BEEKEEPING IN DUNFERMLINE AND WEST FIFE

Compiled by Members of the
Dunfermline Beekeepers' Association

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FOREWORD

Although a beekeeping association has been in existence in Dunfermline since 1927, it was for several years a branch of the larger Fifeshire Beekeepers' Association. Fifty years ago an independent association was formed which became known as the Dunfermline and West Fife Beekeepers' Association.

With the loss of some of our longest standing members in recent years we realised that if some attempt was not made to record the work of the Association from its beginning then much of the information might be lost forever. Our plans would never have materialized without the generous assistance and encouragement of the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust who, over the years, have taken an interest in our ventures as they have done with so many others. In 1957 they allowed the use of the Music Pavilion in the Glen to stage one of the greatest honey shows ever held in Scotland, the Fourth Scottish National Honey Show, which Bob Couston writes about in his article. Pittencrieff House Museum has also been used for a number of years to display an observation hive which was donated by the Trust.

Special thanks are also due to the assistance of members of staff of the College Advisory Services in Beekeeping, especially to Bob Couston from Perth, but also George Smith of Edinburgh and Bernhard Möbus of Aberdeen, who over the years have supported our Association.

In preparing the publication I have been painfully aware of the lack of information available now about some of the activities of deceased members. Marshall Lamont's article attempts to remedy this by his discussions with some of the older beekeepers and in particular W. L. Browne of Burntisland, who is the oldest remaining beekeeper and also the most highly qualified as an Expert Beemaster and holder of the Honey Judge's Certificate. I would like to apologise to those whose activities have not been mentioned; there is no excuse other than lack of space.

We are grateful for the fine drawings appearing in this publication which are the work of Janet Marshall who has generously given her time.

Finally 1 must express my gratitude for the time and patience of my wife, Katie, and the staff of the Carnegie Trust in typing the manuscripts and to Canon Kindon Kay, Marshall Lamont and Richard Rozycki for the criticisms and suggestions they have made.

John Durkacz

Crossford 1988

THE SCOTTISH BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

The present Association was founded in 1912 but before this there had been two earlier Scottish Associations, namely the Caledonian Apiarian and Entomological Society from 1891 to 1899 and the first Scottish Beekeepers' Association from 1891 to 1900. The latter was founded by Sir T. D. Gibson — Carmichael of Skirling, Bt., who later became Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal. Recently his art treasures from India have been salvaged from a P. and O. liner sunk in the English Channel in 1917 and it is hoped that the SBA will take part in an Exhibition to be held in Dundee in 1988.

The First Annual Report of the original SBA contained reports from many districts in Scotland including that by George Weston of Dunfermline and another beekeeper, William Craig of Urquhart.

On 25th May 1912 a meeting was held in the East of Scotland College of Agriculture, and at the suggestion of Mr G. W. Avery the Beekeeping Adviser the second Scottish Beekeepers' Association was launched. The Rev. J. W. Blake, who had been a member of the first SBA, presided. The Association had a hard struggle at first, especially during the 1914-18 war, but survived, having 2,500 members in 1919 and 34 federated associations. In 1920 the Scottish Board of Agriculture gave the SBA a grant of £100 to compile a Register of Beekeepers and by 1922 there were 8,971 beekeepers with 31,281 hives. It is probable that the Register was never comprehensive.

In 1924 the Scottish Beekeepers' Magazine was started with Dr John Anderson as Editor: he was the adviser to the Northern College of Agriculture, and remained Editor until 1939 when he died. The John Anderson Memorial Award is available for presentation to beekeepers in Scotland who have made significant contributions to the craft, and local associations are asked each year to nominate suitable candidates.

