

THE BUZZ

CENTRAL SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

CHARITY 1051548

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CSBKA COMMITTEE

Melvyn Essen (President 07811 070294)
president@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Ben Hewson (Chairperson)
chair@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Ben Donnachie (Hon Treasurer)
treasurer@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Kim Mair/Fiona Hiron (Hon Secretaries)
secretary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Pip Edgcombe (Membership Secretary)
membership@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Matt & Glynnis Arbuthnot
(Marketing & Fundraising)
extractors@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Ade Belcham (Apiary Coordinator)
apiary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Pip Edgcombe (Events/Show Co-Ordinator)
membership@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Yolanda Noye (Newsletter Editor)
buzz@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Viv Sallows (Convention Coordinator)
convention@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Simon Randall (Website Coordinator)
website@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Elaine Allen



Welcome to the May 2023 Edition of The Buzz.

King Charles III – the Bee friendly Monarch will be crowned in a matter of days and in this issue, we have a short feature on his involvement in various bee related initiatives.

The Training Apiary is open and has welcomed a bumper attendance of Newbees - it really is wonderful to see so many new faces and the return of many existing members which makes for interesting debate and exchange of ideas!

This month also brings us World Bee Day on 20th May – see feature inside for what you can do to take part.

Finally, the Swarm List in **NOW OPEN** – see inside for new guidance!

Yolanda Noye



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Ben Hewson

May is here! April was busy, Melvyn guided the latest batch of new beekeepers through the virtual course and then their first hands on experience in the apiary.

The treatment free study gained momentum with many expressions of interest from members and a methodology being drawn up as we speak.

The West Sussex Bee Auction was the usual mix of bumper sales and catching up with old friends to swap stories and exchange tips, our very own cake stall was a roaring success, a huge thankyou to everyone who baked or donated a cake or snack. A special thankyou to all the volunteers who helped on the stall and carried out other duties – it simply couldn't happen without you.

We already have had reports of swarms, so it's a timely reminder to check the new rules around joining the swarm list contained within this newsletter. We are looking to make the process easier and fairer for all and hope you will agree.

Asian Hornets have been a topic of much conversation recently with a surge in sightings in Jersey, the Committee feels it is very important to gather as much information on exactly how many Asian Hornets are making it to the mainland. Trapping is the first response to gathering data, we have invested in traps that will be distributed throughout the area, these traps are designed to be monitored daily and to allow any other pollinator to escape. If this is an area of interest to you, please contact Melvyn.

Lastly, we need you. Our current Treasurer Benjamin Donnachie is stepping down, and we need to replace him, if you have a head for figures, please, please get in touch. Ben has worked extremely hard to bring the accounts up to date and implement new ways of working which have simplified the task and we owe him a great debt and many thanks for everything he has done.

Once again, I wish you all good luck and happy beekeeping.

All the best





NEWS FROM THE APIARY – Ade Belcham

The club apiary is up and running again. At the time of writing, we've had a couple of very well attended Saturdays – nice to see new faces and reconnect with old ones.

As always during the early meets of the year, one of the topics of conversation was winter losses. The early signs are that it has been a tricky winter/early spring – not surprisingly perhaps, given that the winter was generally mild, except for an unseasonably warm and dry February, followed by an extended cool wet start to the spring. Certainly, the variability in colony build-up seems exaggerated this year, with some colonies booming (there have been several reports of early swarms) and others struggling to get going. I have had some colonies going strong on double brood since early April while also having to move several full hives into nucs in April to give them a boost, something I haven't had to do previously (thanks Melvyn).

I thought it might be useful to share the overwintering statistics from the club apiary and from my own bees to give a benchmark for comparison until BeeBase posts the national overwintering data later in the year.

- At the club apiary:
 - 14 colonies including 2 double nucs went into the winter.
 - Winter losses were $4/14 = 28\%$ including 1 of the nucs.
 - We also had to transfer 1 full hive to a nuc in April to give it a boost - $1/14 = 7\%$.
- From my own bees:
 - I took 33 of my own colonies including 10 nucs into the winter.
 - Winter losses were $6/33 = 18\%$ (of which 3 were nucs).
 - Perhaps significantly 4/6 were from the same apiary which is a great location in many ways but can get a bit waterlogged in winter. However, in previous years the losses have been nothing like as high. One question I must ask is whether, in a long damp off season, the site is a good overwintering location? That said one of the remaining hives on the site is booming!
 - Another interesting observation for me was that 6 of the colonies surviving to the end of April have needed to be moved from full hives into nucs. Again that's 18% of the total number of colonies I took into winter and all bar 1 were first year colonies moved into full boxes in 2022.
 - So, one pattern that seems clear is that my nucs and young colonies have been where most of the losses and difficult starts have been. As with the weather observations – perhaps no surprise there.

