



OCTOBER
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

PRESIDENT:

SANDY GORDON
Tel.01224-484540

CHAIR:

MALCOLM WATSON
e-mail:
adbkachair@gmail.com
Tel.07901-515212

VICE CHAIR:

DAVID MORLAND
Tel. 07768244420
e-mail:
adbkavicechair@gmail.com

HON. SECRETARY:

ALISON GOSS
e-mail:
aberdeenbeekeepers@
gmail.com

HON. TREASURER:

JOHN ADAMS
Tel. 01224868402
e-mail:
treasureradbka@gmail.com

**MEMBERSHIP
SECRETARY:**

ERLING WATT
Tel.074294 54572
e-mail:
adbkamembership@
gmail.com

ADBKA NEWSLETTER

OLGA MACAULAY
Tel. 01224315276
e-mail:
adbkanewsletter@
gmail.com

FUTURE ARTICLES

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Well, summer has gone and October is here once again. Hopefully we have all finished our autumn feeding and varroa treatment, and some may have already got their insulation and mouse guards on. The keenest will have already cleaned up and treated their spare boxes and frames with acetic acid. Let's hope our colonies are all strong and healthy enough to get through the coming winter.

A big thank you to Graham Torrie and Naomi Adams who between them have looked after the Association apiary throughout this season, in addition to caring for their own bees. The apiary goes into the winter with 11 colonies, and the cabin has been well maintained and looks good.

We managed to hold one apiary event at the end of August on the subject of winter preparations – there's a separate article about that. But since then Government restrictions have been re-imposed and now we don't expect to be able to organise any face to face meetings for the remainder of the year. I know these meetings have a social aspect as well as sharing information about bees so I'm very sorry about this - I hope members will understand the reasoning. I also hope members and their families are coping with all the other difficulties that these restrictions have brought.

For those with internet access your committee is working on plans for an experimental online "zoom" meeting to be held before Christmas – details will be shared as soon as these are available. We know it won't be possible to reach all 280 members this way but we'll see what we can do. We are also beginning to think about the 2021 activity programme, which of necessity will be somewhat different to previous years and might also include an online element.

Because our Association activities have been limited this year the committee has decided that it would be appropriate to give all 2020 members a reduction in their membership fees for next year. The form and website will be updated to show that existing members can renew for £10 less than the normal rate (ie individual £10, household £15). For new members joining in 2021 the rates will be the same as 2020 namely individual £20, household £25.

Remember to keep looking after the bees.

Malcolm Watson

ADBKA Beekeeping Supplies

As noted in last month's newsletter the Association would like to hear from anyone interested and able to take on the management of beekeeping supplies on behalf of ADBKA members. Access to competitive pricing for supplies based on bulk purchasing has been a longstanding ADBKA service. The committee is reluctant to drop the service but recognises that it requires a combination of storage space and commitment by a willing member. If you think you may be the willing member then please contact either John Adams or Joan Gilbert-Stevens.

OUR BEEKEEPING YEARS - 2020, PART 1

Thank you to everyone who provided stories of their beekeeping year. We received enough contributions for three articles, so here goes with the first...

CRATHES, TWO HIVES, FIRST YEAR

Our plan this year was to fulfil a long-term goal to start beekeeping. We joined the ADBKA and started the introductory course. Sadly, after three excellent lectures COVID shut the course down. Not to be put off we got some advice and decided we would try and get two colonies in the summer. We both read the 'Haynes Bee Manual' cover to cover, watched lots of YouTube videos and built two flat packed Thornes hives during lockdown (with the annoying Thornes instruction video tune still stuck in our heads). We found our first colony (a nuc) in June and left it a bit late to get our second colony (a full colony) in early August. Sadly, our first colony eventually had a drone laying queen, but through ADBKA contacts we were generously donated a late season nuc with a new queen. We combined that with what was left of our first colony. We have learned very quickly that beekeeping is a fantastic, absorbing but complex undertaking (hobby seems the wrong word). Joining the ADBKA and the generosity in both time, advice and bees of the people we have met through it, has allowed us to get around the challenges of the COVID restrictions. Apparently getting started was the easy bit! Our challenges now start in the spring.

