ISSUE
October 2026



The Apiarist

. . .High Weald Beekeepers' Newsletter

Wings & things: Chair's Update

By Roxanne Gould



It has been nearly a year in my role as Chair for the High Weald Beekeepers Association, and therefore a great opportunity to both reflect and look to the future. I have learnt so much about my new role and about myself, along with what I can realistically achieve during my tenure. I want to thank those who have supported me, and for the belief in me to succeed. I feel this role is about the club and supporting the members, helping with their interests and our overriding collective passion, the bees!

This year the weather has thrown us some curveballs, and I don't think that it, despite repeated requests, has yet finished surprising us. Areas as far north as York have declared droughts in October - something unheard of – while the fabulous sunshine has given us an incredible Ivy flow which is something to watch out for in winter, as it can trick us into thinking hives are heavy, but the bees can't access the resource. With the end of the Ivy flow and the lack of nectar/pollen resources, now is the time to watch our bees closely for Asian Hornets – please do photograph any observations and report them accordingly.

I want to thank the committee for their hard work this year and for all the wonderful events they have organised and run. Volunteers are the cornerstone of our club and, without them, we cannot have the wonderful events and training sessions that we enjoy. Please do consider joining the Committee, it's a rewarding and fulfilling experience, and we are a friendly bunch. Any assistance gratefully received, and the more active members there are, the more we can offer the membership to keep the Association flourishing.

The teaching apiary has seen a change in the way we manage it, as we have moved to a cooperative approach, which has been a great success. The feedback from participants has been incredible to hear and I am pleased with its success from the outset – this wouldn't have been possible without the hard work of our volunteers.

Our educational programme has been well attended and has had some great feedback. We offered a mixture of practical apiary and online sessions, with the Winter Prep session being moved online. It was a great sessions and there were some insightful questions asked, with everyone

Continues on the next page. . .

IN THIS ISSUE

Chair's Update 1
Born free 2
General Husbandry 4
How and why I became a beekeeper 6
Book review 8
Sussex Bee Festival 2027 8
Calendar 10
The HWBKA committee 10

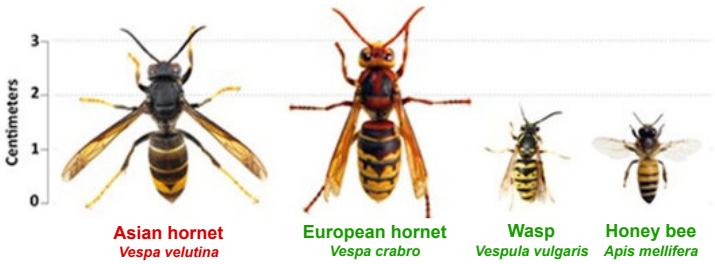
The Apiarist is a quarterly newsletter from the High Weald Beekeepers' Association.

Publisher: Roxanne Gould (HWBKA Chair)

Contact: Paul Lindström (Editor)
the.hwbka+apiarist@gmail.com

Next issue: January 2027

Think you've seen an Asian hornet? Report it!



Report through the Asian hornet Watch app on your smartphone or at: https://catch.asianhornetalert.org.uk/ or at:

. . . continued from the previous page

coming away with new knowledge and techniques to try going forward.

The summer BBQ was a huge success, with 40 participates and buzzing with conversation and food – a great way to celebrate another season. We also attended some local markets, which are a great way to engage with the public and promote bees and beekeeping, along with selling local honey.

The AGM is fast approaching, together with our annual Honey Show on the 22nd November. Please do come along for a great time talking about our bees, honey, and tasting the different honeys produced across the Association. I would also like to encourage members to enter their honeys, cut combs, and to experiment baking with new recipes. Please look out for information regarding the class schedules and how to enter, which will be communicated soon.

We also have some changes within the committee which we must recognise. Peter Halford is retiring at the AGM after 10 years of service, and I want to thank Peter for his dedication and his efforts in helping shape what the club is today for us all to enjoy and benefit from. Peter over the years has fulfilled a number of roles within the committee and he will be missed. I want to acknowledge his service and wish Peter the best with his retirement, and we hope to see you at Bee Banters and Summer BBQs alike.

Steve Adams is also retiring from his role as treasurer and I want to extend my thanks for his time, stepping in at short notice and continuing to serve over the last few years! We wish you the best with retirement (again) and look forward to seeing you at future events.

