



Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association (SCIO)

- promoting the study and development of apiculture, and advancing the heritage, culture and science of beekeeping amongst its membership and throughout the wider community

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SC031754

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AGM UPDATE

Our 2016 AGM took place on 25 May at the Leys Hotel, Blackburn. In his report to the meeting, the Chair noted that over the previous twelve months the association has worked hard to serve the interests of its members through the delivery of a rich and varied programme of events, significantly enhancing the range of loan equipment, the continued development of the Crathes Castle apiary facilities and the dissemination of information and items of interest to our members through our monthly newsletter.

Special mention was made of those members whose efforts in the past year to support the work of the association were especially notable.

Honorary Treasurer, Leona Lowe, delivered a report on the association annual accounts, confirming a healthy financial position. Leona reminded members that copies of the full accounts were available on request.

Sincere thanks were given to departing committee members Ian Douglas, Hugh Donohoe, Louise Forbes and Innes Simpson for the contribution they have made to the association. Warmly welcomed onto the committee for the first time were Olga and Lindsey MacAulay and Malcolm Watson.

In recognition of their unsurpassed contribution to Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association, the 'Chair's Quaich' was awarded to Sandy and Lilian Gordon.

The meeting was delighted to re-elect Robert Wood as ADBKA President.

Following the formal part of the AGM, David Morland gave an extremely interesting presentation on his involvement with the Bee Project run by Greenbrae Primary School last year.

Our 2016/2017 committee:

Naomi Adams - Bielside 01224 868402

Secretary: Rosie Crighton - Blackburn 01224 791181
Barbara Cruden - Dyce 01224 770001

Joan Gilbert-Stevens - Muir of Fowls 019755 81369

Treasurer: Leona Lowe - Aberdeen 07966026564

Olga MacAulay - Aberdeen 01224 315 276

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Vice-Chair: David Morland - Udny 01651 842597

David Pert - Brechin 01356 647373

Graham Stables - Potterton 01358 743348

Gordon Stephen - Oldmeldrum 01651 873846

Kirsty Sutherland - Aberdeen 01467 626248

Chair: Graham Torrie - Torphins 013398 82038

Malcolm Watson - Auchnagatt 07901 515212

Erling Watt - Peterhead 07429454572

ADBKA members enjoyed fine weather and even finer hospitality at our **Bring and Buy Sale** at Auchry Farm on 29 May.

A huge thank you is due to the Seed family for their generosity in hosting this event and providing a lavish picnic, very much appreciated by all of us. Yvonne and Kathryn worked incredibly hard all afternoon to make sure we were amply fed and watered.

Thanks, too, to Hugh Donohoe and David Morland for setting up a microscopy demonstration, which proved to be a great draw.

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Members wishing to help out at the ADBKA stand at the **Turriff Show** on 31 July and/or 1 August this year, please contact Rosie Crighton. There will be honey tasting, as well as honey for sale, general information, observation hive, candle making for children, and other products of the hive will be for sale (not alcohol).

Rosie will provide a rota and information regarding the activities to be covered. Volunteers will be needed Sunday afternoon, and all day Monday. Great fun was had last year and hopefully even more this year!

Please let Rosie know if you have wax products you would like showcased or sold at the Show.

See contact details on this page.

TOP BAR HIVE PROJECT

Week 1: 28-MAY-16

After the usual weekly activities at the Crathes apiary, Team Top Bar stayed behind to assemble the new flat pack Top Bar Beehive. The instructions were somewhat misleading but between the four of us we managed to assemble it. A few coats of varnish were applied to the outside faces of the hive and then it was left to dry whilst we discussed the options to move a colony from a National into the Top Bar Hive.

On an old frame we practiced the "Chop and Crop" technique of removing the side and bottom bars of a national frame. This is well-documented by Phil Chandler, author of "The Barefoot Beekeeper" for transferring bees from a National into a Top Bar Hive.

Our plan is to find the queen, capture her in a Butler Cage and transfer her to the new hive. The frames will then be removed individually, shook into the original hive and the crown board replaced to minimise the amount of flying bees when we chop and crop the brood and stores frames down to size.

For the other frames that will fill the Top Bar Hive we have come up with three different ideas to try. Five frames have a 1 inch strip of non wired foundation glued into place with molten beeswax, some other frames will have some molten beeswax syringed along the seam where the wax would be inserted and the remaining frames will be left blank for the bees to do whatever they like to it. This will help us understand what types of frames the bees prefer to work on to draw comb.

Following a call for volunteers in our May newsletter, four ADBKA members stepped forward to take on the task of setting up and managing a top bar hive at our Crathes apiary. Running a top bar hive presents a whole series of challenges compared to what most of us are used to, for example in relation to feeding, swarm control and honey extraction. 'Natural beekeeping' has gained a lot of publicity in recent years, and we are sure that there will be great interest in this project amongst our members.

Our top bar team, Jenny Lewis, Alison Goss and Wayne and Debbie Riddell will be reporting regularly in our newsletter as the season progresses.



Week 2: 4-JUNE-16

The volunteers (bar one) met on Saturday at Crathes to transfer the colony of bees from the National into the Top Bar Hive (TBH), it was amazing weather. After we set up the new hive and kit needed to use during the transfer we carried out a normal hive inspection. The Queen was located and transferred her into a plunger style queen marking cage before placing her into the new TBH. Following that we went back through the National hive and lifted the frames one by one, shaking the bees into the National hive and closing down the crown board to reduce the number of flying bees. The edge of the comb was cut along the sides and bottom with a sharp knife, the bottom of the frames were chopped off and the side bars broken off. The frame was then attached to new Top Bar frames with some screws and placed into the new TBH with the queen. This process was followed until all the frames were transferred from the National into the TBH and then the Queen was released from her cage onto a frame. The remaining bees which were locked up in the National hive were then shook into the TBH and closed up with a syrup feeder. The National had a super on top of it so we tried as best we could to shake the bees out of it just outside the TBH with some crown boards laid out to help them climb up into the TBH. By the time we were leaving the site the majority of the bees had made their way into the new hive! A quick check on Sunday confirmed they were quite happy in their new home!



