



# 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

Established 1910

Scottish Charity Number SC031754

## FLOATING BEES

### Important Notice: Subscriptions

Some members still have to renew their subscriptions for 2016. If you are in that position, you will have received a further copy of the subscription renewal form with this newsletter.

Please note that ADBKA membership will lapse for those members who have not renewed their subscription by 31 March.

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Last spring I moved my bees to a new apiary next to the Deveron, in an area, I later learned, that has a history of flooding. With Yvonne Seed's help I moved six colonies to safety in the autumn, but six remained, and in mid-January the Deveron flooded. I later arrived to find that my apiary had vanished. Nothing was left – just bare, soggy, soil.

Shocked I looked around and spotted two colonies lying on their sides far away in the middle of a field upriver. The next three colonies I found about 600 metres downstream, still strapped to their stands with gravel bags and all. They had floated over a wire fence and landed at the foot of a hill. Two had landed upright, but the tallest one got caught on the fence and lay on its side. All five colonies were fine.



All washed up - Kitta's hives after being swept away by the Deveron



I found the last colony a couple of days later, about a kilometre downriver, beached near a tributary stream – and again, alive and well.

A local farmer helped me to move the bees back to safety. I think the queens have survived and that the colonies will be fine. I was so lucky and so were my bees. The moral of the story: strap your hives tightly.

Kitta Potgieter

## BRING, BUY and GET WELL JARRED!

As you sort out your equipment for the new season, why not set aside the things you don't need and earmark them for our Bring and Buy sale?

Courtesy of the Seed family, on **Sunday 29 May** we will be gathering at Auchry Farm, Cuminestown, where we will enjoy a barbeque and a chance to blether about how the season is progressing.

**BRING AND BUY** - members are invited to bring along any surplus beekeeping equipment that they want to sell (at a reasonable price!) and to have a poke around what others are selling on. Please note that if you have a large quantity of

equipment you wish to bring to the event, we can assist with transport.

**HONEY JARS** - take the chance to buy your honey jars for this year at a price that won't be matched elsewhere. We will have a large stock available.

**THROUGH THE MICROSCOPE** - microscopy experts, Hugh Donohoe and David Morland, will be on hand to give you a glimpse into the wonderful world of pollen identification and bee disease diagnosis, and to demonstrate the equipment you would need to venture into this fascinating aspect of the craft.

**NEW EQUIPMENT AND BEEKEEPING BOOKS** - we will have a good selection of new beekeeping equipment and books to browse.

And to cap it all, seemingly this is going to be the warmest day of the year! Don't miss it.

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## Members' Events

**PRACTICAL SESSION:  
KIT ASSEMBLY**

**- putting together your flat pack hives and other beekeeping hardware**

Saturday 9 April 2016, 1.00pm-5.00pm

The Kinellar Community Hall, Fintray Road, Blackburn AB21 0SS

**DEMONSTRATION:  
DEEP SPRING INSPECTION**

Saturday 30 April 2016 at 1.30pm

ADBKA Apiary  
Crathes Castle  
Banchory AB31 5QJ

*(Make sure you bring your bee suit.)*

On Saturday 25 June we are invited to visit Murray McGregor's new queen rearing facility near Couper Angus. Murray runs a major bee farming operation and many members will have enjoyed visiting his heather sites here in the north east over the past few years. This is sure to be a real treat.

To help in planning this event, it would be extremely useful if we can get an idea of the number of members intending to make the trip. If you plan to head down to Couper Angus, please contact me on 013398 82038 or email [adbkanewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:adbkanewsletter@btinternet.com)

*Graham*

**SPRING INTO ACTION!**

Are you ready for the active season? Your bees will be. Before you know it your colonies will be motoring on: rapidly increasing in size, making honey, and, before long, developing an inclination to swarm.

Make sure that you have a plan of action for the season. Decide what your beekeeping goals are, make sure you have the knowhow and equipment to realise your plan and, finally, be prepared to respond to the unexpected. Remember, the bees haven't read the books!

From 3 April onwards, there should be someone at the Crathes apiary each Sunday morning between 10am and midday.

