

# North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

## Newsletter January 2012

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### Calendar at-a-glance

18 <sup>th</sup> January 2012	Bob Sibley lecture: Allotment gardening & prize quiz
24 <sup>th</sup> January	Committee meeting
15 <sup>th</sup> February 2012	Dr Sara Robb lecture: Honey Potions (inc soap making)
3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2012	Bucks County Seminar
20 <sup>th</sup> March	Committee Meeting
22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Committee Meeting

### Articles

#### *Editorial*

This month sees many contributions from retired beekeeper and retired newsletter editor Libby Culshaw. Libby looks after the association's library and equipment, and this month's articles feature our library extensively. Thanks for your contributions, Libby.

### ***Tips for candle making***

All equipment should be cleaned, honey filtered and stock taken. This means you are wondering what to do in 2012! Rake out your wax, clean it and make candles. Remember, NBBKA has a steam wax extractor, which is useful for the first cleaning and gets rid of most of the debris.

Be sure to have the right size wick, it should correspond to the diameter of the candle you are making. Too thick and you get a smoky flame, too thin and the wax runs down the side.

Wicks have a central thread, so always pull the wick taut then soak it in hot wax. I use an old frying pan for this. Pull taut again and soak again. You are ready to roll or dip.

Always stand the wax container in a pan of hot rain water, never directly on the hob.



Whether you are going to dip the candle in melted wax or pour melted wax down the wick, this type of rack could be very helpful. Spare wick can be wound around the top spindle and pairs of candles hung from the hooks. I am happy to loan it, proceeds going to NBBKA.

We have several books on wax in our library, two by NBBKA member, Martin Buckle and the comprehensive "Beeswax" by Ron Brown. "Candlecraft" has lovely bright photos of various processes including rolling beeswax candles and making your own moulds.

Wax is your most valuable commodity. To produce a pound of wax bees have to make 6 to 7 pounds of honey.

### **Seasonal Recipe - Walnut and honey tart**

After Christmas there is usually an assortment of uncracked nuts sitting about. Here is a way to use them up.

- Line an 8 inch flan dish with short crust pastry.
- Prick and bake blind at gas mark 5 / 190C / 375 F for 15 minutes.
- Mix 4 tbsp clear honey, 3 oz brown breadcrumbs, 2 tbsp dark brown sugar.
- Gradually beat in the juice of half an orange and three beaten eggs.
- Spread 4 oz chopped walnuts over the pastry case.
- Pour the filling over the nuts.
- Return to the oven and bake for 20 minutes or until the filling has set.

Recipe from Libby Culshaw.

### **Books**

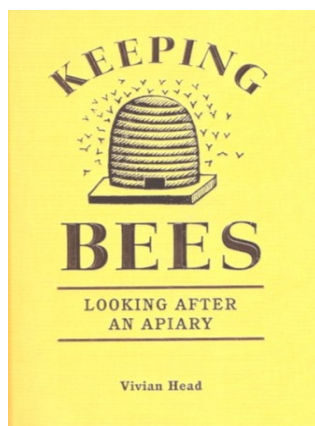
#### **Books about bees**

On sale at Wyevale Garden Centre are two beekeeping books which might be of interest to members. These are:

- KEEPING BEES by Vivian Head, Aura, £3.99
- KEEPING BEES AND MAKING HONEY by Benjamin & McCallum £4.99
- BEEKEEPING FOR DUMMIES £11.99
- THE BEE-KIND GARDEN £8.95

Also just published is a book called THE BEES by Carol Ann Duffy (Poet Laureate), publish by Picador. It can be purchased for £14.99 or £11.00 from The Guardian Bookshop on 0330 333 6847. This collection of poems has received mixed reviews. Apparently the bees represent virtue.

The last two of the four books listed about can be purchased from Telegraph Books ([books.telegraph.co.uk/Christmas](http://books.telegraph.co.uk/Christmas)). You should quote TC11 when ordering.



## Our library

We have a great variety of books from 1903 to 2008.

The library has been updated and a new online reservation system is being trialled. The entire inventory of books and DVDs is listed and members may login to place a reservation. The availability of a book is shown against its title using colour: green means the book is available now, yellow means that it has been reserved by someone else ahead of you, and red means that it is currently out on loan. The list of books can now be sorted for easy listings.

