



# Annual Bee Market & Auction

**A REMINDER.** The Association's 48<sup>th</sup> Bee Market & Auction will be held at Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus, Pulborough on **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April** from 8:30am.

We are now closed for the acceptance of further Lots but those registered for sale include a significant number of honey bee colonies or nucs—never guaranteed, of course, until they have been checked prior to the Auction by our Regional or Seasonal Bee Inspector.



***Around 40 members are needed to help run the day and roles both inside and out are available with flexible timings. So if you can help please get in touch with either Ben or me as a matter of urgency. [ben@benhewson.com](mailto:ben@benhewson.com).***

Full details on the website:  
[www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html)

As always, your help is really appreciated and the day cannot be staged without your active support. Thank you.

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

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# Review 51<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting

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The Association's **51<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting** since its inception in 1973 was held in March. Those members who joined us online will know that the Chairman, Roger Patterson (Wisborough Green), was retiring after 3 years in the role.



Roger was subsequently voted into the role of Vice-Chair and Harry Boxall (Chichester) replaced him as Chair. All other executive members had expressed their willingness to continue in their respective roles and were duly elected unanimously:

Christine Stevens (Chichester) - President

Brian Hose (Chichester) - Treasurer

Graham Elliott (Chichester) - Secretary

Kevin Breen (Chichester) - Accounts Scrutineer, was re-elected for a further 12 months.

The only other item of business was to elect Graham Elliott into the honorary position of Life Vice-President. Roger Patterson proposed the appointment commenting, ***'The WSBKA Rules state that a person who has given valuable service to WSBKA over a long time may be elected a Life Vice-President at the AGM.'***

***This honour is not given lightly and in the 50 years' existence of the WSBKA I believe there have only been 5 recipients.***

***Graham Elliott has certainly given valuable service serving as secretary, minutes secretary, auction organiser, newsletter compiler and website editor - all tasks that in many organisations would each be done by individuals. If ever there is a deserving person it is him'.***

Christine Stevens seconded the proposal and added, ***'Minutes of an executive meeting of West Sussex Beekeepers on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008 shows the future of the Bee Market & Auction was discussed at length, particularly addressing the manner in which it should be organised. It was agreed that the functions should be undertaken by at least 3 people working alongside an administrator.'***

***The roles were agreed and following that Graham not only took on the role of organiser but also the roles of the three other people!***

***At the AGM of 2011 Graham stood to become secretary, so on that basis has done 30 years' of work already'.***

All those present were in favour and the proposal was carried unanimously with the President offering Graham her congratulations.

It is worthy of note that the current Life Vice-Presidents are Christine Stevens, Roger Patterson and Ray Noakes. Graham is joining an eminent group who have worked tirelessly for the WSBKA over very many years.

# BBKA Spring Convention

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## The 46<sup>th</sup> BBKA Spring Convention

The venue is again Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

Click [Book Here](#) for Convention tickets, bookings & merchandise.



# Spring 2024 Convention

**12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024: Bee part of celebrating 150 years of the BBKA!**

In addition to 70+ workshops & seminars, which can be booked (until sold out, or 2nd April) online, there are 24 Lectures and an Expert Panel Question & Answer session. **Lectures are not bookable.** Entry is free with a Convention wristband for that day (not Trade Show Only).



## BBwear Members' Discount

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At the start of the new beekeeping season BBwear is again offering a discount to West Sussex Beekeepers.

They are offering **15% off their classic polycotton range**, and **10% off the innovative award winning Ultra range**.

Use the following discount codes on their website [www.bbwear.co.uk/](http://www.bbwear.co.uk/) until 31<sup>st</sup> July.

*Polycotton range discount code:*

**BKAPOLY15**

*Ultra range discount code:*

**BKAULTRA10**

**Both codes are case sensitive**

# Asian Hornet Lessons From Kent

*The following is a brief excerpt from Alison Terry 's article following a visit from Kent Beekeepers to Chichester.*



We are all too well aware of the imminent threat of the Asian hornet. It feels as if we have been talking about this for years, but now it seems we have reached a tipping point and recent visitors from Kent did nothing to dispel our fears. Simon Sprately and Tony Warren gave us chapter and verse on their experience of tackling hornets last summer. Simon has an apiary in Capel Le Ferne, near the coast at Folkestone. He lost almost all his hives from hornet depredations.

Kent beekeepers have struggled to establish where verified hornet nests have been found. Simon reported that one of the nests, unbeknown to him, was less than half a mile from his apiary! For some reason Defra has refused to make these locations available at a postcode level and are merely quoting discoveries by town. This makes it very difficult for local beekeepers to establish exactly how close they are to verified nests—this approach was confirmed by Lynne Ingram at our recent Convention.

Although it was reported that all the nests that were found were destroyed, emphasis is on the word found, as in their estimation, it was only just over a quarter of actual nests that were destroyed. Many of the nests are hidden in inaccessible spots such as cliff edges and bramble patches. With one nest generating hundreds of queens, and as spring queens can travel up to 80km, this makes West Sussex within reach for this summer.

With regard to safety, one of Simon's friends was stung last year and was laid low for 3 days! Experience in Europe indicates that it is agricultural workers or landscape gardeners at biggest risk, but safety is a big concern. Asian hornets are fiercely protective of their nests and will persistently defend them.

[www.kbka.org.uk/](http://www.kbka.org.uk/)



*Thanks to Chichester Beekeepers and Alison Terry for allowing this abridged reproduction of the article from*

## Asian Hornet Update - NBU



The first Asian hornet of the year has been found in Ash in Kent.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> March the NBU received confirmation of an Asian hornet found in a potting shed in Ash, Kent. The finding was around 5 miles from a nest found and destroyed in 2023 near Canterbury.

