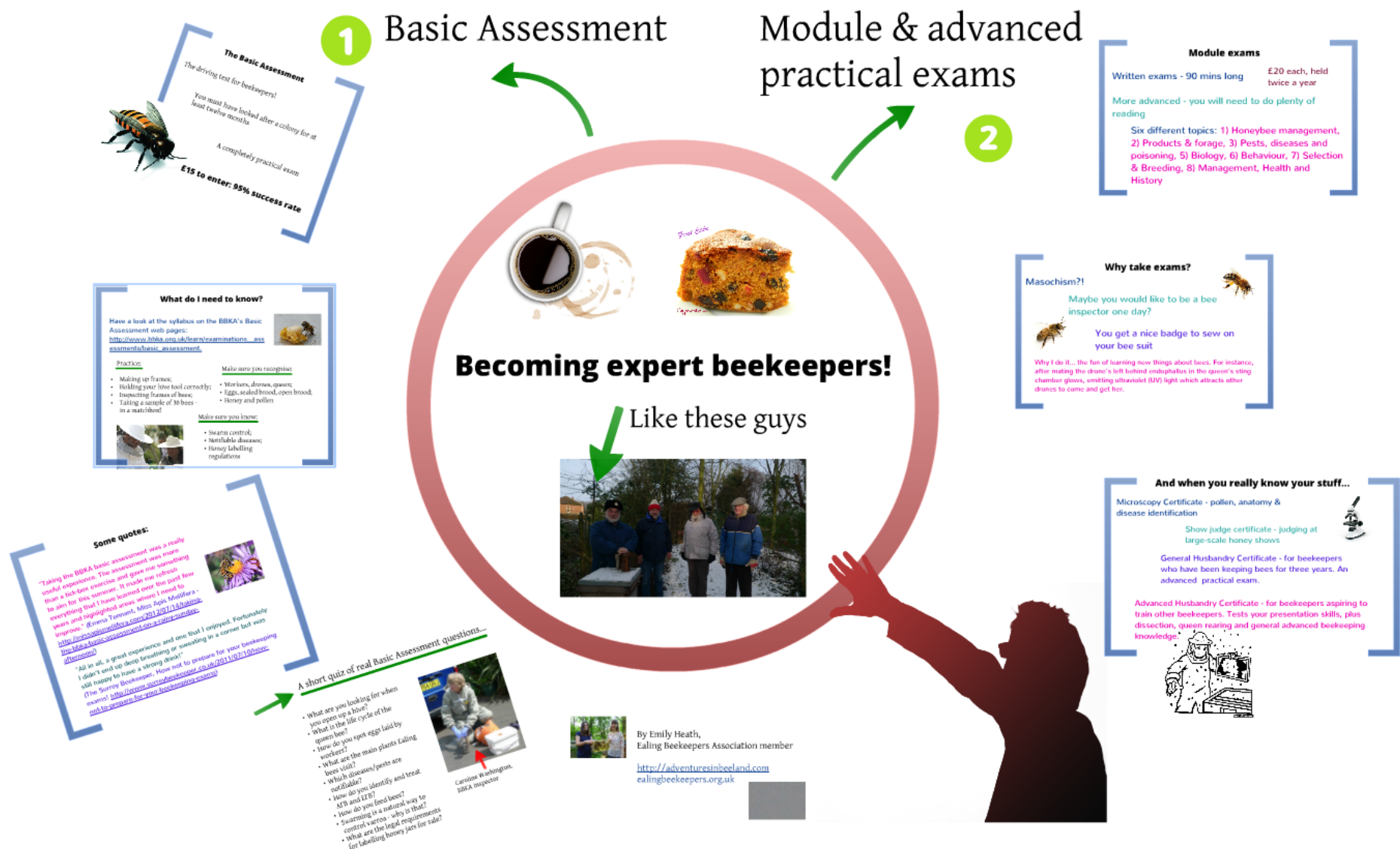


Progressing with beekeeping through the BBKA exams - from the Basic to Modules





Becoming expert beekeepers!

