

Newsletter

November 2011

# Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Established 1910  
Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

President:  
Mr R Wood  
Cothal Lodge  
Cothal, Dyce

Chair:  
John McGregor  
11 Marcus Road  
Blackburn  
Tel. 01224 790468

Hon. Secretary:  
Rosie Crighton  
29 Marcus Cres.  
Blackburn  
AB21 0SZ  
Tel. 01224 791181  
e-mail:  
aberdeenbeekeepers@gmail.com

Hon. Treasurer:  
Innes Simpson  
Burndale  
Keith Hall  
Inverurie  
AB51 0YJ  
Tel. 01467 670265

## HONEY SHOW 2011



The 2011 Honey Show has been hailed a great success by ADBA Chair, Jock McGregor: "It was really good that we had so many high quality entries this year, despite the fact that once again the weather has not been too kind to the bees. Most of all I was delighted to see such a mixed group of people being drawn together by their shared interest in bees and beekeeping. Our membership includes older people and youngsters, women and men, experienced beekeepers and beginners. The annual Honey Show provides an opportunity for all of them to show off the results of their beekeeping skill and hard work, and to be recognised for what they have achieved."

Jock is already looking to next year's show and anticipating an even bigger turnout: "The new beekeeping year has already started and it's never too early to start thinking about what you want to achieve next spring and summer. We're planning a busy programme of association activities next year, and I think that this will generate even more interest from our members when the 2012 Honey Show comes around."



*Eleven-year-old Steven Macaulay is presented with the Shield for the best exhibit in the Junior Class by Ian Craig, the Honey Judge at the show this year and President of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association.*

This year's Honey Show 'Gift Table' was donated to the Blythwood Residential Home, Port Elphinstone, Inverurie

### ***In the Newsletter this month:***

Honey Show	1
Insulation vs. ventilation	2
Talking Bees	2
Beekeeping Circles	2
Feral bees	3
In the News	3
Equipment	4
According to.....	4

*The full list of this year's winners and awards is distributed with this month's newsletter.*

As the season progresses and honey is being processed, simply set aside four or five 454 g/1lb jars from each of the season honey types; likewise, boxes of cut comb. Then, as the show date approaches - be it the local flower show, agricultural show (for example, at Turriff) our own honey show, or whatever - look at the categories from the 'Show Schedule', and from what you have set aside select the two 'best' jars/items for each of the categories you wish to enter. Generally entering the competition is free and prize money is paid to the winners. Thereafter retain your items for entry at subsequent show venues. Show categories are much wider than simply honey - e.g. wax, wax candles, baking, toffee, shop window and more. Get involved. It's a bit of fun and local entries add sparkle to community events. You don't have to be old and have years of experience to win!



*What is the best way to prepare for this?*

*Are any of our members able to offer help or advice on the subject of balancing ventilation with insulation? If you have any thoughts on this, please e-mail them to: [grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com](mailto:grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com) Alternatively, call Graham Torrie on 013398 82038. Helpful comments will be included in next month's newsletter.*

## A Member Asks.....

**How do I strike a balance between keeping my hives warm this winter and keeping them well ventilated?**

I have an open mesh floor on my hive. As I prepare for the arrival of the winter, I'm wondering what advice other association members may have about the balance

between warmth and ventilation.

I've read about stuffing the roof with sacking or some other insulating material to keep the brood body warm, and about raising the crown board with matchsticks to let the air flow through. But aren't these things acting against each other?

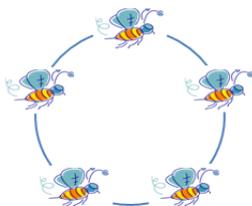
What about the open mesh floor? Should I be leaving the slide-in tray in place, or should it come out over the winter. If it's out, the whole bottom of the hive will be open to draughts. Alternatively, should I be thinking about getting a solid floor to put in place before the very cold weather arrives?

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

## Talking Bees

As well as the association's formal schedule of talks and presentations, notably the current programme of lectures being delivered by Dr Stephen Palmer at Aberdeen Grammar School, it seems our members are much in demand when it comes to spreading the word more widely. John Cooper has recently given a talk on bees and beekeeping to the Aberdeen Branch of the British Humanist Society, and is scheduled to give a similar talk to the Beacon Gardening Club in Aberdeen at the end of November. And Willie Taylor has hit the headlines with his talk, *Who told the bees?*, at the Mearns Probus Club in Laurencekirk. (See page 3.)

