



Bath BEEkeepers NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4
APRIL



HELLO AND WELCOME



In the beekeepers calendar the month of April means that spring should finally be here. Warmer, brighter days means more available for the bees to forage. With the warming temperatures our bees will continue to clear out their hive and begin to bring in new pollen while the queen is rearing new brood. If it's warm enough (15°C) for your 1st hive inspection have a plan and purpose for the inspection and have all your bee equipment clean, tidy and to hand.

CLUB NEWS— BASIC ASSESSMENT SUCCESS



Congratulations to Sean Dennedy who has achieved his Basic Beekeeping certificate. Trevor Curry recently presented Sean with his certificate at the TA.

To take the Basic Assessment you should have managed at least one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months.

The Basic Assessment syllabus can appear daunting at first glance but closer inspection will show that it merely lists the basic things which all beekeepers should know. But there are always people available to ask questions at the TA who will happily answer these and offer support if you

wish to undertake this qualification. Further information and dates see March Newsletter. The BBKA Basic Assessment syllabus can be found by clicking on this link:

<https://bathbeekeepers.com/courses-education-basic-course/>

Places on this course are limited. If interested please get in touch with Alison Holman to book your place and/or if further information is required, by **1st April 2024**.



CLUB ACTIVITIES— BEES ABROAD TALK

On the 7th April at 14.00 we have Rachel Monger from Bees Abroad coming to give us a talk at the TA. Please come along and support this interesting talk.

Bees Abroad works directly with communities and in-country partners to mentor and train in local beekeeping best practices, business skills, and protecting the environment.

Beekeeping is a sustainable, cost-effective, and ecologically friendly way for communities to generate an income and a food source and to build and grow a business. There is a significant opportunity to increase honey production in the countries that Bees Abroad work with as the conditions are often well suited to Beekeeping and the

demand for honey far exceeds the supply.

Bees Abroad offer the opportunity to not only increase honey production in communities but to do so sustainably using local beekeeping practices.

Bees Abroad have seen first-hand the diverse impact beekeeping has. Working with a strong network of in-country partners, communities receive training, support, and guidance in building and inspecting hives, locally sourcing equipment, harvesting and processing honey and setting up micro-businesses. See link to [Bees Abroad](#)



CLUB ACTIVITIES— SHOWS

We need your help.... The Show season is nearly upon us and the requests for Bath Beekeepers to attend are coming in.

Supporting these shows are great days out and a fantastic way to help increase your own beekeeping knowledge while also educating the public.

Even if you are a new beekeeper, you'll be surprised how much knowledge you have and there will always be someone on the stand to help if you don't know the answer.

Dates we need support for are:

- 12 May:** Holbourne Plant Sale
- 8 June:** Queen Charlton Fete
- 9 June:** Kelston Farm open day

13 July: Frenchay Flower Show

14 September: Bathampton Village Show

If you can help please email: Alison.Hillman@BTInternet.com

Dates for Diaries:

- 6 April Avon Spring Study Day
- 7 April Bees Abroad talk @ TA
- 9 April Basic (Improvers) course. & cont over 16; 25 & 30 April
- 13/14 April Beginners Course starts W/End & cont.: 20\21 & 27/28 April
- 12-14 April BBKA Spring Convention
- May 24 Basic (Improvers) Practi-
- 15 June BBKA Queen Rearing

CLUB ACTIVITIES - ASIAN HORNET IMPORTANT UPDATE

An update on the latest Asian Hornet (AH) information from Jeremy Huckle the TA's Asian Hornet Team Coordinator.

Jeremy believes that currently we need to take a pragmatic approach to the Asian Hornet threat and not over react. He is recommending that we all support and promote the traffic light view, and thankfully in this area we are currently in the green zone, indicating that there have not been any nests located and destroyed or any positive sightings within our area.

The current and best advice is to concentrate on keeping the public informed and aware of

the AH threat and to distribute the posters (some available at the TA) and advice around Bath to the relevant businesses etc.



Facts So Far: 73 AH nests were found and destroyed in 2023, mostly in the Kent area.

As a result of this the NBU and local AHAT volunteers will be placing numerous Spring

AH traps in the Kent area to hopefully find any emerging queens that have survived the winter.

The results from this activity will be very interesting and will help to plan the future way forward.

Action for Members: If you haven't undertaken please complete the BBKA Asian Hornet quiz to increase your own AH knowledge: [Asian hornet quiz](https://www.bbka.org.uk/general-public-asian-hornet-quiz) (<https://www.bbka.org.uk/general-public-asian-hornet-quiz>). Then become an AH verifier which will be critical in the future.

AH Verifier's Required:

An Asian hornet (AH) verifier supports Jeremy Huckle in his role as the TAs Team Coordinator.

Please help with this important role and contact [Jeremy Huckle](mailto:Jeremy.Huckle@outlook.com) (<Jandjhuckle@outlook.com>)

You will need to complete the BBKA AH [Exercise](#) at this link

(takes about 20 minutes to complete) - on the BBKA site at <https://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-action-team-map>.

CLUB VACANCIES

IMPORTANT: The club needs a treasurer. Is there a member willing to take on this role for us? You'll get a good handover and support from all the committee members (committee meets every other month) please contact Charlotte or Shaun at bathbka.sec@gmail.com if you can ink undertake



CLUB ACTIVITIES - TIDING UP THE APIARY

Although the Teaching Apiary is closed during the winter months the weeds and plants don't seem to get that same message and continue to grow.

