

Brighton & Lewes Beekers

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
including Honey Show & Auction
Friday 18 February, 7.15pm, Cliffe Hall, Lewes

A DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

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EDITORIAL



Honey Show at the AGM in 2019

Come to the AGM!

The Annual General meeting is here. On Friday 18 February 2022, we'll be deciding who is to run B&L for the next 12 months. Will members entrust the next year to the existing committee and officers? We'll have to wait and see.

Note that two stalwarts are standing down: Chairman Norman Dickinson who, when elected a year ago, committed to doing the job for a year; and Secretary Hilary Osman who, after seven years in the job, has decided she needs to spend more time with her bees. And after that length of stint, who can blame her?

I'd like to offer my vote of thanks to both of them. Both have done their jobs with outstanding diligence and, on a personal level, have been incredibly helpful to me both in my job as newsletter editor, and as a beekeeper.

Honey Show and Auction

The AGM isn't just about managing the Division though. That part of the meeting is likely to be done fairly quickly and we can then move on to the fun stuff.

If you have kit you'd like to sell or you need more equipment, the Auction is there just for you.

And if that's not enough, the B&L Honey Show is there to show off the best that members have to offer, whether it's honey, candles, comestibles, photographs (digital only this year) or wax.

Since last year was a terrible year for honey for many if not most, we've added more classes for non-honey entries.

Should you be considering putting in an entry, have a look at the Noticeboard page for more details, or go to our website where you can find a downloadable entry form and a copy of the rules. Please enter: it's free!

Each class attracts points and the person with the most points will be awarded the Dixon Hurst Cup, so the more classes you enter the better your chances. The Novice Cup is for the most points gained by a member who has not won anything in a previous B&L Honey Show. The Honey Cake Salver trophy is awarded for the best Honey Cake.

See you there!

Manek Dubash, Newsletter Editor

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2022

EVENTS

- AGM and more indoor meetings.
- See [back page](#) for details

NEXT MONTH

- AGM
- Late winter tips
- Your contributions
- Committee news
- News updates

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS AND STORIES

Do you have interesting photos or video links you'd like to share? Or an insight from your beekeeping that would could enhance the hobby for others? Do you have skills that could be useful to other members? Anything else you'd like to see in this newsletter?

Ideas and contributions welcome; all contact details are on the [back page](#).

ONLINE

-  [B&L website](#)
-  [Facebook](#)



QR link to our website

Seasonal tips for February

For the beginner

There's not a lot you can do until you get your bees, so go on holiday and research basic beekeeping.

There's a number excellent books on the market aimed at all levels of experience. Here are just three:

- [Bees & Honey](#) by Ted Hooper is a bit of a dense read but highly informative.
- [Beekeeping for Dummies](#); less intense; ignore the bit about bears
- Clair & Adrian Waring's [Haynes Bee Manual](#), which the Division will be using to teach this year.

You could borrow a book from the Division's library. There's a [list of titles](#) on the website, and you can email our Librarian Barbara Summerfield [here](#).

Equipment

Where to start? There's a number of practical questions, such as the type of hive to use. Most use the Modified National design but there are others. It depends on [what kind of beekeeper you want to be](#).



British Modified National hive

Make sure the hives and components are readily available, or make your own. Stick with one design; some parts will interchange but not all.

Location

Then there is the question of where to site your hive. There are some [good leaflets](#) available from the BBKA. But in general, allow at least 600mm around



each hive to give you space to work and to put things down.

Position hives so they can be approached from the side or rear. Face the entrance into a hedge or fence so the bees have to fly up above head height before orientating. Don't point the entrance across a path; bees are very single-minded and fly in straight lines, so if anyone is in the way they will get a bee in the side of the head.

Make up hive and frames. Save putting foundation in until later but remember to do it—the Swarm Co-ordinator will be miffed if they ring you with a swarm and you're not ready.

Education

[Jude New](#), our Training Co-ordinator, will be running three courses in 2022:

- Introduction to Beekeeping, for those still thinking about keeping bees. A full day, with guest speakers.
- Novice Beekeeping, for those who have just got bees or are starting out this year
- BBKA Basic Assessment for those who have been keeping bees for a couple of years.

All courses are planned to be in Brighton and at our apiaries.

For the experienced

As well as all the stuff above, there will be winter tasks to do.

Clean and repair old used equipment from last year. Do something with wax: make cosmetics, candles, [wax wraps](#), or swap it at Paynes for clean foundation.