Like these guys



The Basic Assessment

The driving test for beekeepers!

You must have looked after a colony for at least twelve months

A completely practical exam

£15 to enter: 95% success rate



What do I need to know?

Have a look at the syllabus on the BBKA's Basic Assessment web pages:

http://www.bbka.org.uk/learn/examinations__assessments/basic_assessment.



Practice:

- Making up frames;
- Holding your hive tool correctly;
- Inspecting frames of bees;
- Taking a sample of 30 bees - in a matchbox!

Make sure you recognise:

- Workers, drones, queen;
- Eggs, sealed brood, open brood;
- Honey and pollen

Make sure you know:

- Swarm control;
- Notifiable diseases;
- Honey labelling regulations



Some quotes:

"Taking the BBKA basic assessment was a really useful experience. The assessment was more than a tick-box exercise and gave me something to aim for this summer. It made me refresh everything that I have learned over the past few years and highlighted areas where I need to improve." (Emma Tennant, Miss Apis Mellifera - <http://missapismellifera.com/2012/07/14/taking-the-bbka-basic-assessment-on-a-rainy-sunday-afternoon/>)



"All in all, a great experience and one that I enjoyed. Fortunately I didn't end up deep breathing or sweating in a corner but was still happy to have a strong drink!"

(The Surrey Beekeeper, How not to prepare for your beekeeping exams! <http://www.surreybeekeeper.co.uk/2011/07/10/how-not-to-prepare-for-your-beekeeping-exams>)

A short quiz of real Basic Assessment questions...

- What are you looking for when you open up a hive?
- What is the life cycle of the queen bee?
- How do you spot eggs laid by workers?
- What are the main plants Ealing bees visit?
- Which diseases/pests are notifiable?
- How do you identify and treat AFB and EFB?
- How do you feed bees?
- Swarming is a natural way to control varroa - why is that?
- What are the legal requirements for labelling honey jars for sale?



Caroline Washington,
BBKA inspector

Module exams

Written exams - 90 mins long

£20 each, held
twice a year

More advanced - you will need to do plenty of
reading

Six different topics: 1) Honeybee management, 2) Products & forage, 3) Pests, diseases and poisoning, 4) Biology, 5) Behaviour, 6) Selection & Breeding, 7) Management, Health and History

Why take exams?

Masochism?!



Maybe you would like to be a bee inspector one day?



You get a nice badge to sew on your bee suit

Why I do it... the fun of learning new things about bees. For instance, after mating the drone's left behind endophallus in the queen's sting chamber glows, emitting ultraviolet (UV) light which attracts other drones to come and get her.

And when you really know your stuff...

Microscopy Certificate - pollen, anatomy & disease identification

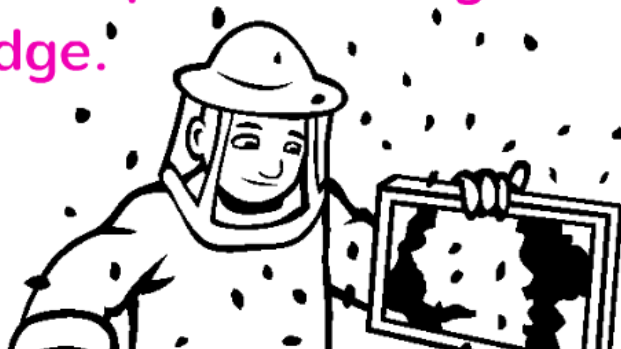


Show judge certificate - judging at large-scale honey shows



General Husbandry Certificate - for beekeepers who have been keeping bees for three years. An advanced practical exam.

Advanced Husbandry Certificate - for beekeepers aspiring to train other beekeepers. Tests your presentation skills, plus dissection, queen rearing and general advanced beekeeping knowledge.





By Emily Heath,
Ealing Beekeepers Association member

<http://adventuresinbeeland.com>
ealingbeekeepers.org.uk

