

Newsletter

August 2012

Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

President:

Mr R Wood
Cothal Lodge
Cothal
Dyce

Chair:

John Cooper
9 Westburn Drive
Aberdeen
Tel. 01224 637774

Hon. Secretary:

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

Hon. Treasurer:

Louise Forbes
56 Morningfield Rd
Aberdeen
AB51 0YJ
Tel. 01224 313096

Area SBA Rep:

Stephen Palmer
Tel.01888 551367
e-mail:
palmers@fintry.plus.com

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Autumn Lecture Series

Those thinking about taking up beekeeping, novices still learning the craft, and experienced beekeepers wishing to brush up their knowledge will all find something of interest in our series of autumn lectures, "An Introduction to Bees and Beekeeping", to be held on Thursday evenings at Aberdeen Grammar School, presented by Dr Stephen Palmer. The six-week programme begins on 20 September at 7.30 pm and will cost £10, payable on the first evening of attendance. Attendees who are not currently members of the ADBKA will be able to redeem £5 of the course fee against their first year membership of the association.

Programme

- 20 September: The Beehive
- 27 September: The Biology of the bee
- 4 October: What do I need to keep bees?
- 11 October: The products of the hive
- 18 October: Help – there is something wrong with my bees!
- 25 October: The beekeeping year

Turriff Show

There was the usual keen public interest in the Association stall at the Turriff Show on the 5th and 6th August - both in the bees and the honey tasting and sales.

Disappointingly only a handful of association members entered exhibits in the show's honey section. Sandy Gordon scored most points and won the trophy for the best entry with his two jars of bell heather.

SBA Examinations

The Scottish Beekeepers' Association will be holding their examinations for **Modules 1, 3, 6 and 8** on 10 November this year.

Candidates wishing to enter these exams should apply to the SBA Education Convener, Alan Riach, Woodgate, 7 Newlands Avenue, Bathgate, EH48 1EE, no later than 15 September.

The syllabuses and exam application form can be downloaded from <http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/PracticalBeekeeping/Downloads.aspx>

Applicants will be sent a specimen examination paper, and should include a contact telephone number and, if possible, an e-mail address with their application.



Watch out for the Honey Show Schedule in the September newsletter!

THE ABERDEEN AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION
HONEY SHOW 2012

THE ENGINEERING LECTURE THEATRE, S.A.C.
CRAIBSTONE, BUCKSBURN
SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER 2012

The annual honey show is the highlight of our year. Its success relies on members taking part, so make sure you set aside the best of your jars of honey now, in anticipation of entering them into the competition. It's easy and it's fun!



Craigston Castle home apiary, in readiness for the ADBKA members' gathering on 4 August

BeeBase

2,810 additional beekeepers registered on BeeBase so far during 2012 leading to 27,514 registered in total as of July 2012. If you haven't already registered please do so and join your fellow beekeepers by visiting www.nationalbeeunit.com or by phoning the NBU on 01904 462510. By letting us know that you keep bees and the location of your hives, you will be helping in our ongoing battle against disease and our efforts to sustain honey bee populations.

APIARY DEMONSTRATION

Saturday 18 August at 2.30pm

HEATHER VISIT AND PICNIC LUNCH

Commercial Beekeeper Murray McGregor's Apiary, Raebush

*Map ref NJ430022, approximately half way along the minor road between the B9119 and the A97
From the south, pass the Burn O'Vat Visitors' Centre, then fork left, signposted 'Raebush'
(signage will be posted at site)*

For those who want to meet up earlier, bring your own picnic to the Burn O' Vat car park, post code AB34 5HB, at 1.30pm for an informal get together before the apiary visit.

APIARY DEMONSTRATION

Saturday 15 September at 2.30pm

John Cooper and John Steele

VARROA TREATMENT AND WINTER PREPARATION

Association apiary, SAC, Craibstone,
AB21 9YA

AUTUMN LECTURES

Six-week programme starts Thursday 20
September at 7.30pm

Presenter: Dr Stephen Palmer

AN INTRODUCTION TO BEES AND BEEKEEPING

Aberdeen Grammar School Lecture Theatre,
Skene Street, ABERDEEN, AB10 1HT

Remember to Feed Your Bees

During spells of poor weather during the summer, like those we've experienced this year, it is important to check for stores in the colony and if in any doubt feed your bees with thin syrup, fondant or frames of honey stores if available.

