

Newsletter



September 2015

# 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

## 2015 HONEY SHOW

SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2015 at 2PM

The Kinellar Community Hall, Fintray Road, Blackburn AB21 0SS

Circulated with this month's newsletter is our Honey Show Schedule, newly revised and updated for 2015. You'll find that there are more entry classes and categories than ever before, so more opportunities for everyone to get involved. As well as honey, you can enter beeswax, mead, art, needlework, baking, photographs and more. Don't forget our 'gift table', which consists of show entries that are subsequently gifted to a local charity.

Even if you're not able to enter this year, why not come along to see what it's all about? There'll be beekeeping equipment and books to browse, fine refreshments to enjoy and an opportunity to blether with other beekeepers about the rotten season.



All trophy holders should ensure that they return their trophies to the secretary **before 17 October.**

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*Late swarming, bad tempered bees, a dearth of honey, starving colonies, drone-laying queens: such was beekeeping this summer in the North East of Scotland.*

*A pretty grim picture, but can you see the upside to all of this? Yes, you're right, there isn't one.*

*Here, Willow Lohr gives a fascinating account of a uniquely problematic season.*

I have experienced quite a few 'new and strange' going-ons this year, despite beekeeping for 19 years! It must be the very peculiar weather, which has lacked in consistency and is a stop-start affair for the bees. Imagine a city being randomly supplied and cut off food for the whole summer. Its population would live quite differently with 'new' strategies in order to cope with the unpredictability and short supply demands of feeding the population.

I have also had late queen cells, which were of peculiar shapes. I started opening them up and often they had no queen in them, but normal bees or drones! I have also had an artificial swarmed colony where the queen has abandoned the bees and turned up in another colony! (I mark all my queens and she happened to be my only green one.) I have also had very small colonies swarming and then a swarm swarming again, clearly with virgin queens, but easy to hive and settle anyway. These I destroyed and re-queened with less swarmy queens I had. However, I am always worried about virgin queens becoming good laying queens if they have a small entourage and the mating weather being sporadic.

Some of my young, but established and marked queens are laying multiple eggs in cells, even though they have 2 or 3 frames of sealed brood. This looks very alarming and 'laying workers' spring to mind, but the pattern is from a queen and there is no drone brood. In the old book 'A thousand beekeeping questions' this is usually an indication of a very good queen with too few bees to cover her egg laying capacity. This would tie in

with this summer's situation, where colonies are less opulent than last year and consequently swarms are smaller too.

As nectar flows continue to come and go in short stop-start events, the bees' frustration appears to be expressed in emergency measures of making hay when the sun shines; so, late and many queen cells (not many of good quality, though) and late, but small swarms. I am continuing to check the colonies for all possibilities until the end of this month, as a late heather nectar flow might still throw some surprises.

In addition, I had to remove a late and substantial swarm two days ago in Crathie! The bees had settled in a very swanky compost bin which looked like a luxury polystyrene hive; all warm and dark. The owners had been stung and said the swarm had only been there for 5 days, but already there was lots of wild comb and the queen laying in the new comb. Clearly not a virgin queen cast!!

I also united a large colony which was suddenly making odd and many queen cells. No queen or sign of her could be found. The queen cells were ugly, long and thin, with larvae in it which looked skinny. It may be that the queen got lost, became infertile or died and I did not notice, and the bees made desperate, but futile, attempts to re-queen. Too late to start raising new queens now, so uniting it quickly with another colony is the only option to save this colony from becoming laying workers or weakening further.

Yep, a 'thinking on your feet' year!

*Willow*

**AUTUMN LECTURE SERIES:****An introduction to bees and beekeeping**

Aberdeen Grammar School, Skene Street,  
Aberdeen, AB10 1HT

Thursdays 7.30pm-9pm

- 03 September: *The Biology of the bee*
- 10 September: *The Beehive*
- 17 September: *What do I need to keep bees?*
- 24 September: *The products of the hive*
- 01 October: *Help – there's something wrong with my bees!*
- 08 October: *The beekeeping year*

**2015 HONEY SHOW**

**SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2015 at 2PM**

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Road, Blackburn AB21

*See front page for further information.*

**ABERDEEN AND DISTRICT  
BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION  
SOCIAL EVENING**

***plus the presentation of Honey Show trophies***

Saturday 14 November at 7.15pm

The Kinellar Community Hall,  
Fintray Road, Blackburn AB21 0SS

*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.*

For the 2nd year of attendance at the **Duthie Park Environmental Event** the ADBKA stall was designed and organised by Olga and Lindsey Macaulay, who keep their bees at the Aberdeen City site at Grove Nursery, Hazlehead. Lindsey, who is now making a good recovery from some major surgery, could not attend this year, but Olga was helped by Rob Rowe and John Cooper, who also keep bees at the Grove Nursery site.



