

Newsletter  
July 2012

# Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Established 1910  
Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

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## Autumn Lecture Series

Our popular series of autumn talks, "An Introduction to Bees and Beekeeping", will be held this year on Thursday evenings at Aberdeen Grammar School, presented by Dr Stephen Palmer. The six-week programme begins on 20 September and will cost £10, payable on the first evening of attendance. Attendees who are not currently members of the ADBKA will be able to redeem £5 of the course fee against their first year membership of the association.

Look out for more details in the August newsletter.

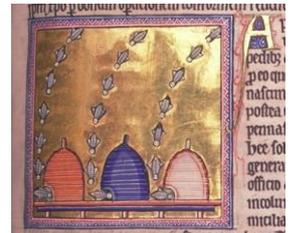


Illustration from "The Aberdeen Bestiary" – see page 3

### American Foulbrood Disease Outbreak in Inverness-shire

The disease was confirmed following laboratory diagnosis by Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA). Outbreaks of AFB have previously been reported and dealt with in this area over the last three years.

The AFB infected hive will be destroyed as there is no permitted treatment for the disease in the UK. There are no risks to public health from AFB and no implications for the quality and safety of honey. The affected apiary is located near Inverness and the movement of bees and related equipment into or out of the affected apiary is prohibited.

### Don't Forget to Ask!

If you are moving stocks of bees to other folk's land, **please check with the land owner first**. We have been contacted by a farmer who had bees placed on his land without permission and was concerned that he was unable to contact the beekeeper regarding spraying, etc.

### Examination Study Group

If you have done the SBA's basic beemaster exam and intend to do modules 1 and 3 this November, perhaps you would like to join a study group. If so, contact me please and it can be arranged.

Rosie Crighton  
Hon. Secretary



Thieves have **stolen 3 million bees** in 154 hives from a beekeeper in Alberta, Canada. Read all about it at the Huffington Post at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/06/bill-termeer-canada-honey-bees-stolen\\_n\\_1654221.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/06/bill-termeer-canada-honey-bees-stolen_n_1654221.html)

THE ABERDEEN AND DISTRICT  
BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION  
**HONEY SHOW 2012**

THE ENGINEERING LECTURE THEATRE, S.A.C.  
CRAIBSTONE, BUCKSBURN  
**SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER 2011**

Watch out for more information in next month's newsletter!

**APIARY DEMONSTRATION**

Sunday 22 July at 2.30pm

**HEALTHY BEE HUSBANDRY**

Dr James Beattie's Apiary

Approximately 100 metres along the Clovenstone road, off the A96, just before the Thainstone Mart, post code AB510YG  
(signage will be posted at site)

**APIARY DEMONSTRATION**

Saturday 18 August at 2.30pm

**HEATHER VISIT AND PICNIC LUNCH**

Murray McGregor's Apiary, Raebush

App. half way along the minor road between the B9119 and the A97. From the south, pass the Burn O'Vat Visitors' Centre, then fork left, signposted 'Raebush'  
(signage will be posted at site)

**APIARY DEMONSTRATION**

Saturday 4 August at 2.30pm

Dr Stephen Palmer:

**HIVE INSPECTION & DEMO OF EXTRACTING HONEY AND PROCESSING/CREAMING HONEY FOR SALE**

Fintry Schoolhouse, Fintry, Turriff, AB53 5RN OS Grid reference: NJ 75291 (54596)

Take A947 out of Turriff towards Banff; turn right at Whitelodge Garden Centre on B9105 towards Peterhead. At Fintry Farm turn sharp left towards 'Slackadale'; the schoolhouse is 400m on RHS.

Phone number 01888 551367

There will be a wet weather routine in case of inclement weather. Attendees should come to the Schoolhouse in the first instance.

