

Newsletter
June 2014



Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

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AGM News

Our 2014 AGM saw the departure from the committee of John Cooper, Alec Innes, Witek Mojsiewicz, Stephen Palmer and Fred Simpson. We are very grateful indeed for the contribution that each of them has made in the time that they have served on the committee, and we know that they will all continue to support the ADBKA as highly valued association members.

Those present at the meeting made sure that the extraordinary contribution made by our outgoing chair, John Cooper, was duly noted. In the past two years, John has transformed the association with the development of our superb new apiary at Crathes Castle. Also thanks to John's tireless work, we are well on the way to adopting a new constitution and altering our legal status to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. He has very kindly agreed to continue as a co-opted member of the committee in order to see the process through to its conclusion. John was given a standing ovation in recognition of all that he has done for the Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association.

For outstanding service as ADBKA's Treasurer, Louise Forbes was presented with the Chair's Quaich.

Fred Simpson and John Cooper were made Honorary Members.

A big thank you to everyone who contributed prizes and bought tickets for the raffle, which raised just short of £100.

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

The makeup of our committee for the forthcoming year changed a little bit from that announced at the AGM and is subject to ratification at the committee's first meeting on 9 July, but should look like this:

Robert Wood remains as President
Chair: Graham Torrie (Torphins 013398 82038)
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)
David Pert (Brechtin 01356 647373)
Innes Simpson (Inverurie 01467 670265)
Graham Stables (Potterton 01358 743348)
Gordon Stephen (Oldmeldrum 01651 873846)
Kirsty Sutherland (Aberdeen 01467 626248)
Jim Thomson (Dunecht 01330 860208)

Can members who are prepared to catch swarms please let me know their name, address, telephone number, and mobile phone number and how far they are prepared to go to catch a swarm and the area they are prepared to cover. This list is for the SBA, the local councils and Police Scotland, (local division) to enable them to contact the appropriate people to deal with swarms in the summer season. Please contact me with your details and your availability, eg, weekends only, or weekdays only. Thank you very much.

Rosie Crighton

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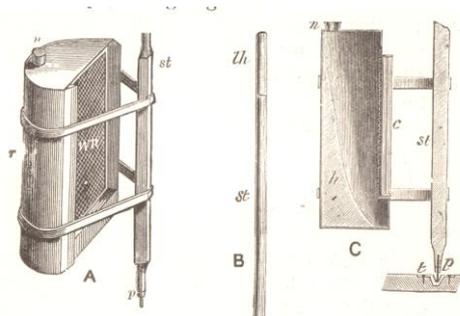
We are still looking for more volunteers to help staff the sales table, assist with the candle making, and meet and greet the public at this year's **Turriff Show**.

No major beekeeping knowledge is required as there will be experienced beekeepers present, only enthusiasm for promoting beekeeping, and a love of bees is necessary.

The show, an importance event in our calendar, will be held on Sunday 3rd and Monday 4th August.

It is intended that there will be a rota system in place for volunteers to help with all the things on offer so please help out if you can even if only for a couple of hours.

If you can help out, please contact Rosie Crighton on 01224 791181.



It's little wonder this single-frame honey extractor was popular in the 1880s.

To find out how it worked, see page 4.

APIARY DEMONSTRATION:**Disease inspection and demonstration of shook swarm methods, with Kirsty Sutherland**

Saturday 28 June at 2.00pm

ADBKA Apiary

Crathes Castle, Banchory, AB31 5QJ

APIARY DEMONSTRATION:**Preparing bees for moving to the heather**

Saturday 12 July at 5.00pm

ADBKA Apiary

Crathes Castle, Banchory, AB31 5QJ

APIARY DEMONSTRATION:**Harvesting honey**

Saturday 26 July at 2.00pm

Hillcrest, Craigmyle Road, Torphins,
AB31 4HN

Please note the
change of time from
that previously
advertised

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

Saturday 16 August at 2.00pm

Location to be advised

On Sunday 2nd June a number of Association Members took advantage of the opportunity to visit with Dr Stephen Palmer at his apiary in Fintry, where we were all given an excellent opportunity to assist practically with some of this hives – a total of 6 hives were located in the area and during the practical session there was a number of preventative methods discussed and carried out to prevent swarming.

