



SEPTEMBER
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

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VISIT TO THE HEATHER WITH MURRAY McGREGOR

On Sunday the 13th of August members of ADBKA attended a demonstration conducted by professional beekeeper, Murray McGregor, at one of his heather apiaries adjacent to the Burn O Vat visitor centre on the B9119.



During our visit Murray worked his way through approximately forty colonies of bees where he assessed their condition and when necessary he united colonies, shook out any drone laying colonies, identified any potential queens for inclusion into his bee breeding program and treated the colonies for Varroa.

Murray sets himself a target of four minutes per hive to complete the manipulations, when not distracted by our many questions.

As part of his swarm management technique Murray splits colonies in the spring and unites them in the Autumn. To unite two colonies Murray sprays household air freshener onto the top of the frames on the lower brood box and onto the bottom of the frames in the top brood box; once the frames are sprayed he places the two boxes together. Towards the end of our visit Murray inspected a colony that had been united a few minutes previously and found the new colony in harmony.



Murray has been kind enough to dictate a series of articles for our newsletter that outlines his beekeeping year. By reading these articles it should become clear where the manipulations he demonstrated to us on the 13th of August fits into his overall yearly management cycle. The articles start this month and will run until next spring / summer and give us the opportunity to follow his practices as the year progresses.

Lindsey Macaulay

FUTURE ARTICLES

BEE MENU –
Malcolm Watson

**MY BEEKEEPING
YEAR**
(Murray McGregor)

**HONEY SHOW
PICTURE FROM
1984 –**
Sandy & Lilian
Gordon

MY BEEKEEPING YEAR

By Murray McGregor, Professional Bee farmer.

Foreword

This article was dictated by Murray McGregor and is intended as an aid to my amateur beekeeping friends and colleagues. The article outlines the sequence of events that I undertake on an annual basis from the start of the beekeeping year in September through to the year end in August.

Introduction

My introduction to beekeeping was through my Father.

My Father was cut off behind enemy lines in Burma by the Japanese during the Second World War, during this time he contracted Tuberculosis. After the war he returned to Scotland and decided to take up beekeeping on a part time basis to his main job as a bookkeeper for an electrical company. My parents would also grow and sell chrysanthemums from their one acre garden. In 1950 my father started off with twenty smith hives.

1955 saw an exceptional honey harvest in Scotland and my father averaged 200 Lbs of honey from each of his twenty colonies.

The winter of 1963 /1964 was a bad Nosema year which saw heavy bee losses.

In 1970 my father and mother had built up to 200 colonies which I helped out with, in the morning before going to school I'd have to disbud the chrysanthemums before school in the morning and then again when I returned back from school.

In the summer holidays from school and at the age of 14 I picked raspberries and saved enough money to purchase my own bee colonies, the honey proceeds I intended to sell to my father to supplement my pocket money. My father arranged for me to buy twelve colonies of bees in smith hives. When it came to securing the deal I had to leave the negotiations to my father, I had to stay outside the seller's house whilst my father went inside to secure the deal. My father came out of the house after a period of time to advise me the deal had been done and I was now the owner of my own twelve honey bee colonies in smith hives. My father advised me that my raspberry picking money had been enough to secure all twelve colonies; looking back I suspect my father put some of his own money towards the cost of the purchase to make up the shortfall. In any case I now had my own bees and the embryo of my current business was born.

At 17 years old I joined Shell as a merchant navy cadet, I stayed in the merchant navy for ten years. In 1984 / 1985 I left the merchant navy but on my last trip I managed to get Dad a place on the ship as a passenger and we sailed through the Panama canal to the West coast of America and Los Angeles.

In 1985 I left the merchant navy and returned to Coupar Angus and joined the family business.

1985 and 1986 were disastrous for the bees and many colonies died out. I returned to sea to get an income following these terrible years.

In 1988 my father had a honey jarring and selling business and I had 600 to 700 colonies.

I think it is realistic that one person and a labourer could have 800 hives. My own target for inspecting a hive is four (4) minutes per hive on average once I arrive on site. Most of our day is spent in travelling to and from the hive locations. I try and set a target of six (6) minutes per hive for my employees.

In 2016 we harvested a little over 50 tonnes of heather honey in what was a slightly above average year. Every year varies but I think this year we have produced more honey than anyone else in Europe.

We shall have approximately 3,500 colonies by next summer and over the year we utilize over 300 locations including winter, summer and heather moors. We have six employees who look after the bees and equipment; this is supplemented by part time employees during the busy times of year in the early summer and autumn.

SEPTEMBER 24th

Members of Tarland Bee Group will be giving a talk as part of the Tarland Food and Music Festival Bee Keeping Sunday Talk in the Community Garden 10–11am £3. Followed by 11 a.m. walk to Strathweltie.

