

THE BUZZ

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INVERNESS-SHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION



Fun was had by all at the Annual Beekeeping Dinner this year.

Inside This Issue:

President's Rant _____	2
American Foul Brood. An unwanted experience. _____	3
Buzz Bee Dinner _____	6
The Beekeepers Assistant _____	8
The Duke of Edinburgh Award _____	9
What to do in... _____	10
Notice Board _____	11
The Back Page _____	14

President's Rant

David Brown

WELCOME! WELCOME! WELCOME!!

To all of you – our readers and members – but mainly to JED the new editor of the BUZZ!

Being younger and (obviously) being more observant and astute than many of you, he jumped at the opportunity of being editor of our newsletter and joining the management committee. As I have observed on many an occasion before – that is where the fun is!

So – an appeal – please help and support your new editor. Give him stuff to publish (he is, after all, an editor, not a journalist) and encourage him in every way you can. Your committee have all promised to provide copy for Jed – so please think what you could do. It could be a personal experience or something you don't think will be of wider interest. Don't worry – the editorial team is very skilled and can turn ~~the dullest effort~~, anything into an interesting article.

Hopefully, a picture of Jed appears elsewhere in this Buzz, so some of you may notice that he is younger than many of us. This means that the tone and flavour of our newsletter will change – Great! Do you want change? – Well you have got it now!

Now....to other and more serious matters...

Your committee has been concerned at the relatively poor turnout at our events recently – speakers' evenings, annual dinner etc – and would like to know what to do to improve matters. Don't be shy – if you have a view, please share it with a committee member; they just want to know and won't argue with you!

The speakers for this year's programme have included some of the best speakers in Scotland; even so, the attendance at the first meeting was embarrassingly low for me (who had invited the speaker) and for the rest of your committee. Why is this? It is not easy to organise a speakers' programme of this quality and if you would rather we didn't bother, let us know and save us all a lot of work!

Nevertheless, we have taken steps to address this.

- A Facebook page has been set up which we hope all members will access. Tuition can be provided!
- Membership cards will be reintroduced which lists the timetable. This was not possible whilst things were so fluid at Balloch.
- We appeal again for a webmaster. Our web presence has lapsed. This is a tragedy. Surely we can find one volunteer from our 110+ membership who is willing to put in the small amount of effort to provide this service!

Well, goodness! – that's better! - nothing makes me feel better than a good rant!

Hope to see you ALL at future meetings!

President David

American Foul Brood. An unwanted experience.

Ken Morley

Bee diseases are a topical subject for discussion at beekeeper's meetings and the overall effect can be discouraging, even disheartening. Anecdotes are recounted along with reminiscences that these problems were not so prevalent in the 'good old days'. Big honey yields per hive were the norm and no-one had to consider Varroa etc.

But the reality is that beekeeping in today's world is an increasingly popular and positive hobby for many folk from all walks in life; diseases do occur. Furthermore, bees are seen as being integral to the very survival of the human species so avoidance or management of disease is essential.

I offer my experience of an episode of American Foul Brood (AFB) and hope it will not result in negative reading!

I have kept bees for several years – initially as a young boy alongside my father, and then latterly, when the opportunity arose, towards retirement. I find it an interesting hobby and very much enjoy the contacts and association with other beekeepers. I am not an 'expert' and perhaps veer towards the 'letting the bees do their own thing' that they have been adept at for thousands of years. I have never had commercial interests and give away most of my honey which is usually gratefully received.

My three hives were doing well near Scaniport during the second half of the summer of 2016. Strong colonies with lots of rather feisty bees and after poor-weather in May - when they consumed most of the honey collected thus far, were beginning to consolidate a promising harvest for late August.

Lesson 1 - Regular hive inspections. I was distracted that summer by a significant other circumstance and was not around enough to go through the routine hive inspections as often as I would like. The bees were also rather tiresome in that they became angry when I disturbed the brood box. I was aware that people regularly walked along the adjacent access road including a schoolboy at circa 1600hr daily, so was concerned that 'stirring the bees up' might put passers-by at risk.