OLDMELDRUM, SIX HIVES, FOUR YEARS' EXPERIENCE

I live and work on a farm near Oldmeldrum. My first colony of bees arrived on 01 March 2017 and this autumn marks the beginning of my fifth season. I have had as many as 12 hives but this year I go into winter with six full sized colonies and one nuc. Four would be my ideal to over winter but with six strong colonies, all with 2020 queens, I did not wish to unite any further. Varroa treatment was completed for the year with three oxalic acid vaporiser applications after which I removed feeders and put fondant in place. My goal this year was swarm prevention in order to maximise my honey harvest and I achieved this successfully with a combination of Snelgrove 2 splits (as detailed in Wally Shaw's excellent guide) and the Demaree method. I had two good honey harvests, in June after the OSR and then towards the end of August. As usual the bees taught me much, especially that they don't read the same books as I do... In the eternal struggle that is "cherchez la femme" I witnessed firsthand how easily a queen can hide from our view, watching a newly established queen sink her head into a cell and remain there for several minutes, completely disguising her appearance and rendering her 'invisible' - very tricky I thought!

INVERURIE, THREE HIVES, TEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE

I still believe I am the bees biggest threat! I read a lot and try very hard to be one step ahead of them but they always seem to have the upper hand!

This year, unlike others, I have been at home during the working week. As my apiary is at the bottom of my garden this proved to be an absolute godsend during the early weeks of spring when I could take a few minutes away from my desk and just watch the bees. I doubt this made any difference to the bees, but it was hugely beneficial to me.

Swarm management was not perfect this year (it never has been), but arriving at an online meeting at the last minute because I had been capturing a swarm was probably one of the more unusual excuses for tardiness. I had more time to be aware of queen cells being developed, so I still haven't mastered the art of swarm prevention, but I was able to be prepared for a swarm being issued. I became aware of scout bees taking an interest in a particular area of the garden and I was never disappointed when the swarm went straight to the chosen spot.

I was able to help two beekeepers by providing each with a healthy colony (both were captured swarms from my apiary) which they successfully merged with their queenless colonies.

Being at home during the week allowed me to weather watch and exploit warm spells to inspect the bees as opposed to arriving home from work to a cool evening or a wet weekend.

Having to exercise close to home meant I became more aware of the location of the various crops growing in the fields nearby. The nearest OSR was just under a mile away and sure enough my bees were bringing in bright yellow pollen.

During the early days of lockdown I had a mega clean-up of bee kit, disposing of a lot of old frames and foundation. I had not expected lockdown to last for as long as it did and when I required frames and wax I sourced them locally. I was disappointed in the quality of both the foundation and the wood of the frames. That is karma for not wanting to pay the excessive postage for delivery to 'the Highlands'. On a positive note my bee shed is very tidy, I can see where everything is and I have an up to date inventory of kit.

The ADBKA newsletters and the Facebook group were a good source of interest. I have found the comments in response to Facebook posts have been relevant. I enjoyed an online 'any questions' style forum arranged by Yorkshire Beekeepers, an unexpected bonus of the lockdown!

I go into winter with three healthy colonies, one of which remains in a double brood box. Each colony is relatively docile. One produces an incredible amount of propolise - I have no idea why!

In summary I have probably developed a greater understanding of beekeeping, though just as I think I am mastering the art I realise that I know very little at all!

