



**FEBRUARY
2019**

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

A YEAR IN THE APIARY AT CRATHES

CHAIR:

DAVID MORLAND

Middle Ardo
Udny, Ellon
AB41 6QX
Tel. 07768244420
e-mail:
ADBKAChair@
gmail.com

HON. SECRETARY:

MALCOLM WATSON

Ebrie Lodge,
Auchnagatt, Ellon
AB41 8YL
e-mail:
aberdeenbeekeepers@
gmail.com

HON. TREASURER:

JOHN ADAMS

5 Baillieswells Drive,
Bieldside, Aberdeen,
AB15 9AT
Tel. 01224868402
e-mail:
treasureradbka@
gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

ERLING WATT

23 Winding Brae,
Longside, AB42 4XQ
Tel. 074294 54572
e-mail:
adbkamembership@
gmail.com

FUTURE ARTICLES

The Association's new
collection of model
beehives and
beekeeping equipment
(David Morland)

Beginners. Briefly
(Ian Mackley)

In January 2018 we treated our 12 colonies for varroa with oxalic acid as part of the yearly programme and gave them a top up of candy to see them through. They got a later treat with some candypoline.

By April, all the hives had flying bees and we did our first brief inspections, so it was very pleasing to find that they had all survived the winter.

As a part of the programme for those who had signed up to the beginners bee keeping class, we set aside two weekends for the participants to attend a practical session at the apiary and this proved to be very popular, so we will repeat it for the classes held in 2019.

The excess colonies were sold off and we then had space to allow the colonies we were left with to expand. The wet spring gave way to a wonderful summer and the bees made the most of it, we took off around 100lb of blossom honey and compared to the 17lb blossom honey we got the previous year we were very pleased. Joan took on the task of doing the extractions and bottling so along with her own honey and some of her friends, she spent a rather sticky summer, extracting to distraction some might say.

We had a very exciting session one Sunday morning with the volunteers when two swarms took off while we were at the apiary. They were followed and recaptured giving any of the new beekeepers a chance to experience a swarm and give chase. It was a strange year for the bees, hives that we didn't expect to swarm did but then, no year I have been involved with bees has ever been the same.

We united some of the colonies before they went off to the site in the heather at Ballogie at the end of July allowing the gardeners to get the hedges around the apiary site clipped. The heather was a failure as far as a honey crop went this year and the bees had to get a feed of fondant while they were away. This was the second year our little team were involved in moving bees, so it was an altogether much smoother effort, it certainly was a learning curve.

While the bees were away, we took the opportunity to do some weeding and spread out two tonnes of bark over the site.

As soon as the bees came home we gave them a treatment using MAQs and started feeding as they were all light, something we were very aware of having just had to lift them on and off the trailer for the move. On a visit to the apiary on the 30th December, it was 12.5 ° and all the hives had flying bees, we can only wait and see how they do over the coming winter.

Earlier in the year, Yvonne and Catherine Seed entered the ADBKA into a fund-raising scheme with the Co-op in Ballater and this raised a phenomenal £3600, I went along to receive the cheque on behalf of the association from the local manager of the shop. Some of this money will go towards the purchase of new beesuits and gloves for younger members and for some kit for raising queens. Some of the members have been on queen raising courses and this has generated interest in giving it a go so this is purely experimental, we are not taking orders yet!

I would like to thank all our volunteers for helping to keep the apiary going and supporting the new beekeepers who come along on Sunday mornings over the season. There is always something happening at the apiary and discussions about what is going on in our own hives, how much honey has been collected or how swarms have been avoided or caught – so never a dull moment and a cup of tea or coffee usually at the end, it can be hard to persuade folks to go home sometimes. We are very welcoming to new bee keepers or indeed members who have been in bee keeping for longer and we are at the apiary from 10 until 12 Sunday mornings from May onwards, weather permitting.

Naomi Adams

BOOK REVIEW

HONEYBEE DEMOCRACY – THOMAS D SEELEY

I had been in the fortunate position of attending a presentation by Thomas Seeley a couple of years ago where he explained the background work carried out which had formed the basis for his writing of this particular book.

So earlier in January while travelling I decided that it was time to read my copy of the book which had been sitting on the book shelf for some time. I do believe that as you become a little more experienced as a beekeeper gaining more understanding as to the functioning of a colony is no bad thing. Every day is a learning day and that is certainly true when it comes to our bees.

