

Newsletter  
July 2014



# Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

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## BEES WERE BORN FREE, AND ARE EVERYWHERE IN CHAINS

It has come to my attention that there have been more thefts of bees in the Kincardineshire area. Can I remind all beekeepers to be careful when siting their apiary. It is becoming more important to maintain the balance between protecting the public from bee stings by siting bees sensibly away from main walkways, etc, with keeping a higher profile where bees are more visible so that if there is criminal activity, it is more likely to be seen. Keeping bees up a long dirt track miles from anywhere may no longer be the safest place. A more visible site where activity can be monitored more easily might be better. The bees which were removed in this incident were in a remote apiary where the public rarely goes, meaning that this isolation rendered them vulnerable to criminal activity. These latest thefts involved hives being opened and frames of bees, including the queen, being removed. This means that the person(s) who removed the bees have a degree of knowledge, therefore I urge all beekeepers to think carefully about how you can keep your bees safe.

Branding frames and boxes, or marking with your postcode, area or initials, can all help if equipment ever finds its way to the public domain, sale, etc, however site security is probably more likely to work. I don't want to raise anxiety amongst beekeepers but I cannot stress highly enough how important apiary security is. It must be devastating for a beekeeper to go into the hive and find frames including the queen gone, and be helpless to do anything about it.

Chains and padlocks are much cheaper than a box of bees so please take care!

*Rosie Crighton*

*ADBKA Honorary Secretary*

The heat is on, and everyone's in a flap!  
See page 4

Established 1910  
Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

The lull in the **neonicotinoid debate** was never going to last very long. One of the big pesticide manufacturers, Syngenta, had applied for a special derogation from the two-year ban on neonicotinoid use, which came into effect last December. They wanted special permission to use a coated autumn-sown OSR seed called Cruiser. To fit with farmers' planting schedule, a decision on whether to allow the application would have had to have been made by the UK Government by the end of June. By Thursday 3 July, with no decision made, Syngenta withdrew its application, but indicated that it may try again next year.

Underlining the controversy that continues to characterise the whole affair, the NFU and the Agricultural Industries Federation expressed disappointment over the withdrawal of the application and frustration over the government's failure to make a decision in the required timeframe. In contrast, the Soil Association saw the outcome as a 'victory for pollinators and science', whilst Friends of the Earth noted its delight.

You can find good coverage of the ongoing debacle in the Farmers' Guardian, at

<http://www.farmersguardian.com/home/arable/syngenta-withdraws-neonicotinoid-emergency-use-application/65807.article>

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The Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

## HONEY SHOW

SATURDAY 12 OCTOBER 2014

Watch out for more information in next month's newsletter!



Start planning  
your entries  
now!

## Members' Events

**APIARY DEMONSTRATION:****Harvesting honey**

Saturday 26 July at 2.00pm  
Hillcrest, Craigmyle Road,  
Torphins, AB31 4HN

*Heading west on the A980 towards Torphins, you'll spot a Shell petrol station a mile or two from the village. About a mile on from this, look out for a small sign indicating a right turn to Craigmyle. Come up this single track road; Hillcrest is the first house on the right.*

**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**

Saturday 13 September at 2.00pm  
ADBKA Apiary  
Crathes Castle, Banchory, AB31 5QJ

**AUTUMN LECTURE SERIES:****An introduction to bees and beekeeping**

Starts Thursday 18 September at 7.30pm  
See the August newsletter for full details

Lindsey and Olga MacAuley and John Cooper represented the ADBKA at Aberdeen Council's Britain in Bloom event on 2 July. Here is John spreading the word.



The Duchy of Lancaster, which provides private income to the Queen, has offered grants to people living within its estates to take up beekeeping. They will fund a beginners' beekeeping course officiated by a beekeeping association, essential equipment including a hive, safety wear and honey extractor as well as a colony of bees.

Not bad, eh?

In addition, this year ADBKA members have given talks on beekeeping to a community group at Walker House, Hazelhead, Albyn School senior pupils' Fair Trade Group, Midmar Primary School, Logie Durno Primary School, Albyn School Primary section, Momentum – a brain damage support group in Aberdeen, and Aboyne Ladies Probus.