Particularly at risk:

- Bee colonies where supers of honey have been removed earlier in the season
- Splits/ artificial swarms and nucleus colonies made up this year
- Newly collected and hived swarms which have not been fed following 24 hours after hiving
- Populous stocks of bees which haven't swarmed this year and weather has precluded them gathering sufficient food

Extract from the Food and Environment Research Agency's newsletter, *Healthy Bees Plan*, Issue 11, July 2012

What should beekeepers do?

- Firstly, check all colonies feed levels by 'hefting' the hive – lifting the hive from below the floor sufficiently to see how much it weighs. Where the hive is light liquid feed should be applied directly above the bees. If there are empty supers above the brood box with few or no bees in them, then remove to feed, otherwise the empty super may act as a barrier to the bees getting the food quickly
- Feed can be sugar and water mixed at 2:1 ratio or one of the proprietary ready mixed syrups available from beekeeping equipment suppliers
- Fondant can be used in an emergency if nothing else is available, but liquid feed will be more appropriate at this time of season
- Large starving colonies of bees can take 1 gallon (approx 5 litres) of syrup very quickly. For smaller colonies half this amount may be sufficient. After feeding heft hives again and check weight, if in doubt feed some more in a few days time



More on the topic of **neonicotinoid-based pesticides**: DEFRA is coming under pressure from the Friends of the Earth and other campaign groups to consider the issue as part of the consultation on their proposed action plan for 'sustainable use of pesticides'.

The Telegraph reported the story at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/wildlife/nature-notes/9440663/Should-Britain-ban-pesticides-blamed-for-killing-bees.html>

The consultation, which runs until 22 October 2012, can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2012/07/30/uknap-pesticides/>

SCOTTISH BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION CENTENARY CELEBRATION CONFERENCE

Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 September 2012

THE STIRLING MANAGEMENT CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

To download a booking form, visit <http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/About/SBACentenary.aspx> or, contact Peter Matthews, 4 Annanhill, Annan, Dumfriesshire DG12 6TN; Tel. 01461 205525, e-mail: silverhive@hotmail.com

The British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) has a long and creditable record of supporting beekeeping education in the UK e.g. the wealth of information on the outstanding BBKA website, the eleven Advice and Guidance leaflets, the Correspondence Course and the examination system, the *Course in a Case* resource material – all this in addition to the many informative articles in the BBKA monthly *Newsletter*. The BBKA has now endorsed the production of a superb addition to the canon of educational material available in the form of *The BBKA Guide to Beekeeping* by Ivor Davis and Roger Cullum-Kenyon. The BBKA and the authors of this book are to be congratulated on an outstanding achievement.

Book Review

The BBKA Guide to Beekeeping by Ivor Davis and Roger Cullum-Kenyon
(ISBN 978-1-4081-5458-8; Bloomsbury 2012; pp182)

This book has many virtues and it is hard to find any faults – despite the best efforts of this reviewer! It is a clear, direct and very well presented book. It is designed to complement the *Course in a Case* resource material and to assist the enquirer, the novice and the beginner. In all respects it succeeds admirably in fulfilling its aims and objectives. The word that first comes to mind when reading this book is 'comprehensive'. This book contains all the information that you would need to get started in beekeeping and the authors have managed to convey a vast amount of information – complete with many beekeeping tips and techniques – in a concise and helpful way. The style of writing within this book is a model of clarity and it is the kind of book that draws the reader into itself in a desire to read and learn more.

One of the great strengths of this book is that it fully recognises the range and diversity of beekeeping methods and equipment that are in current use in the UK. The book resolutely refuses to press home a particular viewpoint and opinion – and in this respect this book stands in marked contrast with many other books on beekeeping that are currently in print in the UK. It is pleasure to read a book that is so open and frank about what is, and what is not, known about beekeeping in the UK.

The design and layout of this book is particularly good and the information is clearly and helpfully divided into ten chapters that manage to cover the whole range of topics that its target readership would need to start beekeeping. The book has a thoroughly 'modern' feel about it – with a mass of helpful photographs and illustrations. It is pleasing to note that the photographs do add value to the book and are not just used for visual effect. The only minor blemish with the printing of the book is that during the course of reproduction some of the photographs have taken a distinctly darkened and brown hue, but this does not detract from the overall appearance of book.

The chapter on bee and colony health is particularly helpful and apposite. More than ever, today's beekeepers need to have a thorough and effective knowledge of what can go wrong in the beehive and what they should do about it. One minor niggle the reviewer has about the information on the control of the varroa mite is that the book places little emphasis on the use of open mesh floors as part of an integrated pest management system.

