

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



A DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER MAY 2026

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EDITORIAL



Jude's programme of winter meetings ended on a high note, as Martin Hann and Claire Densley, beekeepers both at Buckfast Abbey—yes, that Buckfast Abbey (above; photo by Stefan Schwarz)—gave us insights into how they manage their bees. Read the full report inside—and if you missed that meeting, you missed an excellent, full-fat presentation.

We report inside on the announcement

that our longstanding Swarm Co-ordinator Ian White is stepping down from the role after many years in harness. It's only a seasonal role (*no, really?*) so if you fancy taking it on, even for a year or two just to see how it fits, please let me or any of the committee know.

Inside you'll also find my report from the BBKA Spring Convention: it was a great weekend as always and costs about the same as a couple of nights in a nice country pub, but with a free bee-relevant lecture/workshop programme and trade show thrown in for free. And it's just a stone's throw from the Severn Valley Railway—but that's another story...

And finally, the South of England Show calls for steward volunteers, and issues an invitation to show your honey.

Manek Dubash, Editor

May 2026 events

Date	Event	Location	Leader
Sat 2 May	Honey Bee Health Module	Grassroots	Jude
Sat 9 May	SBKA Bee Market	Uckfield College	-
Sat 16 May	Open hive: queen rearing	Hove	Adrien
Sat 16 May	Open hive: vertical splits	Rottingdean	Jeff
Sat 30 May	Open hive: Demaree/Padgen splits	Barcombe	Ian

Bee Chats start at 19.30. **Open meetings** start at 19.00 for 19.30. You can find the full list of 2026 events and meetings [on the back page](#).

EVENTS

- Open apiary meetings
- Training
- Swarming

NEXT MONTH

- Seasonal hints and tips
- Asian hornet update
- News news news!
- Latest events
- Meetings & more

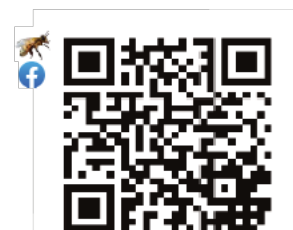
SHARE YOUR PHOTOS & STORIES

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 group](#)



QR link to B&L website

Notes from the Chair



Manek Dubash
Chairman

Elsewhere in this issue, Jude reminds us that Sussex BKA's annual Bee Market is once more upon us. There's always some interesting stalls there, as well as the Seasonal Bee Inspectors ready to give advice or just chat bees. The auction is always worth the trip—plus, B&L is running a book stall, selling some of our old library books to raise a bit of cash.

What we're not doing this year is running a tea and home-made cake stall for the first time in I don't know how long. The reasons are somewhat complex and a bit fraught, as these things often are, but it boils down to increasing risk-adversity. Because we are a volunteer organisation, we cannot

guarantee to the satisfaction of the insurance industry that cakes made in the kitchens of individual members meet the required hygiene standards for sale to the public. Despite food health certificates being held by many of the cake makers, they won't insure us. We did try.

Consequently, Eastbourne BKA will be running a tea stall at the BM this year.

It feels like the end of an era but we should not take it personally; it is perhaps surprising that the issue has not reared its head before now. The most annoying element though is that the BM stall was a good money-spinner for our squeezed cash reserves. Bright ideas welcome...

Yellow-legged Asian Hornet report



Rachel Ramaker
Asian Hornet Team
Co-ordinator

New Zealand may be winning the fight against the invasive yellow-legged hornet but a crucial phase lies ahead. The aim is to find and destroy every YLH nest before new queens are produced.

Six months on from the discovery of a YLH queen in Auckland there are encouraging signs New Zealand's eradication effort is gaining ground.

Teams that have been searching intensively for the highly invasive predators haven't turned up a new nest since last month (March), a result suggesting the NZ\$12 million response programme, which has seen dozens of nests destroyed alongside a huge public reporting effort, may be winning.

New Zealand's incursion appears to be recent and geographically contained.

Since the first queens were detected in Auckland in October, all confirmed nests have been found within a relatively small area on the North Shore. Genetic analysis suggests they may have originated from a single introduction event in 2024/25.

AI cameras and 'Judas hornets'

Behind the 77 queens discovered to date—most of them linked to nests—lies a far larger response effort, measured in thousands of hours of fieldwork, thousands of public reports and a co-ordinated national push.

