

Volume 14, Issue 9

December 2024



MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

# West Sussex Beekeepers' Association

Est. 1973



**Inside this issue:**

<i>South of England Honey Show</i>	2
<i>Central Sussex Division's New Logo</i>	2
<b><i>WSBKA Annual Convention</i></b>	3
<i>Wisborough Green Division Training</i>	4
<i>BIBBA Training Courses 2025</i>	5
<i>Yellow-legged Asian Hornet Update</i>	5
<i>Chat from the Chair</i>	6
<i>Northumbria University Survey</i>	6
<i>BBKA Update</i>	7
<i>Canine Partners Appeal</i>	8
<i>BeeBase Annual Hive Count</i>	8
<i>Exam Success</i>	8
<i>Around the Divisions &amp; Dates for your Diary</i>	9
<i>Bee Smart - Buy Local</i>	10
<i>West Sussex BKA website</i>	11

# A Very Happy Christmas

2024 is almost at an end and this is the last newsletter of the year. Unfortunately there will be no January County News so this addition includes articles that would have appeared in January.

The passing of our chairman, Harry Boxall, was a shock to everyone who knew him, but at this time of the year it is good to remember dear friends and colleagues who are no longer with us to enjoy this festive season.



The Asian hornet - sorry, yellow-legged Asian hornet, has all but passed us by this year. Although there is some concern that a number of the nests destroyed by DEFRA recently would have already produced queens that may show themselves in the new year. We must not become complacent. It is inevitable that West Sussex will become familiar with this predator on our honey bees.

The organising team of our annual Convention has again done a Sterling job in organising another memorable event. Please join us if you can. Details are included in this newsletter and full details and the booking form are on the WSBKA website. Book early to ensure your seminars of first choice.

Enjoy the festivities while you look forward to a new beekeeping season starting in just a few short months.

## South of England Honey Show

The volunteer team of the organising committee has reported on the Show held on 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> September this year at the Ardingly Showground.

Their report can be viewed on the 'Notices' page of the WSBKA website:  
[www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/page\\_3039910.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/page_3039910.html)

The document includes an introduction to the content and organisation of the show, some images captured during the event and the Show Bench results.



## Central Sussex Division's New Logo



The **Central Sussex Division** recently launched its new logo.

It will take pride of place on all things printed and public facing.

<https://centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/>



# West Sussex BKA Annual Convention 2025

The West Sussex Beekeepers' Association is pleased to invite beekeepers and those interested in bees and beekeeping to the **WSBKA Annual Convention**. The event is designed to suit beekeepers of all standards. As well as the main lectures, the seminars offer a choice of more specialised topics. We hope you will be joining us.

**Reception open from 9am.**

## Main Lectures

*'Inside the Hive'* - Ventilation, Insulation, Bee Space and the Cluster  
– Jane Medwell

*'Varroa Resistance Explained'* and how Beekeepers can Benefit from this Knowledge – Professor Stephen Martin

*'Spring Management and Swarm Control'* – Anne Rowberry



**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025**  
**9:30am – 4:30 pm**  
**Lodge Hill Centre, Pulborough,**  
**Watersfield, West Sussex,**  
**RH20 1LZ**

**In addition there is a choice of seminars.**

## Seminar 1 (You can attend one of these)

- 1) *'The Demaree and More'* – Anne Rowberry
- 2) *'The Honey Bee's Head, under the Microscope'* – James Donaldson
- 3) *'So you want to be a Swarm Collector'* – Tom Moore

## Seminar 2 (You can attend one of these)

- 4) *'Moving away from Varroa treatments'* – Professor Stephen Martin
- 5) *'Comb Change – Why, What and How'* – Jane Medwell
- 6) *'The Magic and Mystery of Drone Congregation Areas'* – Stephen Fleming



Advance booking per person, WSBKA members £30  
Members of other Associations and non-members £40  
On the day if space allows £40

Full details, speakers' profiles and Booking Form are on the WSBKA website:

[www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html)

or contact Viv Sallows on 01293 871092 or 07749 265944

or email: [wsbkaconvention@gmail.com](mailto:wsbkaconvention@gmail.com)

The West Sussex 2025 Convention has attracted a great line up of speakers. We anticipate the demand to be particularly keen, so booking is opening earlier than usual to give members a better opportunity to book. We have an exceptional blend of lectures and seminars to look forward to with the main lectures being presented by Jane Medwell, Professor Stephen Martin and Anne Rowberry. There is something for everyone, beginner to expert.

