



THE BUZZzzzz



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Welcome to the December 2025 CSBKA Newsletter!

I hope those of you who have attended our recent Winter Meetings have found them both interesting and enjoyable. Our next meeting has been brought forward to **Tuesday 6 January** and will feature a presentation by **Dr Stefan Stângaciu**, President of the **International Federation of Apitherapy**. Further details can be found inside.

I find winter evenings an ideal time to brush up on beekeeping knowledge by reading new books. The BBKA has an excellent *Special Issue Series* on topical subjects, which can be ordered directly online. At the moment, however, I am enjoying *Honeybee Anatomy Brought to Life* by **Graham Kingham**, which I bought following our last Winter Meeting after **James Donaldson's** presentation. It is a lovely book, full of illustrations, which I find particularly helpful.

Now is also the time to plan your diary for the year ahead and book your place at the WSBKA Annual Convention – more information and a link to the booking form are included inside.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year - I look forward to seeing you all in **2026**.

Yolanda Noye



NEWS FROM THE APIARY – Carl Slade



Still peaceful ... 🐝 🐝 🐝 😊





SEASONAL BEEKEEPING TIPS – Melvyn Essen



December in the Apiary:

To survive winter, a honeybee colony must be strong, healthy, dry, well-fed and protected. Good preparation throughout the season is essential, while certain late interventions can do more harm than good.

A safe, dry hive

Damp is a major winter killer. Entrances must remain clear for ventilation and cleansing flights and positioned to catch winter sun where possible. Strong stands, sheltered apiary sites, and secured roofs reduce storm damage.

Protection from predators

Once clustered, bees are at risk from mice and green woodpeckers. Fit mouse guards in autumn and protect hives with wire netting during hard winter months to deter woodpeckers.

Winter Management

Avoid opening hives in winter. Instead, heft regularly, check after storms, and observe flight on mild days. Debris trays beneath mesh floors can give useful information without disturbing the colony.

Careful preparation allows colonies to overwinter successfully and build up strongly in spring.

Repair, renovate and replace

Beekeeping equipment is generally designed to take the routine knocks and scrapes that occur during the season. With almost no moving parts and simple construction there's almost nothing to go wrong with much of the kit we use. Once cleaned it can be stacked up and stored ready for the Spring. However now is a good time to check your equipment and you also start your frame building!



Winter Meeting Review – Yolanda Noye



James Donaldson delivered a fascinating presentation, complete with a live dissection of a deceased honeybee.

Firstly, he guided us through the remarkable anatomy that makes bee flight possible. Each side of the thorax carries two wings: a larger forewing and a smaller hindwing. The hindwing is edged with numerous tiny hooks (hamuli) along its leading edge, which latch into a channel on the forewing when the wings are first unfolded for flight, creating a single, strong aerodynamic surface.

The wingbeat can exceed 200 beats per second. Power for this extraordinary feat comes from two sets of indirect flight muscles within the thorax, which move the wings up and down rather than directly flapping them. James demonstrated this beautifully by gently applying pressure to the dissected thorax (with wings still attached), clearly showing the resulting wing movement.

Once inside the dissected abdomen he pointed out the bee's heart: a long, muscular tube running along the dorsal side of the abdomen. It is surrounded by muscle cells that contract rhythmically in a forward motion to circulate haemolymph through the body.

Another enjoyable detail was the so-called "bee's knees". Strictly speaking, bees do not have knees as their joints lack a kneecap. However, when the leg bends, a circular opening forms at the joint, allowing the bee to pull its antennae through to clean off dust and pollen.

Another captivating insight was into the sting mechanism, located in the final segment of the abdomen. James explained how the two lancets slide together and only protrude when the act of stinging begins.

There was so much more covered in this absorbing talk, and I hope I have interpreted everything correctly. I am sure those who attended will let me know if I have made any errors!





Winter Programme – Yolanda Noye

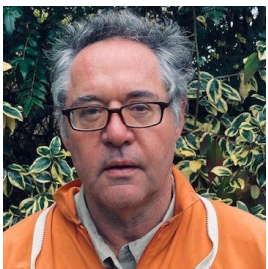


Our next Winter Meeting is on **Tuesday 6th January** (*please note new brought forward date*) at the Millenium Hall, Crawley Road, Roffey, Horsham, RH12 4DT. The talk will commence at 7:30pm but the Cowdray Room will be available from 7:00pm for those that want to get settled into their seating and catch up with other members. Light refreshments will be served.



