



**OCTOBER  
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*

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**FUTURE ARTICLES**

**BEE MENU –**  
Malcolm Watson

**MY BEEKEEPING  
YEAR**  
(Murray McGregor)

**HONEY SHOW  
PICTURE FROM  
1984 –**  
Sandy & Lilian  
Gordon

## APIARY REPORT AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2017

10 hives were packed up and moved to a site on the Ballogie Estate to take advantage of the heather for August. They seemed to do well and have stored some honey, at this time how much cannot be identified as it has not been extracted yet.

The head gardener at Crathes, Chris Wardle donated his 4 hives to us and with sterling help from Graham Stables, they were removed for a few weeks and then returned to Crathes but at our apiary this time. On inspection, 2 were found to be queenless and they have been united with 2 of our weaker hives, bringing our total at Crathes to 12.

All the hives have been treated with MAQs and fed with ambrosia.

We have now replaced the faulty extractor from Thornes with a new plastic model that is easier to handle.

My thanks go to Joan Gilbert Stevens and her husband who provided the transport to and from Ballogie for the heather visit.

Naomi Adams

## SBA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Over the weekend 8 - 10th Sept the SBA had their Annual Convention in conjunction with the Ayr Beekeepers who were celebrating their centenary. The joint convention committee put together a great programme of talks, workshops and demonstrations and the event was well supported by a number of trade stands. It would have been attended by about 150 people over the weekend.

The weekend kicked off on the Friday evening with a very entertaining talk from Jamie Ellis ( Associate Professor of Entomology from the University of Florida) under the topic of "How Honey Bees helped me address life's most important questions" - clearly everyone wanted to know what the questions were .. however if you did not attend then you will not know what those were or how he resolved things - however suffice to say it was a very entertaining discussion.

During the Saturday and Sunday there were a variety of workshops held - I was pleased to be able to attend the cosmetic workshop and it was good to get some expert advise on how to make some cold pressed soap and some very nice moisture cream. Karl attended the chocolate workshop on Sunday and has already started practicing with some chocolates at home. Overall it was a very interesting weekend with lots of opportunity to chat and meet fellow beekeepers. Next year the event is planned to be held in Glasgow as it is their centenary and we did make some comments to the organisers that an event in Aberdeen in 2009 might be well received - however we will have to wait and see if that is likely to happen.

Joan Gilbert-Stevens

## REGISTER AND REFRESHMENTS

Those that attended the talk that was conducted by Graeme Sharpe on the 7<sup>th</sup> will have noticed that a register of attendees was taken upon entry. This is something we shall be doing from this point going forward; in the event of an emergency we are required to have a list of those that are present. This information can also be used to select future talks and presentations.

In addition a small charge of £2 per adult will be collected to cover refreshments; there will be no charge for children.

## MY BEEKEEPING YEAR

By Murray McGregor, Professional Bee farmer.

### September - November

My season starts in September when all my colonies are at the heather moors of Scotland waiting for us to harvest the honey crop.

The first thing we do is remove the bees from the honey crop within the hive. We do this by using a New Zealand type clearing board which normally clears all the bees in a matter of hours and in my opinion it offers several advantages over the alternatives. See Note 1.

Once the supers are cleared from the bees we remove them from the hive and go through the brood box and remove any old comb and replace it with fresh frames with wax foundation. The colonies are over wintered on a full complement of frames. In season we typically replace 25,000 sheets of foundation over approximately 2,500 hives. See Note 2.

The bees are then transported from the heather moors to the lowlands where they are fed and over wintered. Each colony is fed 14 kg of invert syrup bee food with an Ashford type polystyrene feeder. We try and have all the colonies fed by Guy Fox night. See Note 3 & 4.

**Note 1.** The New Zealand type of clearing board has two holes on the opposite corners of the board where the bees go through the board and out the underside. On the underside there is a gap on an external corner which the bees can pass through. Bees look for holes on the inside of a corner but a hole on an outer corner is less easily found by the bees so once the bees are through they are unlikely to find their way back. The bees congregate on the centre of the board before they make their way down between the frames hence this design with two bee escapes on opposite corners is better than the design with central bee escapes.



