



# THE BUZZzzzz



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Photo credit: CSBKA Member Nadia Ziyada

## Welcome to the November 2025 CSBKA Newsletter!

Thank you to everyone who has completed our online survey – for those of you who have not done so, there is still time to submit your reviews here: <https://forms.gle/yPnRQeXfv5FyvonB7>.

Behind the scenes, the Committee and Apiary Team continue to work hard on your behalf. Our Winter Meetings kicked off with a fantastic evening featuring Professor Tom Seeley. Some members had additional questions for him after the event, and he has kindly provided answers - these are included in this newsletter. Looking ahead, our December Winter Meeting will welcome back James Donaldson, who will be performing another live dissection - always an interesting and fascinating experience to witness.

We also have plans for a Working Party at the Apiary in the New Year. Tasks will include painting the exterior and rearranging the interior of the main shed, cutting back foliage, and spreading more chippings on the pathway. We will let you know once a date has been arranged.

In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you on 4th December at the next Winter Meeting.

Yolanda Noye





## NEWS FROM THE APIARY – Carl Slade



All is well .....





## SEASONAL BEEKEEPING TIPS – Melvyn Essen



### November in the Apiary:

November is a quiet time for bees. There may still be some late-season forage available, such as ivy, which they will take advantage of on mild, sunny days. Otherwise, the colony is largely quiet. Brood rearing has practically ceased, reducing the demands on the colony, and activity levels are low. Cleansing flights will occur when conditions allow, but aside from that, the colony appears to do very little.

### Winter Bees

The colony began its preparations for winter back in August and September with the production of winter bees. The ability of these bees to survive for five or six months is critical to the colony's survival, as it is these bees that kick-start activity in early spring. They need to endure the winter months and begin brood rearing as early as late January. The colony cannot afford for these bees to die before the new workers have emerged to take over from them. So, what makes winter bees different? Normally, newly emerged workers eat nectar and pollen, which develop their hypopharyngeal glands and fat bodies for producing brood food. By August, with less brood to feed, these young bees store fats and proteins instead. This ability to store nutrients is what gives winter bees their remarkable longevity - perhaps the elusive elixir of youth?

In addition to their stored food, winter bees have much lower metabolic rates because they are largely inactive. When the ambient temperature drops below 18 °C, bees form small clusters, which merge with the hive as it gets colder with the outer layer of bees holding it all together. Inside the cluster is not so tight and the bees can move around and feed and, if necessary, vibrate their wing muscles to generate heat. Regular swapping of places ensures the bees all share access to food.

With no brood to care for, the colony can afford for the brood nest temperature to drop whilst maintaining the centre of the cluster at around 20 °C. So, apart from occasional flights on mild, sunny days, the colony's inactivity is helping it survive.

### Reflect on the season

Now is a good time for reflection while the season's successes and challenges are still fresh in your mind. Were your swarm control methods effective? Did you spot the signs early enough to act, or did each visit to the apiary feel more like a panic? Take a moment to consider where things didn't go as planned and explore alternative methods that might suit your style of beekeeping better.





## THE NATIONAL HONEY SHOW – Yolanda Noye



### A King's Award for the National Honey Show

The National Honey Show - organised for more than a century by dedicated and passionate volunteers - has been honoured with the highest accolade awarded to volunteer groups in the United Kingdom: The King's Award for Voluntary Service 2025. This prestigious recognition is widely regarded as the voluntary sector's equivalent of an MBE.

Since the Show's inception, thousands of remarkable volunteers have contributed their time, energy and expertise to bring the event to life, year after year, uniting experts and enthusiasts from across the beekeeping community.

In 2026, two volunteers will be invited to receive the official crystal and framed certificate at a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, presented on behalf of His Majesty by the Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey.

Organisers of the Show extend their heartfelt thanks to everyone — past and present — who has supported and sustained it declaring "his Award truly belongs to all of you"!

Below are some pictures CSBKA Member Nadia Ziyada took during her visit to the Show this year.





