



## Sandra – Our Show Champion !

After 12 years of organising ADBKA presence at numerous shows in Northumberland, introducing many new members to the association, Sandra Carrott is handing over the reins in the coming season. She reflected on her time running the show programme with Alnwickdotes.

*"In 2005 I was visiting the Glendale Show when I met Brian Ripley who was running the stall for ADBKA. I was looking for some local honey. Not only did Brian persuade me to take up beekeeping and produce my own but the following year he turned up at my house with a collection of boxes and handed over the task of organising and*

*attending shows and events for the Association. It has been an absolute pleasure to meet with the public and talk about honey bees. After all, family and friends can only tolerate so much 'bee talk'. In the early days I also learnt a great deal listening to experienced beekeepers explaining the craft. I've always been very grateful for the many, many members who have regularly given their time to help and support.*



*The 'season' of shows generally starts with The Children's Day at Glendale in early June. This is a great way to involve young pupils. Barney Hay, seen explaining the hive at the 2017 event, first became interested when attending with his first school. Throughout the summer months we have always been at Felton Fair, Warkworth Flower Show and the Glendale Show on August Bank Holiday. Over the years we have been to Dyke Neuk, Powburn, Glanton, Swarland and Bamburgh and have been invited to special events at*







*Cragside, Heighley Gate and Alnwick Spring Flower Show. Special interest 'bee' days, when we have exhibited alongside Bumblebee experts, have fascinated visitors.*

*Using the observation hive (not without it's challenges when for example the bees killed the queen and spent the entire day trying to eject her), tasting different flavoured honeys, going through the demonstration hive really intrigues visitors but the key to engaging with people is the enthusiasm of our members. So many of us have been 'recruited' at the shows. Dawn Shaw came to Dyke Neuk with a friend who was interested in taking it up. In the end it was Dawn who became the beekeeper and in subsequent years when helping at shows she always told people she was a beekeeper by default. "It's her fault" she would say pointing at me!*



*After 12 years I have honed many skills, not least how to fit everything into my car and have 'retired' from my role as 'Show Organiser'. I didn't need to deposit the boxes on anyone's doorstep as Iain Hay has willingly agreed to take over the task, ably assisted no doubt, by Barney. I will be passing on all the names and telephone numbers of those members who have supported me over the years - Gary Dodds needs to continue to practice hanging the bunting correctly. I do hope that other people will consider getting involved in the future."*

A big Alnwickdotes thank you to you Sandra from all of the members of ADBKA, as well as all of the children and adults you have introduced to Beekeeping. ☺







## Apiary Update

It was a difficult summer with prolonged queen mating times noted and the need to manage several colonies that became queenless.

At the end of May two colonies were again prepared in Observation hives for 'Children's Day' at Glendale.

Poor weather during June delayed and frustrated queen rearing, although by the end of June eight nuclei were progressing, albeit with little evidence of queens laying. Other queen cells were given to queenless hives.

July was quiet, before year end preparations commenced in August. Observation hives were once more provided for display at ADBKA show stands at Warkworth and Glendale. Despite the problems this year we did succeed in getting some honey off, which was all processed and sold at Glendale.

Examination of the nuclei made during the year finally showed that queen mating had been extremely poor with many colonies either without laying queens or queenless. Significant uniting took place, in one case four colonies being reduced to one but this failed by mid October presumably due to lack of young bees. Other nuclei were united with larger queenless colonies and hopefully these will survive the winter.



At the end of August following the removal of small amounts of honey from some of the stronger colonies, winter feeding started with all colonies receiving at least a full container of Ambrosia.

Varroa counts continued to be low and no treatments were given in September.

There were few sightings of wasps at the apiary this year but the finding and removal of 12 hibernating queen wasps, under roofs/over crown boards, during a mid-October final hive assessment, was evidence that there had been nest activity nearby.

We enter winter with 21 colonies and hope for a kind winter and improved weather in 2018.

**Peter Rose – Apiary Manager**







## Apiary Autumn Tidy Up

Thanks to everyone who helped with the autumn apiary tidy up on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017. The hope was to have as many members as possible come to the apiary and help in the annual tidy-up/clean-out of the sheds and equipment ready for next spring.

