

Newsletter

June 2013



Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

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Making a Bee-Line for Crathes

Discussions with National Trust for Scotland about our new apiary site at Crathes Castle are going smoothly, though final details of the lease still have to be concluded. The agreement will probably be for a five year lease in the first instance, with extensions beyond to be agreed in the light of experience.

The rent will be similar to what we have been paying at Craibstone.

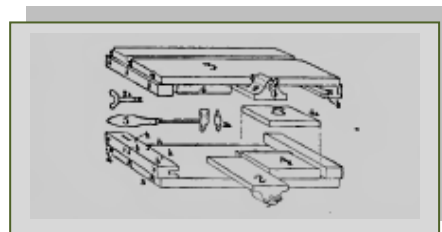
A key component of the new site will be a good quality log cabin style apiary building, 10 metres by 4 metres in size, which will provide us with space for storage, workshop activities and small group teaching and instruction.

Applications for help with funding to cover approximately two thirds of the cost of this building are in the pipeline, and we expect decisions about whether we have been successful by the end of June. The funding applications have been made to the Aberdeenshire LEADER programme and to Scottish Natural Heritage.

Applications for Planning Permission and for Building Warrant will be made as soon as the lease agreement at Crathes Castle is finalised.

Providing everything goes smoothly we would hope to have the new building in place sometime this autumn. We also anticipate that the bees will be moved from Craibstone to Crathes Castle before the end of the year.

John Cooper



What do you think this contraption might be? And what's the link with our association?

Find out on page 4.

A Scottish Government survey designed to assess the health status of honey bees in Scotland has just been published.

Key results of survey include:

- 39 per cent of beekeepers questioned lost at least one colony during winter 2011-12 and 79 per cent lost at least one colony during winter 2012-13
- Beekeepers identified weather, queen health, starvation and Varroa mites as the main risk factors
- The highest winter losses in 2012-13 were sustained in the Highlands; the lowest losses were in Tayside
- The average Scottish beekeeper has been beekeeping for less than 10 years, manages five or fewer colonies and produces 20-29lb of honey per colony annually
- Foulbrood disease and other notifiable pests were not found outwith known disease areas
- Varroa mites were present in all nine regions inspected, although smaller areas of Varroa freedom may still exist in parts of Scotland

The survey report can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/animal-welfare/bee/News>

For members without internet access, contact the Scottish Government's Agriculture, Food and Rural Communities Directorate Animal Health and Welfare Division on 0300-244 6672

We are sad to announce the death, suddenly at home in Banchory-Devenick on the 15th of May, of Sandy Rattray. Sandy, who was 76, was a beekeeper and a member of our association for over 40 years. He was well known for his work in helping the mental health charity, Solstice, and applying his beekeeping skills and experience to benefit others. He is survived by his sons, George and William.

**APIARY DEMONSTRATION:
DISEASE MANAGEMENT AND DEMONSTRATION OF 'SHOOK SWARM'
with Kirsty Sutherland**

Saturday 29 June at 3.00pm
Association Apiary, SAC, Craibstone, AB21 9YA

**GENERAL APIARY DEMONSTRATION -
AIMED PARTICULARLY AT BEGINNERS**

Saturday 13 July at 2.00pm
Association Apiary, SAC, Craibstone, AB21 9YA

**APIARY DEMONSTRATION:
HARVESTING HONEY**

Saturday 27 July at 2.00pm
Hillcrest, Craigmyle Road, Torphins, AB31 4HN

NB This is a change to the event
billed in the 2013 programme card

AGM News

Subscriptions

One important decision made at the AGM last month was to increase the annual subscription, with effect from January 2014, from £15 to £20 for full single membership, and from £20 to £25 for joint family membership.

This decision was made in the light of the fine balance between annual income and annual expenditure. A fall in membership has reduced income, and a rise in costs generally is constantly pushing up expenditure.

We still feel that members get a good deal, given all the events and services that membership of ADBKA brings.

Congratulations to members Rosie Crighton, David Morland, Kitta Potgieter, Emma Chapman, Hugh Donohoe, Kirsty Sutherland and Graham Torrie, all of whom have recently passed SBA beekeeping examinations.

Those present at the AGM were presented with their certificates by ADBKA Chair, John Cooper.

ADBKA Committee for 2013 –14

At the AGM on 25th May, only one change was made to the committee for the next 12 months.