*The following letter appeared in the July issue of the Scottish Beekeeper and is reproduced here with the kind permission of the authors:*

Dear Sir

On the differences in colony losses in the East and West of Scotland Magnus Peterson attended a lecture by Dr Chris Connolly of Dundee University on his ongoing honeybee research and a striking result which he cited, from the volunteer beekeepers working with him, is that there had been in the winter of 2011-12 a strikingly higher rate of winter losses among those volunteers in the East of Scotland compared with those in the West of Scotland. This particular comparison is one which we had never chosen in the series of surveys of beekeepers in Scotland which we have conducted for the SBA since 2006. However the data are all available to us, and the following table summarises the results when this comparison is made:

Winter (sample)	Reported East of Scotland loss rate	Reported West of Scotland loss rate	Comment
2006-07 (SBA members)	18%	18%	No difference
2007-08 (SBA members)	24%	28%	No significant difference
2008-09	No data available		
2009-10 (SBA members)	35%	26%	Significant difference
2009-10 (Bee farmers)	29%	11%	Significant difference
2010-11 (SBA members)	25%	7%	Significant difference

The difference in 2007-08 shows a higher rate of loss in

the West than in the East, but is not statistically significant. However since 2009-10 there is clear evidence – based on statistical significance testing – that the East has had higher winter loss rates than the West.

It looks as though something changed between 2007-08 and 2009-10, and it has remained in its new state ever since.

Of course the East of Scotland has a far higher proportion of the land devoted to arable farming than the West, and in particular there is far more growing of Oil Seed Rape there, often deliberately sought out by beekeepers. Evidence has recently started to accumulate about the possible adverse effects of neonicotinoids, used as seed dressings, on bees foraging on crops treated with them, with Oil Seed Rape being particularly implicated. When did the widespread use of neonicotinoids as seed dressing for Oil Seed Rape in Scotland begin?

Yours faithfully

Alison Gray and Magnus Peterson

Department of Mathematics and Statistics

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow



As can be seen above, the debate about the part played by **neonicotinoid-based pesticides** in bee health continues. Meanwhile, the French Government has banned the commonly used neonicotinoid pesticide, Cruiser.

The story was reported by, amongst others, Reuters at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/06/01/us-france-cruiser-idUKBRE8500L020120601>

I visited yesterday an exhibition at the new (spectacular) Aberdeen University Library called: 'The Aberdeen Bestiary'. This is a 12<sup>th</sup> century book held at the University Library – and it is full of wonderful illustrations from nature. A Bestiary is a collection of short descriptions about all sorts of animals, real and imaginary, birds and even rocks, accompanied by a moralising explanation. One of the illustrations depicts the honeybee (see page 1). The accompanying text (to this illustration (from Folio 63v) includes these words (note the mistaken belief that drones are the kings of the hive).

*The Greeks call the larger bees which are produced on the outer parts of the honeycomb castros; some think they should be called 'kings' because they are leaders in the fortress.*

*Bees, alone among all the kinds of living things, raise their offspring communally, live in a single dwelling, are enclosed within a single homeland, and share their toil, their food, their tasks, the produce of their labour and their flight.*

*What else? Procreation is common to all, as is the purity of their virginal body in the common process of birth, since this is achieved without intercourse or lust; they are not wracked by labour pains, yet they produce at once a great swarm of offspring, collecting them with their mouths from leaves and grass.*

*They choose their own king, they appoint themselves his people; but although they are subject to the king, they are nevertheless free. For they have the right of selecting him and of offering him their loyalty, because they love him as one whom they have chosen and honour him with such a responsibility. Moreover, the king is not chosen by lot, because in such cases the outcome is a matter of chance not judgement. And often, by the unpredictable chance of fate, the least suitable candidate is chosen over better ones.*

*Among bees, the king has outstanding natural characteristics, standing forth by virtue of the size and appearance of his body. And, what is essential in a king - a merciful nature. For even if he has a sting, he does not use it for revenge, for there are laws of nature, unwritten but embedded in custom, that those who are endowed with the greatest power should be the more lenient in administering punishment.*

*The bees who do not comply with the laws of the king, repent and punish themselves and die by their own sting. It is custom that the Persians are said to preserve today: that those who have committed a crime pay the price by carrying out their own sentence of death.*

*Thus no peoples serve their king with the devotion shown by the bees: not the Indians, nor the Persians, who are subject to exceedingly harsh laws, nor the Sarmatians. Their devotion is such that no bees dare leave their living areas in search of food, unless the king has gone first and has claimed his place at the head of the flight.*

The exhibition continues until 18<sup>th</sup> August – and is well worth a visit.