Before I sign off, I want to take a moment to thank the committee, apiary cooperative, and all our volunteers for their hard work this year.

I wish all our members a wonderful Christmas, and a well-earned quiet period after a very busy season.

Born Free

– the secret bees of Sussex

By Simon Tuck, NDB (National Diploma in Beekeeping)

This article initially appeared in THE BUZZ, the quarterly newsletter of the Eastbourne Beekeepers' Association, in May 2026



Honey frees working on their natural cavity entrance. Adobe Stock Photo



We are very lucky here in Sussex to have a healthy population of "honey frees" – that is honey bees which live without any help from us.

Despite wild or free living honey bees being classed as endangered, according to The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), research suggests that the UK may have up to 40,000 free living colonies many of which can be found on managed Estates such as Petworth Park (11 colonies) and Herstmonceux Castle (9 colonies). This is important because free living honey bee colonies, or "honey frees" form a part of the honey bee population as a whole and contribute to our own managed colony genetics.

Free living colonies produce higher numbers of drones than ours do, because they raise as many as they want not being constrained by being provided with worker foundation only. And since they live within flight distance of well-used drone congregation areas which our queens get mated at we can assume that they influence our colony genetics. And vice versa. That means our queen decisions have consequences far outside our apiary boundaries.

Local adaptation has been demonstrated time and time again as being of huge benefit to local populations; the result of millennia of harsh natural selection. The bottom line is local bees perform better in

"This is important because free living honey bee colonies, or "honey frees", form a part of the honey bee population as a whole and contribute to our own managed colony genetics."



Matt Somerville and his rocket hives. My next winter project!
Image from the YouTube video "The Hive Architect – Saving Britain's Wild Bees" (link here)

terms of disease resistance, adaptation to local season and forage fluctuations, overwintering and honey production. All these small genetic adaptations add up to a big advantage, but it is a delicate balance, because non-local drones, that is drones produced from a single non-local queen can significantly set back these advantageous traits.

One particularly visible example of this is *Varroa* tolerance. For free living colonies to survive without treatment, they must have genetic advantage to do so. By allowing strongly V*arroa* sensitive colonies to spread non-resistant genes into the local gene pool we are weakening the local honey bee population and putting honey free colonies at risk.

Working only with locally adapted bees is therefore the key, particularly those which thrive with limited intervention. That isn't to say honey free colonies would make good managed bees. Swarming, for example, is a disadvantage to the beekeeper but an evolutionary advantage to the honey bee. It makes up for severe winter losses by repopulating the area with surviving colonies. But if we, as beekeepers, appreciate more readily the effects of our decisions, not only on our own bees but on the local bee population as a whole, it makes complete sense to 'go with the flow' rather than against it. Improve what you have, don't bring in something you haven't.

This principal was at the heart of the recent ***B4 Project symposium*** (link here) which I attended at Calstock in Cornwall on 11 April. I learnt of the B4 Project some time ago through the Sussex Coast Honey bee Improvement Partnership (SCHIP), which was set up in 2022. SCHIP is a local BIBBA group and shares the BIBBA principals of 'improving what you have' – it is dead against imports and seeks to work only with locally adapted bees. I want to take that one step further and work with bees which demonstrate genotypes of *Apis mellifera mellifera* (the European black honey bee) and *Varroa* sensitive hygiene behaviour (VSH), but the fundamental similarity is improving what is already here so that the overall honey bee population becomes more and more sustainable – and works with those honey frees, not against them.

Thus when I was invited to attend the B4 Project symposium I jumped at the chance. An annual event, the 2025 symposium had focused on the negative effect of imports whereas this one prioritised the conservation of the honey free in the UK; where they live, how they survive and what benefits they provide to honey bee populations and general pollinator health.

Norman Carreck introduced what was new in the field of honey bee conservation and Ollie Visick described his doctoral research focused on where free living colonies lived and how they could be located.

Dr Jonathan Ellis described a citizen science project being undertaken at the University of Plymouth to request the help of beekeepers and the public in locating honey free colonies. Next, Matt Somerville and Filipe Salbany talked about their experience with honey frees at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire and the building of rocket hives, designed to give honey frees the home they need when many veteran trees, with ideal cavities are disappearing from our landscapes.