Over 50 people are out hunting hornets

daily. Beekeepers are monitoring over 575 apiaries. And the wider public response has been impressive: the Ministry for Primary Industries has received over 16,625 notifications so far.

Visiting UK experts have been advising on field tactics, tracking and nest detection. They say the NZ response impresses for its scale, coordination and smart use of technology. Pete Davies, formerly of the UK's Animal Plant and Health Agency, said: "You're throwing everything at it, using all the technology available and treating it with urgency. I remain optimistic that you'll ultimately eradicate the hornet from New Zealand."

AI-enabled cameras are deployed at bait stations to distinguish yellow-legged hornets from other insects, allowing teams to monitor activity remotely and focus their efforts where it matters most.

So-called "Judas hornets"—captured workers—are fitted with tiny radio transmitters and released, then tracked as they fly back to their nest, leading search crews to colonies that would otherwise be difficult to locate high in trees.

A toxic bait that attracts hornets and wasps, but not bees, has also been deployed. Other non-toxic bait stations have been set out across the search area and are being checked regularly.

Phil Lester

Seasonal tips for May

May is mostly about swarm prevention and management, and making sure you have enough bees in the hive to continue collecting nectar.

People talk about swarmy bees and non-swarmy bees, but in my experience they all swarm at some time, so be prepared! As it's natural for colonies to swarm, you need to manage this inclination and to have enough equipment to hand for the strategy you are going to employ.

In the words of the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy: 'Don't Panic'.

The three-legged stool

Back when I was in the construction industry, we were taught about the fire or combustion triangle. It's a simple model for understanding the necessary ingredients for most fires and illustrates the three elements a fire needs to ignite: heat, fuel, and an oxidising agent (usually oxygen). A fire occurs when all three elements are present and combined in the right mixture.

Claire and Adrian Waring (of Haynes Bee Manual fame) proposed a similar model for the swarm. The three elements of a swarm are:

- A queen
- Brood and nurse bees
- Flying bees

In the fire model, if you remove one element from the equation then the fire can't ignite; by the same token, if you remove one element from the swarm equation, the bees won't swarm.

Sounds simple doesn't it?

A colony will not usually swarm until there are drones for the new



Two queen cells opened up, with clearly copious amounts of royal jelly

queens to mate with, so if you can't see drone cells, they're not ready to swarm. Once drone cells are visible and the hive starts to become congested, about seven to ten seams of bees, then if you have not already put a super on do so now. There will be a lot of flying bees and they need somewhere to put their nectar and pollen.

Queen cells

Start looking awfully hard for the preparation of queen cells. Not to be confused with supersedure cells or emergency cells, which will be covered in a later article. Queen cells will usually be built at the bottom of the frame and will be built down towards the floor and once complete will look like a peanut shell (see image below).

I said 'look hard', and 'usually', because they can be built on the sides

of the frame or between unevenly drawn comb. They start life as small cups. At this stage start making your plan.

Once big enough, the queen will lay an egg in it; make sure you have the equipment necessary for your plan. Next the egg will hatch, and the nurse bees will flood the cell with royal jelly. Now is the time to act, as you only have a couple of days until the cell is sealed, and once that happens the hive will have usually swarmed.

Regular inspections

Knocking the queen cells down will not stop them swarming. It is therefore particularly important that you inspect your bees on a weekly basis during the swarm season. Not so bad for us retired folk but if you're working, you can't afford to miss an inspection even if the weather is not conducive or the family intervenes.

Here's a bit more clarity about the life cycle of a queen cell. Once the cell is formed and ready:

- Day 1: the egg is laid.
- Day 4: the egg hatches and the larva starts to be fed royal jelly.
- Day 8: the cell is sealed, and the old queen and half the bees will swarm.
- Days 9-15: the new queen pupates.
- Day 16: the new queen hatches.

So, back to our swarm model and your plan. There are various ways of separating the elements of a swarm, some of them are quite straightforward and some are like 'Find the Lady' in some carnival side show; what most of the methods require is that you find the queen (Manek!).

[Who, me?? Ed.]



How easy is to spot the queen?



A fistful of queen cells



A nuc full of bees

Seasonal tips for May



Marked queens are easier to spot

Separating the colony

You can separate the queen and the flying bees from the brood and nurse bees creating an artificial swarm by leaving the queen in the original hive, in the original position and moving the brood and nurse bees to a different hive and location.