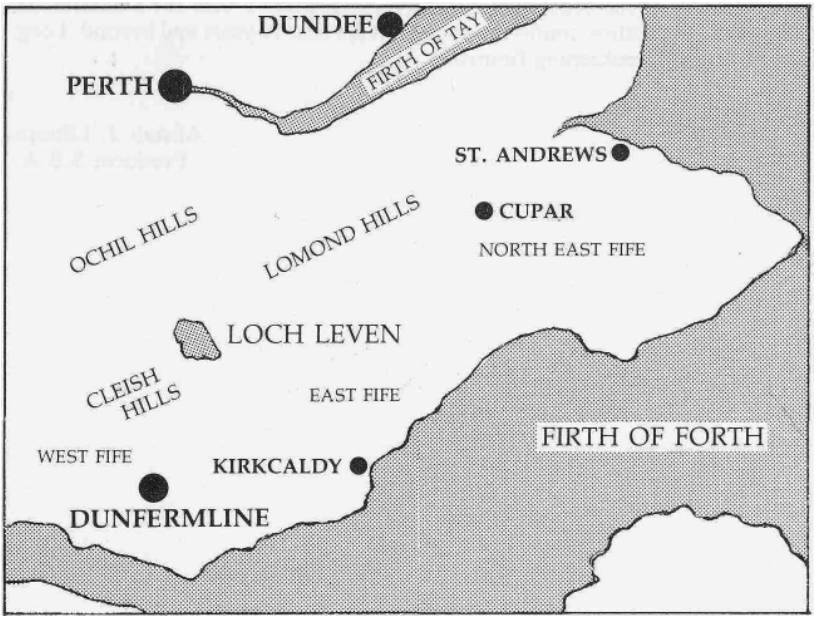
On consulting the Scottish Beekeeper of 1938 it appears that a veteran Dunfermline Beemaster, Mr William Reid of Carnock, Fife, had recently died aged 81; he had been a railway employee and since his retirement in 1921 he had concentrated on gardening and beekeeping. It was through his efforts that 50 beekeepers in West Fife got together and formed the Dunfermline Association, Mr Reid later becoming its President. He exhibited at many shows and was elected President of the Fifeshire Association. The Reid Cup, competed for annually, is a tribute to his memory.

One of the treasures of the SBA is the Moir Library founded on a bequest by the late J. W. Moir, a retired African trader who spent much time combating African slavery. Books can be borrowed from the Library by members.

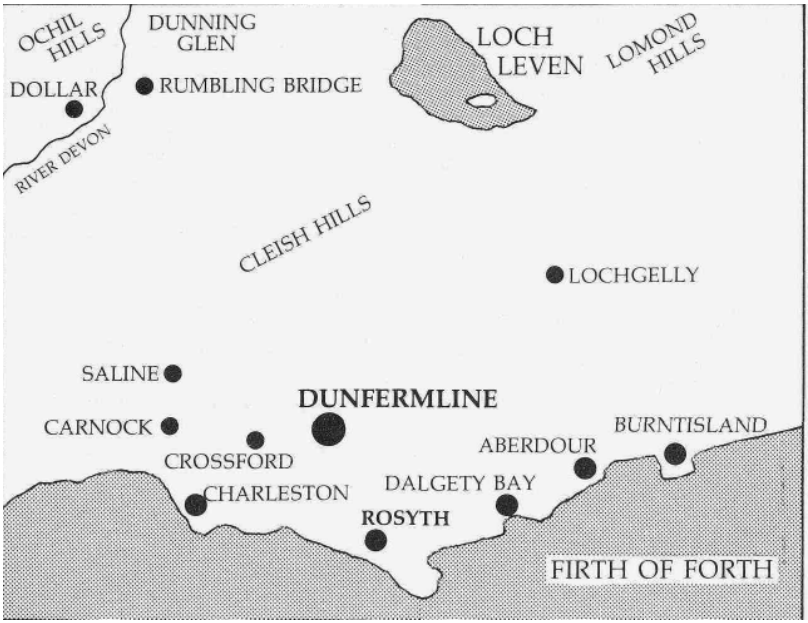
The SBA organises two Honey Shows each year, one at the Royal Highland, Show in June and the other at the Ayr Flower Show in August.

As President of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association I wish the Dunfermline Beekeepers' Association continuing success in the next 50 years and beyond. Long may the craft of beekeeping flourish.

Alistair J. Lilburn President
S.B.A,



Fife and surrounding area.



Dunfermline and West Fife area.