Why not drop by and stock up?

**BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES  
AND FREE EQUIPMENT  
LOAN FOR ADBKA  
MEMBERS ACROSS THE  
NORTH EAST**

Honey extractors; Mini-melters; Heather honey press; 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

**BUY AND SAVE: CANDY AND SYRUP**

Contact: Erling Watt  
074294 54572

[watterlingg@aol.com](mailto:watterlingg@aol.com)

**LONGSIDE AB42 4XQ**

Heated uncapping tray; Electric uncapping knife; Heather honey press; Wax melter; Universal lightweight 9 frame radial extractor

**BUY AND SAVE: CANDY AND SYRUP**

Contact: Joan Gilbert-Stevens  
019755 81369

[craigmill@btinternet.com](mailto:craigmill@btinternet.com)

**MUIR OF FOWLIS AB33 8NX**

Combimel stainless steel radial 9 frame extractor; Heated uncapping tray; Electric uncapping knife; Refractometer; Candle-making kit

**BUY AND SAVE: CANDY, SYRUP AND  
HONEY JARS**

Contact: Graham Torrie 013398 82038  
[adbkanewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:adbkanewsletter@btinternet.com)

**CRATHES AB31 5QJ**

## WILLOW: A THREE COURSE MEAL FOR OUR BEES

The willows may be weeping, but if they are near to your hives your bees will be laughing all the way to the dinner table.

### STARTER

Willow is one of the most important early spring sources of protein-packed pollen. It is a dioecious species, meaning that each individual plant will bear either male or female flowers, but not both. Pollen is only produced by the male flowers.

Workers are stimulated to go out in search of pollen through the action of a pheromone emitted by open brood. It's a virtuous circle. With the winter-stored pollen quickly getting used up to produce brood food for the first of the year's hatched larvae, the promotion of foraging behaviour amongst workers brings in fresh stocks, which in turn stimulate the queen to accelerate her laying.

### MAIN COURSE

As an insect-pollinated plant, willow needs honeybees and other pollinators to visit both the male and female catkins. That means there's a meal of carbohydrate rich nectar available from all of the flowers.

Come March, winter honey stores will be critically low, so this early nectar source can be a life saver for honey bees. As in the case of pollen, incoming nectar will accelerate the queen's laying rate, so producing an urgently needed new generation of nurse bees.

### DESSERT

Willows produce a generous amount of sap, a real draw for plant-sucking aphids. The high sucrose content of the sap is partly synthesised by the aphids into complex sugars or oligosaccharides, then excreted in the form of 'honeydew'. Bees will collect this, process it and store it as honeydew honey.

In its precise definition of 'honey', the Honey (Scotland) Regulations 2015 begins by telling us that it is "the natural sweet substance produced by *Apis mellifera* bees from the nectar of plants or from secretions of living parts of plants or excretions of plant-sucking insects....." Yum, yum!



### WHY NOT PLANT -

*Salix caprea*, also known as Goat Willow? It will grow on heavy damp soils but will also do well on drier ground. Remember, if you are aiming to give your bees an early-spring pollen treat, make sure that the plant you buy is male.

Expect to pay around £45-£50 for a tree at 5ft or so. Smaller specimens will cost anything from £10 upwards.

Not cheap, but your bees will love you for it.

Of watery race Alders and Willows spread  
O'er silver brooks their melancholy shade,  
Which heretofore (thus tales have been believed)  
Were two poor men, who by their fishing lived;  
Till on a day when Pales' feast was held,  
And all the town with pious mirth was filled,  
This impious pair alone her rites despised,  
Pursued their care, till she their crime chastised:  
While from the banks they gazed upon the flood,  
The angry goddess fixed them where they stood,  
Transformed to sets, and just examples made  
To such as slight devotion for their trade.  
At length, well watered by the bounteous stream  
They gained a root, and spreading trees became;  
Yet pale their leaves, as conscious how they fell,  
Which croaking frogs with vile reproaches tell.

