



**MAY
2017**



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

Meet the ADBKA Committee members

Your committee members have recently redistributed the tasks they undertake on a voluntary basis and we thought it is important for the membership to know who they are and what they do within the association. Over the next few issues of the newsletter we will run a series of articles to introduce the committee members to you.

David Pert - Committee member for four years.

My first introduction into beekeeping started from my father in law who used to keep bees in the 1970's and had nine colonies in National Hives, he was a member of the Angus Beekeepers association. Being a joiner and carpenter by profession my initial interest was in the construction and maintenance of my father in law's hives but invariably I began to help with the management of the colonies.



When I started helping to look after the bees I was stung just above the eye which caused both eyes to close and required a trip to Stracathro hospital where I was advised that I may have an allergic reaction to bee stings. Subsequent stings caused less and less reaction and now I get very little problems from their stings at all. In the 1970's we used to harvest a lot of honey from the raspberries; almost on a weekly basis we were able to sell our excess honey. Back then there was no Varroa mite so in general beekeeping was easier.

One season we were unlucky when all our bees eventually died out after taking them to harvest nectar from the oil seed rape and latterly the heather, we never found out what had happened to them. And so my beekeeping was interrupted for several years and then I was back into it.

In the year 2003 when I received a call from my daughter advising me that a swarm of honey bees had taken up residency in the roof space of her house. Upon further investigation I have discovered that the bees had found an entrance into the roof space of the property that was impossible to access from inside and the only way to reach them was to remove a section of roof tiles and sarking boards to access the bees from outside the building. After I stripped back a section of roof, a big colony was located which I transferred into a box and left to settle, returning the next morning to find out that unfortunately the box was empty and the bees were happily back within the roof space of the house. I had to remove another section of roof in an attempt to secure the Queen bee together with more of the combs the bees had constructed. As before I put all the bees I could handle back into the box and left it overnight. Upon my return I was greeted with a full colony of bees in the box and all of the bees cleared from the roof space.

Shortly after I retrieved this swarm I spotted a swarm of bees travelling along beside power lines at the back of my house, the swarm of bees settled close by and I was able to secure the colony. I now had two swarms of bees and was back into beekeeping.

I stay in Edzell which is approximately half way between Tayside and Aberdeenshire beekeeping associations and therefore decided to join the ADBKA shortly after securing the swarms. I keep bees because I like honey and I get a great sense of achievement from looking after them; every time you open up a hive and check through the colony things change from the previous inspection and you have to react differently depending upon what you see.

President:

Mr R Wood
Forests Road
Banchory

Acting Chair:

David Morland
Middle Ardo
Udny
Ellon
AB41 6QX
Tel. 07768244420
e-mail:
davidmorland64@
gmail.com

Hon. Secretary:

Rosie Crighton
29 Marcus Cres.
Blackburn, AB21 0SZ
Tel. 01224 791181
e-mail:
aberdeenbeekeepers@
gmail.com

Hon. Treasurer:

Leona Lowe
70 Pittodrie Place
Aberdeen, AB24 5QT
Tel. 07966026564
e-mail:
leonalowe@
hotmail.co.uk

FUTURE ARTICLES

MEET THE MEMBERS

(Sandy and Lilian
Gordon)

WAX MOTHS

(Malcolm Watson)

ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW

MY BEEKEEPING YEAR

(Murray McGregor)

Being a beekeeper in Edzell when the military base was fully operational I have received my fair share of calls to collect swarms of bees. One particular day I received a call from the base to collect a swarm of honey bees from the back garden of a serviceman. I arrived to find a family had recently arrived from Texas to take up residency at the military base only to find their property 'invaded with bees'; inspection of the bees found them to be a small colony of Bumble bees. Another emergency call turned out to be a small colony of Miner bees.



David's apiary

Currently I have seven colonies of bees that I keep in my garden within National hives and two Langstroth hives, which after hearing such good reports about them I decided to make a couple and so far they have proven to be excellent.

During my time in the ADBA I have seen us move from our association apiary at Craibstone to the new location at Crathes. Within our new apiary building I have put my joinery skills to good use by making the work tops and cabinets that can be found within the building.

David Pert, Edzell

David and Dorothy Pert

David's nice garden and the conservatory he has built himself



In addition to David's contributions as a committee member he has also been a tremendous asset to the work of the apiary as one of the team of loyal volunteers. David's professional joinery skills and specialist tools saw him continually adding to and improving the cabin facilities in numerous ways, and he has always been there when any woodworking skills on hives is required. David is an unassuming character and just gets on cheerfully with any job he sees which needs some expert attention. David is in many ways the epitome of a good and useful association member, who gives his time and skills unstintingly.