Thursday 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, 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



There are no further updates on BeeBase since 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.





WHY THE CROWN? Credit: Bee Haven



"What's with the crown? The queen honey bee is a slave to the hive, laying eggs all day, every day.!"

First of all, if someone fed me, groomed me, followed me around and handled my every need – maybe I'd wear a Crown to work too. That said to understand how a honey bee colony works means the queen isn't a queen in the way we humans imagine.

She doesn't rule the hive or boss anyone around. She's more like the colony's reproductive engine.

Yes, her job is to lay eggs, while the workers (the girls!) make almost all the big decisions

- 🐝 where to forage
- 🐝 how much comb to build
- 🐝 when to swarm
- 🐝 whether to raise a new queen
- 🐝 and even how much to feed the queen

(and yes... sometimes they put her on a diet to slim her down before a swarm!)

BUT, with all that said, she's NOT a slave either.

She's fed, groomed, protected, and constantly surrounded by attendants who take care of her every need. She doesn't even feed herself! The hive relies on her, so they treat her like precious cargo.

So, the crown?

Just a cute little way to honour her importance!

even if the workers are the ones actually running the show!



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.

January

**** PLEASE NOTE THE DATE OF THIS WINTER MEETING HAS BEEN BROUGHT FORWARD ****

6th **CSBKA** Winter Meeting – Dr Stefan Stangaciu (7:30pm Millenium Hall, Roffey, RH12 4DT)

February

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

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

March

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

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

April

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

17th – 19th BBKA Spring Convention at the Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

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

May

20th World Bee Day

October

22nd – 24th National Honey Show at Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey



WSBKA CONVENTION – Viv Sallows



**Saturday 28th
February 2026**

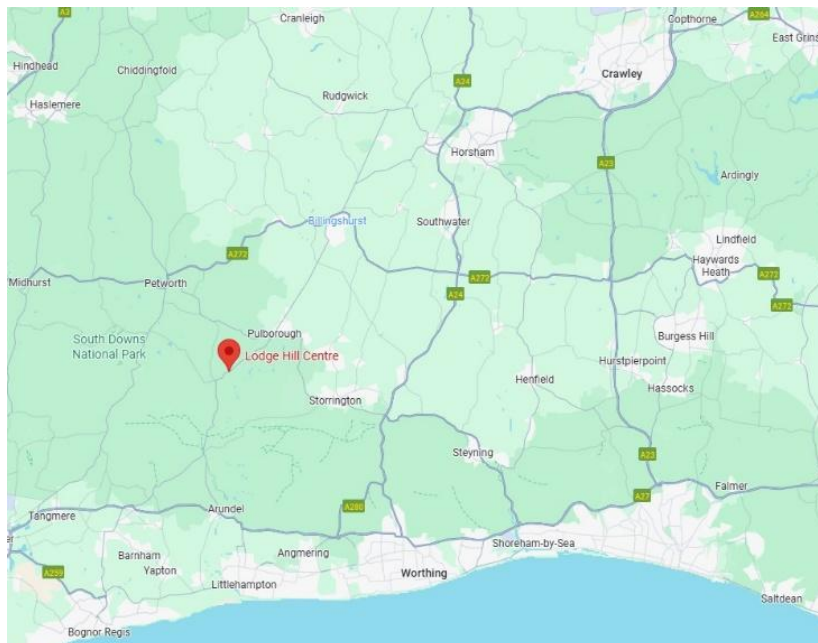
Bookings are now open for the **WSBKA Annual Convention**, taking place in February 2026. Beekeepers and anyone with an interest in bees and beekeeping are warmly invited to attend this popular event.

The programme is designed to appeal to all levels of experience, from beginners to seasoned beekeepers. Alongside the main lectures, a range of optional seminars will be available, offering the opportunity to explore more specialised subjects in greater depth. See following information.

