



Annual Bee Market & Auction

The weather was kinder to us this year and although cloudy and cool remained dry. The sun shining on us in the afternoon.

347 Lots went under the hammer just after midday and there were many satisfied vendors and buyers with some of this year's new intake of beekeepers taking their first steps towards a hobby and craft that will provide them with a lifetime of pleasure.

Over 40 members were involved in staging and managing the event throughout the day and my grateful thanks go to all of you who so generously gave of your time on Saturday. This is the second large event this year for the Association and would not be possible without the active support of members.



Est: 1975

Although this is offered as a service to members and non-members alike it also makes a contribution to the Association's funds and enables us to support training in the county as well as our annual Convention that again this year attracted high class, knowledgeable speakers from around the UK.

Next year we will be celebrating 50 years of the Annual Bee Market & Auction and we look forward to seeing you there.

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Event Coordinator - International Meeting of Young Beekeepers

The BBKA is seeking to appoint an Event Coordinator, but time is short to apply.

The IMYB is an annual event giving young beekeepers the opportunity to meet, work and learn from fellow young beekeepers from almost 30 countries around the world. It is a life-changing trip for those selected to represent England and a great time is guaranteed. The next IMYB event is planned for **11-12th July in Northern Ireland.**

The teams comprise 3 young people aged 13-18, an event coordinator and a pastoral mentor. As coordinators/mentors may need to enter single sex dormitories it is important that the team has one male and female in these roles. Due to safeguarding requirements, the Occupational Requirement under Schedule 9 (part 1) of the Equality Act 2010 applies as there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be male, as duties include providing personal care and supervision of male children to ensure their dignity, welfare, and safeguarding is protected when travelling and attending competitions internationally.

A female pastoral mentor is already in place **so the BBKA is seeking a male event coordinator.**

The Job Specification for the role can be accessed via the WSBKA website: www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/page_3039910.html

If you are interested in applying submit your CV and a covering letter to gen.manager@bbka.org.uk or by post to BBKA, National Beekeeping Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2LG to arrive no later than **Friday 23rd May 2025.**

Next BBKA Talk in May - 'The Beekeeping Year: Year 1'

The next in the BBKA series of Zoom talks is with Ian Campbell on **Tuesday 20th May at 7pm.** This is a change to the previously advertised talk. A recording of this talk will be available on YouTube for those unable to watch live.

Ian Campbell is the social media manager for the BBKA. He has been a beekeeper in the North East of England for over 15 years. A former Chair of Newcastle and District BKA, he has made his way through the BBKA's modules and practical assessments to Advanced Theory Certificate level. He undertakes beginners and improvers practical and theory training sessions each season. He keeps around twenty colonies in locations ranging from city centre to rural. He recently wrote The Beekeeping Year section of BBKA News.

Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?pwd=DYMZxTImJpRCLJjYjvblxgybQQdSZ.1>
Meeting ID: 812 3381 9992 Passcode: 527929

Dates for the Diary - Future Talks:

17th June: 'Small Scale Queen Rearing' with Jane Medwell. Further details will be available nearer the time.

New Outreach Officer appointed

From Sara Stewart, *'I hope you're well and your beekeeping year has got off to a good start. I wanted to write and introduce myself as the new Outreach Officer for the BBKA, taking over from Kirsteen Thorne. Kirsteen has done such a fantastic job over the past year and I'm excited about the opportunity to continue to build on her great work.*

A little bit about me: I've been a beekeeper for three years, and I also had the pleasure of serving as YLAH coordinator for my local association last year and during that time I worked closely with Kirsteen.

I look forward to collaborating with you and your association in the months ahead. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you soon'.



outreach.officer@bbka.org.uk

07742 066382

Winter Losses

Many regions have already experienced weather suitable for the first beekeeping inspections of the year - a moment of both excitement and apprehension as we check our colonies for the first time! As always, the BBKA is eager to understand how winter losses in 2024/25 compare to previous years, and need our help.

Once again, the BBKA is collaborating with COLOSS (Prevention of Honey Bee COLony LOSSes), an international non-profit organization based in Bern, Switzerland, dedicated to improving bee health worldwide. The results of this survey will be published in BBKA News and will also contribute to a global study on the threats facing honey bee populations.

BBKA would greatly appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete this short, anonymous questionnaire. The survey will remain open until **Friday 16th May**.

[Take the survey here](#)

Asian Hornet Update



The yellow-legged Asian hornet has already been spotted this year in the South East of England.

Nigel Semmence from the NBU has confirmed that the eradication phase will continue in 2025. The high risk areas have been identified as Kent and East Sussex.

The first sighting in the South East was in Canterbury at the end of March with a single AH being confirmed on 20th of the month.

Since then there has been a sighting in Marchwood, Hampshire and the area is now being monitored by the local AHA Team.