We all understand that at some stage a colony will become overcrowded and the decision will be taken to swarm. As beekeepers how you handle that situation is well documented and everyone will have their own thoughts as to what they should do in that situation.

However – had you given any thought as to what decisions the swarming bees will make to help them select and eventually set up their new home? What are the criteria that the bees look for in that new home? What makes a swarm of bees which are all tightly clustered take off within a few seconds of each other from their temporary location (branch, gate post etc.) and how do they all know what direction they need to be flying in to get to the selected new home which may be 2 – 3 km away?

Tom Seeley clearly explains how the bees evaluate possible sites and how they disseminate that information in order to make their final decision. He explains how temperature plays a part in deciding when a swarm will take off and how the scout bees aid the whole swarm in ensuring that they take the correct flight path to their final location.

He also makes an excellent comparison between what the bees do and how their decision making choices could work well for ourselves when requiring to make group decisions.

This is a really interesting book which I believe is available to borrow from the association library held at the apiary. Happy Reading

Joan Gilbert-Stevens

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members are reminded that ADBKA subscriptions become due on 1st January. The rates for 2019 are unchanged at £20 single, £25 household, and free for under 16s. An updated membership form is available from the association website : this includes revised gift aid wording and a new section about data protection. We are also inviting members to state their occupation (or former occupation) – this information will help the committee to understand where special skills exist around the membership, that we may occasionally need to consult. Please renew your membership now, and complete the gift aid section if you are able to do so.

Malcolm Watson

MEMBERS EVENTS**MARCH**

Sat 23rd at 10am at Westhill library.

SBA Exams

Sun 24th at 2pm at Kinellar Hall.

AGM

plus lecture – Bumble & Solitary Bees

by Murdo MacDonald.

APRIL

Sun 7th at Kinellar Hall.

Classroom Day - Swarm Control with Tony Harris (booking required).

BEES FOR SALE

Numerous colonies of bees on National standard frames.

Good natured strong colonies, treated for varroa,

Ready for collection any time from March.

I am happy to be a mentor to the beginners.

Price to be negotiated.

Please contact

Olga Macaulay

Home 01224 315276

or 07717115927

or email: astrolo@mail.ru

BEES FOR SALE

Sandy Watson is wanting to sell at least six of his colonies this year. The colonies all have young queens and will be raring to go. Bees are on BS frames and have had Varroa treatment..Price to be negotiated.

It is always better if you are new to beekeeping to have a nominated mentor. Sandy would be willing to help any new beekeeper in Bieldside and surrounding area.

Please contact Sandy on

012245 868370

or 07856 653419.

Email:

sandywatson1731@gmail.com

BEGINNERS, BRIEFLY...

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

On warm enough days in February (or possibly even January) the bees will make cleansing flights to clear their gut of waste accumulated during their winter confinement. Whilst it's great to see the bees flying and such positive sign of life in the hive, if you keep your bees near your house, you might not want to do the washing or wash your car that day! Watch the bees at the hive entrance; if they are bringing in pollen in the pollen baskets on their hind legs then that's a good sign there is brood in the hive.

Continue to heft the hive and feed fondant or candy if necessary, as described in last month's article. Somewhat counter-intuitively, the bees will use stores more quickly in warmer weather as they will fly more often and raise brood earlier. An extended cold period after a warm one should therefore ring warning bells.

If you have any spare hive components, these should be cleaned. After scraping off propolis and wax, wooden components should be scorched with a blow torch and anything that will not tolerate the heat can be washed in washing soda and thoroughly rinsed. Drawn combs – both supers and spare deep – can be sterilised using acetic acid but please be very careful with this procedure if you need to do it as concentrated acetic acid is hazardous. The dilute version is ok on your chips though! Polyhives should be disinfected with a bleach solution. The National Bee Unit (see below) publish a good fact sheet 'Hive Cleaning and Sterilisation'.

If you have not already done so, sign up to Beebase: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/>

Apart from the national database of apiaries, allowing you to be quickly notified of any local disease issues, there is loads of good information on there. Have a look at the Advisory Leaflets, Best Practice Guidelines and Fact Sheets found under 'Publications'.

