

Newsletter

August 2014



# Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

## Can you spot the queen?

*President:*

Mr R Wood  
Cothal Lodge  
Cothal  
Dyce

*Chair:*

Graham Torrie  
Hillcrest  
Craigmyle Road  
Torphins  
Tel. 013398 82038  
e-mail:  
adbkanewsletter@  
btinternet.com

*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  
AB15 4AQ  
Tel. 01224 313096

*Membership  
Convener:*

Barbara Cruden  
Standingstones Farm  
Dyce  
AB21 0HH  
Tel. 01224 770001  
e-mail:  
barbara.cruden@  
btinternet.com

**In the Newsletter  
this month:**

Queen/Bee	1
Members' Events	2
2014 Honey Show	2
Rosebay willowherb	3
AFB outbreak	3
Notice Board	4
According to.....	4



I realised when I offered to take over the organisation of the stand at the Turriff Show, that I would have a hard act to follow, having seen the hard work and dedication of Sandy and Lilian Gordon, Jock and Margaret McGregor, and John Cooper, amongst many others behind the scenes. I thought it might be fun to invite Association members to volunteer to help and bring new ideas to the table along with some of my own. As well as introducing new things I also wanted to maintain the ethos of the Association, namely to educate and inform the public about bees. I was very lucky that Stewart Anderson, Tamsin Morris, and Yvonne and Kathryn Seed volunteered, as did Jock and Margaret who were keen to be part of it for another year. My son and his friend manned the candle making on the Sunday afternoon which was very successful.

The presence of Dave Findlater, my husband, was a given, and he was in charge of our observation hive both days, which is why he was in the right place at the right time when I whispered to the Lord Lieutenant, 'Would Her Majesty like to see the bees?' The reply was that there was a tight itinerary and the press pack was waiting down the aisle she was expected to walk down and it wasn't possible. 'Aw', I replied, 'That's a shame, it would have been lovely if the Queen had managed to see the queen bee,' and the rest as they say is history, with the strict schedule going to pot, a scurry of press reporters who were standing in the wrong place all hurriedly moving up the tent, and the security men not quite knowing where to look!

Luckily Her Majesty spent about 3 minutes with Dave speaking knowledgeably about bees and beekeeping and showing genuine interest and enthusiasm. When interviewed by the journalists about his conversation Dave didn't share what he spoke with her about, so they made up their own story and published bits and pieces that annoyed Dave due to their inaccuracy.

A new item this year, as mentioned, was candle rolling for children, but was just as popular with adults alike. Aberdeen Bee Supplies (AKA Jock McGregor) very generously sponsored this activity and nearly 90 candles were rolled over the 2 days. This was a learning experience but next year it will be bigger and better, and we will have enough wax to meet the demand. We ran out of wax early afternoon on Monday! There were different honeys for sale this year and although sales were steady, the stand was busy at all times, providing information about the autumn introductory classes, membership forms, and Jock providing a variety of equipment to act as talking points for the onlookers.

On a less exciting note there were only 4 beekeepers who entered produce in the Industrial competition, and only 1 of them was a committee member. It would be really good if we could better this for next year, because we are invited to attend the show, we don't pay for a stance, and yet the interest we generated was immense. We never stopped talking to an interested public all day and we need to be mindful that this is one of our very few shop windows and we should try to make the most of it.

However, on a much cheerier note, I can't sign off without offering a HUGE thanks to the volunteers without whom it would have been fairly dull and boring. Each and every one brought a unique blend of knowledge, good humour, warmth, approachability, and passion about bees and I would like to think that I have made a few new friends over the 2 days, such was the grand time we had. The camaraderie and sharing of knowledge and experience was visible and I hope that more can be encouraged to be part of it in 2015. A couple of enthusiastic brains are already thinking up more ideas for next year...You know who you are.....

Rosie

**APIARY DEMONSTRATION:****Going to the heather – with commercial beekeeper, Murray McGregor**

Saturday 16 August at 2.00pm

Raebush

*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 Visitors' Centre car park (postcode AB34 5HB) at 1pm for an informal get together before the apiary visit.

