



# WSBKA Annual Convention

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025

Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Near Pulborough,  
West Sussex RH20 1LZ

This is your FINAL reminder to book your place

Our Annual Convention has again attracted exceptional speakers to cover a wide range of topics with the main lectures being presented by Jane Medwell, Professor Stephen Martin and Ann Rowberry. There is something for everyone, beginner to expert. We hope you will join us.



Book now to ensure your place on the seminars of your choice. Tea and coffee will be served during the breaks and also a simple lunch.

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

Reception open from 9.00am. Introduction and Welcome at 9.30am.

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## 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 – Prof. Stephen Martin

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



## Apart from the three main lectures, you can choose to attend two out of the six seminars

*'The Demaree and More'* – Anne Rowberry

*'The Honey Bee's Head, under the Microscope'* – James Donaldson

*'So you want to be a Swarm Collector'* – Tom Moore

*'Moving away from Varroa treatments'* – Professor Stephen Martin

*'Comb Change – Why, What and How'* – Jane Medwell

*'The Magic and Mystery of Drone Congregation Areas'* – Stephen Fleming

Full details, speakers' profiles and the 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)

## LASI Sale

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OF SUSSEX

*The Department of Apiculture and Social Insects, LASI*, after almost thirty years of research on honey bees and social insects, is closing down. As a result we have many items for sale. Amongst others there are 15 colonies of honey bees in Langstroth hives (shallow frames), of between three and four supers each. There are also hive spare parts, hundreds of plastic frames and some wooden frames and new wax foundations, pollen traps, dozens of Apideas with extension supers and about 20 - 30 Langstroth nuc boxes, various types of plastic buckets and bucket feeders. There is an electric 20-frame (Langstroth) stainless steel honey extractor.

In the apiaries we have about forty big concrete patio slabs and 160 concrete blocks which are used as bases for the hives to stand on.

### **EVERYTHING MUST GO SO ANY REASONABLE OFFERS CONSIDERED.**

Please contact Luciano Scandian by email on his Sussex University address: [L.Scandian@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:L.Scandian@sussex.ac.uk)

## WSBKA Annual Bee Market & Auction

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Following the Convention this month we will be turning our attention to the next important event for West Sussex Beekeepers and its members.

Our 49<sup>th</sup> Bee Market & Auction will be held on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April**. The venue is again Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough.

Our first Auction was held in 1975 and had it not been for Covid preventing us from holding an event in 2020 this year would have seen us celebrating 50 years. That now has to wait until next year.



Est. 1975

Full details, Guidance Notes and an Entry Form for registering Lots for sale is now on the website: [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html)

So it's time to take stock of all that surplus beekeeping equipment you may wish to sell at the Auction. Remember, the equipment must be clean and in a saleable condition. Any bees offered for sale must have been inspected by the Regional or Seasonal Bee Inspector within 14 days prior to the Auction.

As usual, a large team of volunteers will be required to manage this event and ensure a successful experience for the Association, buyers and vendors. So if you can offer some time please contact Ben Hewson by email: [ben@benhewson.com](mailto:ben@benhewson.com) or me. It's never too early to register your interest. We promise you an enjoyable and interesting day benefiting members, non-members and your Association.

### **Graham**

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

## WSBKA Annual General Meeting

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Roger has mentioned the Association's AGM in his 'Chat from the Chair' this month. This year it will be on **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March** on 'Zoom'.

Full details will be in the next Newsletter with instructions on how to join the meeting. We will be electing a new President and Chair. The other Executive positions, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will also be elected. So come along and cast your vote.

If you are interested in joining the Executive Committee in any of these positions, or you would like to discuss what is involved, please get in touch.

### **Graham**

Hon. Secretary, West Sussex Beekeepers' Association

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

## BBKA Examinations & Assessments 2025

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We are entering a new year for BBKA Examinations and Assessments. Exams can appear daunting at first glance but they are a great way to improve our understanding of how to work with our bees to get good results.



