



Bees in the News

The BBKA is proposing that May is "Bee Health Month" and encouraging every Association to hold a "healthy hive day".



Photo Competition

To support the BBKA initiative Alnwickdotes is running a "best brood pattern" photo competition. Members can enter by sending a photo of their brood pattern taken in May. The winning picture will win the prize of having their picture featured in the next edition of Alnwickdotes! Send your entry to alnwickdotes@adbka.co.uk

Apiary Update

"Great news. All seventeen hives have made it through the winter and look healthy. It's too early to do a proper inspection yet but there is load of pollen going in to all the hives. We have taken 50lbs of honey from the hives which the bees have not taken over the winter, which should help to buy some new equipment for the queen rearing programme. Looks like we're getting off the season to a good start." – [Brian Ripley, Apiary Manager](#)



Apiary tidy up

There was a great turnout for the "start of season clear up" at the club apiary on 5th April, with over 30 people helping to get the site looking in great shape.



Peter Edge, Ian Robson and Matt Wright blow torched the spare apiary equipment, helping keep our apiary hygienic and disease free.

Peter Rose making up brood frames, along with Gary Hardington, Guy Burgess, Dawn Jorasz, Ben Hopkinson and June, ready to replace old frames when inspections start.



While John Wilsdon, along with his soon to be son in law Bobby Frank, as well as brothers John and David Saul, cleared the path through the apiary.





Helen Wright and Jan Broderick removed mouse guards fitted over winter and replaced then with entrance blocks.



Glyn Scott and Lynn Brown stocked up the shop ready for the new season, which will be open on Saturday mornings between 10:30 and 12:00, after 26th April, when this season's training sessions start at the apiary.

Well done to everyone who helped and supported the clean-up day. It was great to see so many of the association's experienced characters, as well as so many new members turning out.

Saturday mornings during the season look like a great place to come and share the fantastic atmosphere and location of the association apiary and talk about bees with other enthusiasts.

Honey Recipe

Thank you to Helen Wright for providing this recipe for Honey Spice Cake.

Honey Spice Cake

This recipe and accompanying text is taken from a postcard, bought at Lindisfarne several years ago. "It was believed that bees could whisper in God's ear, so religious houses only used beeswax candles. The honey was used for making mead and in cooking. Gingerbread was made for holy days, and honey was used until imported sugar became cheap. This modern recipe is inspired by the old tradition and improves with keeping for a few days before cutting".



Ingredients

- 250g / 8oz self-raising flour
- 125g / 4oz honey
- 90g / 3oz light soft brown sugar
- 125g / 4oz butter
- 1 egg (beaten)
- 75ml / 5tbs milk
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Instructions

- Sieve together dry ingredients.
- Warm honey, sugar & butter in a pan until the butter melts.
- Leave to cool slightly and then beat in egg & milk.
- Stir into dry mix and then pour into a greased & lined 20cm / 8" round cake tin.
- Bake at Gas mark 5, 190 C / 375f for about 50 mins, or until cooked in centre.



Top Tips – For Spring

Alnwickdotes asked Keith Grimes for his top 3 tips for new beekeeper in the spring. They are:-

- *“Don’t got into your hives until the weather is warm enough to wear a Tee Shirt”*
- *“Check that your bees have enough food during the “hunger gap”, as they start becoming active while there is little nectar about.”*
- *“Take mouse guards off”*

Here is Keith, our membership secretary, giving fellow committee member, Glyn Scott, some advice at the apiary clean up on Saturday.



Members - Me & My bees

In this edition, Alnwickdotes asked Ian Robson about his beekeeping experiences.

What’s your experience and approach to keeping bees ?

“I have been keeping bees for about 10 or 12 years. I started with bees from the Association and have built them up such that I put about fifteen hives through the winter. I keep the local black bees in Smith Hives, though in hindsight I would have been better if I had started with National Hives as these are more readily available.”



“Over the last three years I have bought a number of Buckfast Queens from Ged Marshall and now have 4 hives of these kept in Commercial Hives (different gear again!)

The hives are kept on a farm a mile or so away from the house, and I will generally move them to the rape and to the heather through the year and then back to the home Apiary for the winter.”

What’s your beekeeping goal for the future ?

“I want to carry on with the BBKA Education and work my way through The Modules next.”



What would be your hardest earned advice for other beekeepers ?

