

# THE BUZZ

CENTRAL SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

CHARITY 1051548

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editors Notes  
Chairmans Notes  
News from the Apiary  
Tips of the Month  
Contributor Features  
Events & Notices

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Welcome to the December 2022 Edition of The Buzz.

I hope those of you that attended our November Winter Meeting found it interesting and are looking forward to our next one on **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December** – this will be a Zoom presentation by Professor Stephen Martin on the topic of Varroa.

Thank you also for the completed online membership survey responses received so far – for those of you who have yet to respond please spare a few minutes to complete the survey which can be found here  
[CSBKA – 2022 Feedback Form](#)

Finally, I am pleased to announce the Committee have been working extremely hard behind the scenes to update the Association website and this is now live. If you haven't visited it recently, please do so and as always, your feedback is most welcome.

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

Have a wonderful Christmas, and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Yolanda Noye



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Ben Hewson

Well folks, it's all a bit quiet on the beekeeping front, but soon thoughts will be turning to the new season and preparations for the new Beekeeping Course for Beginners and the Annual Bee Market & Auction. If on your travels, you happen across friends and acquaintances that would like to get started in the wonderful world of bees please direct them to the new website for details of the course. Similarly, it's never too soon to plant the seed that we would love some volunteers to help at the Bee Market & Auction. This will be held as usual at Chichester Colleges' Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough, next year on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023 - many hands make light work!

Talking of websites, have you seen the new CSBKA website? I urge you to check it out. The committee are particularly pleased with the way the hard work has paid off. We would be delighted to hear your thoughts and comments and to receive ideas and contributions for content.

We still have plenty of winter talks planned, mail shots and details will be sent out periodically and are included in the monthly Buzz, the last evening was very interesting and well attended. Again, if there were a topic you would like to be covered in a talk, please let us know.

As this year draws to a close, we have the perfect opportunity to reflect on the highs and lows of the past twelve months, personally I have only halcyon memories of a glorious, long, and hot summer, the numerous stings and melting inside a suit have all but faded in the intervening months. Once again, I wish you all good luck and happy beekeeping.



Lastly, I would like to wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas and happy and healthy New Year.

All the best.





## NEWS FROM THE APIARY – Ade Belcham

It's all quiet at the apiary this month. Nothing to do but check for damage and heft for stores.



My patented (or perhaps patently not!) technique runs as follows:

- At the end of September, I can just about tilt a heavy colony with two fingers but can't with one.
- As winter proceeds, it gets easier with two fingers and about possible with one.
- If I can tilt relatively easily with one finger, I give them some fondant. or .....
- If one colony seems much lighter than its neighbours, then all the hi-tech finger calculations go out the window and I feed them too.

Light colonies now won't necessarily have been short of stores in September. Robbing maybe? More brood rearing over the autumn consuming more stores? Less foraging to top up stores consumed? I'm always curious about the variation in activity between colonies over the colder months. Site, genetics, strength of colony going into winter, availability of late and early forage, wet/cold/warm weather affecting foraging and brood rearing and cleansing flights, presence of pests or disease, frugal or less frugal behaviour – the list goes on. So many variables, or maybe connections would be a better word to use. All this is what makes bees such a good window into the earth-systems of which we too are part. They explain why the phrase 'being in nature' always jars my ear. Though often used in a positive context, it implies that nature is something we are not, something apart from the human world, somewhere to visit. Bees know better. And so should we.

I just visited the cave painting museum in Lascaux. No bees but the paintings of aurochs, deer and horses were incredible. In all the thousands of images there is only one human. He has the face of a bird and looks like he is being killed. No one really knows what significance the paintings had to the communities that made them. What seems certain from the scale and scope of Lascaux and other caves though, is that the non-human world was central to their way of being. The Lascaux paintings were created by human artists from hunter-gatherer communities 20,000 years ago. 10,000 years later their descendants started farming and what we call civilisation began. By the time Michelangelo painted the man-made cave of the Sistine chapel about 500 years ago, he forgot to include anything but human forms.



The first honeybees appeared nearly 30 million years ago. Modern beekeeping is a few hundred years old. Perhaps it's not surprising that the bees still have lots to teach us forgetful primates.

This bald ape wishes you and your bees a peaceful turning of the year. May your pollen be plentiful and your honey sweet. And of course, may your plate of mince pies be full!