One of the main focuses of the B4 Project has been the honey bees on the Isles of Scilly, since they are apparently *Varroa* free and provide a suitably closed population to test genetic lineages and effects of importation (both intentional and accidental) and biosecurity risks (ditto). The first YLAH nest was found and destroyed in September 2025 so spring trapping is being undertaken in full force, headed by the very capable Jill Halliday. The 'other' co-editor of BeeCraft, Stephen Fleming, was in attendance since he was heavily involved in the Game of Drones, a study over a number of seasons which investigated whether drones flew across the water between islands in the Scilly archipelago in order to mate; thereby demonstrating how such a small honey bee population (just 45 managed colonies) was proving to be genetically sustainable.

Overall, there was much of relevance discussed and an equal amount to come away thinking about. The clear message for me was cementing the SCHIP principals of gradually plugging away at overall bee improvement and working towards sustainable honey bee genetics. That all relies on responsible and competent beekeeping so there is also a significant place for beekeeper improvement as well, especially when selection and queen rearing are a big part of it.

The excellent attendance of Eastbourne BKA's recent talk 'Local Bees for Local People' by Karl Colyer in March shows just how much of an appetite there is here in Sussex for working with the best of our local bees.

It turns out the Sussex black bee has never left the County – and for those of us who wish for it to remain here there are conservation plans already in progress. So watch this space and get involved. I started my first round of queen rearing in 2026, on 12 April.



12 of my queens ready for mating flights at Wisborough Green apiary in West Sussex.

General Husbandry

– Why I should have taken it years ago

By Malcolm Wilkie



This June, after more than ten years of saying that I was going to take the General Husbandry assessment, the day finally arrived.

Two Master Beekeepers were coming to our house to inspect the apiary, examine my hive records and honey-processing facilities, ask me to carry out four practical manipulations and, as it turned out, ask me a very large number of questions.

90% of the work is preparations

I had done plenty of preparation. The lawns around the hives had been left long, with clover, self-heal and hawkweed flowering, while the rest of the garden was full of bee-friendly plants. I had even mentioned the wildflower meadow in my directions to the assessors! If they knew anything about bee plants, they were certainly going to find some here.

Lesley had entered fully into the spirit of the occasion. She recleaned the extractor that I had already cleaned, along with the uncapping trays that I had also cleaned but which apparently still contained unacceptable traces of wax and propolis. The storeroom was cleared, the work surfaces scrubbed and even the windows cleaned. Lesley, you are a star.



Equipment set out ready to do manipulations.



Four supers extracted and now clearer board on to reduce supers ahead of the exam.

For the week before the assessment, I cleaned equipment and thought through the possible manipulations. The day before, I arranged everything into labelled piles: Pagden artificial swarm, Demaree, shook swarm, Bailey comb change, uniting colonies, disease inspection, moving colonies, making up a nucleus and so on.

This was some of the best advice I had been given. Having every piece of equipment ready and laid out was crucial. Under assessment conditions, even the most obvious things can suddenly disappear from your mind. For example, seeing a queen excluder beneath the brood box reminds you where it will be needed in a shook swarm!

Assessment Day

The assessors, Celia Perry and Gareth Morgan, began by examining my records and apiary plan. Every colony was numbered and recorded, including notes about temperament. Any particularly feisty colonies were described as having "attitude", with a comment about possible requeening. One colony had been awarded ten out of ten for temperament. Naturally, that was one of the colonies they did not choose.

The first task was a brood disease inspection. Unfortunately, the chosen colony was not pleased to see us. "Spiky" would be an understatement. I lit the smoker carefully and, for once, it worked like a dream. The bees, however, seemed unimpressed by it.

I began working through the brood box, looking for the queen and trying to inspect the combs while questions came rapidly about healthy brood, Sacbrood, Chalkbrood, European foulbrood and American foulbrood. My carefully planned explanation of healthy, pearly-white, C-shaped larvae quickly went out the window.

This was probably the most difficult part of the day. It is one thing to know the answers and another to explain them clearly while handling an uncooperative colony and trying not to lose track of what you are doing.

Eventually, we moved on to the next manipulation: demonstrating an artificial swarm. This colony was much

more obliging. Gareth spotted the queen, I caged her and placed her safely in his pocket while I demonstrated how I would carry out the Pagden method. They did not simply want to see the boxes moved. They wanted to know why each part of the operation was being done, where the supers and feeder would go and how variations of the method might work.

The third task was uniting two colonies using newspaper. The fourth was making up a nucleus for sale.

This was an especially useful exercise because it reflected something many beekeepers already do. I was asked whether the beginner buying the nucleus would be present while I made it up or would collect it later. The answer affected how I approached the task.