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

By John Durkacz

In the Winter of 1927 — 28 a group of beekeeping enthusiasts met to discuss the formation of an association. This early meeting was to bear fruit and the Dunfermline Beekeepers' Association was born as yet another branch of the larger Fifeshire Beekeepers' Association. In 1938 a decision was finally made to leave the Fifeshire Beekeepers' Association and to become directly affiliated to the Scottish Beekeepers' Association. Thus we have chosen to mark 1988 as the 50th Anniversary of the Association's independence.

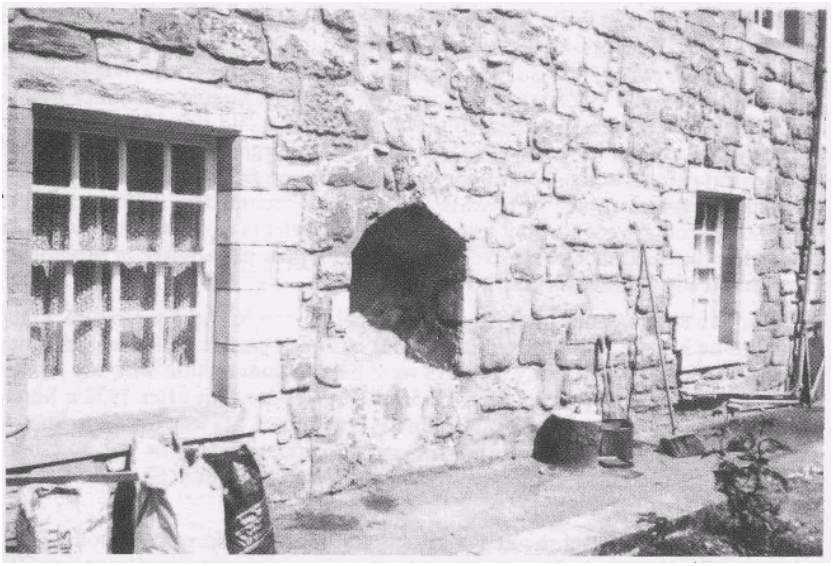
An inspiring force and pioneer president was Mr William Hutton, who laid the groundwork on which the Association was to develop in succeeding years. The avowed aims were to offer mutual assistance and the loan of equipment to beekeepers and to further knowledge in beekeeping by a series of lectures and meetings. This has been faithfully followed to the present day and looks set to continue for a further fifty years.

Mr William Reid succeeded as President and under his watchful eye the Association continued to flourish. He was a particularly skilful and knowledgeable beekeeper who was into his eighties when he died in December 1937. By this time the staging of honey shows, lectures, demonstrations and social evenings was well established and the Association was being given valuable assistance by the experts from the Colleges of Agriculture both in Perth and Edinburgh. Both Mr Cunningham and his Assistant Mr Deans from Edinburgh frequently lectured and demonstrated. Mr Rodgers and, some 10 years later, Bob Couston from Perth were also deeply involved in the Association. It is recorded in the minutes that the Association gave a glowing testimonial to the talents of Alex Deans when he applied to be successor to Dr John Anderson's post as Adviser in Aberdeen; needless to say he was successful!

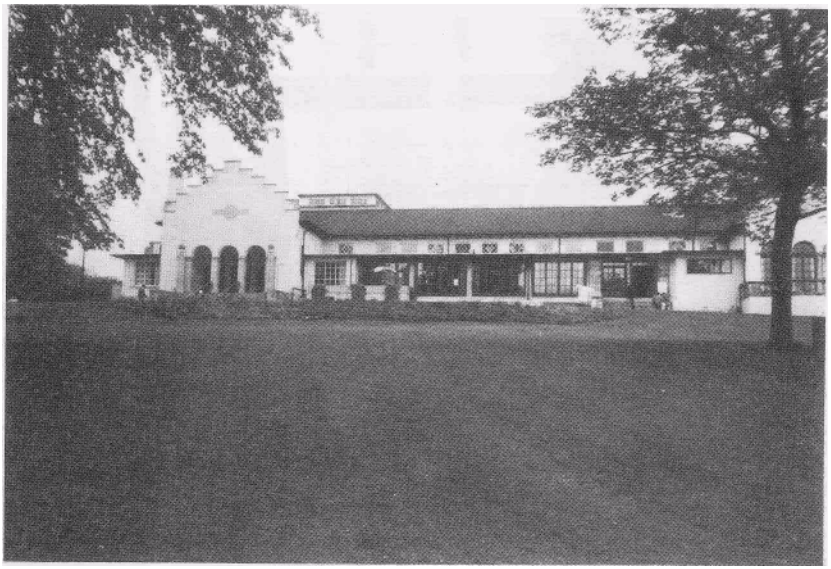
After Mr Reid's death his wife donated a silver cup to the Association which has become known as the "Reid Cup" and has been competed for at the honey shows ever since. Those early displays were held in conjunction with the annual Agricultural Show at Broomhall on Lord Elgin's estate, but after 1938 a honey section was included at the Dunfermline Horticultural Society Summer Shows. A further silver cup was competed for at the Agricultural Show but now both these cups are presented as prizes at the annual Chrysanthemum Show at the Glen Pavilion in October.

