



**NOVEMBER  
2018**

# 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*

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**FUTURE ARTICLES**

The Association's new collection of model beehives and beekeeping equipment

Experiences with removing swarms from inaccessible places

Beginners. Briefly  
(Ian Mackley)

## THE 2018 HONEY SHOW

Yet another successful annual Honey Show was held at Kinellar Hall on 20<sup>th</sup> October. The Schedule was significantly revised for this year, removing Classes where there had been only few or no entries in recent years in order to make the Show more manageable. 39 people submitted 169 entries in total. 2018 has been a good year for spring and summer honey but very poor for heather honey and this was reflected in the entries: 20 each in the light and soft set classes, but only a handful of heather honey entries.



The Show was judged by Bron and David Wright from Edinburgh. Both are National Honey Show judges and Bron is the immediate Past President of the SBA. The Industrial entries were judged by Margaret Grant, a very skilled baker who has been judging our Industrial Section of the Show for the past four years.

Prior to the prize giving, Bron said a few words about the Show, noting in particular that she felt some of the best entries were of national standard and encouraging people to submit entries for instance at the Highland, Scottish Honey and the National Shows. By way of example, Jenny's stained glass honeycomb and bee exhibit won Best in Show.



Also, before Prize Giving, Sandy Gordon was formally invited to become the Association's next President. Sandy graciously accepted and did what he has been doing for decades, offering his beekeeping help to anyone who needed it.



David gave a short and insightful talk on how honey exhibits are judged. Clearly time does not permit all exhibits to be tasted. The judges first look for 'elimination' faults, for example failing to meet the Schedule (e.g. wrong type of jar), or in the wrong Class (e.g. medium honey entered in the light Class). They then screen for externally visible 'downgrade' faults, for instance imperfect lids, chipped jars, air bubbles or signs of granulation in liquid honey. At this point the original say 20 entries will have been reduced to only six or eight jars which are actually opened. The visible surface of the honey is then scrutinised for further 'downgrade' faults such as impurities, scum etc.

The honey might also be tested for water content at this point. Finally, the few exhibits which have got this far are assessed for aroma and taste then ranked accordingly. David's tip for success is to pay attention to detail – all the judging factors to the point where the jar is opened are completely within the control of the beekeeper - to aim to get your entries to the standard where they are at least tasted in the first place, and prizes will follow.

Lots of thanks are due to the Co-Conveners, Alison Goss and Jenny Lewis, to Stewards and other helpers, Donald, Malcolm, Karl, Joan, Naomi and Steve, and of course to Margaret and Moira for a splendid tea.

Ian MACKLEY

## TROPHIES AND AWARDS

The Thorne Trophy  
 The A.S.C.D. Trophy  
 The John Cooper Cup  
 The President's Trophy  
 The Bill MacKenzie Quaich  
 The Henry Simpson Trophy  
 The Anne C. Beddie Trophy  
 MTM Construction Shield  
 The Captain Manson Trophy  
 The David Pert Memorial Prize  
 S. C. Rae Memorial Trophy  
 John D. Walker Memorial Trophy  
 Jim Tocher Trophy  
 ADBKA Shield

Most points in the show  
 Best exhibit in the show  
 Best exhibit of cut comb honey  
 (This year) Best lemon honey cake  
 Best exhibit in liquid ling heather  
 Best exhibit in medium/dark honey  
 Best exhibit in the Beeswax Class  
 Best exhibit in light honey  
 Most points in the Industrial Class  
 Best exhibit in the handicraft class  
 Best frame  
 Best exhibit of soft set honey  
 Most points in the Novice Class  
 Best exhibit in the Junior Class

Joan Gilbert-Stevens  
 Jenny Lewis  
 Lindsey Macaulay  
 Anne Daniels  
 Hugh Donohoe  
 Ken Gow  
 Rhian&Crawford Anderson  
 Jamie Evans  
 Rosie Waites  
 Lindsey Macaulay  
 Hugh Donohoe  
 Witek Mojsiewicz  
 Geoff Holtom  
 Sophie Breeman



Shop window display  
 1<sup>st</sup> prize (Rhian&Crawford Anderson)



Industrial class  
 Numerous entries



Handicraft class 1<sup>st</sup> prize  
 Honey warming cabinet  
 (Lindsey Macaulay)



*1<sup>st</sup> prize Class Photography  
Katie Hall*



*Impressive beeswax entries*



*1<sup>st</sup> prize Class 31  
Joan Gilbert-Stevens*

### **MORE BY LUCK THAN BY DESIGN**

I was lucky enough to win first prize at this year's honey show for this close-up photograph of a drone at the 'purple-eye stage' of development. Last year I came second with a close-up of a worker emerging. On both occasions, lots of people asked how the pictures had been taken, clearly in the mistaken belief that I had some expertise that I might be able to pass on. Rather than allow that myth to persist, here's the background to the photographs.



I have a fairly good SLR camera, which I've used a lot over the years, and I have a basic knowledge of the principles of taking a decent photograph with it. However, it's useless for taking down to the hives, being heavy, bulky and calling for framing to be done through an eye piece. Instead, I routinely pop into the pocket of my bee suit a compact camera that my wife bought some years ago, which is fully automatic and has a 'macro' setting. That means you can set it to focus very close up to small objects. It is a Panasonic DCM-TZ40, which wasn't cheap at around £150, but probably not that expensive in terms of its quality. A quick search on the internet suggests that this model is probably now out of date, but there's bound to be better, more advanced cameras in this price bracket. It is also likely that modern smart phone cameras can do an even better job.