John Cooper, ADBKA

During the time he has spent on the committee, David has been hugely generous with his time and, in particular, his impressive joinery skills. This has proved to be especially valuable over the past couple of years as we have developed the apiary cabin at Crathes. It seemed that there was no problem that David couldn't solve. The slide-out workbench, the book cabinet, the worktop, the bee screen, the composting toilet, the observation hive, the wheelchair ramp - the list goes on. At each weekly gathering of our Sunday morning apiary volunteers group, David's arrival with his white van/mobile joinery workshop was a guarantee that our facilities at the end of the session would be better than they were at the beginning!

Graham Torrie, ADBKA



SUMMER BARBEQUE AND BRING AND BUY SALE

Courtesy of the Seed family at 12 noon
On Sunday the 28th of May.

Greenapple, The Walled Garden, Auchry,
Cuminestown. Postcode AB53 5TP

Where we will enjoy a barbeque and a chance to
blether about how the season is progressing.
Members are invited to bring along food and/or
drink which will be laid out or barbequed for all
to share.

BRING AND BUY

Members are invited to bring along any surplus
beekeeping equipment that they want to sell (at a
reasonable price!) and to have a poke around
what others are selling on. Please note that if you
have a large quantity of equipment you wish to
bring to the event, we can assist with transport.

HONEY JARS, SYRUP AND CANDY
- at unbeatable prices.

THROUGH THE MICROSCOPE –

Hugh Donohoe and David Morland
will demonstrate how microscopy can be applied
to the study of pollen, bees and bee diseases.

**NEW EQUIPMENT
AND BEEKEEPING BOOKS -**

We'll have a good selection of new beekeeping
equipment and books to browse and purchase.

DIRECTIONS:

From the B9170 coming into Cuminestown,
signs (ADBKA, with directional arrow) will be
placed at both ends of the lane to guide you in.
A Sat Nav programmed with the post code will
get you to the road end. Look out for the blue
"Green Apple" sign in the yard.

Talk 'At the Hive Door' Conducted by Ann Chilcott

2 – 4 p.m. on Saturday 3rd of June
at Kinnellar Community Hall
Blackburn AB21 0JQ.

This talk covers many things that the beekeeper
can learn about his/her bees
without opening the hive.
It focuses on bee behaviour
and dips into disease.
This talk lasts just under an hour with questions.

THE ADBKA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

is on **24th May this year** at 7:15 p.m.
at Kinellar Community Hall, Blackburn, AB21 0JQ
All members will be welcome.

As is customary, the roles of Office Bearers (Chair, Vice
Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) are up for re-election. Last
year's Chair (Graham Torrie) and Secretary (Rosie Crichton)
will not be standing again.

Any member can put themselves forward for nomination and
should contact Rosie if they are interested (01224 791181).
We are also looking for a few enthusiastic beekeepers to join
the committee as Trustees of ADBKA. We will give
preference to members who have kept bees for some time and
who would like to be involved in the running of one of
Scotland's largest beekeeping associations.

This will require active participation in running and organising
events or becoming part of the 'core crew' at the apiary.

Contact David Morland (07768244420) if you are interested.

Full Hives of Locally Reared (Aberdeenshire)

Bees For Sale

From Our Best Productive Bees 2016
Over Wintered Queens

National Cedar Hives (new condition) 7 – 8 frames brood and
adequate stores, 2 supers with Manley frames and foundation,
wired queen excluder, alighting board and open mesh varroa
floor. All bees treated for varroa.

Price: £295. Can sell the bees separately £195.

Available early - mid June.

Ideal for summer honey crop.

Collect or can deliver for a small fee.

Would prefer to sell to an experienced beekeeper or someone
who has completed a beginners course or similar training.

A small deposit of £40 is required to secure

Please contact: 01467 643062 or mobile 07890631813

ADBKA Conference 2017 Saturday 17th June

Kinnellar Hall, Blackburn AB21 0JQ
10am until 4pm

Full details of this event are included with the newsletter.
Your entry fee includes a buffet lunch and tea & coffee.
This event is open to non ADBKA members so complete
your registration form as early as possible to avoid
disappointment and secure your place in what promises to be
a very informative day.

Margaret Murdin

is chair of the British Beekeepers Association and holder
of the National Diploma in Beekeeping.

