



THE SCOUT



moving Sussex beekeeping forwards >>>



04.2026

WELCOME BACK TO

THE SCOUT – your source of inspiration and information for beekeepers across Sussex. This newsletter will keep you updated on learning opportunities and help you grow your skills and confidence in the craft of beekeeping.

Welcome to 2026 and another exciting beekeeping season, which has already seen colonies bursting at the seams with early swarms and full supers. The question is – do you feel fully confident to deal with whatever your bees throw at you this year?

Perhaps you're wondering whether to try something different this season, refine what you already do, or even take the plunge into something new like queen rearing. Whatever your level, one thing is certain: there is always more to learn in beekeeping, and Sussex is fortunate to have a wealth of knowledgeable and enthusiastic beekeepers willing to share their experience.

With that in mind, I'm delighted to offer our six-session Zoom programme: **"Building Basic Confidence in Beekeeping 2026 - with Sussex."** Starting on 16 April at 19:30, this county-wide course brings together some of our most experienced trainers and covers the full BBKA Basic and Honey Bee Health syllabi.

This is an opportunity to **consolidate what you already know, fill in the gaps, and build real confidence at the hive** – whether or not you plan to take an assessment. For those who do, you'll have the full support of the county to help you feel properly prepared on the day.

The course is designed to sit alongside practical apiary sessions run by your local Division, with additional support available across Sussex where needed. Theory is important – but time with the bees is where it all comes together.

Best of luck to those already entered for Basic, Honey Bee Health or General Husbandry this year. For everyone else, this could be the season you take that next step.

Don't get left behind – join us!

SIMON TUCK

> Education Officer and Chair SBKA

STUDY

Module 5: Honey Bee Biology

Once you have a clearer picture of how the honey bee's body works, it becomes much easier to understand their nutritional requirements and why pests and diseases have the effects they do. That knowledge makes you a more informed beekeeper, able to spot issues earlier and make better decisions for your bees. It is a fascinating topic and very relevant to everyday beekeeping.

Join my Zoom study group starting in September which will fully prepare you if you want to take the exam, or allow you to learn with fellow Sussex beekeepers even if you don't. Sign up here if you are interested:

<https://tinyurl.com/studyM5>

BUILDING BASIC CONFIDENCE IN BEEKEEPING 2026

- WITH SUSSEX

Session 1 – Swarming, Varroa and Keeping Colonies Viable

Thursday 16 April 2026 | Trainer: Malcolm Wilkie

✓ An integrated look at two of the biggest influences on colony survival: understanding and managing swarming, and detecting, monitoring and controlling varroa using modern integrated pest management approaches, including awareness of viruses, reinfestation and mite resistance.

Session 2 – Bees, the Beekeeping Year and Feeding

Thursday 23 April 2026 | Trainer: Ian Smith

✓ How bee biology, forage and the seasons drive practical beekeeping decisions, including the colony life cycle, overwintering, feeding, recognising starvation risk, supering, robbing awareness and small-scale honey extraction.

Session 3 – Hives, Equipment, Hygiene and Records

Thursday 30 April 2026 | Trainer: Jude New

✓ A practical session on working confidently with modern hives and equipment, focusing on bee space, frames and comb management, good apiary hygiene, disease prevention, record keeping and using key online beekeeping resources.

Session 4 – Confident Hive Handling and Inspection Skills

Thursday 14 May 2026 | Trainer: Graham Stuart

✓ Building calm, methodical hive inspection skills, including handling bees, using tools correctly, identifying castes, brood and stores, understanding what you see in the hive, and taking adult bee samples where required.

Session 5 – Queens, Colonies and the Apiary Environment

Thursday 28 May 2026 | Trainer: Pete Coxon

✓ Understanding queen-related issues and colony continuity, including recognising queenlessness and uniting colonies, along with practical apiary considerations such as siting, nuisance avoidance, stings and first aid, and managing pests like wax moth and mice.

Session 6 – Bee Health, Disease Recognition and Responsibilities

Thursday 4 June 2026 | Trainer: Simon Tuck

✓ A comprehensive overview of honey bee health, covering healthy brood recognition, brood and adult bee diseases, statutory responsibilities, use of diagnostic tools, spray poisoning awareness, emerging threats, and how BBKA Basic and Honey Bee Health fit as optional next steps.

WHY IT'S WORTH IT

Overview

Get Basic or Honey Bee Health ready with this county-led, 6 session course. Receive all the theory you need from top trainers across Sussex.

This county-wide course is for beekeepers who want to feel **calm, confident, and successful** with the fundamentals of beekeeping – whether you're thinking about the BBKA Basic or Honey Bee Health Certificate, or simply want to strengthen what you already know.

Many people come out of their first season thinking *"I sort of understand this... but I'm not always sure I'm doing the right thing."* This course is designed to turn that uncertainty into confidence.

Who is it for?

Beekeepers in their **second (or third!) season**

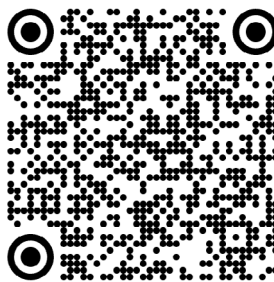
- Anyone considering the **BBKA Basic or Honey Bee Health** assessments
- Beekeepers who want a **refresh of the essentials** without pressure
- Those who want to improve colony health, decision-making, and enjoyment

You do not need to be entering an assessment to benefit.

1. Turn *"I think I'm doing it right..."* into **real confidence at the hive**
2. Build the **core skills every beekeeper should have** – handling, inspections, swarm awareness, bee health
3. Learn from **experienced Sussex trainers** drawn from across the county
4. Understand **what's really happening in the hive** and make better decisions through the season
5. **Spot problems early** – varroa, disease, queen issues – before they become disasters
6. A friendly, supportive route for anyone considering **BBKA Basic or Honey Bee Health**
7. Perfect for **second-year beekeepers...** and for more experienced beekeepers who fancy a refresher
8. Because even **old dogs can learn new tricks** – and the bees keep changing the rules anyway!

SIMON TUCK

> Course Leader



Building Basic Confidence in Beekeeping 2026 - with Sussex Sign up here.