You do need to ensure the brood and nurse bees have enough stores to see them through until they develop enough foragers to sustain themselves.

They also need the ability to create a new queen, so leave one queen cell intact to develop into the new queen, or leave at least one frame in the hive with the eggs or larvae in the right stage for the remaining bees to develop a new queen.

Or you can create a nucleus with the queen and a couple of frames of brood, nurse bees and stores. Remember to feed this nucleus as there will be no foragers for quite a while.

Again, you will have left at least one queen cell intact or have one frame in the original hive with the eggs or larvae in the right stage for the remaining bees to develop a new queen.

If you can't find the queen

What happens if you can't find the queen? Split the hive into two nucleus boxes with an equal distribution of brood (in all stages) and nurse bees.

Shake a few extra frames full of nurse bees into one of the nucs. Remove all queen cells from both nucs.

Leave the nuc with the depleted number of nurse bees in the original position to catch all the flying bees and move the other one to a different location and in a different orientation to the original.

What you have now created is a combination of the artificial swarm and the nucleus method. The nuc with the queen will have thought it has swarmed and will settle down to expand, the queenless colony will create a new queen cell and raise a new queen.

Make sure to inspect this nuc to make sure there is only one queen cell, otherwise it can create lots of casts—secondary swarms—as each queen cell hatches, until the colony becomes unviable.

Opportunity knocks

If nothing else, see this as an opportunity. On the one hand, it will help you develop your bee husbandry and confidence; and on the other, you have the opportunity to harvest those spare (not unwanted) queen cells and



Queen cells. Photo: Rusty Barlow

create other nucs for future expansion or to start your own selection and breeding programme.

Told you it was simple. Remember, every day is a school day.

Further reading

If you have any doubts, please read Wally Shaw's very good booklet 'An Apiary Guide to Swarm Control 2nd Edition 2020', published by the Welsh Beekeepers Association and is available [free to download here](#) [pdf] or we have a copy in the library.

It develops methods for dealing with the bee's tendency to swarm either pre-emptively or reactively depending on what stage the colony is in its swarm preparation. My only criticism is that it involves a lot of lifting sometime quite heavy brood boxes.

Now back to those supersedure and emergency queen cells.

In essence they are the same and are the product of the colony deciding their queen is failing and they want to raise a successor—ie supersedure—or where the queen is missing for whatever reason, and the colony needs to raise a new queen to survive.

In both cases the new queen cell is developed from existing brood. The existing cell or cells that are chosen are extended to form a banana-shaped queen cell that extends down the face of the comb. The modified Demaree method Wally describes in his booklet develops these types of cells.

Have a great season!

The Veiled Beekeeper

Apiary reports: Grassroots



The willow (left) is releasing pollen making us sneeze and the flowering currant (right) is just coming into flower, so the season is moving along. So much seems to be in flower very Has anyone seen lime trees in flower?

A nuc from Hove has been installed at Grassroots and is doing well. The Grassroots overwintered colonies had a routine check from Helen Hadley, the Seasonal Bee Inspector last month. She recommended some TLC and Varromed treatment. The treatment has started and the bees are picking up.

Queen rearing at Grassroots may be replaced by increase via the nuc method instead.

Jude New, Apiary Manager

Swarms!



Extend your apiary with local swarms! To book a swarm, please [contact Ian White](#), our Swarm Co-ordinator. You must have a nuc with

frames ready to collect the swarm and a hive for the bees to housed. Your name will be put on a list and you will be contacted when a swarm is available so you can arrange to collect the bees asap—for free!

Note that Ian would like to train up a successor or hand over this post by the end of the season. Interested?

Training and apiary meetings

Bee Market

The Bee Market at Uckfield College is on Saturday 9 May, 10.00-16.30. B&L is running a second-hand book stall to raise funds for the division. If you would like to donate some books for sale, please contact Manek Dubash or Jude New who will take them to the market for you.

Apiary meetings

Saturday 2 May: final honey bee health meeting at Grassroots with me. Demonstration of Bailey comb exchange and Shook swarm. For Honey Bee Health participants only. There may be an additional meeting at Grassroots for queen rearing which will be open to any interested B&L beekeeper.