Stephen Palmer

Is there no end to the wonders of the honey bee? Now a team of scientists from Arizona State University and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences claims that in circumstances where older bees take on responsibilities usually conducted by younger bees, they undergo chemical changes in their brains, akin to **reversing the aging process**. They found that there was drastic increase in two proteins, Prx6 and chaperone. Prx6 is a protein that is also found in humans that can help protect against dementia including diseases such as Alzheimer's.

This story was widely reported in the press, including by the International Business Times at

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/359372/20120704/older-bees-time-reverse-aging-effects-dementia.htm>

Intrepid and supremely brave **Nepalese honey gatherers** seek out the cliff-borne nests of the giant *Apis laboriosa* bee, which measures up to three centimetres in length. A single nest can contain up to 60kg (130lb) of honey.

Dressed in special ritual clothes woven from nettle fibres, the men risk their lives to gather the bees' red honey, which sells for about five times the price of regular honey.

See the amazing pictures of their extreme beekeeping at:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2151002/Just-buzz-ness-usual--Fearless-Nepalese-honey-hunters-scale-250ft-cliffs-pursuit-prize--attack-worlds-largest-bees.html>

## SCOTTISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION CENTENARY CELEBRATION CONFERENCE

Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 September 2012

The Stirling Management Centre, University of Stirling

Over the two days, there will be a series of lectures by Prof Robert Paxton, Prof Keith Delaplane, Prof Robert Pickard, and Dan Basterfield NDB.

Accompanying the lectures will be trade stands, local associations' displays, workshops, demonstrations and beekeeping exhibits. The highlight of the celebration will be a centenary dinner and ceilidh.

To download a booking form, visit

<http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/About/SBACentenary.aspx> Or, contact Peter Matthews, 4 Annanhill, Annan, Dumfriesshire DG12 6TN; Tel. 01461 205525, e-mail: [silverhive@hotmail.com](mailto:silverhive@hotmail.com)

Stephen Palmer is our Area Representative on the SBA Executive Committee. He can be contacted at [palmers@fintry.plus.com](mailto:palmers@fintry.plus.com) or on 01888 551367

To join the SBA, visit: [www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk)

## 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](mailto: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

### For Sale

- New hive, incl. 2 supers
- Overalls - ladies large
- Leather gauntlets – ladies large
- Hive tools
- Smoker
- Books

An excellent starter kit

Contact Kate Hopkins on 07772 788680 or 01330 811073 evenings

Sugar is £1.50 for 2kg at Pound Stretchers, Gt. Northern Road, Aberdeen - for those folk who still like to feed sugar!

### For Sale

Nucleus colonies and nuc boxes

Contact David Lunney on 01467 643 593

### For sale

I shall shortly have a small number of nucs for sale, all raised this year in Forres and mostly with 1-year-old queens. They are all currently on 6-7 frames. With continued feeding and support they should grow into full-sized colonies capable of overwintering, or possibly even provide a small surplus by the end of this summer. These are all raised from bees that have survived continuously on this Forres site for almost thirty years with no known or deliberate introduction of any other or alien strain of bees.

Varroa is present in Forres. The bees should therefore be taken only to an area in which varroa is already known to be present.

Preference will be given to SBA and Local Association members. Please contact me in the first instance by email if you are seriously interested.

Alasdair Joyce

[aldasair@manachie.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:aldasair@manachie.eclipse.co.uk)

01309 671288

## ADBKA 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.

We also have 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.*

## According to.....

.....CP Dadant in his 1918 book *First Lessons in Beekeeping*, "The experiments of Poloppe Freres, of Champosoult, France, have proven that in drawing out the foundation into comb the bees manipulate the wax in the same way that the potter handles clay to make a vase, by "repoussage", which forces the wax towards the outer edge of the cell in a circular way. This is another evidence of the bees' intelligence, for the cells are thereby made much stronger than if the drawing of the wax had been made towards the outer edge without any circular manipulation. In the same manner, if the potter had made his vase by pushing the clay out ward without the circular rotation, the vase would break much more readily."

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: [grahamtorry002@btinternet.com](mailto:grahamtorry002@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 if I can help.

Graham Torrie