

**AUGUST
2020**

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

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

As I write we are preparing for our first association meeting in a long time – the winter preparations demo at Crathes scheduled for 29th-30th August. Hopefully by the time you read this the event will have taken place, and the small number of members who were able to attend will have found it useful. Of course we are planning for reduced attendance (with pre-booked places), and for social distancing in line with the current Government advice. However, that advice has been changing so often that we don't yet know how the event will turn out – fingers crossed !

Members will have seen many of their plans disrupted this year. Work and leisure activities, travel, non-emergency health care, weddings, funerals, and even visiting relatives have all been hugely affected. Time will tell whether all these restrictions were a good idea or not, but let's hope that life starts returning to normal soon.

I am sorry that the association has had to curtail its activities so much, and I hope you will understand that we had little choice in the matter. The committee has decided to cancel our convention (planned for 24th November), and a decision on the Honey Show will be taken shortly. Also, the SBA has cancelled their November exams. We are still working on how to handle the evening classes which were abandoned half way through in March – but one way or another the attendees will be given the opportunity to complete their course. We hope to be back to something like normal next year.

One of the consequences of the restrictions seems to have been an increase in wildlife in towns and cities. And many people have taken the opportunity to spend more time in their gardens. Maybe the lack of traffic and other noise has tempted more wildlife in from the countryside, or perhaps this has encouraged the animals that were already there to become more visible. I don't think this applies to bees though – they have continued their normal annual cycle regardless. My experience is that the spring honey crop was strong, but although the bees look healthy the summer has produced a disappointing yield so far – I think our weather has been too changeable. I've been feeding my weaker colonies.

It will soon be time for everyone to make their own winter preparations - including autumn feeding, combinations if required, and varroa treatment. Whatever else has had to be dropped this year we can still do this for the bees before the weather turns too cold for them in October.

Keep following the guidelines, and stay safe.

Malcolm Watson

CRATHES APIARY UPDATE AUGUST 2020

You may be wondering what has happened out at the association apiary at Crathes this season. Normally we would have had our regular Sunday morning volunteer sessions with all the often lively hive inspections, swarm control and doing whatever maintenance jobs from making up frames to painting the hive stands and of course all the banter and chatter about our own hives and what ever our bees have been testing us with that week. It is a great opportunity to ask questions and hear the obligatory two answers or even three for every question posed but that is one of the delights of bee keeping.

Once the lockdown started and the estate was closed to the public Graham obtained permission for us to gain access via a different entrance not open to the public and we were able to continue to visit the apiary occasionally as long as we gave prior notice to the estate.

The colonies were slow to build up and we watched one of them hover on only two frames of bees for a long time and then it took off but after being so carefully nurtured over the winter and spring they thanked us by becoming the hive from you know where. They have now been successfully requeened.



One of the other hives was notable but for a different reason, it came through the winter and was our best hive with a queen yellow dot so she was from 2017 and she is still going. Graham has made up several nucs from this colony so we can keep this strain going.

The one hive that swarmed was a total surprise, I know, we always claim that but this one had a new 2020 queen!

Right now, the hives are all away at various sites so that the hedges can be cut and it all looks so empty without them but the lavender is looking beautiful and is covered in bees, many of them honey bees where ever they have come from.

We owe a special thanks to Graham for stepping in and managing the apiary and in particular for moving all the colonies out of the apiary so that the gardeners can get in to cut the hedges.

I think that we are all looking forward to the time when we can get back to our regular visits and hear all the ups and downs of the bee keeping year, we have missed our volunteers.

Naomi Adams

STORES AND JARS UPDATE

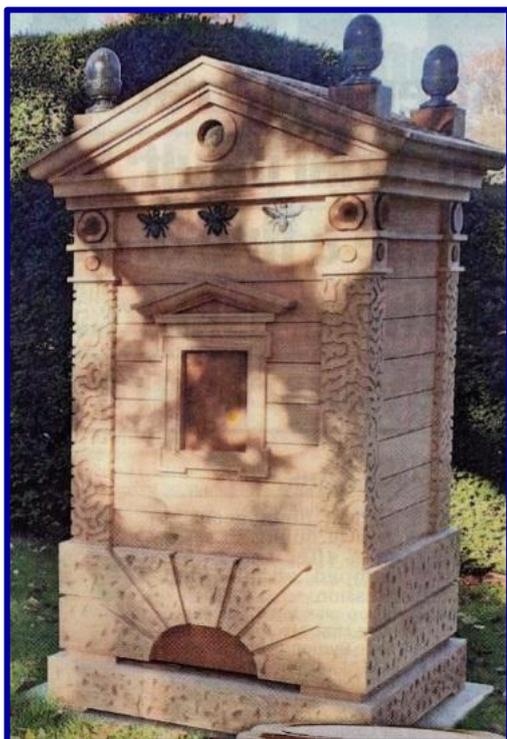
We can confirm that there is still a small stock of candy pollen and fondant available for uplift as required at Joans facility at Muir of Fowlis - uplift can be arranged by contacting :

Joan Gilbert-Stevens on 019755 81369 or email at craigmill@btinternet.com.