Sandy Gordon resigned, and Hugh Donahoe was elected.

Sandy has served on the committee on and off for many years and we are indebted to him for all his contributions. Sandy, ably supported by Lillian, will continue to provide ADBKA with the range of invaluable services at Danestone Market Garden, which for many years has served as a crucial hub for Association activities. The Association gets these services at a bargain basement cost, and Sandy's vast wealth of beekeeping knowledge and experience gets thrown in for free to all who call in there. Thank you, Sandy.

We extend a warm welcome to our new committee member, Hugh Donahoe, who is a highly qualified and experienced beekeeper. Hugh is a qualified Honey Judge, and his knowledge across the board will be a grand addition to the work of the committee.

The full committee is:

Chair: John Cooper (Aberdeen 01224 637774)

Vice-Chair: Andy Sutherland (Pitcaple 01467 681778)

Secretary: Rosie Crighton (Blackburn 01224 791181)

Treasurer: Louise Forbes (Aberdeen 01224 313096)

James Beattie (Kintore 01467 632770)

Barbara Cruden (Dyce 01224 770001)

Hugh Donahoe (Banchory 01330 823502)

Ian Douglas (Dunecht 01330 860221)

Paul Falconer (Oldmeldrum 01467 671463)

David Findlater (Blackburn 01224 791181)

Alec Innes (Peterculter 01224 732765)

Witek Mojsiewicz (Cothal 01224 722302)

Stephen Palmer (Turriff 01888 551367)

Innes Simpson (Inverurie 01467 670265)

Fred Simpson (Inverurie 01467 620804)

Graham Stables (Potterton 01358 743348)

Gordon Stephen (Oldmeldrum 01651 873846)

Kirsty Sutherland (Aberdeen 01467 626248)

Jim Thomson (Dunecht 01330 860208)

Co-opted member: Graham Torrie - Newsletter Editor (Torphins 013398 82038)

Varroa Treatment

A new product called "MAQS", developed in Canada, has become available this year, and the Association is considering buying a quantity at a discount price, and passing on the savings to individual members, via our Danestone hub, managed by Sandy and Lillian Gordon.

THE PRODUCT

Like Apistan and Apivar, MAQS comes in strips, and two strips per hive is the treatment.

The active ingredient is formic acid, and the period of effective treatment is 7 days. However, the strips need not be removed after 7 days, and can be left in place until a time convenient to the beekeeper for removal. Leaving them in the hive for more than 7 days is not a problem.

ADVANTAGES

- Formic acid is found naturally in the hive in bee venom and in honey, and there is no risk of contamination of honey or wax. For this reason the strips can be put in place even when the hive has a super on and there is a nectar flow.
- There is no known risk of varroa becoming resistant to the treatment, which is not the case with Apistan and Apivar.
- MAQS is an authorised treatment.
- A high rate of efficiency is claimed at typical UK temperatures – a minimum of 90% mite kill.
- MAQS kills not only the varroa on adult bees, but also in the cells where they breed. This is not true of Apistan or Apivar.
- Treatment can be administered at any time of year.
- No special equipment is required apart from protective gloves when handling the product. (pvc, neoprene or nitrile are suggested).
- MAQS is sold in minimum quantities of 20 strips to a bucket/package, (10 hive treatments), but the Association will be able to sell smaller quantities to individual members, as each strip is double wrapped inside the bucket/package. The discount price for one hive (2 strips) will be £4.69 as against £5.52 at full price.

ADDITIONAL POINTS OF CAUTION

- MAQS can be corrosive on metal, which could affect metal queen excluders. Plastic is not affected.
- The strips should not be put in place immediately after a hive inspection. Wait at least a couple of days after an inspection before using the strips.
- Do not disturb the hive for at least 7 days after strips are inserted, and do not move hives, or feed colonies during this 7 day period. Leave the bees in peace.
- Ventilation is important, and a full hive width door is recommended when strips are inserted, as are open mesh floors and an empty super on top of the brood box.
- When the strips are inserted it is apparently commonplace for many bees to exit the hive and congregate outside on the front of the brood box. Some mortality of bees may occur in the first couple of days after the strips are in place, and some brood damage may also occur. The manufacturers claim that neither of these losses are serious and that a colony will soon recover, and that the queen will be laying normally by day 7.
- Shelf life of the strips is 12 months, and they should be stored in an air-tight container, away from direct sunlight, in a dry place at below 25 degrees Centigrade.
- Disposal. Spent strips can be composted.