The starting point and entry requirement for all other examinations and assessments is the **Basic Assessment in Beekeeping**; this practical assessment tests the basic skills and knowledge of the craft. You may sit the **Basic Assessment** at any time this year up until 31<sup>st</sup> August. The application closing date is **30<sup>th</sup> June**. It is probable that a number of group sessions will be held across the divisions this summer.

Following the **Basic Assessment**, you may choose to take your bee husbandry further by taking the **Honey Bee Health Certificate**. A practical assessment to encourage beekeepers who have been awarded the **BBKA Basic Certificate** and have at least three years of beekeeping experience to improve their understanding and practice of beekeeping. You will also be able to demonstrate a range of beekeeping skills.

**Bee Breeding Certificate** is a practical assessment to promote the skills required to improve stocks of local bees.

**General Husbandry Certificate**, and subsequently the **Advanced Husbandry Certificate in Beekeeping Husbandry**.

You can also further your knowledge of bees and beekeeping by studying for the written **Module** examinations. In 2025 **Modules** may be sat in either March or November. Whilst it is still recommended that you pass the **Basic Assessment** before attempting any of the written **Modules**, you are now able to take a **Module** without having passed the **Basic Assessment** but should have at least 2 years' experience of beekeeping.

If you are planning to sit **Modules** this March, please contact me by **6<sup>th</sup> February** so that I can e-mail you a link to the online application form as the BBKA's closing date for entry is **8<sup>th</sup> February**. Please note the Syllabi for **BBKA Modules** have been updated for 2025. These can be found on the BBKA website alongside updated reading lists: [www.bbka.org.uk/syllabi-for-written-exams](http://www.bbka.org.uk/syllabi-for-written-exams)

Details of Examinations and Assessments dates and fees for 2025 can be viewed on the BBKA website: [www.bbka.org.uk/general-help](http://www.bbka.org.uk/general-help). If you need any further advice, please contact me by phone or email.

### ***Sue Elliott***

WSBKA Examination Secretary

Tel: 01403 752493 mobile: 07746 093729

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

## Exam Success in West Sussex

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In November last year 2 members sat the BBKA Modules on-line. Congratulations to Alan Aldridge and Kath Hunter (Chichester). Alan achieved Distinction in the Module 5 and Kath achieved a Pass in the Module 2.

# BIBBA Training Courses

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A REMINDER from December's Newsletter

**'Varroa resistance through Bee Improvement' - 15<sup>th</sup> February.**  
Ettington Community Centre, Rogers Lane, Ettington, Warwickshire,  
CV37 7SX

Five experienced beekeepers will share their knowledge.—all leading experts in their fields. Stephen Martin, Steve Riley, Clive Hudson, Rhona Toft and Joe Ibbertson.

Further details, speakers' profiles and to book your place for just £20:  
<https://bibba.com/varroa-resistance-through-bee-improvement/>



**'Sustainability: Bees and Queens for Everyone' - 22<sup>nd</sup> February.** Ampfield Village Hall, Morleys Lane, Ampfield, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 9BJ.

There is growing concern amongst beekeepers of all abilities and experience regarding the impact of the importation of bees and queens. Further details and to book your place for just £12.88:

<https://bibba.com/sustainability-bees-and-queens-for-everyone/>

**'The Early Years' - 23<sup>rd</sup> March.** Pulborough Village Hall, Swan View, Pulborough, RH20 2BF

The course sponsored by West Sussex Beekeepers will 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. The two tutors are practical beekeepers who will pass on the experiences gleaned from many years in the craft. Karl Colyer is from Cheshire and will join Roger Patterson.

## Programme for the day:-

9:00 Registration

9:25 Introduction and welcome

9:30-10:15 **Roger Patterson:** *'Learn the basics'*

10:15 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 11:15 **Karl Colyer:** *'Things I Wish I'd Known Earlier'*

11:15 – 11:30 Break

11:30 – 12:30 **Roger Patterson:** *'Queen cells: Their recognition and uses'*

12:30 – 1:15 Lunch (bring your own and refreshments)

1:15 – 2:15 **Karl Colyer:** *'Balancing your beekeeping with your other commitments'*

2:15 - 2:30 Break

2:30 – 3:30 **Roger Patterson:** *'Observation: Interpret what you see'*

3:30 General discussion and close

Further details, speakers' profiles and to book your place for just £12:  
<https://bibba.com/early-years-events/>

## Chat from the Chair

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I am writing this on 22<sup>nd</sup> January after being taken for an early morning walk by three border collies. I have just heard two Greater Spotted Woodpeckers drumming fiercely, showing that spring isn't far away. The daylight is lengthening and bees will be responding.

