



THE WELSH BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

CYMDEITHAS GWENYNWYR CYMRU

Established/Sefydlwyd 1943 Registered Charity – No 509929

Annual Report

1st January 2015 to 31st December 2015

Trustees:

Chair	Jennifer Shaw (elected AGM 2014)
Vice Chair	Susan Townsend (resigned 27.06.15)
	Andrew Ryan (elected SGM 7.11.15) – Trustee since AGM March 2014
Treasurer	Margaret Jones (resigned 14.08.15)
	Graham Wheeler (elected SGM 7.11.15) – Trustee since AGM March 2014
General Secretary	Vacant
David John Bowles	(elected AGM 2014)
Michael Hoyes	(resigned AGM March 2015)
John Sweet	(elected AGM March 2015 resigned 13.08.15)
Christopher Clarke	(co-opted SGM 7.11.15)

Officers:

President	David Culshaw (elected AGM 2013)
Vice-presidents	Fred Eckton and Tom Pegg (died 29.07.15)
Membership Secretary	Ian Hubbuck
Minutes Secretary	Jill Wheeler (resigned 11.09.15) currently vacant
Convention Secretary	Graham Wheeler (resigned 11.09.15) Jill Wheeler (appointed 11.09.15)
Exam Secretary	Lynfa Davies
Website Manager	Grant Williams
Editor	Sue Closs (resigned AGM 2015) Grant Williams (appointed 06.02.15)
Sub-editor	Dewi Morris Jones (died April 2015) Elin Meek (appointed 7.12.15)
Technical Officer	Wally Shaw
Insurance Officer	Susan Townsend (resigned 27.06.15) John Bowles (acting)
Health & Safety Officer	John Pilgrim
Publicity & Press Officer	Vacant

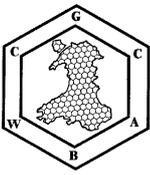
All trustees and WBKA officers give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefits. The WBKA is indebted to these volunteers for their continued goodwill and efforts on behalf of the Association.

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Our Aims & Objectives:

The encouragement, improvement and advancement of beekeeping throughout Wales by:

- developing co-operation amongst all beekeepers throughout Wales and interchanging ideas and experiences,
- improving the standard of beekeeping by:
 - i. publication of literature,
 - ii. providing and supporting the provision of apicultural educational aids and materials,
 - iii. encouraging the training and qualification of beekeepers,
- arranging for national examinations at various levels,
- encouraging community participation in observing and learning about bees in safety, and developing an appreciation of the value of bees in the environment.



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Administration

A full list of meetings during the year can be found at the end of this report.

The Trustees met with the WBKA Council at two meetings (March and November) to report on the actions of the Management Team and to seek guidance from the membership. Prior to the November meeting a Special General Meeting of the WBKA was convened due to the resignations of both the Treasurer and Vice Chair and to adopt a re-written Constitution. At each of these meetings a minimum of 80% (15) of the WBKA Member Associations were represented and overall 84% (16) Associations attended at least one meeting. Details of all Management Team meetings have been presented to the membership at both the March and November Council meetings and an interim report circulated in May 2015. Council meetings are scheduled for March 5th, June 25th and November 5th in 2016. The Management Team will meet at least four times in 2016 the first meeting being on January 25th. The venue and date for Management Team meetings reflects the availability and home addresses of the Trustees to ensure maximum attendance and minimum travelling expenses are incurred.

A completely re-written Constitution for the WBKA has been finalized during 2015 and following consultation with the Member Associations this document was adopted at a Special General Meeting on 7th November 2015, registered with the Charity Commission and is now the governing document of the WBKA. This Constitution complies with current Charity Commission guidance.

Work continues to add to and update the policies of the WBKA. During 2015 policies for both Procurement and Resolution of Conflict have been adopted. Currently draft policies to cover involving minors in Association activities, advertising, editorial guidance and codes of conduct are being drawn up and, when finalized, will be adopted during 2016 and be available via the WBKA website. Once again we are indebted to the services of the translators who have assisted the Management Team to provide bilingual documents for beekeepers in Wales.

