded to West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association.
- Tony Awdry, MBKA won the Teal Cup for outstanding service to the Wiltshire beekeeping community.



Post Script - The National Honey Show 27-29 October

Congratulations to:

Sue Rawlings who won the Liz & Mike Duffin Cup for her display of beeswax flowers. Alan Hepper was second.

Chris Rawlings who won the Mead Makers Mazer for his bottle of dry mead.

Alan Hepper's honey label design gained him another second.

Conclusion

Successful shows such as our Bee and Honey do not just happen. Congratulations to Sophie Butcher, chair of Wiltshire BKA and the show's organising committee, together with her committee members; the many members who volunteered to help on the day and the show's sponsors.

Thoughts are already turning to next year's show. If you would like to be involved please contact Sophie Butcher (wiltshirehoneyday@gmail.com).

Photographs.

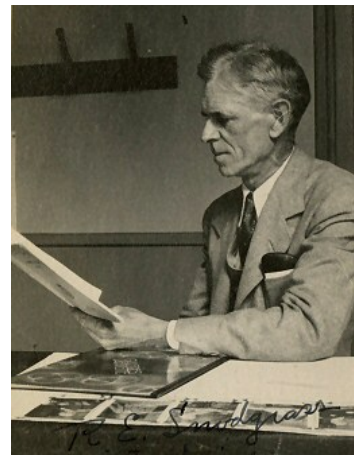
The photo of Richard Rickitt outside the Corn Exchange was one of 12 photos taken by Trevor Porter. All can be viewed at: **Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day an un-bee-lievable success | Wiltshire Times.**

Photos of the trophy winners by Richard Oliver.

R E Snodgrass and H A Dade

Some years ago the BBKA removed the historical elements from the syllabus from the seven modules. In 2022 these were reinstated. Over the winter months some members from across the county will be joining a study group to look at Module 5: Honey Bee Biology. Section 1 of the syllabus requires candidates to describe “the contributions of R.E.Snodgrass and H.A.Dade to the understanding of honey bee biology.” Both studied the honey bee in depth and published their findings which have been recognised internationally.

Robert Evans Snodgrass (5 July 1875 - 4 September 1962) was an American entomologist and artist who made important contributions to the fields of arthropod morphology, anatomy, evolution and metamorphosis¹.



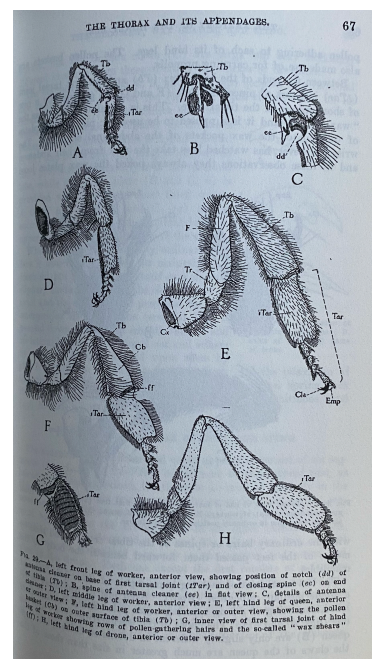
Snodgrass was interested in biology at a young age and practiced taxidermy on birds. His family sent him to a religious prep school where his studies included drawing. The school forbade the teaching of evolution and biology was not taught. The rebel, Snodgrass, read Darwin, Huxley and Spenser which led to arguments with his parents and a *persona non grata* in the local church.

As a student at Stanford, Snodgrass was bitten by the “entomology bug” in his studies of the Mallophaga (biting lice) under VL Kellogg. His illustration abilities helped him in his studies of Mallophaga mouthparts. His illustrations were detailed, accurate and were important to making the case for the close relationship between Mallophaga and bark lice.

In 1910 he submitted a manuscript entitled ‘The Anatomy of Bees’ to the U.S. Department of Agriculture which was accepted for publication on the grounds that: “it embodies the results of detailed studies and should prove of value as bringing to the beekeeper reliable information concerning an insect of such great economic importance and also furnishing a sound basis in devising new and improved practical manipulations.”²

In writing the forward for Dade’s book in 1962³, Eva Crane describes Snodgrass’s book as “strong meat for those with a formal training in zoology (Snodgrass’s degree was in zoology), and there has been no up to date book for other beekeepers, amateur naturalists and younger students. Further Snodgrass had a penchant for abbreviations in his figures that requires a search of the text to decipher (see drawings).”