Prior to the war years the active association membership ran at about 30 but on the outbreak of war there was a sudden increase in membership to around 100 because of the increased sugar rations allowed for beekeepers. There was no doubt a similar pattern of rise in membership in other associations around this time as more beekeepers realised the advantage of association membership and the sugar that would be available. By 1945 the membership roll had increased to over 100

South facing wall of Abbot House, Dunfermline, where the bee-bole is situated (see below).



The Bee-bole inset in the wall of Abbot House. Once used to house straw skeps it probably dales from the 16lh century.



The Music Pavilion, in the Pittencrieff Park, which was the site of the Fourth Scottish National Honey Show in 1957. This building is unequalled for the beauty of its situation and suitability for shows.

Pittencrieff House Museum where the Association has kept an observation hive on the top floor for a number of years.

The observation hive has attracted great interest particularly from visiting school children. Unfortunately it has proved very difficult to maintain owing to the poor seasons lately.

and predictably after the war, as things gradually returned to normal, the active membership dropped to prior levels. In the early days of the war no winter meetings were held because of the blackout, but summer meetings continued and by all accounts were successful.

Throughout the years the indoor meetings have been held at a variety of venues such as Textile House, the Co-operative Lesser Hall in Queen Anne Street, and the Bridge Tea Rooms. Finally in 1952 the meetings were moved to rooms at Abbot House and have been held there ever since. It is particularly apt that inset in the wall below our regular meeting place is a bee bole of considerable antiquity.

In 1955 the Perth and Kinross, Fifeshire and Dunfermline Beekeepers' Associations joined in printing a newsletter of the various activities. This was particularly useful in informing members of other programmes which they could attend if so desired. Initially this was a successful venture but was discontinued in the 1960's. In 1957 the Fourth Scottish National Honey Show was held in the Music Pavilion in Pittencrieff Park. This was a resounding success and was only made possible by the work of a dedicated committee led by Bob Couston, the show's convener, who took over after the untimely death of James Hayden of our Association. A magnificent Civic Reception for the organisers of the Show was given by Provost Allan and the committee were indebted to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust for the gratuitous use of the Pavilion.

Now the Scottish National Honey Show is permanently held in conjunction with the Ayr Flower Show and so will never again return to Dunfermline to inspire our Association to greater efforts. But other work has to be done by members who organise the Annual Honey .Show at the Chrysanthemum Show of the Horticultural Society. For a number of years now an observation hive has been mounted in Pittencrieff House Museum and has been extremely popular with visiting schoolchildren. This has proved to be a difficult venture recently with the poor seasons we have had. The Dunfermline District Council with the help of sponsors has helped organise an annual Hobbies Exhibition at which the Association has begun to display to attract more members. From time to time various organisations from retirement clubs to primary schools request lectures and film shows and we do our best to respond and spread the gospel.

And so our work is never done. Unlike our bees which can rest through the winter months we find ourselves continuously involved in Association activities and then preparing equipment for the next season. But would we have it any other way? I doubt it. The first 50 years has gone and taken with it a host of fine men who have contributed so much to beekeeping. Will the next 50 years see some sanity return to our civilisation and ever more people engaging in our craft in a countryside saved from dereliction?