Saturday 16 May: Ben Harden queen rearing at Hove Apiary with Adrien Parker. Time tbc. Please contact Adrien or ask on the B&L Buzz/Hove WhatsApp group.

Saturday 16 May: Vertical split increase at Rottingdean Apiary with Jeff Rodrigues. Time tbc. Contact Jeff

or ask on B&L Buzz/Rottingdean WhatsApp group.

Saturday 30 May: Demaree/Pagden swarm control demonstration at Barcombe Apiary with Ian White. Time tbc, Contact Ian or ask on B&L Buzz/Barcombe WhatsApp group.

Notes for apiary meetings

- Make a note of the start times and please be punctual.
- Choose the apiary you will attend. The subject matter will be similar; there is no need to attend every meeting each month
- Tell that the apiary manager if you need to borrow a jacket or suit as we don't always keep them on site. It helps you and us if you give us at least 24 hours' notice.
- Tell the apiary manager you will be coming, there are different arrangements for parking at each apiary. If we know you are coming we will be prepared, if not then you may miss information/handouts/references/ free stuff.
- Each meeting will last at least an

hour, you will get the most benefit from the visit, if you stay until the end when there will be time to consider what we have seen and to ask questions.

Summer training

Any members wishing to take the BBKA Basic Assessment or Honey Bee Health Assessment modules should register by 30 April (bee quick!). Exam sessions start in June, assessment in mid-July.

If you have not yet registered, please come along to the hive-side apiary meetings and register for the online support sessions there.

Details are on our Facebook page, our website on the Training and Assessment page and advertised here.

If you want any more information, please contact me—email link on back page.

Jude New
Training & Events Co-ordinator

Apiary reports: Hove



On Saturday 18 April we held an open apiary where we were looking for potential diseases. Spring is a good time to spot potential problems when colonies can be slightly under stress because of mixed weather conditions and the build up of brood outstrips the number of available young worker bees.

It was a calm and sunny day, perfect for looking into open cells. Before opening any hives we talked about what we were going to do, what potential diseases we may spot and what actions should be taken if potential signs of foulbrood is found.



Bursting with bees

The first hive we opened was bursting with bees which is always a good sight. I knew that the queen had recently found her way through the queen excluder into the supers and then made her way back down into the brood area.

The first super contained a small amount of both capped worker and drone brood but to my relief there were no eggs. The queen excluder was handed round but nobody could find any obvious defect. The queen was spotted in the brood area. The capped brood looked perfect, the pattern was good and the larvae was plump, nicely segmented and pearly white. Having spotted eggs in a couple queen cups I passed two brood frames round without mentioning what I had seen.

On the first rotation of the frames, the eggs were not spotted so we then discussed signs of swarm preparation and the frames were re examined. Spotting eggs can be difficult especially when they are hidden at the bottom of a queen cup. Time was moving on so we opened a second hive. This hive looked similar to the first hive. No diseases were found although we did spot a few perforated cells.

Before our time ran out we moved on to a third hive. Ross spotted what looked like a large pile of dead bees on the ground below the entrance but on examination this turned out to be a layer of dead bees on top of a large clump of grass. It is normal to see dead bees on the ground at this time of the year but there were probably more dead bees than I would anticipate seeing. When we opened the hive we found one or two black, hairless, tatty looking bees but other than that the bees looked well. Could this be an early sign of chronic bee paralysis or were these the last of the winter bees? Something I will need to watch. We added a super to give the bees more space and closed up.

Varroa counting

My next action will be to obtain a



varroa mite count and over the coming weeks I will slowly change the orientation of the hive in order to reduce potential drifting. If the problem persists the colony may have to be sacrificed to protect the health of the apiary.

The day finished with tea and cake under the magnolia tree and plenty of bee talk.

Thank you Ross for providing the mobile catering service and Mim for the photos.

*Adrien Parker, Apiary Manager
Photos by Mim*



Apiary reports: Rottingdean



Spotted a rape field in glorious golden-yellow two valleys away today, so hopefully we won't have too much of

it in the forage. The apiary, aside from the undertone of happy bees, is tranquil and quiet. The leaf cover in the wood is starting to emerge -before it goes darker, that shimmering light-filtered green is so gorgeous.