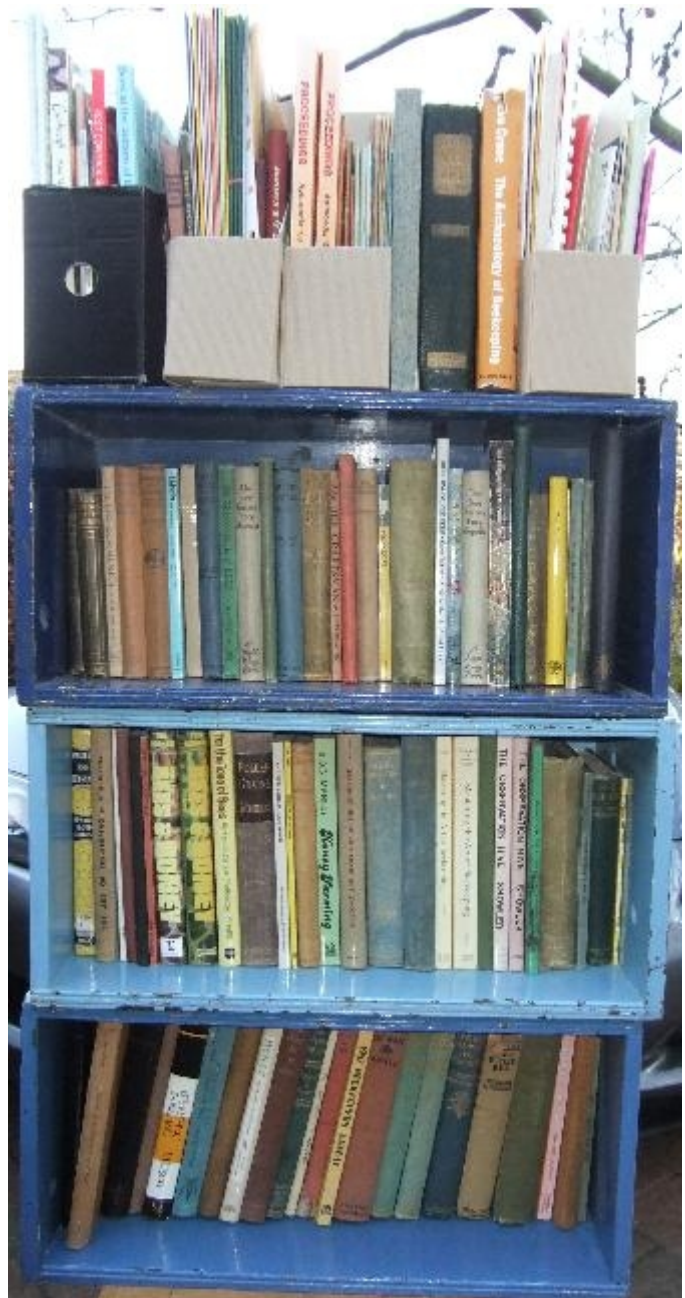
See the list on our website at [www.nbbka.org/Library/](http://www.nbbka.org/Library/)

If you have any comments on the new online catalogue please email [webmaster@nbbka.org](mailto:webmaster@nbbka.org).

Rules for borrowing: books, slides, DVDs must be returned within one month or there will be a 50p per week fine.

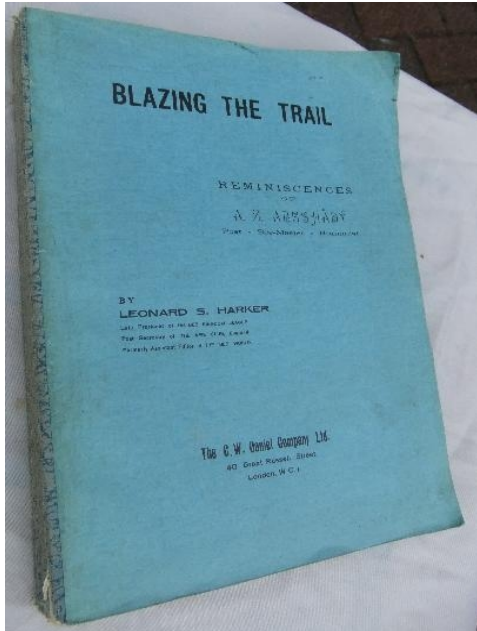
Fiona has ordered the notes for the BBKA Beekeeping Examination Modules and also the pictorial Waring Book. They will be added to the list when they arrive.

