

Newsletter

November 2014



# Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association (SCIO)

- promoting the study and development of apiculture, and advancing the heritage, culture and science of beekeeping amongst its membership and throughout the wider community

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SC031754

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## 2014 HONEY SHOW AWARDS

A complete list of class winners is enclosed with this month's newsletter

	Awarded for	Winner
The Bill MacKenzie Quaich	Best exhibit of Ling Heather Honey	James Friend
The Thorne Trophy	Most points in the show	Graham Torrie
The ASCD Trophy	Best exhibit in the show	Terry Daniels for soft set honey
The Cut-Comb Trophy	Best exhibit of cut comb	Jock McGregor
The President's Trophy	Best photograph	Graham Torrie
The Anne C Beddie Trophy	Best exhibit in the wax section	Rosie Crighton
The Henry Simpson Trophy	Best exhibit in the medium/dark honey Member's class	John Steele
MTM Construction Shield	Best exhibit in the light honey Member's class	Olga MacAulay
The Captain Manson Trophy	Most points in the Industrial Class	Anne Daniels
SC Rae Memorial Trophy	Best Frame	John Steele
Jim Tocher Trophy	Most points in the Novice Class	Andrew Henderson
ADBKA Junior Shield	Best exhibit in Junior Class	No entry
Gift Table	Best exhibit in the Gift Class	Graham Torrie
John D Walker Trophy	Best exhibit in the creamed /soft set honey class	Terry Daniels

Aberdeen & District Beekeepers Association annual Honey Show took place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October at the new venue of the Kinellar Hall in Blackburn, and from the response of the participants and members it was a resounding success. This year the classes ranged from open to newcomers and offered a choice for a range of honey and wax showing abilities, from the first time entrants to the seasoned competitors. New classes this year also included decorative items with a beekeeping theme, photographs, and cake decorating for children.

More than 40 entrants placed over 160 entries in a possible 75 classes and judge, Alan Riach was impressed by the quantity and quality of the entries giving constructive feedback and encouragement to everyone. Mr Riach proceeded to present the Honey Show trophies and SBA exam certificates awarded to members who sat Modular exams in the past year as part of the SBA education programme. All in all it was a great success with over 50 visitors enjoying the display as well as tea and refreshments and we are looking forward already to next year's show which we hope will be even bigger and better.



Rosie Crighton

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**ABERDEEN AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION SOCIAL EVENING**  
**- including the presentation of Honey Show trophies and fun quiz**

Saturday 22 November at 7pm  
 Dyce Church Hall, Victoria Street, Dyce, Aberdeen

*As with previous years, this evening will be organised along the lines of an "American Supper". Members are invited to bring along some food and drink, which will be laid out for all to share. **Some paper plates and paper or plastic glasses would also be a great help!***

Please note the change of venue from that advertised in your 2014 membership card.

### **HONEYBEE HEALTH: A MITEY PROBLEM**

*Last month, ADBKA member Ian Murray attended this presentation by Aberdeen University's Dr Ewan Campbell at the Hutton Institute. Here, Ian provides an interesting summary of what he heard:*

By 2050 there is going to be an extra 2 billion people to feed. There has not been any significant increase in agricultural land available thus food security is a major issue. 84% crops are insect pollinated. Oilseed rape is also wind pollinated. Wildlife also depends upon insects.

In the USA 50% of all commercial hives go to the almond fields. The economic value is a staggering US\$3.3 Billion. In the UK typical values are: £400m for OSR; £150m for strawberries; £100m for raspberries; £100m for apples.

In the last 50 years pollination demand has increased by 300% but hive numbers have only increased by 85%. There is a deficit of hives throughout Europe with the UK and Finland having the largest deficits. In common with most other governments the Scottish Government has a 10 year bee health strategy.

There are some 12 species of varroa and ours is the varroa destructor species. This species jumped from coexisting with Apis Cerana to a destructive existence with our Apis Mellifera. Its arrival in the UK can be traced to a single bee farmer in Devon in 1992.