I selected a strong, good-tempered colony, found the queen and assembled a generous nucleus containing brood in different stages, young bees and adequate stores. The assessors were not looking for a memorised formula. They wanted to see that I could think about the bees, the customer and what would make a balanced, viable colony.

That is perhaps one of the most important things to understand about General Husbandry. Much of it concerns ordinary beekeeping activities: inspecting brood, controlling swarming, making nuclei, uniting colonies, managing temperament and giving advice to beginners. The difference is that you must be able to explain what you are doing and why.

More questions

After the practical work, I assumed we would move directly to the honey room. We did not.

I sat opposite the assessors and the questions began again. We discussed laying workers, drone-laying queens, chilled brood, wax moth damage and the advice I would give to someone buying a nucleus.

I mentioned that I would always provide important instructions in writing. A beginner may be told six essential things when collecting bees but remember only one of them by the time they get home. That is not a criticism of beginners; it is simply what happens when someone is excited, nervous and suddenly responsible for thousands of bees.

Eventually, we reached the honey-processing equipment. The extractor, warming cabinet, uncapping trays, sieves and jars were all inspected. We discussed extracting, conditioning and storing honey, making soft-set honey, moisture levels, fermentation and food hygiene.

The honey labels were examined in detail, including the legal requirements for weights, country of origin and batch numbers. The assessors also looked at my scales and the test weights used to check them. Despite being correct the previous day, some of the weights now appeared to be one gram light. Celia told me that exactly the same thing had happened during her assessment.



Correx fat dummy built to do queen rearing using the Ben Harden method.

Then came the wax blocks. I had six small blocks ready for sale, and Celia selected one to weigh. It came to exactly 28 grams (the correct weight). I laughed and told her not to weigh another one!

By this point, the assessment had become demanding but also remarkably good-humoured. We discussed wax processing, honey shows, queen rearing, record keeping and yellow-legged hornets. I talked about finding yellow-legged hornets in my own apiary and reporting the secondary nest discovered at Baldslow.

Four hours after we began, the questions finally stopped. The assessors apologised for running an hour over the expected time.

I was exhausted and relieved. I knew that I had a great deal of knowledge, but I was less certain that I had always communicated it as clearly as I would have liked. That is probably true of many assessment situations. You remember afterwards the perfect answer you might have given.

Thankfully, I had done enough and subsequently learned that I had passed.

The assessment was certainly thorough, but it was also a positive and worthwhile experience. Nobody is expected to be flawless, and not every answer or manipulation will go exactly as planned. Bees make sure of that.

Good preparation matters. Have your equipment ready, keep clear records, practise explaining your decisions and ask experienced beekeepers to give you a mock assessment. Most importantly, recognise how much of the syllabus you may already be doing.

You may already be making up nuclei, controlling swarming, inspecting for disease, processing honey and helping beginners. General Husbandry asks you to bring those skills together and demonstrate that you understand the principles behind them.

I spent ten years saying I would take it, but the assessment did not require ten years of preparation – far from it. Much of it was based on things I had already been doing for years without really thinking of them as “General Husbandry”. My advice is to look at the syllabus, recognise how much you already do, identify the gaps and start working towards it. You may be much closer than you think.

How and why I became a beekeeper

By Paul Lindström



One day some nine years ago our neighbour suddenly suggested that we should start beekeeping. I said I was interested in priciple, but thought it might mean quite a lot of work, and I should probably wait until I retired. He said "Oh no, it's not that much work involved, and anyhow – we can do it together". Well, in that case, I had no objections.

Now, nine years later, he has stopped beekeeping, because it was "much too much work". And we never had bees "together" – he had his apiary in his garden, and me and my wife Laurel put our apiary in the lower (and smaller) paddock below our garage. OK, we did some occasional inspections together, my neighbour and me, but that was about it. And yes, it is quite a lot of work involved, if you want to be a "good" beekeeper, that is, look after the bees properly. But it is definitely worth it, and very rewarding, as you all know.



Our apiary today – a mix of WBCs, home made Nationals with extra thick insulation and two Warré hives (at the far end of the line).

Buckfast bees

My dear and very kind and generous wife Laurel bought me a colony from a breeder of Buckfast bees. She asked me and some other beekeepers what types of bees there were, and which ones "were the best"? Some preferred Ligurian bees (Apis mellifera ligustica), but I had been told by the teacher of the evening classes in beekeeping that the Buckfast bees where the best, so that was what I told Laurel I wanted.

