



WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Helping honeybees & beekeepers since 1946



website:
www.wdbka.org.uk
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A Brief History of Wokingham and District Beekeepers' Association (WDBKA)

Before our Association there was the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Beekeepers' Society, which was formed at a meeting in 1879. This body was in existence for four years when the two counties separated company. Berkshire formed the Berkshire Beekeepers' Society, under the presidency of Her Royal Highness Princess Christian of Schleswig Holstein. The Society's Committee was made up of area secretaries or representatives from Abingdon, Farringdon, Maidenhead, Newbury, Reading, Twyford, Wallingford, Windsor and Wokingham.

By the time of the Second World War (1939-1945) the local groups had disappeared. However the war brought an upsurge in beekeeping and divisions were formed at Reading, Newbury, Abingdon, Wargrave, Wokingham and Maidenhead. These were initially financed by the Society, but one by one became independent of it.

Wokingham and District Beekeepers' Association was formed on October 19th 1946, with thirty members and chaired by Major-General Sir John Duncan, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (K.C.B.). By October 1947 there were 137 members.

Other groups followed suit: in 1947 Maidenhead and District BKA was formed and in January 1952 Newbury and District BKA was formed. Reading and Abingdon BKAs also came into being around the same time.

These local groups had no county or national voice and were not represented at the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA). The Berkshire Society was disbanded in 1952 and the local groups formed the Berkshire Federation, each remaining independent, working together on county matters and sending a delegate to the BBKA. Slough and District BKA was welcomed into the Federation when county boundaries changed in 1973.

On 9th June 1979 the Federation celebrated its centenary with The Royal County of Berkshire Beekeepers' Centenary Meeting, which was held at Hall Place, Berkshire College of Agriculture. The Federation Chairman at the time was celebrated Wokingham member Bert Spragg.

The programme for the Federation's centenary meeting contained a brief history of 100 years of beekeeping in Berkshire. That history has informed the one you are now reading.

In February 2018, thirty-nine years after it celebrated its centenary and with the BBKA's permission, the Berkshire Federation was disbanded. With dissolution, each association can now send their own delegate to the BBKA's Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM).

We continue to work with the other Associations, much as Wokingham's beekeepers did when the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Beekeepers' Society was formed in 1879.