

Newsletter

November 2012

# Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

See p.2 for a roll call of trophy and award winners from our fantastic **2012 HONEY SHOW**. All category winners are listed in an enclosure with this month's newsletter.

Established 1910  
Scottish Charity Number SCO31754

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**More on the neonicotinoid pesticides debate:**

Earlier this year, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) undertook a review of the available evidence on the impact of the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on honey bees. They concluded that "the recent studies do not justify changing existing regulation. However, the research that we have put in hand and the on-going work in Europe to develop the risk assessment could change the picture and it is always possible that further new evidence may emerge. As our knowledge develops, we will continue to consider the need for further research and for any changes to the regulation of neonicotinoids." See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/chemicals/pesticides/insecticides-bees/>

Now the UK Government's Environmental Audit Committee is conducting an enquiry into Defra's

**DON'T MISS OUR FINAL  
MEMBERS' EVENT OF THE  
YEAR**

We will be holding a social evening and 'American Supper' at the Kinellar Hall in Blackburn on Saturday 24 November (see p2).

The idea is that those attending will bring along something to eat and/or drink and this will be laid out on a buffet table for everyone to share.

The evening will include a short talk by former ADBKA Chair, Jock McGregor, on his beekeeping year. We hope that other members will also contribute their own experience of what, for most it seems, was a particularly challenging season.

Let's try and cheer each other up.

position. The committee will "examine the basis on which Defra decided not to take action at this stage and whether such a course of action is justified by the available evidence."

Although written submissions to the enquiry were requested to be in 'ideally' by 2 November, later submissions may be accepted.

See: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/news/new-inquiry-insects-and-insecticides/>

**And honey, I miss you.....**

The British Beekeepers' Association has issued a press release highlighting the results of their 2012 Honey Survey. It makes depressing reading. Alternatively, it might cheer you up knowing that you are not alone! The key points are:

- Average annual honey crop per hive down by 72 per cent compared to 2011
- Just eight pounds of honey produced per hive, compared to annual average of 30 pounds
- Unprecedented mid-summer starvation warning issued by the BBKA to keep honey bees alive
- Rain and cold weather cited by 88 per cent of beekeepers as main factors affecting poor honey supplies
- Poor summer may have longer term detrimental impact with new queens unable to produce sufficient brood to see colonies through to next year

You can read the whole report at:

[http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/pressreleases/bbka\\_honey\\_survey\\_2012\\_national\\_press\\_release\\_13515903\\_19.pdf](http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/pressreleases/bbka_honey_survey_2012_national_press_release_13515903_19.pdf)

Members' Events

**SOCIAL EVENING**

&

**'AMERICAN SUPPER'\***

Saturday 24 November at 7.00pm

Including talk:

**MY BEEKEEPING YEAR**

The Kinellar Community Hall

Fintray Road

Blackburn AB21 0SS

*\*members are invited to bring along something to eat and/or drink as a contribution to a shared buffet - please note that alcoholic drinks are not permitted in the venue*

Researchers in the US are working to identify the genes associated with "Varroa sensitive hygiene behaviour" in honey bees. They hope in the future that selective breeding can increase this trait. The full story, as well as a link to the latest research paper, can be found at <http://www.futurity.org/top-stories/bees-fight-back-killer-mites-and-win/>

Justin Walter has pointed us to a source of several recent research articles on Bees.

They can be found at

<http://phys.org/search/?search=bees>

Last month's newsletter covered the story of the multicoloured French Honey. Not to be outdone, some bees in North Yorkshire have found a source of **After Eight fondant!** Don't you think a whole new world of opportunities is opening up here?