No need to book viewing times at Strathweltie: starting at 11 am. Yvonne Davidson and Martin Leahy explain the basics of beekeeping and share some stories from the first few years of Tarland Bee Group. Swarm capture from chimney tops to hollow trees. Our 2017 queen rearing project and all the fun encountered rearing queens. It's been a busy few years and our new beekeepers are keen to share their experiences.

Following the talk you are welcome to join us on a walk up to Strathweltie to visit Ronnie Greenlaw, Strathweltie, Tarland, AB34 4YS. Ronnie has his whole family coming along to help for the day and is really looking forward to welcoming people to his Bee shed and demonstrating the whole honey extracting and bottling process. He also has an observation hive where you will be able to view bees at work through the glass and have no need to wear lots of gear. Honey tasting included, with a great variety of different honeys.

Viewing at Strathweltie will start at 11am and run for as long as is needed to show everyone round, there is no need to book.

SEPTEMBER 30th – 1st OCTOBER

SBA are running a two day classroom based course on swarm control at Elgin hosted by Moray Beekeepers.

Cost is £120, refreshments, lunch and notes are provided. For further info, please search under 'events' on the SBA website.

OCTOBER 7th – 2 P.M.

Talk by Graeme Sharpe –
'My method of beekeeping'

Kinellar Community Hall,
Fintray Road, Blackburn. AB21 0JQ

OCTOBER 21ST – 2 P.M.

ABERDEEN AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION HONEY SHOW

Kinellar Community Hall. AB21 0JQ

The annual honey show is the highlight of our year. Help make this year's show the most successful ever by setting aside your best jars of honey, cut comb, sections, mead, candles, handicrafts or wax, all of which can be entered.

It's not only fun to show some of the results of your hard work, but also to see what other members have managed to achieve with their year's beekeeping.

The honey show has dozens of entry classes and categories; there are lots of opportunities to get involved. As well as honey, you can enter beeswax, mead, art, needlework, baking, photographs and more. Don't forget our 'gift table', which consists of show entries that are subsequently gifted to a local charity.

Even if you're not able to enter this year, why not come along to see what it's all about? There'll be beekeeping equipment and books to browse, fine refreshments to enjoy and an opportunity to blather with other beekeepers about the highs and lows of the season.

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?

SWARMING

Interesting post I found today on Swarming.

Do you know what the beekeeping terms; prime, cast, colt, filly, and maiden mean?.

circa. 1867 - Swarm Nomenclature.

Via: Historical Honeybee Articles - Beekeeping History

The first swarm that issues from a stock of bees in the spring is called the "prime" swarm, and is usually the strongest and best which such a stock may be expected to produce that season.

The second swarm, or first afterswarm, is termed a "cast" and usually issues from ten to fourteen days after the prime swarm. It is commonly weaker than the prime swarm -that is, composed of fewer bees; and coming later in the season, does not always secure sufficient stores to pass the winter safely. It has the advantage, however, of possessing a young queen.

Should a third swarm issue from the same stock, it is termed a "colt," and a fourth swarm is called a "filly." These are rare, but when they make their appearance, follow the second swarm, after an interval of only one or two days.

A swarm from a swarm is called a "maiden" swarm, and is accompanied by the same queen which issued with the parent stock when it swarmed.

In ordinary honey districts, good bee-keepers generally strive to prevent the production of any afterswarm by adding supers to their hives. But as this is not always effectual, they catch and destroy the queen of the young swarm, and let the bees return to the parent stock.

Source:

circa. 1867. American Bee Journal. January, Page 125

Jenny Lewis

INSURANCE UPDATE

Members may be aware that until recently the association had two insurance policies – one covering the Crathes cabin and its contents and another for third party liability.

The third party liability policy was expensive and it largely duplicated the cover that SBA members already receive as part of their membership. Many members of ADBKA are also members of the SBA.

The committee has therefore decided to terminate the third party liability policy. The cabin/contents policy will continue.

The implications of this change for the association are that in order to have insurance protection in place certain activities should only be undertaken by SBA members:

- The person in charge of the association's apiary must be an SBA member.
- Persons representing the association at events using observation hives must be SBA members.
- Persons collecting swarms from the public on behalf of the association must be SBA members, although all ABKA members remain free to do this on their own behalf if they wish.

ADBKKA members who wish to have personal insurance cover against third party liability related to beekeeping are advised to join the SBA if they have not already done so. SBA membership also provides insurance against loss of colonies, as well as many other benefits including access to the examinations – see the SBA website for details.

IN MEMORIAM –

KATIE-JANE BUCHAN

On 30th August local girl Katie-Jane Buchan died at ARI after a long illness. She had recently graduated and become engaged, and was only 22. Katie-Jane loved bees, and ADBKA was contacted by her family because they wanted to talk about Katie-Jane's love of bees at her funeral and to present those present with a small jar of honey as a memento. Association members donated honey for this purpose, and the jars were supplied with a special label featuring this photograph.