Beekeeping-wise, springs tend to vary considerably, which is why I advise beekeepers to respond to what bees tell them, not what they are told or what's in the books. Queens should have started to lay, so augmenting the dwindling adult population when it emerges. Brood is very hungry, so as there is little income until the flows of the spring trees and flowers, the stores will be consumed at a quicker rate. Be aware of possible starvation, but don't just feed for the sake of it, otherwise you may crowd queens out, so hindering colony development.

A couple of things to remind you of are the 'Early Years' day at Pulborough on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Everyone should have a programme and the details are again included in this Newsletter (Page 5). Although intended for newer beekeepers, it is suitable for more experienced, as it will be packed with practical information.

The auction on 26<sup>th</sup> April is always a good day out and gives beekeepers the opportunity to pass their unwanted items onto others. Details for these events can be found elsewhere. Out of county, there is a ['Sustainability: Bees and queens for everyone'](#) day in Hampshire on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

Apart from Worthing, the other Divisions have their AGMs early in the year (as does WSBKA). I know there is a reluctance to attend by some, but if you value the work of your local BKA, then it's only reasonable that you support it.

### **Roger**

Vice Chair WSBKA

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

## General Husbandry 2026

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Have you passed your Basic assessment, considered General Husbandry but concerned about getting you and your apiary 'assessment ready'?

The BBKA is launching a new month-by-month programme to support anyone who wants to work towards taking their GH assessment in the summer of 2026. During 2025, we will discuss the topics covered by the syllabus so you can start to work on beekeeping practices this season, to get you assessment-ready for 2026.

The General Husbandry is a practical (not written!) assessment that encourages continuous learning and improvement in your beekeeping practices and ultimately provides a formal and highly respected recognition of your beekeeping skills and knowledge.

The meetings will be monthly via Zoom and open to anyone who has passed their Basic Assessment, has kept bees for a few years and is serious about working towards their GH certificate. !



We will also be encouraging Area Associations to provide additional training to their local members to practice some of the more practical, hands-on training. Members hoping to take their GH assessment in 2025 are also welcome.

Please register your interest using the link below. If you register, you will be sent a zoom link for the first meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7pm and subsequent meetings on the 1st Wednesday of each month.

During the first session we will introduce the GH assessment, review the syllabus, and encourage you to start thinking about how you will 'demonstrate your approach to general beekeeping, queen rearing and swarm control in 2026'. We also want to know what you feel we should include in later sessions. Please note that sessions will be recorded so anyone who registers but is unable to attend will still be able to participate and access the sessions in their own time.

Link to register: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/british-beekeepers-association/t-lnpxzrq](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/british-beekeepers-association/t-lnpxzrq)

Month	Topics for monthly Zoom
Feb 5th 2025	The GH syllabus- doing a personal audit General guidance about the assessment Assessing your apiary.
Mar 5th 2025	Disease inspection – start practising how you would demonstrate this to an assessor The importance of personal, equipment and apiary hygiene. Start to practice giving a running commentary of what you are doing and why every time you handle bees “Reading the bees”.
Apr 2nd 2025	Plan the queen rearing approach you will use. Start planning to take photos etc. Consider using a Queen rearing portfolio. For your assessment – bees should be good tempered and not follow more than about 5 metres from hive – start breeding these now!
May 7th 2025	What artificial swarm procedure will you be demonstrating? (not using a nuc) Start practicing holding & marking queens Shook swarm, Bailey comb change (strong and weak)
Jun 4th 2025	Handling skills Keeping good records – demonstrate at least 12 months of records
Jul 2nd 2025	Nucs! Demonstrate preparation of a nucleus colony for the purpose of swarm control, sale, increase or queen mating as advised by the assessors'
Aug 6th 2025	Honey and Honey Processing – a critical look at your honey processing environment – any changes needed? Prepare 3 jars liquid and 3 jars set honey for next year in case no surplus honey before your assessment
Sep 3rd 2025	Winter preparation and uniting hives Preparing to move a colony to another apiary
Oct 1st 2025	Demonstrate the recovery of beeswax and how to produce blocks suitable for retail sale.
Nov 5th 2025	Stings.
Dec 3rd 2025	Tbc
Jan 2026	Tbc
Feb 2026	Tbc Submit your GH application (deadline end Feb)
Mar 2026	Tbc
Apr 2026	Tbc

