



**JULY
2017**

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:

Mr R Wood
Forestside Road
Banchory

Chair:

David Morland
Middle Ardo
Udny
Ellon
AB41 6QX
Tel. 07768244420
e-mail:
davidmorland64@gmail.com

Hon. Secretary:

Malcolm Watson
Elbrie Lodge,
Auchnagat,
Ellon
AB41 8YL
e-mail:
aberdeenbeekeepers@gmail.com

Hon. Treasurer:

Leona Lowe
70 Pittodrie Place
Aberdeen, AB24 5QT
Tel. 07966026564
e-mail:
leonalowe@hotmail.co.uk

FUTURE ARTICLES

ENVIRONMENT
DAY IN DUTHIE
PARK

MY BEEKEEPING
YEAR
(Murray McGregor)

ADVANCED MANIPULATIONS COURSE

Kitta and I attended the second of the two SBA 'Manipulations' courses in 2017 at the Moray Beekeepers' Association (MBA) apiary near Elgin. The course was delivered by Tony Harris and Ann Chilcott, kindly supported in the logistics by some of their colleagues from the MBA.

The initial round of introductions revealed a diverse set of fifteen students, some from the north east of Scotland but also from as far away as Kelso, Carlisle and Ireland, with beekeeping experience between two to fifteen years. Students were managing between two and thirty hives. It almost goes without saying that everyone expressed a motive for attending as "to become a better beekeeper."

The SBA had done a great job in booking the weather which was remarkably benevolent given lashing rain all day on the Friday before the course and again on the Sunday evening afterwards.

The course format was a mixture of lectures and discussion, bee-less demonstrations and live demonstrations and practice. Although labelled 'advanced', what was covered were manipulations that most beekeepers would need or want to, or should, practise within a year or two of starting the craft, as well as a lot of general handling and husbandry tips along the way.

The course started with a talk by Tony on shook swarms, a manipulation few of the students had already attempted. The next session covered making up nucs. Although the sessions were based round slide presentations, there was plenty of discussion and sharing of experience amongst the delegates. The morning's programme wound up with a talk about feeding, covering both feeder types and different feeds.

A superb sandwich lunch was enjoyed outside before we kitted up for the afternoon's practical work. As I have observed on a previous visit to the apiary, the MBA is meticulous about hygiene and apiary good practice. Four teams were formed, worksheets handed out and equipment issued. The first manipulation, following the morning's talks, was a shook swarm.

No doubt having spotted a few skills during this first manipulation that most of the students could improve on, Tony then gave a live demonstration of general hive manipulation, including how best to achieve gentle handling, efficient placement of equipment, and so on. The second exercise for the afternoon was to set up a nuc, after which we stopped for a welcome cup of tea and returned to the classroom for a talk on uniting colonies. We then returned to the hives to implement the newspaper method to reunite our nuc with its host colony before packing up for the day.

Sunday morning started with a presentation and discussion of the general handling practices we had seen demonstrated on Saturday. Ann then led a session on the Bailey Comb change after which there was a short quiz requiring us to specify feed and feeder type for various colony situations. The rest of the morning comprised talks on artificial swarming, queen handling and acetic acid fumigation.



The afternoon practical session, after restoring the colonies manipulated on the Saturday, was devoted to queen handling. We were all able to spend a good amount of time practising handling, marking and caging 'queens'. Drones were of course used as queen-substitutes for these exercises. Tony then gave a live demonstration of a disease-focused colony inspection.

The course had something for everyone. Whilst one might learn and/or see most of what was covered via an Association's programme over time, or with a mentor, there was definitely benefit in a focused approach. There was plenty of time for discussion of principles and experience under the guidance of expert tutors, and then getting out amongst the bees and giving it a go!

Ian Mackley

PLANTING WITH PASSION

Two local Aberdeen schools accepted the Countryside Rangers invitation to plant nectar rich wild flower plug plants to attract a range of pollinators in the Hazlehead Park azalea garden. They were also given the opportunity to see honey bees in an observation hive and learn more about these amazing insects and their role in pollinating some of the fruit and veg we take for granted by passionate local bee keepers - Olya Macaulay and Alison Goss. Alison has recently joined the committee of the Aberdeen and District Beekeepers Association.

The plants, which included annuals, biennials and perennials, were grown from seed by Annie McIntosh – Community Learning Officer and her team of volunteers in the Grove Nursery.



