



NOVEMBER
2020

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

PRESIDENT:

SANDY GORDON
Tel.01224-484540

CHAIR:

MALCOLM WATSON
e-mail:
adbkachair@gmail.com
Tel.07901-515212

VICE CHAIR:

DAVID MORLAND
Tel. 07768244420
e-mail:
adbkavicechair@gmail.com

HON. SECRETARY:

ALISON GOSS
e-mail:
aberdeenbeekeepers@
gmail.com

HON. TREASURER:

JOHN ADAMS
Tel. 01224868402
e-mail:
treasureradbka@gmail.com

**MEMBERSHIP
SECRETARY:**

ERLING WATT
Tel.074294 54572
e-mail:
adbkamembership@
gmail.com

ADBKA NEWSLETTER

OLGA MACAULAY
Tel. 01224315276
e-mail:
adbkanewsletter@
gmail.com

FUTURE ARTICLES

SBA INSURANCE - IMPORTANT!

If you are an SBA member and have more than five hives, please be aware that there are imminent changes in the SBA insurance scheme that may leave you without cover unless you take action.

From 1st January 2021 the number of colonies insured as an automatic benefit of SBA membership is being reduced from TEN to FIVE.

Additional colonies can be insured at £5 per five colonies up to a maximum of 40 colonies.

The SBA have told me that 'Members will be receiving an e-mail or a letter to let them know about the changes and to ask them to contact the Membership Secretary, Mhairi Neill, by the **11th of December** with the level of cover they require. Some members may choose to include the premium for the additional cover with their Direct Debit. Some may wish to make a separate payment, by another method, to cover their needs.'

They also note that unless you renew your SBA Membership by the end of January 2021, your cover will lapse until 40 days after you actually make your renewal payment.

Here is a link to the document about the SBA Insurance Policy and Compensation Scheme:

<https://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/images/Constitution/SBA%20Insurance%20Summary.pdf>

[The ADBKA Committee is occasionally asked if ADBKA could include insurance as part of ADBKA membership. We have not specifically looked in to it, but suspect it is unlikely that we could get rates as competitive as the SBA given the specialist nature of the cover and the significantly larger number of SBA members.]

Ian Mackley

OUR BEEKEEPING YEARS - 2020, PART 2

Thank you to everyone who provided stories of their beekeeping year. Here is the second article...

LONGSIDE, ONE HIVE, FIRST YEAR

Living in a country location with an acre of garden surrounded by well-established trees, I decided to try my hand at beekeeping, hoping to increase my self-sufficiency garden of fruit and veg production. So in early 2019 I went on the Association's beekeeping course and gathered my tools and first hive together ready to get started in 2020. Everything in place, my bees were due to be delivered in April. However, Covid struck and we went into lock down; my bees were not able to be delivered until the 9th of July. However, my colony was now pretty well established since its split and was now too big for a nuc, so a full-size hive brood box was delivered.

I put on a super and my bees managed to draw out 11 super frames of comb by the end of August, which is a great head start for next season's honey. The colony seems strong to me but I have zero experience or anything else to compare it with. My hive is full of bees and my varroa count is low at 1.5 per day drop. My issue is that I have been unable to see my queen. She is an unmarked 2019 queen. I am hoping that early spring, before colony numbers increase, I will be able to find her and mark her. Today I purchased a second hive and am hoping to be able to split next year and have two colonies; fingers crossed I get my girls through winter. I was amazed by how much feeding they took; 20kg of sugar 2:1 syrup in the space of three weeks in September but I am confident they have full stores now. I am planning a mid-winter Oxuvar treatment and then fondant feed with an early spring fructose syrup feed. I hope for bumper fruit and veg crops, with honey on top in 2021.

NEAR BANCHORY, THREE YEARS' EXPERIENCE

After living alongside bees in the walls of our 200 year old house we formalised the arrangement three years ago. After attending the excellent beginners evening course I mostly learned that as an adult - apart from learning to drive - I had never embarked on something as "new" as this - and we are fairly sensible practical country people! How is it possible to know so little?