Insurance: The WBKA insurance broker was consulted following an enquiry from a Member Association re the cover provided if they accepted a school rather than an individual as a member. The terms of the cover were provided by the brokers and draft guidance has been made available to all Associations considering involving minors in their activities.

The WBKA Insurance cover is based on a number of conditions including the need for capitation to be paid on time. Payment of capitation is due from Associations on the 1st of January each year but an allowance is made providing that all monies due are received by the 31st March in that year. Some Associations were late paying their capitation for 2015 thereby putting the insurance cover of their members at risk. Member Associations are reminded of the need to make payment punctually.

Capitation and BDI: Some Member Associations have a financial year which ends on a date other than 31st December. This has led to complications re the annual membership numbers declared by some Member Associations for Capitation. To give clarity the membership numbers for capitation will be as at the end of the Financial Year for the individual Local Association rather than at the end of the WBKA financial year, 31st December.

It was confirmed that the WBKA pays the basic BDI covering three hives for all WBKA Honorary Life Members to comply with BDI rules. It was acknowledged that this payment is required even if the Honorary Life Member either does not keep bees currently or does not live in the UK. The payment is due as they are members of the WBKA.



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Governance: During 2015 several factors have hindered the Management Team in their running of the day to day business of the WBKA and ultimately curtailed their activities. Firstly the inability of the 2015 AGM to appoint a General Secretary and the failure of all attempts since that time to recruit someone to the role has increased the workload of several Officers to ensure that the essential tasks, normally assigned to the post, are covered. The Trustees are indebted to the Membership Secretary, Ian Hubbuck who has facilitated the circulation of information from the Management Team to the Member Associations throughout the year. Purchasing professional secretarial services was explored but the cost to have someone attend meetings was prohibitive.

The problems were compounded by the sudden resignations of the Vice Chair, Susan Townsend in June and the Treasurer, Margaret Jones and Trustee, John Sweet in August. Under the 2014 Constitution, which the WBKA was governed by at that time, a Special General Meeting was required in order to appoint a new Treasurer, Graham Wheeler and Vice Chair, Andy Ryan. The SGM could not be held before early November and this delay meant that the WBKA was unable to access its funds for several months. Several measures have been put in place to ensure that the WBKA is not put in this position again. An accounting package and computer have been purchased for the Treasurer's use, all Trustees are now signatories and financial records will be cloud stored and accessible to a small number of the Trustees. We are indebted to the Trustees who used their own personal funds to cover essential expenditure during the period that access to WBKA funds was not possible. This included major expenses such as the annual insurance renewal and one issue of the Welsh Beekeeper magazine. All these debts have now been reimbursed from WBKA funds.

When Graham Wheeler agreed to be nominated as WBKA Treasurer he was no longer able to be the secretary to the Events Committee. We are grateful to Jill Wheeler who has taken on this role. As a consequence though Jill is no longer able to be WBKA minute secretary and currently this post is vacant.

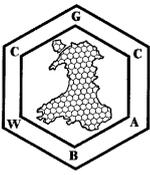
A Learning and Development Committee, incorporating the Exam system, has been created and their reports are included in this document. The terms of reference for the Events Committee have been clarified to incorporate the previous Convention Committee.

Finance Reserves: The revised Reserve policy states that the Charity (WBKA) shall maintain a reserve of £10,000-£13,000. This reserve is required by Charity Law to cover operational and contractual expenses should the need arise. This policy will be monitored at least annually.

Monies held on the HSBC current account are used to not only cover the running costs of the Association but to fund various projects such as the running of courses and the dissemination of information, by various means, such as the Web Site, publications and booklets.