Any further information can be obtained from Thornes on 01673 858555.

Before ADBKA places a bulk order we would like some idea of likely demand from members. Please phone (01224 637774) or email (j.cooper@clara.net) John Cooper if you are interested, saying how many hives you will be treating. (2 strips per hive).

If there is insufficient demand we will drop the idea.

FINAL POINTS

Apivar, which many members have used in recent years, is only available by mail order 'on prescription' from a vet in Dumfries, Richard Thurlow. He will only sell Apivar to individual beekeepers after he has spoken to them on the phone. This means ADBKA cannot buy from him in bulk. He can be contacted on 01387 259111.

Apistan is still available at Danestone and can still be useful if rotated with other treatments.

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

Abelo Beekeeping Equipment

Wide range of products & competitive prices

Please check our offers at

www.abelo.co.uk

Contact Sebastian Bacz on

07508944101 or e-mail

sales@abelo.co.uk

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

Beekeeping Equipment for Sale

Supers, lids, mesh floor, etc

Contact Jenny Bond at corskiebond@btinternet.com

For Sale

A quantity of Smith bee hives - clean and in good condition. (Unfortunately no bees.)

Also, two National hives comprising floor, brood body and roof.

Contact Tom Gullan on 07736732882

A Gift of Bees

We are grateful to Matthias Volkaert and Marion Kolata for kindly donating a colony to add to our stocks at the association apiary.

These bees originated from a feral colony taken from a hollow tree trunk some time ago by ADBKA member, Willie Taylor. A nuc taken from the colony was passed to Matthias, who has successfully reared further colonies from the 'swarmy' stock.

(Apparently, the hollow log is still lying in the shed at the association apiary. Do you think they'll find their way back?)

Fifty years on from Aberdeen's first involvement in the 'In Bloom' competitions the City is bidding for honours once more in the modern version 'Beautiful Scotland'. And Aberdeen City Council is keen to see bees as part of their campaign.

Environmental Services has a few **sites within Aberdeen that may be suitable for siting an apiary** and would love to hear from anyone who would like to be involved. If you think you are that person please contact Steven Shaw stevens@aberdeencity.gov.uk or tel. 01224 489273.

FROM OUR MEMBERS

Campaigning website, Care2, has suggested that honeybee **colony collapse disorder** can be linked directly to the fact that humans steal the bees' honey and feed them instead on sugar syrup. Their answer: stop eating honey! You can read the article at http://www.care2.com/causes/cause-of-colony-collapse-disorder-found-its-you.html?cid=email_na For all you 'gamers' out there, the Co-Op's *Plan Bee* initiative has launched a **bee-themed game app** for iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. To download the app, and to see what else *Plan Bee* is up to, visit <http://www.co-operative.coop/Plan-Bee/> Finally, National Geographic has published a thorough overview of the **challenges facing the honeybee**, including pesticides and Varroa, pointing out that honeybees have in fact done disappearing acts on and off for more than a century, with unexplained colony declines in the 1880s, the 1920s, and the 1960s that baffled farmers, as well as in Pennsylvania in 1995-1996. See <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/13/130510-honeybee-bee-science-european-union-pesticides-colony-collapse-epa-science/>

Thanks to Jim Beattie, Jennie Biggs and Innes Simpson for these items.

According to.....

.....D.M. MacDonald of Banff, writing in the December 1912 issue of the British Bee Journal, the 'foundation fixing outfit' illustrated on page 1 of this newsletter was something to behold: "This ingenious contrivance is the invention of Mr. Low, Rosehall, Newmachar, the enthusiastic secretary of the Aberdeenshire B.K.A. It consists of a wiring board fitted to accommodate either standard or shallow frames, having an adjustable chisel to open up the saw-cut in the top bar to receive foundation. The other side of the board has an end-piercing jig, and a block for fitting foundation in sections. I was much taken with the device when seeing it in operation in Mr. Low's workshop, and he gave a demonstration at the annual show, which was highly appreciated. It showed speed, accuracy, and facility of manipulation such as I have never before seen in any system of foundation fixing."

If you have an item for the newsletter, please contact Graham Torrie on 013398 82038, or by e-mail at grahamtorry@icloud.com

Distributing the newsletter by e-mail realises significant savings for the ADBKA. If you wish to receive your copy by e-mail, please let me know.

Graham