Swarming time was past and I was content with regularly noting the high level of activity around the hives and seeing that there was enough space for accumulating honey in the supers, which were well populated by masses of bees.

One August afternoon, I noticed that there seemed to be fewer bees around the hive that previously was the 'strongest' one. The honey super also was less busy. I went deeper and to my instant concern, in the brood box, saw a textbook picture of comb infected with American Foul Brood. I knew within seconds what was happening – from well learned photographs.

I had a relatively brief look through the other hives without seeing anything similar.

Lesson 2 - There is a wealth of local knowledge and experience. My next port of call was to contact one of our so-knowledgeable, so-helpful local bee gurus - Fred M. As always, he listened carefully then promptly agreed to 'come and have a look'. After inspection of the presenting hive, we agreed that the portents were ominous.

Lesson 3 - Report early. A few phone calls later (the system moves quickly), it was agreed that Gordon Mackay our local bee inspector and the principal National Inspector, Steve Sunderland, who was in the area, would come out the following day to inspect.

The visit was conducted with great courtesy and care. I felt supported and was even thanked that I had brought the matter to their attention rather than hiding it.

Inevitably the samples were positive – within 48hr as I recall, but we all agreed, on inspection, that AFB was the diagnosis and destruction of the bees was the necessary intervention. I was told that the hives themselves were in good condition and if adequately flamed with a blow torch would be re-useable. Two of the colonies were visually cleared of infection at that stage and no samples taken.

Lesson 4 - Restriction order. A mandatory, immediate full restriction order was put on moving anything that might transfer the infection contagiously from the apiary. Inevitably there are lots of things to think through about equipment that has been used during the season. I will not elaborate on all the practical aspects but they are a mix of legal requirements and common sense hygiene precautions. No honey extraction is allowed. There are several official notifications that one would rather not receive!

Lesson 5 - Unpleasant experience. The finding of AFB is a bit of a shock but to hear the reaction of a colony of bees when a cup full of petrol is poured into the hive late one summer's evening is not a pleasant sound. You might want a friend to be present.

The following day, I had to light a brisk fire very nearby and burn the contents of the hive. Not only did this include thousands of dead bees but also a significant amount of honey.

At the six-week check by our local bee inspector, one of the remaining hives showed three single brood cells (only) that might be AFB infected. The lab result was again positive with a sad result that this hive also had to be destroyed. It was a fully functional, very strong colony so the destruction process was even more unpleasant and difficult. There was a large amount of honey in two supers that had to be destroyed. On a cold rainy autumn evening I did the needful.

Lesson 6 - It is difficult to incinerate a lot of honey-loaded frames. The fire needs to be substantial and very hot!

And now....

So what has happened a year on? I decided not to re-establish an apiary on the same site for fear of re-infection. The third hive (on the original site) has proved disease free on formal inspection twice and all restriction been lifted. It has been a source of some honey this year.

Fortunately, I was able to set up a new hive about a mile away. This thrived and I divided the colony mid-season. They both produced a modest crop and went into the winter apparently well.

Retrospectively.....

Where did this all come from? A local beekeeper had AFB several years ago and again in 2016. I suspect that my strong hives raided his and transferred the infection back. AFB bacteria are identified by DNA markers and so outbreaks can be easily linked

Lesson 7 - Look at the national map of AFB infections. Be aware of local risks – even historical ones. There may be nearby feral colonies from previous infections and this was also my concern in not re-establishing the new colony on the same site.

Overall lesson. In modern beekeeping communities, the importance of regular monitoring for and early reporting, even suspicion of notifiable disease is essential. Then radical intervention if necessary must be a priority. Also remember the ongoing need for hive inspections, good hygiene and scrupulous cleanliness techniques with handling bees + equipment.

Finally, the local and National Bee Inspectors are very pleasant, friendly people and keen to help with any concerns about infection. Don't be worried before approaching them. There is also a wealth of knowledge amongst local beekeepers that are characteristically very generous with their experience and time.