**Note 2.** Removing old brood frames helps prevent the build-up of pathogens that can be harmful to the colony. Wax brood frames that are drawn by the bees in the autumn, gives the best foundation because the bees do not create drone cells and they are active on the wax at a relatively quiet time of year for them. In the spring when they need space in the brood nest the wax is already prepared for them.

**Note 3.** Each colony is given exactly 14 kg of invert bee feed syrup. I have found that this is exactly the correct quantity to see them through to the spring, if they are given more food than this then it creates congestion in the brood nest and limits the Queen's laying in the Autumn. Should the colony not take the 14 kg of syrup then the feeder is left on the hive. In December a colony in a polystyrene hive can still take syrup down to the brood nest, colonies in a wooden hive tend to stop taking syrup down to the brood nest in November.

**Note 4.** Bee fondant may be fed as a supplement to syrup not instead of syrup. Should the colony not take the full 14 kg of syrup then the shortfall can be fed as fondant. For example if only 6 kg of syrup have been taken by the bees then the shortfall of 8 kg may be made up by adding 8 kg of fondant.

When feeding fondant it should be fed inside a plastic bag or if the fondant is purchased in plastic bags it should be left in the bag. To allow access for the bees a narrow strip about an inch wide should be cut from the plastic and the bag should be laid flat on the frames with the cut strip crossing the frames to allow the bees on adjacent frames access to the fondant. If the fondant is removed from the plastic it can turn hard and unpalatable to the bees and the bees are unable to eat it.

**OCTOBER 19<sup>th</sup> – 7:30p.m.**

**“First Attempts at Queen Rearing”**

Kemnay Community Bee Group  
-Kemnay Village Hall, AB51 5SS

Yvonne Davidson and friends from Tarland Bee Group will entertain us with a talk about their fledgling Queen Rearing Project, and the adventures they have had producing queens and nucs. This will be an informal talk which promises to be fun as well as enlightening.

Anyone interested in honeybees and beekeeping is welcome to attend. Access to the Friendship room is via the rear door of the Hall. There will be a small charge of £2 to cover refreshments.

**OCTOBER 21<sup>ST</sup> – 2 P.M.**

**ABERDEEN AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION  
HONEY SHOW**

Kinellar Community Hall. AB21 0JQ

The annual honey show is the highlight of our year. Help make this year's show the most successful ever by setting aside your best jars of honey, cut comb, sections, mead, candles, handicrafts or wax, all of which can be entered.

It's not only fun to show some of the results of your hard work, but also to see what other members have managed to achieve with their year's beekeeping.

The honey show has dozens of entry classes and categories; there are lots of opportunities to get involved. As well as honey, you can enter beeswax, mead, art, needlework, baking, photographs and more. Don't forget our 'gift table', which consists of show entries that are subsequently gifted to a local charity.

Even if you're not able to enter this year, why not come along to see what it's all about? There'll be beekeeping equipment and books to browse, fine refreshments to enjoy and an opportunity to blether with other beekeepers about the highs and lows of the season.

At this year's honey show you will have the opportunity to purchase honey that has been harvested from our association bees whilst at Crathes Castle and on the heather moors. Please note that only ADBKA honey obtained from our training apiary will be offered for sale, member's honey sales will not be permitted.

In addition to being able to deliver your honey show entries between 8 am and 10 am on the morning of the show you can also drop of your entries on the Friday before the show between 6pm and 7 pm. Entries to be delivered to a member of the show committee at Kinellar Community Hall together with a completed entry form.

**NOVEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup> – 10 a.m.**

**SBA written examinations.**

The examinations will take place at Curl Aberdeen on the Lange Stracht. AB15 6LN

**NOVEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> – 10 – 4 p.m.**

**SKEP MAKING WORKSHOP  
with Bryce Reynard –**

Kinellar Community Hall AB21 0JQ.