So last month some kind volunteers answered the "call to help out" and supported Pete with the clearing and tiding up of the site



and making of frames for the coming season.

Many thanks to all those who attended working very hard and giving up their time over several weekends to tidy up the site and get it ready for when the club re-opens.



CLUB NOTICE BOARD

Do you look at the Notice board at the TA? Please keep yourselves up to date with information that is pinned onto this board, you could be missing out. Not only will it display information regarding the club and activities but it will also include discount vouchers or codes that you can utilise for various outlets.

THIS MONTH IN THE HIVE—APRIL 2024

When the hive is fully opened for the first time, it is essential that the amount of space for the colony to expand into and the remaining food stores are assessed. Within the brood area, there should be eggs, larvae and sealed brood. There may also be some drone brood.

The first full inspection of the year should be considered as one of the more important inspections of the year. It will

be the first chance to more fully understand the condition of the colony and the stores in the hive. It may also be one of the last chances to detect and respond to issues within the colony and to reconfigure your hive before the season gets into full swing.

During April:

- ◆ It is worth checking that your hive stands have not sunk a bit over winter. Do not

rely on your eye, use a spirit level.

- ◆ Is there any encrusted propolis around the tops of your brood chambers where the frame ends are supported? If so, it is time to clean away the propolis or change the frames for clean ones.

- ◆ Are all your queens marked? Knowing the exact location of the queen is an

essential pre-requisite for many manipulations and the ability to mark her, an essential skill.

- ◆ Now is the best time of year to remove old comb. Any that is black, misshapen, should be replaced.

- ◆ As some colonies will swarm in April, it is recommend you start making brood inspections every week.

CLUB ACTIVITIES - BASIC BEE HYGIENE



Hygiene covers everything from having a clean bee suit and gloves, to ensuring that you the beekeeper is not a conduit for any disease. This is done by ensuring that all equipment is cleaned between hives and after each apiary visit.

Apiary hygiene is key to prevent the spread of pests and diseases, maintaining good hygiene practices around the apiary by removing all exposed bees wax scraps, any old comb, honey spills or feed and any dead colonies, all of which can increase the risk of attracting and harboring pests and diseases.

Beekeepers Clothing:

Beekeeping overalls should be washed regularly but at least annually in the washing machine. Include a small amount of washing soda with the detergent to help remove propolis, zip up the suit to avoid damage and check if your veil should be removed for hand washing.

Washing up gloves or thin disposable gloves are mostly used these days and can be swilled in washing soda solution between colonies, reducing the risk of spreading infection. They can also be replaced on a frequent basis.

Hive Tools:

Always clean hive tools between each inspection. Use a washing solution made from:

1 kg of washing Soda (soda crystals/Sodium Carbonate) to 5 ltrs of warm water with a squeeze of washing up liquid. Immerse the equipment in the solution, while using a wired brush, or similar tool to scrub off residues until the tools are clean and then dry before putting away.

Clean and Disinfect Brood Boxes and Frames:

In summary this can be done in several ways:

- 1: If you have the facility place all into a freezer (less than -20C) for 48 hours, then scrape off the debris onto newspaper for easy disposal.
- 2: Use a blow torch to scorch equipment being careful not to burn anything.
- 3: Clean by scrubbing with a clean soda crystal solution.
- 4: Use a chemical sterilisation with a disinfectant.

For more details on when and how to clean, sterilise and disinfect please see the National Bee Unit (NBU) Guide on [Hive Cleaning & Sterilisation](#).

QUESTION & ANSWERS

Q: Do winter bees have stingers?

A: Yes, Winter bees are all females and therefore have stingers. It is thought that the bee venom increases in toxicity as the bees age and the stings from newly hatched bees are milder.

Q: Checking my hive I saw small, stingless bees that were outside & looked like they were dying?

A: This is probably young emerging bees or bees removed before emerging that have been affected by varroa. Sometimes they can be re-

moved earlier at the white grub/developing bee stage. This is not necessarily a bad thing, it could be a sign the bees are removing the week, affected bees which is a sign of good hygienic behaviour. Keep monitoring this to see if a regular sign of good behaviour.

Also, at this time of year there is more brood than bees. If we get a cold snap there won't be enough bees to keep all the brood warm and some will die off in the cold and the dead ones will have to be ejected.



Recipe of the month –Harissa & Honey Halloumi Toastie

Ingredients:

- * Olive Oil, for frying;
- * 250g Halloumi cut into 6 slices;
- * 40g butter;
- * 4 slices toasted sourdough bread;
- * 2 tsp Rose Harissa
- * 2 tbs Honey &
- * 2 sliced tomatoes

Method:

Step 1: Heat a frying pan over a medium heat with a drizzle of olive oil and fry the halloumi for a couple of minutes on each side until golden then remove. Wipe the pan clean

Step 2: Divide the halloumi between 2 slices of the bread, smear the rose harissa onto the halloumi, drizzle with honey and lay the tomato slices on top. Season well with black pepper, then put the other

slices of toasted bread on top and press down.

Step 3: Heat half the butter in the same frying pan. Add the sandwiches then weigh down with a plate and a tin of beans. Once golden, flip, add the remaining butter and repeat on the other side until golden and toasted



If you have any stories, photos, info that you'd like included please email to:

alison.hillman@btinternet.com

By 20th each month