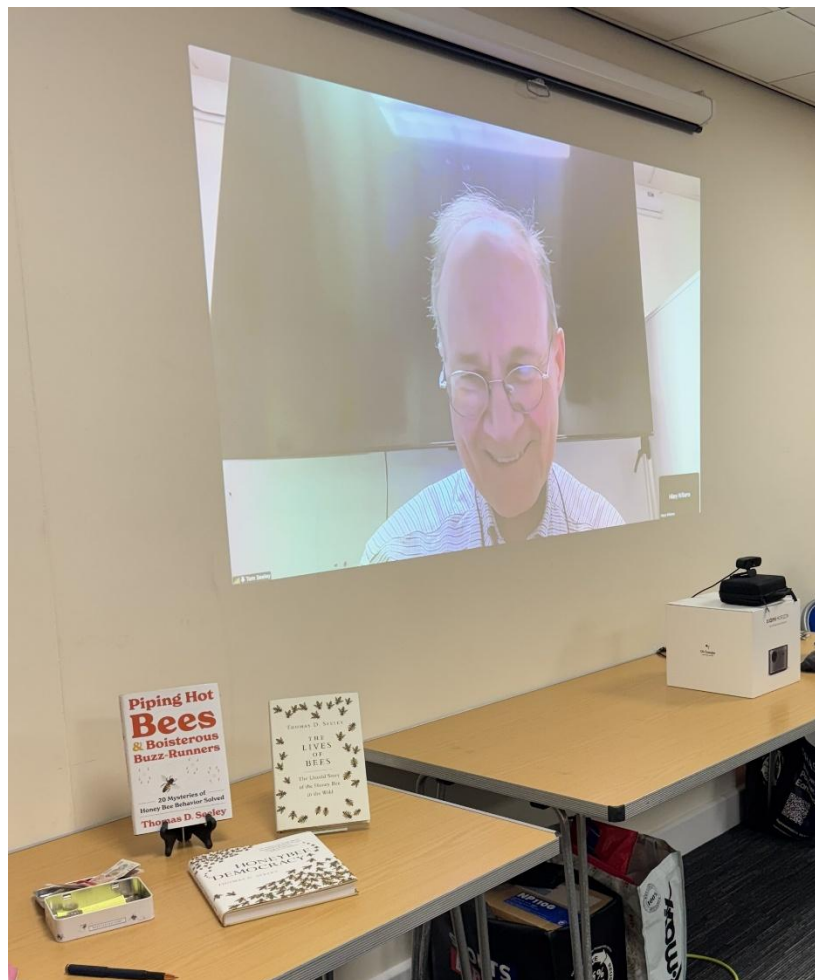




## Winter Meeting Review – Yolanda Noye



We were very fortunate to have Professor Tom Seeley deliver his second presentation to CSBKA at our October Winter meeting. Professor Seeley explained to us the intricacies of how a honeybee swarm chooses its home, including sharing the fieldwork he and his research team conducted off the coast of Maine on Appledore Island. This early research of his focused on understanding the criteria bees use to select a nest site and the process by which a swarm reaches a consensus on a single location. To study this, he built several nest boxes of varying sizes and mounted them in different locations on the island, allowing him to observe swarm behaviour in a controlled environment. The island's distance from the mainland ensured that the bees remained on site. More about this can be read in his book *Honeybee Democracy*.



Unfortunately, due to a technical issue during the Q&A session following the presentation, some of Professor Seeley's answers were not heard clearly. In addition, after the meeting, a couple of extra questions were raised on our BeesKnees WhatsApp Group. I contacted him again, and he has kindly provided answers to these questions, which are below:

**Q1: In your test studies, did the marked yellow bees check out the yellow hive again, or did they just visit once?**

**Professor Seeley:** *A nest site scout visits "her" site repeatedly, and dances for it after multiple visits, but the strength of her dancing declines each time, about 15 dance circuits in total.*

**Q2:** Occasionally a swarm sets up home in the open, seemingly where it has clustered, with no real chance of survival. What do you think might have gone wrong with their procedure for choosing a suitable site? Some of our members have suggested the following possibilities, but it would be good to hear your views:

- Has the colony reached a point of desperation?
- Has too much time passed without a collective decision?
- Have the workers simply started to build comb because time is of the essence for survival?
- Could the weather play a part?
- Might there be poor options in the vicinity, leaving scout bees unable to find a suitable site?
- Could the colony have used up much of its honey, triggering a behavioural change – for example, scout bees ceasing their search and instead joining in foraging, leaving too few scouts to reach a quorum?
- Or could there be some form of evolutionary pressure on swarm behaviour, leading colonies to “decide” to remain where they settle, perhaps even increasing their chances of being collected by a beekeeper?

Professor Seeley: *This phenomenon is a real puzzle. I think that several of the ideas listed above play a role. We know that if a bivouacked swarm builds comb and then the queen lays eggs in it, that the swarm never leaves the bivouac site. Fatal error.... but why a bivouacked swarm builds comb is unclear. Perhaps this is apt to happen if a swarm is caught out by bad weather. The bees (who are already producing wax scales) are prone to start comb building, and if this happens, and the queen lays some eggs in the comb, then the bees get stuck there.*

**Q3:** When using a swarm catcher, do scout bees prefer a large box with a large entrance (which is harder to defend) or a smaller box with a smaller entrance (easier to defend)? On Thursday evening, you mentioned that they tend to prefer a large box with a small entrance. Does entrance size make much difference, or would they always favour the larger cavity regardless of the entrance size?

