

Newsletter

August 2011

# Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Established 1910  
Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

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## An introduction to bees and beekeeping

The Aberdeenshire and District Beekeepers Association are once again holding a series of public lectures to introduce anyone interested in bees and beekeeping to the traditional hobby of beekeeping.

There will be six lectures held at Aberdeen Grammar School's Lecture Theatre, Skene Street, ABERDEEN, AB10 1HT commencing on Thursday 29th September at 7.30pm.

The lecture series is open to anyone who would like to learn more about the honeybee or who is considering

becoming a beekeeper. The lectures will also be of value to those who are already beekeepers and who want to improve their skills.

Subjects covered in the lecture series will include: how bees function; the equipment needed to manage honeybees; the products of the hive i.e. honey and beeswax; a typical beekeeping year; what to do when something goes wrong with the bees.

The principal lecturer is Dr Stephen Palmer, from Turriff, who has kept bees for more than 30 years and is a qualified Master Beekeeper.

The dates for your diary are-

29th September:  
The Beehive

6th October:  
The Biology of the bee

27th October:  
What do I need to keep bees?

3rd November:  
The products of the hive

10th November:  
Help – there is something wrong with my bees!

17th November:  
The beekeeping year

**Looking ahead.....** Aberdeen and District Beekeepers Association is keen to hear from any member who has a good idea for the future of the Association or the apiary. We want to hear from you if you have any innovative ideas for developing the Apiary or the Association activities, incorporating sponsorship, or even working towards small business status. This is currently an exciting time for beekeeping and we are eager to develop to meet the needs of existing and new beekeepers alike through education, innovation and development, to ensure that a secure long term plan can be established to safeguard not only the Association's future but also that of bees and beekeeping. Any ideas can be submitted to Jock McGregor, Rosie Crighton or Graham Torrie, and all will be given consideration. (See elsewhere in the newsletter for contact details.)

## A Member Asks.....



*Is sugar dusting a worthwhile strategy in controlling Varroa?*

**What are the pros and cons of using sugar dusting for Varroa control?**

I've heard about the use of sugar dusting as part of an integrated pest management scheme, aimed at reducing the numbers of Varroa mite.

Basically, the advice I've been given is to dust a handful of icing sugar down between the frames in the brood body weekly during the summer.

The icing sugar is not to have any 'anti-caking' agent, but all of the brands I see in the shops seem to contain this. Does anyone know of a brand that doesn't?

As an alternative, I've tried grinding down ordinary white sugar in a food processor, which does produce a fine powder, but this soon 'cakes' when it's stored.

A day after dusting, I've been taking out the slide in insert beneath

the open mesh floor of the hive to have a look for mites and to clean things out. The first time I did this there weren't many mites, but there was a wasp on the insert enjoying the sugar!

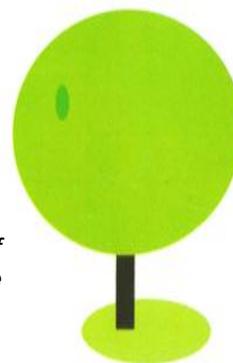
I would be really interested to hear what association members think about sugar dusting, whether many people are doing it, and what success they're having.

Last month, **A Member Asked** about the 'June gap'. In response, DB advises: "You are right to highlight the flowering of rosebay willowherb as a signal that pollen and nectar are available for honeybees, irrespective of whether or not there has in fact been a June gap. Other important plants you could look out for in the north east at this time of year are meadowsweet, white clover and the flowering of the lime trees\*."

RA thinks that it isn't always necessary to feed colonies over June: "You are worrying too much about this. The key thing is to judge whether your colony has sufficient food stores, and this is something that you should be doing on an ongoing basis anyway. Even if there is a lack of flowering plants over June, as long as you can see honey and pollen stored in the brood body or supers, your bees will be fine."

Sounding a cautionary note, PMcB says: "If you have already placed a super on to the hive, you should never feed sugar syrup. This will result in the syrup being stored in frames that you would otherwise expect to contain nectar-derived honey.

*\*Could it be that the lime trees in the north east of Scotland have failed to flower this year? There are reports of just such a situation in west Aberdeenshire. What is the experience of members across Grampian?*



*Are any of our members able to offer help or advice on the subject of sugar dusting for Varroa? If you have any thoughts on this, please e-mail them to: [grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com](mailto:grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com) Alternatively, call Graham Torrie on 013398 82038. Helpful comments will be included in next month's newsletter.*

*If you have a question for our members that you wish to be printed in the September newsletter, please e-mail it to the above address or call the above number.*

## Foraging around in the media

Professor Jane Memmott of the University of Bristol has speculated that cities may provide a more successful habitat for honeybees than the countryside. Read about her team's work in surveying pollinators in 12 cities from Dundee in the north to Southampton in the south at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-14309007>

The Independent was one of many media outlets that covered the recent Chinese "bee bearding" competition. See: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/bee-bearding-in-pictures-2315687.html> (*Definitely not for the fainthearted!*)

**Blue honey found in Scotland!** It's true. Read about the mysterious blue honey found in Scotland County, North Carolina, at: <http://www.witn.com/news/headlines/Blue-Honey-NC-Mysterious-Treat-For-100-Years-125992423.html?ref=423>

**And finally...** do bees have feelings? Recent studies by Geraldine Wright and her colleagues at Newcastle University have highlighted this question by showing that honeybees may experience something akin to moods. The story is at: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=do-bees-have-feelings>

Mexican scientists are currently looking at a possible medical role for propolis: fighting tooth decay. The story is reported at: <http://www.dentalplans.com/articles/54903/researchers-investigate-bee-resin-as-a-potential-treatment-for-dental-carries.html>

As we come to the time of year when we should be thinking about treating our colonies for Nosema, read about the latest research into the interaction between this bee disease and exposure to low levels of insecticides: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/07/110725091434.htm>



## Bees for Sale

Willow Lohr of Crathie has some bees for sale for new members trying to start up or existing members to replace winter losses.