We take very different approaches - I'm the reader - my husband is the do'er. Although when it comes to actually do-ing, himself likes to stand back and tell ME what to do. I like to be prepared and scan a book as a reminder prior to taking any action. Both methods have varying degrees of success. For example - Bees will "give chase" if you rumble in amongst them like a friendly bear after a bottle of Sancerre (they don't mention THAT in any books I've read) - he didn't much appreciate being chased down the garden. I had romantic notions of handling bees bare handed, this came to pass this year as I reached up into a huge tree hanging swarm with a gloved hand - only to expose two inches of bare skin at my wrist. As I retracted my arms my sleeves slid back over the bees trapping about a dozen inside - one little sting was all that was administered but it put me to bed for the rest of the day with the shock!

Two things I am grateful to have learned this year. The first is the generosity of bee keepers in sharing information - as sometimes we beginners don't like to repeatedly ask for fear of appearing endlessly stupid. We had two experts go through our hives at the end of last year and I learned more that sunny afternoon than I had from all my reading. It was the confidence to be - as a doric beekeeper said "kirning a-min i' bees" - and to let go of the fear as they pinged up into my veil. We also have taken solace in gaffer taping down our cuffs and veil edge after the second bee made its way inside my hat.

Secondly the importance of "clearing bees" before taking off honey. OK, OK, all you seasoned 'keepers - it made perfect sense to us at the time that we take off the frames we wanted, stack them in transporting crates and leave the bees to go back to the hives themselves. Himself said of COURSE this was the correct plan of action (also because he couldn't be fuffed getting back into his bee suit later on in the day for a second time).....so we took off a HUGE crop (for us) of about 36 frames - only to discover that four hours later the clever bees had uncapped and carted most of it back into the hives! We've left them to it - as we still have plenty to deliver to the Bee Cabin for spinning and jarring and I firmly believe one should learn the hard way sometimes! And finally on that humble note HUGE kudos to Colin and Fi at the Bee Cabin in Kincardine O Neil who have faced harder times than most with good humour and the support of other local beekeepers. I'm very proud to be able to say I keep bees, maybe one day I can aspire to some proficiency!

BEEKEEPING AT THE APIARY DURING THE COVID 19 LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS

Back in the early spring when we were all supposed to be staying at home and not travelling anywhere, we beekeepers were given special dispensation to visit our bees. As the main gates to Crathes estate were locked Graham contacted the National Trust to negotiate visiting rights for us to tend to the hives. With all that agreed, we have been going back and forward over the summer to do inspections and general maintenance work.

One beautiful sunny day in early May it was my turn to do the rounds and I expected it to be a routine set of inspections. There were two nucs that needed to be promoted to a full sized hive and none of the hives had been building up fast. For those of you who are familiar with the site, I started with the hive on stand 10 and worked anticlockwise. There were no surprises, no hive was remotely near the point of making swarm preparations and I got all the way round to the hive on stand 1 which was doing well, it had brood on seven or eight frames and the red marked queen was going about her business so I closed up and went off to tidy up and then write up the records inside the cabin.

On my way out I looked back up towards the hives and noticed a cloud of bees in the air above hive one. I must say that it caused me some panic. Gradually the bees started to settle all over the legs of the hive stand and under the floor. I wasn't sure if I had done something to make the hive swarm, none of our hives were strong enough to throw a swarm and the smoker had gone out. So after a few minutes of total bewilderment, I thought that I would check to see if I could see what was going on inside hive one but it all looked as it did before and the queen with her red dot was still happily walking about on her frame.

One of the now empty nucs was put back into action, I rummaged through the store to find frames with foundation and drawn comb, returned and I brushed off as many bees as I could off the hive stand into the box - that was no easy task. Using a drawn comb proved to be a good way to transfer bees from the swarm into the nuc box. It wasn't large enough to be a prime swarm and I didn't see a queen. I was worried that the bees would just leave and fly back to regroup on the hive stand so I gave them a frame with some brood from hive one and then left the nuc box up on the empty stand at the top of the apiary with the dial on the door half closed and topped up with syrup.