The details for the early season monitoring work are currently being finalised by the NBU so additional surveillance close to the finding site will be included in these plans. There was also a single unconfirmed sighting in Preston, Lincolnshire, and a dead AH in Romford, East London.

The article below is reproduced courtesy of the **New Forest & District Beekeepers' Association**. The BBKA website at the end of the article will access the Association's map that shows all the local Asian hornet co-ordinators across England.





# Is it an Asian Hornet ?

## European Hornet

I don't go looking for trouble, but if you stand on me or grab me, I might sting. And I can be cranky if you try to take my food away from me, so best to leave me alone if I am feeding.

My Queen and our Males up to 4cm long, my worker sisters are up to 2.5cm long and you will usually hear us before you see us. You will only see my Queen in the spring and autumn, our Males can only be seen in the autumn and I can usually be seen from May until October. I eat large insects, like beetles, wasps, large moths, dragon flies and robber flies. I will even steal insects that spiders have caught. I also like fallen fruit and other sweet foods.

I am part of a healthy ecosystem. I've got brown legs and antennae. I'm a huge wasp, my Queen is massive!



Krycia Watson, New Forest Bookkeepers



## Asian Hornet

I have a 6mm long stinger. When I'm out looking for food I'm pretty chilled and don't look for trouble. But if you get near my nest I will be very aggressive, and so will all of my sisters.

My Queen can be seen looking for food from mid February, and she's about 3cm long. I'm a worker hornet and a little smaller, up to 2.5cm long and I can be seen from May until it gets cold in November.

My queen feeds on nectar, but only until May, then she stays in the nest to make more sisters for me. I feed on nectar and insects. The nectar is for me, the insects are to feed the babies in the nest. I need to collect lots of insects, honey bees, bumble bees, wasps, flies and with my sisters, will collect around 11kg of them in a year.

I should not be in this country. I am damaging to the ecosystem and I can be dangerous if you disturb my nest. I will kill lots of insects, animals that should feed on those insects may struggle to find food.

My legs look like I'm wearing yellow socks, my antennae are black and I have an orange band near the end of my abdomen.

To report an Asian hornet sighting use the Asian Hornet App that can be downloaded on all smart phones. Find your local Asian Hornet Action Team at:

[www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-teams](http://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-teams)

SEE IT - SNAP IT - APP IT

<https://newforestbees.co.uk/>

# Harry's Herald

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*Harry writes his maiden article for the County News as our new chair.*

**T**his is my first newsletter of many I hope, in which I write as the newly elected Chair of West Sussex Beekeepers. I was voted in at the recent AGM following Roger Patterson's tenure. Roger has held the post for the past 3 years and is not eligible to hold it for a fourth. In fact, Roger who is well-known to most of you has actually held the post of Chair five times, each for 3 years. He held the very first post of Chair way back in 1973 long before any of us ever took up beekeeping and many of you were born.



Roger has been an excellent servant of WSBKA and has done his utmost to promote and publicise good beekeeping practices. He'll be a hard act to follow. I was fortunate to be vice-Chair for the past 3 years and learnt a lot working under Roger's tutelage which I hope I can apply in the next 12 months. However, I suspect some of you have ideas and suggestions about what WSBKA might do to improve beekeeping in the community. If so, I'd certainly like to hear them.

We are approaching this new beekeeping season with some trepidation knowing that our bees and other insects are threatened by the yellow-legged (Asian) hornet (AH). Already this Spring three Asian hornet queens have been caught in the UK; one in Ash, Kent, a second in Preston, Lancashire (believed to have hitched a ride on a lorry from France) and a third in Romford, Essex (this one was dead). All have been sent off by the NBU for analysis.

Each of our 4 divisions has an active Asian hornet team and I would urge everyone of you to try to become involved and help where you can to counter this threat. Remember every little helps. I know in your division's newsletter this topic is discussed in much more detail so I shan't write any more at this time. There are also two articles on the hornet in this County News—pages 4 &5.

Finally, I wish each of you and your families a very happy Easter and an enjoyable, successful beekeeping season.

**Harry**

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



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 17<sup>th</sup> April** - 'Swarm Prevention & Control' with Christine Coulsting 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](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 11<sup>th</sup> April** - 'Beginning Beekeeping' with Celia Rudland from Surrey Bees at The Glebelands Centre, Greystoke Road, Ferring, BN12 5JL at 7:45pm. Further details of the Division's activities from: Debra Edwards, [dmcd.edwards@gmail.com](mailto:dmcd.edwards@gmail.com) or 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



**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April** - '150 years of the British Beekeepers' Association. Spring Convention', Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB.

[www.bbka.org.uk/pages/category/about-spring-convention](http://www.bbka.org.uk/pages/category/about-spring-convention)



**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April** - 'West Sussex Beekeepers' 48<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)



**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.un.org/en/observances/bee-day)

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



...and finally

## BBKA Train-the-Trainer

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### Queen Rearing: Train-the-Trainer - Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May

This one day course at Stoneleigh is for BBKA members who are experienced beekeepers wishing to run a Queen Rearing course for their local association. Participants should have the knowledge and skills to raise queens having already raised sufficient queens for their own colonies and improved their own stock.

The emphasis in the session will be on recent and relevant content and how to meet the needs of a variety of beekeepers you encounter locally.

Participants will leave with the resources necessary to run a Queen Rearing course which can be adapted to their own situation. Participants who deliver a Queen Rearing training in their own association during 2025 will have their course fee refunded by the BBKA.

Cost: £75

For more information and to book places, please visit the shop on the BBKA website:  
[www.bbka.org.uk/pages/shop/department/training-courses](http://www.bbka.org.uk/pages/shop/department/training-courses)



#### 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 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.