Read all about it at

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/foodanddrinks/9666608/Bees-make-After-Eight-honey-after-eating-mint-fondant.html>

**2012 HONEY SHOW TROPHIES AND AWARDS**

Trophy/Award	Awarded for	Winner
The Bill MacKenzie Quaich	Best exhibit of Ling Heather Honey	Jock McGregor, Blackburn
The Thorne Trophy	Most points in the show	Jock McGregor, Blackburn
The ASCD Trophy	Best exhibit in the show	Sandy Gordon, Danestone
The Cut-Comb Trophy	Best exhibit of cut comb	Jock McGregor, Blackburn
The President's Trophy	Flavour only	Jock McGregor, Blackburn
The Anne c. Beddie Trophy	Best exhibit in the wax section	Jock McGregor, Blackburn
The Henry Simpson Trophy	Best exhibit in the medium/dark honey Member's class	Sandy Gordon, Danestone
MTM Construction Shield	Best exhibit in the light honey Member's class	Sandy Gordon, Danestone
The Captain Manson Trophy	Most points in the Industrial Class	Margaret McGregor, Blackburn
S.C. Rae Memorial Trophy	Best Frame	Jock McGregor, Blackburn
Jim Tocher Trophy	Most points in the Novice class	Rosie Crighton, Blackburn
ADBKA Junior Shield	Best exhibit in Junior Class	Steven Macaulay, Sauchen.
Gift Table, (Honey to be gifted to Ythan Vale Residential Home in Ellon)	Best exhibit in the gift class	Sandy Gordon, Danestone
John D. Walker Trophy	Best exhibit in the creamed /soft set honey class	Terry Daniels, Ellon



A group of ADBKA members has been meeting regularly, under the tutelage of Hugh Donohoe, to prepare for this month's Scottish Beekeepers' Association examinations. Here they are, looking apprehensive, the night before the big day!

If this picture looks blurry to you, see John Cooper's message on the notice board.

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

Lots of coverage in the media concerning research into the **bite of the honey bee**. Greek scientists have found that a chemical released by bees' mandibles has a local anaesthetic action, sufficient to paralyse victims.

Read how the story was reported by the BBC at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-20080389>

For the scientifically minded, the research paper can be found at

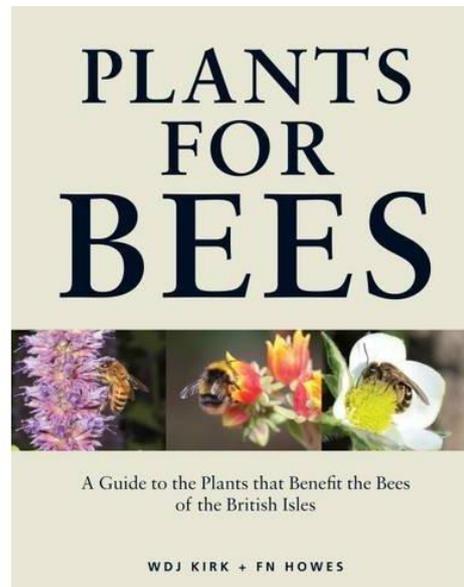
<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0047432>

In 1945 Dr F Norman Howes, a member of the scientific staff at Kew Gardens, published the book *Plants and Beekeeping*. The book has proved to be enduringly popular with many beekeepers and a second edition was published in 1979 - six years after Norman Howes' death in 1973. The book has now been modernised and expanded and has been re-published by The International Bee Research Association (IBRA) as: *Plants for Bees – A guide to the plants that benefit the bees of the British Isles*; W D J Kirk & F N Howes; pub. The International Bee Research Association 2012; ISBN 10:0-86098-271-8; 280pp; £25. The book was published with the support of funds from the Eva Crane Trust; IBRA are to be congratulated on this very considerable achievement. It is particularly pleasing to see a book that places honeybees within the wider context of all the various species of bee (at least 270 species - both solitary and social) that can be found in the British Isles.