A class of P3 pupils from each of Airyhall Primary and Hazlehead Primary pitched in enthusiastically to plant 600 plants. Ranger Rob's favourite quote from the day was "☺ Yae, More plants..."

Classes came for a morning or afternoon 90 minute session. The classes were divided into two with half going to see honey bees in the observation hive and find out more about bees, their life style and experience handling honey comb with the other half doing the planting. The groups changed around halfway through each session. Now three weeks on, almost all the plants from that hot day have survived and are doing well with some flowers attracting hover flies. There are more plants about to flower. This is a good outcome.

Ranger Rob said "The Birds Bees and Trees theme for In Bloom is an ongoing project in Aberdeen City. It is spearheaded by Environment Manager Steven Shaw and began in 2016. The project is not just about honey bees or bumble bees – Did you know that there are 250 species of bees in the UK?"

Other pollinators we rely on include butterflies, moths, wasps, hover flies, bee flies and other insects. Some insects are much specialised and will only pollinate certain flowers. The tongues of bumble bees can pollinate a variety of different flowers, making them ideal in commercial fruit growing enterprises. Honey bees have very short tongues so are more limited but no less important.

The project aims to get schools and communities to realise that they can have a significant impact improving the environment for pollinators in their areas. It is pleasing to note that Annie and her team at Grove Nursery have sent out plants to four (4) schools in

Aberdeen with some going out to community projects. It is hoped to increase this in future years.

This one day of planting was really part of this process. We very much hope and would encourage other local schools and communities to get involved in future years."

Countryside Ranger Rob Rowe, Aberdeen City Ranger Service





YOUR ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOU

Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association operates through the goodwill of those members who are prepared to give up a little of their time to keep the show on the road.

If you think you might be able to help out but want to know a bit more about what's involved, why not ring David Morland
on 07768244420 for a chat?

Bees for Sale

Strong nuc on six frames with marked 2017 queen in full lay. £80.

Phone or text **Graham Torrie**
on 07594 063703.

BEES FOR SALE

Bees on National hive frames. Numerous sizes of stocks to suit your requirements.

Grab yourself a bargain, contact **Olya Macaulay: 01224 315276**

FOR SALE:

4 National hives (no bees) each with Queen Excluder, two supers and hive stand with landing board.

National hive parts: Floors, Brood boxes, Supers, Queen Excluders (wire and zinc), crown boards and clearing boards.

Selection of 70Lb buckets including single handled and double handled, with and without holes for dispersing valve. Over thirty buckets available.

Selling on behalf of the widow of a former ADBKA member who has recently passed away

Please contact Witek Mojsiewicz
Tel: 01224 722302, Mob: 07914355809
email: witekmoj@btinternet.com

COMING EVENTS

July 30th – 31st Turriff Show – This year's ADBKA stand is being organised by Yvonne Seed. Members who would like to assist on the stand or sell their honey on the stand should contact Yvonne on 01888 544024.

August 2nd – For a Beginners demonstration and **Apiary Visit at 7-9 p.m** conducted by and at the apiary of Rosie Crighton at Marcus Cres, Blackburn AB21 0SZ. Booking essential, Tel Rosie on 01224 791181. Numbers are limited to a maximum of 6 people, call and book your place early to avoid disappointment.

August 13th – Visit to the heather with professional beekeeper **Murray McGregor** – Meet at the Burn O Vat visitor centre at 12:30 and plan to leave just after 1:00 to visit Murray's apiary sites.

For those that want to meet up earlier, bring your own picnic to the Burn O Vat Visitors' Centre car park at mid-day for an informal get-together before the apiary visit.

The visit centre is located along the B9119, postcode AB34 5NB, Sat Nav coordinates N57.085062 W2.942828.

October 21st – Advanced notice of **ADBKA Honey Show** – Kinellar Community Hall AT 2 p.m. Postcode AB21 0JQ

The Ochils Breeding Group would like to offer you priority booking for a one-day **Queen Rearing Workshop** to be held at **Willowgate, Perth on 5th August** and repeated again on **19th August, 10:00-16:00.**

The programme for the day includes:

- selection of breeder colonies and production of drones
- methods of raising queen cells
- hands-on grafting of selected stocks
- preparing and using mini-nuclei for mating virgin queens
- finding, handling and marking queens
- introduction of queens to colonies
- hints and tips for success

The practical parts of the day will be conducted in groups of up to 8 people.

We also plan to make available on the day, if the bees cooperate, freshly emerged virgin queens and mature queen cells from Colonsay stock for a donation to SNHBS.

