

West Wilts BKA

News

News, the planned activities, and some advice for members of West Wiltshire Beekeepers Association



The above photo shows a bee on ivy – I have seen bees remarkably busy in the garden until quite recently – particularly on mahonia....

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This is your 'go to' section that will describe the things that you need to know about.

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The 'fun bits': news and reports.

We have had a busy few months recently, haven't we? What with the shows and the bees out quite late this year with the mild weather.

Winter is almost with us now – and not far away from Christmas.

Have a look at the date and menu for the WWBKA Branch dinner – put it in your diary – some details are in this newsletter – more details to follow next month.

Sending best wishes to you all for a happy and peaceful Christmas season.

Diary of Events

Apiary dates will be announced at a later date...

January

South West Beekeeping Forum (SWBKF) 2nd AHAT Conference. Saturday 6th January at Bridgewater.

WWBKA Committee meeting. 19:30 Monday 15th January Venue Jubilee Hall, Bratton.

Branch dinner – Thursday 25th January. Venue: The View, Westbury Golf Club, Coach Road, Westbury BA13 4LX – more details on page 3 of this newsletter

April

BBKA Spring Convention. Friday 12th – Sunday 14th April

May/June 2024

Bath and West Show Thursday 30th May to Saturday 1st June

September

Branch Honey Show – date and venue tbc

October 2024

Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day Saturday 12th October

National Honey Show Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th October

Need to know

Lectures

There is an off-season lecture to be delivered on Zoom; links will be sent to members about a week before each session is scheduled to take place.

Roger Patterson - Observation: Interpret What You See

Wednesday 17th January

Bob Smith - Keep It Clean

Wednesday 20th February

Good to Know

KEEP THE DATE!

WWBKA Branch dinner - details follow below:

Date: 25th January 2024. Thursday

Time: 6.30pm for 7.00pm, carriages 10pm

Venue: The View, Westbury Golf Club, Coach Road, Westbury BA13 4LX

Parking: Ample, Disabled parking available

Price: £30 per person, 3 courses, including a welcome drink

As in previous years, prepayment needed, menu choices ahead of time, cash bar on the evening.

Welcome Drink

Starter

Sweet Potatoes and Butternut Soup

or

Chicken Liver Pate with Ale Chutney & Herb Croutes or Prawn cocktail

Main

Roast Chicken,

or

Nut Roast

With Roast Potatoes, Parsnip, Carrots, Red Cabbage, Stuffing, Yorkshire pudding, gravy

or

Oven baked salmon

With crushed new potato cake, spinach & hollandaise sauce

Desserts

Salted Honey Cheesecake

or

Warm Brownie and Ice cream

or

Sticky Toffee pudding and Ice Cream

Details for payment will be announced in the January WWBKA newsletter

Honey Show Devizes - Thinking back to the recent success of the Honey Show in Devizes, The WWBKA would once more like to send special thanks to all the volunteers and unsung heroes - one of those people in particular is Kelly Sheaff (Honey Show Secretary) – not sure how we would manage without your help, we all appreciate your help and expertise.

West Wiltshire BKA AGM 2023 – report of proceedings....

The West Wiltshire Beekeepers' Annual General Meeting 2023 was held in the Jubilee Hall, Bratton on November 7th, 2023. This year there were approximately forty attendees – the attendance sheet was not signed by all attendees, so the number may be slightly inaccurate. As in previous years the production of reports before the meeting allowed for a rapid yet thorough progress through business, with the opportunity to ask questions throughout procedures.

The committee elections were conducted with two of the 2021 committee standing down, but an additional three members offering to stand.

David Newell stood down as President but remains a Trustee. David Raines stood down as Chair and was elected as President. Nina Wilton stood down from her position as Secretary, the role of Training Coordinator is currently under modification – more details will be published in the newsletter when they are available. Alan Ridout was elected as the new Chairperson. Cressida Hemmings stood down from the committee. Special thanks to committee members retiring from the committee for their hard work and commitment.

The full list of officers follows:

President- David Raines

Chair – Alan Ridout

Vice chair – Gerren Mayne

Apiary Manager – Den Pictor

Secretary – Amanda Leworthy

Treasurer and Membership Secretary – Gloria Pilz

AHAT Coordinator – Ken Wilson

Newsletter Editor – Elaine Mairis

Librarian – Alex Sparke

(West Wiltshire BKA AGM 2023 – report of proceedings... contd)

Swarm Liaison Officer – David Newell

Education and Training Officer + Mentoring Officer - tbc

Webmaster – Martin McDermott

Honey Show Coordinator – tbc

Honey Show Secretary - Kelly Sheaff

Additional committee members:

Liz Gwinnell, Chris Rawlings, David Raines, Danny Young

The meeting completed and presentations of the trophies for various recent show successes was undertaken.

Unlike last year when the venue was changed at short notice those attending were not treated to the Bratton Silver Band – that was disappointing! Many thanks for the support and interest of all those attending.

Vacancies open

Following the recent Trustees Meeting, the following vacancies have become available. **The deadline for applications is 17 December 2023** to Amanda Leworthy at secretary@wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk.