Mac Giolla Coda

is from the Irish Native Honeybee Society and is a fourth
generation Irish beekeeper and a commercial beekeeper
Both have travelled specifically to present this conference.

MEET THE MEMBERS

Sandy & Lilian GORDON

PART 2 – MY INTRODUCTION TO BEEKEEPING

In 1960 I decided I'd become a beekeeper and arranged to buy my first hive. The colony I bought was housed in a massive Glen Hive which I bought in Glenkindie Estate in Alford. I and a friend of mine arranged to collect the hive in my car and paid the princely sum of £20 for the colony of bees and the hive. We loaded the hive into the boot of the car and headed back into Aberdeen. Unknown to us there had been a bank robbery in the area and the police had set up roadblocks and were searching all vehicles for the suspects.

As we approached the road block we were signalled to stop and were approached by a police officer. The police officer leaned down to the open car side window and asked us who we were and asked if we had seen any sign of the bank robbers. The officer asked me to open the boot of the car so that he could search the vehicle. I advised him that the boot was open and available for inspection; all that was in it was a hive of bees. The officer stood up and said 'Drive on Sir'; we were not delayed any further as we made our way to Aberdeen.



PART 3 - MY MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADBKA COMMITTEE

The ADBK Association was run for over 32 years with Robert Wood as chairman, Stewart Rae as secretary and Alex Ross as treasurer. Robert Wood was part of a local company called Woodsons that made beacons for boats and ships. The association newsletter was edited by Stuart Ray and the clerical staff at Woodsons would format the newsletter. The newsletter was distributed by Stewart or Sandy & Lilian Gordon it on a monthly basis to members. Under this management the association went through a long period of stability.

The association took over the apiary at Craibstone after Bernard Mobus left. Bernard Mobus was a world authority on all matters relating to beekeeping and worked with several other staff members who were employed as part of the agricultural college of Craibstone within the beekeeping unit there. At one time Craibstone had five staff employed within the beekeeping unit and one staff member employed in animal husbandry.

The association honey show and Annual general meeting were held within a building at Craibstone and the catering was largely taken care of by two ladies who were twin sisters from Aberdeen called Ms Stephanie. Catering was assisted by a lady called Miss Christie from White Cairns. This continued for many years until Miss Christie took over full responsibility for the catering with Lillian Gordon and Mrs Lamb assisting with sandwiches.

To be continued.

Sandy Gordon



Lilian Gordon



Sandy Gordon in his greenhouse

DUTHIE PARK – BEE FRIENDLY SCHOOL VISIT



Pupils of Ferryhill primary school are currently undertaking a project on the importance of bees and bee friendly plants within our environment. In order to support them in their endeavours the Duthie Park Ranger Service invited the pupils to attend a demonstration which was held on Monday the 8th of May within the David Welch Winter Gardens at Duthie Park, Aberdeen.

The Ranger Service had organised for the pupils to gain hands on experience of planting within a specially prepared flower bed within the Floral Courtyard of the winter Gardens. In addition I was invited to attend the event with our observation hive suitably furnished with willing honey bees.

The class was split into two groups, whilst one group was engaged in planting the other was given a presentation on the importance of honey bees to our environment and given the opportunity to see up close the various casts of the honey bee including, workers, drones and a well-marked Queen bee. I have explained to them the complicated and amazing structure of bee society and the purpose of bees in our environment. The pupils could see, touch and smell wax combs and learnt about all products of bee hive including honey, wax, propolis and royal jelly. The presentation was held within the recently refurbished

Education Room within the Winter Garden which overlooks the surrounding Japanese Garden and is a truly pleasant facility to be in. The enthusiasm of the pupils can be seen from the pictures attached.



The flower bed that was planted by the pupils will be allowed to grow and flourish during the summer and is available for visitors to the winter gardens to view and admire as the growing season progresses.

Olga Macaulay and

Arthur Gill
Outreach & Training Officer
Communities, Housing and
Infrastructure Aberdeen City Council

THE FOOT OF THE PYRAMID – OFTEN NEGLECTED IPM STRATEGIES AGAINST VARROA

The mantra of pest control in any livestock / cultivated crop or invasive species is integrated pest management (IPM). It is a holistic approach that draws on a range of different control methods to keep the numbers of a pest at a minimum. We, as beekeepers should be well aware of IPM when considering how to manage that most persistent of bee pests, the Varroa mite.

