

## West Sussex Beekeepers' Association Annual Convention – 22nd February 2025

### 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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#### Professor Stephen Martin

Professor Stephen Martin is an Emeritus Professor at University of Salford, Manchester. He has studied social insects (bees, wasps, termites and ants) for most of his career. His areas of specialisation are the 'Hornet ecology', '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 spent 12 years working at Sheffield University, 7 years with the National Bee Unit and 7 years in Japan conducting research into hornets.

More recently his expertise in hornet biology is in demand, both nationally and internationally but Stephen is best known for his work on the Varroa mite and its association with viruses, especially the Deformed Wing Virus. His research, funded in part by beekeepers, aims to understand why some honey bee colonies have become naturally resistant to Varroa and see if this information can provide beekeepers with a long-term solution to their mite-problem.

Stephen will give a main talk on 'Varroa Resistance Explained and how Beekeepers can Benefit from this Knowledge' and a seminar on 'Moving away from Varroa treatments. Since the arrival of the Varroa mite from Asia, millions of honey bee colonies have died. For decades, beekeepers have continued to control Varroa populations by the use of chemicals and other invasive methods. However, throughout Africa and most of South and Central America mite-infested colonies survive without any form of mite-control for decades. Throughout Europe and the USA an increasing number of naturally evolved, mite-tolerant colonies are being discovered. We now have a good understanding of the underlying mechanism of Varroa resistance in these populations, which is leading to a decreasing number of UK beekeepers using chemical miticides to control the Varroa mite. The talks will provide the most up to date information about Varroa resistance honeybees and how to promote them that will help inform beekeepers wanting to keep Varroa-resistant honey bees.

#### Jane Medwell

Jane has been a beekeeper in Warwickshire since 1999. In the early years of beekeeping, she kept around 40 hives and learned a good deal about keeping bees on a larger scale. However, she realised that her interests are in the study of beekeeping rather than honey production. Jane now keeps her hive numbers to a maximum of a dozen in two or three apiaries near her home. This has allowed her to experiment with methods of queen rearing and do more training and education activities at branch, county and national level.

Jane has been a Master Beekeeper since 2013 and remains committed to keeping her knowledge relevant. She is currently studying for an MSc in Entomology. Her proudest achievement is that her son is a good beekeeper who can really read a colony. Jane will give a main talk on 'Inside the Hive – Ventilation, Insulation, Bee Space and the Cluster' and run a seminar on 'Comb Change – Why, What and How?'.

#### Anne Rowberry

Anne is a Master Beekeeper and holds a Master's degree in Educational Management from Bristol University and a Diploma in Counselling from Reading University. Anne is involved in the assessment procedure for practical exams at all levels, writing and delivering BBKA courses for the Intermediate and Advanced level Assessments at Stoneleigh and also courses requested by Associations. She is an assessor for all levels of BBKA assessments, lectures and delivers practical and theory courses to beekeepers both nationally and internationally, runs workshops and lectures at the Spring Convention and has contributed to beekeeping literature through articles, beekeeping magazines and as an author. When asked, she also contributes content and also reviews literature related to beekeeping publications.

Anne served as BBKA President and has represented the BBKA view on numerous issues as a member of various committees, including the Bee Health Advisory Committee, contributing to the Government Healthy Bees Plan 2030, All Party Parliamentary Group and as part of the National Pollinator Strategy Advisory Steering Group. When President of the BBKA, Anne introduced the National Honey Day raising public awareness on issues concerning buying local honey, with MPs and also took a jar honey to the King at the palace.

She promoted the need for beekeepers to have opportunities to increase their knowledge and improve handling skills within their own Associations. All these experiences have given her a depth of understanding about the

role of honey bees in the environment and as part of our economy. She continues to learn about these amazing creatures through research and this contributes to her efforts to participate as an effective member of the Examination Board. Anne enjoys her bees, finds them fascinating and is continually learning more about them. Anne will give a main talk on 'Spring Management and Swarm Control' and in addition run a seminar on 'The Demaree and More'.

### **Dr Stephen Fleming**

Dr Stephen Fleming, co-editor of BeeCraft and a beekeeper for three decades, was intrigued when he first heard about drone congregation areas (DCAs) – places where honey bee males gather in the hope of mating with a queen - and the more he found out, the more curious he became. Eight years ago, he acquired the necessary equipment to find DCAs and was extremely fortunate to locate one within 60 minutes. Now, he tries to escape work on sunny summer afternoons in search of DCAs and has mapped many in his local area. He has also rediscovered the first documented DCA on Selborne Common, reported by Rev. Gilbert White more than 200 years ago, has turned up some surprises on the Isles of Scilly and tested the legendary Glastonbury Tor. The rather poor summer of 2024, when there seemed to be fewer drones on the wing than usual, eventually revealed one of his most intriguing discoveries yet. Although still somewhat bemused by the mysteries of DCAs, he will explain in his seminar 'The Magic and Mystery of Drone Congregation Areas' how he finds them, ideas that may explain their locations, what they can tell us about honey bee mating and the joys of searching for them.

### **Tom Moore**

Tom attended beekeeping classes with Ted Hooper in 1971 but didn't actually start beekeeping until 2006! He has kept up to 35 colonies but currently keeps between 7 and 10 colonies in partnership with Gordon Allan in the Petworth area. He started collecting swarms in 2010, taking as many as 26 in the peak year of 2019. A member of Chichester Beekeepers Association, Tom is well known to us in West Sussex being a previous West Sussex Chairman and a current active BBKA examiner. He makes a huge contribution to the support and encouragement of beekeepers throughout our region in all sorts of ways including speaking at events and supporting our annual Bee Auction. Tom's seminar is entitled 'So you want to be a Swarm Collector'.

### **James Donaldson**

James has been a beekeeper since 2005 and looks after around 15 colonies in North East Hampshire. James is a Master Beekeeper who also holds the Microscopy Certificate. He is heavily involved in teaching beginners and more experienced beekeepers with the aim of raising standards in beekeeping. He mentors and assists candidates preparing to take Module exams and assessments at various levels. James is also a BBKA Correspondence Course tutor and an examiner for practical assessments. He is the Secretary and a Trustee of his local Beekeeping Association, a past Chair of Hampshire Beekeepers' Association and until recently a Trustee of HBA. Until he took early retirement, James's day job was a project manager in the defence sector.

James will run a seminar on 'The Honey Bee's Head - under the Microscope'. He will describe and explain the internal and external anatomy of the bee's head and share some fascinating images and insights into this wonderful creature. He will illustrate this by giving a practical demonstration, using his microscopy skills to display some of the internal organs under a microscope. The image James sees will be projected onto a screen for the audience to watch as he works. This seminar will provide a rare opportunity for beekeepers to see a very detailed view of a bee's head.

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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 17th February 2025) and £40 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](mailto:wsbkaconvention@gmail.com) or see the website [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html)

The following Booking Form can be used for up to two delegates. This can be completed and returned by email with payment made by bank transfer (see Booking Form). Confirmation and map will be sent by email. Alternatively, you can post the form with your cheque (made payable to 'WSBKA') to Viv Sallows as soon as possible. If you wish to receive confirmation and map by post, a stamped addressed envelope should be sent with your booking.

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