*If you have given, or will be giving, a talk or presentation on bees and beekeeping, why not let the newsletter know? It's another useful way of gauging the level of public interest in our craft.*



## Beekeeping Circles

Our beekeeping circle gathered for tea and gingerbread last week, to put faces to names and to chat about our shared interest. We were especially pleased to have the chance to glean a wealth of information and encouragement from Banchory beeman, Hugh Donahoe.

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The idea of establishing local, informal groups of association members providing mutual help, support and advice has already taken off with beekeepers setting up networks in two areas in Aberdeenshire.

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](mailto:sh.and@gmx.com)

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

## Feral Bees – a sad end



ADBA members, John Cooper and Sandy Gordon, were called out to help deal with feral bees nesting in a tree. Although they had hoped to get the bees into a hive and save them, unfortunately, the company employed to remove the felled tree had killed all the bees with petrol rags and had removed the bees, the combs and the tree. All that was left was an empty hollow stump.

This photograph was taken a few days before by an employee at the company in whose grounds the tree was located.

*Thanks to John Cooper for this item.*

## Foraging around in the media

### Twenty Million Bees make bid for freedom

A highway in the US state of Utah was temporarily closed after a lorry carrying at least 20 million bees overturned, freeing the cargo. The bees were being transported to California, ready to pollinate an almond crop next spring.

The road was closed down for several hours while local beekeepers worked overnight to recapture the bees.

The full story can be found on the BBC website at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-15439754>

*Thanks to Ian Mackley for this item.*

### New film on city bees in Copenhagen

In Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, millions of honey bees are working hard for the city.

These busy employees provide not only delicious honey to city people, but a blooming environment in the parks and greens around the capital. The European Environment Agency (EEA) has made a short movie about the city bee project. The film can be downloaded from:

[http://www.eea.europa.eu/atlas/eea/city-bees?utm\\_campaign=newsletter.2011-10-14.4031667168&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=EEASubscriptions](http://www.eea.europa.eu/atlas/eea/city-bees?utm_campaign=newsletter.2011-10-14.4031667168&utm_medium=email&utm_source=EEASubscriptions)

*Thanks to Janet Williams for this item.*

### Who Told the Bees?

This was the title of ADBA stalwart, Willie Taylor's, talk to members of the Mearns Probus Club, who not only delighted in Willie's knowledge and style, but also in the opportunity to savour the produce of his bees. The occasion was reported in the Kincardineshire Observer and can be seen at:

[http://www.kincardineshireobserver.co.uk/community/who\\_told\\_the\\_bees\\_1\\_1932030](http://www.kincardineshireobserver.co.uk/community/who_told_the_bees_1_1932030)

**And finally.....**The Guardian reports that Peers are to be asked to back a bill to curb a total of 1,208 powers of right of entry to private homes and gardens. Conservative peer, Lord Selsdon, has pointed out that the 1980 Bees Act which gave environment officials the right to enter possibly also confirms the Roman law on following bees. "If you find a bee taking pollen in your garden, it is taking raw material from your land. If you follow that bee and keep it in sight, you may go on to any other person's land, without permission or court order, and when you find its nest you may take a share of the honey because the raw material comes from you," he told the Lords.

Read the full story at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/nov/03/privacy-right-of-entry-law-curb>



## 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

### Breaking News:

Jock's steam wax melter is back in Blackburn! Jock has also been alerted to a tidy 4 frame extractor, which was found outside one of the sheds on the apiary site at Craibstone. He reports: "It runs like a dream and is currently out on loan!"



## 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.

The Association honey jar store at Danestone Market Garden has 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.*

### 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)

## According to....

....Alexander Deans\* in his book, *The Beekeepers Encyclopedia*, early classical sculptors would use bleached beeswax to fill in faults and flaws in their work. The best artists would boast that their sculptures were "sine cera" – literally, "without wax". The next time you close a letter with "yours sincerely", think about where this claim to being without deception comes from.

*\*A.S.C. Deans was the Chairman of our association in 1939, 1945 and 1946, and was Honorary President until his death in 1997.*

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](mailto: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