Book early to ensure your place on the seminars of your choice.

Tea and coffee will be served during the breaks and also a simple lunch.

## Wisborough Green Division Training

---

As we mentioned last month Wisborough Green Division has organised an exciting training course specifically for those who have recently entered the craft, or are about to do so. When you have your first colony you can immediately be faced with something you may not have been told in your beginners' course.



This course started in November, but there is still time to join. It is covering many of the issues that newer beekeepers need to know, so they have a better chance of recognising something and understanding it. Rather than the usual course format, a topic will be discussed, with questions from the floor to help with understanding and clarification before moving onto the next topic.

The tutor will be Roger Patterson. See the BIBBA website for Roger's profile:  
<https://bibba.com/roger-patterson-2/>

The venue is **The Chapel, Spy Lane, Loxwood, RH14 0SQ** from 7pm on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025, 19<sup>th</sup> February and 19<sup>th</sup> March.

The course is free and it is advised that to get the best out of it all future sessions are attended. It would be appreciated if attendees could email me so I have a rough idea of numbers (and how many biscuits to bring!). Although it will be pitched at a level to suit newer beekeepers, it is also suitable for those who have a little more experience.

***Martina Hendry***

[secretary@wgbka.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wgbka.org.uk)



# BIBBA Training Courses 2025

---

## BIBBA Supporting Beekeepers

### Beekeeping Courses for Early 2025

BIBBA has three different courses planned for early 2025, each with the aim of supporting and supplementing training and sessions run by local BKAs. Click on the titles below to find out more:



1. ['Varroa Resistance through Bee Improvement'](#)

For those aiming to go treatment free. Ideally suited to beekeepers with at least a few years' experience. The latest scientific knowledge and practical experience from expert speakers.

2. ['Bees and Queens for Everyone'](#)

It is generally accepted that locally reared queens are better suited than imports, this one-day course will go through how to raise locally adapted bees and queens using low-cost, simple methods.

3. ['Early Years Beekeeping Course'](#)

To support beekeepers to enhance their skills and knowledge. Ideal for beekeepers looking for the next stage after the local theory and practical course, or for those wanting a refresh. Hosted by West Sussex Beekeepers.

Open to ALL beekeepers, not just BIBBA members. Full info at [bibba.com/events](https://bibba.com/events)

## Yellow-legged Hornet Update

---

Since DEFRA's last update, another nest has been located, bringing the total to 24 nests found in 2024.

On 11<sup>th</sup> November, a nest was found in Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, following a report of a single hornet entering a cheese shop. The nest has been destroyed, removed and sent for analysis.



The NBU has continued to monitor various sites in Kent and East Sussex but have seen very little hornet activity and the surveillance has now finished.



## Chat from the Chair

---



Every year I notice something different about the natural world. This year, for several weeks, I have seen primrose leaves that are much larger than normal at this time of year, though not all of them, some staying hidden as we have come to expect.

This is similar to what we see in spring, when hawthorn, ash, oak and willows break bud at different times, although they are the same species. This is natural variation that helps in adapting to changing conditions. If everything is the same, then it becomes vulnerable, so a danger to survival of the species.

This is the same as our bees, where free-living colonies, although their characteristics, if they have survived at least one winter, are much closer than many managed colonies, there is still adequate diversity. Colonies with no human intervention are subject to natural selection, which ruthlessly takes out the unsuited, so it doesn't influence future generations. This does narrow down the variability, but results in a much more stable population that is robust.

Nationwide, there is becoming much more interest by beekeepers in raising their own queens. That's fine, but we need to make sure they will survive and not contribute to heavy losses. One reason for high losses is the unsuitability of many bees to our fickle climate, that is considered to be the result of buying queens from commercial sources that have either been imported, or are raised from imports. I encourage beekeepers to raise their own queens from local stock. It's easy to do and if WSBKA members are interested, Wisborough Green BKA hope to be running sessions to help you in 2025.

