



**AUGUST  
2019**

# **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*

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**FUTURE ARTICLES**

Beginners. Briefly

(Ian Mackley)

Book Review

(Ian Mackley)

Visit to Zoology

Museum & Garden

(Malcolm Watson &  
Jamie Evans)

## **2019 MEMBER SURVEY**

All Members that receive the Newsletter electronically should have received a questionnaire from Ian in the past two weeks. This is the first time we have asked the membership about its beekeeping practices and interests in this way and we hope the survey results will help us develop the Association's activities in future. Some of the results will be published in future Newsletters. If you have not completed the questionnaire, but still wish to do so, please do so before the midnight the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August. You can access the questionnaire from the original email you received or via the following link: <https://forms.gle/N3Y5NS5SUiXE8oeGA>

*Malcolm Watson, Chair*

## **ADVANCED MANIPULATION COURSE**

Over weekend 20-21 July I attended the 'Healthy BEES (Bee Education in Scotland)' 'Advanced Manipulation' weekend course at the Moray Beekeepers' apiary near Elgin.

Fortunately the weather held for the weekend which was a real bonus as the course entailed a reasonable amount of "hands on" work with the colonies at the apiary. I had attended earlier courses associated with the Healthy BEES program and as such there was some general revision – however repetition is always good and there is still plenty of notes that can be taken to remind one of the basics needed primarily in ensuring that swarms are kept under control or prevented if at all possible.

The course consisted of sessions associated with Nucleus making for a variety of reasons and Uniting Colonies as well as sessions on Swarm Control. There was an excellent practical session on Queen Introduction and Handling and the participants will now hopefully be well used to picking up queens and workers particularly for caging and marking as necessary.

We can all get a little bogged down with what we should and what we should not be doing when we either want to prevent a swarm occurring or for taking action once we have identified that the bees have already gone down the route of making the decision to actually swarm. The course provided a good simple method of swarm control using the nucleus method which is relatively easy to carry out with the only additional item of equipment that you need to have being a spare nuc box.

Some useful tips for onward passing when it comes to dealing with swarms:

- always have some spare equipment – a nuc box is a great item to have in your apiary for use when needed

- learn swarming theory – understand and try and read what is happening in the hive and that will help you decide on the course of action you need to take

- learn and be confident when it comes to shaking bees off frames

- keep good records so that you know which colony is more likely to swarm than others

- rear some queens from your colonies – if you don't want or need them some of your other beekeeping friends just may appreciate a new queen.

The Healthy Bees Courses have one more year of funding left so if you are interested in a good weekend with lots of handy hints and tips and practical experience you should try and go along – they are limited to 12 places and cost £60 – good value for money if you want to learn and understand more about beekeeping. The courses will be advertised on the Moray Beekeeping Website.

*Joan Gilbert-Stevens*

## DISEASE INSPECTION DEMONSTRATION – CRATHES 27<sup>TH</sup> JULY

At the end of July the association benefited from an excellent demonstration by Kirsty Sutherland at the Crathes apiary. In hot sunshine one member sported one of the new “ventilated” bee suits, while others were forced to retreat into the shade as the meeting progressed. Kirsty herself wore a spotless light blue suit, and gave us some practical tips about apiary hygiene. This included adding a little washing soda to the washing machine when cleaning suits, and tucking the veil inside the body to protect it during the spin cycle.



Kirsty demonstrated how to inspect a colony for notifiable diseases, as well as describing other pests and diseases that may be noticed at this time of year. By handling the frames gently and by “speaking to the bees” Kirsty was able to take a detailed look at every frame with a minimum of smoke and without upsetting the bees. Kirsty found nothing of concern in this apiary, but was able to show how slightly discoloured brood cappings are sometimes an indicator of chalk brood within.

You may already be aware that Kirsty has moved on from her position at Thainstone and is no longer the government bee inspector for this area. Members requiring advice or wishing to report notifiable diseases should either contact the

Thainstone office on 0300 2446822 or email [Bees\\_Mailbox@gov.scot](mailto:Bees_Mailbox@gov.scot)

*Malcolm Watson*

## PRIME FOUR APIARY

ADBKA was approached in February by Prime Four at Kingswells with a view to setting up a small apiary within the Prime Four Business Park. Initial discussions were held between Graham Torrie, Dave Morland and Prime Four. The opportunity to run this apiary was advertised in the February newsletter and interested parties requested.

I was very interested and was delighted to get the job, further meetings were then held with Prime Four to finalize the details.



The management and tenants of Prime Four have provided a purpose build compound within the business park. This is an area with a picket fence around it, slabbed inside for placing the hives on.

Four of the tenants, CNOOC, Apache, Transocean and the Kingswellies Nursery each sponsored and bought a completely assembled National Hive. I provided the bees and look after the apiary, three hives are now colonized and all are doing well. I have had great support from Keith Symon and his team who manage and look after the Prime Four Business Park.

So far I have only had one interested person, a lady from the Prime Four community who was keen to volunteer and also learn with a view to eventually keeping bees herself. Hopefully this will increase as the apiary becomes established and we can promote beekeeping within the Prime Four community.



*Mike Legge*

## BEGINNERS, BRIEFLY...

*An occasional article aimed at helping the novice through the beekeeping year.*

### AUGUST

Let's assume July and August have had great weather and you have a crop in your supers. The season is drawing to a close – the availability of pollen and nectar is significantly reducing and the queen's lay rate is decreasing.