On the day there was a good turnout and a lot of work was carried out.

The main wooden shed was emptied, swept and put back together, with all the frames and hive parts sorted out and restacked.

Hive boxes, crown boards and queen excluders were scrapped and cleaned, with John Wilsdon leading the blow torching of the woodwork!

The grass and shrubs around the container and the brambles and path ways were tidied up.

A major piece of work carried out was the laying of a cable to provide power to the covered area and shed.



This involved digging a narrow trench from the container and having the electrical installation done correctly. We will now be able to use equipment which will help during training and maintaining equipment, as well as using the kettle!

Then it was time for tea and biscuits, as well as some cake provided by Glyn Scott.



Thanks to everybody that lent a hand with the tidy up, including Glyn Scott, Peter Rose, Sandra Carrott, Sue Richardson, Lynnis Jones, Gary Dodds, Dave Cummins, John Wilsdon, Peter Lovering, Fenwick Rice, and Ronn Smith.

There is still loads to do in the Spring and the Autumn clean-up day has enabled us to assess what we need to do with the equipment and apiary to get off to a good start next season. We will be having a Spring clean-up at the start of the season next year and welcome all members to get involved.

Its also a great place to talk to other beekeepers about your own bees during the season😊







## Me & My Bees

Alnwickdotes asked **Glyn Scott** to tell us about his beekeeping experiences.

*What's your experience and approach to keeping bees ?*

*"My first experience of beekeeping was as a young boy, watching my father attending his hive. He only kept bees for about 5 years but it obviously had a lasting effect on me. I started beekeeping some 15 years ago, after attending a beekeeping course led by Dorian Pritchard, at Kirkley Hall. On completion of the course I joined ADBKA and after a few months acquired my first nuc of bees. It was all very exciting and soon my enthusiasm got me involved at the Association Apiary which was a massive help in getting beekeeping experience. I quickly learnt from the many experienced members that there were many ways of beekeeping, though many aspects appeared to be more of an art than a science! After a few years, I built up my own apiary to 5 hives, though more by accident than design. One thing you must soon appreciate in beekeeping is that you have to be proactive in controlling the development of your hives, needless to say in the early days, I wasn't! I would have a few swarms, particularly, can you believe, over the spring bank holidays when I was away visiting family!"*



*An arrangement with an experienced beekeeper (thanks always to Jim Rogerson!) would be called on to rescue my swarms during that time. More recently I have had up to 11 hives through the summer season. Now I prefer to maintain 3 hives, perhaps going up to 5 for the summer, then combining to 3 for the winter. I manage to get some honey every season and I've been particularly keen to build at least one hive up to strength and take it to the heather. 2017 was a good year for heather honey of which my family and I are very fond!*

*What's your beekeeping goal for the future ?*

*For the future I want to continue to improve my stock of bees, pursuing development of the traits of the native black bee as far as possible – calm and hardy.*

*What would be your hardest earned advice for other beekeepers ?*

*From my experience beekeeping continues to be an engaging pursuit, you are always learning and you always need to be calm, steady and confident whilst in your bees. I try to consider what the bees needs are at any particular time, taking in to account the weather and the season. Always maintain Hive Records as this helps in planning ahead whether it's for swarm control, disease control or preparing your equipment for the following season." 😊*







## Shop Update

As the shortest day approaches and the colonies are tucked up for the winter, now's the time to think about your bees needs for next year. Thorne's will be holding their January Sale soon, with orders over £100 attracting free postage, and Bee Equipment (formerly Mann Lake) currently have a free postage offer, and will probably have a sale planned too.



I will stock up on frames and wax to keep the apiary and ADBKA members supplied via the shop, and if I can get good prices on hive parts I shall be getting some in, for sale in small quantities, so please don't rely on getting a whole hive out of our little shed!

A huge thank you to all the elves who have helped me by volunteering to run the shop on many mornings throughout the year, and taking in deliveries etc. – I couldn't do this without you. If you fancy helping in the shop in 2018, please get in touch – it's a couple of hours on a Saturday morning, jotting down purchases and chatting about bees with anyone who calls by. When the sun shines the apiary is a beautiful place to be.