Snodgrass was at heart a morphologist and his most famous publication internationally is *The Principles of Insect Morphology* published in 1935. Overall he published six books and 76 scientific articles.

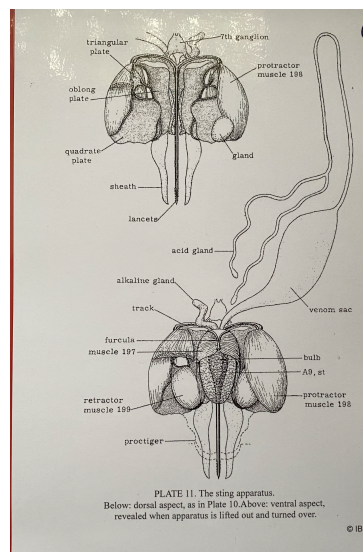


Harry Arthur Dade (4 September 1895 - 26 July 1978). Major Dade was studying natural sciences at the Royal College of Science in Kensington (now fully integrated with Imperial College, London) when in 1915 he was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery. He served in Egypt before being injured and discharged in 1916.⁴

He was by profession a mycologist (the scientific study of fungi). He graduated in 1921 and joined the British Colonial Office and worked in Ghana (then the Gold Coast) doing research work on tropical crop diseases. It was during his time in Ghana that his interest in beekeeping first became aroused. On his return to Britain in 1935 he became the Assistant Director of the Commonwealth Mycological Institute at Kew until his retirement in 1960.

Dade was a superb teacher and his extra mural classes on honey bee anatomy at the University of London and elsewhere led to widespread interest in the subject. In 1952 Eva Crane, then Director of the Bee Research Association received Dade's manuscript for *The Dissection of the Honey Bee* but some of the drawings were missing so the manuscript went into storage. A few months after Dade retired Eva Crane suggested to Dade that the project be reviewed and updated. The 1962 edition of *Anatomy and Dissection of the Honey Bee* is the result.

Eva Crane goes on to say: "The book supplies a long-felt want as a guide to practical work, with diagrams designed as a practical aid, and with the necessary systematic anatomical background. It will be of immeasurable value to those studying for the National Diploma in Beekeeping and for examinations of the British and Scottish Beekeepers' Associations. It will also be welcomed by many other classes of students, and by teachers in schools and colleges. The clear style on which the author's thorough and wide knowledge of the subject is presented, and his first class diagrams, will make the book of special value to them and many others. The author remarks in the opening chapter that the interest and beauty of the complicated mechanisms of the honey bee make it relatively easy to learn about them. This may be so, to someone with specialised training: Mr Dade's contribution - by reason of his great gifts as a teacher, writer and draughtsman - is to make it true for a very much wider circle of readers."⁵



Dade later moved to join his son in Australia. There he equipped a small laboratory in his home and for several years studied the corophilous fungi of the region.

References:

1. R.E. Snodgrass. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Evans_Snodgrass.
2. Preface to *The Anatomy of the Honey Bee* by R. E. Snodgrass (page 3).
3. and 5. Forward to the 1962 edition of *Anatomy and Dissection of the Honey Bee* by Eva Crane.
4. Harry Arthur Dade entries via https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/?name=Harry+Arthur_Dade&birth=1895 and other links.

The Anatomy of the Honey Bee by R.E. Snodgrass is printed in UK by Amazon and available via its website.

Anatomy & Dissection of the Honey Bee by H.A.Dade is published by IBRA. Laminated copies of the 20 plates in A4 are also available from IBRA.

Beekeeping Tips for November

Check for Predators.

Wasps. The last week of October was incredibly mild and the ivy was covered with insects collecting nectar and pollen before winter sets in. Wasps seemed to be predominant. These were probably queen wasps as they had large abdomens as they build up their fat bodies before going into hibernation. They were also targeting a nuc in the apiary. If we have a mild winter, wasps could be even more of a nuisance next year.

Mice. Mice can negotiate very small entrances so ensure your entrances are no more than 8mm high of fix a mouse guard.

Green Woodpeckers. Green woodpeckers visit the garden almost daily but thankfully seem to find sufficient food in the lawns and no need to attack the hives in the apiary. However that could change so best check regularly and add a layer of wire netting or plastic sheeting as protection if necessary.