Professor Seeley: *What I have found is that swarms avoid cavities that are less than 15 litres in volume, and that they like them to have a smallish (15-20 cm<sup>2</sup>) entrance opening. Cavities with large entrances (> ca. 50 cm<sup>2</sup>) are avoided. Entrance size is VERY IMPORTANT to the bees. Entrance size is also VERY important to the nest-site scouts. Same for cavity size. The former must not be too large and the latter not too small. See numbers just mentioned. My bait hives hold 6, deep, Langstroth-hive-size frames (so the volume is ca. 25 litres), and they have entrance openings that are about 15 cm<sup>2</sup>.*

**Q4:** Do bees that swarm from a hive specifically look for another hive?

Professor Seeley: *I doubt it. I say this because a hive is not a natural nest site, so it is unlikely that bees have a built-in preference for a hive. That said, an unoccupied hive that holds a set of combs is mighty attractive to a swarm!*



## Winter Programme – Yolanda Noye



Our next Winter Meeting is on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December** at the Millenium Hall, Crawley Road, Roffey, Horsham, RH12 4DT. The talk will commence at 7:30pm but the Cowdray Room will be available from 7:00pm for those that want to get settled into their seating and catch up with other members. Light refreshments will be served.



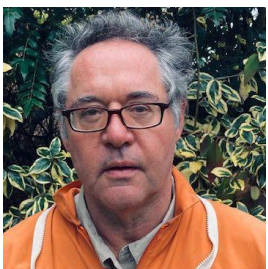
### **Thursday 4th December 2025: James Donaldson**

James has been a beekeeper since 2005, he qualified as a Master Beekeeper in 2021 and holds the Microscopy certificate. James will be performing a live dissection of a bee showing the inside of the abdomen, alimentary canal and possibly the heart (though this is quite tricky to do!).



### **Thursday 8th January 2026: Dr Stefan Stangaciu**

**Dr Stefan Stangaciu**, President of the Romanian Apitherapy Society, is a medical doctor specialising in preventive medicine and natural therapies with a focus on bee products. He serves as Secretary General of the International Federation of Apitherapy. An active promoter of apitherapy worldwide, he has spoken at over 100 conferences in more than 50 countries and founded multilingual Apitherapy Networks as well as Apitherapy.com. His publications include *Soft Healing Through Bee Products*, *Gentle Healing with Honey*,



### **Thursday 5th February 2025: Steve Riley**

Steve is the author of *The Honey Bee Solution to Varroa* and a member of the “Path to Varroa-resistance in the UK” team, led by Emeritus Professor Stephen Martin. This team launched an educational science website, [www.varroaresistant.uk](http://www.varroaresistant.uk), in April 2023. Currently, Steve serves as Chair and Education Officer of Westerham Beekeepers, who are well on their way of searching for and identifying Varroa-resistant honey bees.





## YELLOW LEGGED HORNET – Yolanda Noye



The following is the latest update from BeeBase as at 21 11 2025.

**544** credible yellow-legged hornet sightings have been reported in the UK in 2025.

**162** nests have been found.

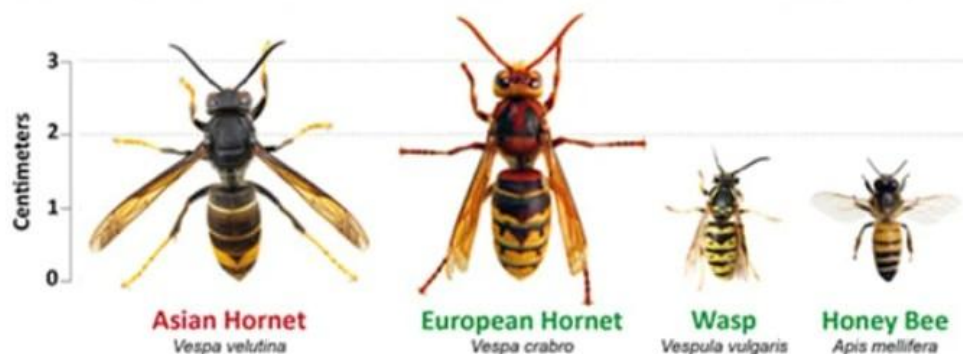
To view the location of destroyed nests, please visit the [map page](#) and choose the Asian Hornet map layer using the 'Layer' icon in the top right hand corner of the map.

For more information visit: [Yellow Legged Hornet 2025 Rolling Update](#)

If you spot a Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet or a nest, please report it immediately via the Asian Hornet Watch App.