Feeding and hive care

February is when the days noticeably lengthen, and the queen starts to lay. So fine, still days are ideal to think of your bees, as the growing colony can eat

through the stores left on in autumn. Do they have enough stores to see them through the rest of the winter? Heft the hive. If it's not heavy, look inside. If you're unsure they have fondant, put some on. If they need it, they will take it, if not, they won't.

Check the entrance is clear. A blocked entrance can stop the bees taking cleansing flights which could lead to diarrhoea or even worse. Ensure the entrance is at the top, so any build-up of dead bees will be below the entrance.

Are the mouse guards clear of dead bees? Are the hives weather-tight? Is the mesh still in place to deter woodpeckers. Can you still find the hive among the undergrowth?

It's not too late to treat for varroa using oxalic acid. There will be brood in the hive and, as it's been a mild winter, you will have to treat two or three times to catch all the mites.

Planning is all

Work on your swarm management. Plant bee-friendly flowers: most native annuals or perennials are good or if you want something a bit more exotic, try something from any temperate region. American prairie flowers do well in England.



[Helianthus](#): great for bees

Consider rearing queens this year. Do you need to change the brood comb, if so, will you use shook swarm or Bailey comb change?

All the answers to these, and many, many more questions can be found in a library, on [our website](#), [our Facebook page](#), YouTube or by asking a friend.

Hope to see you soon.

The Veiled Beekeeper



**Norman Dickinson
Chairman**

Words from the Chair

Sad but true: this will be my last report as Chairman for the B&L newsletter as I will be standing down at our forthcoming AGM on 18 February.

But I am not going away and will remain as Treasurer / Membership Secretary (unless I get voted out at the AGM) for the foreseeable future. Whoever takes over the role (and as I write this, I have no idea who that may be) I wish them good fortune. The past 18 months have been pretty intense following the departure of our previous Chair in 2020 but I would like to think that I am handing over the reins of an organisation that is now in a good place (*hear hear! Ed.*).

Membership renewals are still coming in and anticipate that they will do so for the next couple of month. So far we have had 92 renewals, which is just short of a 60 per cent renewal rate and I do know that many will renew at our next couple of live meetings. On

the down side, some five members have indicated that they will not be renewing their membership for 2022. You can't win them all.

The Sussex Beekeepers Association (SBKA) will be holding its AGM on Saturday 5 March 2022 at the Luxford Centre in Uckfield. Each of the SBKA Divisions take turn in hosting the event and this year it is B&L's turn to do so.

Please try to come and support us on the day, where The Bee People will have a stand at the event selling all manner of beekeeping items and there will be light refreshments available. The AGM starts at 2pm and scheduled to finish at 5pm.

Finally, I wish to thank all members for the various kind and encouraging comments that I have received over the past 18 months and may you have a very successful beekeeping year.

Bee buzz: news in brief

by Gerald Legg



Bees on the booze get banned

Honey bees are partial to a tipples, and will happily imbibe fermented nectar, fruit, sugar etc. Not so good for the bees though. Like us they have accidents (flying) and find it hard to find their way home to the hive. Once home, they are not welcome and will be refused entry, attacked and even dismembered. Drunk bees seem to be a threat to the colony, hence the harsh treatment.

West Asian roots for common honey bee

The western honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) is the world's most common honeybee species, and a genetic study confirms

that it originated in western Asia about seven million years ago before evolving into European and African subspecies (Science Advances, doi.org/g8ggg).

Asian honey bees make alarm screams

From New Scientist 20 November 2021

A frenzied alarm signal produced by a species of Asian honey bee when giant hornets attack was identified by Heather Mattila at Wellesley College, Massachusetts, and her team. They recorded nearly 30,000 Asian honey bee (*Apis cerana*) signals while their hives were attacked by a species of giant hornet (*Vespa soror*) or a smaller hornet (*Vespa velutina*).

Giant hornets are the bees' deadliest predators. By analysing the sound patterns, the team found that the bees produce harsh, irregular noises that change rapidly in frequency when giant hornets arrive at the hive.

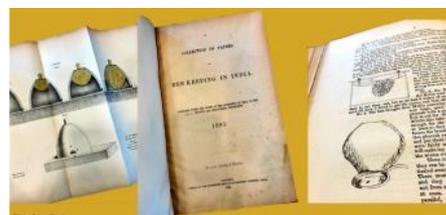
The scream-like signals rally more bees to the hive entrance, where they place animal dung to deter the hornets. The bees buzz their wings to make the

signals, which have acoustic properties similar to alarm shrieks made by primates and birds, says Mattila.

