



WSBKA 48th Annual Bee Market & Auction

The Auction was again a great success, but WET! In its 48th year the venue was again the Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough. All grassed areas were closed to us with many underwater due to the recent heavy and persistent rain. The use of one of the main car parks for the Auction Ring reduced parking significantly, but we squeezed in over 200 visitors, many of whom had taken notice of our warning and shared transport. Over 40 members helped make the event the success it undoubtedly was.

All week leading up to the Auction the weather forecast looked dire! On the day we enjoyed a dry morning. But the rain arrived just after 2pm - over 2hrs earlier than forecast - in biblical proportions! Only by the concerted efforts of our intrepid (and very wet) Lot Stewards were many of the Lots prevented from floating off down the carpark and protected from the worst of the weather!

The sale continued in the Sussex Restaurant with the 100 or so remaining bidders continuing to battle it out in a very 'cosy' environment. But at least they remained dry, which is more than can be said for the Lot Stewards. Over 300 Lots were sold during the afternoon as the unrelenting rain beat down outside.

The value of some of the equipment being sold this year was exceptional and I hope both buyers and sellers were satisfied with the results of the day. I wonder how many items have been through this Auction more than once in its 48 year history?!

We look forward to seeing you again next year and to those of you who supported the event by buying, selling or helping with the organisation or administration of the event - THANK YOU. It would not happen without you.

Graham

Secretary & Auction Organiser WSBKA

Inside this issue:

<i>Asian Hornet Fact Sheet & Update</i>	2
<i>South of England Show</i>	3
<i>Harry's Herald</i>	4
<i>Around the Divisions</i>	5
<i>Dates For Your Diary</i>	5
<i>World Bee Day</i>	6
<i>West Sussex BKA website</i>	6

BBKA Asian Hornet Fact Sheet



- A single Yellow-legged Asian hornet queen arrived in France around 2004, an accidental import from China
- The insect has since invaded many parts of Western Europe
- They were first discovered in the UK in 2016
- Between 2016 and 2022 there were 23 confirmed sightings in the UK, including 13 nests
 - In 2023 there were 72 nests destroyed in 56 locations – more than the previous six years combined
- honey bees and all native insects –
- A voracious predator which poses a significant threat to it has no natural predators in the UK
- An average nest can consume over 11kg of insects in one year
- It has already altered the biodiversity in France, where it is present
- Their habit of hovering outside the hive stops the bees from collecting nectar and pollen to feed themselves
- Can now be found in 12 European countries
- Some make their way to the UK by flying across the channel – other routes include via ferries, containers and vehicles
- We need eyes on the ground everywhere – in towns and cities, parks and woodland areas...ports, marinas, garden centres, orchards, vineyards, parks, timber yards, fruit and veg wholesalers, transport hubs and gardens need to be extra vigilant
- Yellow-legged Asian hornets have been found on ferries, sailing boats, and in imported goods such wood, soil and other horticulture products
- Sightings should be reported, complete with an image if possible, via the Asian Hornet Watch app - available on app store for Android and iPhone
- The National Bee Unit (NBU) will then follow up reports and destroy their nests
- A single hornet is unlikely to cause injury if left alone
- They can become very aggressive if their nest is disturbed – keep a distance of at least 10 metres away
- The Yellow-legged Asian hornet is a 'reportable' pest – if spotted, it should be reported to the National Bee Unit as soon as possible via the app
- The first confirmed sighting in 2024 was on 11th March, found in a potting shed at Ash, near Canterbury in Kent
- Asian hornets have a stinger up to 3.5mm long, and they can use it multiple times
- Primary nests are roughly 5 -10 cm in diameter. These can often be found in sheds, garages, porches, bird boxes, hedgerows and brambles, even vehicle engines – generally at a height of less than 10m
- Secondary nests will be built close to primary nests, usually within a distance of 100m. These are usually found in the tops of trees, but those built lower down are a danger to those who might accidentally disturb them; for example those in hedges, bramble patches, utility boxes etc. They can be very difficult to spot when concealed by vegetation
- One nest can produce 350+ queens, some of which will begin new colonies the following year
- Asian hornets present one of the biggest threats to UK honey bees and other pollinators in a generation
- Not to be confused with '*Vespa mandarinia*', the Asian giant hornet, aka 'murder hornet'. This, to date, has never been found in Europe
- All our efforts are currently working towards eradication

Asian Hornet Update



At the beginning of April, the NBU began spring trapping in areas identified as high risk. Traps have been set at locations across Kent, East Sussex, Devon and North Yorkshire to monitor for signs of Asian hornet activity. On the 13th of April, a single hornet was caught in one of these traps near Four Oaks, Kent approx. 3km from the nest found in 2023. The specimen was sent to the lab at Fera Science Ltd for official confirmation and analysis and the NBU will continue to monitor the area.

The NBU has also received 3 further credible reports of lone Asian hornets last month. The first was a hornet on a ferry midway between Calais, France and Dover on 8th April. The second was a report on 11th April of a hornet in Folkestone, Kent by a homeowner. Lastly, on 13th April a hornet was sighted on a ferry between St Malo, France and Portsmouth – close to the St Malo port. The hornets reported on the 11th and 13th were both reportedly killed but the specimens were not captured for official confirmation.