## TIPS OF THE MONTH – Melvyn Essen

This time of the year I usually have little to write about, your colonies should have enough stores to last them until the Spring, you treated \* for Varroa in the Autumn, your hives are not sitting close to waterlogged ground, I'm sure your bees wouldn't choose to be there if they had the choice.

Looking at our "BeesKnees" WhatsApp group, some members have had problems this Autumn/Winter. With so many factors that could be playing their part it's difficult to work out what has gone wrong. Starving bees are usually found dead in the hive with their heads in the cells and a lot on the floor. If they are left like this some moulds move in, and it could look like a disease problem when opened in the Spring.

There are several other pests and diseases that affect bees, not just Varroa, you should be familiar with them and checking for them during the season. Have a look at The National Bee Unit "BeeBase" for Honey Bee Pests & Diseases. Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus (CBPV) has been affecting some members' bees this year so check that one out.



*Nosema*

Nosema, a fungal pathogen has been known as the "dwindling disease" especially during the Winter coming into Spring. There used to be a treatment for Nosema, but it was banned so it's up to us to identify it, then avoid spreading it to other colonies while dealing with it.



Wasps have been quite a problem with some members' bees this year too. For some reason certain areas are worse than others every year. If you keep strong colonies, they should be able to cope with wasp attacks, especially if you restrict entrances or put defences in place. If you have a small colony in a full-sized hive then the bees will struggle to defend against attack and will also struggle to build up by not being able to keep the brood at their optimum temperature, best to put them in a nuc until they have grown stronger and multiplied.

One comment made was that "spirited bees" seems to cope better with wasps than more gentle bees. I wonder why the latter bees are gentle, usually until a colony reaches its optimum size, you're not really sure of their temperament, so perhaps they have an underlying problem.

\* Unless you go treatment free.

Several years ago, I opted to just give one Formic Acid treatment each year in the Autumn, which up until now has worked with quite low Varroa drops. Please see details of our December Winter Meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> which is a presentation by Professor Stephen Martin who has worked on the research project "Varroa Resistance in Honeybees" which was partly funded by BDI. WSBKA also donated to this research (CSBKA are a division of WSBKA).

On a different topic, why not use some of your surplus wax from your honey extracting to make some candles for Christmas. If there is enough interest from members I will try and arrange a wax cleaning and candle making workshop demonstration by Zoom. Let me know by registering your interest on the BeesKnees WhatsApp Group.





## **Bombus Lucorum** – Graham Sitton

I thought to share our experience over the past two years. This may sound like overkill, but in the spirit of working with the environment and aware of the increasing rarity of our furry friends, we have hosted a colony of white-tailed bumble bees *Bombus Lucorum* during the summer period. We had obtained ladybirds over the past five years, and we now see ladybirds in ours and our neighbours' gardens which obviously benefit the reduction in aphids. Why bumbles? Well, they are a totally different animal as they have longer tongues which appear to increase our runner bean crop exponentially. Such has been the resultant crop - with the same number of plants - that we had to give substantial amounts to neighbours along with surplus tomatoes. (We have just finished harvesting November 8th). As you will be aware, we do not have bumbles that continue - they die out..... but they raise queens that may hibernate over winter and produce a new colony in the following year. We have anecdotal evidence that the spread of 'our' bumble bee initiative has interested neighbours as far away as a mile. How do we know? Well, they were noticed this year as 'never noticed them before' reports have encouraged us to believe we are encouraging diversity in our local environment. Although they are reported to be extensive throughout the British Isles, we had never seen any in the years whilst in Horsham, thus our efforts.

We would encourage you to try out the idea of a bumble bee colony in your back garden; they are very gentle - you can encourage hand feeding by having sugar syrup on the palm of your hand and sit quietly by the entrance. The bonus we found was they forage extensively in our garden and for some reason don't bite into the base of flowers, but forage the 'correct' way - well, when we watch them anyway.



Graham sourced his colony from here <https://www.greengardener.co.uk/product/box-of-bumblebees/> other reputable suppliers are also available!



## How an innovative hive entrance could help save bees

*Thank you to CSBKA members Joanne Knowles and Andy Hibberd for highlighting our attention to this interesting article published on the CNN website written by Michelle Chohan and published 18 11 22. Very topical considering our forthcoming Winter Meeting with Professor Stephen Martin.*

### How honeybees keep our ecosystems alive



Three quarters of the world's crops depend on pollinators like honeybees, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. They are critical to our food security.



