



Bristol Beekeepers

Bristol Branch of Avon Beekeepers Association

A registered charity established to advance the science of Apiculture and to promote and foster the education of the public therein.

Registered charity number 271717

An Introduction to Beekeeping.¶ Jan & Feb 2021¶¶



Covid Restricted e - Course

We normally deliver our beginner beekeeping course over 3 separate Saturdays on consecutive weekend in January and February, when we get all the attendees together and they can meet the Bristol Beekeepers. Attendees can see touch smell and feel the equipment needed for beekeeping, and hear about and discuss the business of beekeeping. In anticipation of limited ability to meet and socialise, this year we are re-creating the course in an electronic mode, with the aspiration of delivering the more practical hands on teaching in 3 repeated days with small but permissible numbers. The online theory teaching will be supported by Zoom meetings, where you can question and discuss the topics with the course tutors.

This course will not turn you into a beekeeper, it is an introduction. We normally run regular sessions in our training apiary throughout the

summer, for beginners to get some hands on experience with bees before they get bees themselves. We recommend you spend a year attending and learning before you acquire a colony and when you do, if you have engaged with us at the apiary, we will try to find you a mentor who can encourage and guide you in the right direction.

Keeping bees requires a number of key decisions, and we aim to help you make those before you spend significant amounts of money on new equipment and bees. We want you to avoid the disaster of having a colony in your garden, only to discover you go into a panic attack when you get a few cross bees buzzing round your ears. We therefore make no apology for challenging any false pre-conceptions, and are confident you will benefit if you discover that perhaps keeping bees requires more commitment than you thought, and maybe it is not right for you now.

However, we do want to open your eyes to the natural wonder that is the bee colony, and to amaze you with how sophisticated the honey bee society is. It is a potential opportunity for learning new skills and disciplines, and starting a lifetime of discovery and enjoyment.

The course will cost £80 in total, if we are unable to deliver the practical element, or if you choose not to complete the course by attending this, we will refund 50% of the cost. The course book (BBKA Guide to keeping bees) and other handouts will be provided at the practical sessions. If you want to get going on reading another beginners book in the meantime, there are plenty to choose from and the Haynes Bee Manual is one that has good reviews from our members.

Chris Morton. Education Officer, Bristol Beekeepers.

Lecture Programme. Released 16th January 2021.

1. To Bee or Not to Bee, that is the Question.

An introduction to Beekeeping and the Bristol Course

2. The Natural History of the Honey Bee.

The biology and anatomy of the Honey Bee, Form and Function.

3. The Bee Hive.

History, Design, and importantly, how to choose a bee hive.

Question & Answer session on Zoom, covering the first three lectures. Date: Saturday 23rd January, 8:00 – 9:00 pm, by Zoom.

4. Seasonal Management.

The Beekeeping year, and planned management of your colonies.

5. Swarming: Prevention and Control.

Cause and effect. How to recognise swarming before it is too late, and what to do about it. Prevention is better than the cure!

6. Honey Bee Health and Disease, 1.

The range of pests and diseases, plus public enemy number 1: *Varroa destructor*.

Question & Answer session on Zoom, covering the second three lectures. Date: Saturday 30th January, 8:00 – 9:00 pm, by Zoom.

7. Honey Bee Health and Disease, 2.

Focus on Brood diseases, especially the notifiable Foul Broods.

8. A Beginners Personal Experience.

A dose of reality and enthusiasm!

9. The Honey Harvest.

How to harvest and extract honey, then sell it whilst meeting your legal obligations.

10. Getting Started.

Membership of the British Beekeepers Association, its education programme, and Bristol Beekeepers / Avon BKA. Apiary sessions and what to expect. Mentoring. Acquiring bees and beekeeping equipment.

Question & Answer session on Zoom, covering the final four lectures. Date: Saturday 13th February 2021. 8:00 – 9:00 pm, by Zoom.

Zoom details and Questions:

Links to all the Zoom Question & Answer sessions will be released along with the lecture programme on the 16th January. We plan to invite questions ahead of the sessions submitted in an online survey format so that we can answer any common questions before inviting further topics during the session.

Practical Sessions:

We plan to hold a series of practical sessions, which will depend on the numbers involved in the course, and the regulations / controls in place at the time. We will aim to hold these towards the end of February, beginning of March if possible, but may delay further if necessary to enable them to be viable.

The planned subjects will be:

- Introductory Talk
- Honey Tasting (Sales available)

- Making Frames
- Anatomy Demonstration.
- Hands on examination of hives and bee kit.
- Hive inspection, on virtual hive
- Beekeeping Equipment.
- Honey Extraction **If Viable.**
- Honey Bottling & Labelling. **If Viable.**

At the practical session you attend, you will be given copies of catalogues from local and national equipment supplies, and a copy of “*The BBKA Guide to Beekeeping*”.

Apiary Sessions.

From late April / May onwards, we expect to be able to conduct sessions for beginners at the Bristol Beekeepers Apiary, near Cribbs Causeway. Here you will be able to get hands on experience of bee hive inspections, and discover if beekeeping really works for you – or if you are totally allergic to bee stings or the sound of angry bees at your ears! They are also an opportunity to get to know the Bristol BK team, and to start to engage with all the association can offer.