Membership: The WBKA has nineteen affiliated Associations, with a total membership of 1,840. For an annual capitation fee of £9 per year each beekeeping member of the nineteen affiliated Associations benefits by receiving four editions of 'The Welsh Beekeeper' and Public and Product Liability Insurance. There are currently twenty three Individual Members of the Welsh Beekeepers' Association. A detailed breakdown of membership accompanies this report

The WBKA are saddened to report the deaths of a number of past and present officers of the Association during the year. In April the death of Dewi Morris Jones, Welsh editor of the Welsh Beekeeper Magazine since 1997 was reported. Our Vice President since 2013, Tom Pegg passed away in August. Tom was a long term regular supporter of all WBKA events and will be sadly missed. Former Regional Bee Inspector, WBKA Secretary, Exams Secretary and an honorary member of the WBKA Pam Gregory died in October. Pam was a very influential beekeeper and guided Welsh beekeepers through the early days when Varroa was first found in Wales. Pam was a prominent member of Bees Abroad and a donation has been made to that charity in her memory by the WBKA. Pam wrote several books that are readily available and used by beekeepers worldwide. The likes of



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Pam will be hard to find again. The sudden death of Brinley ap Dewi Rowlands was announced in December. Dewi was General Secretary of the WBKA for 20 years and served on several WBKA committees before taking on the secretarial role. He was a very prominent member of the Association for many years. The WBKA would like to extend their condolences to the families and friends of all the members that have died during 2015.

Website: A new WBKA Website was launched in late March 2015. The Trustees would like to thank the Web Master, Grant Williams for all his work on the website and to congratulate him on the results. WBKA members are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions for the development of the website. Discussions are underway to look at providing commercial advertising space on the website.

Welsh Beekeeper Magazine: In February Grant Williams was appointed to succeed Sue Closs as WBKA Editor after the Spring 2015 issue. We would like to thank Sue for her time as Editor and to welcome Grant. A new computer was purchased for the Editor's use and in November it was agreed to change the magazine to an A4 format. As part of this review the print firm used to publish the magazine was changed for economic reasons.

Publications: The booklet 'An Apiary Guide to Swarm Control' was written by the WBKA Technical Officer, Wally Shaw and distributed to all members of the WBKA with the Spring 2015 Welsh Beekeeper. Additional copies will be available to Member Associations at Council meetings.

WBKA Logo: A competition will be organised in 2016 to design a new logo for the WBKA. Details will be published early in the year.

Winter Losses: Members were randomly selected and encouraged to take part in the European Colony Loss Survey (COLOSS) for the winter of 2014/15. The response was low (41%) and for 2015/16 the selection process will be modified to attempt to give a better compliance level. The preliminary result from COLOSS record Wales as having 'significantly lower than average' losses, as compared to other European countries, for the winter of 2014/15

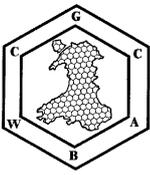
Sponsorship: WBKA Sponsorship will be considered for conferences and similar types of events on beekeeping that are held in Wales and aimed at a wide audience.

Archive: Several years ago the Wales National Library, Aberystwyth was damaged by fire and all the WBKA archive material stored there was destroyed. For the future Ian Hubbuck has agreed to set up and maintain an electronic archive stored in several different places to ensure security. John Tayler and Wil Griffiths have kindly volunteered to search out material to rebuild an archive of the WBKA activities before 2005. We hope that anyone with relevant documents will make them available to be copied.

The Trustees have worked with several external agencies during 2015 to ensure that Welsh beekeepers are kept fully informed and supported not only locally but also at a Wales, UK and European level. A list of the external meeting attended by the WBKA is given below.

Healthy Bee Plan – Wales: The WBKA was invited to meet members of staff of DEFRA and the Welsh Government to discuss the Healthy Bee Implementation Plan. This was achieved on the 6th March 2015 by a teleconference and the WBKA was represented by Jenny Shaw, Wally Shaw and John Bowles.

Discussion included subjects dictated by the EU around healthy beekeeping and the possibility of beekeeper and/or hive registration.



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We agreed to continue to support Beebase and to encourage our members to do the same, although not all have access to the internet.