The course will teach you how to create your own skep which you will be able to take home at the end of the workshop. The cost of the course is £20 per person and must be pre-booked in advance.

Please contact Malcolm Watson to book your place on this course in writing to Malcolm Watson, Elbrie Lodge, Auchnagat, Ellon.AB41 8YL or e-mail: [aberdeenbeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:aberdeenbeekeepers@gmail.com)

**NOVEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**SCOTTISH NATIVE HONEY BEE SOCIETY  
WINTER WORKSHOP-**

**“IDENTIFY THOSE NATIVE BEES !”**

An interactive hands on workshop open to all SNHBS members which will arm you with the skills to identify black bees. Free admission but open to SNHBS members only. To join visit <http://www.snhbs.scot/> and once members you will be given a link to the ticketing for this workshop. The day will include training on image analysis, microscopy, wing morphometry, demonstration of simple DNA analysis and a discussion about a large scale survey of Scotlands bees starting next year.

Day runs from 10.00 – 16.00  
and will include teas and coffees.

Spaces limited to 60.

Zoology building- University of Aberdeen

**NOVEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> – 7:30 p.m.**

## **ADBKA Social evening and presentation of Honey Show trophies.**

The social evening this year will be held in Kingswells church hall which is attached to Kingswells Parish Church on the Old Skene Road, Kingswells. AB15 8QA. This hall is opposite the junction from the Kingswells Village Hall.

As with previous years, this evening will be organised along the lines of an American supper. Members are invited to bring along food and drink which will be laid out for all to share.

We shall have our hugely successful bee..tle drive and for the first time a raffle which has gifts donated by our friends and suppliers for us to enjoy. In addition there shall be duplicate association beekeeping books for participants to win during the evening's entertainment.

Please contact Alison Goss on Email [alagoss@aol.com](mailto:alagoss@aol.com) or mobile 07970392322 to confirm your attendance

### **EDWIN HORNE FROM MINTLAW HAS SOME EQUIPMENT KIT FOR SALE.**

He can be contacted on 01771 622481 at weekends only.



1 x HD plastic 9 frame radial extractor, electric (price new £830), good condition

1 x large capping melter and honey liquifier (new price new £1200), looks like new condition

2 x WBC hives complete, cedar, good condition, various national hive parts incl. 2 roofs, 2 supers, 2 excluders, 1 floor.  
various tools, sieves, feeders, buckets.

**Price to be agreed between buyer and seller.**

### **NEWSLETTER COSTS**

Last month those of our members that receive their newsletter by post will have benefited from a replacement printer we have purchased. The new printer offers a much improved printing quality at a fraction of the printing costs. With over sixty members receiving their copy of the newsletter by post every month any cost savings are well worth exploiting.

With the new printer I calculate that it will cost the association £8.38 annually per postal recipient to print and post a copy of the monthly newsletter. If you are one of these people who receives the newsletter by post and it is not an inconvenience for you to receive it by email please let me know. You can contact Olya or me or any of the association committee members to change the way you receive your newsletter.

Lindsey Macaulay, Tel 01224 315 276

### **GRAEME SHARPE'S TALK**

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> of October members of the Aberdeen and District Beekeepers Association gathered in Kinellar community hall to hear a talk presented by Graeme Sharpe. Graeme first of all outlined what encouraged him to expand his beekeeping to his currently colony strength of over one hundred hives. Graeme outlined that his motivation was quite simple in that he wanted a way of supplementing his existing salary and beekeeping was something he knew enough about and enjoyed doing.

Graeme's talk was titled 'My method of Beekeeping' and he outlined very clearly how he prepared his bees to meet the challenges of each of the seasons and the available honey crops and what he did to control the bees swarming in order to keep them at maximum strength throughout the year.

Everyone present learned something from the talk. At the end of the talk I heard Jock McGregor say it was one of the most informative talks he had attended and I think Jock's opinion was shared by most of the thirty eight attendees.

Lindsey Macaulay