

Newsletter

September 2011

Welcome to a new beekeeping year!

Aberdeen and District Beekeepers' Association

Enclosed with this month's newsletter you'll find details of the **ADBA Honey Show**
Don't miss it!

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AFB outbreak in Inverness-shire

An outbreak of American Foulbrood (AFB), a disease affecting colonies of honeybees, has been found in an apiary in Inverness-shire.

The disease was confirmed this week following laboratory diagnosis by Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA). This follows two previous outbreaks of AFB in the Perthshire area earlier this year.

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 in Inverness-shire and the movement of bees and related equipment into or out of the affected apiary is prohibited.

Bee farmers and beekeepers are being urged to be vigilant for signs of the disease, to maintain good husbandry practices and to notify any suspicion of disease to BeesMailbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

In order to assist Scottish Government Bee Inspectors to control this and other diseases, beekeepers are urged to register on BeeBase, the national bee database. This will give them access to up-to-date

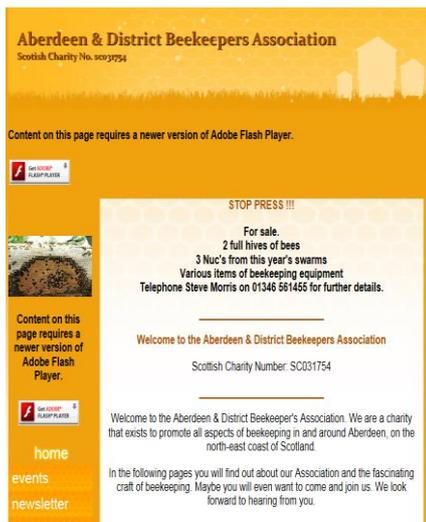
information on the control of AFB and bee related issues.

Beekeepers in the area of this outbreak who are not on BeeBase are requested to send their contact details to BeesMailbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

If you haven't yet returned your **Gift Aid** form (distributed with the July newsletter), please note that the deadline for getting this back to the Treasurer is the end of October.

Beekeeping Circles

Following a call for ideas for the future of the association, it has been suggested that some members may wish to form local groups that can provide mutual help, support and advice. Although these would be under the umbrella of the association, it is anticipated that they would operate on an informal basis. It is hoped to establish local co-ordinators who would be willing to compile a list of names and contact numbers of other beekeepers in their area, then to take things forward as the members of the Circle deem fit. The ADBA is unable to release personal information about its members, but those wishing to be involved can contact the co-ordinators directly and establish local networks in that way.
See page 3



New ADBA Website launched

The association is very proud to launch its new website, which will not only serve its members but will provide a window through which the public can view our activities and interests.

Visit the new website at:
www.aberdeenbeekeepers.com



New!!
 For information about honey bees, bumble bees, wasps and other related wee beasties please visit our new [Bee Information page](#).

New!!
 Newsletter and membership application form in PDF format.

>Do you think you have a swarm? click [here](#) for an easy to use identification guide

>Are you interested in becoming a member? click [here](#)

>Find out about up and coming events [here](#)

SBA Convention Report

The Scottish Beekeepers' Association's autumn convention took place on 10 September in Perth with an attendance of around 100 beekeepers, including a handful of intrepid members of the ADBA who had ventured south in some pretty grim weather. The journey was well worth it however, with the opportunity hear three excellent speakers and to peruse the offerings of the various trade stands.

The first talk of the day saw Dr Giles Budge, the Research Co-ordinator of the National Bee Unit, update the audience on recent advances in the understanding of foulbrood. Scientists like Dr Budge have been able to make significant advances through the opportunities provided by modern genetics and the mapping of the genome of the honey bee, which has been available since 2006, as well as those of its archenemies, AFB and EFB.

Next up was Terry Clare, the President of BIBBA. Terry's talk covered the long and fascinating history of beekeeping, with a focus on his special concern for the conservation, restoration, study, selection and improvement of the native and near-native honey bees of Britain and Ireland. Looking to the future, he took particular encouragement from the increasingly diverse range of people taking up the craft of beekeeping.

After a satisfying lunch, Giles Budge was back to talk about the 'Random Apiary Survey'

conducted in England and Wales by researchers at the National Bee Unit. Unquestionably the most comprehensive study of its type ever undertaken in the UK, it took samples of bees from 4,600 randomly selected apiaries and subjected them to no fewer than 28 tests for pests and diseases. The outcomes of the research will direct the government's inspection strategy in the years ahead.

