

Newsletter
January 2015



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

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A HIDDEN TREASURE - a boon for the busy man!



Tucked away in a dark corner of our apiary cabin at Crathes there is something very special indeed. Neglected, gathering dust, and in considerable disrepair is a beehive of great historical significance: a **Stewarton**.

In 1819 - well before Lorenzo Langstroth designed and patented, in 1851, what is widely regarded as the world's first moveable frame beehive - a Scottish cabinet maker called Robert Ker built an octagonal hive that anticipated many of the innovations that were to emerge later in the nineteenth century. Ker (known locally as 'Bee Robin') named his hive after his home

village of Stewarton, which lies just north of Kilmarnock. With deep brood boxes and shallower honey supers, the hive originally worked on the top bar principle but was later adapted to use frames similar to those we use today. Clever slides between the bars allowed control of access to the upper levels.

Even after the explosion of invention and development that followed the introduction of Langstroth's hive design, the Stewarton was still seen as a worthy alternative. Not least by the Reverend E Bartrum, who sang loudly its praises in his 1881 book, *The Stewarton: the hive of the busy man*. (Presumably, women beekeepers weren't as hard pressed.)

Congratulations to the following ADBKA members who have been awarded the Basic Beemaster Certificate by the Scottish Beekeepers' Association:

Stewart Anderson, Lindsey and Olga MacAulay,
Ian Mackley and Malcolm Watson

If you're interested in sitting the Basic Beemaster Certificate or any of the SBA's other practical examinations, find out more by visiting the SBA's website (see below) or by contacting our Area SBA Representative:

Tony Harris
Tel. 07884 496246

E-mail: secretary@scottishbeekeepers.org.uk

Applications for the practical examinations must be submitted by 11 April 2015.

For those members who have already passed the Basic Beemaster Certificate and who wish to go on to sit the SBA's written modular examinations, take note that the next round will be held on 21 March 2015. Applications have to be in by 31 January.

Application forms and further details can be found at http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/fees_exams.html

*You should have sent off your **2015 membership subscription form** by now. If you haven't, get it done right away. Remember, we are now a new incorporated charity, so the old ADBKA that you were a member of last year no longer exists!*



ADBKA's **Stewarton**, rescued from its dark corner and brought out for some fresh air.

Perhaps some of our more senior members will know something of the history of this particular hive and how it came to be in the possession of the association. If you can help, contact the newsletter and we'll let everyone know.

BEES BY MAIL ORDERED

Royal Mail has announced that bees are to feature in their 2015 Special Stamp Calendar. No specific details are available yet, but the issue will be released on 18 August.

TALK:**MY METHOD OF BEEKEEPING - Graeme Sharp, Bee Inspector**

Saturday 17 January at 2.00pm

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

FILM:**More than Honey**

Sat. 14 February at 2.00pm

The Kinellar Community Hall
Fintray Road
Blackburn AB21 0SS**TALK:****BEE HEALTH AND PESTICIDES
- Gavin Ramsey, SBA Bee Health Convener**

Saturday 28 March at 2.00pm

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

"More than Honey takes in all the things hurting bees - overbreeding, pesticides, farming practices that upset their life cycles. By the time we see Chinese workers slowly and painfully pollinate trees by hand, unable to perform a fraction of one hive's work, it's clear that [director Markus Imhoof] is issuing a warning. Without any preachiness, this magically beautiful film urges us to take better care of the bees, and honor the irreplaceable things that they do for us." **Farran Smith Nehme, New York Post**