We informed them of our plans to:-

- modernise our website to provide more guidance in both languages;
- To restructure our training support through a new Learning and Development Committee.
- To promote the keeping of locally adapted bees and self-sufficiency so as to reduce the need for the importation of packages, nuclei or queens.
- give support to the NBU and Bee Inspectors in Wales whose work and guidance was much appreciated by most beekeepers

DEFRA in turn agreed to:-

- amend some of the wording in the translated EU document to clarify meanings
- ask the NBU to create a generic slide pack to assist training
- to liaise with the WBKA to make best use of the information held on Beebase

Bee Health Advisory Forum (UK): There have been four meetings this year which have been attended on behalf of WBKA by the Technical Officer and/or John Bowles (Trustee). The European Apicultural Fund has been a recurring subject at these meetings in 2015. The need to provide accurate statistics on colony numbers in the UK has already been discussed at both Council Meetings in 2015. Other subjects that have been discussed or there have been presentations concerning them have been Small Hive Beetle, Asian Hornet and the regulations regarding honey bee medications (by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate). The next meeting of BHAF is scheduled for early March 2016.

European Apiculture Funding: The Welsh Government has asked us to comment on how we consider that the grant towards Beekeeping from the EU has been spent in the past.

The majority funds the activities of the NBU in Wales. We responded that we appreciated the role of the NBU both in their work to detect and limit the spread of disease as well as their educational work, both formally at disease workshops and in talks given at the hive side with our members.

The volume of funds from the EU is determined by the number of hives managed in individual countries. The issue of how we demonstrate satisfactorily to the EU that the UK and Wales in particular have a specific number of hives was raised. We responded that we were supportive of the pilot count currently being developed across the UK using an updated (hopefully) Beebase and other criteria including memberships of associations. However we felt that an annual return using the national associations and their member associations would be more likely to be effective. Any return from the WBKA would only contain an anonymous national total. The EU will insist on a robust method and a voluntary system is far preferable to an enforced census and if that were brought in costs would probably take up most of the EU grant.

"You don't fatten a pig by weighing it!"

Wales Pollinators Taskforce: The WBKA continues to be an active member of the Taskforce and lobbies for the promotion of locally adapted stocks and measures to reduce or, if possible, prevent the importation of bees into Wales and the resulting pest/infection risks. One of the main tenets of the Pollinators Action Plan is to ensure that Honey bee stocks in Wales are healthy. Many of the projects encouraged by the taskforce are aimed to make Wales a more insect pollinator friendly environment.



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CONBA: The Beekeeping Associations of Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland jointly form CONBA which lobbies the EU re the beekeeping interests of their joint memberships.

NDB: The National Diploma in Beekeeping is the highest formal academic beekeeping qualification available in the UK. As well as awarding the Diploma the NDB also run short courses on specific subjects that are of interest to some of our members. The WBKA is working to encourages the NDB to run short courses in Wales.

Internal WBKA Meetings

6TH Feb – Management Team – Trustees (Dolgellau)

7th March – AGM, Council meeting and Convention Committee meeting – Penrhos Golf Club

8th April – Management Team – Trustees (Elan Valley)

11th May – Learning and Development Committee, Devil's Bridge, Aberystwyth

10th August – Extraordinary Trustees, Dolgellau

14th August – Convention Committee, Llanbister

11th September – Management Team, Llanidloes

7th November - SGM and Council meeting, Elan Valley

28th November – Events (incorporating Convention) Committee, Machynlleth

7th December – Management Team, Dolgellau

WBKA representation at External Meetings – 2015:

Jenny Shaw (J.S.), John Bowles (J.B.), Wally Shaw (W.S.), Trisha Marlow (T.M.), John Sweet (J.Sw.)

6th March – Welsh Government re Healthy Bee Plan by teleconference (W.S., J.B. and J.S.)

30th March –Bee Health Advisory Forum: London (W.S. and J.B.)

16th April – CONBA: Harper Adams (J.B.)

5th May – Welsh Government Environment and Sustainable Development grants: Cardiff (J.Sw.)

3rd June – Wales Pollinator Taskforce: Newtown (J.S.)

18th June – Bee Health Advisory Forum: York (W.S.)

24th September – Bee Health Advisory Forum: London (J.B.)