A teacher once told me that if I couldn't be comfortable with the state of "I don't know", then I shouldn't consider becoming a body worker and yoga therapist. I think probably the same advice applies to beekeeping. That said, one of the most engaging aspects of working with both people and bees is the constant sense of inquiry and exploration as to what works best. So, these days I try to balance acceptance of ignorance with a celebration of curiosity. All I've got to do now is figure out what to do with the data!

Good luck with your own ponderings and I hope to see you on a Saturday morning soon. Here's the programme for the next few weeks:

06-May	Swarm Management part 2 – Reactive measures (Wally's Way – without finding queen)
13-May	Making increase – selection, splits, and swarms
20-May	Collecting and hiving a swarm
27-May	Catching and marking queens (including drone marking practice)
03-Jun	Choosing a hive type and selecting a site
10-Jun	Requeening a queenless colony





TIPS OF THE MONTH – Melvyn Essen

We are experiencing another challenging spring, the wettest March for years followed by a cold and wet April. Some colonies have been building up surprisingly well and others have been struggling and have been low in spring worker bees which means brood has not been kept warm enough in the cold spells. If you still have small colonies in full hives give them a break and put them in a poly nuc for a few weeks, it will take you a few minutes and could well save the bees, feed the nuc if needed.

Below is a colony struggling and put into a poly nuc on 29th April at the apiary.



In contrast, the colonies that are doing well could go into swarm mode if they get too congested. There are several procedures you could try. The most obvious one is to put supers on when needed and when the top super is $\frac{3}{4}$ full of bees put another on. If the brood box is full of brood and the queen has nowhere to lay, you can put a brood box on top of the supers and move up two frames containing sealed brood then fill the gaps with drawn comb or undrawn either side of the brood nest. Be sure to check the moved frames just in case they contained some eggs, they could draw out queen cells.

Be ready for swarming, check any queen cups for larvae and if you do find some carry out your chosen method of swarm control.



BEE TALKS FOR SCHOOLS – Piers Pollard

Thursday 30th March 2023



Returning for a third time I made a made a repeat visit to London Meed Primary School, Burgess Hill to deliver Bee and Pollination Talks to the two Year 3 classes. It was an early start for me to arrive at the school for 8:15am, register and set up for the first talk. The children were very attentive and knowledgeable and thoroughly enjoyed the talks. Unfortunately, due to the inclement weather, the nectar and pollen activity had to be organised in the classroom after both talks.





THE BEE FRIENDLY MONARCH – Yolanda Noye

The tradition of beekeeping has long continued within the Royal Family and not only has King Charles III been active in beekeeping for years, but he has long championed the cause of bees whilst he was Prince of Wales.

So many people around the world now acknowledge the need to protect and help bees, it might come as a surprise to them to learn that the awareness building took time to develop. A small group of individuals were already promoting the campaign before, for example, organisations like Friends Of The Earth came on board in 2012, after the work that secured the EFSA report, which resulted in the EU moratorium on neonicotinoids that followed. Beekeepers rather than environmentalists were then at the forefront of the campaign, for the simple reason that they witnessed the devastating impacts of insecticides in their hives before the wider impact of these toxins was considered.

Campaigners were grateful for the intervention of Prince Charles, in a bid to help raise awareness. He raised the issue certainly as far back as 2009, as he addressed audiences in his media-attended talks. News of the Prince's intervention spread across Europe, such that jars of honey from grateful beekeepers flooded in from all over Europe to him, who in the end, was so overwhelmed, he had to ask beekeepers to stop sending them!

Charles remained faithful to the cause of bees, raising the issue frequently and thus supporting the campaign as best he could. It's also quite widely known that not only does Prince Charles embrace organic farming at his vast estates, he has also kept hives both at Clarence House and Highgrove House and has embraced a system of natural beekeeping at Highgrove for several years. Under his concerned and watchful eye I also feel sure the beehives will continue to be maintained at Buckingham Palace.

His Majesty has for years, been a major supporter of various bee-related initiatives, such as community beekeeping groups up and down Britain, as well as school programs. He has personally visited the sites of community apiaries and attended individual schools to engage with and encourage the children. Camilla, the wife of Charles (and now Queen Consort), is the first President of the international charity, Bees for Development, which aims to help individuals in poorer regions of the world become self-sufficient through beekeeping. No doubt King Charles will now have a broad range of duties and pressures that will impact on his time, yet I am hopefully confident that he will continue to support beekeepers and conservationists as best he can, that he will ensure any bee-related duties are properly handed on as necessary, and that he will maintain an interest in the welfare of bees.





