

Newsletter August 2026

Hi everybody, welcome to my newsletter for August '26. What a month July was and for the first time in years I was able to take off a quantity of honey, not a great deal but enough to fill me with the desire to keep on beekeeping.

Membership

No new members to welcome this month, all the recent joiners are throwing themselves into beekeeping.

July Events

Well July's visit was very interesting indeed. Our thanks go to Maggie and Shaun for hosting. Maggie and Shawn are new to beekeeping and have three hives. Two nationals and a WBC. Eleven of us managed to attend on a rainy day but the rain held off for the opening of the two National hive. Very impressed by the hive security here. Hive standing on a level paving slab and hive stand screwed to slab with angle brackets. Brood and Honey Supers fitted with clips and a bungee strap for the roof, all neatly tucked behind a guard rail to keep the deer away. Shaun opened up his first hive and with Richard's assistance, queen was found and marked. the hive was fully inspected and advice given. The same procedure went for the second hive and just near the end of that inspection the rain decided to come back and put a halt to the proceedings and we were unable to inspect the WBC which was a shame but im sure there will be another visit next year. As well as bees, Maggie and Shaun have a number of rescue animals and it was as interesting to see them as much as it was the bees. Thank you both.

Tony's Bee Blog

Tony's Latest blog is now on line and I do thank him for his time in doing this. Tony certainly highlights the danger of just one hive, as we all know and many of us have found out if something goes wrong you've nothing left. He also draws us to the opposite 'problem', where you have two hives you could end up with four. I was interested in his point of the wind break, if the bees have to struggle to get in and out of the hive are they less productive that day?

Apiary Visits

August will see us at Iain's apiary on Sunday 30th, times, parking and other details will be sent out on an all-members email

Honey Shown 2026

Entry forms and Honey Show schedule has been sent out and I look forward to a flood of entry forms soon.

Many of us will be extracting honey this month - please remember to keep aside a frame of honey for the show. When jarring up, again think about the show, and have some 1lb jars ready to fill with your "prize" honey

A reminder that we have an extractor you can borrow, as well as frame holders and access to 1lb jars if you need them. Simply send an email for any of these items.

Things to do in August

August is a quieter month for the bees as in many areas the summer flowers are coming to an end and the nectar flow is finishing – unless you have Himalayan balsam nearby or are taking your bees to the heather. There is still forage about: sunshine will encourage willowherb, blackberry, red clover, borage, golden rod and garden flowers and the bees will work them enthusiastically while they last. There is ivy still to come to provide a late season boost to stores but we should be mindful of our bees' needs as we take our final honey harvest: that golden bounty has not been gathered for our benefit alone. As the forage decreases, so will the laying rate of the queen and the brood area will decrease and fill up with winter stores. Drones are no longer needed and the workers throw them unceremoniously out of the entrance to starve: the focus now is on the winter bees. These bees are different for they stay within the hive all winter and do not pass beyond the nurse bee stage, meaning that their hypopharyngeal glands remain full of brood food ready for the spring rush of brood. The survival of the hive during that critical time in early spring is entirely dependent on these winter bees: for them to survive they must be well fed, healthy and free from varroa mites and the viruses they bring. This means that, for the beekeeper, there is plenty to do in August. This is the month to take off your last honey crop, treat for varroa and start autumn feeding. It is a time to take steps to prevent robbing by other colonies and wasps – reducing entrances, setting up wasp traps. It is also a time for preparing equipment and comb for storage, for cleaning and repairing everything that needs it and for making a list of what you need to buy in the late season sales.

Summary. Reduce hive entrances to help the bees defend against wasps and robbing by other colonies; if you have not already done so, set up wasp traps: a mix of beer and jam works well, plum for preference. Check hives carefully for gaps and small holes that could allow wasps or robbing bees to enter and plunder their stores: seal them up tightly. I use beeswax and propolis scrapings or small pieces of foam as a temporary fix but gaffer tape and Blu Tack are also useful. Do not forget to check floors and roofs, too. Finish taking off the honey harvest, clean extractor & equipment and put away. Check the bees have sufficient stores, clean & prepare feeders, buy in fondant/sugar/syrup. Carry out a thorough disease inspection, ask for help if worried. Decide on your varroa treatment plan, buy in what you need – and use it properly! Keep a treatment record. Unite small colonies. Start reducing the number of supers on each hive: consolidate or put over the crown board for the bees to move stores down. Maintain vigilance for Asian hornet activity: although the queens are confined to the nest at this time of the season, workers will be out looking for food and hawking around your hives. Baits should be protein (cat food/tuna) and changed regularly. Put empty supers and drawn comb into storage protected from wax moth. Clean and repair equipment before storing and make a list of needs & wants. Look back and take stock: what could you have done differently? better?

Dougie

Chair