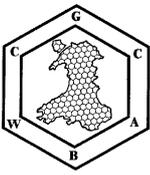
28th October – CONBA: Weybridge, Surrey (J.S. & W.S.)

30th October – NDB: Weybridge, Surrey (T.M.)

4th December – Wales Pollinator Taskforce: Newtown (J.S.)

10th December - Bee Health Advisory Forum: London (J.B. and W.S.)

REPORTS



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Learning and Development Committee Report

Committee Members: Andy Ryan (Chair), Lynfa Davies (Exam Secretary), Wally Shaw (Technical Officer), Frank Gellatly (RBI), Trisha Marlow, Stephen Davies, Margaret Jones (resigned 14.08.15).

The broad remit of this Committee encompasses learning at all levels and by all means. For the formal examination route ways to address both the shortage of basic assessors and candidates taking the assessment have been agreed. A new format and syllabus for the Basic Husbandry Assessment has been introduced for 2016.

Work to provide outline guidance for the contents of beekeeper training courses at both beginner and improver levels are under development. As part of this initiative ways to facilitate association training personnel to exchange ideas and information are being explored. One proposal under review is a Training / Education Officers Symposium.

Various informative leaflets and additional booklets are being designed.

Examination and Assessment Report

Basic Assessments: The WBKA continued to promote and offer Basic Assessments to members during 2015 with 38 applications received. Of these, 37 were completed with the outstanding assessment being held over until 2016. The following list shows the number of applicants from each association.

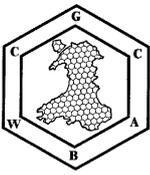
Anglesey	2
South Clwyd	6
Lampeter	2
Carmarthenshire	1
Meirionnydd	5
Swansea	12
Flint and District	4
Cardiff	4
Aberystwyth	1

The pass mark for the Basic Assessment is 50% and the following information shows the proportion of people achieving passes in the following bands;

GRADE	No of candidates
50-60%	2
61- 80%	23
81-100%	12

The majority of assessments were carried out in Association apiaries allowing the assessors to examine more than one candidate at each session. This is the most efficient way to organise Basic Assessments and the WBKA is grateful to the Association Apiary Managers for their help in arranging these assessment days.

We have also been able to train 4 new assessors this year taking the number of assessors to 15. Thank you to all of these people who make themselves available to assess candidates.



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Modules: In March 2015 the WBKA switched to using the services of the BBKA for the provision of modules and higher practical examinations. This requires each candidate to pay an annual exam membership fee to the BBKA which the WBKA covered during 2015. There were 10 candidates requiring this membership for 2015 at a cost of £9 per candidate. The following information shows the number of modules and higher practical exams sat during 2015 (in March and November).

Exam	Number of candidates	Number of passes
Module 1	2	1
Module 2	2	2
Module 3	1	0
Module 5	3	1
Module 8	2	0
Advanced Husbandry	3	1

For the module exams this gives an overall pass rate of 40% (4 out of 10 modules sat). This is a disappointingly low result and highlights the need for good preparation prior to undertaking these assessments.

Events Committee Report

Committee members: - Andy Ryan (Chair), Jill Wheeler (Secretary), Graham Wheeler, Fred Eckton, Wally Shaw, Grant Williams, Publicity Officer.

The 2015 convention was well received with only a few minor problems; Fire Alarm, Hearing loop not accessible everywhere, no Welsh on the programme cover. The convention made a surplus of approximately £2,410. Attendance was 530, with 163 prepayments. A team of 37 helped to steward the event.

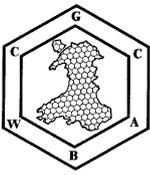
Smallholders Show in May saw the WBKA in a more prominent display. Graham Wheeler designed a striking stand and the WBKA purchased 8 large banners to promote what we do for Beekeepers. This gave the display a professional look and attracted a lot of attention. We shared this display with Seasonal Inspectors and the stand was manned by 18 stewards over the two days.