These sounds can convey particular types of threat to other bees in the colony, which 'hear' the calls through vibrations in their legs, supporting predator-specific defences.

Conservation help needed

The Linnean Society of London has an extensive library including books on bees and beekeeping. Below is one water-damaged example. Fellows are being asked to sponsor conservation work on this and other volumes. The Royal Pavilion & Museums Brighton, Booth Museum of Natural History also has a large library and this too includes old beekeeping books.





AGM: event update

The process for electing officers and committee members is outlined on [the events page: more details there](#). Norman sent out an email with all the forms and details on 22 January.

Honey Show & Auction

The AGM is not just about elections. We'll also be conducting an equipment

AGM: vacancies

Two key members of our Committee will be resigning as of the AGM.

Norman Dickinson

Norman took over the Chair last year and has steered us smoothly through troubled waters, said he would only do so for a year.

Hilary Osman

Hilary, a Committee stalwart, has done a sterling job as Secretary, managing

auction and a competition for the best in class of: honey; wax; candle; cakes; biscuits; and confectionery, so bring them along!

There's a class for photographs too, whether close-ups and more general shots. Photos must be submitted digitally in advance—please check your email for details.

correspondence, assembling the minutes and agenda, and lots besides for the last seven years, but she now wants and deserves to spend more time with her bees.

So B&L will be looking for two key officers from next month. If you would like know more about what the jobs entail, see the July 2021 issue.

Additionally, if you would like to join the Committee, please use the form that was emailed out on 22 January.

Land for beekeeping

Are you looking for somewhere to site an apiary? We've been contacted by Rebecca Buchmann, who would like to house some bees.

She writes: "We have 10 acres of wild flower meadow in a very quiet, rural setting near Uckfield. We previously had a friend who kept bees here, but retired last year."

If you'd like to know more, please contact B&L Secretary Hilary Osman (contact details on [the back page](#)).

B&L Facebook group

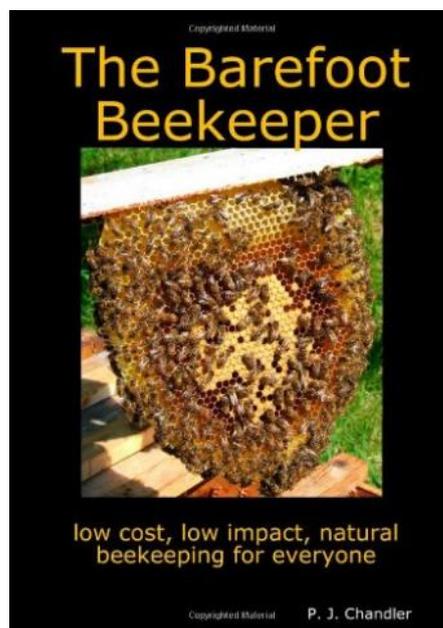
If you need help, want to keep up to date with events, to learn from other beekeepers, find out what others are up to, or would like to offer advice, please join in!

The water's warm and the atmosphere friendly. And well over half of the membership is there.

To join, log into Facebook and search for **B&L Beekeeping Division**, or follow [this link](#).

Members only admitted.

Book of the Month



This month's book is on a subject which I knew little about: top bar hives (see image below). The back cover calls it a low impact, sustainable, chemical-free way of keeping bees. It doesn't mean that you can ignore them or that they will thrive on neglect; rather you work with the bees to minimise stress and disturbance.

It includes information on building your own TBH and the general year's work in the apiary. Harvesting the honey seems slightly messy, maybe even more sticky than normal.

I would love to see a working TBH if any member would be prepared to show me one.

If you'd like to know more, there's a free support site for TBH beekeepers [at www.biobees.com](http://www.biobees.com).

To borrow the book, please contact me (details on [the back page](#)).

Barbara Summerfield, Librarian



Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers Annual General Meeting

Friday 18 February 2022, Cliffe Hall, Lewes, 19.15

The Annual General Meeting is the most important meeting of the year. All members welcome!

AGM: elections

Both our Chair and Secretary are standing down at this year's AGM. We have nominations for the Chair but none for the Secretary role. If you are interested in taking this on, please fill in and send to the Secretary the nomination form you were sent by email on 22 January.

To stand for any role or to sit on the Committee then please complete the form as noted above. Any member can stand. Nominees must have a proposer and seconder, and should sign the form to signify that they are willing to stand. All nomination forms must be returned to the [B&L Secretary](#) by **Monday 14 February 2022**.