2015 DIARY DATES- from the SBA website <http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/>**March**7th - SBA Wax Workshop, Thornes, Newburgh14th - SBA **AGM**, Dewars Centre, Perth21st - SBA Exams, Modules 1,2,3,5, 6, 7 & 828th & 29th SBA Microscopy Course - SASA, Edinburgh**April**11th - SBA Skep Making Course, The Pyramids, Bathgate17th - 19th - BBKA Spring Convention, Harper Adam College, Newport25th - Honey Judge/Steward workshop - Portmoak Hall, Scotlandwell**May**16th - Scottish Government Bee Health Day, Barony College, Dumfries23rd - SG Bee Health Day - East Lothian29th to 31st - Gardening Scotland, Ingliston, Edinburgh**June**6th - SG Bee Health Day - Perth18th - 21st - Royal Highland Show, Ingliston**July**26th to 31st - Federation of Irish Beekeepers Conference, Gormanston**August**22nd - SBA Workshop on Honey Processing, Thornes, Newburgh**September**4th to 6th - Scottish National Honey Show, Camperdown Park, Dundee12th - SBA Autumn Convention, Oatridge, Broxburn, West Lothian**October**Wed 30th Sep to Wed 7th Oct - SBA Tour - Speaker- Graham Royale,29th - 31st - UK National Honey Show, Weybridge**November**14th - SBA Exams, Modules 1, 2,3,5,6, 7 & 821st - SBA Member's Meeting and Local Assn.

Secretaries' Meeting

If you're able to cope with some bad news, Professor of General Zoology at Queen's University Belfast, Robert Paxton, has warned that global warming will increase the impact of the honeybee gut parasite *Nosema ceranae* in Europe. It's a more deadly cousin of the familiar parasite, already widely spread throughout the UK, *Nosema apis*; where both are present the two compete with each other for dominance. Paxton explains: "We used a simple mathematical model to analyse the dynamic between the two species of parasite and we found the exotic *N. ceranae*'s competitive advantage increases the warmer it gets, perhaps a legacy of its origins in the warmer east Asian climate."

You can read more about it in the *Ecologist* at http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_round_up/2661779/bee_crisis_warmer_summers_will_help_new_parasite.html



Waxing Lyrical

In a series of emails to the newsletter, Stephen Palmer tells a story that might just inspire us to think again about what we do, or don't do, with old comb and cappings:

15 December 2014

For the past few years I have been putting aside any old wax and scrapings – plus the products of uncapping and the solar wax extractor - in a plastic container. I was recently having a general tidy-up of the workshop and I came across the container of old wax. I borrowed the Association's steam wax extractor from Sandy [Gordon] and it worked perfectly. I am astonished to find that I now have a 10lb block of pure and clean beeswax. I know that the suppliers like Thornes run an exchange system of rendered wax for new foundation, but because I have my own foundation press I intend to get busy making my own foundation. There will be more than sufficient in this block for my needs – and I think I'll also make some soap and beeswax polish.

Moral of the story – don't throw away any 'surplus' wax. You can always make use of it!

16 December 2014

Today I returned the ADBKA steam extractor to Sandy and we discussed what I was going to do with such a large block of wax. I am going to make up some beeswax polish and the remainder will become sheets of foundation. Sandy asked me if I wanted to use the superb Hertzog Foundation Press that belongs to the ADBKA. I said "No thanks, because I was given one of my own twenty years ago". Sandy then said that the ADBKA Foundation Press hadn't been out of the box for more than ten years. Sandy commented that "people don't bother making foundation because it is easier to use either pre-wired foundation or to exchange rendered wax for sheets of foundation through the beekeeping suppliers' scheme".

There is another moral here – come on folks use the great ADBKA kit; it is an ideal job to do during the winter; there is a great sense of achievement that your bees are using foundation you have made. And in any case bees wax is pure gold dust – re-cycle your surplus wax and old combs!



20 December 2014

This is what 500ml of pure turpentine, 350gms of beeswax and 10gm of carnauba wax can produce. The last time I made beeswax polish was in 1990! It is nice to know that I can still do it. The major snag is that wax and turpentine are highly combustible and you need to take serious precautions when making the stuff on the kitchen stove!

And if members of the ADBKA need any incentive to try this out they might like to know that I have customers for all eight of the £5 tins of polish.

Stephen

Stephen's article mentions the association's steam wax extractor and foundation press; see details below of these and other expensive pieces of equipment that you can borrow free of charge as a benefit of your ADBKA membership.

What's the connection between bees and the mulled wine you sipped too much of last month? Find out by reading the BBC's account of "The Insects that Made Christmas" at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-30575208>

Thanks to Jim Moynagh for this.