1. WBKA Treasurer - there is interest in this position, however the vacancy is open to all members.
2. Examinations Officer - there is interest in this position, however the vacancy is open to all members.
3. Education Officer
4. Honey Bee Times Editor
5. Spray Liaison Officer - there is interest in this position, however the vacancy is open to all members.
6. Webmaster

Membership

We are reminded by the Membership Secretary that the membership year runs from 1st October – 30th September each calendar year.

It is hoped that members will renew their membership and we look forward to seeing members in the coming year at branch meetings, and at Branch apiary sessions next spring and summer. If you have any questions, please send an e-mail to Membership-WWBKA@outlook.com and the Membership Secretary will respond.

(Membership contd.)

It seems that at the time of the AGM, thirty-five members paying their dues for 2021- 2022 are outstanding their payment for the current membership year. Meet the committee

Meet your committee....

We are starting a new committee year, and I thought now would be an ideal time to start a new "feature" for the newsletter. I am hoping that committee members will each answer the same questions – you will find out a bit more of the backgrounds of the committee members that serve you.

For this month, these are the responses of David Raines, the outgoing Chairperson – he is now the WWBKA President and a committee member.

Question - What is your role on the WWBKA Committee? **Answer** - President

Question - How did you become interested in keeping bees? **Answer** - My youngest daughter accused me of being obsessed with work and needing a hobby, so she gave me a "Beginners Course" as a Christmas present.

Question - How long have you been keeping bees? **Answer** - 15 years

Question - How many hives do you have, and which hive is/are your favourite? (Why?) **Answer** - 6 hives. 4 14x12, a poly nuc and a Top Bar hive. 14 x 12 is favourite as standardised parts.

Question - Do you like your honey - what do you do with it? **Answer** - I give honey to family and friends. Also, dinner party gifts in presentation box for two jars.

Question - What has been the most useful tip given to you that you would like to pass on? **Answer** - If in doubt - DO NOTHING. The honey bees have been around for thousands of years swarming and producing honey without any help from we humans.

And finally – introducing a **monthly book review** from a WWBKA member.

(From the library) **Title - Guide to bees and honey. Author - Ted Hooper. THIRD EDITION. Fully Revised.**

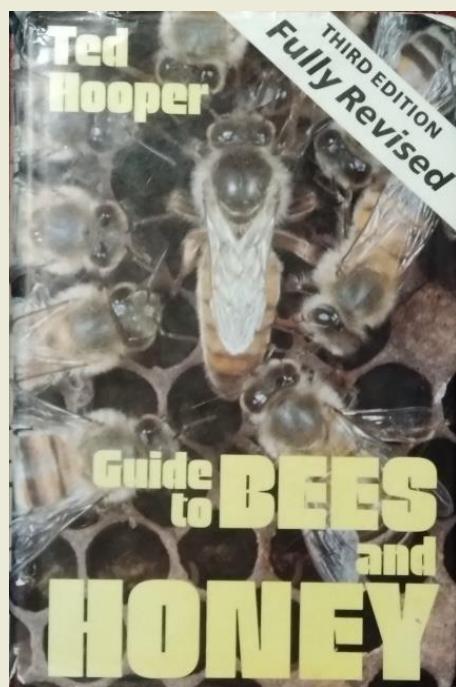
Each time I see a copy of this book it is like seeing an old friend.

For many years this was my 'go to' reference for beekeeping, and I still refer to it now.

The branch library has several versions, not all of which include the update for varroa, but that does not really matter - that information can be picked up elsewhere and it changes quite frequently as new treatments come along.

It really is an excellent grounding to beekeeping and my hive records are based around "Hooper's five questions" that dictate what I need to do urgently, what I need to consider next time I visit and what I can leave for a few weeks.

Whilst it may seem a little dated in places, if you are starting out or just want to refresh your knowledge, this is a book I would recommend. It covers many aspects of beekeeping from the natural history, the equipment you need, handling the bees, the year's work and onto queen rearing and forage. This is one of the books I would recommend every beekeeper takes a peep between the pages to see if it is something that should sit on their bookshelf. Please contact the WWBKA librarian if you would like to borrow a copy.



Many thanks to Den Pictor – our Apiary Manager – for the following contribution.

One to wonder about....

Late in September, I had a call out to attend to a swarm of bees they said but on arrival, I found it to be nothing more than a cast so I was a little disappointed though as I was there I ought to “do something” with them - so gathered them up into a box and set off for home.

While driving and thinking about what I was going to do with so few bees at this time of year, I eventually produced the idea that I would put them into a nice wooden mating box that I just happened to have lying around so put some fondant in the feeder and shook them in.

The next problem was the high populations of wasps that seemed to be around everywhere. I decided to put them in one of my out apiaries. I thought they would rob this small number of bees out in no time at all -but to my amazement, they survived and on inspection three weeks later there were a few eggs.



The really interesting thing about this will be to see how they overwinter in the nuc – or if they perish – Den has promised to give us further news in the spring – let us keep our fingers crossed!

Do not forget to keep the bees supply of fondant topped up – The apiary has some fondant you can buy, you can contact Den to arrange collection of it, (payment is through the treasurer).

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: Contact our Librarian (either direct or 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