To give you an idea of the range of titles we hold, Libby will review a variety of books, from ancient to modern over the coming months. To start is an unimposing looking book, published in 1938.



**Featured Book – Blazing the Trail**

BLAZING THE TRAIL reminiscences of A.Z. Abushady (poet, beemaster, humanist) by Leonard S. Harker, past President of the Bee Kingdom League and past secretary of the Apis Club, England.



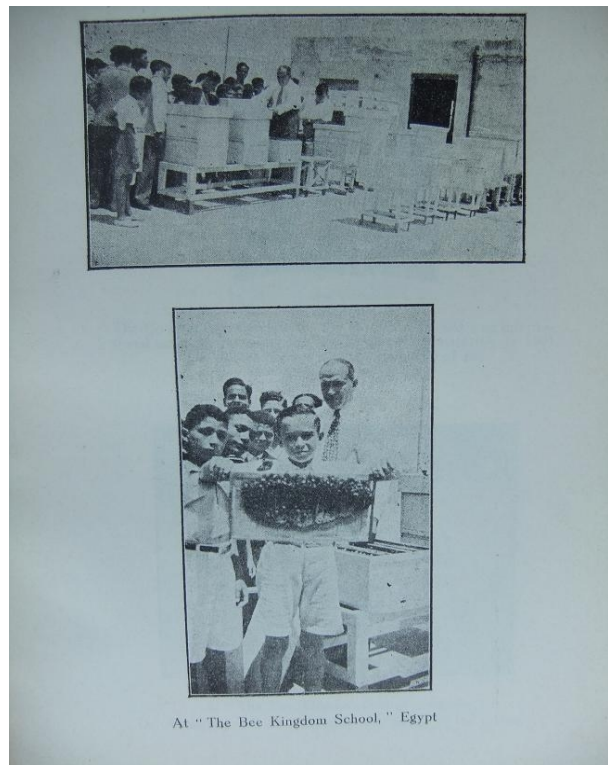
Dr Abushady was born in Cairo in 1882. His family were well known literary and intellectual figures. AZA studied medicine and specialised in bacteriology. He came to London in 1912 and gained certificates of honour at London University for his work on the meningococcus and the tubercle bacillus.

Living at Benson-on-Thames, he founded The Apis Club in 1919. The Club was an International Association of Beekeepers with open membership for all interested in modern beekeeping.

The Club collected together an excellent library of bee books, lantern slides and microscopic slides for members to borrow.

This book contains interesting photographs, many of people handling bees with no protective clothing, including a child at a school apiary holding up a frame of bees. "The Doctor never did any 'stunt' tricks when handling bees, and for serious work, always wore a veil, like all decent beemen. I have known beekeepers wear a bathing-suit when examining colonies, and I was tempted to follow their example – but, only once, and never again!" Next season's apiary meetings should be fun. Who's going first?

R.O.B. Manley was a neighbour of AZA and together they shared numerous bee adventures. The book is a fascinating history of all the pioneers in beekeeping. You will see and read about the authors of books in our library: R.O.B. Manley; Rev. Tickner Edwards; Brother Adam; H. J. Wadey to name but a few. A most interesting book and well worth a browse. It puts us and our Association in perspective.



At "The Bee Kingdom School," Egypt

## Apiary Notes from Andrew Beer

Seasonal note taken from Andrew Beer's 2011 article for January.