We transferred a rapidly expanding double broodbox poly nuc into a national poly hive on Saturday. By the look of things, the transfer did not damage the queen—always a risk—and the colony looks settled in. We will take it up from our garden apiary, where we nursed it through the winter, to the apiary in the wood in advance of the open day on 25 April.

I noticed that the temperature in the garden apiary was a clear two degrees warmer than the temperature up in the wood.

I'm not convinced that there is a huge amount of nectar out there. If they fly south, the village gardens are

full of flowers, but if they prefer the other three directions, they'll have to work hard to find their sources of nectar.

However, with the blackthorn and other prunus-related plants about to come into blossom, things should change soon. The 1:1 syrup I've prepared is being taken down voraciously.

We've scanned the wood and surrounds—no sign of Asian Hornet nests—but nevertheless we're taking the traps up today, charged with home-made bait.

The local primary school would like me to take an observation hive for their Forest Day classes so I'm just thinking about when to time that. First, I need to find and mark a queen. Oh dear!

Jeff Rodrigues, Apiary Manager

Events update

B&L outreach

We have stalls booked at the Society Fair, Lewes, on 29 August, the Patcham Duck Fair, 30 August, and the Makers Fair Jubilee Square, 5 September.

Our aim is to raise awareness of honey from beekeepers rather than supermarket honey, and to sell the honey produced from our divisional apiaries.

Please make a note of the dates on your calendars. If you can volunteer to help run the stall for an hour or so please contact me—see email link on back page—and of course, come along to support us.

Meeting schedule

We had our last—brilliant—winter meeting at Eastgate Baptist Church Hall on 15 April, presented by Clare Densley and Martin Hann talking about how they manage swarming at Buckfast Abbey—see the story on page xx for a full report.

Meetings from now until the start of September will be at one of our apiaries, and at Bee Chats at various pubs in our patch.

Times and dates are here in the newsletter. For more information about Bee Chats, please check with Mim Uzzaman or Debbie Cole.

Honey Show

Our Honey Show will be on Saturday 3 October in Patcham, featuring photography and independent judges. Collate your pictures now, so you have choices to enter the show. Start selecting your moulds for candle making and practise making your wax wraps. There will be a recipe provided for a honey cake and honey lemon curd, and you can choose your own recipe for honey biscuits which have a snap and taste of honey.

Kids go free

There will be opportunities for our

children and grandchildren to enter the B&L Honey Show.

- Paint a stone related to bees (for under 11s)
- Any Artistic, Decorative or Instructive Exhibit, relating to Bees and Beekeeping with a written explanation of the exhibit is permitted. Display not to exceed 600mm x 600mm (under for 11s)
- A Matching Pair of Moulded Beeswax Candles, one to be lit by the Judge. Open only to individuals under the age of 18 on the first day of the Show.
- A piece of artwork (any medium) with the theme of "My Smoker My Smoker". Open only to individuals who are senior school age on the first day of the Show).

More information about the honey show to follow, or get in touch with me—see email link on back page.

Jude New, Events Co-ordinator

Meeting report: Oops, my bees have swarmed!



Our last winter meeting on 16 April featured an enlightening session with Martin Hann and Claire Densley, beekeepers at Buckfast Abbey and authors of *Beekeeping: A Practical Guide for Considerate Beekeepers*, available from Northern Bee Books.

They reframed one of beekeeping's most stressful events: the swarm. Rather than a sign of failure, Martin and Claire reminded us that the colony is a supra-organism, and swarming is a natural, healthy expression of vitality.

The biology of the swarm

Swarming provides a vital biological reset. The resulting brood break is one of the most effective natural defences against varroa mites, as it halts their reproductive cycle.

However, it isn't without risk: the

bees leave without a guaranteed home, their success often tied to the local environment. Interestingly, soil types play a role: light soils lead to faster spring build-ups, while clay soils, though slower to warm, retain moisture better for forage.

Pheromones and congestion

The glue holding the colony together is the queen pheromone, spread through physical touch. Swarming behaviour often begins in the extremities of the hive. If the hive is congested, the workers at the edges lose contact with the pheromone, triggering the impulse to build queen cells. While we often look for cells along the bottom of frames, the speakers warned that swarm cells are not always on the edges.

Supersedure vs swarming

Distinguishing between a swarm and supersedure—replacing a failing queen—can be difficult.