As usual it is being held at:

Lodge Hill Centre, Pulborough, Watersfield, West Sussex, RH20 1LZ

09:30 – 16:30



Advance Booking, WSBKA/CSBKA Members - £30:00
Members of other Associations and non-members - £40:00
On the day if space allows - £40:00

Download your Booking Form [here](#)

West Sussex Beekeepers' Association Annual Convention – 28th February 2026

Speakers' Profiles

The West Sussex Beekeepers' Annual Convention has again attracted top speakers to cover a wide range of topics throughout the day. As well as the main lectures, you can attend two additional seminars on different subjects. Please indicate your choices in order of preference as spaces on some seminars will be limited. We will, of course, do our very best to meet your individual wishes. **Please apply as soon as possible to have the best chance of attending your preferred seminars.** We hope there will be plenty to interest you.

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Professor Giles Budge

Professor Giles Budge obtained his degree in Molecular Biology and Genetics from the University of East Anglia and his PhD in Molecular Plant Pathology from the University of Reading. He previously worked for Horticulture Research International, ADAS, Central Science Laboratory and FERA before moving to Newcastle University in 2018 to set-up a pathology laboratory specialising in crop and bee health.

Giles also worked as the National Bee Unit research co-ordinator for 12 years, responsible for an applied programme of research. Research interests include combining experimental biology, molecular detection and modelling to improve understanding of disease epidemiology.

He has provided expert evidence to Government policy reviews surrounding pollinator health, is an independent science advisor to the DEFRA Bee Health Advisory Forum and a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society. Recently Giles has worked on projects to better understand the Chronic Bee Paralysis virus as well as working with the NBU to develop methods to track foulbrood sequence types, and improve foulbrood surveillance across England & Wales. He is also a partner for the Horizon EU project called BEE-GUARDS, where he is working with 27 partners from across Europe and beyond to help improve beekeeper resilience.

At Newcastle University he is interested in tackling complex, real-world problems facing Government and industry. He studies emerging infectious diseases and invasive pests to inform surveillance, detection and mitigation strategies. External partnerships are key to all his work and he works very closely with Government and industry. He is also a beekeeper with over 15 years' experience and produces honey for sale locally.

Giles will give a main talk on 'Chronic Bee Paralysis', which is a serious disease of the honey bee that can lead to colony loss in 40% of cases. He will share what is known about CBP and progress so far to give us a better understanding. In addition, he will run a seminar on 'Climate Change and Bee Health', an interactive session with the audience – asking how things have changed and to discuss how climate might impact disease spread, pest build up, foraging and winter survival.

Dr Ben Woodcock

Ben is an Ecological Entomologist at UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in Oxfordshire, a world-leading independent research institute.

Ben's work focuses on reducing the impacts of modern agriculture on the wider environment, particularly how we can maintain productivity while reducing the consequences for wider biodiversity. This work considers how farmers can benefit from ecosystem services such as crop pollination and natural pest control. Integrating these species in a sustainable way into farming systems is critical to the long-term viability of UK agriculture.

Unfortunately, there have been large scale declines in many of the species that provide pollination and pest control, as well as wider biodiversity in general. As a result, a big part of this work is understanding what is causing this biodiversity loss, particularly in relation to insects in agricultural systems. Ben's recent research has led to the ban on Neonicotinoid use on Oilseed Rape crops in the UK, as well as more recently through the development of a pesticide monitoring scheme for DEFRA that uses samples collected through the National Honey Monitoring Scheme to track real world risks to bees.

He has worked on projects funded by NERC, DEFRA, Natural England and the Health and Safety Executive as well as for industry looking at the impacts of neonicotinoid pesticides. He will be giving a main lecture on 'The Effect of Pesticides on Bees' where he will be sharing with us the outcome of his findings.

Professor Patricia Wiltshire

Professor Patricia Wiltshire is an ecologist, with special interests in palynology and microbiology. She was a lecturer and researcher, for a total of 34 years, at the University of London, firstly at King's College, and later at University College, and has received a Simons Fellowship at Cambridge University, at the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematics.

Over the last 31 years, she has concentrated on developing and establishing the disciplines of forensic ecology, botany and palynology, the uses of pollen and spores in forensic science in crime solving. These microscopic entities are ubiquitous and if an item contacts vegetation, soil, debris, or any surface on which they have landed, they can be picked up. They can be embedded into fabrics, hair, fur, footwear, vehicles and very many other items pertinent to criminal investigations. They can be preserved in rocks for millions of years and end up in soils and sediments when the rocks weather into soil minerals. They provide valuable trace evidence and can sometimes even give information about timing.

