



Photo: Snowdrops by Tim Dale

February 2020

WVBKA Charity Registration Number: 517008



WVBKA Christmas Lunch 2019

Another successful social event on 7th December saw twenty-two association members gathering at Ye Olde Salutation Inn, Weobley. A cosy room gave us our own WVBKA space to enjoy a delicious Christmas dinner. A warm welcome plus good, wholesome food made this another great choice of venue.

Dinner was once again followed by mince pies, coffee and a good array of raffle prizes –thanks to all those who donated.

The final ceremony was to award the named cups to Honey Show winners – don't forget you're on silver cleaning duty this year Andi!

Thanks go as always to June for organising a fitting end to 2019 for WVBKA members.

Juliet

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(Photo on back page)



Diary Dates 2020

- TBN

Queen Colour of the Year

2020 is: **BLUE**

Chairman's Notes

This is the first newsletter of 2020 and the first opportunity to report on my visit to the Annual Delegate Meeting of the BBKA. What an experience it was!

Firstly, there were propositions put forward by the Committee. Then followed propositions from the associations, almost seventy of which had sent delegates. The proposals had been issued previously online so that it was possible for members and their delegates to consider them in advance. Voting was by an electronic gismo, resembling a cross between a credit card and a TV remote, that each delegate wore on a lanyard and which required either pro, contra or abstain buttons to be pressed at a particular moment in response to a proposition or an amendment.

So far, so modern and progressive, however what transpired next was less so. When a small rural association applied to join the BBKA fold, their representative provided statements of achievement and intent and argued for an independent voice for them. The delegates duly voted in favour by a considerable majority. Then a delegate from a very large association stood to call for a 'membership vote'. This meant that each delegate was to vote again and now had the numerical power of their association instead of the 'one delegate one vote' ratio. The previous vote was overturned and the candidate association debarred.

Now the big question is whether the gang with the huge membership had been canvassed in advance by their delegate on the proposition and was therefore truly representing the 'will of the people' or, was he (for it was 'he' not 'she') simply flexing muscle as a 'dog in a manger'? I mean, why would you not want a new association to join the BBKA? There may be reasons but none were given and no debate occurred, just procedural bunkum. In addition, the microphones couldn't be properly used which was laughable in 2020 or is one presuming too much of our modern age? Answers by pigeon on a postcard.

In order to be sure such arcane travesties don't happen at our AGM, please come to the meeting at 2pm on Saturday 22nd February at Moccas Hall. As well as the AGM, we will have a presentation on the Flow Hive and light refreshments will of course be available. Full information will be in your Inbox shortly and I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

Rob D

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DAVE'S BLOG

February Notes

Hopefully the better weather will soon be with us. The bees will start consuming a little more winter stores so you will need to see that they don't run short. In addition, you will see the tell-tale signs of activity at the entrance of your hives, little bits of wax cappings will show at the entrance. A careful look will indicate these things, you do not need to pull your colony about or disturb them too much. You can tell by placing your hand on the crown board whether you have live bees or not. Of course this doesn't tell you how big or how little they are, it is merely an indicator that they are still alive. Careful hefting of the hive will also tell you if they are short of food or not. Placing fondant on any hive which is short will sustain them until they can gather enough to provide for themselves.



According to my understanding, various people up and down the country are moving away from treating their colonies with harsh chemicals to control the mite levels. There is a balancing act to be brought into play here. You don't want to leave your bees completely to the perils of this horrible little fellow but careful monitoring and use of treatments which are not harsh, will allow the bees to gather their own independence from the use of chemicals. I will leave it to the experts to explain how this comes about as I'm simply not equipped to answer these questions. All I can tell you is bees have developed an immunity to Acarine which was called originally the Isle of Wight disease. This again was a mite which gained entry to the breathing tubes of the honeybee.

Most of our indigenous bees now do not suffer from this pest but in the early part of the century it was a big problem. Seventy-five years ago many beekeepers were treating their bees with various treatments to combat this problem. Over the last 50 odd years it has not been a problem, or should I say it hasn't been a problem in my bees. Back in the 70s I went to great expense to buy microscopes to do my own diagnostic work because I didn't wish to rely on other people to do my in-house diagnostics. After spending considerable money, in the region of £700 to £800, most of it has remained redundant for the past 30 or 40 years, although I do test occasionally for the presence of Nosema.

If you stick with your indigenous bees from the area where you live you're less likely to come into contact with these problems. Of course any bees can get disease, they are not completely immune. However, they are less likely to become affected if they're indigenous, I won't say black. I'm not even sure whether there is such an animal in existence, although they do tell us there is. Working with bees as I have for the biggest part of my life and importing and using most other strains, Buckfast, all-American, Russian, and New Zealand to name but a few but all have traits which are not conducive to our climate. The indigenous bees are by far the best bees to prevent most diseases. I'm not saying they are the best bees to work with but they certainly are more sustainable than most of the so-called hybrids. I don't wish to get on my soapbox but put your money where my mouth is, buy a few and see if I'm not right. On the other side of the coin there is the BBKA wishing to stop imports altogether. I'm not sure that this is the right thing to do because if you are a commercial beekeeper and wish to expand quickly you need a supply of queens and they are just not available in this country in quantities at the moment. Many years ago when I was expanding and wishing to buy indigenous queens they were simply not available. Through The Village Bee Breeders Association once again I see that there are moves afoot to establish various new groups to propagate our dark bees, they call it sustainable beekeeping.

Dave

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WVBKA Dinner 2019 at Ye Olde Salutation Inn, Weobley



WVBKA Articles

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER SO PLEASE
CONTRIBUTE TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS.