

The Bee Conference Programme

The Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester



Friday 15th September

15:00 onwards Arrival, registration, tea and coffee. Staging of honey show.

16:15 to 16:30 Welcome address

16:30 to 17:30 The Demeree and more...

Anne Rowberry

17:40 to 18:40 The importance of drones

Lynne Ingram

19:00 to 20:15 *Dinner*

20:30 to 21:30 Beekeeping questions and answers session

Colin Pavey

21:30 onwards *Social time & bar*

Saturday 16th September

07:30 to 08:45 *Breakfast for residents and day visitors reception*

09:15 to 10:15 Chemical ecology of honey bees and how it is exploited by varroa

Prof. Stephen Martin

10:15 to 11:00 *Coffee / tea. Start Honey Show Judging*

11:00 to 12:00 Pollen - super-food for honey bees

Bob Smith NDB

12:10 to 13:10 Reactive swarm control

Wally Shaw

13:10 to 14:30 *Lunch & set up workshops*

14:30 to 17:00 Workshops

19:00 to 20:30 *Conference Dinner*

20:30 to 21:30 After dinner speaker. Stray thoughts of an aspiring bee master

David Maslen

Sunday 17th September

07:30 to 08:30 *Breakfast for residents and day visitors reception*

08:30 to 09:15 *Inter-denominational service (optional)*

09:30 to 10:30 Sustainable bee improvement

Jo Widdicombe

10:30 to 11:00 *Coffee / tea. View honey show*

11:00 to 12:00 How plants solve crime?

Dr. Michael Keith-Lucas

12:10 to 13:10 Bee genetics explained... simply

Margaret Murdin NDB

13:10 to 14:30 *Lunch followed by honey show results, prizes and raffle draw*

15:30 onwards Depart

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Anne Rowberry

After gaining an MEd at Bristol University and Diploma in Counselling at Reading University, Anne moved from teaching on to work for a charity. She joined a club and improved her knowledge working through the BBKA modules, microscopy and the husbandry exams, becoming consequently a Master Beekeeper. Anne has 20 hives, enjoys teaching beekeeping to pupils at a local school and is also the Chair of both Avon and Frome Beekeeping associations. What she loves about bees most is that they do not read the books and keep us on our toes.

The Demeree and More ...

Friday 15th Sept 16:30-17:30

A brief look at the history and development of the Demeree system and how it has added to the resources available to Beekeepers. This manipulation appeared to go out of fashion but the value of it is becoming more apparent. We will consider how it can be modified and adapted to serve many purposes and solve some equipment issues.



Lynne Ingram

Lynne has been keeping bees for over 30 years, and currently runs about 30 colonies in 5 apiaries. She is a Master Beekeeper, a BBKA examiner and Correspondence course tutor. Lynne is passionate about bees, and loves being able to pass that passion on to other people.

The Importance of Drones

Friday 15th Sept 17:40-18:40

Drones are important in the honeybee colony, but are often ignored in hive inspections, or sacrificed. This talk will look at the role of drones in the honeybee colony. We will also look at the anatomy, biology and mating behavior of drones, and the mysteries of Drone Congregation Areas.



Colin Pavey

Colin graduated University of Portsmouth with degree in Business studies. Having worked as a commercial manager, with wide experience of sales and marketing in a range of markets, he is now the Regional Bee Inspector for the Western England Region, managing the team of Seasonal Bee Inspectors. Colin is the President of Herefordshire Beekeepers Association and is involved in teaching beekeepers at all levels.

Beekeeping questions and answers panel

Friday 15th Sept 20:30-21:30

Open session to ask our panel questions on beekeeping.

Disease management – Workshop

Saturday 16th Sept 14:30

An overview of the ways you can proactively manage your colonies to keep them healthy and thriving. In this workshop, we will look at the common pests and disease of the honey bees and the recommended techniques available to beekeepers for their management and control.



Prof. Stephen Martin

Stephen has studied social insects for most of his career, with two areas of specialisation the 'pest and diseases of honeybees' and 'chemical ecology of ants'. He holds a Chair in Social Entomology in the School of Environmental and Life Sciences at Salford University. Prior to that, he worked at Sheffield University, the National Bee Unit and in Japan conducting research into hornets. His team of researchers at Salford, funded in part by beekeepers, are using the very latest molecular methods to read the genetic code of the DWV virus. The aim is to understand why some honey bee colonies have become naturally tolerant to Varroa and see if this information can provide beekeepers with a long-term solution to the problem.