I had finished the beekeeping course late in the Winter, so I had to wait for bees to become available until the Spring. Finally the day came when we could fetch the bees. They came in a polyhive with standard size national brood frames.



Laurel with some friendly and inquisitive bees.

I didn't like the polyhive for estetic reasons, and quickly ordered a cedar hive with gabled roof, which I thought looked prettier than with a flat roof.

I had no practical experience but with my unnatural high self confidence I thought "how difficult can it be"?! Yes, the teacher had recommended to join a beekeeping association, but I thought "I can do that later".

The first inspections went well, and me and Laurel were careful to look out for queens cells. This I had learned was a bad thing to find in the colony.

Beginner's mistakes

We had to take a brake in the regular weekly inspections because of a busieness trip that lasted about a week. When we came back home we knew we should make an inspection quickly, since in late April we were well into swarming season. And lo and behold, when we opened the hive we found lots of queen cells, at least 4-5 of them. But there were lots of bees in the hive now, many more than when we left it looked like, so I was pretty sure they hadn't sarmed. "We must remove all the queen cells" I said, in slight panik. And so we did. A new inspection the day after but we



Ooops!

couldn't find the queen. Next day same thing – no queen to be seen. And only now did I start to realise that I had panicked and not thought it through properly and calmly. The colony was queenless.

Nothing else to do than contact the breeder and ask if he had a new queen for us. He did, and it came, to our amusement, in the post a couple of days later. I read up about how to best introduce a queen, and luckily she was accepted. Later in the season we found queen cells again, but managed to do a sucessful artificial split. Meanwhile I had built a second National hive on Laurel's nudging – "you like building things, surely you can build your own hives". So I did, copying the existing hive.

Testing hive types

After building a Standard National Hive, I read a book by the French beekeeper and priest Emil Warré. He suggested a beehive should imitate a natural home for honeybees, as in a hollow tree. His design uses the same size boxes for both brood boxes and supers, but they are smaller than a standard National and the height is somewhere between a standard brood box and a super. According his design and instructions you should use top bars and let the bees draw out the comb from the top bars, but I thought that would be impractical and modifed my standard size brood frames to fit my new Warré hive. A bit of a faff to do, but fully doable. The bees seemed to love the Warré hive, so I made a second hive when it was time to do a split of the colony in the first Warré hive.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile I had joined the HWBKA, and the first thing I did was to attend all the semanars and lectures that was arranged, with Malcolm Wilkie as the teacher/speaker. When I told Malcolm about my mistake of removing all the queen cells earlier in the season, he wasn't impressed. He said I was very lucky to have succeeded in introducing a new queen, because it was far from certian that it would go well.

I got a very good mentor, "Bee Buddy", in Peter Halford. This was heaven sent, and I got a lot of advice and tips from Peter, and he kindly came to our apiary and observed how I and Laurel did our inspections.

In HWBKA I was introduced to other types of hives, like the WBCs and extra deep brood boxes for the Nationals, the 14x12 brood frames. My neighbour had 14x12 brood boxes in his hives, but I thought the frames were very heavy to handle, and preferred my "one and a half" setup – a standard national brood box with a super on over winter allowing more stores for the bees, acting as a half brood box. I read more and more books on beekeeping, among them a book by Thomas "Tom" Seeley, and noted that he had found that bees would choose a hive that has abouth 40 litres of volume as the ideal size hive, if they are given different options. So eventually I switched to using 14x12 brood frames, because it means you only have one brood box to look through when you look at the brood and look for the queen. A 14x12 brood box is more or less 40 litres in volume. I converted my two first National hives to become 14x12 size brood boxes. The old frames could be used after modifications in my Warré hives.

While among others Peter Coxon favoured WBC hives, I at first thought it was a cumbersome to use them since you had to lift off the "lifts" before you can start the inspection. But I was later given some WBC lifts by a beekeeper that had given up beekeeping and thought I could give them a try, simply using them as an other "skin" on my Nationals. And I found that it's not particular cumbersome to take off the lifts, it only takes some seconds, and they are very good for the bees. Thanks to the extra layer of wood they stay cooler in hot Summer's days, and stay drier and warmer in the Winter. So now I slowly convert all my beehives to become WBCs, except for the Warré hives that I keep since the bees seems to love them.