Kdm Dec 2017

PS I sincerely hope that I do not need to go through this experience again for at least a long time!

Buzz Bee Dinner

Bryce Reynard

On a very wintry December night twenty two members attended the Inverness-shire Beekeepers' Association Dinner and prize giving at the Craigmonie Hotel in Inverness. We were only one short of last year's numbers.



The hotel did us proud with quality, quantity and choices for the meal, complete with crackers and mince pies. Each table had a night light burning in an apple. Two side tables held the trophies and the raffle prizes. Fortunately we had a room to ourselves for the daft games later. Irene Brown was our guest for the evening as she is our exam invigilator every year and her husband John's father Peter Brown has a trophy in his memory.



After the meal the president, David Brown, presented the Honey Show trophies. Moira Carstairs and Annelise McDougall won the Peterkin Cup for best honey exhibit in show. Charlie and Sheila Moir got the Newcomers Shield. Fred and Jean Millwood won the Hugh Chisholm Cup for best exhibit in gift section and The MacKenzie Cup for the best sections (not ling). Irene Brown won the Silver Spoon for the best date and honey loaf. Bryce and Elizabeth Reynard got the Peter Brown Shield for best heather sections and cut comb, The McIntosh Gregor Cup for most points in heather classes and the Margaret Logan Trophy for best display of hive products.

Fred Millwood presided over the ever popular raffle with some prizes donated by Black Isle Brewery and Beecraft magazine.

Jean Millwood recited a poem, "The Beekeeper's Assistant" especially written for the night by her brother-in-law, Eddie (See next section for poem). It went down very well amongst the audience.



Sheila Moir, as a Beaver Leader, was well suited to help Bryce involve all the party in singing and acting, “Head and thorax, wings and toes” to the tune of, “Head and shoulders, knees and toes”. Later everyone had to do the Beekeepers’ Hokey Cokey.

The members also had to use their skill and judgement to guess/estimate the weight of the large Honey Bear. David Brown (as a retired accountant!) won. The best suggestion for recycling an Ambrosia container came from Sheila Moir who thought it would be suitable for

Charlie when needed during the night! Fred thought it could be filled with BP.

Sue Mullins had to find a hidden toy bee by Margaret Lashley in the room while guided by buzzing from the members as she looked for it. Loud buzzing if she was heading in the right direction and quieter buzzing if heading away.

A final, Wings Flapping (don’t ask!) competition got everyone needing to rest, blether and circulate for the rest of the evening.

It is always the sign of a good party when nobody wanted to go home.

Bryce Reynard

The Beekeepers Assistant

Eddie Piper

My husbands a beekeeper
And I'm his willing crew
When he needs a helping hand
He tells me what to do
But first I have to learn some things
About bee suits, hives and queens
What they are and what they do
And keeping everything clean
At first it didn't seem too hard
So I took the job to task
When he mentioned drones and workers
Some questions I did ask
So gradually my knowledge grew
I learnt a lot through time
But one thing always bothered me
All the dirty jobs were mine
Still as a team we carried on
Selling all our honey
But it seems as he is the beekeeper
He keeps all the money
Now I don't think it is fair at all
But I'll take it on the chin
Even though after all
I know as much as him
And the moral of this story
I feel I have to say
Is behind all successful beekeepers
There is one hellava good B A.



Eddie Piper, Wellbank, Dundee. 2017.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award

Bryce Reynard

Over the past few years the IBA has been involved with Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) candidates from Culloden Academy and Millburn Academy doing Beekeeping as their Skills section. Our own Jed Russell, when at Culloden Academy, was one of the first two boys and went on to do his Basic Beekeeper Certificate with the Scottish Beekeepers' Association and is now working his way through the written modules. Carol Muirhead, the DofE co-ordinator from Culloden Academy, has been very supportive and encouraging.

Fred Millwood, Elizabeth and Bryce Reynard delivered the training using a mix of practical and theory. The IBA apiary was used for colony inspections. Practical experience included using protective clothing, hive tools, lighting and using smokers and making up brood and super frames. All attended at least a one day training course and association evening lectures as well as several visits to the apiary. Loan of books from our bee library was encouraged. We also included a honey tasting session.