The chemical ecology of honey bees and how it is exploited by varroa

Saturday 16th Sept 09:15-10:15

Recognition is fundamental for all behaviours, and in insect's chemical communication is the main mode of recognition. However, if parasites can mimic the smell of their host they can remain there undetected. We know this chemical mimicry is used by many parasitic ant species, so it was no big surprise to discover that honey bee parasites such as *Braula coeca* flies and Varroa mites are able to survive within a honeybee colony using the same method. The mites' ability to mimic the bees' odour in just a few hours explains why they are able to move undisturbed between bees of the same colony, as well as move between bees belonging to different colonies.



Bob Smith NDB

Bob has kept bees for 40 years but still experiments with their management, this year running all colonies on double (14x12) brood; strong colonies make lots of honey! 6 years as a Seasonal Bee Inspector in Kent provided insights into bee health and the proactive management of these fascinating insect colonies; that led to continuous investigation of the how and why of beekeeping.

With interests in botany and pollen, Bob has run microscopy courses aiming to identify our bees' foraging behaviour. Pollen is wonderful stuff

Pollen - super-food for honey bees

Saturday 16th Sept 11:00-12:00

Honey bees obtain all their food from flowering plants in the form of nectar and pollen. These nutrients are required in considerable quantities and there needs to be continuity of supply if a colony is to thrive. As beekeepers, we are rather keen on the nectar and honey aspects but less observant on pollen? This talk will explore the function of pollen and examine the several constituents that make it a super-food for our bees. Options will be discussed for providing nourishment when pollen is scarce.

Making pollen reference slides – Workshop

Saturday 16th Sept 14:30

This workshop will concentrate on preparing good slides for further examination; we will explore two or three ways of sampling pollen from flowers and look at ways to tackle the pollen pellets obtained from pollen traps. The transfer of pollen in honey to a microscope slide will be discussed but not practiced.

Jenny and Wally Shaw

Jenny and Wally have been beekeeping together since 1987 (30 years). This started with one hive to help pollinate a newly planted orchard. But what was intended to be a sidelining to gardening gradually became an obsession. They currently manage 40 of their own hives, the Anglesey Beekeepers Association apiary (12 hives) and have this year made 30 nucs of locally adapted bees. Jenny and Wally are equal partners in their beekeeping and share the lead role by taking responsibility for alternate hives. Jenny is ex-Chair of the Welsh Beekeepers Association (WBKA) and ABKA training officer and Wally is WBKA Technical Officer. He has written several WBKA booklets on beekeeping matters and is currently responsible for the Q&A section of BBKA News.

Reactive swarm control

Saturday 16th Sept 12:10-13:10

The most widely used method of re-active swarm control (artificial swarming) is the so-called Pagden Method. The use of this method (with variations) over a number of years proved to be. This lecture describes the development of a much better method based on the work of L.E. Snelgrove (his Method II) and the rationale behind it.

Snelgrove method of swarm control – Workshop

Saturday 16th Sept 15:45

In this practical session we will demonstrate the Snelgrove method of swarm control and the logistics involved using colour coded hive boxes. We also hope to be able to show a short video of the method being done live on hives that have set up to swarm.



Jo Widdicombe

Jo is a bee farmer running over 100 colonies in southeast Cornwall. He has been a member of BIBBA (The Bee Improvement and Bee Breeding Association) for over 25 years and he is currently the President of the organization. Jo is the author of 'The Principles of Bee Improvement', which outlines how to select and improve our bees.

Sustainable bee improvement

Sunday 17th Sept 09:30-10:30

What is bee improvement? What effect do short-term fixes have on our bee population as a whole? Is there a more sustainable alternative to the continued hybridisation and mongrelisation of our bee stock? How can bee improvement be achieved without the continuous influx of new stock? Is a national bee improvement strategy possible?

Some of the questions I will attempt to answer.



Dr. Michael Keith-Lucas

Michael is a retired Senior Tutor in Plant Sciences at the University of Reading, President of Reading and District Gardeners Association, Vice-Chairman of Reading and District Natural History Society and Chairman of Reading Tree Wardens. His academic career was mainly centred around Pollen in Archaeology, Woodland Ecology, Tropical Rainforest Ecology, and Pollen in Allergy and Forensic Science.