AGM: Honey Show and Auction

The Honey Show is back with new classes and a new way to submit photos. We know this year has not been great for honey, so we have added a couple of non-honey classes. The new classes are honey label designs and any confectionery you make with honey that are neither a biscuit nor cake.

Photographs will be dealt with differently this year, as we are going completely digital. Photographs (jpg format only please, max size 4MB) need to be submitted by email a week before the AGM and will be projected on the evening. We hope it will be a better way to show off your photos and give those without fancy printers an incentive to compete.

Points mean prizes

Points are awarded in each class and the person who gains the most points will be awarded the Dixon Hurst Cup, so the more classes you enter the better your chance. There is the Novice Cup for the most points gained by a novice who has not won anything in a previous B&L Honey Show. The Honey Cake Salver trophy is awarded for the best Honey Cake.

Prize classes

- Class 1. One 454g (1lb) jar clear honey
- Class 2. One 454g (1lb) jar naturally crystallised honey
- Class 3. Two 454g (1lb) jars of similar honey
- Class 4. One honey Jar Label of your own design on an empty 454g (1lb) jar
- Class 5. One moulded candle
- Class 6. One 28g (1oz) block of wax
- Class 7. One honey cake. (see the emailed recipe).
- Class 8. Six honey biscuits. Your own recipe to be provided with biscuits
- Class 9. Four items of confectionery containing honey (sweets, fudge, etc.)
- Class 10. A bee-related photograph
- Class 11. A close-up shot of a bee

Please have a go, you have plenty of time to make, bake and edit before February, so we expect a good turnout.

The known unknowns

Wednesday 2 February 2022, 19.00. With David Evans



The goal of this talk is to make beekeepers a little more proactive and a bit less reactive. The bees will do whatever they want (as usual!) but with a little preparation the relatively short season can feel a bit less frantic.

David will cover record keeping, equipment needs, feeding, varroa management and queen rearing. Good for new beekeepers. Register [here](#).

Queen rearing for the small producer

Wednesday 2 February 2022, 20.00. With Randy Oliver



Every beekeeper wants to keep their queens young and vigorous for maximum colony health and production. There are many ways in which queens can be reared easily and well within the capability of the hobbyist beekeeper.

Randy will outline some of these methods. Register [here](#).

Silent Earth

Wednesday 9 February 2022, 20.00. With Dave Goulson



Insects are vital, fascinating, weird and wonderful. They are food, pollinators, recyclers, pest controllers, and much more, so we should be deeply concerned that they are in rapid decline. Dave will explain the many causes of insect decline, and then turn to solutions of this crisis. Register [here](#).

A year in the life of a honey bee colony

Wednesday 16 February 2022, 20.00. With Jamie Ellis

Honey bees live in perennial colonies. Survival and reproduction are the ultimate goals of any organism and honey bee colonies are no different. Jamie will discuss the yearly lifecycle of a colony and what it does to survive the fluctuations in temperature, rainfall, forage availability, and other stressors that it faces. Register [here](#).

Wild bees, hives and beekeeping

Thursday 17 February, 19.00. With Filipe Salbany

Wild bees are an incredible resource and provide a critical piece of the puzzle in terms of how we work with bees. The talk is about looking for free-living bees, and what we can learn from them. Register [here](#).



B&L Divisional Diary

Winter / spring meetings & events 2022

Date	Format	Topic	Speaker
Friday 18 February	Live *	AGM / Honey Show / Auction	
Wednesday 16 March	Zoom	Dance like no-one's watching	Lynne Ingram
Friday 22 April	Live *	Getting ready for the new year + The Bee People trade stand	Ben and Maggi Pratt
Saturday 21 May	Live	Bee Market at Heathfield College	
Tuesday 31 May	Live	Bee Disease Day at Laughton	Bee inspectors

* Meetings held at Cliffe Hall, Cliffe High Street, Lewes BN7 2AH.

Spring/summer meetings

Looking forward to the start of the season, the **provisional** date for the first out-apiary meeting is Saturday 9 April 2022. Note that this may change as circumstances dictate.

Deadlines

Please send all contributions for the newsletter, **including photos**, to the Editor (details on right). Max. length: 700 words.

Copy deadline: 18th of the month before the publication date (except December: 11th). Email photos etc. for the website to Webmaster Gerald Legg (details on right).

Publication date: 25th of the month.

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Disclaimer

The Brighton and Lewes Division of the SBKA cannot accept any responsibility for loss, injury or damage sustained by persons in consequence of their participation in activities arranged by the Division.



Managed by the Community Development Foundation
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