Everyone commented on how well natured the bees were despite the various opening/closing/moving of brood boxes and supers. The benefits of queen marking and clipping was discussed as well as some information on the various strains of bees – in particular the variety present at the apiary which certainly proved to be quite docile and relatively unconcerned with all the movement around the hives. Stephen did comment on the fact that there were some other somewhat more aggressive bees

at a separate location, so all of his bees are not as good natured!

On the completion of the practical session extracting the honey collected from the nearby rape seed fields was discussed and some very good hints and tips provided to allow for the beginners in the group to gain some first-hand knowledge in some of the more practical requirements for achieving a good honey suitable for use. An excellent tea break was provided at the end of the session allowing some general discussions to take place.

Thanks are extended to Stephen and his wife on behalf of the members who attended the session for an excellent afternoon – the good weather was certainly an added bonus.

Joan Gilbert-Stevens

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)

Everything you always wanted to know about.....

DIPLOID DRONES

.....but were afraid to ask

It's true. There's more science here than you can shake a stick at. But put up with the technical terms and you'll see that the ideas are straightforward and that the conclusions might be significant to your beekeeping.

The starting point will be familiar to all beekeepers. The queen bee lays a fertilised egg in a worker cell that produces a female, worker bee. When the queen comes across a larger drone cell she lays an unfertilised egg that produces a male, drone. The term 'fertilised' means that the egg produced by the queen has combined with a sperm donated by a drone with which she has mated during the first three weeks of her adult life. She stores around six million sperm from her matings with an average of 13 drones.

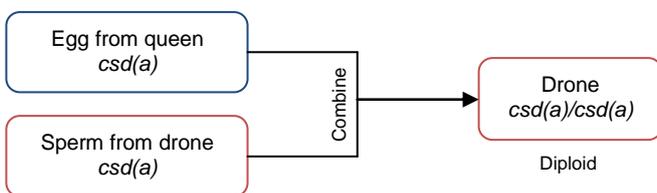
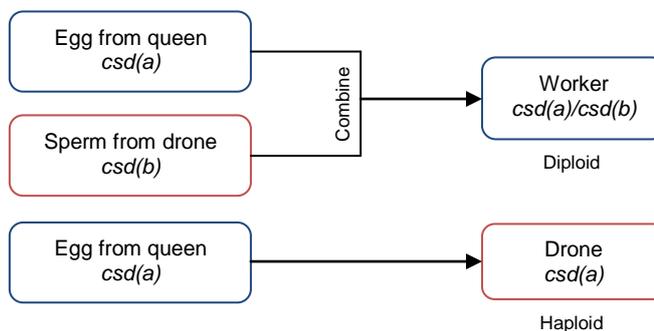
So, egg plus sperm create a worker; egg on its own creates a drone. What's going on here at a genetic level? Genes are passed from parent to offspring and carry the information that will determine or shape the next generation's biology and behaviour. Genes are strung together in threads called chromosomes. Within the nucleus of a cell, the chromosomes normally come in pairs; in the honeybee there are 16 pairs of chromosomes, so 32 in all. When the queen produces an egg, these pairs split apart resulting in the egg carrying only half the full complement. A drone is unusual in that it only has half the normal number of chromosomes (16) to start with. A sperm produced by a drone carries these 16 chromosomes and when it combines with one of the queen's eggs the two sets of 16 'join up' to make up the full set of 32 in the worker bee. Of course, because the drone is produced from an unfertilised egg, it only gets the 16. From the point of view of its genetic payload, the female honeybee, worker or queen, is referred to as being 'diploid'; the half-loaded drone is referred to as being 'haploid'.

If you plan to stick with this, now would be a good time to get a strong cup of coffee and eat something sugary.

The sex of the bee is governed by the *complementary sex determiner* (or *csd*) gene. There's only one of these within each of the genetic consignments passed on by the queen and the drone. However, they come in different varieties. Variations of the same gene are called *alleles*. Up until very recently it was thought that the number of *csd* alleles in the honeybee was in the region of 6 to 18. However, recent research has indicated that there may be as many as 145 of these genetic varieties in the worldwide population, with fifty or so existing within any local group.

When the egg and sperm combine, each set of 16 chromosomes will be carrying one of these *csd* alleles. As long as they are different forms of the gene, this combination of *csd* alleles 'determines' that the resulting individual will be female. One *csd* gene on its own – in the unfertilised egg – gives rise to a male bee. The diagram on the right attempts to illustrate this, labelling two varieties of the *csd* gene (a) and (b).

However, the smaller the population of queens and drones, the more closely-related they are likely to be, and the greater the chance that both sexes will be carrying the same variant of the *csd* allele. What happens then?