### *Roger*

Vice Chair WSBKA

[roger@pattersonbees.co.uk](mailto:roger@pattersonbees.co.uk)

## Northumbria University Survey

---

My name is Federica Paradiso, and I am a PhD student at Northumbria University. I am conducting an online survey to assess how the perception of pollinators in urban green spaces varies across different groups of people. The perspective of beekeepers is crucial for my research project. This survey involves beekeepers from the entire UK to collect perceptions of people living in or out of cities.



**Northumbria  
University**  
NEWCASTLE



The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and will include questions on your understanding of the abundance of honey bees and wild pollinators in your area, your interest in nature, and your ideas about pollinator-friendly urban greenspace management practices. Your contribution is invaluable to this research.

To participate please click the following link: <https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/northumbria/managing-urban-pollinators-beekeeper-pilot-survey-corrections-d> . **Closing date is 1st January.** At the end of the project, I will be more than happy to share all the findings with your association.

Thank you. ***Federica***

# BBKA Update

---

## Examination Papers

During an Area Association Education Forum meeting earlier this year, the question of selling past examination papers was discussed. It was clear that a majority of Education Secretaries felt that the papers should be freely available to members.

The trustees have considered this feedback and have decided that with effect from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 past examination papers will be available for members to download, free of charge, from the BBKA Online Learning platform:

<https://learning.bbka.org.uk/login/index.php>



## Learning Online Content Creators

The BBKA is seeking members who have a passion for education and content creation. The ideal candidates will be responsible for writing outline course plans (storyboards) and then either creating high-quality content or working with the Education & Husbandry Committee to source or commission content from other beekeepers.

This will support the education platform to help members and association officers improve their beekeeping knowledge and skills. Responsibilities will include commissioning and managing content creation projects that will appeal to a wide audience with differing levels of experience. Qualifications must include experience in beekeeping education and content creation, strong IT and excellent project management skills.

The contract offered will be self-employed for an initial 12 months. Remuneration will be paid at £16 per hour based on an average of 10 hours a week reducing to 5 hours a week in the busy beekeeping season with flexible home working.

A letter of application should be made to Leigh Sidaway, [gen.manager@bbka.org.uk](mailto:gen.manager@bbka.org.uk). Leigh is also available for an informal telephone conversation by emailing and arranging a mutually convenient time.

**Note that the Closing Date for receipt of applications is 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**

Full details are available on the 'Notices' page of the WSBKA website:

[www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/page\\_3039910.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/page_3039910.html)

## Stewards Wanted



The success of the BBKA Spring Convention depends on the many volunteers involved and Chief Steward, Ray Green (Chichester) is looking for stewards to cover the three days of the event.

So if you can help on 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> April next year contact Ray for further information; [scstewards@bbka.org.uk](mailto:scstewards@bbka.org.uk)



**Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8NB**

Remember to recycle your used postage stamps from all those Christmas cards to support the work of Canine Partners. Although the local Heyshott Southern Centre is now closed the charity continues to operate out of its centre in Leicestershire.

For full details and where to send your stamps:  
[caninepartners.org.uk/recycle-used-postage-stamps/](https://caninepartners.org.uk/recycle-used-postage-stamps/)

This year's local Carol Service at Arundel Cathedral will be on **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December**. For full details visit Canine Partners website: <https://caninepartners.org.uk/event/carol-service-arundel/>



## BeeBase Annual Hive Count



Please don't forget this year's Hive Count!

To update your BeeBase record, click on the link [www.nationalbeeunit.com/hive-count/](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/hive-count/). Log in and submit your response by **31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**. It is important that you update your record, even if this is to confirm that you currently have no colonies.

If you have any further questions, please visit the Hive Count page on

BeeBase [www.nationalbeeunit.com/bees-and-the-law/hive-count/](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/bees-and-the-law/hive-count/) or contact us at [Hive.count@apha.gov.uk](mailto:Hive.count@apha.gov.uk).

Thank you

**National Bee Unit**

## Exam Success



In November Alan Aldridge (Chichester) took and passed the BBKA Microscopy Certificate. This assessment provides a qualification and measure of achievement for those beekeepers with an interest in pollen, anatomy, and disease relevant to the honey bee.

Well done Alan.

A reminder, for all BBKA Modules to be taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2025 applications need to be with me no later than **1<sup>st</sup> February 2025**.

