



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.

With the Christmas decorations repacked into the loft for another year we can look forward to a rather uncertain 2019! However, our Convention in February and the ever-popular Bee Market and Auction in April will raise our spirits. A talk on the Asian hornet is also planned for March in preparation for the county setting up its own 'Asian Hornet Action Team' to support Sandra Gray and her team at the NBU.

Whatever the new year has in store for us, may your bees be gentle, healthy and productive in 2019.

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WSBKA Annual Convention - Saturday 23rd February



Full details of our Annual Convention are now available on the county website. Here you may also download the speakers' profiles and the booking form. www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we have a renowned group of speakers and an impressive mix of lectures and seminars with something for everyone.

A simple lunch will be included and there will be many opportunities to catch up with fellow beekeepers from around the county and beyond. As always, [Paynes Southdown Bee Farms](#) will bring a range of equipment to the Convention for you to purchase. You can also pre-order and collect at the Convention.

Special bonus for Beginner Beekeepers! In conjunction with Paynes, we are pleased to offer a £10 Payne's voucher to the first 10 beekeepers from WSBKA who book a place at the Convention in 2019 and who have attended a Beginners' training course at any Division of WSBKA in 2018. It is a special opportunity to make a beekeeping purchase with a high discount! Qualifying members will receive separate notification in the coming days.

You are encouraged to book early to ensure that you secure a place on your preferred seminars.

BDI Subscriptions 2019

Subscriptions and Premiums for 2019 will remain unchanged from 2018. Rates have been held for a number of years, despite IPT being raised repeatedly by Government to the current 12%. Full details of the rates are on the [BDI website](#).



BIBBA - Sustainable Bees & Queens



There is growing concern amongst beekeepers of all abilities and experience about the ever-increasing importation of bees and queens. This is on several grounds, including the possibilities of introducing pests, diseases and pathogens, aggression in subsequent generations and the unsuitability to our fickle climate.

Defra has recently conducted a Queen Replacement Survey that shows the majority of beekeepers prefer home-reared queens but need help to produce them. In addition, many BKAs are unable to produce enough bees for their beginners and queens to head them.

In response to the obvious need the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders' Association (BIBBA) is staging a series of one-day regional events during the 2018/19 winter. These are to help and encourage everyone from the small-scale beekeeper upwards and BKAs to produce bees and queens from local stock, by using simple techniques that may be little more than a variation of what many beekeepers already do and at little or no cost.

The event in the South East will be hosted by Wisborough Green BKA on Saturday 30th March in Rudgwick Village Hall, Bucks Green, RH12 3JJ. Full details on the BIBBA website:

<https://beekeeping.events/event/sustainable-bees-and-queens-south-east/>

South East Region Annual Report 2018 (abridged)



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

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

What a season 2018 has been for the South East both in terms of weather and NBU Inspections.

As you are aware Brian McCallum sadly retired from the role in February after seven years and, with a DEFRA recruitment 'freeze' at the start of April, North London had significantly reduced NBU coverage. Consequently, although I managed to get to visit as many apiaries as I could, there are many of you still awaiting an inspection. Mark Patterson, who covered South London, decided to leave the NBU at the end of September 2018 in order to pursue his personal beekeeping career. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Brian and Mark for all their hard work and support.

Michael Cooper unfortunately suffered an ankle injury in June and did not return to work until late September. Kay Wreford took the helm and covered as much of Kent as she possibly could. Meanwhile both East and West Sussex were, again, ably managed by Diane Steele and Hilary Hayward continued to be kept very busy in Surrey.

I would also very much to like thank those beekeepers who welcomed and assisted the Seasonal Bee Inspectors who came from various parts of the UK to help us out in the South East.

The level of notifiable disease has not decreased this year.

The weather has a major influence on how well our colonies perform, not just for honey production at a specific time, but also on the vitality and viability of colonies from one year to the next. Late winter was very cold and the land seemed to be continually covered in white with the 'Beast for the East' persisting into the start of May. Then the sun appeared and did not stop shining until well into August. Temperatures reached record heights and nectar and pollen flew into the colonies. Many a colony was inspected with several supers filled. As always, there were geographical differences with London colonies not collecting as much nectar as those in Sussex or Kent.

Not only was it extremely hot working in a Bee suit, but in some counties temperatures and dry conditions brought problems for Inspectors doing their job. For one apiary in Kent, it was too dangerous to burn the infected colonies on site so collaboration with our APHA (Animal Plant Health Agency) Colleagues resulted in the South East being the first NBU Region to organise incineration of infected hives and frames.