Participants will be informed a week in advance of the likelihood of availability and given advice on using this material.

Interested attendees will be invited on an optional tour of the Ochils Breeding Group's mating site after the event if they wish. This is likely to run from 18:00-19:00 at the site 30 min drive from Willowgate.

The fee for the day is £40 and includes lunch.

Please book your place here:

http://taybees.co.uk/?page_id=23

SNHBS membership currently costs £25 to the end of 2018.

Details: membership@snhbs.scot

Looking forward to seeing you there!

The Ochils Breeding Group

MEET THE MEMBERS Sandy & Lilian GORDON

PART 5 – ADBKA



During the second World War beekeepers were given sugar to feed bees which was in addition to any ration that was allocated to each household. During this time the membership of the association swelled to over two thousand. The sugar that was allocated was known as 'Green Sugar' because it was dyed green by the government to differentiate it from normal household sugar.

After the war the association started stocking honey jars and Ragus candy for the bees and then when Varroa destructor reached the north east we started stocking Apistan as an effective medicine against Varroa. Later I introduced Ambrosia syrup for feeding bees. The stock was held at my premises at the bridge of Don and it was a roaring trade. In the height of the season cars would be queued for seventy five yards along my drive and the supplies would be sold until 11 p.m. in the evening.

Stewart Rae would count jar lids into bags in the shed at Danestone by hand over many nights, should he be interrupted during counting then the bag would have to be counted all over again. Only latterly did we invest in a weighing machine to count the jar lids which has eased the process massively.

Around 2002 Stewart Rae died and the long standing partnership of Rae and Wood was at an end. Robert Wood visited me at Danestone and wondered how the association would continue without his friend. At this point my daughter, Janice Kennedy, suggested she would take on the role of secretary, wife Lillian took on the role of treasurer and I took care of the association supplies from our premises at Danestone.

Robert Wood had a personal supply of beekeeping equipment which was sold and the £2000 proceeds were given to the association and interest from the money was to be made available to the membership. This £2000 fund was never to be spent and should the association fail and disband this money should be given to the R.N.L.I.

Supplying the association beekeepers with supplies was a massive task and members regularly helped us with offloading supplies from articulated Lorries. The jars were bought in Glasgow and transported to Aberdeen and distrusted by Walkers transport. The lorry would be scheduled to arrive at 8 a.m. on Saturday morning and a willing squad of members would gather just as the lorry arrived.

John Cooper, John Steele, Eddy Lamb, Jock MacGregor and my neighbour Sandy Ross would arrive just as the lorry arrived and form an orderly line from the truck to the bantam shed where the supplies would be off loaded and passed down the line by hand. Typically the lorry could be unloaded of a year's supply of jars in just over an hour. This unloading method we did for jars, candy and syrup.



PART 6 – MY OBSERVATIONS ON HOW BEEKEEPING HAS CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS AND THE FUTURE

As I've said previously the association apiary was located on the grounds of Craibstone agricultural college and had been there for decades. About seven years ago it was announced that Craibstone was to close and a housing estate was to build on the land and therefore force the association to find a new location for the apiary. John Cooper was Chairperson at the time and John and I met with Stuart Wale who was the Deen at Craibstone and was very keen to find us a new location. He suggested nearby Ashtown or Tulloch farm would make a fine location. Unfortunately Stuart retired six months later and his replacement showed little enthusiasm for the association apiary and therefore we were left potentially homeless.

Members will now know that John supported by the members, located the association apiary to Crathes castle where it remains today.

In about 1990 through to 2000 we would typically supply 400 gross of jars over the season. This equates to 800 boxes of 72 jars in a box which equates a total of 57,600 jars of honey produced by the local Aberdeenshire beekeeping community. Prior to the introduction of oil seed rape the local honey crop was mainly from clover and heather. Honey production was approximately 26 tonnes of honey from association membership.

The association membership was about three hundred which is similar to what it is now but it was common for members to keep a large quantity of bee colonies. The modern beekeeper keeps far less colonies than we used to and therefore far less honey is produced. Several years ago it was common to see 'Honey for sale' signs at the end of almost every farm entrance and the production of section honey was common.

Latterly the number of jars I would sell on behalf of the association was only 50 gross which equates to 7,200 jars or 3.2 tonnes of honey produced by the membership.

Honey produced in Aberdeenshire has dropped significantly over the last twenty years and as a result there is far less honey for sale at markets and farms. It is now rare to see beekeepers represented at local shows and without honey production it is difficult to continue a presence at Turriff agricultural show.