Royal Welsh Show saw a small display with the Honey Show in the South Glamorgan Hall, manned by Wally Shaw, and a joint venture with Coed Cadw out on the countryside field area. Pam & Bob Mendy provided an observation hive for the entire 4 days, with Wally & Jenny taking them away for flying each evening. Over the 4 days 33 members helped to steward the field display.

During the year the events committee has been looking at an alternative venue for the 2016 Convention. After looking at a range of halls within the RWAS site at Bwlth Wells it has been decided to use the Old Food Hall for the traders and The Montgomery Pavilion for the lectures. This allows for a much larger audience for the lectures while not increasing costs above projected income.

Editor's Report:

This year has seen some major changes to the Welsh Beekeeper. Following a process of consultation and research, a proposal to shift from an A5 publication to an A4 format magazine was approved. Our first offering in the updated layout was the winter issue, which has received nothing but positive feedback, and it is our intention to build on this exciting new opportunity to grow the magazine into a window into the works of the WBKA and to continue to encourage learning and further support beekeeping within Wales and farther afield. Distribution has been in the region of 1,800 copies per



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issue, and the continued support of advertisers has helped significantly in offsetting production costs.

The magazine has benefited greatly from regular contributions by Wally Shaw and Frank Gellatly along with the Grumpy Old Beekeeper's observations, delivered from a point of knowledge edged with humour. We've been very fortunate in receiving articles on a wide range of subjects from association members, creating a broad overview of beekeeping in Wales.

Continuing support from Ian Hubbuck, liaising with our distributors, has ensured efficient delivery of the magazine, and editorial support has been welcomed from all members of the management committee. The formation of a new editorial team promises to streamline future production and aid me in sourcing relevant content.

Editorial committee: I see an important function of the editorial committee as one of highlighting trends and appropriate news items/themes in order to keep the magazine content as current as possible whilst upholding the principles of the WBKA. I would hope that as relevant items come to light they would be forwarded to me for consideration and that 'feelers' would be put out to encourage additional contacts to forward items, thus building a more substantial network of contributors.

Web Master's Report:

The website has continued to attract increasing numbers of visitors during 2015 due to recommendations from other sites, search engine referrals and 'word of mouth'.

In the past 6 months we have received over 40,000 (approximately 220 daily) visitors making a total of 315,000 visits (1,750 daily i.e. Approximately 8 page clicks per visitor), although the visits figures would include indexing spiders and automated visits, it still demonstrates a healthy and growing number of users.

It is hoped that 2016 will see further development in all areas of our web presence, particularly the Welsh content on the site.

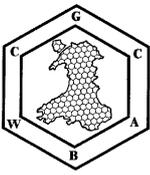
Publicity Officer

Despite several appeals to recruit a WBKA Publicity and Press Officer since the 2014 AGM there have been no volunteers. The Trustees are responding to any press enquiries but no other publicity material has been generated.

Technical Officer's Report

Bee Inspection Service: So far the re-organisation of the Bee Inspection Service (BIS), in which responsibility was moved from the National Bee Unit (NBU) to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), has proved to be seamless as far as the beekeeper is concerned – business as usual. A new post has recently been created in NBU to provide a link between them and APHA and the stakeholders (that's you and I). The current appointee is Nigel Sessions who was previously RBI in Southern England so he has plenty of first-hand experience about the work of BIS.

Lead in Honey: No more has been heard on this issue (originating in the Irish republic) reported in 2014. However, it should be emphasised that the use of tinplate extractors has long been illegal (because of the soldered joints) and that only stainless steel or food grade plastic should be used in any stage in the extraction, storage and processing of honey.