### See it! Snap it! Send it!

### Think you've seen an Asian Hornet? Report it!



Report through the Asian Hornet Watch app or [www.bit.ly/asianhornetreport](http://www.bit.ly/asianhornetreport)



Jackie Thomas' lecture from The National Honey Show 2025 on the latest Yellow Legged Hornet news was just released on Friday 21st November. Jackie, a Master Beekeeper, is the Asian Hornet team co-ordinator for Dover & District BKA, the area most affected by the recent hornet incursion. She brings to life how DDBKA's response to the YLH has evolved over the past 3 years. Summarising at the end of 2025, she considers implications for the future:

Watch her presentation here: <https://www.youtube.com/@NationalHoneyShowUK/videos>.



Our Chairman of West Sussex BKA, Roger Patterson can be seen here during an informal chat with Jackie during the show, where they discuss the Yellow Legged Hornet: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A\\_5s22FZoM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_5s22FZoM)







# EVENTS



## Upcoming Events!

Below are some dates for your diary.

This list will be updated monthly, so be sure to check back for updates and latest details.

### December

4<sup>th</sup> **CSBKA** Winter Meeting – James Donaldson (7:30pm Millenium Hall, Roffey, RH12 4DT)

### January

8<sup>th</sup> **CSBKA** Winter Meeting – Dr Stefan Stangaciu (7:30pm Millenium Hall, Roffey, RH12 4DT)

### February

5<sup>th</sup> **CSBKA** Winter Meeting – Steve Riley (7:30pm Millenium Hall, Roffey, RH12 4DT)

28<sup>th</sup> West Sussex BKA Annual Convention (9am – 4pm @ Lodge Hill Centre, Pulborough)

### March

12<sup>th</sup> **CSBKA** AGM, Social and Prize Giving (7:30pm Millenium Hall, Roffey, RH12 4DT)

28<sup>th</sup> **CSBKA** 2026 Beekeeping Course for Beginners (Day 1) (10am – 3pm MacNaughton Hall, Pease Pottage, RH11 9AH)

### April

11<sup>th</sup> **CSBKA** 2026 Beekeeping Course for Beginners (Day 2) (10am – 3pm MacNaughton Hall, Pease Pottage, RH11 9AH)

25<sup>th</sup> WSBKA 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Bee Market & Auction/CSBKA Cake Stall



## NOTICES



### A perfect Christmas gift for Honeybee lovers

We've been offered what can only be described as the perfect Christmas gift for bee enthusiasts: a 2016 Honeybee coin from New Zealand in mint condition. One side features a beautifully detailed honeybee resting on a honeycomb, while the other bears an effigy of Queen Elizabeth II.

The coin was designed by Hannah Stancliffe-White (with the QEII image sculpted by Ian Rank-Broadley) and is number 328 of a limited edition of 1,500, complete with full provenance. When first released, these coins caused quite a stir among collectors, and the current owner was lucky enough to have this one bought to the UK by a relative as they weren't allowed to be posted at the time!

The seller is asking £300, plus a small donation to CSBKA. There are live listings on eBay for considerably more.

If you are interested please contact me and I will put you in touch directly with the seller.

Yolanda M:07775 841535

## FOR SALE: COLONY OF BEES

National Beehive with overwintering bee colony inside for sale, collection from Eastbourne:



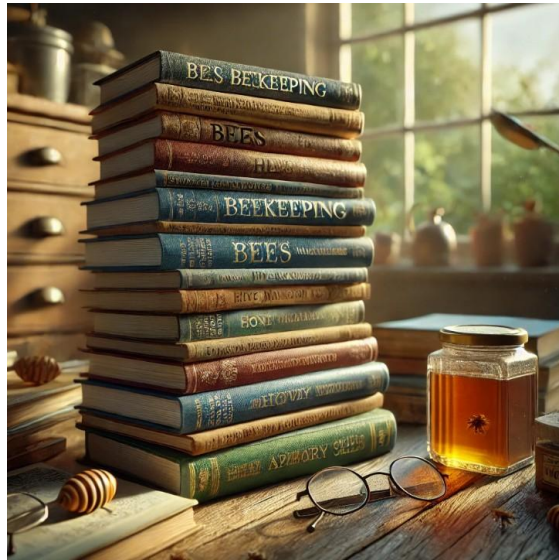
*NB: Picture for illustration purposes only*

Please contact Jaffer Manek on 07500 222008 if you are interested.



# Beekeeping Books

Do you have any beekeeping books that you no longer need?



If so, please put them aside. In the New Year we'll be gathering donations to help expand our Apiary library, and any surplus books will be offered for sale at our Beginners' Course, with all proceeds going to the CSBKA.

Over the Christmas and New Year period, perhaps you could have a look through your shelves. I'll share the drop-off locations in the New Year but wanted to give you advance notice, so you have plenty of time for a clear-out!