Varroa resistant bees

I have avandoned trying to keep "pure" Buckfast bees since a long time back – they are hybrid bees anyhow, and brother Adams, while he meant well, really didn't understand genetics. I now try and learn what it means to identify "hygenic behavior" in a colony and select which colony to breed new queens from. I know there are several other beekeepers in HWBKA that are interested in this, and the goal is to finally have bees that can handle the Varroa mites on their own, not needing medicine and/or chemicals to fight them.

I'm really glad I joined HWBKA in 2017. I have learned so much from other members and enjoy teaching new beekeepers how to manage bees. This season we have managed the bees at Horsted Green Park as a team, a "co-operative", and this has been a pleasure. Starting keeping bees was one of the best choices I've made over the years, and I'm grateful to my neighbour for persuading me to start.

Book review

By Graham Stuart



I first came across the book, *Beekeeping Bottom-Up*, when reading the March 2026 issue of BBKA News. Ray Baxter, the author, had written an article about learning from the bee debris on inspection boards as an indicator of colony activity, whilst at the same time promoting his book. I was taken by the concept of reducing intrusive inspections by learning to understand colony development through careful observation of hive debris patterns. This methodology was brought in to focus in my mind, when Paul Lindstroöm, our Horsted Apiary manager, suggested that HWBKA have a long-term aim of breeding bees with varroa resistance in the Association apiary, therefore negating the need to use miticides.

Important evidence that a colony has varroa resistance is hygienic behaviour, whereby the bees uncap cells they sense are varroa infested. If they detect the mite, they cannibalise the pupa and discard the exoskeleton. If there is no infestation the bees will quickly recap the cell. Evidence of exoskeletons under the microscope on the inspection board debris, is therefore an important indication of varroa resistance. Karl Colyer, in the same March 2026 issue of BBKANews, explains about monitoring and assessing hygienic traits to determine varroa resistance.

The book stems from Baxter's two-year systematic study of hive debris using monthly weighing, mapping, and microscopic analysis of the debris over an annual cycle. Careful observation of wax flakes, pollen types, and brood cappings, helps reveal cluster size, brood cycles, and seasonal changes in foraging diets. Debris analysis also helps quantify Varroa mite population, chalkbrood remains, and evidence of hygienic behaviour.

This 202-page book succeeds in combining personal observations with the scientific literature. It includes over 200 high-quality microscopic images detailing wax, pollen and pests seen in inspection board debris.

Title: Beekeeping Bottom-Up
Author: Ray Baxter
Publisher: Northern Bee Books (1st Ed) 2025
ISBN: 978-1-912271-96-2
Cost: £27 + pp from Northern Bee Books

Sussex Bee Festival 2027 – a "sneak preview"

Overview

• A full revamp of the Sussex Bee Market as a flagship annual event celebrating all bees — honey bees, wild bees and pollinators — while remaining firmly rooted in practical beekeeping
• Designed to attract a far greater proportion of Sussex's 705 active members, of whom only 140 (20%) attended the 2026 Bee Market as beekeepers
• 85-response member survey confirms strong appetite: 80% plan to attend or considering it; 63% say £15 for all four talks is not a barrier; 88% would pay £15 or attend at a slightly lower price
• General admission £3 covers hall, trade stands and auction; separate paid tickets for talks
• Zoom live streaming of all four talks, with post-event recording access for full day and Zoom pass holders

Venue & Facilities

• Uckfield College — date confirmed: ***Saturday 17 April 2027***
• Setup: Friday 16 April, 4–6pm (included in venue quote)
• Main Hall AG01 — trade stands, social hub, auction display
• Theatre AG02 — all four talks and the auction
• Refectory, kitchen and upper terrace — catering and networking (FOC)
• Internet access, screen and card payment facilities available in hall
• Note: venue charges subject to review January 2027

Speakers

Dave Goulson "Saving Our Insects"
Professor of Biology at the University of Sussex and bestselling author of A Sting in the Tale. One of the most recognisable voices in pollinator conservation in the UK. Opens the festival with the broadest possible public appeal — beekeepers, gardeners and conservationists alike. A significant coup for the inaugural Sussex Bee Festival.

Richard Rickitt "Gardening for Bees & Pollinators"
Broadening the festival's appeal to gardeners and the general public. A natural companion to the wild bee and conservation trade stands, and highly shareable for publicity. Perfectly positioned as the second morning talk to sustain the public audience.