She has been consulted by police forces and industry in over 300 investigations in several countries and has been instrumental in helping to solve several high profile and notorious crimes. She is an experienced expert witness and has worked with every police force in the UK and Ireland and lectures worldwide on the disciplines she has developed.

Patricia is on the editorial boards of Forensic Science International and Science and Justice and was Editor-in-Chief for a special edition of the journal on Forensic Ecology. She has a large publication record and continues to research, teach and publish her work. She has extensive TV and radio experience and, in January 2020, was the subject of BBC Radio Four's programme 'Life Scientific' with Professor Jim Al-Khalili and, this year, Desert Island Discs. She has written two best selling books, the first, 'Trace', published in 2019 and the other, 'The Natural History of Crime' published in 2024.

Patricia will be giving us a main lecture on 'Forensic Palynology: Use of Pollen, Spores and other Microscopic Entities, in Criminal investigation'.

Simon Tuck

With a background in biology and a love for the natural world, Simon has kept bees for only a relatively short time compared to some. But what he lacks in decades of experience he makes up for in his passion for improving the standard of both bees and beekeeping for himself and others. He was awarded his Master Beekeeper & Bee Breeding Certificate in 2025 and is now working towards gaining his NDB (National Diploma in Beekeeping).

He manages a number of apiaries around Sussex and raises queens for his local Association, Eastbourne, of which he is Chair. He is also Education Officer for Sussex. As a regular contributor to BeeCraft, Simon is always promoting the benefits of raising queens from local bees and heavily selecting for the better qualities; his main objective is to simplify queen rearing so that every beekeeper can add this essential skill to their repertoire.

Simon's beekeeping ambition is to establish and maintain a sustainable population of the British Black Bee and its modern genotype in Eastbourne and to promote its use within the Southeast. He recently undertook training in instrumental insemination with Susan Cobey in Washington State, U.S. so that this elegant method of controlled mating can be taken advantage of within the breeding programme.

Simon will be running two seminars – 'Smoke but no Mirrors – Making Queen Rearing Doable' and 'The Apidea: Getting a Lot for a Little'. In these seminars Simon will cover practical application of key queen rearing methods to get us on the path towards raising high quality queens for ourselves and others.

Dylan Gussman

Dylan has been keeping bees for 10 years and currently has 5 colonies situated at home. He started at the age of 15 as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award and reckons that one of the greatest challenges he has tackled in beekeeping is keeping bees whilst at university. As a member of the Meon Valley BKA in Hampshire, he co-leads the training team and organises the website and newsletter. Writing regularly for BeeCraft, he has particular interests in climate change and beekeeping, threats to honey bees and understanding the behaviour of the superorganism.

Another part of his hobby is finding Drone Congregation Areas, something that still remains a mystery to this day. He has recently finished his Masters in Environmental Monitoring and Assessment at the University of Southampton and aside from beekeeping has begun a new role as a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Consultant. Prior to this, he graduated from the University of Exeter, studying BSc Geography with Applied GIS, with a first-class degree.

Dylan will be running two seminars – ‘Winter Losses, Colony Post Mortems and Overwintering Techniques’ when we can learn how to perform effective colony post-mortems to determine what went wrong and how to use that knowledge to strengthen our overwintering strategy and ‘Guarding Behaviour and Dealing with Defensive Colonies’ when he will offer insights into both the science of honey bee defence and the art of managing aggressiveness in the apiary.

Peter Smith

Peter is a beekeeper and amateur entomologist with ten years’ experience of beekeeping and runs ten hives across three apiaries in Surrey. He writes the long running ‘Beyond the Broodbox’ column in BeeCraft which takes a quirky view at the world of beekeeping and beekeepers. He also writes for the American Beekeeping Journal and has appeared on BBC Countryfile talking about bees and honey.

Peter also gives talks to adult audiences around the country on bees, pollinators, moths, butterflies, flowers and some of the amazing stories from our long association with the natural world. His talks are designed to entertain (there may be singing and dancing) as well as inform.

Peter tries to improve the awareness of some of the problems faced by our native pollinators, offering practical suggestions on what we can do to help and works closely with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust mapping bumblebee populations on the North Downs.

Peter will be running a seminar on ‘Bees & Honey: Tradition, Myth Symbol and Magic’. Come and learn how to cast a honey spell...



NOTICES



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!