**APIARY DEMONSTRATION:**

**Preparing bees for winter and Varroa treatment, including a demonstration of the oxalic crystal sublimation technique**

Saturday 13 September at 2.00pm

ADBKA Apiary  
 Crathes Castle,  
 Banchory, AB31 5QJ

**AUTUMN LECTURE SERIES:****An introduction to bees and beekeeping**Aberdeen Grammar School, Skene Street,  
Aberdeen, AB10 1HT

Thursdays, 7.30pm-9pm

**Programme**

- 18 September: The Biology of the bee
- 25 September: The Beehive
- 2 October: What do I need to keep bees?
- 9 October: The products of the hive
- 30 October: Help – there's something wrong with my bees!
- 6 November: The beekeeping year

The six-week programme will cost £10, payable on the first evening of attendance. Attendees who are not currently members of ADBKA will be able to redeem the full course fee against their first year membership of the association.

The programme is ideal for those thinking about starting out on beekeeping, but would also be of interest to novices preparing to take the next step, or even experienced beekeepers wishing to update their knowledge.

Our bid to be included in this year's SBA expert lecture tour wasn't successful. There are only six slots, and as we had a visit last year it's only fair that other associations have a chance.

Nevertheless, you might still be able to catch one of the talks. East of Scotland BKA will be hosting the touring expert, Pam Hunter, who will be giving a talk on 1 October at Dalhousie Building, University of Dundee, DD1 1QR at 7.30pm. The lecture is entitled: *Are current problems really that new?*

If you want to go along, contact ESBKA secretary, Colin Smith, on 01241 830372, or email:

[secretary@eastofscotlandbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@eastofscotlandbeekeepers.org.uk)



The Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

**HONEY SHOW****SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER 2014**

The Kinellar Community Hall  
 Fintray Road  
 Blackburn AB21 0SS

Take note of the  
 revised date!

*Due to circumstances outwith our control, we've had to shift the Honey Show to Saturday 18 October. This is a different date from that shown on your members' programme card.*

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.

Full details of the various show categories and how to enter will be circulated with next month's newsletter.



The ADBKA Honey Jar store is open between 6.30pm and 8pm on Wednesday evenings and at other times by arrangement with Sandy Gordon (Tel: 01224 484540)

Take a closer look at.....

## ..... ROSEBAY WILLOWHERB

It's growing all over the north east of Scotland and is seen by many people as an unwanted, invasive weed. But rosebay willowherb is one of the honey bees' most important sources of nectar, and one of the main reasons that July is the peak of the beekeeping season – at least so far as blossom honey making is concerned.

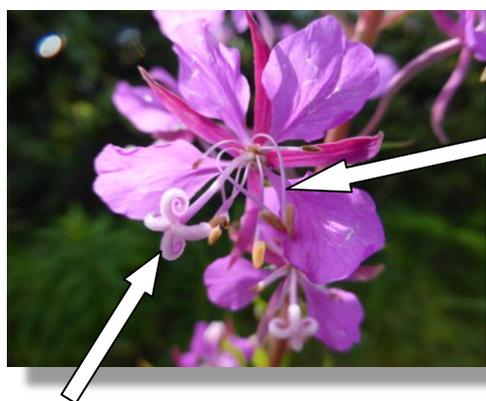
The deep pink petals of the flowers wave about on tall stems, with the youngest, unopened buds at the top and progressively older flower heads below. The plant has evolved a mechanism for avoiding self-pollination when insects visit one of its flowers. When the bud first opens, the male parts of the flower mature first. The pollen-bearing *anthers* are like miniscule rice grains on the end of fine stalks called *filaments*. Taken together, the anther and filament are called the *stamen*.



Younger flower heads

Older flower heads

Rosebay willowherb  
(*Chamerion angustifolium*)



Mature stigma on older flower

*Drooping filaments, with exhausted anthers*

After the pollen has been exhausted, the filaments droop and the female part of the flower, known as the *pistil*, comes to maturity. The pistil is made up of the *stigma*, which receives the pollen, mounted on a stalk called the *style*, which has an *ovary* at its base.

If you have the appetite for more biological detail, this male-before-female functionality is called *protandry*, which is one form of *sequential hermaphroditism*.

On a more practical note, if you watch your bees visiting rosebay willowherb, you'll see that they only go to the lower, older flowers on the stalk. This is because the flower only secretes nectar when it's in the female phase of its life cycle.

And as if all this wasn't exciting enough, look out for the blue pollen!

### AMERICAN FOULBROOD OUTBREAK in TARLAND AREA

At 1041am on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July the Scottish Government announced that an outbreak of American Foulbrood Disease had been found in the Tarland area.