“Keep more than one hive, I think three is the magic number, it allows you to carry out a number of different manipulations and gives you three times as much bee experience each year, if you only have one hive and it dies out, you are starting again from scratch the following year and gaining no experience!”

Training @ ADBKA

Training sessions at the apiary start on the 26th April and run over 12 weeks to cover the basic beekeeping skills. It is aimed at new beekeepers and those wishing to develop their skills and learn from experienced members of the association.

The first meeting on the 26th starts at 10:00 at the café 200m along the lane from the apiary entrance.



Queen Rearing Programme

After the initial startup meeting earlier in the year the association queen rearing team training started on the 14th April at the apiary.

The programme is being organised by Brian Ripley, with Jim Rogerson conducting the training of the team, which is made up of Lance Adkin, Ian Thompson, Ian Jobson, Peter Rose, David Cummins, Bryan Cole and Brian Wood.



Jim took the team through the process and equipment that will be used to prepare a queen rearing hive, the introduction of queen cells, transfer to mating hives and the introduction of mated queens to new hives.



The use of the grafting tool was demonstrated and practiced. The team also learned about methods and equipment for collecting the pollen required to feed the nurse bees, so they can produce the royal honey required to feed the developing queens.



The team then inspected the apiary colonies to identify the best colonies to raise queens from and to take samples of bees for wing analysis.



During the inspections it was clear that most of the colonies in the association apiary have emerged from the winter in strong condition, with many requiring empty supers to be fitted straight away.

The next step in the process is for the larger team to be split into a left side and a right side team. Each team will be preparing its own queen rearing hive in the coming weeks.

Alnwickdotes looks forward to keeping you updated with their progress. Good luck team.





Bee Poetry

Thank you to Jan Broderick for providing this poem,
The **Bee-Boy's Song** by **Rudyard Kipling**

Bees! Bees! Hark to your bees!

"Hide from your neighbours as much as you please,
But all that has happened, to us you must tell,
Or else we will give you no honey to sell!"

A maiden in her glory,
Upon her wedding - day,
Must tell her Bees the story,
Or else they'll fly away.

Fly away -- die away --
Dwindle down and leave you!
But if you don't deceive your Bees,
Your Bees will not deceive you.

Marriage, birth or buryin',
News across the seas,
All you're sad or merry in,
You must tell the Bees.
Tell 'em coming in an' out,
Where the Fanners fan,
'Cause the Bees are just about
As curious as a man!

Don't you wait where the trees are,
When the lightnings play,
Nor don't you hate where Bees are,
Or else they'll pine away.
Pine away -- dwine away --
Anything to leave you!
But if you never grieve your Bees,
Your Bees'll never grieve you.

be **informed**, be **up to date**, be **entertained**
read

THE BEEKEEPERS' QUARTERLY
the 64 page full colour magazine in its 25th year
view a sample at www.bkq.org.uk
£26 per year from Northern Bee Books
Scout Bottom Farm, Mytholmroyd,
Hebden Bridge, HX7 5JS
Sales@recordermail.co.uk
www.groovycart.co.uk/beebooks

Beekeeping Basics

Making up sugar syrup of the right strength is a key skill for beekeepers. Concentration will depend on the purpose of the syrup solution.



Weak Solution is ideal when bees need to feed immediately, it needs to be below 50% concentration for them to digest the syrup and can stimulate activity.



Strong Solution is ideal when bees are building up stores. They will evaporate off the water to leave an 80% concentration for compact and hygienic storage and add water back later for feeding. Hot water may be required to dissolve at this concentration.


Bee-ginners Questions

If you have any beekeeping questions, send them to Alnwickdotes and we will publish them so more experienced beekeepers can respond. Send in your questions & responses to alnwickdotes@adbka.co.uk

Dear Alnwickdote readers

I have heard that Apis Melifera Melifera are the native bee to the region but that Buckfast are more productive. Can anyone tell me which should I get?

— Helen Wright, Morpeth



*'Blow, blow ye wastin winds, blow soft,
Among leafy trees,
With the gentle gale from hill and dale,
Bring hame the laden bees'
Robert Burns, O' A' the Airts*

**Western Red Cedar Hives,
crafted to perfection.**

Contact us for a quote

The Hive Maker
Shaun Scrimgeour
Tel: 0191 2532101
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