DUNFERMLINE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

By Robert Couston

I feel very honoured to have been asked to contribute a review on some aspects of the history of The Dunfermline Beekeepers Association, but in one respect at least I can claim to have some links with the ancient capital of Scotland. I write these lines seated at an oak desk which has a plaque inscribed "From Andrew Carnegie To Ma Wife An' Me. Christmas 1907".

My late Grandfather, Robert Couston of Musselburgh, was born in Torryburn, and served a grocers' apprenticeship in Dunfermline. Then, after working as an agent in St. Kitts in the Caribbean, he returned to Scotland to set up his own business in Musselburgh. He was also a freelance writer and somewhat of a poet, these latter works being mainly in the Lallan Scots tongue. One of his poems which contrasted the pleasures of the simple man to those of the potentate and entitled "Me and Andra" was published in the "Dunfermline Press" on 3rd February, 1906.

Andrew Carnegie was greatly taken with the sentiments expressed in this poem and, after meeting, the grocer and the multi-millionaire became fast friends over the years. My hereditary links with Dunfermline, therefore, are contained in the following lines.

We're puir bit craturs, Andra, you an' me
Ye hae a bath in a marble tub, I dook in the sea:
Cafe au lait in a silver joog for breakfast gangs to you:
I sup yit brose wi' a horn spuin an' eat till I'm fu.

An' there's nae great differ, Andra — hardly ony,
My sky is as clear as yours, an' the cluds are as bonnie,
I whussle a tune thro' my teeth to mysel' that costs
nae money.

The bobolink pipes in the orchards white in your hame
On the ither side:
Gray whaups cry up on oor muir t' me, white seamaws
Soom on oor tide.
An organ bums in your marvle hall wi' mony a sough
an' swell:
I list to the roar o' the wind an' the sea in the hollow
o' a shell.

An' there's nae great differ, Andra — hardly ony ava, For
the measure that throbs thro' eternal thingsTo me is as
braw,
An' it wafts me up to the gate o' God to hear His choir
ana'

We are draglit bit craturs, Andra, plowterin' in the glaur,
Paidlin' ilk in oor ain bit dub, and glowerin ilk at his star:
Rakin' up the elan o' the trink till oor Faither airts us hame.
Whiles wi' a strap, whiles wi' a kiss, or carryin' us
When we're lame.

An' there's nae great differ, Andra, we're sib as peas in a pod,
Ill — faured weans at the best — the draglit wi' the snod:
An' we'll a' get payed what we're ocht, Andra, when we gang hame to God.

What if I win fame or gear, Andra, what if I fail,
Be gleg as a fumart whittrock, or dull as a snail?
It'll be a' ane in a hunder year whether I sally or slide -
The nicht sits as dark on a brawlin' linn as it broods
On a sleepin' tide.

An' there's nae great differ, Andra, whether ye bum or bizz;
If no a wheel we may be a clink — if we canna pull
We can bruiz;
We maun tak' the world as we find it, lad an' content
Wi't as it is.

Bobolink	—	Bob G. Lincoln — North American Singing bird
Whaups	—	Curlews
Seamaws	—	Sea-gulls
Gleg as a fumart whittrock	—	Lively as a weasel
Wheel	—	Hard worker
Clink	—	Fallen person
Bruiz	—	Push hard
gear	—	property, wealth
soom	—	to swim, float

When Dunfermline BKA was formed in 1938, the College Beekeeping Adviser for the district was Mr James Cunningham and that year he was joined by Mr Joe Rodger, then based in Edinburgh. After the war Joe was moved to Perth where I joined him after leaving the Services. Joe was very much a beemaster of the old school and I was privileged to serve my apprenticeship under him. I have never met anyone who could handle bees quite as well as Joe Rodger. Although I was not allowed to wear a veil no matter what weather conditions were like, I was taught to control bees and develop that sixth — sense which makes one aware of how far one can go with the handling of them. In January 1948, Joe attended a meeting in Dunfermline which was addressed by H. J. Wadey, the author of several books on beekeeping who was another giant in the beekeeping world.