Last, but by no means least, was Willie Robson, who looks after 1800 colonies at the Chain Bridge Honey Farm near Berwick upon Tweed. In marked contrast to the white-coated science and banks of statistical tests we had heard about earlier, here was someone with an astonishingly rich, deep, intuitive understanding of honey bees, gained from his experience of working with them for nearly 50 years. Willie's energy, passion and natural humour were more than sufficient to set this beekeeper up for the long homeward drive north on the A93. *GT*

Links:

Chain Bridge Honey Farm
www.chainbridgehoney.co.uk

BIBBA
www.bibba.com

The Random Apiary Survey
<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pag eid=203>



Following a comment in last month's newsletter, we got a mixed picture of the flowering or otherwise of the lime trees here in the north east. Members' experience this year has ranged from a definite "no" to this report from EC: "I noticed lime flowers in Old Aberdeen on 1st August; they were nearly over by then, but even a single floret had a strong honey scent to it. Later that day I spoke to a friend who'd been in Fyvie about 2 weeks earlier, and had noticed that the lime trees there were "dripping" with bees & wasps; from what he said I think it was the sound of them all that caught his attention. I'm now seeing a lot of seeds on the trees here in Powis."

Last month, **A Member Asked** about the use of sugar dusting as a method of Varroa control. SW provides a very useful response: "The most comprehensive advice on the subject is the 44 page leaflet, 'Managing Varroa', published by fera. It's available on-line at <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=93>, and a hard copy can be ordered by e-mailing nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to National Bee Unit, The Food and Environment Research Agency, Sand Hutton, York, UK, YO41 1LZ. Significantly, the leaflet does not mention sugar dusting. Nevertheless, this strategy is dealt with in many bee books, is promoted on beekeeping-related web sites, and equipment for dusting with sugar is

available from the main beekeeping suppliers. The best advice I've found is at ScientificBeekeeping.com, at <http://scientificbeekeeping.com/powdered-sugar-dusting%E2%80%94and-safe-but-does-it-really-work-part-1/> (It has the look of being authoritative, but bear in mind that you can never be sure with things you find on the web.) Personally, I use sugar dusting at this time of year, in addition to whatever primary treatment for Varroa I'm using. Like the person who raised this question, I grind down ordinary white sugar in a food processor. I'm really not sure if there's such a thing as icing sugar without anti-caking agent."

Andy Wattam, Head of Bee Health at the Food and Environment Research Agency recently sounded a cautionary

note on sugar dusting: "I am seeing in lots of cases of people using icing sugar as a 'Varroa Treatment'. It should be borne in mind that icing sugar is to be seen as a complimentary technique to other forms of Integrated Pest Management. As a standalone it rarely has sufficient knock-down to achieve the full controls on its own unless it is done regularly, skilfully and with the correct Open Mesh Floor in place, ie: with sufficient drop beneath to ensure that the mites cannot return to the hive, and sufficient cover onto the bees – the value of just sprinkling icing sugar onto top bars is very questionable, although in some cases it has helped to keep the bees alive – by giving them something to eat!"

If you have a question for our members that you wish to be printed in the October newsletter, please e-mail it to grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com or call Graham Torrie on 01339882038

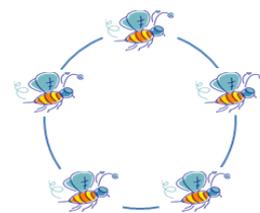
Aaaaarrgghh!



This photograph was taken in Westhill at the beginning of August by a friend of ADAB member, Ken Gow.

Dr Alan Bowman of Aberdeen University explains: *The bumble bee is infested with a species of mites - this is very common, especially amongst queens. These mites do not feed off the bee, but just use her for transport between nests where they feed on wax and debris. Some researchers even suggest that such mites play a beneficial role in nest hygiene, while others say such large infestations much affect flight and therefore the mites are harmful. Sounds like more research needed...!! The mites are reported to be species/genera specific and so don't pose a danger to honey bees.*

Beekeeping Circles



If you would like to join an informal group of beekeepers providing mutual help, support and advice in your local area, contact -

Helen Anderson, based in **Inverurie**, on 01467 620750, e-mail: sh.and@gmx.com

Graham Torrie, based in **Torphins**, on 013398 82038, e-mail: grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com

If you wish to volunteer to co-ordinate a beekeeping circle in your own area, please contact Graham Torrie.

Foraging around in the media

The BBC was among many news outlets to cover the story of the latest outbreak of **American Foulbrood Disease** – as reported on page 1 of this newsletter. See how the public are being informed about the situation by going to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-14805281>

EU bans GM-contaminated honey from general sale

The Guardian reports that Bavarian beekeepers have been forced to declare their honey as genetically modified because of contamination from nearby Monsanto crops. The European Union's highest court has ruled that honey which contains trace amounts of pollen from genetically modified corn must be labelled as GM produce and undergo full safety authorisation before it can be sold as food.

