

September 2023



MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

West Sussex Beekeepers' Association

Est. 1973

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

## National Honey Centenary Show

**T**his year's **National Honey Show** will open at 9am on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October and run until 4:30pm on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October. The venue is again Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ. The Show is celebrating its Centenary in 2023.

*'This year's Show is a credit to a century of enthusiasm by our dedicated team of volunteers and visitors', says Bob Maurer, Chair of the Show Committee. 'We want to share with you the upbeat zest and excitement which characterises the Show, welcome new visitors to come along to share the experience, and lead the way to an ever bigger and better show over the next 100 years.'*

Bob continues, *'We have come a long way since our first show at Crystal Palace in 1923 and we should take a moment to think about the many amazing and dedicated people who have delivered great shows over the years. Too many to mention here but you can read about them in our publication, "[A Short History of the National Honey Show](#)", available to download from our website'.*

For full details of the events planned and the Show Schedule visit the NHS website: [www.honeyshow.co.uk/](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/)

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# Treatment-free *Varroa* Control

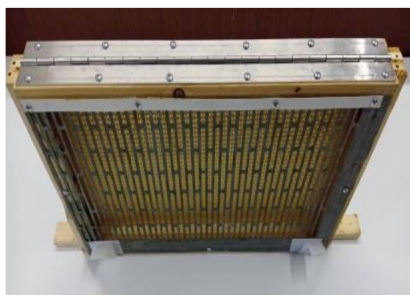
*This year Divisions have been trialing a number of different ways to control Varroa.*

**Worthing** has invested in the '*ThermoMite*' approach. This claims to be the world's first and only power-free thermotherapy treatment for *Varroa*. It works on the principle that heat tolerance of bees is greater than that of the parasite. Heat up the hive to a temperature that is not too hot for bees but is too hot for *Varroa* and the theory is that the mites will become stressed, halt reproduction and eventually suffer irreversible damage and die.

The device consists of a replacement hive floor which holds some '*ThermoMite*' pouches. Each pouch contains a phase change medium which gives off heat when triggered. A small metal disc in the pouch triggers the reaction when it is clicked.

Three pouches are triggered and then inserted into the '*ThermoMite*' floor. The clear liquid in the pouch turns white and becomes solid as it gives off the heat. The instructions say to leave the pouches for 2-4 hours for the full treatment. Worthing will be monitoring success by counting the mite drop.

After use, each pouch has to be returned to its liquid state by heating in boiling water until it has melted. The manufacturer claims 150+ discharge/recharge cycles and suggests it should be used up to three times per year in Spring, Summer and Autumn. More information can be found on their website: <https://thermomite.com>



**Chichester** is running two trials. The first involves the use of the *Queen Frame Trap* first developed over 20 years ago. A number of traps have been made and these have been used selectively this year. *The Trap* encloses a brood comb where the queen is laying. Nurse bees enter the cage to look after the brood. *Varroa*, attempting to reproduce, enter the open brood cells within the caged comb, and, when the cells become capped over, the frame is removed along with the mites and destroyed.

The second trial followed an excellent presentation from Steve Riley from Westerham Beekeepers on identifying those colonies of honey bees that are developing resistance to the mite. Those developing this trait will uncapped and recap brood cells - this is not to be confused with wax moth larvae damage. Recapping is when a sealed brood cell has a hole made in the cap that is then refilled with wax by worker bees. If the capping is carefully removed from a brood cell and inverted the dull waxy re-sealed area will look different to the silky lined original cap. A high level of recapping can indicate *Varroa* resistance. For more details: [www.varroaresistant.uk](http://www.varroaresistant.uk)

Good luck to those members who are actively looking for effective alternatives to chemical treatments and risking their own bees in the trials.



*Black lines indicate recapping area. Courtesy varroa-resistant.uk*

*Thanks to Tony Cairncross from Worthing, Alison Terry and Brian Hose from Chichester, and Reigate Beekeepers via ebees for their contributions to this article some of which may have appeared previously in Divisions' Newsletters. Ed.*

## Chairman's Chat

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*Chairman, Roger Patterson writes for the County News.*

**A**sian hornets have been threatening to establish a foothold since the discovery of the first nest in 2018.

In 2023, up until 24<sup>th</sup> August, there have been 24 nests found in 22 locations, suggesting they are fairly widespread. I think the Divisions will be giving details, so I will keep this brief. It is too early to give up and accept they are here to stay, so in the interests of our bees and other insects, beekeepers should be extra vigilant.

It is no longer sensible to assume it is others who will be on the lookout, it is all of us. We should all learn to identify the Asian hornet and the way it differs from our own European hornet. Two main features are the darker abdomen of the Asian hornet and the yellow legs. I have never seen one alive, but as a keen amateur naturalist, I feel confident I will be able to identify one. Can you?



*European hornet*



*Asian hornet*

If you aren't sure, then please look at the material online. There is also a useful rolling update from the NBU here: [2023 Asian Hornet Rolling updates » APHA - National Bee Unit - BeeBase](#).

There has recently been concern about some smoker bellows containing asbestos. Thorne's have issued a recall notice [www.thorne.co.uk/Product-recall/](http://www.thorne.co.uk/Product-recall/) that gives valuable information. From the information that I have seen, it could affect many of the cheaper imported smokers, so I advise checking with the supplier.

**Roger**

[chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)

## Asian Hornet Week 4<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> September

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This year Asian hornet week takes on a new urgency. There have already been multiple nest sightings (22 on 23rd August) predominantly in Kent, but also in Hampshire and Devon.