The Varroa Destructor (VD) mite waits until the cell is ready to be sealed and then nips in and hides in the feed at the bottom of the cell until the cell is capped. It can judge the optimum time to enter the cell within 20 hrs by detecting pheromones. Once inside the cell it uses a Snorkel type device to breathe whilst hidden. The first born mite is a male with all other progeny being females. VD is incestuous thus the male will then mate with the females.

During winter the mite lives off adult bees. It has a strong preference for drones as they are bigger and take longer to mature than females. The mites live off their hosts and they bite their host leaving an open wound; this is a potential pathway for viruses and there are over 18 viruses associated with varroa. In particular the type of Deformed Wing Virus that we see in the UK is a highly pathogenic variety. 90% of the mite population is in the brood all year.

The VD mite is now pretty much resistant to pyrethroids and particularly Apistan although this particular resistance is not quite so severe in Scotland.

Genetic diversity allows man to use antibiotics to attack viruses without damaging mankind, similarly antibiotics can

be used to treat fish for sea lice. But mites and bees are genetically quite similar so it is difficult to attack one without damaging the other.

The latest strategy is RNAi knockdown whereby the genome does not get damaged but the messenger (a protein) does get damaged. This method has been used successfully before on the common tick (arthropods) hence the link to mites. RNA knockdown is very species and target specific thus for example you could make the target male mites only, or the reproductive system only. The trick is to get the VD mite to think that it is under attack by a virus so that an auto immune response is triggered and in so doing, put simply, it attacks itself. This is achieved by the use of dsRNA (double string RNA).

It is possible to micro inject dsRNA into mites by aiming for the soft tissue between the platelets as they are tough little beasts. Clearly this would not be a viable strategy on an industrial basis but they can also be soaked in a solution or, in a more operationally practicable strategy, using a sugar syrup as the vector. This hopefully is the smart delivery method needed. The nurse bees then take the sugar syrup to the base of the cells where the VD mite hides.

Knockdown RNA is not a silver bullet but can be considered to be part of an integrated pest management approach. Unlike chemical solutions there is no resistance built up to the RNA methodology and targets can be quickly switched to avoid this but it would be imprudent to state that resistance can never occur. The DNA approach is also being used in personalised human medicine particular with cancer cases.

It is noted that Monsanto (2010) and Bayer (2013) are investing in the use of RNA as a tool. They have achieved 41% mite mortality but at huge investment cost, allegedly some £400 per 40 varroa injected/soaked.

There is now a need for full size hive trials as only mini hives (aka nukes) have been trialled so far and in laboratory conditions.

The Scottish research has been funded by VITA (Europe) ltd, BBSRC- LINK and the EU and it is understood that the EU are to fund a 5 year grant for this research.

Link: <http://www.hutton.ac.uk/events/honeybee-health-mitey-problem>

*Ian Murray*



Since beginning my bi-annual checks the colony survived until the very long cold winter of 2012/2013. There were no flying bees in spring 2013. However, in summer 2012 a swarm took up residence in the roof of another building within half a mile of the original site, and that colony is still alive today. In addition a swarm has re-inhabited the roof of the first building this summer, 2014.

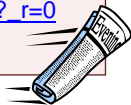
It is possible, but not provable, that the two swarms mentioned above originate from the same strain I began monitoring 5 years ago. In the SBA project no feral colony has survived in a site continuously for more than 6 years.

Quite what conclusions can be drawn from this, and whether or not it shows that there are strains of honey bees that may be able to survive long term as feral colonies without being treated against *Varroa* is to date unclear. In the meantime the SBA project will continue, and I will carry on monitoring the two separate feral colonies in Glen Tanar.

The photograph of the beautiful queen carved in stone, which lies at the foot of the building in Glen Tanar, gives some indication of the length of the history of beekeeping in the glen.