After I was judged competent enough to be a fully fledged adviser, Joe Rodger retained the North territory of the College region while I was allotted South Perthshire, Kinross and Fife. I therefore became the official Dunfermline Beekeeping Adviser from 1951 onwards. My first lecturing engagement in Dunfermline was to the Naturalists' Society in October 1949 and this meeting was attended by quite a few of the local beekeepers. At that time Abbot's House had not been renovated and I remember wandering through the fascinating dusky rooms of the old building and examining the quaint collection of zoological bric-a-brac housed there. Abbot's House has of course been the venue for the Beekeeping Association meetings since those early days.

Each year I gave two or three lectures or film shows during the Winter months and these were augmented by one or two outdoor demonstrations in Summer. One favourite apiary site for this was opposite the Ice Rink on the side of a railway embankment. Courses of six consecutive evening lectures were given weekly in various Dunfermline schools during 1951 and 1958, also in Culross during 1952.

During the Winter of 1966/67, a special course of seventeen lectures was given in the school at Kincardine-on-Forth to prepare those wishing to sit the examination for the Scottish Beekeepers' Expert Beekeepers Certificate. Some candidates from Dunfermline were successful in obtaining this reputable award.

One of Dunfermline's beekeeping highlights, indeed of all Scotland's, was surely the Fourth Scottish National Honey Show which was staged in the Music Pavilion, Pittencrieff Park, during the 11th and 12th of October, 1957. This event was the outcome of the three preceding shows held at Glasgow 1952, Edinburgh 1953 and Dundee in 1955, and was the brainchild of the late Mr James Hayden of Rosyth, who at the time was President of Dunfermline BKA.

James Hayden realised that the Dunfermline Association on its own could not cope with such a tremendous undertaking and it was he who devised the idea of combining all the Fife Associations in this joint venture.

A steering committee was formed which first met in Dunfermline on 25th April, 1956, then a month later in Kirkcaldy where the various provisional conveners were appointed. The committee was due to meet again in Cupar on 17th September but during the intervening period it received two crushing blows with the untimely deaths of James Hayden himself and Mr A. T. L. Haggart, who was to have been one of the main king-pins. Because of my experience and involvement with the previous show in Dundee, I was asked to accept the responsibility of Show Convener and Secretary.

It was a daunting task but what a wonderful committee we had to put it into effect! It consisted of M. B. Jackson (Show Manager), J. Ritchie (Staging Convener), G. Hynd (publicity, printing, and prize draw), these all from Dunfermline. Also A. S. Jack (Treasurer from Wormit), G. Lochtie (Chief Steward from Aberdour) P. M. Gordon (Films and Lecture Convener from Freuchie), A. Drummond (Honey Shop Convener from Freuchie), D. Fraser, F. Dickson and Captain J. Edgar (Show Entries, all from Leven), D. Robertson (Electrical Convener from Kennoway) and myself who had the job of steering this powerful but high-spirited team throughout the build-up to the event.

What a show it turned out to be! The weather was glorious

The opening ceremony was graced by the presence of the Honorary President of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association, the Countess of Mar and Kelly, and Provost Allan who represented the Royal Burgh of Dunfermline. The Civic Trust had already provided honoured guests with a magnificent Civic Reception in the Pavilion itself.

The quality and volume of the show entries have never been surpassed or even equalled at any time in Scotland and the Dunfermline Scottish National Honey Show will go down in beekeeping history as the peak of such achievements.

It was obvious, however, that to maintain such a standard in Scotland, even periodically, was impractical so the National Show was moved to Ayr, where it still enjoys a more modest though permanent setting within the Ayr Annual Flower Show. The precedent set at the previous National Shows, especially the Dunfermline one, ensures a continuing high standard of exhibits second to none in Europe.

The health of honey bee stocks in the Dunfermline area has always been remarkably good. A single outbreak of American foul brood was discovered in 1958 and was dealt with before any spread occurred. A survey was carried out in 1968 when all hives in the area were thoroughly examined revealing that there were 31 beekeepers owning 232 hives, none of which showed any trace of brood diseases.