A poor brood pattern or scattered drone cells may suggest the queen is running out of sperm, but the colony's final decision to swarm or stay is often weather-dependent but swarms generally issue between midday and 16.00. Before the exit, the queen physically changes shape, slimming

down to become light enough for flight.

Management strategies

Once a swarm has left, the workers remain in control. They listen for the piping and quacking of virgin queens to decide whether to throw subsequent cast swarms. To prevent this depletion, Martin and Claire advised:

- Reduce queen cells down to a single, strong candidate.
- Avoid cell ripping: simply tearing out cells repeatedly is ineffective; once a cell is sealed, the swarm impulse is usually committed.
- The mini-artificial swarm: create a queen-right nuc with open larvae to satisfy the colony's instinct while keeping your bees.

This session provided a fantastic blend of biological theory and practical apiary management, leaving us all better prepared for the busy season ahead. It was a really useful refresher for the experienced and a great lesson for newer beekeepers.

Thank you to Ross for the tea and the cakemakers for the refreshments.

Manek Dubash (words & photos)



2026 BBKA Spring Convention highlights



I attended the 2026 event—my fourth year—to immerse myself in the latest research into bees and the threats they face (among other things). And to enjoy the company of beekeepers amid the toothsome catering provided by the venue host, Harper Adams University.

The weekend-long event consists primarily of research-led lectures and practical workshops; this year I decided to focus on attending as many lectures as possible, so here's a summary of my three days there.

Top line: there are three core issues facing our hives: evolving viruses, the looming threat of new parasites, and the essential role of bee healthcare.

The virus landscape

Deformed Wing Virus (DWV) remains our most persistent adversary. Professor Robert Paxton and Stephen



Martin highlighted that while deformed wings are an accidental by-product of the virus—it manifests when the virus happens to concentrate in the wing buds—the real damage is internal. The UK is largely dealing with DWV-B, which is more virulent than the A strain.

Dr. Laura Brettell's research suggests that DWV is spilling over into bumblebees and wasps via shared flowers, so keeping mite levels low is the only effective anti-viral strategy, as the virus mutates too quickly for cures to work.

On the horizon: *Tropilaelaps*

The session on *Tropilaelaps mercedesae* (dubbed Varroa 2.0) was worrying. This mite is faster, more aggressive, and reproduces twice as quickly as varroa. Humans are currently moving it through Georgia and probably Turkey too. Unlike varroa, it doesn't prefer drone cells



Marla Spivak

and can collapse a colony in mere months. The NBU is updating its list of accepted medicines as standard treatments like Varromed do not penetrate the cells where these mites hide.

Propolis and hygiene

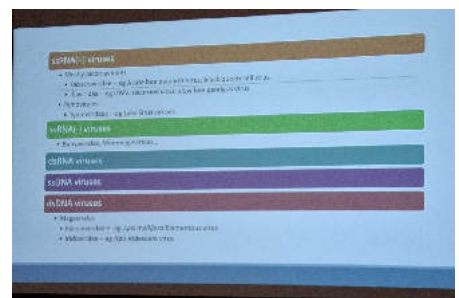
Marla Spivak of the University of Minnesota provided two fascinating talks, this one about insights into social immunity.

The propolis envelope: we've long known propolis is anti-microbial, but new data shows that hives with a rough interior (encouraging bees to coat the walls in resin) have quieter immune systems. This saves the bees energy and leads to higher honey yields and lower disease rates.

Hygienic behaviour: Resistance is often found in recapping—where bees uncap a cell, sense a mite, and reseal it, disrupting the mite's reproductive cycle.

Beekeeping in the local landscape

In a study relevant in our urban-vs-rural Sussex, Prof. Robert Paxton's research, mainly conducted in



2026 BBKA Spring Convention highlights (cont.)



Germany, confirmed once again that urban environments often provide better forage diversity and higher seed sets than the open countryside. Interestingly, organic farming and flower strips were shown to significantly lower parasite loads. For those keeping bees near organic plots or urban gardens in Brighton and Lewes, the news is positive: diversity is the best medicine.

Breeding for resistance

This lecture from Marla Spivak focused on long-term survival. While a Darwinian approach of letting weak colonies die may work for those with very large numbers of colonies, the best way forward for hobbyist beekeepers is pragmatic breeding.