- Are your colonies/nuclei secure? January often produces a few warm days – have a look soon after midday – some activity may be observed. Perhaps pollen being taken in, wax particles dropped by the entrance during snowy and frosty periods, wet, thawed patches on roof – all signs that all is well. Also check your hives after gales and heavy snow – brush away sufficient snow to allow bees access/egress.
- Keep hefting and use my “grunt test” (see previous notes). If you grunt, your bees should be alright but be warned! Check, too, that you can see food around the cluster (a torch helps). Cluster at top of frames may indicate food exhausted on those frames. If you can't see food, put a slab of fondant above cluster and add more as required until the cluster breaks up – usually late March or until the Spring flow starts. N.B. If you have an eke above the cluster, you will find that you can reach the bees on a coldish day without them knowing it! [Please also refer to Ged Marshall's thoughts, see above.
- Woodpeckers, mice, rats, attempting to gain entry? Add netting or whatever comes to hand to ward them off. N.B. Mice and rats entering will soon see off a colony and smash combs to bits.
- Colony/nucleus sadly dead? Remove the hive and speak to experienced beekeepers as to the advisability of a “post-mortem”. Again, ask if bees appear restless or if faeces present on combs hive body and take beekeepers' advice as to clean-up measures.
- Hives on weakened or wobbly stands? Go to the bees on a cold (but not freezing) day. Block hive entrance, gently move the hive aside, sort out the stand or replace old one, replace hive and open entrance.
- Hives need re-positioning, etc.? Go to the bees on a cold but not frosty day after, say, two weeks confinement by weather whilst weather still confines bees; move stands as desired.. Bees will re-orient once flying resumes. N.B. Never attempt when bees have been flying freely.
  
- Back at home base – vital tasks:
  1. Plan your beekeeping for the coming season. For example, you have three colonies and want to increase to five? Buy in the necessary equipment - perhaps taking advantage of suppliers' sales. Don't use second-hand equipment unless from a reliable source. For each hive you will need up to three supers.
  2. Continue repairing/cleaning existing equipment; have all boxes covers roofs, etc. scraped clean of wax, propolis and other debris and washed down with a strong soda crystals/water mix. N.B. If any disease is suspected, take advice about cleaning.
  3. All misshapen, defective, blackened combs and all brood combs 2 years plus: Strip out all wax (try pulling the wire out first – it saves getting it mixed with molten wax and general debris later) and treat frames as above or better still sterilise in boiling water. Then melt down the wax for re-use. Cleaning wax is a messy job. For small quantities try a bain-marie and then drain the wax through

a kitchen strainer. (N.B. There are other methods for small quantities). The job probably will need doing twice. For larger quantities you will need specialist equipment. Cleaned wax can be exchanged for foundation through an equipment supplier

- The bee season is just 90 days away. You need to make your final preparations now.
- A plea to those who are seeking a colony, nucleus or swarm in 2011. Please, please get yourselves organised now. NOTHING IRRITATES A SUPPLIER OF A COLONY, NUCLEUS OR SWARM MORE THAN IF YOU ARE NOT READY TO, OR CANNOT, RECEIVE IT. THIS HAPPENED SEVERAL TIMES IN 2010! THE BLOCK CAPITALS ARE DELIBERATE. END OF BLAST! Seriously we just want to help you keep your bees better and for some to get started. A great sadness in 2010 was that many aspiring beekeepers went without because bees were in short supply. Experienced beekeepers, can you please help out beginners by raising more stocks than you need and passing them on.

## Future Events

### ***Bob Sibley Lecture***

Bob's lecture on gardening will mainly focus on allotment gardening and will include some topics relevant to beekeeping. He will also share his tips for how to save money as a gardener.

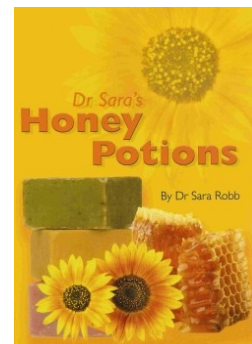
At the end of the lecture there will be a quiz covering gardening, beekeeping and general knowledge. Bob has secured sponsorship and the association has purchased some items to be given away as prizes. These will include gardening gift vouchers, seeds and bottles of wine.

The lecture takes place at Rectory Cottage (Bletchley) on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January at 19:00.



### ***“Honey Potions” from Dr Sara Robb***

Dr Sara Robb gives us a presentation on "honey potions", including **soap making**. 15<sup>th</sup> February 2012, 19:00, Rectory Cottage Bletchley. Dr Robb also has a book of the same name:



### ***Bucks County Annual Seminar***

This is a splendid event with guest speakers of national acclaim. Note especially the date – Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2012. Only the Gales and Andrew Beer were there to represent the NBBKA in March last year so the rest of you don't know what you missed. Venue: Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Wendover, HP22 6HF.

### **Next Month**

Articles gratefully received by [webmaster@nbbka.org](mailto:webmaster@nbbka.org) by the last week of January.