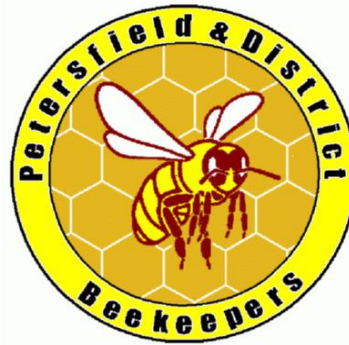


the Petersfield Beekeeper

New date!

Petersfield & District Beekeepers Association



80th Annual Honey Show

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Sunday 16 October 2022

10am until 4pm

**All members and visitors are welcome to visit the Honey Show at
any time during the day.**

Sky Park Farm Visitor Centre

Durford Lane

West Harting

GU31 5PF

West Sussex

CHAIR AND APIARY REPORT

I actually don't have very much to report, as I was away during September, except in my absence the Queen died and a new Prime Minister was elected AND the Honey Show was postponed. The latter has been re-scheduled for Sunday 16th October at Sky Park Farm, the deer farm and restaurant, just outside Petersfield. So come along and visit the farm and our Show. Exhibitors will be able to stage their entries between 4 and 6pm the day before on Saturday 15th October.

The Committee are preparing a winter programme of talks but sadly our first end of season talk, on Wednesday 19th October, has been cancelled as the venue was no longer available. Look out for our new December workshop with Louise Arthur on skep making, details in this newsletter.

The apiary has been prepared for winter: colonies were assessed for strength for winter month survival, some colonies united (weak with strong), mixing and feeding thymolised syrup for treatment against nosema, treatment of drawn comb with sulphur and bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki (Dipel) for sterilising and protecting against wax moth, woodpecker protection, storage of brood boxes and supers on stands in the apiary.

Neil Mariner, our Head Custodian, is stepping down to pursue his personal beekeeping activities. I asked Neil to come on board to help develop the Petersfield apiary from a Club apiary to a Training apiary to enable us at Petersfield to offer a robust education training programme for new and experienced beekeepers. Neil has committed a lot of personal time to the apiary and amply fulfilled my ambitious request. On behalf of the Committee and Membership we are very grateful to Neil for offering his considerable beekeeping expertise and wide level of knowledge to our members and apiary Custodians.



The nails in entrance block was demonstrated by Peter Reader at the apiary as a quick mouse guard if you don't have a bought or metal mouse guard.



Using sheep's wool from sheared sheep that would have been thrown away, put in the top of the hive to act as natural insulation.

Skep Workshop

The Association are holding a Bee Skep Workshop on Sunday 11th December, 2pm – 6pm. Our local basketry expert and Association member, Louise Arthur from [Rough Around The Hedges](#) will be demonstrating and teaching us how to make a Skep, by making a small bowl and demonstrating how to taper and finish the final round of the skep. Materials will be provided as part of the workshop to be able to complete a full skep, but further coiling will be needed at home to finish this off. Participants could opt for a bread proving bowl or basket if a full skep seems too big. (It is the same technique taking less time)



A useful natural item for our beekeeping toolkit

The course cost is £40 per student and covers the cost of Straw, lapping cane and fid tool in order to make a full skep.

Maximum participants will be 12 and materials are required to be ordered up front.

Names please to our committee member, Martin Smyth (Contact details: - Mobile: 07906 124747, email: msmyth243@gmail.com)

Payments in advance to PDBKA please by the following methods:

- Cheque made payable to PDBKA (Following contact with Martin for address)
- Direct to PDBKA account with reference “skepcourse” Account Name: The Petersfield & District Beekeepers Association, Sort Code: 30-93-17, Account Number: 00798895
- At Blackmoor Apple tasting on Sunday 9th October, with card on our SumUp card machine
- At our Honey Show on Sunday 16th October, with card on our SumUp card machine



Asian Hornet Action Team

Here is a timely reminder to us all to keep a look-out for this non-native and potentially invasive insect that predares heavily on honey bees and other pollinators. It is important to raise awareness at this time of year because, if the Asian Hornet is present in the UK, a nest could be producing hundreds of fertilised Queens during the autumn. These Queens could overwinter and go onto produce their own nests next spring causing an exponential growth of Asian Hornets in the area. More information below but important pieces here:

Call to action; how can we as individuals help?

- Ensure you can easily identify Asian Hornets and know how to distinguish them from our native European Hornet (*Vespa crabro*). Know how and where to report it.
 - There's a great poster here: <https://nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=698>
 - Consider printing this off and placing it in local shops or other public venues.
 - Download and update the latest version of the Asian Hornet Watch app
- Spend 10-15 minutes at your apiary just watching your hives - this might be before autumn feeding or hive manipulations or a special trip. Watch out for Asian Hornets 'hawking' in front of your hives or feeding from neighbouring flowers or bushes.
- Join our Asian Hornet Action Team. We are a small group within the association who will support the Bee Inspectors with any potential sighting in our area. This may include following up on suspected sightings, providing 'watch' cover to identify Asian Hornets in a suspected area, or helping to track and trace individual hornets to their nest location. Please email Ali on alihbery@googlemail.com to offer your help and to join our WhatsApp group.