USING A REFRACTOMETER

Now that the honey harvest is upon us, members will be bottling their honey to sell or to show in one of the many shows over the summer and into autumn. There are regulations governing the sale of honey which you must comply with when preparing honey for sale, dealing with hygiene, labelling and composition.

One characteristic of honey you need to be aware of is moisture content, the main reason being that honey will ferment over time due to the activity of the natural yeasts present in it. If the moisture level is less than 17% these yeasts will not convert the sugars to alcohol, and if it is over 20% the risk of this happening is greater.

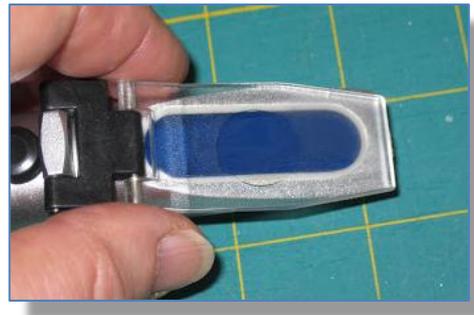
As you know, when you put a spoon into a glass of water it appears to bend. This is due to the refractive index of air and water being different and we can use a refractometer to measure this characteristic of honey.

There are many types of refractometers to measure liquids and the one we use has a range which is specifically for liquid honey (12-27% water). It has automatic temperature compensation (ATC) which allows readings to be taken between 10°C and 30°C without adjustment.

This is what the instrument looks like with the eyepiece on the left.



Step 1: Lift the plastic cover and place a droplet of honey on the refractometer.



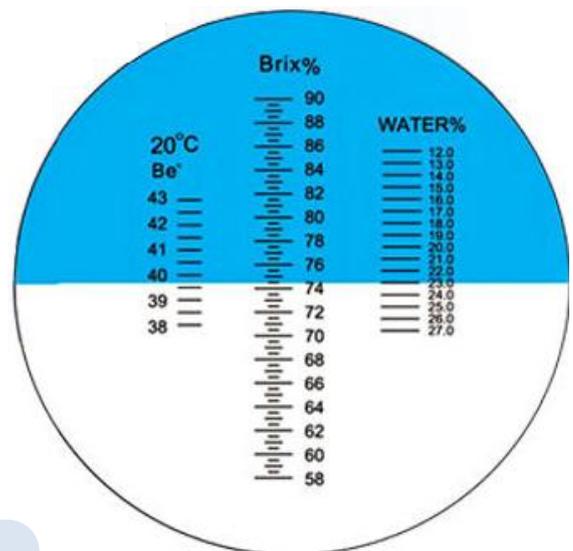
Step 2: Place the plastic top down on top of the droplet, flattening it on the viewing window.

Now look through the eyepiece with the instrument held up toward the light and focus by twisting the dial near the eyepiece until you can read the scale on the right (Water %). The point at which the blue meets the white shows the reading in % - your view will look something like this (a reading of 23% is shown).

For honey offered for sale, the legal levels are 20% for blossom and 23% for heather honey (Honey Regulations (Scotland) 2015 – Para 15.)

Note that the honey has to be liquid for the instrument to give a reliable reading – the presence of crystals will give a misleading reading, so warm it gently first.

Although ADBKAs refractometer will have been calibrated before use, you can do this yourself by following the instructions with the instrument.



David Morland

As a member of Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association, you can borrow our refractometer free of charge. Just contact David Morland - see details on front page.

Members' Events

Saturday 25 June 2016
Trip to Murray McGregor's queen rearing unit

NB Now fully subscribed

**DEMONSTRATION:
HEALTH INSPECTION**

- with Bee Inspector,
Kirsty Sutherland

Sunday 10 July 2016 at 1.00pm
ADBKA Apiary
Crathes Castle
Banchory AB31 5QJ

DEMONSTRATION/THEORY/PRACTICAL

- with Rosie and David Crighton

Wednesday 27 July 2016 at 7.15pm
29 Marcus Crescent
Blackburn AB21 0SZ

*Limited to 12 places. Call Rosie on 01224
791181 to book by 25 July.*

TURRIFF SHOW

Sunday 31 July and Monday 1 August

For more information, see panel on page 1.



Aberdeen Bee Supplies

Jock McGregor is the local agent for Thorne Beekeeping Equipment. Contact him on 01224 790468 or e-mail: aberdeenbeesupplies@hotmail.com

9-FRAME RADIAL EXTRACTOR (electric) – FOR HIRE £10 per hire period
STEAM WAX MELTER – available ON LOAN £10 deposit

Both items available from: Jock McGregor, 11 Marcus Road, Blackburn. Tel. 01224 790468

EQUIPMENT WANTED

Looking for a second hand National hive and poly nuc box.

Contact Leslie Peacock at lap9387@gmail.com

Charles Milne is selling a **heather press** complete with tank, and a plate hand extractor, (4 small frames or 2 large), £30 each. His number is 01467 621881

WANTED

2 Nucs or Full Colonies on National Frames, I can use both Standard and 14x12 Brood Frames. I am located in Ellon and hold the SBA Basic Beemaster Certificate

Contact Karl Breeman at karl.breeman@btinternet.com
or call 07711582258

BEES WANTED

ADBKA member Graeme Yule is looking for two nucleus colonies. Contact Graeme at gyule2@sky.com