This is an outstanding book and the reviewer will make full use of it when involved in enquirers/beginners classes. It stands alongside David Wootton's book *A Novices Guide* as one of the two best books currently in print about beekeeping for the beginner. Wootton's book has matchless photographs – but this book is more comprehensive and it comes from a deep understanding of the honey bee and man's involvement with the insect. During this year's beginners lectures that the reviewer will be involved in he will be commending both books!

With the publishing of this book it is at least arguable that there is now an ample sufficiency of introductory/beginners books on beekeeping. Does the BBKA now intend to follow the publication of this book with a further endorsement for one designed for the more seasoned and experienced beekeeper?

Dr Stephen Palmer FRGS FLS

Talking Bees

Our Chair, John Cooper, is giving a number of talks in September:

- 6th - The University of the Third Age (U3A)
- 12th - the Granite City Ladies Probus Club
- 21st - a Mental Welfare Group in Huntly
- 25th - The Bridge of Don Gardening Club

The involvement of our members in giving talks on bees and beekeeping is an indicator of the level of interest in our activities amongst the local community. If you are giving talks or presentations, let us know and we'll put it in the newsletter.

Bees on
the
wing!
(Flybe?)



By far the most extensively covered bee story of the past few weeks was the grounding of a Delta Airlines jet at Pittsburgh International Airport as a result of a swarm settling on its wing. A master beekeeper had to be called in to remove the bees from the plane before it could set off on a flight to New York.

See how the American news network ABC reported the story at <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/lifestyle/2012/08/thousands-of-bees-delay-pittsburgh-flight/>

Notice Board



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

Nucs for Sale

3 frames of brood, 2 frames of stores

Contact Bill and Rosemary Legge

Tel. 019755 81239

e-mail: brh18510@aol.com

For Sale

- Colony of bees, currently in WBC hive
- WBC hive, brood body, large number of supers and frames
- Boiler and quantity of wax cappings
- Misc. Items of equipment

Contact:

Joan Harper

Tel. 01771 622262

e-mail:

joan_harper@tiscali.co.uk

For Sale

- Bees in 4 cedar hives (3 with Varroa floors) with 2 supers each - 4 years old: One is a swarm, one a nuc (now in hive with new mated queen), two are full colonies
- 4 frame Thorne's (national) extractor 2 years old
- Sherriff smock and trousers – XL
- Thorne's cedar nuc 1 year old

Contact Andrew Smith at

andrewsmith7@hotmail.co.uk

For Sale

Good nuc on five frames

Contact Graham Torrie on 01339882038

e-mail: grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com



ADBKA Equipment

The Association has the following items of equipment available for free borrow: 2 honey extractors, 2 mini-melters, 2 heather honey presses, 1 wax extractor and 1 wax foundation press. These are available from the honey jar store at Danestone Market Garden (directions below) on payment of a returnable £10 deposit.

The maximum length of loan should be two weeks.

We also have supplies of Apistan, Jars, Ragus, Ambrosia Bee Syrup and Hessian for smoker fuel. The store is open between 6.30pm and 8pm on Wednesday evenings and at other times by arrangement with Sandy Gordon (Tel: 01224 484540).

Directions: At Persley Bridge (Tesco) roundabout turn onto Laurel Drive. Continue for about ½ mile. Look for Laurel Place on your right (it is a semi-circle so take the second entrance into this street). Now turn left into Laurel Avenue. Danestone Market Garden is signposted, on the left, about 100 yards along.

According to.....

.....The Rev. JG Digges in his 1904 book *The Practical Bee Guide*, bees "have a deep rooted objection to jarring of their combs; fly into a passion if any of their number be crushed in the hive; will not tamely submit to being rubbed the wrong way; are provoked to violence when one sting has been inflicted, by the mere smell of it; and will often attack a hand for no other reason than it has been suddenly and quickly moved adjacent to them. Sometimes bees noted for their peaceable disposition will be found in an angry humour, some unaccountable influence having disturbed their wonton calm. Therefore, bees should always be handled with the utmost deliberation and care."

Distributing the newsletter by e-mail realises significant savings for the association. If you do not currently receive the newsletter by e-mail and wish to do so, contact Graham Torrie on 013398 82038, or by e-mail at: grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com

We urge as many members as possible to do so.

Why not think about contributing to the newsletter yourself? We have a wealth of experience and expertise in the association, and it would be great if we could do more to share this around our members. If you have any tips, advice, or experiences to pass on, why don't you jot them down and forward them to the above e-mail address? I would be happy to assist with drafting and formatting, so feel free to call me if I can help.

Graham Torrie