Ian Mackley

IN MEMORY OF LINDSEY MACAULAY



With the deepest sorrow and grief in my heart I bring the sad news to the ADBKA members that my husband Lindsey Macaulay has passed away on Saturday the 9th of February.

Lindsey has been a member of the ADBKA for 6 years and the member of the ADBKA committee since May 2016. Since January 2017 Lindsey was the editor of the ADBKA newsletter, contributing numerous articles to it.

Members might remember his last article in the August 2018 edition of our newsletter, in which he describes with humour his memories of the beekeeping in his childhood with his dad.

Lindsey has been ill for a long time, he battled the horrible disease with courage and dignity and up to the last day he went on reading beekeeping magazines and books, educating himself in beekeeping. He was passionate about the bees and knowledge of beekeeping. For Lindsey small honey bees were an example of the hard work. For me Lindsey's way of beekeeping is an example of dedication to the hobby he loved.

I want to thank the ADBKA members for the support and comfort they give me during this difficult time of my life.

Olga Macaulay

Lindsey had a great eye for detail – he regularly entered items of home made or refurbished equipment into the honey show which were of use to his hobby and the skill in which everything was built and finished off was just amazing – everything was beautifully made and finished to a very high standard and he regularly left the show with prizes for his entries.

Lindsey follows in the footsteps of many famous beekeepers – Edmund Hilary, Sherlock Homes and Maria von Trapp of Sound of Music. Fame to name just three – I like to think that when he enters that pearly gates there will be a special place alongside those that have gone before him where he will be able to reminisce about all his beekeeping adventures.

Thank you Lindsey for your words of wisdom and help over the short years of knowing you - you will be sadly missed".

Joan Gilbert-Stevens

Swarm Management

ADBKA will be holding a one day workshop for members from ADBKA, Kemnay, Tarland and Moray at

**KINELLAR COMMUNITY HALL, FINTRAY ROAD, BLACKBURN,
ABERDEEN AB21 0JQ**

**Sunday 7th April 2019
9.30am – 4.30pm**

TONY HARRIS, NDB WILL COVER -

Understanding honey bee swarm behaviour
Swarm prevention and control techniques
Bait hives and collecting swarms

Tickets, which include lunch, tea and coffee, are available from:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/honey-bee-swarm-management-tickets-56803626175>

The closing date for ticket applications is 31st March 2019. There are a limited number of places available so please book early to ensure your place.

Tony Harris, NDB, is a bee farmer based on the Moray coast in Scotland where he manages 150 hives for honey production. He also breeds and sells local queens and nuclei. He is a past general secretary of the Scottish Beekeepers Association (SBA), a Scottish Honey Judge, a BBKA Correspondence Course tutor and a regular contributor to beekeeping publications in Scotland, England, and America. Tony is a Scottish Expert Beemaster and holds the National Diploma in Beekeeping qualification. He teaches beekeeping at the highest level and gives presentations and lectures to community and beekeeping groups on all matters relating to bees, beekeeping, the environment and conservation.

Tony is the driving force behind the 'Healthy 'BEES' (Bee Education in Scotland) Project', a subsidised programme of beekeeping courses aimed at improving honey bee health and securing a sustainable and healthy population of Scottish honey bees. He sought the funding, wrote the courses and is now delivering them throughout Scotland. It is believed to be the first time a co-ordinated programme of intermediate beekeeping courses has been available in Scotland and the support from the beekeeping community has been fantastic.'

SWARM MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

The prevention and control of swarming is one of the biggest challenges facing beekeepers and with lots of differing advice 'out there', it can lead to countless hours of frustration and stress. To have any chance of controlling swarms an understanding of what is happening in the hive is essential otherwise it will be a complete mystery to you.

During this workshop we will examine swarming theories in detail, including triggers and influences within the nest and the behaviour of honeybees in the lead up to swarming, the issuing of the swarm, selection and re-locating to a new nest site and what is happening back in the parent colony.

We will cover swarm prevention techniques and compare the main swarm control methods – Pagden artificial swarm, shook swarm, Demaree and the nucleus method.

We also consider efficient and effective approaches to collecting swarms including the use of bait hives and personal and public safety.

Tony's approach to beekeeping, including prevention and control of swarming is to keep it simple and he will give lots of practical tips to help you gain control, rather than the bees!

