



Happy New Year



A Very Happy New Year & Happy Beekeeping to all members of West Sussex BKA and to those of you reading this newsletter from outside the county.

Christmas done and dusted and another year of beekeeping activities to look forward to - the BBKA Annual Delegate Meeting in January, WSBKA Convention in February, our AGM in March, and in April the BBKA Convention as well as our Auction - and so much more!

May your beekeeping be rewarding, your bees gentle and the honey crop plentiful.

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WSBKA Annual Convention - Saturday 29th February



Remember to book your place at the West Sussex Beekeepers' Annual Convention on **Saturday 29th February 2020**. The Convention has attracted exceptional speakers and we anticipate the demand to be particularly high. Details and Booking form are available on the website: www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html

The main lectures are being presented by the renowned speakers: Marin Anastasov NDB, Professor Robert Pickard and Dr Anna Oliver. Apart from the three main lectures, you can choose to attend two out of the six seminars and in between times it is a great opportunity to catch up with beekeeping friends throughout the county and beyond. You can also stock up on beekeeping equipment from [Paynes Southdown Bee Farms](#). And remember, you can pre-order for collection at the convention.

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

Advance booking per person for WSBKA members, £25. Members of other Associations and non-members, £30. On the day if space allows, £30. Book now to ensure you get a place and can attend your preferred seminars.

Contact: Chris O'Riordan on 01403 253020 or email wsbkaconvention@gmail.com or see the website.

Special bonus for beginner beekeepers! In conjunction with Paynes, we are again pleased to offer a £10 Payne's voucher to the first 10 beekeepers from WSBKA who book a place at the Convention in 2020 and who have attended a Beginners' training course at any Division of the WSBKA in 2019. It is a special opportunity to make a beekeeping purchase with a high discount!

Wisborough Green Division - January Meeting

The Division's first winter meeting of the New Year will be held in their usual venue at the Emmanuel Fellowship Church in Spy Lane, Loxwood, RH14 0SS on **29th January at 7.30pm**.

The speaker will be Jonathan Brookhouse who is a beekeeper with over 40 years experience who lives nearby in Cranleigh. He is a former Bee Inspector and keeps near-native bees that are supported by his well equipped workshop where he not only makes his own hives but also designs and produces innovative items such as the 'Waggle Wedge' that WG uses in its own apiary. He is one of an increasing number of beekeepers who does not treat for *Varroa*, preferring to work with nature rather than with chemicals and raises queens from his most resilient colonies. He will discuss his approach, results and reasons for it.

Members from other Divisions are welcome, but please let the organisers know if you plan to attend.

BDI Subscriptions 2020

BDI has again announced that subscriptions and premiums for 2020 will remain unchanged from 2019. Rates have now been held for a number of years and full details of the rates are on the [BDI website](#).



South East Region Annual Report 2019 (abridged)



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Kay Wreford, Regional Bee Inspector, reports from the [National Bee Unit](#). Kay's full annual report can be viewed here: www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/newsletters.html

We said farewell to Michael Cooper, SBI Kent and East Sussex at the end of 2018, his team spirit and sense of humour is greatly missed.

2019 season started with a full complement of SBIs. We welcomed Thomas Bickerdike (London), Julie Parker (London and North Kent), and Stewart Westsmith (South London, Surrey and Kent) to the team. They have done very well to be trained and out competently inspecting in their areas in such a short time.

Diane Steele continues as SBI in East and West Sussex and has been busy inspecting and educating in this area. Hilary Hayward was SBI for Surrey and was kept busy with foulbrood inspections. Both helped considerably with training our new Bee Inspectors.

Hilary Hayward left the South East team at the end of September, she will be missed by us all. We wish her well for the future. Sandra Gray moved from RBI South East to National Bee Inspector. I took over as RBI South East in July, whilst still covering Kent as an inspector.

The South East region currently has 6206 beekeepers registered on Beebase and 7756 apiaries recorded. This season we inspected 801 apiaries and of these inspections 329 were classed as exotic pest surveillance inspections. This is where the apiary is close to a risk point for introduction of an exotic pest such as Small Hive Beetle or Tropilaelaps. We also carried out 30 import inspections, 1 export inspection and 5 suspect poisoning inspections. 9 honey samples were taken across the region on behalf of the Veterinary Medicine Directorate as part of their screening programme for substances that should not be found in honey. We responded to 1 positive Asian hornet sighting in our region and also helped Southern region with their Asian hornet incursion.

Varroa again was found to be causing problems.

In addition to our apiary inspection programme, South East inspectors have given talks to associations, attended Bee Safaris and Bee Health Days and staffed the NBU stand at the National Honey Show.