When Joe Rodger retired in 1960, his post was not filled and I then had the responsibility for most of the beekeeping advice for the whole of the East College region, North of the Forth. In 1972 I was given the added responsibility for most of the West College territory and when George Smith retired in 1976, I had to take on South of the Forth as well. Advisory services to beekeepers therefore started to dwindle during the 1960's and it was no longer possible to visit beekeepers by request. The numbers of lectures and demonstrations at each centre obviously also had to be curtailed.

Beekeeping has suffered more than most as a result of intensified methods of agriculture, as previous sources of nectar and pollen have been ruthlessly destroyed in the interests of so-called viability. In an effort to stem the over-production of many foodstuffs, the government has imposed severe financial cut-backs on the Agricultural Advisory Services and, as beekeeping has always been the Cinderella of the agricultural scene, services to it have been almost eliminated. It does not seem to register with those having the power to make such decisions that beekeeping is not just a matter of producing honey but an essential part in the production of many agricultural and horticultural crops, to say nothing of the impact it has in maintaining the natural environment.

One bright spot on the horizon, however, is that there is an increasing awareness of what has been happening to the rural environment and already moves are being made, not only to halt the increase in mono-culture, but even to restore certain areas to a more acceptable form of cultivation and scenic attractiveness. The increased planting of deciduous trees may not be of immediate benefit to our present generation of beekeepers but in years to come we may find restored to us some beekeeping localities where it will again be possible to practise the gentle art. So whether you bum or bizz let us look forward to these days and in the meantime keep the fun in beekeeping and enjoy the pleasant companionship which the craft affords.

Congratulations, Dunfermline Beekeepers' Association on your Golden Anniversary and thank you, all those stalwart members who, over the past thirty-five years, have made my task as your adviser such a pleasant and rewarding one.

REMINISCENCES
By W. Marshall Lamont

When it is revealed to some new acquaintance, or even a stranger, that one is a beekeeper, their response is very often along these lines, "how interesting! My grandfather (or uncle or great uncle) was a beekeeper — he was a great old boy!" Immediately you are aware that the speaker is casting an aura of, at least, eccentricity if not more serious derangement over you and you are forever branded in the speaker's consciousness as being somewhat off-beat. This is understandable on a number of counts. As children many of us, particularly town-bred youngsters, were brought up to fear and avoid all insects and stinging ones in particular; so the arms-length syndrome is applied to bees. Then again, bees and beekeeping apply their own disciplines to the beekeeper and these very shortly begin to show through in his dealings with the lay world of non-beekeepers. Not that all beekeepers are aware of this but it is nevertheless true that, in the eyes of many, beekeepers become "characters" although they themselves would be horrified to find themselves so described.

Nevertheless, those whose activities and sayings it is my privilege to remember in these notes were, for me at any rate, real "characters" and I suspect that there would be few indeed amongst those in the Dunfermline Beekeepers' Association who remember them that disagree with that epithet.

The very first meeting of Dunfermline Beekeepers which I ever attended was a demonstration in a well-known apiary behind the smiddy in Cowdenbeath. It would be early summer of 1969, I think. The apiary and garden (also justly renowned) belonged to Tom McEwen who was also the blacksmith, and the quality of the honey which he produced for show there made him a formidable reputation, as indeed in another context did his expertise in growing carrots. Having found the location and introduced myself to the then Secretary, Richard Rozycki, I joined the throng of interested by-standers. Being, as I thought, well equipped, happed up in broad-brimmed hat, modern wire-mesh veil, new beekeeping gloves and, of course, Wellington boots, I was somewhat surprised to notice close by a group of rather elderly gentlemen in cloth caps and the most primitive looking veils rolled up on top, no gloves or any other protection, standing watching proceedings not ten feet away from the opened hive. As I observed the group a bee landed on the nose of one of the elderly gentlemen who reached up and very gently picked it off and let if fly away. To my anxious enquiry as to whether he'd been stung, the reply was, "No, no, most likely it was a drone!" Very shortly the new member was invited to come forward and assist with the manipulation of the hive. Whether it was nervousness or the strange feel of my new gloves I know not but, to my horror, I dropped a frame, covered in bees, on top of the open brood box! In a flash the primitive veils were rolled down and tucked into the necks of jackets and bare hands thrust deep into trouser pockets (which also had the effect of lowering the trousers right over the owners' footgear) and protection was complete!