How plants solve crime?

Sunday 17th Sept 11:00-12:00

Pollen, and other botanical evidence, can be used to determine the timing of events, such as murders, and also placing suspects at the scene of crime. The talk will cover these topics with examples, and then move on to looking at cases closer to the interests of beekeepers, such as honey fraud and solving problems such as unpleasant-tasting honey.



Margaret Murdin NDB

Margaret has kept bees for over 10 years and now has over 20 colonies across three apiaries. She is a Master Beekeeper, holds the National Diploma in Beekeeping and won the Wax Chandlers' Award. Margaret is Chair of the trustees of the British Beekeepers Association, a member of the Education and Husbandry Committee and sits on the Examination Board. She is a Correspondence Course tutor and an assessor for module examinations and husbandry assessments. Previously Margaret was the Principal of a large further and higher education college, a Chief Examiner for teacher education and a tutor and examiner for the Open University.

Bee genetics explained... simply

Sunday 17th Sept 12:10-13:10

Like us, female bees have two sets of chromosomes; one set from the mother and one from the father. But male bees, the drones, are different: They have a single set. This is why we say that drones have no father! How does that work? The genetics of bees can seem complicated, mainly because the words used are long, complicated and difficult to remember. This talk will seek to explain the genetics of honey bees in a straightforward way - in a way that is useful to beekeepers.

Preparing for the winter – Workshop

Saturday 16th Sept 15:45

Winter can be challenging time for honey bees and in the late summer and autumn we need to ensure we manage our colonies in a way so they have the best chance of survival. In this workshop we will look at the critical tasks that we need to complete to help our bees make healthy and strong colonies for the following year.



Marin Anastasov NDB

Marin has BSc in Animal Science, MSc in Organic Farming and gained recently the National Diploma in Beekeeping. He has kept bees for over 20 years and currently manages 25 colonies in Gloucestershire. Marin is a Master Beekeeper, chairman of Gloucestershire Beekeepers Association and serves on the BBKA Examinations Board. He is an assessor for the Basic, General Husbandry and Advanced Husbandry certificates and is part of the team responsible for the development and implementation of the new BBKA Certificate in honey bee breeding.

Introduction to the new BBKA exams – Workshop

Saturday 16th Sept 15:45

Over the last year, the BBKA Examinations board has worked in developing and piloting the two new certificates (Certificate in honey bee breeding and Certificate in honey bee health), that will be added to the portfolio of beekeeping assessments in 2018. In this session we will discover the purpose and rationale behind these modules, as well as what the potential future candidates need to do, in order to prepare and be successful in taking on these assessments.



Nick Lambert

Nick joined the Cheltenham & Gloucester branch of Gloucestershire Beekeepers Association and started keeping bees in 2002. After a few years, he became more and more fascinated by the bees and decided to learn a lot more about them. Nick placed the “I don't want to do exams at my age” feeling behind him and took the BBKA basic, then, he commenced study on the BBKA modules and also did the microscopy exam. Nick is a tutor at the branch apiary, a presenter on the winter training programme and runs a microscopy for beekeepers class.

DIY hive monitoring – Workshop

Saturday 16th Sept 14:30

In this session we will learn how to use cheap, readily available electronic sensors and an Arduino microcontroller to build a hive monitor. With it, you can perform real time monitoring of temperatures at various points in the hive, humidity, monitor hive weight etc. We'll look at some simple devices and how to use them by programming the controller. Once you get the basics you're only limited by your own ingenuity, it's just like building with Lego!

Liz Gardener

Liz started beekeeping in 2009 and she currently runs 15 colonies in Gloucestershire. She is an avid supporter of the near native bees and for the duration of her beekeeping, she has never bought and introduced a queen, other than those she has bred herself. Liz is a Seasonal Bee Inspector and is actively involved in promoting the craft of beekeeping at both regional and National level.

How clean is your kit? – Workshop

Saturday 16th Sept 15:45

A practical session on the different methods for cleaning and disinfection of bee equipment and tools, such as smokers, hive tools and clothing, that form an integral part in the management of honey bee pest and disease. The workshop will cover all aspects of wooden, plastic and poly hives maintenance and cleaning, as well as methods for comb fumigation and comb storage to minimise the damage caused by wax moth and mice.