*De Hortorum Cultura*

R Rapin

Willows, sometimes called Sallows, belong to the Genus *Salix*. The bark and leaves contain a substance called salicin. If consumed, this is converted into salicylic acid, which has a medicinal effect. Potions prepared from willow have been used by humans throughout history for easing aches and pains.

In 1897, a scientist working for the German chemical company Bayer AG produced a synthetic version of the active ingredient in willow, in the form of acetylsalicylic acid, still marketed by Bayer today as Aspirin.

Bayer also produces the neonicotinoid pesticides Imidacloprid and Thiacloprid.



**9-FRAME RADIAL EXTRACTOR** (electric) –  
FOR HIRE £10 per hire period  
**STEAM WAX MELTER** – available ON LOAN  
£10 deposit

Both items available from: Jock McGregor, 11  
Marcus Road, Blackburn. Tel. 01224 790468

### BEE PACKAGES, INCLUDING MATED QUEEN

£130 for one, but more than 15 would be  
£85 each. Telephone Sebastian Bacz on  
07543270350 or 07415449400; email  
[bee@benshoney.co.uk](mailto:bee@benshoney.co.uk)

### Aberdeen Bee Supplies

Jock McGregor is the local agent for Thorne Beekeeping  
Equipment. Contact him on 01224 790468 or e-mail:  
[aberdeenbeesupplies@hotmail.com](mailto:aberdeenbeesupplies@hotmail.com)

### Bees for Sale

At least six good colonies. No inexperienced beekeepers unless  
closely supervised. Contact Sandy Watson on 01224 868370 or  
email [normaandsandy@btinternet.com](mailto:normaandsandy@btinternet.com)

**Bees Wanted:** on Nat. frames - brood,  
split or nuc., what have you? (Of local  
provenance.)

Hives wanted: Any National hive parts in  
clean, sound condition, believed free of  
diseases (I understand the risks); any other  
useful equipment.

Tel.:- (01224) 580137  
Mob. 07979 002388

e-mail: [eric.viking@virgin.net](mailto:eric.viking@virgin.net)

## Get Hands On at ADBKA's Crathes Apiary

Would you like to get involved in running our apiary at Crathes Castle this year? We're looking for volunteers who are prepared to give up a couple of hours from 10am to midday on Sunday mornings to manage our stocks and generally maintain our apiary facilities.

Don't worry if you're just starting out, we'll ensure that there's always a mix of experienced beekeepers and beginners.

If you're interested, email me at [adbkanewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:adbkanewsletter@btinternet.com), or call me on 013398 82038.

Graham

## According to.....

.....Edmund Southerne in his spectacularly titled 1593 book, *A Treatise concerning the right ordering of bees: Newlie made and set forth, according to the authors owne experience: (which by any heretofore hath not been done)*: "That it is not good to kill drones. Many men holde that it is very necessarie to destroy them, and thereto devise instruments for the accomplishing of so great a folly, but above all, one [Thomas] Hill of London in his booke intituled, The Gardners Labyrinth, sheweth the (madder) manner (I would say) how it should be done. Saith he, take one of the Drones and pul off his legs, and one of his wings, and put him in the hive againe, and as soon as the Bees perceive it, presently they will fall upon the rest and so kill them all. But by your leave (good Mister Hill) your advice will prove true, when for the death of one theefe all others will cease stealing : mark this I thinke, that if you catch every Drone and serve him so, it is likely that they will soon dye : for after such a manner Skogin taught the old wives to kill fleas. But in truth whosoever doth practise the destruction of Drones, shall never have profite by Bees : for although the Drones labour not abroad, yet that which the other Bees bring home, they doe both help to work into Combes, and also to unload the Bees of their burdens, so that their work within is as necessarie as the others abroad : mark I denie not but they be great eaters and devourers, but in requitall of that they do wonderfull good service : for in winter they lying amongst the other Bees keepe them very warme....."

*And so it goes on. Southerne's book is the earliest known original English work on beekeeping. Deciphering the text to produce this short extract was a challenge. If you want to have a go yourself, you'll find a facsimile of the entire book at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89098857493;view=1up;seq=11>*