By selecting for queens whose colonies show high recapping rates and low mite counts, we can move toward a future where chemical treatments are the exception, not the rule.

Not just lectures

On top of all the science lessons, there were dozens of practical workshops—it's simply not possible to attend every interesting session—and a great trade show. Some vendors (you can guess who they were) offered discounts, for example, a wooden-framed queen



excluder for under £10, while pre-bought kit could be picked up at the venue.

Notes available

Please note: this is a heavily abridged version of my notes: if you'd like a copy, please let me know.

Manek Dubash

Photos: BBKA & Manek Dubash

South of England Agricultural Show



I hope you and your bees are doing well and that they haven't got ahead of you already with these odd days of warm weather. It's time to ask you whether you will be able to help with our Ardingly shows this year.

Summer show

Dates: 5, 6, 7 June 2026

At the summer show, we will present our popular live beekeeping displays.

We will have observation hives, information displays, and stalls selling bee-related products. As always, we will need plenty of volunteers to help us at this show, performing demonstrations, presenting information, answering questions and looking after the safety of our visitors.

We will aim to focus some demonstrations on youth groups on Friday and are running our children's poster competition again.

Autumn show

Dates: 26, 27 September 2026

At the Autumn show, we will be indoors with our stall offering honey from around Surrey/Sussex and beyond, and presenting the South of England Honey Show.

Please do consider entering the Honey Show, you can see the schedule of classes (when it is issued) [here](#). Volunteers are needed to sell honey,

explain exhibits to visitors, steward the Honey Show, and help us clear up afterwards!

What's the deal?

The usual deal applies, in return for volunteering for half a day, you have the other half to look around the rest of the show, and as much tea/coffee as you can drink. Please let me know as soon as you can the days for which you can volunteer at the summer show, and feel free to share this email with your colleagues.

You are also welcome to give a provisional indication of your availability for the autumn.

Best wishes,

Bob Barnes

Chair & Chief Steward,

Bees & Honey Section,

South of England Agricultural Society

Spring/summer events

Sat 2 May	Honey Bee Health module	Grassroots	Jude
Sat 9 May	SBKA Bee Market	Uckfield College	-
Sat 16 May	Open hive: queen rearing	Hove	Adrien
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Sat 30 May	Open hive: Demaree/Padgen splits	Barcombe	Ian
Sat 13 June	Open hive: swarming and starving	Rottingdean	Jeff
Sat 13 June	Open hive: swarming and starving	Grassroots	Jude
Sat 25 June	Open hive: honey production	Hove	Adrien
Sat 25 June	Open hive: honey production	Grassroots	Jude

Bee Chats

- 19:30 in a pub

Open meetings in Lewes

- From 19:00 for 19:30, Eastgate Church Hall, Eastgate Street, Lewes BN7 2LR

Newsletter deadlines

Please send all contributions, **including photos**, to the Editor (contact details on the right). Max length 500 words.

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

National Bee Unit Inspectors

Seasonal Bee Inspectors

Daniel Morgan
daniel.morgan@apha.gov.uk
 07500 954 390

Helen Hadley
helen.hadley@apha.gov.uk
 07871 320 316

B&L newsletter's award certificate



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Lewes Town Council



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Contacts

President: Norman Dickinson

Chairman: Manek Dubash
chair@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07788 923557

Hon Secretary: Mat Budgen
matbudgen@hotmail.com
 07776 468513

Treasurer & Membership Secretary: Graham Bubloz
treasurer@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07758 866278

Training Co-ordinator: Jude New
newapiary@hotmail.com

Events Secretary: Jude New
meetings@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07875 895285

Newsletter Editor: Manek Dubash
editor@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07788 923557

Librarian: Alasdair Nicol
librarian@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07939 689356

Swarm Co-ordinator: Ian White
swarms@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07999 987097

Asian Hornet Team Co-ordinator: Rachel Ramaker
blbka.ahat@gmail.com
 07762 312592

Webmaster: Gerald Legg
gerald@chelifer.com

Apiary Managers
 Barcombe: Ian White
 Grassroots: Jude New
 Hove: Adrien Parker
 Rottingdean: Jeff Rodrigues

B&L Facebook Group
 Group Administrator: Graham Bubloz
facebook@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk / 07758 866278

Sussex BKA Representatives: Ian White & Manek Dubash

National Honey Show Rep: Vacant