Visit the ADBKA Honey Jar Store for:

Ragus Candy
Apistan (10 strips, sufficient for 5 hives)
Ambrosia Syrup
Honey Jars and Lids
Mesh Floors – National size (wire only)
Hessian Squares for smoker fuel



Free loan of:
Honey extractors
Mini-melters
Heather honey press
Wax extractor
Wax foundation press

Approximately half a mile along Laurel Drive, turn into Laurel Place on your right - it's 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.

**Danestone
Market
Garden
AB22 8AJ**

You may be asked to show your ADBKA membership card when you visit the store, so remember to take it along

For the loan items, a returnable £10 deposit is required, with the maximum length of loan being two weeks. **As other members may be waiting to borrow extractors, etc. these must be returned on time and in a clean condition.**

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

Notice Board



Aberdeen Bee Supplies

Jock McGregor is the local agent for Thorne Beekeeping Equipment. Contact him on 01224 790468 or e-mail: AberdeenBeeSupplies@hotmail.com

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

Wondering what to do with that **fat cheque** you got from your auntie for Christmas? Remember, you can never have too many bee books. Graham Torrie has for sale around 150 titles covering just about every aspect of bees, beekeeping and related subjects. Call 013398 82038 or e-mail grahamtorrie@icloud.com for a copy of the current list.

Talking of Nosema (as we were on page 2), the National Bee Unit advises that, as a precaution against the build up of this and other diseases, brood comb should be replaced at least every three years. One way of doing this efficiently is by using the Bailey Comb Change; here's how it's done:

Prepare a clean brood chamber filled with frames of foundation. Place this chamber over the existing brood chamber. Unless there is a strong nectar flow feed with winter strength sugar syrup i.e. 1 Kg of sugar to 650ml of water. When the bees have drawn out some of the foundation, find the queen and place her on this comb. Put a queen excluder over the old brood chamber and under the new, thus trapping the queen in the upper chamber. If possible arrange a new hive entrance between the two brood boxes and close off the old. This helps to reduce the amount of pollen stored in the old lower combs. After three weeks, remove the old brood chamber. The brood will have hatched and the comb can then be rendered to recover the beeswax. This system is ideal for replacing all the combs at once and is best performed in early spring often, with clement weather, March is suitable, but remember to keep feeding so the bees can build comb.

Source: BeeBase at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

A Seattle-based company called Eltopia has announced that it is in early stage development of a **simple, pesticide-free way to remove Varroa destructor mites** in bee hives. Their device, called 'MiteNot', will, they claim, sterilize mites thereby eliminating them without harming the bees. Research, development and testing is being done in conjunction with the University of Minnesota Bee Lab.

The company explains that 'MiteNot' "uses a compostable circuit board that senses the stages of the bee brood's reproductive cycle and applies heat at a specific temperature and time to sterilize the mites. The heat is applied when the honeycomb cells have been capped and the temperature stabilizes. This is the approximate time when female mites lay eggs but before the male mites can fertilize, thus interrupting the mites' lifecycle."

You can read Eltopia's full press release at <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2015/01/prweb12430179.htm>



According to.....

.....Maurice Maeterlinck in his classic 1901 book, *The Life of the Bee*, "contrary to what is generally believed, the winter life of the bee is not arrested, although it be slackened. By the concerted beating of their wings—little sisters that have survived the flames of the sun—which go quickly or slowly in accordance as the temperature without may vary, they maintain in their sphere an unchanging warmth, equal to that of a day in spring. This secret spring comes from the beautiful honey, itself but a ray of heat transformed, that returns now to its first condition. It circulates in the hive like generous blood. The bees at the full cells present it to their neighbours, who pass it on in their turn. Thus it goes from hand to hand and from mouth to mouth, till it attains the extremity of the group in whose thousands of hearts one destiny, one thought, is scattered and united. It stands in lieu of the sun and the flowers till its elder brother, the veritable sun of the real, great spring, peering through the half-open door, glides in his first softened glances, wherein anemones and violets are coming to life again; and gently awakens the workers, showing them that the sky once more is blue in the world, and that the uninterrupted circle that joins death to life has turned and begun afresh."