Stores

The mild weather has enabled the bees to fly on most days recently and the bees have been active on the ivy. It is good practice to heft your hives regularly by lifting either side of each colony in turn. Some will be difficult to budge others will be much easier and it is these that will benefit from some fondant placed above the hole in the crown board. You will need a shallow eke to make room below the roof.



Queen wasp (?) feasting before hibernating



Hefting a Colony

Varroa

You will probably have finished any autumn treatment for Varroa some weeks ago but did it work? If you have open mesh floors then use insert the Varroa board for at least 7 days to check for mite drop. Use the calculator on BeeBase (<https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/BeeDiseases/varroaCalculator.cfm>) to decide whether you need to treat. That said experience has led to me adopting a belt and braces approach so I try and use the end of a cold spell in December or very early January to trickle treat with oxalic acid. The aim is to find a time when there is no or very little brood in the colonies so that the mites on the bees are dislodged. Once we move into January the days are getting longer and queens will start to lay again, assuming they stopped.

Dates for the Diary

Wiltshire BKA

31st January 2023 - WBKA AGM and Winter Lecture. Details to follow.

Branch Events

Kennet BKA - Meetings held on first Wednesday of the month at Bishops Canning Village Hall
Friday 2nd December - 7 pm. Conservative Club at 30 Long Street, Devizes SN10 1NW.
Wednesday 4th January - 7.30pm. Bee Chat - beekeepers discussion evening.

Melksham BKA

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

Swindon BKA. Meetings held at the Haydon Wick Club.
Thursday 24th November - Speaker to be confirmed.

West Wilts BKA

Monday 7th November at Bratton Jubilee Hall. AGM followed by open forum meeting.
Tuesday 20th December - 7.30 pm Zoom. Martin Hann & Claire Densley (Bee Department Buckfast Abbey) "What the books don't tell you and why the bees change their mind."

National Events

21-23 April 2023. BBKA Spring Convention. Harper Adams University, Shropshire.
 Three days of excellent talks and workshops by some of the best beekeepers nationally and internationally.
1-3 June 2023 - Royal Bath & West Show at the Showgrounds, Shepton Mallet.

Education & Training

Module Exams

November 2022. Good luck to those sitting exams later this month.

March 2023. It is not too late to join the study group that will be covering Module 5: Honey Bee Biology. There will be six sessions during which we will work through the syllabus and fill in sessions to go over topics again as necessary. All sessions will be on Zoom starting at 7pm on Monday 21st November.

Improvers Course

There is a big gap between the Basic and the General Husbandry assessments. There are also very few opportunities either within the county or nationally for beekeepers to improve their knowledge and practical skills.

The plan is to run a mainly practical course designed to enable members from across the county to become better beekeepers. The course will also help prepare for the Bee Health and the General Husbandry Certificates. Topics will include: handling skills, comb change, disease, swarm prevention/control and queen rearing. Priority will be given to those who have the Basic Certificate.

If you are interested in attending either the study group or Improvers Course please let me know (raoliver.64@gmail.com.)

Beginners

New members, who are waiting to start a Beginners or Introduction to Beekeeping course in the New Year, may be looking for a book to whet their appetite. There are many beekeeping books written for beginners but two stand out.

Bee Manual by Claire and Adrian Waring is a step-by-step guide to keeping bees. The late Adrian Waring was one of the few people to hold the National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB) while his wife Claire was for many years the Editor of BeeCraft magazine. The photos are excellent and complement the text to such an extent that you will find yourself routinely referring to this publication during your first few years as a beekeeper. It is published by Haynes Publishing and widely available in hard or soft back. The Foreword is by the late Bill Turnbull.

The BBKA Guide to Beekeeping by Ivor Davis NDB and Roger Cullum-Kenyon. Both Ivor and Roger were involved in developing the BBKA's 'Course in a Case' programme. The case contains a manual, presentation materials and props useful for a tutor running a class. This guide was designed to be a companion manual to the Beginners course. It is an ideal reference for students attending a Beginners course, particularly one based on the 'Course in a Case' format. Like the Bee Manual it is a valuable reference source for many aspects of beekeeping. Published by Bloomsbury it is widely available. The photo is of the first edition. The second edition was published in 2018.