Both pictures were taken on the same day in June last year. It was really clear and sunny, ideal for snapping without the need to worry about using a flash. I had set out specifically to take some photographs of the bees and I deliberately went to one of my mating nucs for that purpose. These small colonies tend to be very placid and can be easily handled without gloves, a big advantage when you are using a camera. In advance, I had set the camera to take macro photographs at the highest picture quality available.

I opened the nuc box and carefully removed one of the frames. With even greater care, I laid it down on its side on top of the other frames so that I had both hands free. Next, I made sure that I wasn't standing between the sun and the hive so as not to cast a shadow, and then had a look at what the bees were up to. As you might expect, there was a lot of action.

One of the big advantages of digital cameras is the freedom to take lots of pictures without worrying about the cost of developing and printing. (If this doesn't make sense to you, you are too young to remember going to the chemist shop with your film and then waiting a week or more for the developed photographs to be produced.) Therefore - and here is my big secret revealed - take loads of pictures. On the grounds of probability, you are very likely to get one or two good ones. In this case, there were plenty of workers emerging, an ideal subject. Then I spotted this undeveloped drone, which had somehow become accidentally uncapped as I removed the frame - bad news for him, but good luck for me.

So, my prize winning photography relies on the fact that you don't get to see the large quantity of useless stuff that I produce. If you fancy taking the same approach, you're sure to get good results too, with the added bonus that you will have added yet another fascinating dimension to your beekeeping hobby.



## BEGINNERS, BRIEFLY...

*An occasional article aimed at helping the novice through the beekeeping year.*

Your winter preparations should have been completed three or four weeks ago. Remember that you should not leave anti-varroa strips in for longer than the recommended treatment period. Remember too that if you need to feed your bees between now and next April, you must use fondant or candy, not syrup. At lower temperatures the bees cannot dehydrate syrup which thus might ferment and lead to dysentery.

Now is a good time to clean your kit, as you won't be needing it much until next spring. The magic ingredient is washing soda.

**Bee Suit:** Detach the veil which risks getting caught by zip pullers in the washing machine, and wash your suit according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add a cupful of washing soda directly to the drum; this will help remove propolis and other stains. Although many manufacturers say you should hand wash the veil, I have found mine machine washes perfectly well on a delicates cycle, again on its own to avoid damage by other garments. Deal with any repairs now too.

**Hive Tool:** Make up a solution of 100g of washing soda in 500 ml of warm water, and add a dash of washing up liquid. Scrape off any large chunks of wax, propolis etc. and soak the tool for a while. After a scrub and a rinse, it should be spotless and gleaming again. Other small metal and plastic hive parts, e.g. Porter escapes, as well as feeders, can be cleaned in the same solution.

**Gloves:** We are encouraged to use disposable gloves over leather gloves nowadays – although this seems an environmentally questionable practice to me – so your leather gloves may well be clean. If you use some sort of plasticised glove, these can be cleaned with the washing soda solution. Some leather gloves are sold as 'washable' so follow the manufacturer's instructions there.

**Smoker:** The bellows are usually screwed on and can be detached. Sticky deposits on the bellows can be removed with the washing soda solution. A heavily used smoker may have tarry deposits on the outside, inside the lid and particularly around the rim, making opening and closing difficult. Apply a blowtorch to these deposits for a couple of minutes. They will coke up into a more solid, brittle deposit which can be fairly readily chipped and scraped off.

You might want to clean spare hive parts now too, but we'll leave that for a future article.

*Ian Mackley*

### MEMBERS EVENTS

**NOVEMBER, 10<sup>TH</sup>,  
Saturday, at 10.30 a.m.**

**SBA EXAMS,**

venue : Westhill Library,  
Westhill Drive, Westhill,  
AB32 6FY

invigilator : Hugh Donohoe

**NOVEMBER, 17<sup>TH</sup>,**

**Saturday,**

**10 a.m. until 6 p.m.**

**ADBKA CONVENTION 2018,**

Kinellar Hall, Blackburn  
AB21 0JQ

Details sent with previous  
(corrected) newsletter and  
available on website.

### ADBKA OUT-APIARIES

The Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association covers a very large area from Huntly across to Inch, Banff to Peterhead and from Laurencekirk to Ballater. In the days of sugar rationing the association was 3000 strong since beekeeping was one way of getting more sugar! In those days it was an affiliation of beekeeping groups with activities being arranged by these groups and open to all.

Today we have 220 members and in the past few years Kemnay and Tarland have also become home to SBA-affiliated Beekeeping Groups.

We recognise that our apiary at Crathes is a long way for many of our members to come, and the same goes for Kinellar Hall where we hold our inside events.

At our meetings we have often discussed whether to set up one or more out-apiaries which could provide local focal points at which to hold demonstrations and other events. To do this will require a suitable apiary location and local beekeepers who would be prepared to put the time in to organize and run a project to make this happen.

ADBKA has some funds which could be made available, and additional money could be raised via other means, something Kemnay and Tarland have been very successful at.

Please contact me if you are interested, at [adbkachair@gmail.com](mailto:adbkachair@gmail.com).

**David Morland**