

Secretary's Report 2011 Season

It has been another busy year for Moray Beekeepers' Association (MBA). Your Committee met formally on 5 occasions and have been involved in general administration tasks, running Beekeeping Courses and Taster Sessions for the public and members, liaison with and briefings to the local press, management of the Association Apiary, talks to Community Groups, compiling and publication of the monthly newsletter, mentoring new members, and planning and running the monthly meetings and talks throughout the year.

MBA is now a **registered Scottish charity** and this has opened opportunities for fundraising and allowed us to highlight the plight of the honeybee and the importance of conservation. For example, we can now advertise events in the local press and on the radio for free and our 'Donate a Bag of Sugar To Help Save the Bees' project was supported by Tesco and Asda and resulted in the public donating over 300 kilos of sugar. We can also claim Gift Aid refunds of 22% on all donations and this includes membership and course fees as well as the Adopt a Nucleus scheme.

After a disappointing winter, when we lost 4 out of 8 colonies, our **Association Apiary** has gone from strength to strength. We ran our first Queen rearing programme with mixed results and were able to provide 7 new members with their first colony of bees through the 'Adopt a Nucleus' project. Birnie apiary has proved a tremendous asset and in 2011 was used for training new members, 'Introduction to Beekeeping' courses, Honeybee Taster sessions, the Queen Rearing programme, and the Basic Beemaster practicals and assessments. Please remember that this is your apiary. The bees belong to all of us who are members so please get involved and support the activities taking place there.

34 members of the public attended our **Beekeeping Courses** in the summer and most of them joined MBA as members. This raised over £600 additional funding and has enabled us to equip the Association apiary and purchase additional honey extraction equipment.

We also ran a course to prepare members for the Scottish Beekeepers' Association Basic Beemaster Assessment and all 7 members passed, all achieving distinctions.

Interest in beekeeping remains high and there was a further increase in the Association membership to 123 in 2011. The challenge will be to assist these new members to acquire bees and to mentor them through their first season as beekeepers.

The Association also had a **full summer programme** with meetings held at various locations throughout Moray – thank you to those members who offered their apiaries and homes for our use and to those volunteers who helped with refreshments and raffles etc.

It was a mixed season with respect to the **honey harvest** with some members reporting bumper crops whilst others struggled to gain any crop whatsoever. Several members took hives to the MBA Heather Stance and were rewarded with a decent heather honey harvest.

We plan to hold further beekeeping courses in 2012, continue the 'Queen Rearing' programme and make up nucs of bees for sale to members at discounted prices. If you would like to be involved with any of these initiatives please contact any Committee member – you will be very welcome!

Best wishes
Tony Harris