The BBKA has premiered its new yellow-legged Asian hornet information film. www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E_cU2eGjnw

The BBKA thanks Spike Production and the Guernsey Government for their assistance.

South of England Show

Taking place this year from 7th to 9th June at their Ardingly Showground, Selsfield Road, RH17 6TL. Ticket prices from £23.40 if purchased prior to 30th May.

Offering all ages the chance to connect with the countryside and have a great day out, the South of England Show features a non-stop programme of agricultural and equestrian displays, country pursuits, live entertainment, rural crafts and an abundance of food, drink and shopping opportunities.



Featuring a variety of entertainment, including headline act Atkinson Action Horses, international show jumping, heavy horse display, scurry racing, equine and livestock judging. The vintage agricultural machinery ring is back this year with demonstrations and displays, plus a new countryside ring with ferrets, wood chopping and so much more. Plus, there's forestry, falconry, fly casting, and many more rural industries and crafts for visitors to experience and enjoy.

Full details and ticket sales on the Show's website: www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show/

Harry Boxall writes for the County News.

According to meteorologists the last 18 months have been the wettest since records were first kept in the 1860s. It certainly has had an impact on our bees and I suspect has contributed to the colony losses in the south and south-east during 2023, the worst in the UK.

Like most of you, there are many occasions in the winter when I go out to my apiaries to check my bees to ensure they have sufficient stores, the hive isn't sinking in the wet earth or the roof hasn't been blown off. I recall my pre-*Varroa* days in the 1980s when the cold weather arrived in November the bees hunkered down and apart from the odd voiding flight on a warm-ish day I didn't see them until late-February or March. I can truly say I never lost a colony until the mid-1990s and that was due to *Varroa*.



The swarm season is just getting underway and I was listening to the BBKA evening talk on swarming on 25th of last month. In addition to the different methods of swarm control, the part social media played in swarm notification was included as well as a talk on bee colony removal from the deep recesses of very old houses. Tim Wylie, the apiarist atelier warned of the perils of taking calls from the public at face value. In particular, accepting that a swarm had newly arrived in someone's chimney. The obvious way to encourage them to move out is to light a smoky fire. However, as Tim pointed out, if the bees have been in situ for some long time the heat of a fire will cause the wax to melt and a fire could start between the liner and the chimney stack.

It is a good rule: don't accept what you're told in a telephone call or email by a non-beekeeper about bees and swarms. Do get some confirmation, preferably a photo. It could save a lot of damage being caused or your time from being wasted. A female caller once became very indignant when I asked her to confirm with a photo that she actually had bees in her attic. She told me she knew exactly what a swarm of bees looked like. However, this swarm turned out to be a large amount of dead flies on the attic wall. Always check first.

Harry

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Around the Divisions

All Members are welcome to attend any Divisional meeting, but please advise the organiser if you plan to attend.

Central Sussex Division



Details of the Division's activities from: secretary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk or the Division's website: <https://centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/>

Chichester Division



Wednesday 15th May - 'Keeping Healthy Colonies' with Margaret Murdin at 7:30pm. at Boxgrove Village Hall, The Street, Boxgrove, PO18 0EE. Further details of the Division's activities from: Cheryl Barton, secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk or the Division's website: www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk.

Wisborough Green Division

Full details of the Division's activities from: Martina Hendry, secretary@wgbka.org.uk or the Division's website: www.wgbka.org.uk.

Newsletters may be viewed here: www.wgbka.org.uk/Newsletters.html

Worthing Division



Full details of the Division's activities from: Debra Edwards, dmcd.edwards@gmail.com or the Division's website: www.worthing-beekeepers.org

'Share your Division's activities with readers of the County News'

...and Dates for your Diary



Monday 20th May - 'World Bee Day'. The day aims to raise awareness on the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development.

www.un.org/en/observances/bee-day



7th to 9th June - 'South of England Show'. Ardingly Showground, Selsfield Road, RH17 6TL
See article in this newsletter.

www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show/

We are on facebook so if you would like your events featured please send details to the Editor.



...and finally

World Bee Day 20th May



World Bee Day is a day of awareness about the importance of honey bees and why we need to protect them and other such pollinators.

Designated by the United Nations, **World Bee Day** seeks to inform and educate people about honey bees and their impact on our biodiversity. For example, it is estimated that one out of every three mouthfuls of food we eat depends on honey bees and the pollination process.

But honey bees are facing extinction, with a 2021 report by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Bombus Pollinators Association of Law Students finding that American honey bees had decreased by some 89%.

MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all this month's contributors. If you don't have access to the internet and want further details of anything in this newsletter, please contact the Editor & County Secretary. Likewise, if you would like to contribute to future newsletters please send articles and photographs to:

Graham Elliott, Editor & County Secretary, no later than the 20th of the preceding month.
secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

We're on the web:
www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



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