- Hive with Colony of Black Bees with

marked 2010 queen.

- Nucleus of 5 frames of black bees with daughter 2011 Queen from above.

Contact Willow on: 013397 42295 or 07837420494

Email: [willowlohr@btinternet.com](mailto:willowlohr@btinternet.com)



David Lunney of Burnherve has bees for sale. David can be contacted on 01467 643593

David Wilkinson has a good nuc and a good Smith colony for sale. David can be contacted on 01330 826663

Following another very successful 'Aberdeen Beekeepers Association stand' at the Turriff Show, a very warm

**'THANK YOU'** is due to Sandy Gordon of Danestone who gave so generously of his time and knowledge, bringing beekeeping to life for the many folk who stopped by to see the bees. Preparing a demonstration hive for the public takes time and effort, and the Association is grateful to Sandy's dedication to promoting interest in the honeybee and educating the public. Many thanks again Sandy, and well done!



**Congratulations** to members Willow Lohr and Kirsteen Sutherland for passing Scottish Beekeepers' Association examinations this year. Well done to both!



## ADBA Equipment

The Association has the following items of equipment available for free borrow: 2 honey extractors, 2 mini-melters, 2 heather honey presses, 1 wax extractor and 1 wax foundation press. These are available from the honey jar store at Danestone Market Garden (directions below) on payment of a returnable £10 deposit.

The maximum length of loan should be two weeks. Members who fail to return equipment within this time are likely to lose their deposit. Please return equipment promptly and allow others to benefit from it.

The Association honey jar store at Danestone Market Garden has supplies of Apistan, Jars, Ragus, Ambrosia Bee Syrup and Hessian for smoker fuel.

The store is open between 6.30pm and 8pm on Wednesday evenings and at other times by arrangement with Sandy Gordon (Tel: 01224 484540).

Directions: At Persley Bridge (Tesco) roundabout turn onto Laurel Drive. Continue for about ½ mile. Look for Laurel Place on your right (it is a semi-circle so take the second entrance into this street). Now turn left into Laurel Avenue. Danestone Market Garden is signposted, on the left, about 100 yards along.

## Extractor and Steam Melter for Hire/Loan

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

## Notice Board

An Aberdeenshire-based trader is looking for **local suppliers of honey**. Contact Louise at: [louise@braemartrading.com](mailto:louise@braemartrading.com)

### NATURAL BEE-KEEPING WEEKEND WORKSHOP

"Bee-keeping with a difference"  
Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011

For the first time together in Scotland, we have two vastly experienced natural bee-keepers teaching the course: Heidi Herrmann, Chairman of the Natural Bee-Keeping Trust, and Phil Chandler, a 'top bar hive' specialist and author of "The Barefoot Bee-Keeper" and [www.biobees.com](http://www.biobees.com).

Whether you're a complete beginner, an experienced beekeeper, or would just like to understand what can be done to help honeybees, this is a great opportunity to learn bee-keeping the natural way.

Some differences between standard and natural beekeeping practices include:

- ❖ Queens do not have their wings clipped
- ❖ Bees create their own comb to their own specification
- ❖ No chemicals are used in the hive ... and yet, the survival rates of colonies are excellent and varroa infestations are kept to a minimum!
- ❖ No queen excluders, so the queen has access to all areas of the hive
- ❖ It's more about the bees than the honey!

The full cost of the workshop, including organic lunches, teas, coffees and homebakes is £95.00  
Venue: Peterculter, Aberdeen

For more info:  
Email: [anne@vitalveg.co.uk](mailto:anne@vitalveg.co.uk)  
Telephone: 07717 34658

My name is Yoel Everett. Recently, two partners and I came up with the idea that many people are interested in trying out a different profession; not necessarily as a career change, but rather as an enriching life experience. We thought people would be willing to pay professionals to give them a one-on-one, hands-on tour of their jobs; for example, beekeeping.

We've developed an easy step by step process to help professionals create their Jobtour and publish it for free on our website. If our idea interests you, we'd be very happy for you to take a look and read more at [www.jobtourist.net](http://www.jobtourist.net)

Sincerely, Yoel Everett

### Site Wanted

We have a few hives in our back garden in Aberdeen but would like to expand and ideally would like a large garden or field fairly close to the west side of Aberdeen. Any site considered.

Please call Neil or Louise Forbes on 01224 313096

### 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)

Distributing the newsletter by e-mail realises significant savings for the association. If you do not currently receive the newsletter by e-mail and wish to do so, contact Graham Torrie on 013398 82038, or by e-mail at: [grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com](mailto:grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com)

*We urge as many members as possible to do so.*

Why not think about contributing to the newsletter yourself? We have a wealth of experience and expertise in the association, and it would be great if we could do more to share this around our members. If you have any tips, advice, or experiences to pass on, why don't you jot them down and forward them to the above e-mail address? I would be happy to assist with drafting and formatting, so feel free to call me on the above number if I can help.

Graham Torrie