WSBKA ANNUAL BEE MARKET & AUCTION – Yolanda Noye

Do read the full review of the WSBKA Bee Market & Auction in the WSBKA Newsletter attached in your email. It was a very successful event with over 350 lots. CSBKA hosted the Cake Stall which raised funds for our association with a commission on the sales going to WSBKA towards the cost of the event.





SWARM LIST – CSBKA Committee

CENTRAL SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

GUIDANCE FOR SWARM LIST INCLUSION

The swarm list is a method to fairly distribute collected swarms to Association members to establish as colonies, further the take up of beekeeping, promote bee health and education. Inclusion and position on the list will not necessarily be on a first come first served basis, preference will be given to new beekeepers and established keepers with a history of ethical colony husbandry and good standards of hive maintenance who have lost their only colony.

In addition, members wishing to be included on the list must be active in Association life in one or more of the following areas:

- Attending courses to further good practice and increase beekeeping knowledge and skills.
- Volunteering to help at the end of season Association apiary clear up.
- Volunteering at events like the WSBKA auction or on the Association stand at fairs and open days. The application to join the swarm list is **NOW OPEN**, if you feel you can take on a swarm, you can apply to join the list at any time by contacting:

[CSBKA Swarm Waiting List](https://centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/swarm-list/)

<https://centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/swarm-list/>

The first 10 names will be printed in the monthly Buzz newsletter. When a swarm becomes available the first person on the list will be contacted, if you are that person, you will then make arrangements to collect the swarm within the same day preferably, 24h maximum. If you are not ready for a swarm or in a position to take responsibility or you do not respond timely or cannot be contacted, the next person on the list will be contacted. In this case you will not lose your place on the list, however, if you are offered three swarms but don't take one you will drop to the bottom of the list. To try and have fair distribution we will limit one swarm per person, should supply outstrip demand this will be reviewed.

Please do not contact the Swarm coordinator for information on list placement or timings. £30 is payable immediately on swarm pick up to cover costs associated with the collection and the Correx nuc with 5 frames with foundation any residual amount will be treated as a donation to the Association.

The Association reserves the right to refuse entry to the list and removal from the list for unreasonable behaviour or poor beekeeping practice.



VARROA RESISTANCE TASKFORCE – KIM MAIR

At the recent AGM, it was decided to set up a Varroa Resistance Taskforce considering recent winter talks. The aim of the project will be to keep up to date with current research, collection of data from members apiaries and experimentation of the effectiveness of alternative varroa treatments to identify hygienic behaviour with the intention to better increase and support wild bee populations ability to resist varroa and deformed wing virus. This will help inform the wider CSBKA membership on effective methods and also increase genetics that promote hygienic behaviour in the Central Sussex area.

We especially welcome those members that have successfully gone treatment free and members that have not but are willing to dedicate time to the project. We aim to get as wide a geographical representation of CSBKA members as possible and set up the taskforce by the end of May 2023.

Several members have already expressed their interest via the Association's WhatsApp Group however in order to secure your inclusion on this project please email secretary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk with the following information

- 1) Your Name
- 2) The number of hives and location of apiary
- 3) Are you already treatment free?

In the meantime, you may like to have a look at the website entitled "Varroa resistant honey bees". The website has been created by Professor Stephen Martin, Rhona Toft (BBKA Master Beekeeper), Joe Ibbertson (treatment free beekeeper) and Steve Riley (Chair and Education Office for Westerham Beekeepers). Even if you choose not to join our new group have a look, you may find you already have colonies that are showing signs of hygienic behaviour.

Link is below.

[Varroa Resistant Honey Bees](#)



WORLD BEE DAY – Yolanda Noye

It's hard to say what a bee's favourite day is, but 20 May is the birth date of Anton Janša (1734–1773), a Slovenian beekeeper, the pioneer of modern beekeeping and one of the greatest authorities about bees.

Did you know? Bees can see a colour imperceptible to humans and known as “bee’s purple”. It is a combination of yellow and UV light.

Did you know? The average honey bee will make a twelfth of a teaspoon of honey in its lifetime.

Did you know? Because it hums, the bumblebee was called the humblebee until the early 20th century.