The week will see a series of talks on YouTube including an update from Nigel Semmence, NBU Contingency Planning and Science Officer. There will also be two live talks from Andrew Durham - further information together with details of how to attend are available [here](#).

Visit BBKA's YouTube Channel here and follow on social media for the latest updates:



[YouTube](#)



We aim to raise awareness of the Asian hornet through a series of activities planned for the week. This hornet could decimate our pollinators including our honey bees so it is important to have everyone actively looking for it.

We are encouraging members of the public to download an updated version of the free 'Asian Hornet Watch' app on their phones. The app has been designed by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. Asian hornets are often confused with similar species and the app has an expanded gallery of pictures to help with identification. Potential sightings can also be reported via the app.

The app is available to download from the [Google Play Store](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bbkahoney) for android and from the [App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/asian-hornet-watch/id1444444444) for iPhone.

[www.bbka.org.uk/help-the-fight-against-the-asian-hornet-invasion](http://www.bbka.org.uk/help-the-fight-against-the-asian-hornet-invasion)

## South of England Show

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**23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September** will see the honey sales' table included at the South of England Show this month. The South of England Honey Show is hoping to attract many more entries this year. Details can be viewed here: [www.seas.org.uk/competing-autumn-show-horse-trials/](http://www.seas.org.uk/competing-autumn-show-horse-trials/)



The South of England Honey Show has made good progress in becoming established as a regional event ahead of the Nationals at Sandown Park next month. The judge this year is Claire O'Brien. At this Autumn show, the sales stall will be offering honey from around Surrey, Sussex and beyond.

**The Show is at the Ardingly Showground, Selsfield Road, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TL**

## BBKA Trustee Vacancies

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There are currently 4 vacancies for Trustees and it is hoped all will be elected at the 2024 Annual Delegate Meeting in January. If you are interested in becoming a BBKA Trustee and believe you have the required experience, skills and availability why not consider standing for election.

A full outline of the role is detailed in the following document which is available via this link: [What does being a Trustee of the BBKA involve?](#) and the role includes working on committees, acting as a Link Trustee between the BBKA and Area Association members, and attending the Spring Convention weekend.

It is also important to read the Charity Commission Document CC3: [www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved)





## Around the Divisions

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All Members are welcome to attend any Divisional meeting, but please advise the organiser if you plan to attend.

### Central Sussex Division



Full details of the Division's activities from: [secretary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk) or the Division's website: <https://centralsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/>

### Chichester Division



**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September** - 'Winter is Coming' with Bob Smith, NDB. 7:30pm. at Boxgrove Village Hall, The Street, Boxgrove, PO18 OEE.

Further details of the Division's activities from: Cheryl Barton, [secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk) or the Division's website: [www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk).

### Wisborough Green Division

Full details of the Division's activities from: Martina Hendry, [secretary@wgbka.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wgbka.org.uk) or the Division's website: [www.wgbka.org.uk](http://www.wgbka.org.uk).

Newsletters may be viewed here: [www.wgbka.org.uk/Newsletters.html](http://www.wgbka.org.uk/Newsletters.html)

### Worthing Division



Full details of the Division's activities from: Debra Edwards, [dmcd.edwards@gmail.com](mailto:dmcd.edwards@gmail.com) or the Division's website: [www.worthing-beekeepers.org](http://www.worthing-beekeepers.org)

***'Share your Division's activities with readers of the County News'***

### ...and Dates for your Diary

**2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> September** - 'BIBBA Conference'. Article in July Newsletter <https://bibba.com/conference-2023/>

**4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> September** - 'Asian Hornet Week'. Details [www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-week](http://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-week)

**9<sup>th</sup> September** - 'Findon Sheep Fair' and Worthing's Honey Show. See the August Newsletter

**23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> September** - 'South of England Honey Show'. Reminder in this Newsletter or on the Show's website: [www.seas.org.uk/competing-autumn-show-horse-trials/](http://www.seas.org.uk/competing-autumn-show-horse-trials/)



**26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> October** - 'National Honey Show'. Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ  
Full details on the Show's website: [www.honeyshow.co.uk/](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/)

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



# Success in West Sussex

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**Congratulations** to **Alan Aldridge** (Chichester) who passed the General Husbandry Certificate this July.

This assessment is designed for beekeepers who prefer the practical approach rather than written examinations and is assessed by two BBKA-appointed Assessors over 4 hours and includes:

- inspection of the candidate's apiary, equipment and honey handling equipment
- manipulation of one or more colonies of the candidate's bees
- demonstration of a method of selective queen rearing

Well done Alan.

Reminder: For all BBKA Modules to be taken on 18<sup>th</sup> November applications need to be with me no later than 30<sup>th</sup> September.

**Sue Elliott** [examsecretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:examsecretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)

...and finally

## Asian Hornet Update

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*Defra update of the ongoing Asian hornet situation 29<sup>th</sup> August.*



So far in 2023 there have been 28 Asian hornet nests found in 25 locations. The NBU responded to a credible sighting of Asian hornet in Thamesmead on the 20<sup>th</sup> August. A nest was located recently and will be destroyed and removed shortly.

Recently the NBU located single nests in Dover, Rochester, St Margaret's Bay and nests in a third Maidstone location. Active operations have also been initiated at a site in Folkstone and near Canterbury.

On 24<sup>th</sup> August a credible sighting has been reported just to the north east of Oxford. A site in Plymouth is also being monitored.

### 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 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.  
[secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)



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