Before signing the youngsters off, they were subjected to a short written and oral test.

In 2017 we had three boys from Culloden Academy and a girl from Millburn Academy. You might have seen the girl, Shona Beveridge, on TV taking part in the Children in Need Rickshaw Challenge.

It has been a learning experience for all those taking part, candidates and tutors alike and is a serious commitment.

Bryce Reynard

What to do in...

December:

- Treat hives for *Varroa* using oxalic acid – disturbance to the hive should be kept to a minimum so the cluster is not broken.
- Stores should be checked by hefting or by quick visual checks under the crown board every two or three weeks.
- If stores are low colonies can be fed using fondant.

January:

- Stores should be checked by hefting or by quick visual checks under the crown board every two or three weeks.
- If stores are low colonies can be fed using fondant.
- Again disturbance to the hive should be kept to a minimum so the cluster is not broken

February:

- Brood-rearing will begin again this month.
- Colony stores should be checked by hefting or by quick visual checks under the crown board every two or three weeks.
- Again disturbance to the hive should be kept to a minimum so the cluster is not broken
- February is also a good month to check the natural *Varroa* mite drop in case some spring treatment is required.

March:

- Colony stores can be inspected.
- If the weather is mild then colonies can be fed using syrup but fondant is safer if it's cold.
- When the weather warms up then mouse guards can be removed allowing pollen collection to be unrestricted.

Notice Board

WEBMASTER REQUIRED URGENTLY!!!

Most of you will have been aware that we have been having problems accessing our website.

Is anybody willing to take on the job of webmaster?

Competitive rates of pay and perfect working conditions!

Contact David at

david@bearradh.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE!!!

It's that time of year everybody. Membership renewals are now due.

Subs are £10 and should be paid to Annelise McDougall as soon as possible.

APIVAR IS NOW AVIALABLE AT THORNE!!!

Apivar, developed by the French pharmaceutical company Véto-pharma, was registered in the United Kingdom in September and will be available in January. Apivar is an amitraz-based product and the worldwide Varroa treatment leader with more than 5 million hives treated each year.

Véto-pharma products will be distributed in the United Kingdom by THORNE.

KNOCKNAGAEI APIARY GRAND OPENING!!!

The grand opening of the brand new and official Inverness Beekeeping Apiary at Knocknagael, IV2 6AJ, will take place on 21st April. The event will begin at 2pm with a 'Bring your own Sausage' BBQ.

Fun for all the family, look forward to seeing you all there.

BEEKEEPING BEGINNERS COURSE – 28/04/18!!!

This beekeeping beginner's course will be a full day event taking place on 28/04/18 and will be hosted by Elizabeth Reynard.

The course is perfect not only for novice beekeepers who are new to keeping bees but also for more experienced beekeepers who would just like a recap of the basics

This event will cost £35. For more information contact Elizabeth Reynard via:

elizabethreynard@btinternet.com or 01463-225887

YOU CAN PUT AN ADVERT IN THE BUZZ!!!

Anyone wishing to advertise the sale of bees or beekeeping equipment can advertise in the Buzz.

The Buzz is distributed to every member of the Inverness Beekeeping Association.

If you are interested in filling this space with your advert contact Jed Russell via:

Jed.k.russell@gmail.com

Note from the Editor:

Hello. My name is Jed Russell and I have just been appointed as the association's editor for the Buzz magazine. I have really enjoyed putting together this issue and hopefully everyone will be happy with the changes I've made.

I would like to appeal to anyone who has any funny stories, experiences, anecdotes, songs, poems or anything. If you've got them we want to hear them. Spreading the beekeeping word is so important and so all contributions will be welcome.

If anyone has any questions, queries or problems then please don't hesitate to let me know in person at one of our meetings or via my email – jed.k.russell@googlemail.com. For those of you who don't know what I look like, I'll stick a picture below:



See you all at the next meeting and happy beekeeping.

Jed.