The early spring warmth meant colonies had built up well and by the time we were inspecting in April many colonies were already on the point of swarming. Many areas reported good honey crops but removal of a spring crop caused problems for some as there was a noticeable June (late May) gap in some places. It was unfortunately not uncommon to find colonies on the point of starvation, with no stores in the brood box.

Varroa again was found to be causing problems, with some colonies showing mites running across comb, bees with signs of Deformed Wing Virus and in some cases colonies were found dying with signs of Parasitic Mite syndrome. The NBU advises an Integrated Pest Management approach to controlling *Varroa*. See the advisory leaflet on BeeBase Managing *Varroa*, (www.nationalbeeunit.com) for advice. Most importantly only use Authorised Veterinary Medicines and follow the manufacturer's instructions when using these varroicides. Failure to do so, means that at the very least the treatment may not work or at the worst could damage your colony. It is also a legal requirement to keep a record of the purchase, application and destruction of any medications used. This needs to be kept for 5 years.

Chronic Bee Paralysis virus was also noted to be the cause of some colony losses. Hopefully ongoing research into this will help our management in the future.

Kay Wreford

Regional Bee Inspector – South East Region

Tel. 07775 119483

Email: kay.wreford@apha.gov.uk

BBKA Examinations & Assessments 2020



A reminder that 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 31st August giving 1 month's notice. 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 Bee Health (a practical assessment suitable for members who wish to advance beyond their Basic Assessment), Bee Breeding (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 2020 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. If you are planning to sit Modules this March please have your application form completed and sent to me with the correct fee no later than **3rd February**. Cheques should be made payable to BBKA – if you prefer to pay by Debit/Credit card please speak to me first. To sit modules in November the deadline for registering with me is **20th September**.

Closing date for applications of all other examinations excluding the Basic Assessment is no later than **19th February** and examinations will be sat no later than 31st July.

Details of Examinations and Assessments dates and fees for 2020 can be viewed on the BBKA website at: www.bbka.org.uk/general-help.

If you need any further advice please contact me, Sue Elliott, 'Robins Croft', Chalk Road, Ifold, Loxwood, West Sussex, RH14 0UB or by phone or email.

Sue Elliott

WSBKA Examination Secretary

Tel: 01403 752493 mobile: 07746 093729

Email: 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

Details of the Division's activities from Debbie Rowland: chairman@centralsussexbka.org.uk or website: www.centralsussexbka.org.uk

Chichester Division

Tuesday 14th January - *'Bee Compliant - the law on labelling honey and beeswax products'*

Jo Walden and Clif Davis from West Sussex Trading Standards. The Fishbourne Centre, Blackboy Lane, Fishbourne, Chichester, PO18 8BE at 7:30pm. Details from: secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk or website: www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk

Wisborough Green Division

Wednesday 29th January - Talk from local beekeeper, Jonathan Brookhouse. Emmanuel Fellowship Church, Spy Lane, Loxwood, RH14 0SS at 7.30pm. See article in this newsletter.

Full details of the Division's activities from Tess Clarke: secretary@wgbka.org.uk or website: www.wgbka.org.uk

Worthing Division

Thursday 9th January - Christine Stevens on *'Honey Handling – from Hive to Jar'*. The Glebelands Centre, Greystoke Road, Ferring, BN12 5JL at 7:45pm.

Further details from Debra Edwards: dmcd.edwards@gmail.com or the Division's website: www.worthingbeekeepers.org.uk

... and Dates for your Diary

February - *'BIBBA Conference 2020'*,

Please note this conference has been cancelled due to the ill health of the organiser.

Saturday 29th February - *WSBKA Annual Convention*. Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough, RH20 1LZ. Details in this Newsletter and on the county website.

Tuesday 24th March - *'WSBKA 47th AGM'*. Pulborough Village Hall, Swan View, Lower Street, Pulborough, RH20 2BF. All members are welcome to attend. Full details next month.

Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th April - *'BBKA Spring Convention'*. Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8NB. Visit www.bbka.org.uk/event/bbka-spring-conv

Saturday 25th April - *'WSBKA Annual Bee Market & Auction'*, now in its 46th Year. Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus, North Heath, Pulborough, RH20 1DL. Full details will shortly be on the website together with an Entry Form to download.

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



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



Melvyn's Missive



Chairman, Melvyn Essen, writes for the County News

It's the beginning of a new decade then, or is it? Depends on the terminology apparently (looked it up)! Here is the first of my last three Chairman's Missives, then in March, after the AGM, I will be put out to grass as there should be a new Chairperson taking over.