The level of notifiable disease has not decreased and the number of package bee and queen imports has dominated Inspector time. Thankfully, nothing was found; more details of import numbers are shown in the full report.

Honey yields for the region were up on 2017 and, in the more favourable locations, up to 80lbs per colony were obtained.

Sandra Gray

Regional Bee Inspector – South East Region

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BBKA Examinations & Assessments 2019



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 2019 Modules will be sat in either March or November. 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 2019 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.

Celia Perry will be presenting the workshop '*BBKA Examination System and what you can get out of it*' at the WSBKA Annual Convention in February. Celia will explain the exam pathways and benefits and hopefully inspire you to consider taking up the challenge.

Sue Elliott

WSBKA Examination Secretary

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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 8th January - 'How to Improve your Green Spaces for Bees and other Pollinators', a talk by Karin Alton from LASI, Sussex University. 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

Tuesday 8th January - 'EGM and Team Beekeeping Quiz'. North Hall, Loxwood, RH14 0SF at 7:30pm. Details from Tess Clarke: secretary@wgbka.org.uk or website: www.wgbka.org.uk

Worthing Division

Thursday 10th January - Monthly Meeting at the Ferring Village Hall, Ferring Street, Ferring, BN12 5JP at 7:30pm.

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

... and Dates for your Diary

Saturday 23rd February - WSBKA Annual Convention. Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough, RH20 1LZ. Details in this Newsletter and on the county website.

Saturday 2nd March - Wisborough Green BKA's annual 'Introduction to Beekeeping'. Rudgwick Village Hall, RH12 3JJ from 9am. Details from Tess Clarke secretary@wgbka.org.uk or the Division's website: www.wgbka.org.uk.

Tuesday 19th March - 'WSBKA 46th AGM'. Pulborough Village Hall, Swan View, Lower Street, Pulborough, RH20 2BF. All members are welcome to attend. Full details next month.

Wednesday 27th March - 'The Asian hornet in Jersey'. A talk by Bob Hogge at the Leconfield Hall, Petworth, GU28 0AH at 7:30pm. Full details next month.

Saturday 30th March - 'BIBBA Sustainable Bees & Queens'. Rudgwick Village Hall, Bucks Green, RH12 3JJ. See article in this Newsletter.

Friday 12th - Sunday 14th April - 'BBKA Spring Convention'. Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8NB. Visit www.bbka.org.uk/Event/spring-convention-2019



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



Melvyn's Missive



Chairman, Melvyn Essen, writes for the County News

Writing the year part of the title for this article '2019', should this be a review of 2018 or speculate what I think may happen in 2019? Probably some of both with no order as usual!

With my club (Central Sussex), yes I write club as I'm not sure what we are any more after Roger has been looking at how we make up the West Sussex BKA and the relationship with BBKA. Are we divisions or associations, or are we affiliated? Well I looked the word up in a dictionary, it reads (of a group) 'link up with a larger group'. Then I thought I had better look up 'link' and one of the meanings is 'to connect by association'!

What I was going to say, with my club (CS) at our Introductory course it's difficult to pick out who will carry on to keep bees and who we will not see again. Sometimes it's the most unlikely people that carry on the journey and keep bees a number of years and/or, become your future secretary or treasurer.

With most, I think this year produced a good honey yield. I was pleased with my crop for the year until another member announced nearly double the yield - well, I go for quality!!

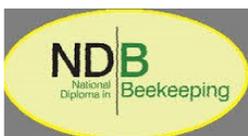
I thought I had better mention the potential next threat to our bees, yes, the Asian hornet. West Sussex as well as most of the other county groups are making preparations to be ready for any incursions in our respective counties. I have asked if each division could set up their own AHAT (Asian Hornet Action Team) with a co-ordinator. The co-ordinators can then meet up and discuss further plans. Each county AHAT will be in touch via the BBKA and the National Bee Unit.

I have arranged for Bob Hogge, a beekeeper from Jersey, to come and give us a talk on his experiences in Jersey since their Asian hornet invasion. Bob's talk will be on Wednesday 27th March in Petworth. More details in next month's newsletter.

Melvyn

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

NDB Short Courses 2019



These in-depth courses are useful for BBKA Modules, Microscopy Certificate and the Advanced Husbandry Assessment and are for small groups, in excellent facilities and designed to raise knowledge, enjoyment and skill levels.

Dates are in February and March and venues include Morden in Surrey and Stoneleigh in Warwickshire.

For full information or to book a place on any of the courses please visit the website:

<https://national-diploma-beekeeping.org/>

...and finally

Bee Market & Auction

A reminder that the Annual Bee Market and Auction, now in its 45th year, will be held on **Saturday 27th 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 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.