#### IS THE HONEY RIPE?

By ripe, we mean with a water content of less than about 18%. Any higher and the honey will likely ferment in due course. Honey that has been capped with wax is ripe, as the bees don't want it fermenting over winter either. Uncapped honey will probably also be present and may be ripe too. Test it by holding the frame horizontally over the top of the super and give it a firm shake. Any drops of nectar indicate it is not ripe enough. You can always help the bees with the ripening process by moving capped super frames to the outside and uncapped ones into the middle. The water content of honey can also be easily tested with a refractometer. The Association has one to loan, and they are relatively inexpensive to buy. Once the honey is ripe, the super can be removed and extracted.

#### HOW DO I GET THE BEES OUT OF THE SUPER?

The most popular method of clearing bees from supers is probably the Porter bee escape - white plastic 'one-way bee 'valves'' that fit into holes in the crownboard which is then temporarily positioned between the supers and the brood box, with the central hole in the escape(s) uppermost. Do not routinely 'store' Porter escapes in position in the crownboard as the bees will propolise them and if you do not clean them up, they will not work when needed. You must check and set the springs to a bee's width, or about 3mm. Too narrow and the bees can't pass; too wide and they can get back into the super. Use two Porter escapes if your board has two holes. I find 'Porter clearing' generally takes at least two days to complete. 'Rhombus' escapes which have no moving parts and cost little more than Porter escapes will clear supers in a few hours. They can be temporarily pinned underneath the central hole in a crownboard although I find them a little deeper than the board rim frame so I have dedicated rhombus clearer boards. Do not leave clearer boards on longer than necessary.

When you remove the super; (a) be prepared with a bee brush or feather to remove any stragglers, (b) handle the super with the consideration that a fine food product deserves – don't just put it open-bottomed on the ground for instance, and (c) in the apiary cover it so bees can't return to it (a couple of blank boards are handy) and remove it promptly to a warm, hygienic place where bees can't get at it, because they will very quickly find it if they can. Expect grumpy bees after you have removed supers.

Space precludes discussion of honey extraction and products of the hive. There is a whole world of knowledge and skills (and mess!) out there for you to explore.

When you have extracted the honey, you are left with 'wet' supers containing residual honey and with the surface of the comb messed up from uncapping. They can be stored like this, although I have no experience of doing so. To get 'dry' supers for winter storage, put them back on the hive above a crownboard with the holes open for a couple of days. The bees will take the residual honey downstairs, tidy up the wax, and the super can be cleared again and removed.

Now you need to be thinking about feeding and varroa treatment. More on this next month, but in the meantime, if there are little stores in the brood box, feed 2:1 syrup until stores are adequate, then start varroa treatment. Immediate feeding may be critical if an extended period of bad weather comes along, as the hive is still relatively populous and will quickly go through what little stores it has.

*Ian Mackley*

#### 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)

## BEEKEEPING TALKS

Talks on bees and beekeeping are hugely popular and throughout the year many requests are received from schools and groups all over Aberdeenshire for speakers. It has been proposed that a register is kept of members willing to occasionally give a talk in their area. The association has educational equipment, photos etc. that can be borrowed at any time. Could members please let me know if you are happy to give talks and of any public talks you have previously done.

Many thanks, **Alison Goss**

## MEMBERS EVENTS

### AUGUST

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>**

**AT MUIR OF FOWLIS  
SOCIAL EVENT and BARBEQUE**

With Joan and Karl Gilbert-Stevens

Booking required

Please note that the date changed from what is in the ADBKA leaflet

### SEPTEMBER

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>**

**AT DINNET , DEESIDE  
DEMONSTRATION:**

Heather site visit by Murray McGregor  
Meeting at 2.00pm.

Murray McGregor has kindly invited us once again to visit one of his heather sites.

Come along if you want to see Murray's strong colonies working the heather.

Drive along the A93 from Aberdeen and meet in the layby on the right hand side approx 3kms after Dinnet village. This is just after passing moorland on the right and where the trees start. There is a small track opposite not suitable for cars. The grid reference for parking is NO 432 981.

All members welcome.

### SEPTEMBER

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 p.m.**

**AT HALLMARK HOTEL, DYCE  
BEEKEEPERS' QUIZ**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>**

**AT HALLMARK HOTEL, DYCE  
SBA CONVENTION**

Booking required

The SBA Conference details are available on line at [SBAConvention.org.uk](http://SBAConvention.org.uk), there are also links on their Facebook page and ADBKA Facebook page.

## CABIN PAINTING

Many thanks to the intrepid work party who repainted the cabin on 8<sup>th</sup> August.



Naomi was assisted by John, Alison, Donald, David and Malcolm, who all mucked in and the cabin is now looking as good as new.

## WELL DONE TEAM!

### BEES FOR SALE

Colonies of bees on 11 National standard frames, Good natured strong colonies, Price £200.

Please contact

**Olga Macaulay**

on **01224 315276**

or e-mail: [astrolo@mail.ru](mailto:astrolo@mail.ru)

### FOR SALE

Stainless steel electric honey extractor, 20 frame, £500 ono. Langstroth boxes.

Available from Blackburn

Please contact **Ian Ross** on **07707 304075**.

## SKEP WORKSHOP 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

Skep-master Bryce Reynard will be visiting us again on **5<sup>th</sup> October**. Places on this all day workshop cost £20 each, which includes the use of tools and materials.

Skep workshops are always popular and are limited to 8 places, so early booking is recommended.

Here is the link for booking the skep workshop:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/skep-making-workshop-tickets-69163755655>