**Sue Elliott**

[examsecretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:examsecretary@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



**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December** - *'The Bee Colony as a Honey Factory'*, with Professor Tom Seeley. 7:30pm at The Millennium Hall, Crawley Road, Roffey, RH12 4DT. Further details of the Division's activities from: [secretary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk) or the Division's website: <https://centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/>

### Chichester Division



**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December** - *'Christmas Social & Honey Tasting'* at 7:30pm at Boxgrove Village Hall, The Street, PO18 0EE. Further details of the Division's activities from: Cheryl Barton, [secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk) or the Division's website: [www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk).

### Wisborough Green Division

Full details of the Division's activities from: Martina Hendry, [secretary@wgbka.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wgbka.org.uk) or the Division's website: [www.wgbka.org.uk](http://www.wgbka.org.uk).  
Newsletters may be viewed here: [www.wgbka.org.uk/Newsletters.html](http://www.wgbka.org.uk/Newsletters.html)

### Worthing Division



**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December** - *'Christmas Social'*. The Glebelands Centre, Greystoke Road, Ferring, BN12 5JL from 7:45pm.  
Full details of the Division's activities on the Division's website: [www.worthing-beekeepers.org](http://www.worthing-beekeepers.org)

## ...and Dates for your Diary



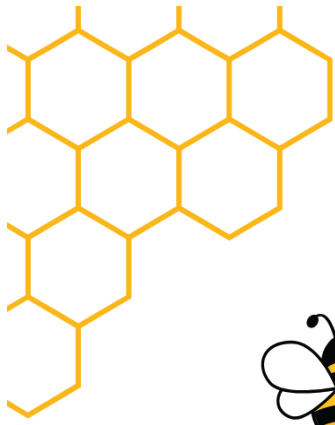
**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February** - *'West Sussex Beekeepers' Annual Convention'*. From 9:00am at Lodge Hill, Pulborough, RH20 1LZ . [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html) .  
Details in this newsletter.

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April** - *'West Sussex Beekeepers' 49<sup>th</sup> Bee Market & Auction'*. From 8:30am at Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus, Pulborough, RH20 1DL .  
[www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html)



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





# BEE 'SMART', CHOOSE LOCAL!



Have you stopped to think about what's in that cheap jar of honey at the supermarket? Or rather, what isn't? Choosing honey from your local beekeeper is the SMART choice and here's why:

## LOCAL HONEY IS....



### **SUSTAINABLE:**

Local honey has one of the lowest carbon footprints in food production, with no land or machinery needed to cultivate it and travelling just a few miles down the road to reach your plate. Bees are exceptional pollinators, vital to the health of our ecosystem, so supporting their health means investing in the wider environment too. Choose bee miles, not air miles!



### **MEDICINAL:**

Feeling a bit under the weather? Try a spoonful of local honey, renowned for its soothing abilities. In fact, if you're suffering with a cough or a sore throat, the NHS recommends drinking hot honey and lemon, as it can have a similar effect to many over-the-counter cough medicines.



### **AUTHENTIC:**

Yes, we know you can buy honey cheaply in the supermarket, sometimes for as little as 69p a jar. And we understand why that might be tempting. But take a look at the small print and you'll see that it's often a blend of 'honeys' from a number of different countries. When we say local, we mean local: created in your community and sold on your doorstep.



### **REGIONAL...AND REALLY TASTY!:**

Local honey is truly unique, offering a variety of tastes and colours that reflect the array of plant life from which the bees have collected the nectar. It's a culinary celebration of the nature in your neighbourhood, varying by location and season. It's a reinvestment in your local economy too, with your pennies going directly to support small enterprises in your area.



### **TRADITIONAL:**

By choosing local honey, you'll be investing in a legacy of British beekeeping that stretches back hundreds of years. The craft of beekeeping is often passed down through the generations and your support will help keep these traditions alive, as well as inspiring future generations of honey producers. That's quite an impact that can be made through a simple jar of honey!

Please consider supporting British beekeepers:

**Bee Smart and Choose Local!**



...and finally



There will be no January edition of the County News—the first edition to be missed in 15 years!

Normal service will be resumed during January and the first edition for the new year will be published at the end of that month.

Wishing you all a **Very Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year** when it comes.

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

#### MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all this year'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 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.  
[secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)

**We're on the web:**  
[www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)



Follow us  
On  
Facebook

Previous newsletters from the last 12 months are available on the website.