Sorry. In last month's newsletter we published contact telephone numbers for the ADBKA committee members, but got Ian Douglas' wrong. Ian is based in Westhill and can be contacted on 01224 741 851.

**Visit the ADBKA Honey Jar Store for:**

Ragus Candy  
Apistan (10 strips, sufficient for 5 hives)  
Ambrosia Syrup  
Honey Jars and Lids  
Mesh Floors – National size (wire only)  
Hessian Squares for smoker fuel  
*Free loan of:*  
Honey extractors  
Mini-melters  
Heather honey press  
Wax extractor  
Wax foundation press



Approximately half a mile along Laurel Drive, turn into Laurel Place on your right - it's 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.

**Danestone  
Market  
Garden  
AB22 8AJ**

*For the loan items, a returnable £10 deposit is required, with the maximum length of loan being two weeks. As other members may be waiting to borrow extractors, etc. these must be returned on time and in a clean condition.*

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

## OBTAINING YOUR FIRST BEES

*Extract from the SBA's Technical Data Sheet 18:*

There have been many definitions for what constitutes a Nucleus, going back to the original British Standard 1372 of 1947 through to the latest advice on FERA's factsheets.

Suffice to say that in summary a Nucleus can comprise of 3 to 5 British Standard (BS) Deep frames of bees with all stages of brood having been laid by a this year's laying queen and sufficient food to allow them to be transported and become settled.

Ideally your Nucleus should be on 5 frames. In Scotland you should avoid getting a 3 frame Nuc after the end of June, a 4 frame perhaps until mid-July. After this time the nucleus should be on 5 fully drawn frames in order to allow it time to build up sufficiently for winter. If you are on large format hives (Langstroth, British Commercial or Dadant) then the above 3, 4 & 5 BS frames can be translated to 2 up to mid-July and 3 thereafter as the frame sizes are much larger. Ideally the bees you source should be from your area as bees become acclimatised to their local environment. Use a reputable supplier and don't be afraid to ask for references. Bees are also supplied in "Packages". A Package is 1.5 to 2 kg of worker bees, a Queen and sugar or candy in a ventilated shipping container. Packages are unusual in the UK and would only be suitable for Scotland if obtained before mid-May by professional beekeepers. You may also come across "Mini-Nucs". These are essentially very small hives used for queen breeding and only contain a cupful or so of bees. They should NOT be on offer for sale. This specification however deals with Nuclei on full size BS (or larger format) Deep frames.

### Specification - A Good 5 BS Deep Frame Nucleus will:

- Have a good quality, young laying queen – ideally from your area
- Have all stages of brood
- Have at least 3 frames with brood
- Be free of signs of disease (ask advice of your local Bee Inspector)
- Have at least 4 frames covered with bees
- Have the equivalent of a full comb of stored honey and half a frame of pollen.
- Have good quality frames and all frames fully drawn out
- Have been examined by a competent person prior to purchase
- Include a statement of what Varroa treatments, if any, have been given

### Delivery Container

Your nucleus may arrive in a Nucleus hive, in a temporary transportation box (usually plywood with ventilation strips) or if sourced locally, you may collect the five frames in your own hive. If the latter, it is best to deliver your hive with 2 dummies and four frames of foundation to the supplier a few days before collection – he can then install the 5 frame Nucleus of bees ready for you to collect.

### Sourcing bees outside your area

If you "import" bees, (and as stated above, please make all attempts to source local bees), you must be very careful to observe the relevant import rules. These are aimed at controlling the spread of pests and diseases. Guidance is given on FERA's National Bee Unit BeeBase website.

The full text of Technical Data Sheet 18 can be found at

<http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/PracticalBeekeeping/TechnicalDataSheets.aspx>

The BeeBase website is at

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm>

*A note of caution, from Tony Harris, General Secretary of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association:*

This is a warning to be extra careful if you are offered bees by someone you don't know. There are unfortunately unscrupulous people out there who will rip off new beekeepers, so don't part with any cash until you have taken some precautions.