Honeybees pollinate about 130 types of fruits, vegetables and nuts. According to the USDA, they are the primary commercial pollinators in the US



Honeybees are extremely efficient pollinators, according to Samuel Ramsey, professor of entomology at UC Boulder's Bio Frontiers Institute. They have "flower fidelity" – only pollinating one kind of a flower on each trip outside the hive – which maximises pollination and crop yield, he says.





The USDA estimates that honeybees pollinate \$15 billion worth of crops every year in the US alone, and says they are particularly important in the pollination of almonds, avocados and apples.



Honeybees produce six hive products: honey, pollen, royal jelly, beeswax, propolis and venom.



Ramsey says one hive can contain 20,000 to 60,000 bees that work together to build, protect and care for a colony.



Bees are experiencing what Ramsey calls a “pollinator pandemic” and have been experiencing high loss since 1987, when Varroa mites were first discovered in North America.



“Every single year we lose between 33% and 51% of our honeybee population (in the US)” says Ramsey.



“Honeybee declines are the result of the three P’s: parasites, pesticides and poor nutrition” Ramsey tells CNN. Of the three, he says that parasites – like the Varroa destructor, pictured here – are the biggest problem.



Naturally occurring miticides like thymol, oxalic acid and formic acid, as well as harsher synthetic aides, are among some of the current treatments to get rid of



*Raina Jain, now 20, began working on a solution to save the bees in high school*

**Greenwich, Connecticut (CNN)** – Raina Singhvi Jain is allergic to honeybees. Just one sting on her foot once rendered her out of commission for weeks. But that has not deterred the 20-year-old social entrepreneur from her mission to save these essential pollinators, which have been suffering from population decline for decades. About 75% of the world’s crops depend, at least partly, on pollinators like honeybees. Their collapse could have a huge impact on our entire eco system. “Bees are the reason we’re all here today” Jain says. “They’re the fundamental basis of our agricultural system, our plants. They are the reason we have food”.

Jain, the daughter of Indian immigrants who settled in Connecticut, says her parents taught her to value life, no matter how small. If there was an ant in the house, they would tell her to take it outside and let it live, she says. So, when Jain visited an apiary in 2018 and saw piles of dead bees, she felt an innate drive to find out what was happening. What she discovered surprised her.



## Fighting parasites

“Honeybee declines are the result of the three P’s: parasites, pesticides and poor nutrition,” says Samuel Ramsey, a professor of entomology at University of Colorado Boulder’s Bio Frontiers Institute.

Out of the three Ps, by far the biggest contributor is parasites, according to Ramsey, and specifically a type of mite called *Varroa destructor*. It was first detected in the US in 1987 and can now be found in almost all hives across the country.

In his research, Ramsey observed that the mites feed off the liver of the honeybees, which makes them more susceptible to the other Ps by impairing their immune system and ability to store nutrients. These parasites can also spread lethal viruses, impair flight, and can eventually lead to the collapse of an entire colony.



With encouragement from her high school science teacher, during her junior year Jain started working on a solution to get rid of *Varroa* mite infestations. After a lot of trial and error, she came up with HiveGuard a 3D-printed hive entranceway that is coated with a non-toxic, plant-based pesticide called thymol.

“As bees pass through the entranceway, the thymol rubs off onto the body of the bee, where ultimately the concentration kills the *varroa* mites, but the honeybee is left unharmed,” Jain says.

Since March 2021, about 2,000 beekeepers have been beta testing the device, and Jain plans on an official release later this year. The data she has collected so far shows that three weeks after installation there’s a 70% decline in *varroa* mite infestations, with no reported side effects.

Thymol, and other naturally occurring miticides like oxalic acid, formic acid and hops, are used in current treatments in the form of strips or trays that go inside the hive. Ramsey says there are also synthetic aides, which tend to be more effective, but can be more damaging to the environment. He commends Jain’s ingenuity in creating a device that maximally impacts the mites, yet protects the bees and the environment from side effects.