LOCAL BEE GROUP UPDATES

Kemnay Community Bee Group

Kemnay Community Bee Group was established in 2014 and I have been chairperson since August 2016. We are a small, merry band, meeting twice a month at our apiary site on the outskirts of the town, close to the Dalmadilly Ponds. We were poised to embark on more apiary demonstrations this year and also run a beginners workshop. Another member and I had hoped to gain some qualifications, sitting a module exam and undertaking the Practical Beekeeping course. Unfortunately, Covid-19 scuppered meetings and all those plans but we are looking forward to being able to meet once more and we have kept in touch with our members by email and via our Facebook page. The bees meantime have continued to be busy and have provided a great source of joy in these difficult times.

Sonya MacPherson

Tarland Bee Group

Tarland Bee Group was established in 2013 with a small grant from Tarland Development Group and established a teaching apiary in 2014 with the kind permission of The MacRobert Trust estate who provided a site. The group is currently establishing a second Apiary to meet local demand, the original apiary being used for lease hives to members. We run a series of winter talks, a summer of practical teaching and a beginner's course, all on hold in 2020 due to Covid. Covid has changed things this year and technology has helped us to communicate with ZOOM, WhatsApp, e-mail and texts. Mentors have provided much advice by these means and when the need arises 'trouble shooting' practical help for new beekeepers has been on hand by the mentors. We look forward to returning to a more 'normal' teaching year in 2021! We have an active facebook page where you can keep up with all our antics. Happy beekeeping!

Yvonne Davidson

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

ADBKA has been issuing its monthly newsletter for many years. The Newsletter is considered the integral part of the Association and we believe it is important to go on issuing it in order to keep the members well informed and updated. In the modern world of technology and online dependency we can find all possible information on youtube. But it is still curious and interesting to find out what are the news inside our Association and to share adverts with other members.

We are pleased to find out that according to the 2019 survey members have outlined the importance of the ADBKA Newsletter. Preparing the monthly issues is a challenging and interesting process. It wouldn't be possible without the great support of the committee and other members of the ADBKA. Big thanks to everyone who has shared their experience and provided the articles for it.

As I have been arranging and issuing the ADBKA Newsletter for 4 years already, it looks like the time has come for me to step away from this role and to give way for somebody with fresh ideas and enthusiasm to take on this part of the work. Our Association fully depends on the work and support of the volunteers. It won't be possible to run all the activities without members' support.

Thus we are looking for somebody willing to take on the role of the Newsletter editor. The process of arranging it is not as complicated as you might think. The main thing is you should have basic knowledge of Microsoft Word. I'll provide training and help you understand what needs to be done. So, If you willing to help the Association, please contact Olga Macaulay or David Morland.

REMEMBER – OUR ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Olga Macaulay

BEE CABIN

BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES AND SERVICES HONEY EXTRACTION SERVICE PRICES 2020/21

FRAMES ONLY:

£1.95 per frame additional 55p per frame for heather honey.
Customer provides container (bee Cabin can supply at additional cost). Minimum of 6 frames per extraction

FRAMES AND JARRING:

£1.40 per Jar – 1 lb, 12oz, 8oz (Jars included in price).
Additional 24p per jar for heather honey Minimum of 6 frames per extraction

CUT COMB:

Cut and packaged £2.00 per frame

JARS ONLY:

1 lb, 12oz, 8oz, 4oz and 2oz all available

An additional charge is levied on Heather honey as it requires additional processing that other honeys do not.

Other than wireless cut comb, all frames being extracted of honey at Bee Cabin are spun either radially or tangentially therefore only wired frames with foundation should be submitted for extraction.

During extraction a frame from time to time can break and fall apart, this is purely due to the age or poor assembly of the frame, in these circumstances Bee Cabin will not be held liable for any such damage.

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WANTED

WBC hive for garden ornament,
not for bees.

Condition not important

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Bridge of Don tel. **07803083346**

williamhchurch@icloud.com



Viking Maid

EMBROIDERY

*Would you like the ADBKA Logo
on your bee suit or clothing of your
choice?*

Names can also be added.

Embroidered Logo - £7.50

Embroidered Name - £6.00

Embroidered Patches - £7.50



**Call Sheila on
07837400896**