One of our members has just bought 5 nucs off a guy north of Inverness way. 2 of the nucs had no queen but sealed queen cells, no eggs or larvae and few bees. The other 3 had a laying queen but as little as 2 frames of bees. I inspected them but only after they had been paid for. They cost £120 each!

If you don't know the seller ask to see inside the nucs before you buy. Ask to see the queen and the brood etc. if you are inexperienced try and get an experienced beekeeper to check the bees out before you buy. Any reputable seller of bees will be happy for a pre-inspection visit.

If you are looking to buy bees contact your Local Association Secretary or Area Rep as they should be able to advise.

Don't miss the SBA's Autumn Convention, to be held in the SRUC's Barony Campus, Parkgate, Dumfries on Saturday 27 September.

For more information, see <http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/>

or contact Mike Thornley on 01436 820493

### NYPD's Bee Cop Dishes on New Doc *Burt's Buzz* and Beekeeping in the Big City

With a headline like that, who cares what the story is? Not me. But if you want to go further, see

<http://www.people.com/article/burts-buzz-tony-bees-bee-cop-interview>



## 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

### Bees to give away

- from this year's swarms  
Bees are on Smith frames. Frames only, hives to be returned.  
Contact Matt on 01224-583132 / 0750-4656640 or email  
[avanti@clara.co.uk](mailto:avanti@clara.co.uk)

### Nucs for sale

5 frame nucs on National frames price £150. Call Bill Legge on 019755 81239 or e-mail [brh18510@aol.com](mailto:brh18510@aol.com).  
Near Alford

Dear Rosie

While many of your members will purchase bee books from their local bookshop or Amazon, you and your members may be interested in the new site [www.northernbeebooks.co.uk](http://www.northernbeebooks.co.uk) - just launched by Northern Bee Books.

It lists a very wide selection of titles.

Best wishes

Jeremy Burbidge  
**NORTHERN BEE BOOKS**

The association has had to splash out on a new printer, and as a result we are left with a box of toner cartridges for a Samsung laser printer. The cartridges are compatible with Samsung series CLP-310/315 and CLX-3170/3175 printers. If you have one of those and want a good bargain, call Graham on 013398 82038.

If you consider yourself 'hi-tech', and are zippy with tablet computers, smart phones and what not, you might be interested in seeing this American computerised apiary management system: <http://hivetracks.com>

It offers a basic version of its software for free.

**The Scottish Parliament** in Holyrood has installed two beehives headed by Buckfast queens, to be managed by Kelvin Valley Honey, an offshoot of Kilsyth Community Market Garden. The Herald reports that the initiative is responding to "growing concern about the dramatic decline in Edinburgh's honey bee population. The insects are responsible for over half of the annual pollination of all crops, produce, fruits and trees in Scotland."

See the report at <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/buckfast-bees-take-up-residence-at-holyrood.1403085610>

Kelvin Valley Honey's website is at <http://www.kelvinvalleyhoney.org.uk/Default.asp>



## According to.....

.....Jurgen Tautz in his 2008 book, *The Buzz about Bees*, "A particular specified value in the colony is the temperature of the brood nest. Should this be too high, bees carry water into the hive, and spread this thinly over the edges and caps of the cells, while others on the comb produce a cooling air current with their wings.

"But how is it that not only the direction of change (cooling or heating) is always appropriate, but also the exact value of the specified temperature is set? And how is it that exactly the right number of bees necessary to correct the unwanted temperature variation are activated?

"The solution is simple, but very effective. Different individual bees have different thresholds to cues and signals that release behaviour. Some bees start to fan their wings following even a very small increase in temperature. If this group of coolers manage to contain the overheating, then all is well. If they do not manage, the temperature will increase still further, and the bees that are the next most sensitive to temperature will also begin to fan their wings, and so on. When the temperature sinks, the individuals with the highest threshold to temperature, which were the last to begin fanning, will be the first to stop. The process is highly efficient, because the effort that is employed is exactly appropriate to the level of disturbance."