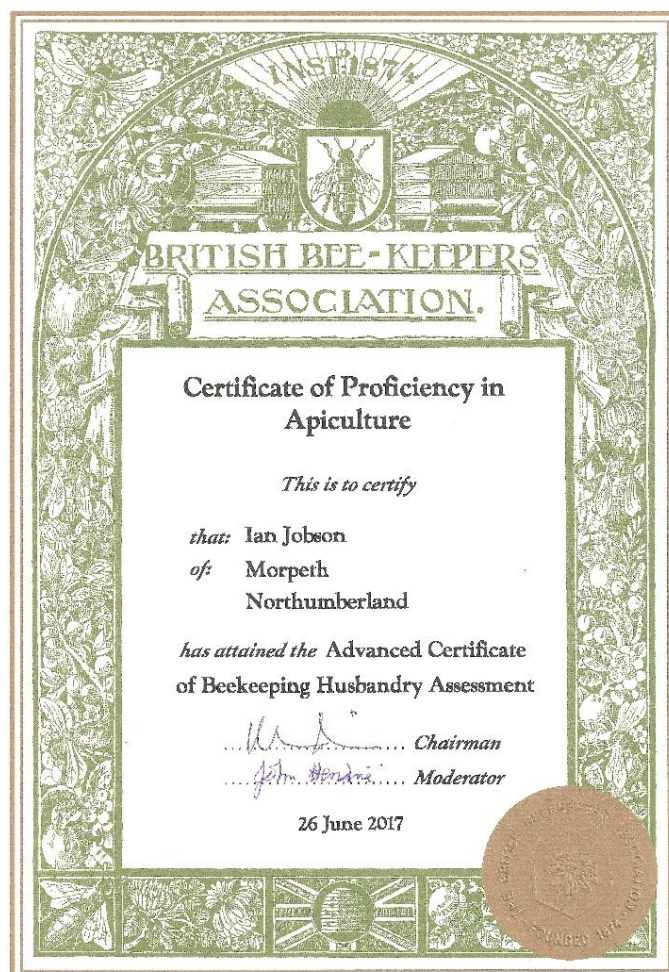
**Susan Hathaway** (aka Mrs Arkwright!)



## Training

At the October meeting of the winter programme, Keith Grimes presented Ian Jobson with the BBKA Certificate of Advanced Husbandry, which he successfully passed at the BBKA assessment centre at Stoneleigh, in June this year. Ian said

*"It has been hard work but I'm pleased to have achieved the highest level of practical skills assessed by the BBKA and look forward to being able to share my learning with other beekeepers"*







## Winter Programme

The winter programme is well underway, with the Annual General Meeting taking place on the Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

### 13<sup>th</sup> December - ADBKA Annual General Meeting.

The Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Apiary Manager will present their reports, followed by appointment of committee for the coming year.

**10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 - Propolis, it's qualities, uses and how to collect it.** James Fearnley is the founder of BeeVital ([www.beevitalpropolis.com](http://www.beevitalpropolis.com)) and is a leading authority on this important, but neglected, substance. This promises to be an unusual and fascinating, yet very relevant evening.

**14<sup>th</sup> February 2018 - Dr Nicola Simcock** works with Jeri Wright at Newcastle University and is also associated with Texas A & M International University. She will speak on the latest stage of the research into bees and the threat from neonicotinoids, as well as other advances in research in her and Jeri's laboratory.

### 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 - Buffet and Social Evening.

Tickets will be available for the evening, which will involve a buffet and an informal evening to discuss beekeeping with other members. It is also open for members to bring along their partners, members of their family or friends to introduce them to the association.

**11<sup>th</sup> April 2018 – To Be Advised.** We are seeking to get a member of the bee inspector team, from the Northern region to give us a presentation on the current threats and risks in our area.



## Project Corner

*"Here is a simple idea for keeping your tools clean whilst you are going through your hives. Who knew that a spaghetti food container is just the right size to get your hive tools in? Put a small sponge in the bottom (to stop the tools from splitting the base) Fill it with a 5:1 mix of water and cleaning soda crystals and add some scotch bright pad. When you are going through your hives you can swap tools between each hive."*

**Ian Jobson**