Rhona Toft, "Seeking Varroa-resistant Bees"
A timely and highly practical talk on one of the most pressing challenges facing UK beekeepers. Focuses on the bees themselves and the potential for breeding Varroa-resistant strains — resonating strongly with both novice and experienced Sussex members.

Marin Anastasov "Self-Sustained Queen Rearing"
Practical queen rearing content accessible to beekeepers at all levels, from those producing 10 queens to those producing 100 in a season. One of the most-requested topics nationally and a strong draw for the experienced contingent within Sussex membership.

Book this already now in your calendar!

SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

The Sussex Bee Festival



Saturday 17 April 2027

Uckfield College

A flagship Sussex gathering for beekeepers, gardeners, pollinator enthusiasts and friends of bees

SUSSEX'S ANNUAL BEE & POLLINATOR FESTIVAL

Expert talks | Food & drink | Curated auction | Trade stands | Wild bee focus | Networking

£3 entry
to the hall, trade stands and auction

– or Talk Tickets
from £10 (entry included)

£8 Zoom access
for talks

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

DAVE GOULSON	*Saving Our Insects*
RICHARD RICKITT	*Gardening for Bees & Pollinators*
RHONA TOFT	*Seeking* Varroa*-resistant Bees*
MARIN ANASTASOV	*Self-Sustained Queen Rearing*

BOOK YOUR TICKETS HERE

SCAN FOR INFORMATION

Dates for your calendar

22nd, 23rd & 24th October
National Honey Show
Venue: Sandown Park Racecourse,
Esher, Surrey

Saturday 14th November
BBKA Modules – Autumn Exams
More exams in March 2027 – sign up by contacting our Membership Secretary Peter Halford

Sunday 22nd November
HWBKA AGM and Honeyshow
Venue: Five Ashes Village Hall



More events might be listed on our web site – check it regularly for the latest updates.

HWBKA Committee 2025-2026

President: Deborah Park the.hwbka+president@gmail.com

Chairman: Roxanne Gould the.hwbka+chair@gmail.com

Honorary Secretary: Simon Bishop
the.hwbka+secretary@gmail.com

Honorary Treasurer: Steve Adams
the.hwbka+treasurer@gmail.com

Magazine Editor, Vice Chairman: Paul Lindström
the.hwbka+apiarist@gmail.com

Apiary Manager: Paul Lindström

Events Secretary and Assistant apiary Manager:
Carlton Waghorn
the.hwbka+events@gmail.com

Lecture Coordinator and Librarian: Helen Chivers
the.hwbka+lecturecoordinator@gmail.com

Membership Secretary: Peter Halford
the.hwbka+membership@gmail.com)

Training & Education Manager: Mark Wilcox
the.hwbka+training@gmail.com

AHAT Coordinator: Tim Wadham
the.hwbka+ahat@gmail.com

Swarm Coordinators:
Simon Bishop the.hwbka+secretary@gmail.com
Peter Coxon the.hwbka+webmaster@gmail.com
Peter Halford the.hwbka+membership@gmail.com

Acting web master: Peter Coxon
the.hwbka+webmaster@gmail.com

Committee members: Liz Missen and Simon Kipping

Other useful contacts – National Bee Unit inspectors:

Local Bee Inspectors:
Daniel Morgan (Mobile: 07500 95 43 90, email daniel.morgan@apha.gov.uk)
Helen Hadley (Mobile: 07871 320 316, email: helen.hadley@apha.gov.uk)
For more Bee Inspectors see the National Bee Unit web site.

High Weald Bee Keepers Association

HEALTHY BEES · THRIVING LANDSCAPES · STRONGER TOGETHER

We're looking for NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS!

Help shape the future of beekeeping in the High Weald

You don't have to be an expert beekeeper to join our committee. We welcome enthusiastic members at all stages of their beekeeping journey, and people with a wide range of skills and experience that can help our work. We're a friendly, active group with a shared passion for bees, beekeeping and the environment of the High Weald.

Why get involved?

- Support local beekeepers and their work
- Help promote bee health and biodiversity
- Bring your skills, ideas and fresh perspective
- Make a positive difference in our local community and landscape



INTERESTED?

Get in touch to find out more about joining the committee and how you can help.

Email us at:
the.hwbka+secretary@gmail.com

HIGH WEALD BEE KEEPERS ASSOCIATION

LOCAL BEEKEEPERS · HEALTHY BEES · A SUSTAINABLE HIGH WEALD