## ***BBKA Education & Husbandry Committee***

## Yellow-legged Hornet Update

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The NBU will no longer be responding to reports of Asian hornets or their nests via the AH Watch app that do not include an image of an insect.

The BBKA DOES NOT expect AH Coordinators, or any other BBKA member, to verify nests and would certainly not advocate anyone investigating nests in a manner that could put themselves, or anyone else, in harm's way.

An online map will be created where locations can be logged of any suspected nests and share that information with local coordinators to aid future monitoring efforts.

If anyone is contacted about a suspected nest, the BBKA will need a photo of the nest and location, which can be sent to: [outreach.officer@bbka.org.uk](mailto:outreach.officer@bbka.org.uk) - the details will then be input onto the map. The map can be viewed here: [www.google.com/maps/d/edit](http://www.google.com/maps/d/edit).

If taking a photograph the image should be taken from a suitable distance to avoid disturbing any live nests (at least 10 metres away). Please do not take any unnecessary risks.

Provide a what3words location if possible.

The BBKA is currently in discussion with APHA around how this should be communicated out to the public and what the wording on their response emails should be.

Follow this link for the NNS nest ID form:

[www.nonnativespecies.org/assets/Uploads/ID\\_Vespa\\_velutina\\_Asian\\_Hornet\\_nest\\_1.0.pdf](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/assets/Uploads/ID_Vespa_velutina_Asian_Hornet_nest_1.0.pdf)

## Hampshire Beekeeper - Skep Beekeeping

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Hampshire Beekeeper seeks Skep Beekeeper to share knowledge and information.

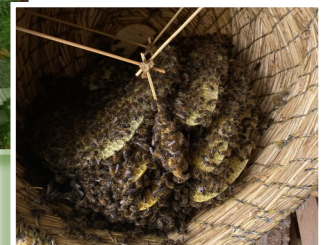
Based near Basingstoke, heading into my fifth year as a beekeeper I keep a number of national hives and have had two colonies in skeps – the bees seem to be very happy in them and I've managed a small harvest of some gloriously rich honey.

What I'd really like for 2025 is to exchange thoughts and experiences with another Skep Beekeeper so if you have hands on experience please contact me.

***Jim Wheatley***

Phone: 0774 468426

Email: [jim.wheatley@oneredlion.co.uk](mailto:jim.wheatley@oneredlion.co.uk)





## Around the Divisions

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

### Central Sussex Division



**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February** - *'The Secrets of Apitherapy – a Journey into the Healing Hive'*, with Dr Gerry Brierley. 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 19<sup>th</sup> February** - *'Preparations for a Better Season'* with Dan Basterfield. On Zoom from 7:30pm. Meeting ID: 773 224 9226 Passcode: 957283

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 13<sup>th</sup> February** - *'Monthly Meeting'*. 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)

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

## ...and Dates for your Diary

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March** - *'West Sussex Beekeepers' Annual General Meeting'*. Full details in next month's 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.



...and finally

## BBKA Spring Convention

**Bookings open Noon 27<sup>th</sup> January!**

Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Bumper Trade Show Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April\*

20+Lectures & 70+Workshops/Seminars

Wristband ticket prices held at 2023 prices

Trade Show only tickets just £6 on the day\*

Programme, FAQs & Bookings: [www.bbka.org.uk/springconvention](http://www.bbka.org.uk/springconvention)



### MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to 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 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)



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