There wouldn't, of course, be any difference in the case of unfertilised eggs producing haploid drones. But when an egg and sperm with matching *csd* alleles combine - in the diagram on the left, both *csd(a)* - the offspring is not a worker but a drone: a 'diploid drone'.

As you might expect, nature has evolved a way of dealing with this troublesome outcome – when the larvae hatch, the workers eat them!

The consequence of all of this would be a reduction in the number of workers being raised by the colony, and a brood pattern spotted with lots of empty cells (remember, the queen 'intended' to produce a worker, so the eggs in question would have been laid in worker cells).

So, if you keep your bees in an isolated apiary, think about the possibility of diploid drones and consider the options you have to increase the genetic diversity in your stocks. Why not link up with another ADBKA member and farm out nucs with virgin queens to get mated with an unrelated population?

The SBA has requested that local beekeeping associations ask their members if they are in a position to offer nucs and queens for sale outwith their association's area. They are hoping to set up a database of possible suppliers that they can make available to SBA members. If this is you, please contact Stephen Palmer - see details on page 1.

ADBKA committee member Ian Douglas is down-scaling his beekeeping activities and has kindly donated a hive of bees to boost the association's stocks at our new Crathes apiary. We are very grateful to Ian for this generous gift.

Notice Board



Bees for sale:

Contact Stanley Christie on
01651 821236 for details

Aberdeen Bee Supplies

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

Bees for sale:

10 frames plus bees - £160

WBC hive plus bees - £400

Can be seen, no obligation to buy,
but buyer collects.

Call 01466 793143 (Huntly area)
and ask for Chris

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 for sale:

with marked overwintered 2013
or young mated 2014 queens.

Most on National frames, some
on Smiths. £200

Willow Lohr, Crathie 013397
42295 or 078 374 204 94
email willowlohr@btinternet.com

In our April newsletter we asked if anyone knew anything about the **Maud bee**, a strain of *Apis mellifera mellifera* (Amm) developed by Bernard Mobus, former Bee Advisor at the North of Scotland College of Agriculture at Craibstone. ADBKA member Susan Caie spotted a discussion thread running on the 'Scottish Beekeepers Interactive' forum, which included this information, posted by someone with the username 'Poly Hive':

"Bernard told me it was a queen he found in the village of Maud in Aberdeenshire and it was a colony which deeply impressed him. Believe me right now and here that it took a great deal to impress that man. When Bernard was forced to retire by the college I took on Craibstone, and the Maud strain, and his bees too. I bought 14 colonies from him. At the time Hamish Robertson was also running AMM and doing very well off their backs for all of that. My best result was (I hate to admit this but for veracity) the best crop I ever had was 320lbs of honey from a timber National. I would love to say otherwise but I have to be honest. The best Mauds were excellent. Any aspect you can think off they were up to or surpassed. However they had two critical weaknesses, which Bernard freely acknowledged. They were susceptible to Nosema and were not the best at over wintering. On the plus side they were excellent at superceding on the heather and their comb honey won me more than a few prizes of a red hue.

"Bernard raised cells on a pretty large scale and I know for sure that batches in the 100's went to Bert Mason at St Cyrus. I took queens to the post office myself and they were going all over. I cannot say one way or the other about Peebles though Moira Stokley may well know about that. Queens certainly went to Conon Bridge that I do know for a fact."

You can find the forum at www.sbai.org.uk

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

Hugh Donohue has also been awarded the SBA's Intermediate Certificate in Beekeeping.

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

According to.....

.....Frank R Cheshire in his 1886 book *Bees and Bee-keeping*: "About twelve years since, Mr Abbott introduced a cheap and handy appliance, 'The Little Wonder', which has done excellent service, and is sufficient where the stocks are few and economy needs studying. With it one comb only can be operated on at a time. This, when ready, is placed against the wire net, the iron pin at the end of the upright stick being firmly socketed into a board, or, better, a permanent iron thimble. The whole now receives a whirling motion, by a sway of the hand, which grasps the loose handle. As the velocity increases, the honey is thrown out into the side can, where centrifugal force keeps it heaped up. It may from time to time be drawn off from the neck. For portability nothing can equal this little extractor, which does its work perfectly, although at a rather heavy expenditure of labour, as the honey has to be kept going together with the comb; it is, in the hands of the novice, a little likely to fly from its socket; the iron thimble is therefore strongly recommended."