Credible sightings were made in Deal, Kent; Appledore, East Sussex; Ramsgate and Langley in Kent. In Langley an embryo nest was discovered. Since then a further embryo nest have been found in Hythe, Southampton and there has been a further confirmed sighting of an AH in Folkstone, Kent; and an AH was found in a NBU-placed trap in Marchwood, Hampshire. The local AHA Team is continuing to monitor.

Des Res for Honey Bees

This has literally just come in. Thus the limited details. A landowner in Itchingfield, near Horsham, is offering a site for honey bees on his land. Further details next month but if you would like more information immediately please contact me and I will pass your contact details on to the landowner.

Graham secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

International Meeting of Young Beekeepers

Are you between 13 and 18 years old? Beekeeping for at least a year? Want to meet fellow young beekeepers from across the UK?

This July, the Ulster Beekeepers' Association is hosting the International Meeting of Young Beekeepers' 2025 Home Nations event near Belfast on **11th and 12th July**. Participants from all the home nations of the UK and Ireland are being invited and the BBKA is once again sponsoring a team of up to six young beekeepers on an all expenses paid trip. With a mixture of practical beekeeping and cultural exchange, it looks to be a great event.



We will be hosting a selection day at the BBKA HQ in Stoneleigh on **Saturday the 24th May**. If you feel eligible and are interested in taking part, please get in touch by emailing imyb@bbka.org.uk as soon as possible!

Simon Cavill & Serena Watts

BBKA Team Manager & Pastoral Coordinator

Chat from the Chair



I am writing this soon after breakfast the day after the auction, when things are fresh in my mind. The first one was in 1975 and apart from COVID restrictions, has taken place every year since. The event is only possible with a lot of helpers on the day, so thanks to all those who took part. I must give thanks to organiser Graham Elliott, who has done the usual excellent job in pulling it all together.

I felt there would be less interest this year, especially as I was told that prices were depressed at other auctions, but I was pleased how things went, with brisk bidding and only a few items left unsold. Overall, I think the quality of lots was as good as I have seen. I'm looking forward to the 2026 event.

Roger

Chair WSBKA

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Queens for West Sussex Beekeepers

In 2025, Wisborough Green BKA will be repeating the queen rearing programme that was done in 2022. The aim is to produce locally adapted queens that are tending towards *Varroa* resistance for distribution to West Sussex beekeepers.

Throughout the summer we hope to produce queens that are raised from locally adapted bees in our teaching apiary that WGBKA apiary manager, Roger Patterson, runs in conjunction with his own bees, that total 80-100 colonies during the summer. These are the same bees that are seen on [Live@theHive](#), where he is often complimented on their docility.

They have been selected over many years to be:-

Gentle. Queens in colonies that show any defensiveness/aggression are culled.

Productive. Crops in excess of 100lb per colony are common, with some yielding over 200lb in 2022.

Healthy. There is very little chalk brood or sacbrood.

Frugal. Autumn feeding is minimal. In 2024 Roger didn't feed any of the 24 colonies in his home apiary and only about half in the teaching apiary were fed. At the time of writing (25th March) all his own are still heavy. Winter/spring feeding is normally only done by using combs of food from other colonies that can afford it.

Survivors. At 25th March, there is only one loss (virgin queen in November) from a total of 82 colonies, 29 of which are nucs.



We will be selecting from those that are showing signs of *Varroa* resistance.

Beekeepers from other WS Divisions (Central Sussex, Chichester and Worthing) are welcome to join to receive queens, but there will be a little learning to do, as it must be understood that locally adapted bees may need slightly different management than imported or 'Buckfast'-types. There will be a video and it is expected that recipients of queens attend some of the sessions to help produce queens and see the docility and behaviour of our bees. It is hoped that each participant will have at least one queen or queen cell to take home. This is a learning experience, not just one trip to get a free queen, so a little commitment is needed.

If you wish to be involved, please register with Martina Hendry martina.b@hotmail.co.uk, who will let you know dates.

Roger Patterson.

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



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

Chichester Division



Wednesday 21st May - *'Communication in Bees'* with Margaret Murdin from 7:30pm. Boxgrove Village Hall, The Street, Boxgrove, Chichester, 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: Carol Montgomery, 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 on the Division's website: www.worthing-beekeepers.org.

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

...and a Date for your Diary



6th to 8th June - *'South of England Show'*. Ardingly Showground, Selsfield Road, RH17 6TL

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

Corrigendum

Last month it was incorrectly reported that at the Association's Annual General Meeting in March the Vice Chairman's role was not filled.

This was an error and the Meeting elected Mrs Christine Stevens, the retiring President, to the position for the next 12 months.

The error is regretted. Ed.



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 20th of the preceding month.
secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

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



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