As soon as the notifiable diseases EFB and/or AFB are suspected the beekeeper becomes subject to The Bee Diseases and Pests Control (Scotland) Order 2007 (as amended) which prohibits removal of hives, bees, combs, appliances etc. from the premises affected except for the purpose of submitting a sample for laboratory tests. Sadly, in this case these tests did confirm the presence of AFB.

The government's press release explained that "the AFB infected hive is being destroyed as there is no permitted treatment for the disease in the UK. There are no risks to public health from AFB and no implications for the quality and safety of honey. The movement of bees and related equipment into or out of the affected apiary are under specific controls."

The full press release can be found at:

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Bee-disease-confirmed-f04.aspx>

Beekeepers in the immediate vicinity of the outbreak who have registered their apiaries on BeeBase will have been notified of the situation by e-mail. All ADBKA members are urged to register their details on the BeeBase website. It's a straightforward process. Just go to <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/public/register.cfm>

ADBKA member Richard Bagshaw has spotted this New Zealand website containing a highly critical account of Apistan, one of our main Varroa control tools: <http://kiwimana.co.nz/apistan-what-is-it-and-why-we-dont-use-it/>

Do you have any positive or negative experiences of using Apistan? Get in touch with the newsletter and share your thoughts with other members.

Two young 'wanabees' at the recent Environment Day in Hazelhead Park. Thanks to Lindsey Macaulay and John Cooper.



## 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](mailto: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

**Apiary site** available in Torphins. For details, contact Graham Torrie on 013398 82038.

You might have heard about bees rejecting their queen and killing her by clustering around her in a ball resulting in her being overheated. It's often referred to as '**balling the queen**'.

A remarkable video clip of this happening in a beekeeper's hand can be found at <http://www.viralnova.com/clusters-of-bees/>

Thanks to Diana Lawson for this item.



**BeeCraft** is offering a discount to local beekeeping associations who wish to take out a bulk subscription to their monthly magazine on behalf of members.

The price of an annual subscription to BeeCraft in 2015 is £27.00. With a 10% discount that you would get by going through the association, the price would be £24.30 per subscriber for 12 hard copies of the magazine delivered to your home, plus a free digital copy. To take advantage of this we need a minimum of 10 subscribers.

If any members are interested in taking up this offer, please contact our Treasurer, Louise Forbes (see front page for contact details), who will make the necessary arrangements.

A preview of BeeCraft magazine can be seen at [www.bee-craft.com](http://www.bee-craft.com)

### Our area SBA Representative is

Stephen Palmer  
Stephen can be contacted on 01888 551367, or by e-mail at [palmers@fintry.plus.com](mailto:palmers@fintry.plus.com)

Thinking about **brood food** in a different way, a journalist for the website 'MUNCHIES' tells us: "I was given a frozen bee larvae, which I popped in my mouth and let melt on my tongue. It wasn't bad. The man feeding bees to me was Charles Michel, a Colombian-French chef who also spends a large portion of his time at Oxford University researching food. He believes we should all be eating bees."

See the story at <https://munchies.vice.com/articles/bees-arent-just-keeping-us-alive-theyre-also-completely-delicious/>



## According to.....

.....Laurie Croft in his 1989 book, *Curiosities of Beekeeping*, "The Rev. W.C. Cotton (born 1814) founded while a student at Oxford the 'Oxford Apiarian Society'. This society published his pamphlet entitled 'A Short and Simple Letter to Cottagers'. This was an attempt to save the lives of bees that might otherwise have been killed by sulphuring. To achieve this end, Cotton advocated the use of the puffball fungus to stupefy the bees when taking the honey harvest. He wrote: *The fungus does them no harm; it makes them drunk, which is very good for bees, though bad for men, as they get well in 20 minutes and are all the merrier afterwards.*

"The BBJ of November 1942 informs us that the use of the puffball (*Galvatia gigantea*\*) was still in use in West Sussex and that beekeepers in the Godalming district occasionally employ smouldering *Polyporus betulinus* and *Doedolea quercina* to anaesthetize bee colonies. The same journal informed its readers in July 1949 that beekeepers on the Yorkshire Moors still use the puffball, however many of them are very secretive about it. In more recent times a firm in Timaru, New Zealand, is reported to use the puffball to anaesthetize bees during queen rearing.

"In a study of anaesthesia of honeybees by smoke from puffballs, W.F. Woods reporting in the *J. Api. Res.*, (1983) p.107, found that the smoke from burning human hair had a similar effect to that produced by the puffball. This he attributed to the presence of hydrogen sulphide in the smoke."

(\*This is probably "*Calvatia gigantea*" - Ed.)