As far as beekeeping is concerned what has changed in the 2010's? Not an awful lot - probably treating *Varroa* after relying on Apistan and Bayvarol (pyrethroids) for a number of years, used extensively when I started beekeeping in 2005, and *Varroa* mites reportedly becoming resistant. Apiguard became popular and then organic acids (Oxalic & Acetic) trickling then vaporising, at the time I didn't think that treating *Varroa* would mean the beekeeper using dangerous substances and having to use the correct respirator! Acetic acid is used in MAQS of course. At the time some were not treating *Varroa* at all, which ultimately has led to a lot of research, some of which West Sussex has help fund. This research to date hasn't changed how we keep our bees but may have helped our understanding why some virus types wipe out bee colonies and others don't.

The other aspect that has changed is that local mongrel queens are the best, to some it has always been the case - local queens are the best. This was reinforced when the Small hive beetle was accidentally introduced into Italy, probably with imported bees, therefore importing bees and queens is now frowned upon, but it still happens every year.

So, what will the next decade be like for us beekeepers? Well I know I must cut down my number of colonies, as well as getting older with all that lifting other hobbies are taking up more of my time, that's what happens when you retire. Also, it is so important that we keep doing what we do, to train the next generation of beekeepers and make sure they are prepared for more threats like the Asian hornet to name one.

Melvyn

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Asian Hornet Conference - Saturday 8th February

BBKA will be hosting an Asian hornet conference at its National Beekeeping Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG from 10am to 4pm on **Saturday 8th February**. Anne Rowberry, Vice Chair and Asian Hornet Co-ordinator, has arranged for keynote speakers and there will also be an opportunity to share best practice.

Nigel Semmence, Sandra Gray (NBI) and Belinda Philipson (Defra Policy) will update the conference on the current position and also answer questions during the conference. Steve Martin will be sharing his knowledge about Asian hornets and Xesus Feas will share his experience and research about the Asian hornets in Portugal.

Initially there will be an opportunity for two representatives from WSBKA to attend, but if requested more individuals may be able to attend. So if you would like to participate send your name and email address to Liz.Leddy@bbka.org.uk to book a place **as soon as possible**. Please indicate you are a member of WSBKA. Initially each Association can register two representatives but please apply and join the waiting list if you would like to attend. A larger hall will be booked for the conference if numbers indicate it is required. This event is free to members.



BBKA 'Positive Thinking' Newsletter



The December publication of the 'Positive Thinking' Newsletter from the BBKA's Chair, Margaret Wilson, can now be accessed on the WSBKA website: www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/newsletters.html

Margaret reflects on the imminent transfer of the BBKA from Charity to CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). This involves changes to bank accounts, stationery, leases and contracts. Preparation for the Annual Delegate Meeting is also underway.

The ADM will also see the retirement of Margaret Murdin as President after 8 years. Margaret has been instrumental with many of the changes for the better within the BBKA in that time.

Beegone - Strategic Partnership

Beegone, who provides a service to remove bees from inaccessible places in buildings, has contacted the Association offering a strategic partnership with financial incentives to WSBKA members for recommendations.



www.beegone.co.uk

There may have been times when you have been called out to remove honey bees colonising a building structure. They may be inaccessible, too high or it's simply too dangerous or complicated to remove them. There are many risks to people, animals and building fabric when removing bees in these circumstances. Beegone live bee removal is fully insured, experienced and qualified to carry out all aspects of the work and have been successfully removing honey bees live from all types of structures across the UK for over 10 years. Grade 1 listed buildings include Beaulieu Abbey, Windsor Castle and University of London.

If you pass on Beegone's contact details and the customer proceeds with a survey and agrees the work with Beegone the company will reward you with 10% of the value of the work. And, if you wish, you may keep the bees Beegone removes. You must, of course, ensure the customer mentions your name when arranging their contract with Beegone.

Note that the value of the initial survey is NOT eligible for commission. Nor is this relationship exclusive.

Beegone may be contacted on freephone: 0800 9551 999, email: savebees@beegone.co.uk, or their office: Unit 16, Smithbrook Kilns Business Park, Cranleigh, Surrey, GU6 8JJ.

If Divisions would like details of the full Strategic Partnership to discuss with their members please contact me: secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk.

...and finally

Bee Market & Auction

A reminder that the Annual Bee Market and Auction, now in its 46th year, will be held on **Saturday 25th April**. The venue is again Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough.



Full details and an Entry Form will be available on the website within the next few weeks. But in the meantime, 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 of the Auction.

Again, a large team of volunteers will be required to manage the event and ensure a successful experience for the Association, buyers and sellers. So if you can offer some time please contact me.

Graham

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

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

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



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