One of the significant features of this book is the four excellent opening chapters. The husband and wife team of Dr David Aston (currently Chairman of BBKA) and Dr Sally Bucknall continue to make their contribution to botanical writing with a clear and concise description of the interaction between plants and honeybees. Dr Jane Stout, Senior Lecturer in Botany at Trinity College Dublin, contributes an important chapter on plants for bumble bees where she describes the diversity of bumblebee species and how plants affect their foraging behaviour. Christopher O'Toole's chapter on plants for solitary bees is a gem. It makes the vital point that by planting a wide variety of plants and by making nest sites available for solitary bees, great strides can be made in arresting the decline in the UK of solitary bees and hence enhancing the resource of pollinators available in the UK. Undoubtedly the star of these four opening chapters is the one written by Norman Carreck, who as well as carrying out research at the University of Sussex, is also the Science Director of the International Bee Research Association and Senior Editor of the *Journal of Apicultural Research*. This well thought-out chapter introduces the book with a powerful plea that it is vital to understand the value of bees, their decline and the value of plants to all species of bee.

The bulk of this book is the re-worked and expanded listing of plants that first appeared in Howes' original book, by Dr William Kirk, Senior Lecturer in Ecology and Entomology of Keele University. The list describes the plants that can be grown in the UK which can help bees to thrive. The listing provides detailed information about the value of plants to honeybees, short and long tongued bumblebees and also to solitary bees. These 250 pages are a master class in

## Book Review



clarity, usefulness and factual information. The quality of the illustrations and photographs are outstanding. Each plant listed follows the same format; the botanical name, followed by the flowering period, how the plant is cultivated, and which of the various categories of bees benefit from an association with the particular plant. Significant plants *i.e* Lime (*Tilia* species) are given a much more lengthy and detailed description. Those readers who have access to a microscope will find the inclusion (within the text) of photographs of the many forms of pollen grains that can be found, a particular delight. This chapter is a masterpiece in every way.

The book concludes with an alphabetical reference guide listing all the plants described in the book and their value to the different categories of bee. The best plants are indicated and the top ten plants are given special emphasis by bold print. If the book has a weakness, it is that I wish there was also a listing of the plants based on the months of the year. This would greatly help the reader to look out for a particular plant during the year and also it would assist gardeners in planning a planting scheme. The absence of this 'month by month' listing means that this book is more a reference book rather than a gardeners or beekeepers handbook. This minor blemish does not detract from the fact that this is an outstanding book in every respect.

This book is set to become, like its illustrious predecessor, a classic amongst beekeeping related literature; it is a delight to read and a pleasure to add to my bookshelf.

Dr Stephen Palmer FRGS FLS

## 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

John Cooper has a pair of reading glasses left behind at last month's Honey Show.

Contact John on 01224 637774

Several double-walled **WBC hives** available free of charge.

If interested, please contact John Cooper on 01224 637774

### About The Bee Cause

Why is Friends of the Earth campaigning on bees?

**Because we need bees**

**Because, thankfully, people are the solution**

**People means the Government.** [Ask David Cameron to adopt a National Bee Action Plan.](#) Let's ensure the way we farm our food, plan our towns and cities, and protect our wildlife, is better for bees.

**People means you.** You can [plant bee-friendly flowers](#), buy local honey or [go on a Bee Walk](#). You can help bees [at home](#), [out and about](#), or [in schools](#).

Please [join The Bee Cause](#). And help save Britain's bees.

*Thanks to Jennie Biggs for this item*



### 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.....

.....Thomas Wildman in his 1770 book *A Treatise on the Management of Bees*, "Where the winters are extremely severe, the authors of the *Maison rustique* advise, to lay on the bottom of an old cask the depth of half a foot of very dry earth, powdered, and pressed down hard, and to set on this the stool with the hive; then to preserve a communication with the air, which is absolutely necessary, to cut a hole in the cask, opposite to the mouth of the hive, and place a piece of reed, or of elder made hollow, from the mouth of the hive to the hole in the cask; and after this to cover the hive with more of the same dry earth. If there be any room to fear that the bees will not have a sufficiency of food, a plate with honey, covered as before directed, may be put under the hive."

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 if I can help.

Graham Torrie