## An important ally

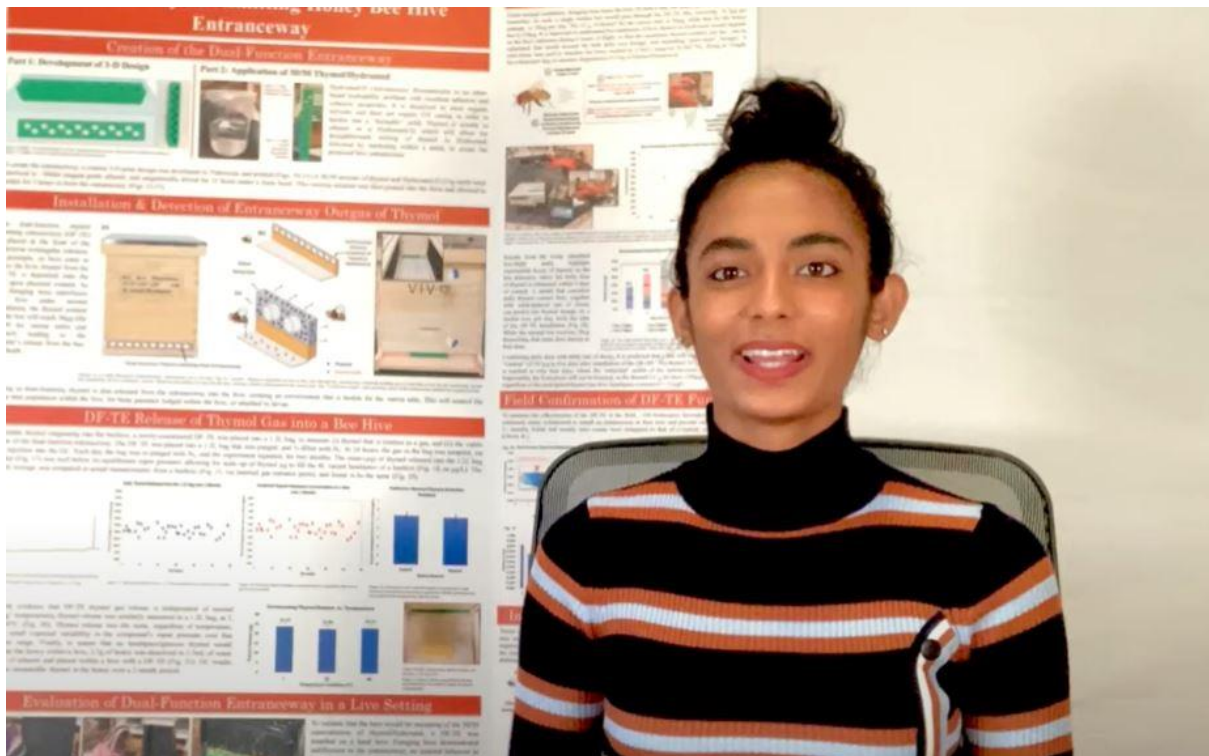
Honeybees are among the most efficient pollinators on the planet. Their contribution is vital for over 130 types of fruits, vegetables, and nuts — including almonds, cranberries, zucchini and avocados. So the next time you take a bite out of an apple, or a sip of coffee, it’s thanks to the bees, Jain says. But every year, according to Ramsey, between 33% and 51% of honeybees die across America.



The USDA estimates that honeybees pollinate \$15 billion worth of crops in the US alone every year. Many of these crops are pollinated by managed beekeeping services that are trucked throughout the country. As the bee populations have become more costly to protect, these services have become more expensive, with a cascade effect on consumer prices, Ramsey says.

But the most dire consequence if honeybee populations continue to decrease, is the serious threat to both food quality and security, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization warns. HiveGuard is just one of the ways in which Jain is using entrepreneurial insight to support honeybees. In 2020, she founded the supplement company Queen Bee, which sells health drinks that incorporate bee products like honey and royal jelly. And for every bottle sold, a pollinator tree is planted through Trees for the Future, a non-profit working with farming families in sub-Saharan Africa.

“My biggest hope for the environment is to restore it back to balance, and be in harmony with nature,” Jain says. She believes it is possible, but it will take a hivemind mentality to do so. “There’s a lot that humans can learn from as a societal structure, from honeybees themselves,” she adds. “The way that they’re able to collaborate, the way that they’re able to delegate, and how they sacrifice for the betterment of the colony.”



The YouTube clip below is of Raina Jain herself demonstrating her product ...

<https://youtu.be/QR66XyETWdg>

## EVENTS

### CSBKA WINTER MEETINGS

Our next Winter Meeting is on **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December**. This meeting will be held via Zoom and a link will be distributed via email and social media on the 8<sup>th</sup> December and again on the 14<sup>th</sup> December.

