

Newsletter

December 2011

Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

For your seasonal delight, we bring you the Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association Christmas Quiz.

The answers to the quiz are on page 3. (No peeking!)

- Q.1 What is a Burgess Perfection?
- Q.2 What will be the accepted colour mark for queens reared next year?
- Q.3 The plant *Galanthus nivalis* will be important for our bees in February and March. Is its common name:
a) Crocus, b) Gorse, or c) Snowdrop?
- Q.4 HE Wood of Glassel was our association's chairman from 1914 to 1928. What scourge of the honeybee was named partly in recognition of his financial support for research?
- Q.5 It is generally agreed that the honeybee evolved in Africa, but how long ago?
a) 500-800 years, b) 60,000-90,000 years, or c) 20-30 million years
- Q.6 At the beginning of the 1960s, the ADBA had reason to establish a "Propaganda Sub-Committee". Was its purpose:
a) to increase membership, b) to alert members to the problem caused by *Nosema Apis*, or c) to discourage the importation of bees from outwith the UK?
- Q.7 Name the Philadelphian minister credited with discovering the significance of "bee space" in 1851.
- Q.8 Honeybees are often threatened by *Vesputula vulgaris*. What is its common name?
- Q.9 What is the total time from egg to emergence of a drone? Is it:
a) 16 days, b) 24 days, or c) 28 days?
- Q.10 The Carniolan bee is so named because it originated in the region of Carniola. In which modern European country does ancient Carniola now sit?
- Q.11 The Western Honey Bee has the scientific name, *Apis Mellifera*. *Apis* is Latin for "bee", but what does *Mellifera* mean?
- Q.12 In which year was the Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association founded:
a) 1910, b) 1930, or c) 1962?
- Q.13 Our honeybees engage in behaviour referred to as trophallaxis. What is it?
- Q.14 Is the melting point of beeswax:
a) 41.7°C, b) 123.5 °C, or c) 64.4 °C?
- Q.15 What should you do if you are stung?
a) swear, b) crush the offending insect between your forefinger and thumb in a pointless but strangely satisfying act of revenge, or c) remove the sting by scraping the blade of your hive tool across your skin?

Last month **A Member Asked** about the apparently contradictory advice regarding insulating hives and providing good ventilation. JM has offered this explanation:

“Your question implies that by ventilating the hive in order to stop the build up of dampness you will be negating any benefit from providing insulation beneath the roof. Here’s the logic: with the bees gathered in a cluster during the very cold weather, it will be of benefit to them not to have a flow of cold air moving up from the hive entrance and/or open mesh floor, through the mass of bees, and out via the central feed hole in the crown board. Blocking off the feed hole(s) and placing some insulating material in the space between the crown board and the roof will overcome this problem.

“However, it’s accepted wisdom now that dampness can be as harmful, if not more harmful, to the bees than the cold. So, through raising the crown board slightly by placing matchsticks at each corner, you are allowing an air flow through the brood body, without channelling this onto the cluster itself. Basically it’s a trade-off. And, like most other aspects of beekeeping, there will be supporters of this strategy, as well as those who have different methods of managing their bees through the winter.”

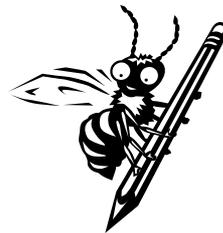
If you have a question for our members that you wish to be printed in the January newsletter, contact Graham Torrie.

Important Call to Members:

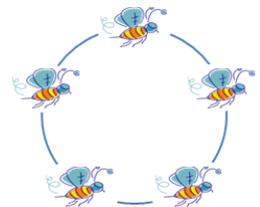
Vacancy: Association Treasurer

Any member able to give support to this critical business aspect of the Association please contact the Secretary, Rosie Crighton, on 01224 791181 or by e-mail at: aberdeenbeekeepers@gmail.com

Please note that there already exists an efficient and effective system for carrying out the relevant duties. No special qualifications are needed, just a reasonably good head for figures and a little spare time.