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Small Hive Beetle (SHB): In the early months of 2015 efforts to eradicate SHB in Southern Italy during 2014 looked as though they might have been successful – no sign of the beetle could be found in beehives in the infected area. However, in mid-September SHB was found in several apiaries and breeding had taken place. How SHB succeeded in remaining undetected in the earlier part of the year is not understood but the most likely explanation is that there was a reservoir of beetles in feral colonies or bumblebee nests. It seems likely that attempts to eradicate SHB will be discontinued in the near future and replaced by a strategy of containment. A recent report published by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) claims that without human help SHB would spread quite slowly – but in the real world how likely are we to be that disciplined? In the report there is a lot of information about how the risk of spreading could be reduced but movement of live bees remains the major risk. Sanitising methods like freezing and desiccation can be used on hive products and equipment but not on bees, which must rely on inspection which it is recognised can never be made 100% secure. The English Channel will prevent SHB entering the UK by natural spread so it is fairly obvious what we should do; to progressively reduce imports of live bees with the aim of becoming totally self-sufficient. **NB** – The EFSA report claims the fact that some member states do not have hive registration system and that this is likely to make controlling the spread of SHB more difficult. So this may be an additional pressure to introduce compulsory beekeeper/hive registration in the UK – something that has been strenuously resisted over the last 10 years.

Asian Hornet (AH): AH is a much more imminent (and many would claim a much more serious) threat than SHB. Unfortunately the English Channel will not provide a barrier to natural spread but on the plus side, because of its biology and conspicuousness, there is a greater likelihood of total eradication of AH if an invasion is caught early. A lecture on AH given by Mike Brown of NBU is planned for the WBKA Convention 2016. Beehives are so attractive to AH that beekeeper vigilance is likely to be the best prospect of early detection - so we all need to be aware of what to look for and what to do if we see anything suspicious.

Oxalic Acid: There is now a registered source of oxalic acid for use in the control of Varroa. The product is called API-Bioxal and is supplied in sachets in 3 sizes (35g, 175g and 350g) which are added to the appropriate quantity of 1:1 sugar syrup (provided by the user). The recipe supplied with the product will produce a 4.2% w/v oxalic acid or 6.0% oxalic acid dihydrate treatment solution. According to the original research on the trickle method of delivering oxalic acid this solution is unnecessarily strong for a cold climate and runs the risk of impairing the spring build-up of the colony – although the colony catches-up later. This research advises that the correct solution for our climate is 3.2% OA or 4.5% OAD – same kill of mites but less damage to the bees. I have informed the Veterinary Medicine Directorate (VMD) and the NBU of this disparity and the latter have replied assuring me that more recent research shows that the stronger solution is safe to use in our climate. This has all happened in the last couple of weeks and I have not yet been able to get access to the papers reporting this more recent research. I have been using the weaker (3.2%) solution since 2001 with good results and no problems – so what can I say? All those who use oxalic acid as part of their Varroa control should have done this year's treatment by now so it's really water under the bridge. I will investigate further and hopefully come up with definitive advice for next winter.

Currently API-Bioxal is the only legal form of oxalic acid that can be used to control Varroa. However, there remains a 'grey area' over the use of oxalic acid and it would appear that if it does not say on the bottle that the contents can be used to control Varroa then it is, by default, legal. In the absence of any medicinal claim it ceases to be a medicine and is not subject to any regulations. The various proprietary 'hive cleaners' (and similar products) that are on the market - now with changed labelling and advertising - also fall outside the current regulations governing medicinal products and it is apparently legal to both sell and use them.



THE WELSH BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION CYMDEITHAS GWENYNWYR CYMRU

Established/Sefydlwyd 1943 Registered Charity – No 509929

WBKA Technical Publications: Stocks of the WBKA/WAG booklet entitled *'There are queen cells in my hive – what should I do?'* published in 2010 are now exhausted and a slightly modified 2nd Edition is under preparation and will be available in time for the 2016 season.

Membership report

Please see the appended document for details of the 2015 WBKA membership.

