

Newsletter  
March 2014



# Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Circulated with this month's newsletter are two important documents: a copy of our new draft constitution, along with a briefing paper from our Chair, John Cooper

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

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North east beekeepers will be all too familiar with the many pests and diseases that curse our bees, and the obligation that we have to be vigilant in the management and treatment of our colonies. Now comes a new blow with the news that two honey bee pathogens, deformed wing virus (DWV) and the fungal parasite *Nosema ceranae*, appear to have jumped species and are now infecting the UK's bumble bees.

An international team of researchers led by Professor Mark Brown from Royal Holloway, University of London sampled bumble bee populations in England, Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man and found significant levels of infection, with strains of the pathogens matching those prevalent within local colonies of honey bees. Around 11% of bumblebees were infected with DWV and 7% were infected with the fungus. This compares to honey bee infection rates of about 35% for DWV and 9% for *Nosema ceranae*. Professor Brown is quoted as saying "A geographical patterning provides us with the information that transmission is occurring among these animals - they are sharing parasite strains. We cannot say it definitively, but because of the epidemiology, the most likely explanation is that the honeybees are acting as the source of the virus for the bumblebees."

The research has been published by the journal Nature and can be found at <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v506/n7488/full/nature12977.html>

News outlets have been buzzing over the last couple of weeks about the worrying news, with some of the more hysterical reports pinning the blame for all this on beekeepers! Perhaps the most informative account was given by the BBC at:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-26242960?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=British+Science+Association&utm\\_campaign=3705031\\_SND+-+20%2f02%2f2014&dm\\_i=1SS9,27ETJ,BCHTGU,7ZESV,1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-26242960?utm_medium=email&utm_source=British+Science+Association&utm_campaign=3705031_SND+-+20%2f02%2f2014&dm_i=1SS9,27ETJ,BCHTGU,7ZESV,1)

## BUMBLE BEES INFECTED WITH HONEYBEE DISEASES

All the more reason not to miss our guest speaker this coming Saturday. Steve Sunderland, Lead Bee Inspector for Scotland, will talk on HONEY BEE HEALTH in SCOTLAND TODAY Saturday 15 March at 2.00pm The Kinellar Community Hall, Fintray Road, Blackburn AB21 0SS

**In the Newsletter  
this month:**

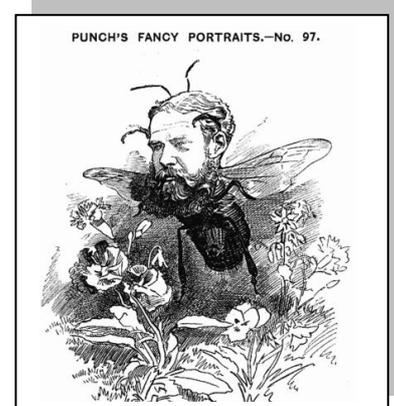
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### Important Notice: Subscriptions

Some members still have to renew their subscriptions for 2014. If you need another copy of the subscription renewal form, please contact the Secretary or the Treasurer.

Benefits of membership include: Introduction to Beekeeping education programme; monthly newsletter; regular meetings; practical sessions; free loan of honey extraction equipment; free loan of beekeeping books and videos; public and product liability insurance cover; discounts on honey jars and bee healthcare products

Please note that ADBKA membership will lapse for those members who have not renewed their subscription by 31 March.



This is Sir John Lubbock. He's been shouting at bees.

Find out why on page 4.

## Members' Events

**TALK: HONEY BEE HEALTH in SCOTLAND TODAY****- with Steve Sunderland***See page 1***MEMBERS' FORUM:  
SWARM MANAGEMENT**

Saturday 12 April at 2.00pm

The Kinellar Community Hall  
Fintray Road  
Blackburn AB21 0SS**HALF-DAY PRACTICAL  
WORKSHOP:****- assembly of frames, flat pack  
kit, making foundation, etc**

Saturday 26 April at 1.30pm

The Kinellar Community Hall  
Fintray Road  
Blackburn AB21 0SS*Beekeeping equipment will be  
available for purchase at this event*

Prince Charles has been getting grief in the press  
about an item for sale on his website

<http://www.highgroveshop.com/birds-wildlife.html>

It's a top bar beehive – yours for a mere £1,250

Read what the Daily Mail thinks of it at

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2559934/Prince-Charles-causes-buzz-putting-handcrafted-bee-hive-sale-1-250-price-tag-sting-tail.html>



*Very nice. But  
worth a King's  
ransom? What  
do you think?*

**A Rare Bee***by Carol Ann Duffy*

I heard tell of a tale of a rare bee,  
kept in a hive in the soul of a wood  
by a hermit – hairshirt, heart long hurt -  
and that this bee made honey so pure,  
when pressed to the pout of a poet  
it made her profound, or if smeared  
on the smile of a singer it sweetened his sound;  
or when eased on the eyes of an artist,  
Pablo Picasso lived and breathed;  
so I saddled my steed.