Beekeeping Circles



If you would like to join an existing beekeeping circle in the following areas, contact -

Helen Anderson, based in **Inverurie**, on 01467 620750, e-mail: sh.and@gmx.com

Graham Torrie, based in **Torphins**, on 013398 82038, e-mail: grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com

The initiative relies on individual members volunteering to compile and share (with permission) a list of names and contact numbers of other beekeepers in their local area, then to take things forward as the members of the circle deem fit. If you would be prepared to co-ordinate a beekeeping circle in your own area, please contact Graham Torrie.

Foraging around

Dr Alan Bowman, who spoke at the ADBA AGM last May about his work in tackling Varroa mite, has received a prestigious **Spirit of Scotland Award**. Dr Bowman and his team at the University of Aberdeen are working out a way in which to target a Varroa gene essential to life, for example one producing proteins involved in the operation of the mites' nervous system - a process referred to as "gene knockdown". His award, under the *Environment* category was reported by the Scotsman at:

http://www.scotsman.com/news/spirit_of_scotland_winners_put_on_a_dram_fine_show_1_1989330



Brainy Bees

Scientists at the University of Sheffield believe decision making mechanisms in the human brain could mirror how swarms of bees choose new nest sites. Striking similarities have been found in decision making systems between humans and insects in the past but now researchers believe that bees could teach us about how our brains work.

Experts say the insects even appear to have solved indecision, an often paralysing thought process in humans, with scouts who seek out any honeybees advertising rival nest sites and butt against them with their heads while producing shrill beeping sounds. Dr. Patrick Hogan of the University of Sheffield, who constructed the mathematical model of the bees, said: "The bees target their stop signal only at rivals within the colony, preventing the colony as a whole from becoming deadlocked with indecision when choosing a new home."

The research was reported on the Cutting Edge news website at:

<http://www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=53344&pageid=28&pagename=Sci-Tech>

And finally.....a group of New Zealand beekeepers has cracked a large scale bee rustling ring. Not happy with the lack of response by the police to the theft of their hives, the sleuths from the Whangarei Bee Club tracked down the crooks' beehive "chop shop", where stolen colonies and equipment were broken down and re-assembled for subsequent resale to unsuspecting customers. A man has now appeared in court charged with the thefts.

The story was reported on New Zealand's Country99TV, and the short news item can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyAWndYFDac>

Quiz Answers

Q.1: The Burgess Perfection was a double walled hive produced in the 1800s by JT Burgess and Son of Exeter, which could be bought for the princely sum of seven shillings and ninepence (about 39p!)

Q.2: Yellow

Q.3: c)

Q.4: *Acarapis Woodi* (Rennie) – the mite that gives rise to the disease Acarine

Q.5: c)

Q.6: a) (*membership of the association had fallen from 3,000 in 1953 to about 350 in 1960*)

Q.7: Rev. LL Langstroth

Q.8: The common wasp

Q.9: b)

Q.10: Slovenia

Q.11: *Mellifera* comes from the Latin *melli*, meaning "honey" and *ferre*, "to bear". So *Apis Mellifera* means "honey-bearing bee"

Q.12: a)

Q.13: The sharing of food or fluids between members of the colony

Q.14: c)

Q.15: a) and b) [*character-dependent*] and c)



Extractor and Steam Melter for Hire/Loan

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

Aberdeen Bee Supplies

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

AberdeenBeeSupplies@hotmail.com

ADBA 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. Members who fail to return equipment within this time are likely to lose their deposit. Please return equipment promptly and allow others to benefit from it.

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.....

.....Ron Brown in his book, *Beekeeping: A Seasonal Guide*, our colonies will reduce from around 25,000 in October to 10,000 or 12,000 by the middle of January - meaning that the death rate from natural causes will be around 150 bees per day. So don't be too concerned to see dead bees around the entrance to your hives. It just means that the colony has been carrying out "undertaker duties".

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 on the above number if I can help.

Graham Torrie