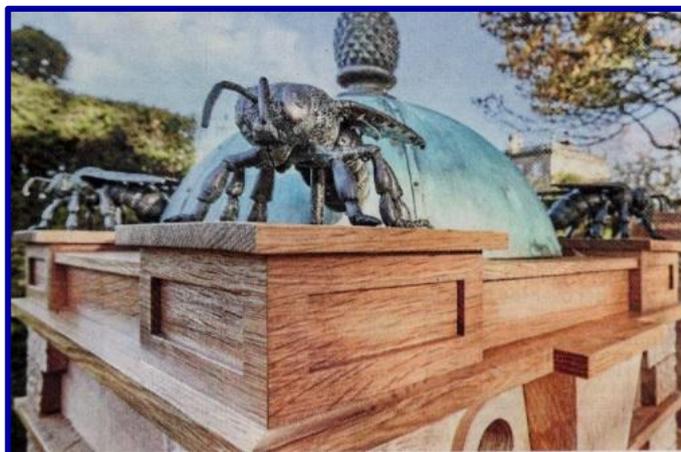
As previously advised Joan has discontinued the supply of jars and syrup due to space constraints. There are a number of online suppliers for jars and for those requiring to purchase Syrup as one alternative you can contact Colin at the Bee Cabin located at Dess on the North Deeside Road. Info on availability and pricing is available on the Bee Cabin Website and Facebook page.

Erling Watt can also be contacted and may still have syrup and a small stock of association jars, candy and old candy pollen gold. Contact him on **074294 54572** or e-mail at watterlingg@aol.com

ROYAL HIVES



You may have spotted an article in the Daily Mail on 22nd August about three new bee hives installed by the Prince of Wales at Highgrove. Based on the double walled WBC hive, these are boxes such as you have never seen before – custom made with feature's reflecting the Prince's style and insignia. Apparently the hives were a birthday present from Fortnum and Masons. We hope that his bees, which have been busy foraging on the estate's sixty-six lime trees, will appreciate their new homes.



This old article had been onward passed from one of our association members and though it is certainly an unusual piece, it might be of some interest to the beekeeping community.

FROM GILBERT WHITE'S "THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBOURNE" (1789)

Dear Sir,—We had in this village more than twenty years ago an idiot boy, whom I well remember, who, from a child, showed a strong propensity to bees; they were his food, his amusement, his sole object. And as people of this caste have seldom more than one point in view, so this lad exerted all his few faculties on this one pursuit. In the winter he dozed away his time, within his father's house, by the fireside, in a kind of torpid state, seldom departing from the chimney-corner; but in the summer he was all alert, and in quest of his game in the fields, and on sunny banks. Honey-bees, humble-bees, and wasps, were his prey wherever he found them; he had no apprehensions from their stings, but would seize them nudis manibus, and at once disarm them of their weapons, and suck their bodies for the sake of their honey-bags. Sometimes he would fill his bosom between his shirt and his skin with a number of these captives, and sometimes would confine them in bottles. He was a very merops apiaster, or bee-bird, and very injurious to men that kept bees; for he would slide into their beegardens, and, sitting down before the stools would rap with his finger on the hives, and so take the bees as they came out. He has been known to overturn hives for the sake of honey, of which he was passionately fond. Where metheglin was making he would linger round the tubs and vessels, begging a draught of what he called bee-wine. As he ran about he used to make a humming noise with his lips, resembling the buzzing of bees. This lad was lean and sallow, and of a cadaverous complexion; and, except in his favourite pursuit, in which he was wonderfully adroit, discovered no manner of understanding. Had his capacity been better, and directed to the same object, he had perhaps abated much of our wonder at the feats of a more modern exhibitor of bees; and we may justly say of him now,—

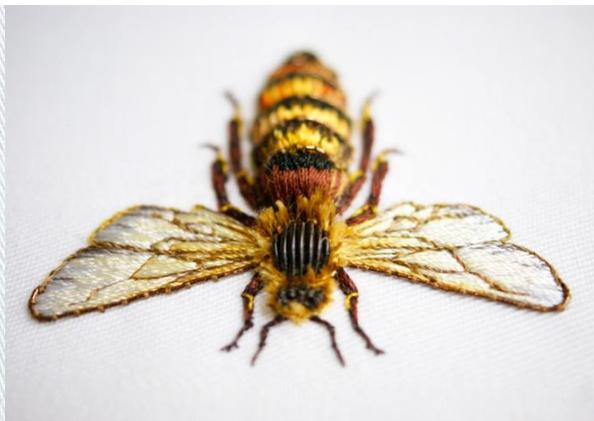
“ . . . Thou, Had thy presiding star propitious shone, Shouldst Wildman be . . . ”

When a tall youth he was removed from hence to a distant village, where he died, as I understand, before he arrived at manhood.

ELABORATE EMBROIDERY BY LAURA BAVERSTOCK

FORMS INSECTS AND ANIMALS FROM PRECIOUS METALS AND COLORED THREADS

London-based embroidery artist Laura Baverstock crafts stunningly intricate animals using colored and metallic thread. From copper bees to gold lions, Baverstock renders the unique textures of each creature. The artist studied at the Royal School of Needlework, where she received a degree in Hand Embroidery, and now works in the film and fashion industries. If you watched "Mary Queen of Scots", you saw Baverstock's embroidery work on the actors' outfits, which earned an Oscar nomination for costume designer Alexandra Byrne.



Viking Maid

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David Morland at adbkavicechair@gmail.com

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Similarly if you are available to help other members or want some help yourself then why not use this section to advertise what you want or what you can offer. Many members struggle to move bees to the honey crops on their own and it may be interesting for you to offer assistance and meet another member and learn how they manage their bees at the same time for example.

The adverts together with your contact details appear on the internet as part of the newsletter.