Did you know? Bees are actually a democracy. They have debates when choosing a new home and each scout is given an equal platform. The votes end with a unanimous decision as each bee in the colony does its own research to verify the scout claims. The Queen remains impartial throughout the process.



What can you do?

The World Bee Day website has the following suggestions.

- Plant nectar-bearing flowers for decorative purposes on balconies, terraces, and gardens.
- Buy honey and other hive products from your nearest local beekeeper.
- Raise awareness among children and adolescents on the importance of bees and express your support for beekeepers.
- Set up a pollinator farm on your balcony, terrace, or garden; you can have go at making one yourself! Plenty of ideas online.
- Preserve old meadows (which feature a more diverse array of flowers) and sow nectar-bearing plants.
- Cut grass only after the nectar-bearing plants have finished blooming.
- If you are able, offer suitable farming locations for the temporary or permanent settlement of bees so that they have suitable pasture; as a consequence, they will pollinate our plants, which will thereby bear more fruit.
- Use natural pesticides that do not harm bees and spray them in windless weather, either early in the morning or late at night when bees withdraw from blossoms.

[Find out more](#)

EVENTS



20th May 2023 – World Bee Day

World Bee Day shines a light on the habitat of pollinators to improve the conditions for their survival so that bees and other pollinators may thrive. The date was chosen as it was the day Anton Jansa, a pioneer of modern apiculture, was born. Jansa came from a family of beekeepers in Slovenia, where beekeeping is an important agricultural activity with a long-standing tradition. The public can help support this annual event by planting bee friendly plants in their garden and encouraging their councils to plant wildflower meadows and leave grass verges alone to allow wildflowers to bloom.



10th - 16th July 2023 – Bees Needs Week



Bees Needs Week is an annual event coordinated by Defra, working alongside charities, businesses, conservation groups and academic institutions to raise awareness of bees and other pollinators.

More information can be found here [Bees Needs Campaign 2023](#)

4th– 10th September 2023 – Asian Hornet Week



The sixth Asian Hornet week will be held from 4th to 10th September 2023. This is the time of year when Asian Hornets start hawking honeybees at hive entrances. Autumn is typically when nests are revealed as a result of leaf fall from trees and bushes and this is the last chance, we will have to prevent the emergence of new Asian Hornet queens. During this time, we would encourage all members to follow the BBKA on social media for information throughout the week as well as liking and sharing their social media posts to help increase awareness of the Asian Hornet.



23rd & 24th September 2023

SAVE THE DATE!



Previously held in the Bees & Honey marquee at the South of England Show during June now more conveniently later in the beekeeping year and indoors (!), the South of England Honey Show is being held again as part of the Autumn Show & Horse Trials. Bill Fisher is returning as judge for the competition and for those that do not know, Bill is a leading judge and convenor at the National Honey Show, so this is a great opportunity to get some feedback at regional level before your entries go to the Nationals in October! For a report on last year's event and advance information on the schedule of classes for 2023 visit [Competing at the Autumn Show & International Horse Trials 2023](#)
NB: no horse required (!).

NOTICES



Congratulations to
WSBKA celebrating 50
Years since their
foundation in 1973.

OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN CSBKA COMMITTEE

VACANCY: CSBKA TREASURER

Do you have a head for figures?

Come and join our friendly Committee!

Due to unforeseen circumstances our current Treasurer is stepping down. During his time in the role, Ben has streamlined and simplified the tasks involved and will be available to provide a detailed handover. The position would suit someone familiar with using a spreadsheet.

Please contact treasurer@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



South of England Summer Show 9th, 10th and 11th June 2023

At the summer show, the marquee will present the popular live beekeeping displays. As always volunteers are needed to help: performing demonstrations, presenting information, answering questions, and looking after the safety of visitors or, would you like to join the organising committee?

Please contact Bob Barnes, Chair and Chief Steward to discuss what is involved or register your availability to help M: 07974 428539.



Take a look at the NBU's new BeeBase website. If you have not already registered you can do so here

[Sign up to BeeBase Online](#)

BeeBase is an excellent resource that is useful to all beekeepers, from those that are just starting to think about keeping bees to those with many years of experience – also for those whose involvement with bees might be involuntary and unplanned! There are leaflets, guides and videos to view/download, articles to read a “New to Beekeeping” section for advice and suggestions and for those more experienced a Queen Rearing section.



Brewing Kit - £30



Make your own mead! Selection of Brewing paraphernalia – glass equipment (used once), brewing buckets and taps etc. Collection from Horsham

Please contact Andy Campbell E: motobiman@icloud.com