The event was very well attended and all three were kept very busy fielding questions and providing information. Next year Olga and Lindsey plan to take their observation hive, made by Lindsey's father, to the event. From the evidence of ADBKA's presence at the Turriff Show for several years, the observation hive will doubtless prove a big additional attraction to ADBKA's stall.



Bee farmer Murray McGregor, working his colonies at our well attended visit to one of his heather sites near Burn o' Vat. Hopefully he has had a better return this year than we have!  
(See below.)

**ADBKA BEES AT THE HEATHER**

For the second year since moving to Crathes the ADBKA hives were taken to the heather on the Ballogie estate, half an hour drive from the Crathes apiary.

The move out and back was carried out by Graham Torrie, John Steele, Neil Murray and John Cooper. The poor weather from Spring onwards meant that several of the colonies were not particularly strong when they arrived at Ballogie in late July, and on top of that the ling heather was about two weeks later in flowering than normal. When the ling did come good the weather in the second half of August was mediocre, and the North wind and cold showers in the first week in September gave little respite.

Under these conditions it is no surprise that several of our colonies failed to produce any honey in the supers, and a few were even given some emergency feeding while at the heather. The overall honey production of around fifty lbs was disappointing but not unexpected. Ten lbs of the honey will pay the Ballogie rent, and the rest will be sold to give a modest boost to ADBKA funds.

Since returning to Crathes the colonies have been fed and treated against varroa, and despite the poor weather this season are probably in 'decent nick' to face the winter.

Like all optimistic beekeepers we will expect a bumper heather year in 2016.

## GREAT BENEFITS FOR ADBKA MEMBERS, ALL ACROSS THE NORTH EAST

### LONGSIDE

#### Free loan of:

heated uncapping tray;  
electric uncapping knife;  
heather honey press;  
wax melter

#### Coming soon -

Unimel stainless steel, 3  
frame tangential extractor -  
will take all size frames apart  
from 14"x12", Dadant Deep,  
Langstroth Jumbo and  
Commercial Deep (16"x10")

Contact: Erling Watt  
074294 54572  
watterling@aol.com

### MUIR OF FOWLIS

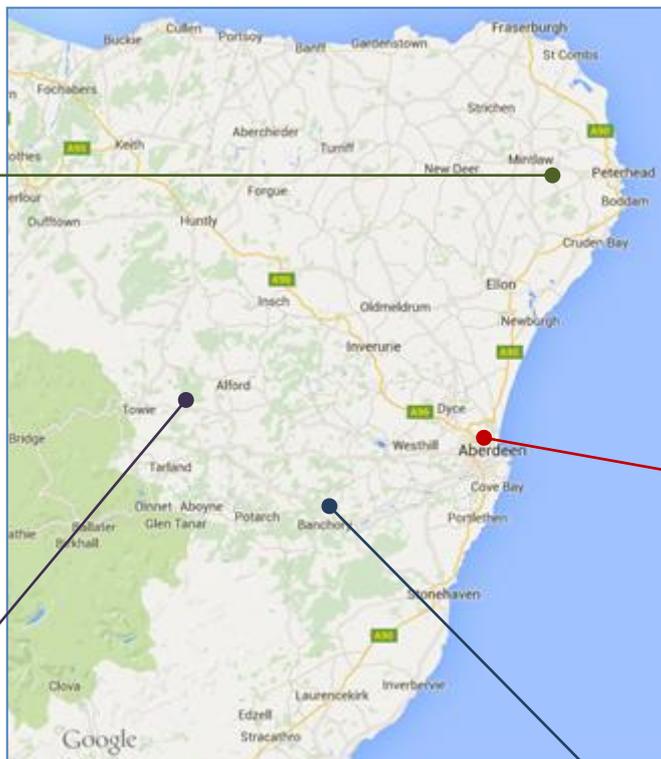
#### Free loan of:

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Unimel stainless steel, 3  
frame tangential extractor -  
will take all size frames apart  
from 14"x12", Dadant Deep,  
Langstroth Jumbo and  
Commercial Deep (16"x10")

Contact: Joan Gilbert-Stevens  
019755 81369  
craigmill@btinternet.com



### DANESTONE

#### 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

Contact: Sandy Gordon  
01224 484540

### CRATHES

#### Free loan of:

Combimel stainless steel radial 9 frame extractor - will take frames of all shallow sizes  
(including Manley) or 9 BS Deep, OSB, Langstroth Deep or 16" x 10" frames;  
heated uncapping tray; electric uncapping knife; refractometer;  
candle-making kit

Contact: Graham Torrie 013398 82038 adbknewsletter@btinternet.com

On Monday 25 August 2015, one billion people (one in seven of the world's population) logged on to Facebook. This milestone was only reached thanks to the circle of ADBKA members who are sharing information and keeping in touch on our Facebook page. Why don't you join them by searching for our page and clicking "Like"?



### BeeCraft

The price of an annual subscription to BeeCraft in 2016 is £28.00. With a 10% discount that you would get by going through the association, the price would be £25.20 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 (see front page for contact details), who will make the necessary arrangements.

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

### BBwear DISCOUNTED CLOTHING OFFER for ADBKA MEMBERS

In order to get the 20% discount, you will need to contact BBwear directly, by email at [sales@bbwear.co.uk](mailto:sales@bbwear.co.uk) or by phone on 01872 562731, and place your order. You'll also need to ask the ADBKA Chair or Secretary (see contact details on the front page) to email BBwear to confirm that you are a member of the association. Your order will then be processed.

You can see the range of clothing on offer at <http://www.bbwear.co.uk/> or you can request a catalogue by calling the above number.

Please note that you will not get the discount if you place your order online via BBwear's website, and discounts cannot be refunded after the order has been placed through the website.

(Free gloves are not included with the full suits, however, a 50% discount is offered on washable leather gloves or spats.)



### Aberdeen Bee Supplies

Jock McGregor is the local agent for Thorne Beekeeping Equipment. Contact him on 01224 790468 or e-mail: [jockandmeggie@gmail.com](mailto:jockandmeggie@gmail.com)

#### BEES WANTED

Contact Eric Chambers on 01224 580137

The Leys Estate has two sites that would be suitable for **SETTING UP AN APIARY**. They are:

1 place on Inchmarlo golfcourse, Inchmarlo, West of Banchory

1 place on Leys Estate, between Crathes village and Park village, north of A93

For further information, contact:

Thys Simpson  
 Countryside Ranger  
 Leys Estate  
 Mob. 07753 931332

[thys.simpson@leysestate.co.uk](mailto:thys.simpson@leysestate.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

#### BUT IS IT ART?

Rosie is assisting an art student who is creating something with dead bees. If you're able to gather some together to help out, call Rosie on 01224 791181.

Jock McGregor has brought to our attention an online service for producing your own design of honey labels. Have a look at <http://www.able-labels.co.uk/> where you'll find various options for putting together your own unique design.

Remember, if you sell your honey, the labelling must comply with the Honey (Scotland) Regulations 2003 (SSI 2003 No 569), as well as a range of other food standards regulations.

For an information sheet detailing the labelling requirements, email or call Graham Torrie - see front page for contact details.



Oldham Athletic v. Blackburn Rovers game on 25 July disrupted by Queen of the South

*Thanks to Malcolm Watson for this item*

## According to.....

.....Thomas Wildman in his 1770 book, *A Treatise on the Management of Bees*: "Each comb hath two rows of cells opposite each other, which have their common bases. The thickness of each comb is a little less than an inch; thus the depth of each cell will be about five lines. We have found in diverse combs, that were a foot long, between sixty and sixty-six ranges of cells; there will therefore be a little less than two lines for the breadth of each, which is a little more than a third of its length.

"Almost all of the combs are built with cells of this size; except for a small number of others in some places of the hive which have larger. The breadth of these cells is something more than three lines, and the length about six lines. These great cells are made for lodging worms that become drones, as we shall mention afterwards.

"One finds likewise, in diverse parts of the hive, three or four cells bigger than the others, and made in a different manner. They have the figure of a spheroid; they are open in the inferior part, and attached to the extremities of the combs. We could not discover to what purpose these cells are designed, but we suppose them the cradle or the abode of the kings."