I had to leave then and all week I was troubled about it. It was Graham's turn to do the apiary visit the following week and I was delighted to hear that the bees were still in the nuc and he reported that he saw a queen. It was a strange event and we did get a new colony from it. I think that it must have just been a visiting swarm and ultimately, we benefited from it but it did cause me a few sweaty moments. Bees are always able to spring a surprise.

Naomi Adams

ASSOCIATION MEETING GOES ONLINE

For obvious reasons many people have found themselves participating in online meetings this year, and this includes beekeepers. Having experimented with committee meetings and our "Introduction to Beekeeping" course, we are now ready to deliver an Association meeting in this way. It does mean that you need a computer, smartphone, or tablet to take part ; but if you have one of these why not give it a try ? If you are unsure of how zoom works a young family member may be able to help !

The meeting will take place from 7:00 till 8:30 on Friday 11th December. Gavin Ramsay of the Scottish Native Honeybee Society will speak to us about the native dark bee, the challenges it faces, and his society's conservation work. There will also be a report from apiary manager Graham Torrie on looking after the Crathes bees during lockdown, and secretary Alison Goss will share some information about the Association's plans for 2021.

After the unavoidable gap in Association meetings I hope that many members will be able to attend. For technical reasons there is a limit on numbers, so book early to avoid disappointment. Registered attendees will be emailed Zoom connection information a few days before the event. See you there.

To register for the meeting please use the following link:

<https://adbka11dec.eventbrite.co.uk>

Malcolm Watson



NEWSLETTER UPDATE

ADBKA has been issuing its monthly newsletter for many years. The Newsletter is considered the integral part of the Association and we believe it is important to go on issuing it in order to keep the members well informed and updated. In the modern world of technology and online dependency we can find all possible information on youtube. But it is still curious and interesting to find out what are the news inside our Association and to share adverts with other members.

We are pleased to find out that according to the 2019 survey members have outlined the importance of the ADBKA Newsletter. Preparing the monthly issues is a challenging and interesting process. It wouldn't be possible without the great support of the committee and other members of the ADBKA. Big thanks to everyone who has shared their experience and provided the articles for it.

As I have been arranging and issuing the ADBKA Newsletter for 4 years already, it looks like the time has come for me to step away from this role and to give way for somebody with fresh ideas and enthusiasm to take on this part of the work. Our Association fully depends on the work and support of the volunteers. It won't be possible to run all the activities without members' support.

Thus we are looking for somebody willing to take on the role of the Newsletter editor. The process of arranging it is not as complicated as you might think. The main thing is you should have basic knowledge of Microsoft Word. I'll provide training and help you understand what needs to be done. So, if you willing to help the Association, please contact Olga Macaulay or David Morland.

REMEMBER – OUR ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Olga Macaulay

STOCK SUPPLY UPDATE

For many years the Association has purchased items such as syrup, fondant and jars enabling members to enjoy the benefits of bulk pricing.

However in recent years fewer members have been using this service. It has become apparent that many members are now sourcing their requirements directly from the suppliers or are visiting local stockists such as The Bee Cabin. Internet access is now almost universal, and online shopping has become a routine part of people's lives, especially in the current climate. This is understandable, as it is now possible for individuals to buy items online for similar prices to those that can be obtained by the Association, and with the added benefit of home delivery.

The Association has now decided to cease bulk purchasing of supplies. This is after careful consideration by the committee, and is because :

- i. The current coordinator wishes to step down and no one has responded to our advertisement offering to take over the running of the scheme.**
- ii. It seems unreasonable for an individual to devote a large amount of storage space and time to providing a service that few people use.**
- iii. As mentioned above, members are now able to obtain most items at competitive prices either from local outlets or online.**

We have previously provided information on various suppliers and are happy to continue to do this if required.

We understand that getting the best prices for supplies is important, and we would suggest that when members use online suppliers they may consider making a purchase for a few local members in order to increase the quantity that they could order - the open Facebook Group could be used to promote this if felt beneficial by members. We also confirm that The Bee Cabin on Deeside provides a local service and Jock McGregor in Kinellar continues to be the local Thorne representative.

Joan Gilbert Stevens