According to Brussels, it is likely that the decision will have an impact on the honey into the EU as Europe does not itself produce sufficient quantities for the size of the market. The bloc produces 200,000 tonnes per year and must import an additional 140,000 tonnes.

Read the full story at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/sep/07/europe-honey-gm>

The Queen Beekeeper

Read about the royal preference for Italian honey bees in the apiary at Buckingham Palace.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2028696/A-unique-insight-Her-Majestys-favourite-honey--backyard.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

Great Yellow

Bumblebees have, for the first time, been filmed mating. The footage was shot at a wild flower meadow created at Dounreay in Caithness as habitat for the great yellow - among Britain's rarest bumblebees. The story was reported by the BBC at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-14635800>



Along with this edition of the newsletter you will find a copy of the **SBA Honey Survey**. Members are encouraged to take part.

For Sale



Sandy Watson has bees for sale. Contact Sandy on 01224 868370

Beekeeping Equipment and Supplies for Sale:

- 6 boxes honey jars (72 in box) plus lids (boxes unopened)
- Honey Press with stainless steel tray
- 20 frame honey extractor
- Honey Strainer
- 12 Shallow frame boxes (wax included) 16.5 x 18.5 inches
- 4 plastic Feeders
- Muslin cloths (new)
- Wired Shallow Frame Wax (new) 3 packets
- 4 Smokers
- 6 Rusks

Please contact Mrs Anna MacPhee (01340 831676)

At the heather



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

**Willow has gained the distinction of being awarded both the Scottish Apiarian Certificate and the Scottish Expert Beemaster Certificate.*

ADBA committee member, Stephen Palmer, installing his charges at the Forrest of Birse in the hope of reaping a good crop of heather honey. It would be great to hear from members how this year's heather honey harvest has been.

Please forward any reports, good or bad, to grahamtorrie002@btinternet.com



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

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

Ragman's Lane Farm, Ruardean, Forest of Dean – 1 & 2 October 2011

Our next **Sustainable Beekeeping Course** will be held at the beginning of October and places are still available.

The course will include sessions on bee health, natural ways to keep bees, building a low-cost hive, a global overview of beekeeping, and the life of a colony.

Ragman's Lane Farm is a fabulous setting, and we have received extremely positive feedback from previous course attendees.

The course costs £170 that includes all tuition and course materials, meals, refreshments and bunkhouse accommodation (if required).
VAT is included.

Further information, including booking form:

<http://www.beesfordevelopment.org/what-we-do/education/uk-training/weekend-course>

NATURAL BEE-KEEPING WEEKEND WORKSHOP

"Bee-keeping with a difference"
Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th 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.

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

Telephone: 07717 34658

If you are interested in taking up this offer, please contact the association secretary, Rosie Crighton (see front panel for contact details)

Dear Secretary

We have sent this fairly widely to Secretaries and I apologise if this is seen to be too much of an advert - but some of your members may well have an interest in the new digital edition of The Quarterly - details below. For those who are interested you can see a limited page sample of the current magazine at <http://beekeepers.peacockmagazines.com>
The BKQ Quality Quarterly Scheme 2012

There will be a small price rise for membership of this scheme to £18 per year. While the normal subscription to The Beekeepers Quarterly will be £28, subscribers who enter via their Association will receive the magazine directly to their postal address at only £18 - a saving of £10.

To set up a Quality Quarterly Scheme the Association needs to set up a group of subscribers which should be at least 6 and hopefully 10 and collect subscriptions. The Secretary then informs us of these names. Those already in subscription will receive a refund on their unused existing full price sub and will in future receive the magazine, direct to their door as before.

The Association will receive a bill and we ask that they pay with one cheque rather than a series of individual cheques. During the year the Association may add further subscribers, at a pro-rata rate but we suggest that all subscriptions end at the same issue.

There is also the opportunity to subscribe to a digital edition through the Quality Quarterly Scheme for those who would prefer this to the printed version. A sample of the magazine may be viewed at <http://beekeepers.peacockmagazines.com>. Subscriptions to this version of the BKQ are £10 rather than the normal £15. To subscribe Associations will need to provide an email address in order that a voucher code may be sent to the subscriber.

We can supply on request sample back copies for your members to see together with subscription forms that can be given out at your next meeting. Subscriptions can be started at any time in the year.

Our apologies if you already run a scheme for your members but if you do please remember that you can join further members to the scheme throughout the year

Jeremy & Ruth Burbidge
Northern Bee Books

Aberdeen Bee Supplies

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

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

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