No birds sang in the branches over my head,  
though I saw the wreaths of empty nests  
on the ground as I rode – girl, poet, knight -  
darker into the trees where the white hart  
was less than a ghost or a thought, was as light  
as the written word; legend. But wasn't going, gone,  
I mused, from the land, or the sky, or the sea?  
I dismounted my bony horse to walk;  
out of the silence  
I fancied I heard the bronze buzz of a bee.

So I came to kneel at the hermit's hive -  
a little church, a tiny mosque – in a mute glade  
where the loner muttered and prayed, blind  
as the sun, and saw with my open eyes  
one bee dance alone on the air.  
I uttered my prayer: Give me your honey,  
bless my tongue with rhyme, poetry, song.  
It flew at my mouth and stung.  
Then the terrible tune of the hermit's grief.  
Then a gesturing, dying bee  
on the bier of a leaf.

Those members who attended the talk on diseases and pests at the beginning of last month may remember Stephen Palmer recommending a book called "**At the Hive Entrance**" by H. Storch. Coincidentally, this publication was also commended by the SBA touring lecturer, David Aston, in his presentation when he visited us last October.

The book is a practical manual on how to 'read' the external signs at your hive that might give an indication of what's going on inside. Unfortunately, it will set you back thirteen or fourteen pounds from most beekeeping book suppliers. Happily (at least for members with access to the Internet), the book can be downloaded free from:

[www.biobees.com/library/general\\_beekeeping/beekeeping\\_books\\_articles/At%20the%20Hive%20Entrance.pdf](http://www.biobees.com/library/general_beekeeping/beekeeping_books_articles/At%20the%20Hive%20Entrance.pdf)

Take a closer look at.....

### ..... THE BEE'S FOOT

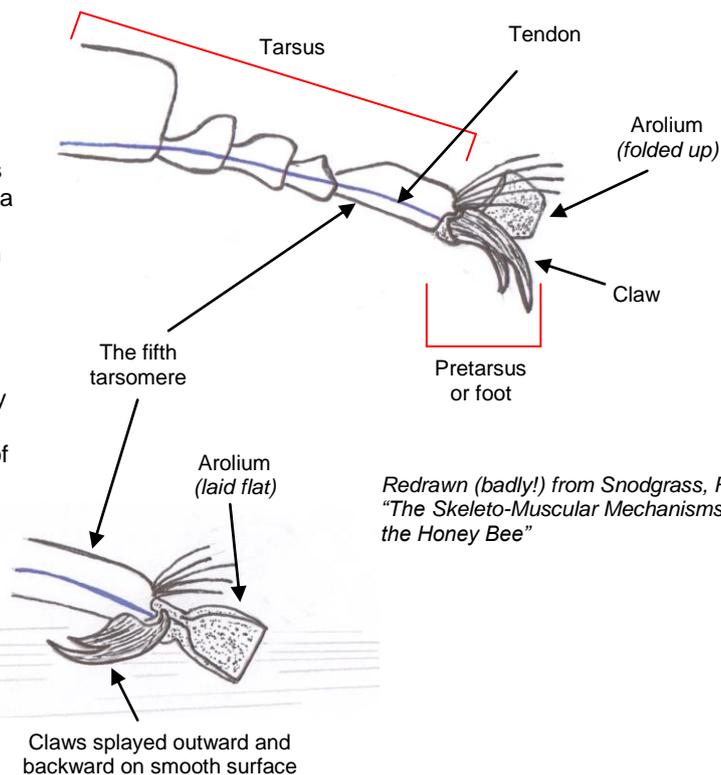
The various bits and pieces that make up a bee's foot are collectively known as the *pretarsus*. It's called that because it comes *before* the group of five leg segments called the *tarsus*. Each segment of the tarsus is called a *tarsomere*. Neither the tarsus nor the pretarsus have any muscles. Rather, the operation of the foot relies on a tendon running up the hollow sections of the leg to muscles in segments further up called the *tibia* and *femur*.

Each foot is equipped with two claws, each with two points, a flexible pad called the *arolium*, which is usually held in a raised position between the claws, five or six long thick hairs or spines, and a devious arrangement of articulated plates, principally the *unguitractor* plate and the *planta* (neither of which are shown in these simplified drawings).

In the normal run of things, when the bee needs to grip something, the tendon pulls on the unguitractor plate, the movement of which is distributed to cause the claws to flex. If the foot is placed on a smooth surface such as glass, the claws fail to grip and splay backwards and outwards. This causes the arolium to unfold and spread flat on the surface. Liquid exuded from the underside of the arolium provides adhesion.

