

West Sussex Beekeepers' Association Annual Convention – 29th February 2020

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.

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Marin Anastasov NDB

Marin Anastasov started beekeeping in his teens and developed his initial beekeeping knowledge and skills while studying towards a BSc in Animal Science, followed by an MSc in Organic Farming.

He is passionate about sustainable food production and his entire working career has been in organic food and farming. He has kept bees for over 20 years and currently manages 30+ colonies in Gloucestershire. Marin is a Master Beekeeper and gained his NDB in 2017. He is a Trustee of Gloucestershire Beekeepers Association and serves on the BBKA Examinations Board. He is co-author and led the implementation of the BBKA Certificate in Honey Bee Breeding.

Marin will be presenting a main lecture on 'Father of the Drone' and also a seminar on 'Management of Mating Nucs'.

Professor Robert Pickard

Professor Robert Pickard is an international authority on the biology of honeybees and provides scientific advice for the media, government departments and a wide range of institutions.

He is Emeritus Professor of Neurobiology at the University of Cardiff; visiting Professor at the Royal Agricultural University, a Trustee of the National Museum of Wales and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology, the Royal Society of Medicine and the Learned Society of Wales.

Much of his work has been involved with protecting consumers, the food chain and the wider environment. He is Chairman of the International Bee Research Association and President of the Cardiff Beekeepers Association and the UK Central Association of Beekeepers. Formerly Editor of the Journal of Apicultural Research, he has studied bees since 1956 and his students are spread through 50 different countries worldwide. In the past, Robert has kept up to 200 hives but with such widescale commitments has now downscaled to 4. His favourite hobby is gardening.

Robert will be presenting a main lecture on 'Wonderful things about Bees' and running a seminar on 'Queens'.

Dr Anna Oliver

Dr. Anna Oliver is a senior molecular biologist working on the National Honey Monitoring Scheme at the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH, Wallingford).

The scheme, backed by both the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) and the Bee Farmers Association (BFA), was set up in July 2018 and aims to monitor how the foraging habits of UK honeybees respond to a changing environment. Further, if these changes can be used to provide information on the health of our countryside. It is the first UK-wide analysis of its kind, and uses advanced DNA barcoding techniques to identify traces of pollen in honey. The scheme comes at a time when many species of insect pollinators are in decline in the UK.

2018 saw 200 beekeepers from across the UK (including members of our WSBKA) participating and identified plants favored by honeybees, regional differences in foraging habits as well as showing the importance of some invasive plant species. 2019 has been an even better year with over 550 beekeepers having submitted honey samples for analysis.

Anna will be giving a main lecture 'National Honey Monitoring Scheme: Using Citizen Science to Understand the Honeybees'. She will be presenting the story so far as well as giving a sneak preview of the first 2019 results, concentrating on the South East NUTS1 region which includes West Sussex.

Sean Stephenson

Sean is a member of Buckinghamshire County BKA, a committee member and plays a large role in developing and educating fellow beekeepers through practical courses, disease days, apiary sessions and newsletter articles.

Sean will run two seminars for us. The first is 'Honey Bee Behaviour and Water' and the second is 'Drones' Life and Behaviour'.

Honey Bee Behaviour and Water - Water is critical to the wellbeing of the colony; it is not stored but a continuous supply is needed. Sean's talk describes how the colony regulates water supply, the process of water collection, how to train bees away from a water source and gives an insight into some things a beekeeper might do to support the water needs of their bees.

Drones' Life and Behaviour - Drones are often viewed as an overhead to a colony whereas they are in fact critical to the wellbeing and balance of the colony. This talk looks at the colony drivers to produce drones and drone comb, examines drone biology and the mating process, highlights the overhead of drones on honey production and finally summarises how we use drones to help us read a colony.

Geoff Blay

Geoff is a Master Beekeeper and currently runs a Surrey based bee farm. He has provided informative lectures on a range of subjects to local organisations and Beekeeping Associations including workshops at the BBKA Convention and has been active in the education of both new and experienced beekeepers.

On this occasion, Geoff will run a seminar for us on the 'Healing Properties of Honey'. We know that honey has special properties and this is an opportunity to learn about them.

Adrian Dwyer

The media has been full of news about the innovative Flow Hive and that honey pours out of it at the turn of a tap. However, most of us have never seen or tried one and this is an opportunity to hear all about it.

Adrian lives in Christchurch, Dorset and has first-hand experience. His seminar 'Going with the Flow' will enlighten us.

Adrian became a 'FlowHiver' by accident, his interest captured by a crowd funding campaign raising money for an innovative beehive. National newspapers, magazines TV and radio shows and global media covered the story leading to one of the most successful fundraising campaigns ever. Wanting to see whether the reality met the hype, Adrian became a FlowHiver. He has published articles on the subject and has been giving talks to Associations describing his experiences with and the modifications to his own hive.

Having completed 3 seasons of Flow Hive, Adrian will be discussing the concept and innovation, both the advantages and disadvantages. He asks that it is made very clear he is not sponsored by Flow Hive and he talks from personal experience and with an objective viewpoint. You can make up your own mind from the evidence presented.