Background Information:

The Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*) is native to Southeast Asia and the honey bees there (*Apis cerana*) have co-evolved with the hornet to be able to defend themselves adequately against their predatory behaviour. This includes *A. cerana* individuals entering and leaving their hives very quickly, "balling" the hornets with a number of hive members and the co-evolved "I See You" signalling (fascinating stuff - google it!). The European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) does not demonstrate these evolutionary behaviours and as such is very prone to predation by Asian Hornets.

The Asian Hornet was accidentally introduced into France in 2004 or 2005 and has colonised rapidly, establishing itself as an invasive species. French beekeepers estimate that in areas where it has become established they have lost 5-80% of honeybee colonies (average 30%). It is also frequently found in the Channel Islands.

The Asian Hornet has been found in the UK on several occasions since 2017 and a nest found in Gosport in 2020 and in Portsmouth and Ascot in 2021. All three nests were destroyed by the National

Bee Unit. A single worker was found in Felixstowe earlier this year. For further reading, there is a very informative article on the potential vectors of Asian Hornet spread to the UK and this can be found here: <https://nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=544>

Appearance and Biology: (reproduced from the National Bee Unit)



The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet, with adult workers measuring from 25mm in length and queens measuring 30mm. It's abdomen is mostly black except for it's fourth abdominal segment which is a yellow band located towards the rear. It has characteristical yellow legs which accounts for why it is often called the yellow legged hornet and it's face is orange with two brownish red compound eyes.

Spring

After hibernation in spring, the queen, usually measuring up to 3 cm, will emerge and seek out an appropriate sugary food source in order to build up energy to commence building a small embryonic nest. During construction of the nest, she is alone and vulnerable but she will rapidly begin laying eggs to produce the future workforce. As the colony and nest size increases, a larger nest is either established around the embryonic nest or they relocate and build elsewhere.

Summer

During the summer, a single colony, on average, produces 6000 individuals in one season. From July onwards, Asian hornet predation on honeybee colonies will begin and increase until the end of November and hornets can be seen hovering outside a hive entrance, waiting for returning foragers. This is the characteristic "hawking" behaviour. When they catch a returning bee, they will take it away and feed off of the protein rich thorax; the brood requires animal proteins which are transformed into flesh pellets and then offered to the larvae.

Autumn

During autumn, the nest's priorities shift from foraging and nest expansion to producing on average 350 potential gynes (queens) and male hornets for mating, however, of these potential queens, only a small amount will successfully mate and make it through winter. After the mating period, the newly fertilised queens will leave the nest and find somewhere suitable to over-winter, while the old queen will die, leaving the nest to dwindle and die off. The following spring, the founding queen will begin building her new colony and the process begins again.

Please contact Ali if you have any comments or questions
alihbery@googlemail.com

News from our Library

Our library has over 120 books in it and is a free service for members. Martin (Our current librarian) is about to embark on the Winter library audit of books and members with books that are awaiting return; some recent and some from somewhat longer times past.

The library has books on subjects for managing bees, biology, disease, honey, beeswax and other bee products as well as a number of encyclopaedias, dictionaries and biographies.

During the Summer period, The Library is kept at The Apiary for members to choose and takeout as well as returns. It is a simple process. Each library book has a card. On taking out a book, this card is inside the front cover of the book. Write your name and date on the card and pop it in a small box contained in one of the library boxes. This small box contains all the cards of books that are checked out. When checking in a book, find your card, cross your name off and date returned, pop it in the book that you are returning and place the book back in the box.

During Winter Training, talks and discussions at Petersfield Community Centre, the Library is taken along, which is contained in 5 large plastic boxes, for members to take out or return books.

Following this years Winter Audit, Martin will be chasing down the books checked out, for return. Books maybe returned to any Committee Member who will ensure they are returned with our Librarian at Committee Meetings, so that they may be shared and re-circulated with other association members.

Many thanks for your support – Martin - PDBKA Librarian

YOUR PDBKA COMMITTEE	
Hilary Hayward	Chair
Ian Neilson	Treasurer
Mel Espin	Secretary
Anne Ballard	Education Officer
Ali Holingbery	Publicity Officer
Martin Smyth	Events Coordinator/Librarian/Safeguarding
Peter Reader	Custodian Coordinator
Brad Davis	Training/Basic Assessment
David Parkinson	Honey Show Manager/Constitution

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Ali Holingbery	
Dean Gregory	
Peter Reader	
Derek Beesley	
Phil Gurney	
James Crawford	