As well as walking, gripping, nipping, grooming and so on, the bees' feet also play an important part in the colony's language of smells – the system of communication that uses chemical scents called *pheromones*. Wherever a bee walks, it leaves behind a smelly trail – footprint pheromone - that has remarkable effects on the behaviour of other bees. In the case of the queen, her footprint pheromone is an important constituent of 'queen substance', which acts to inhibit swarming. It's been suggested that the construction of queen cups and, ultimately, swarm cells on the outside edges of combs is stimulated in part by the lack of queen footprint pheromone when she cannot wander around the perimeters of frames in a congested colony. Similarly, the mystery of how drones locate the congregation areas where breeding takes place year after year (bearing in mind that each season brings a new population of drones) may also have to do with footprint pheromones. In her book *The Honey Bee Inside Out*, Celia Davis notes that drones have been observed to land in large numbers at these congregation areas, so depositing their own chemical scent, which may persist into the following year. Finally, workers make use of their unique footprint pheromone to mark food and water sources to help their co-workers find them and, in conjunction with another scent from their *Nasonov* gland, to help returning foragers zero in on the entrance of the hive.

Look at any book on the subject and it will source footprint pheromone to a gland within the last segment of the tarsus, referred to as the fifth tarsomere. The gland was named after an Austrian scientist named Ludwig Arnhart who discovered it in the 1920s. However, ninety-odd years on, recent research has raised doubts about whether this chemical scent does in fact come from the Arnhart Gland. In the frame instead are glandular cells within the hollow tendon that operates the foot. Evidently, the most studied insect in the history of the world still holds many secrets.



Redrawn (badly!) from Snodgrass, R.E. "The Skeleto-Muscular Mechanisms of the Honey Bee"

### 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)

## Notice Board



### Abelo Beekeeping Equipment

Wide range of products & competitive prices

Please check our offers at [www.abelo.co.uk](http://www.abelo.co.uk)

Contact Sebastian Bacz on 07508944101 or e-mail [sales@abelo.co.uk](mailto: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

### 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)

### Craibstone Clearout/Bargains and Freebies

The equipment we are keeping has been moved to the new apiary at Crathes Castle.

This leaves a body of miscellaneous stuff in the two sheds at Craibstone. Some is old and not always in prime condition, but some may be of interest to members.

If anyone is interested in having a look, and maybe getting a cut-price bargain or a 'freebie', please come to the Craibstone site at 2pm on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

If you are thinking of sterilising your brood boxes and frames with **acetic acid**, you might find that the big beekeeping equipment retailers won't send it out by post. So you might want to look at [https://www.soapkitchenonline.co.uk/cgi-bin/sh000001.pl?REFPAGE=https%3a%2f%2fwww%2esoapkitchenonline%2eco%2euk%2facatalog%2fToiletry\\_Bases\\_and\\_Concentrates%2ehtml&WD=acetic%20acid&PN=Liquids\\_and\\_Gels%2html%23a904#a904](https://www.soapkitchenonline.co.uk/cgi-bin/sh000001.pl?REFPAGE=https%3a%2f%2fwww%2esoapkitchenonline%2eco%2euk%2facatalog%2fToiletry_Bases_and_Concentrates%2ehtml&WD=acetic%20acid&PN=Liquids_and_Gels%2html%23a904#a904) where you can obtain 80% acetic acid solution (the right concentration) and it will be delivered. The supplier, The Soap Kitchen, will also take orders by telephone. Call 0844 880 5381.

*Thanks to Bill Legge and Julie Wall for this information.*

Canadian artist Aganetha Dyck creates these sculpted figurines, then lets her bees finish the work off with their own unique creative contribution.



## According to.....

..... Sir John Lubbock, quoted in William Harris' 1884 book *The Honey-Bee, its Nature, Homes and Products*: "The result of my experiments on the hearing of bees has surprised me very much. It is generally considered that, to a certain extent, the emotions of bees are expressed by the sounds they make, which seems to imply that they possess the power of hearing. I do not by any means intend to deny that this is the case. Nevertheless, I never found them take any notice of any noise which I made, even when it was close to them. I tried one of my bees with a violin. I made all the noise I could, but, to my surprise, she took no notice. I could not even see a twitch of the antennae. The next day I tried the same with another bee, but could not see the slightest sign that she was conscious of the noise.

"On September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> I tried several bees with a dog whistle and a shrill pipe, but they took no notice whatever; nor did a set of tuning-forks extended over three octaves, beginning with A below the ledger line. I also tried with my voice, shouting, etc., close to the head of a bee; but, in spite of my utmost efforts, the bees took no notice. I repeated these experiments at night, when the bees were quiet; but no noise that I could make seemed to disturb them in the least. In this respect the results of my observations on bees entirely agreed with those on ants."