John Cooper

Evidently, there's **money in mites**. The pharmaceutical company that manufactures the *Varroa* treatment Apivar, Arysta LifeScience, has been bought over by Miami-based Platform Speciality Products for a cool 3.5 billion US dollars. Read all about it at [http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2014/10/20/platform-specialty-products-to-pay-3-5-billion-for-arysta-an-insecticide-maker/?\\_r=0](http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2014/10/20/platform-specialty-products-to-pay-3-5-billion-for-arysta-an-insecticide-maker/?_r=0)



## Invisible Inc.

Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association has become an *incorporated organisation*, although you wouldn't know it to look at us. Nonetheless, despite everything seeming to be the same as it was before, we have now changed the legal form of the association, so putting ourselves in a more stable and secure position for the future.

The change follows a vote at the 2014 AGM approving a move to ask the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator to remove ADBKA from the charity register, to be replaced with a new "Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation" called Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association (SCIO). A postal ballot of members gave unanimous approval for the dissolution of the old organisation, and another unanimous vote at a Special General Meeting held on 18 October means that ADBKA's assets and liabilities will pass to the new charity.

As we carry out all of the administrative and procedural tasks necessary to complete this work it would be extremely helpful if members could submit their membership renewal forms, and their 2015 subscriptions, a bit earlier than usual. That's why we're circulated the 2015 subscription form a month earlier than in previous years. *Please help the committee by getting this back to the Membership Convener as soon as possible.*

## 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**

You may be asked to show your ADBKA membership card when you visit the store, so remember to take it along

*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



### 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)

I bought a **skep making kit** a couple of years ago, and started making a skep, but it was hard going and took a lot of time. Now I have given up, but if anyone else would like to have it, it is available free to a good home.

I have all the necessary straw, instructions and the special tool needed.

Helen Gooday  
[helen.gooday@hotmail.com](mailto:helen.gooday@hotmail.com)

### FOR SALE

- 20 Frame electric radial centrifuge c/w stainless steel screens for conversion to tangential for heather honey extraction.
- Thorne lightweight 9 frame plastic radial centrifuge, manual, but electrical conversion possible.
- Approx. 30 German made polystyrene mating hives 260mm x196mm x 110mm deep. Contains 4 grooved wooden top bars, separate and removable feed compartment, adjustable under floor entrance. Catenary shaped inside to encourage comb building. Most with clear perspex cover under roof.
- Thorne 40kg bucket with valve

For offers on above items please contact W. Mojsiewicz on 01224 722302

**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

*Remember not to forget. Getting your 2015 subscriptions in early will make the changeover from the old ADBKA to the new one a lot easier. If you missed it, go back to page 3 to find out what this is all about.*

### Our area SBA Representative is

Stephen Palmer  
Stephen can be contacted on 01888 551367, or by e-mail at [palmers@fintry.plus.com](mailto:palmers@fintry.plus.com)

**BeeCraft** is offering a discount to local beekeeping associations who wish to take out a bulk subscription to their monthly magazine on behalf of members.

The price of an annual subscription to BeeCraft in 2015 is £27.00. With a 10% discount that you would get by going through the association, the price would be £24.30 per subscriber for 12 hard copies of the magazine delivered to your home, plus a free digital copy. To take advantage of this we need a minimum of 10 subscribers.

If any members are interested in taking up this offer, please contact our Treasurer, Louise Forbes on 01224 313096 or e-mail: [forbes.email@btinternet.com](mailto:forbes.email@btinternet.com)

A preview of BeeCraft magazine can be seen at [www.bee-craft.com](http://www.bee-craft.com)

*We have some members keen to take up this offer, but can't go ahead with less than ten!*

## According to.....

.....Laurie Croft in his book, *Curiosities of Beekeeping*, "John Grutch in an article in *St Bartholomew's Hospital Journal* of February 1897 describes a curious remedy, that of taking a bath in honey. The writer states that such a strange treatment is admirable for aches and 'strong itches'. He quotes as follows:

"A friend of his had such a foul itch that he was like a leper, yet was cured by this treatment. He took an empty wine cask, called a pipe, and took out one head, and made a liquor of water and honey, making it pretty strong with the honey and heating it as hot as he could endure to stand in it, and put it in the pipe and caused him to stand in it up to his neck, and this he did three days, one after another, and he was recovered as clear as ever."