The presentation is:

#### **Professor Stephen Martin: Varroa**



We are extremely fortunate to have secured Professor Martin – a copy of his Biography is below.

Current positions: Emeritus Professor, University of Salford, Manchester

I have studied social insects (bees, wasps, termites, and ants) for most of my career. My areas of specialisation are the 'hornet ecology', 'pest and diseases of honeybees' and 'chemical ecology of ants'. I hold an Emeritus Chair in SEE at Salford University, Manchester. Prior to that I spent 12 years working at Sheffield University, 7 years with the National Bee Unit and 7 years in Japan conducting research into hornets.

I am best known for my work on the Varroa mite and its association with viruses, especially the Deformed Wing Virus, but more recently my expertise in hornet biology, which is in demand, both nationally and internationally. My team of researchers at Salford, funded in part by beekeepers, are using the very latest molecular methods to read the genetic code of the DWV virus. The aim is to understand why some honeybee colonies have become naturally tolerant to Varroa and see if this information can provide beekeepers with a long-term solution to the problem. Since the arrival of the Varroa mite from Asia, millions of honeybee colonies have died. For decades, beekeepers have continued to control Varroa populations using chemicals and other invasive methods. However, throughout Africa and most of South and Central America mite-infested colonies survive without any form of mite-control. This has been linked with poor mite reproduction, although what causes this has remained unknown. Throughout, Europe the USA and Wales an increasing number of naturally evolved, mite-tolerant colonies are being discovered. I work with people and honeybee populations in Brazil, Cuba, Africa, USA and UK since they all appear to have evolved similar ways to combat the Varroa mite.

**Saturday 4th February 2023 – British Beekeeping Show: NAEC Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ (9am to 4pm)**



The British Beekeeping Show is a rebranding of the original BeeTradex and will continue to keep the trade show feel with strong suppliers in attendance, whilst also expanding into new beekeeping and pollination areas. Free lectures will also be a main feature of this annual event along with the opportunity to attend workshops and presentations from some great and renowned names in beekeeping. Also, for 'newbees' to beekeeping, there will be several associations and trader stands available who offer advice and have sections of their stands aimed at the new starters.

The British Beekeeping Show is determined to make this event a huge success for both commercial and hobbyist beekeepers and encourages those that are thinking about starting beekeeping to come along and learn about this fascinating world.

For more information visit <https://www.britishbeekeepingshow.com/> where you can purchase 2 for 1 tickets using the code **BBKS**.



**25<sup>th</sup> February 2023 – WSBKA Annual Convention, Lodge Hill, Pulborough, RH20 1LZ (9.30am to 4.30pm)**

This annual event is making a return after two years and is intended to suit beekeepers of all abilities and experience. As well as the main lectures there will be a choice of other seminars available dedicated to more specialised topics. The main speakers are Professor Francis Ratnieks, Bob Smith NDB and Graham Royle NDB. There are refreshments throughout the day and a simple lunch will be included. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet up with fellow beekeepers from around the county and beyond.





## West Sussex Beekeepers' Association Annual Convention – 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023

The main speakers are Professor Francis Ratnieks, Bob Smith NDB and Graham Royle NDB:

- Francis is Professor of Apiculture, School of Life Sciences at the University of Sussex and Head of the Laboratory Apiculture and Social Insects (LASI). He has considerable practical experience with honey bees having kept them in several countries and owned up to 180 bee hives when he lived in California. He lectures on several modules under the subject of biology and environmental science and is also involved with outreach/extension to beekeepers and others, and with undergraduate teaching and the supervision of graduate students. He has written numerous scientific journals, articles, research documents and publications focussed on social insects, honey bees, beekeeping, honey bee breeding and diseases, animal behaviour, behavioural ecology, bee foraging ecology, bee conservation, and social evolution. Francis will be giving a main talk on *'Even healthy bees have to eat: Studying the honey bee food supply and how to improve it'*.
- Bob has been keeping bees since the late 1970's, currently managing 10 colonies in 14x12 WBC's in North Kent. He was a Seasonal Bee Inspector for 6 years and a member of the Defra Bee Health Advisory Forum. He is a holder of the National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB) and the current Chairman of the Central Association of Beekeepers (CABK) whose aim is to "bring science to the beekeeper". His main talk is entitled *'Varroa Control 2023'* - an attempt to guide beekeepers through the maze of potential approaches to *Varroa* control; looking both at non-chemical methods and the 15 currently Defra-approved miticides. He will also be running a seminar on *'Pollen, Propolis, Water – the other things bees collect'*.
- Graham started beekeeping in 1988. His studies resulted in achieving the BBKA Master Beekeeper certificate in 2002 and the National Diploma in Beekeeping in 2004. He was also awarded the Wax Chandler's prize in 2002. He currently manages 24 colonies in three apiaries and has been heavily involved with the education of beekeepers at all levels from encouraging beginners to take up the craft to preparing more experienced beekeepers to take the BBKA modular and practical assessments. In recent years he was the Regional Bee Inspector for the North of England and the Seasonal Bee inspector for Cheshire. In that role he was one of the team that dealt with the first UK Asian Hornet sighting in Tetbury, Gloucestershire in 2016. Graham will be giving a main talk on *'The Colony Mind'* and also running a seminar on *'What the Heck is that?'*