I am sure nearly all the members of ADBKA use some form of Varroa control. Whether it's using thymol based treatments, oxalic acid or harder chemical treatments such as pyrethroids (apistan) and amitraz (apivar). These treatments can be combined in IPM with other strategies such as drone trapping. Mites prefer to grow in drone brood by a factor of 10 to 1 ! Removing a drone comb every month will knock down mites significantly. Other IMP strategies include queen trapping and the more long-term solutions of hygienic bee breeding.

When done correctly IPM is extremely effective at controlling Varroa. I highly recommend reading Randy Olivers fantastic online blog (scientificbeekeeping.com) who has a great mini-series on IPM as well as a host of other great information. Warning....you can lose days in there reading about bees!

More recently a lot of research has focussed on other parts of the IPM pyramid that are often overlooked (Fig 1.). We all know about the chemical acaricides and I've mentioned drone trapping, which comes under "mechanical" methods. There is some minor research ongoing into biological control of Varroa but there is no effective agent yet isolated that doesn't bring with it a host of new problems (although do look up videos of pseudoscorpions battling with Varroa on youtube!). "Educational" is pretty self-explanatory, leaving us with "isolation"....

Did you realise that up to 40% of a hive in your apiary could be full of bees from another colony? Scientists Pfeiffer and Crailsheim carried out research in 1998 to investigate the phenomenon of drifting between colonies. They marked bees individually and then followed their progress and the amount of drifting between colonies over the period of their lifetime. When they carried out the analysis they showed that bees from different colonies made up a large proportion of any hives population. In hives placed less than 26cm apart in straight lines, drifting bees made up to 41% (!) of the hives total bees.

Now what's this got to do with Varroa and IPM? Well, quite a lot! Bees are not drifting on their own....they are carrying a range of pathogens and pests, including mites. Every time a bee drifts between colonies is another chance for a mite to hitch a lift across the great divide. This is where "isolation" and cultural IPM comes in. If you can reduce drifting then you reduce the chance of mites mingling and spreading.

In February 2017 a new piece of research from Keith Delaplanes lab in the US was published. They placed pairs of mite-free hives in apiaries at distances of 0, 10 and 100m between the paired hives. They then sprinkled mites into one of the pairs (the donor) in each apiary and monitored the spread of mites into the clean hives (the recipient) in the same apiary. In apiaries where pairs of hives were close together (0 and 10m apart) there were significantly higher mite levels in the recipient clean hives than when hives were further apart (>100m) and that drifting played a significant role in this. So if you are closer to a neighbouring hive then you are more likely to give them mites. Not a great surprise! Interestingly the research also showed that in apiaries where they were close together (0m), *both* hives in each pair (recipient and donor) had increased mite levels over time. This unexpected result suggests that mites are competing for brood to infest and that this competition is most fierce where hives are very distant as there is less drifting and movement of mites. When hives are close together the competition is very low as there is enough brood for all mites. It's an interesting study but how does it actually help us as beekeepers. Well I am not sure how practical it is for beekeepers to keep hives 100m apart or if many people have that kind of room in a garden but it probably does show that if you have the space then you should place your hives more distant from each other than you currently do !

However there are a few more simple ways to reduce drifting that *are* practical. Firstly, you can paint or mark your hive entrances a different colour and pattern from each other - the theory being that bees will more readily recognise their own hive and not drift into a neighbouring colony by mistake. Secondly, don't place all your hives in a big line. Bees will drift down the line and you'll find the end hives will have big populations of bees...and mites! Hives should, where possible, be positioned with their entrances facing in slightly different orientations or in a circle facing outwards. Another suggestion, by Ted Hooper, is facing the hives towards bushes or screens in order that the wind is less turbulent in front of entrances to stop bees being blown off course. Finally, if you have space, then consider moving hives further apart from each other. In nature hives are on average ~500m apart !

Hopefully we all practice some form of IPM to control Varroa mites, but I am sure, and I am guilty of this, we probably concentrate on the chemical control aspect and don't pay much attention to some of the easy cultural / isolation measures to stop mites moving about so much. With the chemicals proving more and more ineffective it's probably a good idea to start doing so and this time of year is a great opportunity, during a cold spell, to move the hives and alter their orientation without disturbing the bees or risking loosing foragers.

Dr. Ewan Campbell

Notes:

<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/>

Guide to Bees & Honey, Ted Hooper (2010)

Pfeiffer & Crailsheim(1998) Drifting of honeybees. *Insectes Sociaux* 45

Nolan & Delaplane (2017) Distance between honey bee *Apis mellifera* colonies regulates populations of Varroa destructor at a landscape scale. *Apidologie* 48:1