The modern beekeeper is far more of a hobby beekeeper than we used to be. Typically the modern beekeeper has two or three hives and nowadays I know of only about five large stock keepers where previously there was dozens.

Sandy & Lilian Gordon



I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks on behalf of ADBKA to Sandy and Lilian Gordon for the time they both spent preparing these series of articles and for giving us all an insight into their beekeeping careers.

Lindsey Macaulay

A NOTE FROM A CHAIR

I learnt recently that my Grandfather was the first bee scientist at Rothamsted and one of the founder members of the International Bee Research Association (IBRA). His books and papers were passed on the Eva Crane whose own collection was the foundation of the IBRA library.

He was succeeded as Head of the Bee Section at Rothamsted in 1939, by Dr Colin Butler.

At Rothamsted, he initiated studies into the causes of swarming, so our members might be interested in a paper he had published in the Journal of Applied Biology in 1930 entitled 'The Brood Food Theory'. I believe this is the reference at the start of Snelgroves book about swarming.

The article is taken from a photocopy of the original typescript he submitted and includes the diagrams and table from this original.

A paper copy of the paper will be found within the library at Crathes for members to borrow.

David Morland, ADBKA Chair

Brace, Brace, Brace!!!

We carried out our hive inspection at Easter and were surprised to see the difference in health and vigour between the colonies over wintered in tradition cedar boxes and those housed in polystyrene hives. We have a mixture of each but are slowly working our way through moving all our colonies over to poly boxes.

Prior to the inspection, we had fed all colonies with a 1:1 solution of sugar syrup via 1pt contact feeders. All hives took the feed down quickly but we were surprised to see how one of colonies in a poly hive had taken the opportunity to really push ahead with preparing for the year ahead.

As part of our over wintering preparations, we insert a slab of expanded foam insulation in a super and use this to cap the hive and prevent heat loss through the roof in the colder months.

As you can see from the photographs, the bees didn't waste the opportunity to build new comb. To do this though they must have had to move the foam block upwards as we normally don't leave more than ½" of a gap between the top bars and the underside of the foam. Not only had the bees pushed the foam up and built a substantial amount of new comb, the Queen had started to lay and there was a fair amount of food up in the brace comb as well – which was promptly returned to the hive for consumption!

We've never seen anything like this before and certainly didn't experience it in any of the wooden hives. Now, I don't want to open up a can of worms on the wood vs polystyrene debate but we have certainly seen advantages from using modern materials. Not only is moving boxes around a lot easier, but I do feel that the bees are better off too due to the far higher insulation properties of polystyrene. Of course, there could be many other factors at play – general vigour of the colony, Queen health, bee numbers etc. – but I'd like to hear back from other poly box users to see if their observations are similar to ours.

Innes and Sarah, Burndale, Inverurie.



ASSOCIATION SUPPLIES

Honey extractors; Heather honey press; Mini-melters;
Wax extractor; Wax foundation press
Contact: Sandy Gordon 01224 484540
DANESTONE AB22 8AJ

Heated uncapping tray; Electric uncapping knife;
Heather honey press; Wax melter; Unimel
stainless steel 3 frame tangential extractor
Contact: Erling Watt 074294 54572
watterlingg@aol.com
LONGSIDE AB42 4XQ

Heated uncapping tray; Electric uncapping knife;
Heather honey press; Wax melter; Universal
lightweight 9 frame radial extractor
Contact: Joan Gilbert-Stevens 019755 81369
craigmill@btinternet.com
MUIR OF FOWLIS AB33 8NX

DISCOUNTED SUPPLIES contact Erling or Joan

RAGUS Bee Candy 2.5kg	£6
Box of 4	£24
Fondant 2.5kg	£3
Box of 5	£15
Syrup 14kg	£15,50
Jars (1 lb and ½ lb, incl. lids)	
Gross (144)	£60
½ Gross (72)	£30
Bag of 25 lids	£3

Combimel stainless steel radial 9 frame extractor;
Heated uncapping tray; Electric uncapping knife;
Refractometer; Candle-making kit are available at
Crathes Apairy. Contact Joan Gilbert-Stevens.

If you have an item for the newsletter, please contact Lindsey Macaulay on 01224 315276,
or by e-mail at lindsey_macaulay@lde.nu

Distributing the newsletter by e-mail realises significant savings for the ADBKA.
If you wish to receive your copy by e-mail, please let me know.