Declaration: The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature:

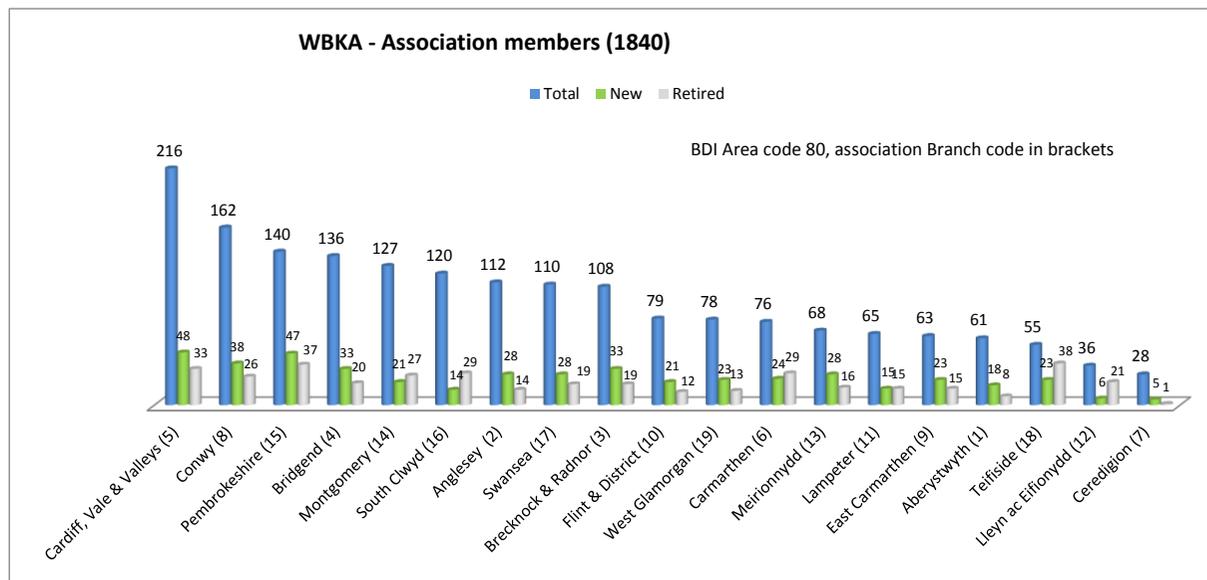
Full name: Jennifer Mary Shaw

Position: Chair

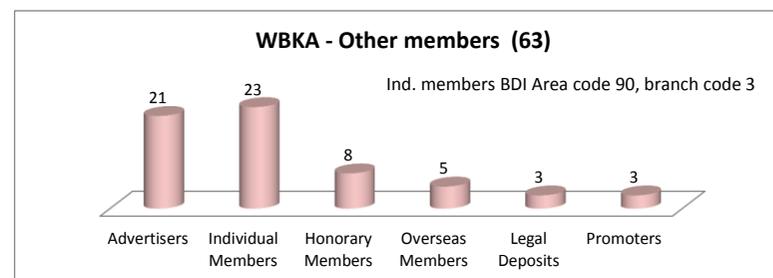
Date: 25th January 2016

WBKA Membership - Year end 2015

Association	2014	2015		
	Total Members	Total Members	New Members	Retired Members
Cardiff, Vale & Valleys (5)	201	216	48	33
Conwy (8)	150	162	38	26
Pembrokeshire (15)	130	140	47	37
Bridgend (4)	123	136	33	20
Montgomery (14)	133	127	21	27
South Clwyd (16)	135	120	14	29
Anglesey (2)	98	112	28	14
Swansea (17)	101	110	28	19
Brecknock & Radnor (3)	94	108	33	19
Flint & District (10)	70	79	21	12
West Glamorgan (19)	68	78	23	13
Carmarthen (6)	81	76	24	29
Meirionnydd (13)	56	68	28	16
Lampeter (11)	65	65	15	15
East Carmarthen (9)	55	63	23	15
Aberystwyth (1)	51	61	18	8
Teifiside (18)	70	55	23	38
Lleyn ac Eifionydd (12)	51	36	6	21
Ceredigion (7)	24	28	5	1
Association members total		1840		



Others	2014	2015		
	Total Members	Total Members	New Members	Retired Members
Advertisers	21	21	0	0
Individual Members	21	23	2	0
Honorary Members	9	8	0	1
Overseas Members	5	5	0	0
Legal Deposits	3	3	0	0
Promoters	2	3	0	0
Other members total		63		



WBKA total members 1903