There will be a variety of seminars to choose from:

- 'What the Heck is That?' – Graham Royle
- 'All things Queens' – Christine Coulsting
- 'The Diverse World of Honeybee Communication' – Dr Elli Leadbetter
- 'Pollen, Propolis, Water – the other things bees collect' – Bob Smith NDB
- 'Instructions for building the Honeycomb' – Vince Gallo
- 'Adult Bee Diseases' – Christine Coulsting

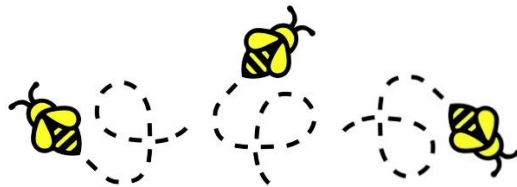
**\*\*\* 15th April 2023 \*\*\* – WSBKA Annual Bee Market and Auction – Chichester College, Brinsbury Campus, Pulborough**

A definite date for your diary – this local annual auction has a longstanding reputation for being a major event in the beekeeping calendar with many visitors from all over the country and buyers/sellers returning year after year.

CSBKA are looking for volunteers to help throughout the day and support WSBKA run this event. We will most likely also host the return of our Cake Stall (*though this is to be confirmed*) and will therefore need you to potentially get baking too!

Do not feel you have to volunteer for the whole day. Any spare time you can offer in the morning or afternoon would be most welcome.

**\*\*\* Note change of date, incorrect in previous edition of The Buzz, apologies!**



**21st – 23rd April 2023 – BBKA Spring Convention, Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB**

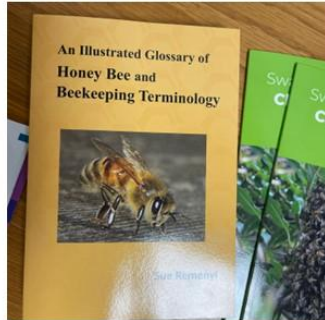
The next BBKA Spring Convention will be held in April 2023. A full programme of events will be released in due course but in the meantime several recorded lectures from the 2022 Convention have now been edited, and are available on the [BBKA YouTube Channel](#)



# NOTICES

## November Winter Meeting

Our first Winter Meeting was a presentation on the findings of a Pollen Study carried out in 2021 by Sue Remenyi together with other members of her BeeBuzz Group. You may recall reading Sue's article in the May 2022 BBKA News. Sue was accompanied by John White, both are members of Reading Beekeepers Association. The meeting was a huge success and enjoyed by all who attended. Thank you to Kim and Fiona our CSBKA Secretaries for arranging this informative evening.





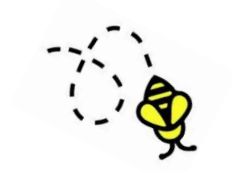
**\*\*\* New Website \*\*\***

Check out our new website here: [www.centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)

Simon Randall, Otto Somodi and I (Yolanda) have been instrumental in updating our CSBKA site and together with support from the Committee we believe we have managed to create a user friendly and explanatory tool to help members and visitors locate the information they need. Please do let us know what you think!



[Home](#) [Courses](#) [Education](#) [Information](#) [Contact Us](#)



**Hive Count**

The National Bee Unit needs YOU to update your records!

The Hive Count runs annually from 1<sup>st</sup> November until 31<sup>st</sup> December: The links to do this on their site are only active during a live hive count period and you will need to have set up your login to BeeBase to do this.

Visit: [Hive Count](#) to update your records

