

West Sussex Beekeepers' Association Annual Convention – 24th February 2024

Details of the Day and Speakers' Profiles

The West Sussex Beekeepers' Annual Convention has again attracted top speakers to cover a wide range of topics throughout the day. As well as the main lectures, you can attend two additional seminars on different subjects. Please indicate your choices in order of preference as spaces on some seminars will be limited. We will, of course, do our very best to meet your individual wishes. **Please apply as soon as possible to have the best chance of attending your preferred seminars.** We hope there will be plenty to interest you.

Margaret Murdin

Margaret has been keeping bees for over 20 years. She holds a degree in biological sciences, is a Master Beekeeper and holds the National Diploma in Beekeeping.

Margaret was previous Chair of the BBKA Trustees and past president of BBKA but for all the high positions she has held, describes herself as an ordinary, practical beekeeper who is naturally interested in furthering the education and training opportunities available to our BBKA members. She enjoys teaching all levels of beekeeping and gives talks and workshops all over the UK and actively encourages members to keep up-to-date with training and take the Basic Assessment if they have not already done so. Margaret is an examiner for all levels of BBKA exams and also moderates the practical exams. She currently lives in Oxfordshire and runs 6 colonies, down from the 40 when she was younger.

Margaret will give a main talk on **'The Queen'** and will also run a seminar on **'Keeping Healthy Colonies'**.

Professor Lars Chittka

Lars Chittka is the author of the book *'The Mind of a Bee'* and Professor of Sensory and Behavioural Ecology at Queen Mary College of the University of London. He is also the founder of the Research Centre for Psychology at Queen Mary. He is known for his work on the evolution of sensory systems and cognition using insect-flower interactions as a model system. He has made fundamental contributions to our understanding of animal cognition and its impact on evolutionary fitness, studying bumblebees and honeybees.

Lars regularly appears in the media, gives lectures and is author/co-author of books and many journal articles. Born in Germany and having studied in universities in Göttingen and in Berlin, he remains fascinated with the question of how evolution shaped advanced cognitive capacities in insects. He is quoted as saying *'... that the primary fascination of insect sensory systems and behaviour is not in their similarities to humans, but in their alien-ness. The fact that insects perceive the world, process information and interact with their environment in fundamentally different ways from humans is what makes them so captivating. And, of course, we cannot help but marvel at the complexity of behaviour and cognition generated by nervous systems that contain only a fraction of a percent of neurons compared with our own'*. Lars will be giving a main talk on **'The Mind of the Bee'**.

Most of us are aware of the hive mind – the power of bees as an amazing collective. But do we know how uniquely intelligent bees are as individuals? Lars draws from decades of research, including his own pioneering work, to argue that bees have remarkable cognitive abilities. He shows that they are profoundly smart, have distinct personalities, can recognize flowers and human faces, exhibit basic

emotions, count, use simple tools, solve problems, and learn by observing others. They may even possess consciousness. He illustrates how bee brains are unparalleled in the animal kingdom in terms of how much sophisticated material is packed into their tiny nervous systems. He looks at their innate behaviours and the ways their evolution as foragers may have contributed to their keen spatial memory. Lars also examines the psychological differences between bees and the ethical dilemmas that arise in conservation and laboratory settings because bees might feel and think.

Lynne Ingram

Lynne is a Master Beekeeper with over 30 years' experience in beekeeping, currently managing 3 apiary locations. She is an active participative member of Somerset Beekeepers Association, where she is very involved in the education of fellow beekeepers and is also the Asian Hornet Co-ordinator. She recently organised the first South West region AHAT training event.

Lynne was elected to the BBKA Exam Board in 2019 and has been involved in reviewing and updating modules and exam reading lists. She is an examiner for the Basic, General Husbandry, Microscopy and Bee Health assessments, as well as for the written Module exams and is also a Correspondence Course tutor. If that wasn't enough, she has been working closely with beekeepers in Morocco during the last 8 years, which, she says, has given her a wonderful insight into their beekeeping practices. Lynne will give a main talk on the Asian hornet, titled **'Know your Enemy'** and will also run a seminar on **'The Importance of Drones'**.

Sue Remenyi

Sue has been keeping bees for over 10 years. When not busy with her bees, Sue is an active member of her Oxfordshire village community, Governor of her local primary school and part of the editorial team for the Parish newsletter. With increasing interest in beekeeping in the Village, Sue, together with her fellow beekeeper and friend, Meryl, are active mentors and enjoy taking an observation hive into the primary school from time to time.

Already a well-published author in the field of information technology, Sue has contributed to many beekeeping blogs, articles in the BBKA News and has also published *'An Illustrated Glossary of Honey Bee and Beekeeping Terminology'* where she untangles the sometimes-bewildering terminology of beekeeping for beekeepers.

Sue will be running two seminars, **'Where do Honey Bees travel for Pollen?'** The results of a community study and **'Wasp Control in the Apiary'**. The first of these presentations begins by explaining why bees need pollen and what they use it for and then goes on to describe a study she and a group of local beekeepers undertook to examine how the pollen in different apiaries varied throughout one year. The findings were interesting and, in some cases, a little surprising. In the second presentation Sue will talk about the ubiquitous wasp that we beekeepers tend to love to hate. After considering the creature itself Sue will go on to illustrate some methods, she has found effective to minimise attacks on her hives.

Andrew Gibb

Andrew started beekeeping whilst he was at a boarding school in Somerset where the biology master gave encouragement to students to show interest in a hive he kept on the roof of his laboratory.

When he left school, Mrs B W Hamlin, a well-known Surrey beekeeper at the time, heard of his interest and gave him some hives and equipment. After keeping bees for 10 years, he attended instruction classes in Guildford run by Mrs Clark and Bob Hammond, both County Beekeeping Instructors. In due course he passed the BBKA Basic Assessment and in the process increased his

annual honey yield by 50%. This led him to eventually becoming a Master Beekeeper in 1985 and he is now a BBKA examiner.

Andrew was Chief Executive Officer of Bee Craft Ltd for 44 years, the organisation that publishes BeeCraft magazine and a wide range of beekeeping books and booklets. He has also been Chairman of Surrey BKA and its Show Secretary. He recently published two books with Ann Harman, a US beekeeper, to help candidates prepare for the beekeeping history questions in the written exams.

Andrew will run two seminars. The first seminar on '**Simple Queen Rearing**' will cover the preparations for queen rearing including breeder and cell raising colonies and then concentrate mainly on the Miller, Alley and Case-Hopkins methods but include mention of other queen rearing methods.

The second seminar on '**Environment, Food and Bees**' will look at the various aspects of our environment and how we look after it and how we don't look after it. Regarding food, his talk will emphasise how we can get more food from an ever-decreasing cultivable land area but with an ever-growing population to feed. Finally, concerning bees, how we manage them to ensure healthy colonies but yet aim to get the maximum honey yield and pollination benefits from them.

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The Convention fee for West Sussex Beekeepers Association members is £30 for the whole day if paid in advance (received by Monday 19th February 2024) and £37 for non-members or on the day (subject to space being available - choice of seminars may be limited). Tea and coffee during the day are included and also a simple lunch. Venue details: Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Near Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1LZ.

Should you require further details, please contact Viv Sallows on 01293 871092 or 07749 265944 or email at wsbkaconvention@gmail.com or see the website www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html