Fortunately Tom McEwen's bees were remarkably good tempered that day and it wasn't long before an ordered calm was restored in the apiary and manipulation proceeded without further incident. At the end of the demonstration and before we went into the smiddy for a sumptuous tea, one of the aforementioned elderly beekeepers approached me and enquired if I had any bees of my own. On hearing that I had neither bees nor hive at that time, he said, "I have a wee neuc in a couple of old boxes which I'll be happy to give you to start you off." So began my second spell of beekeeping. The donor's name was John Fyfe and I will never forget either his generosity or his wise and kindly personality. Incidentally, I still have now, nearly twenty years on, at least one hive which is the progeny of the colony he gave me. John, alas for us, is now no doubt practising the craft he loved in the Elysian fields where the bees don't sting and are grateful for the ministrations of the beekeeper. John was a man of encyclopaedic knowledge of beekeeping and a great lover of his bees but, nevertheless, something of a traditionalist who accepted the scientific findings on apiculture of the last thirty years or so with respect tempered with a healthy scepticism. I recall his once saying to me, "The bees know what is best for them and what's best for them is usually best for the beekeeper, so don't interfere too much!"

One of the questions which seems to be of abiding interest to non-beekeepers is, "How did you become a beekeeper in the first place?" The answers are as varied and diverse as beekeepers themselves. One of the most interesting I ever heard was related to me by Mr George P. Lochtie, a former President of Dunfermline Beekeepers. His entry into the craft came about in this fashion:

In 1938, when the dark clouds of war were gathering over Europe, George was serving in the Territorial Army as well as doing his civilian job. At the outbreak of war he was, of course, called up for full-time service and in no time at all found himself in France as a part of the 51st Highland Division. During the big German advance in the late Spring of that year, he was, like many hundreds of his comrades, captured by the Germans and became a P.O.W. The P.O.W. camp in which he finished up was situated far away from the battle fronts in the West, being in fact on the banks of the River Vistula in Poland.

While there George and another prisoner were assigned to work for a professional commercial beekeeper who had a number of apiaries in that fertile area with its abundant natural flora. One day one of their Boss's hives swarmed and it seemed to be inaccessible in a barn so the beekeeper abandoned all attempts at recapture. Not so the two assistants! Showing quite commendable resourcefulness and patience they eventually managed to get hold of the queen and then in no time at all had the whole swarm in a box. With much labour in what they were pleased to call their spare time they were able to make some sort of a hive out of spare bits of wood and, indeed, even a set of frames to fit it. They hadn't any foundation to fit in the frames but with a good deal of manipulation and "fiddling about" they persuaded the bees to build decent combs in the frames. Eventually, having enlisted the aid of fellow prisoners skilled in such matters as metal work, they were even able to manufacture an extractor and were thus able to supplement their meagre rations with the finest of all foods — honey.

After such an introduction it wasn't surprising that, after repatriation and a return to normality in Fife, Mr Lochtie took to beekeeping like a duck to water and practised the craft with both success and enjoyment until a change in his work necessitated a move of house to a city and beekeeping was no longer possible,

In conversation with Mr Lochtie shortly before these notes were written, the writer was bemoaning the persistence of the bad weather in recent summers. Mr Lochtie, however, recalled that such tragedies are nothing new by relating how, in 1949 or 1950 when the Dunfermline Beekeepers went up to retrieve their hives from the heather site in Little Glenshee which they used in those days, they found that even the road had been washed away and there was no way by which the lorry could get anywhere near the hives. Every one of the forty-odd hives had to be manhandled several hundred yards! Worse still! All the bees were starving!

Truly, it is only rarely that we have years like 1975 when, during the heather season at any rate, Scotland became like Canaan — a land flowing with milk and (more importantly) honey. Who says that beekeepers are not optimists? They have to be!

The whole business of migratory beekeeping (in Scotland this means the annual move to the heather areas) is so complex and, to some extent, hazardous, that the tales which can be related are legion. One of the most hair-raising I have heard was told me by another of our more senior members, Willie Forrest. On a Sunday morning when the Association's lorry was setting out for the heather site one of the hives fell off and burst open, of all places in the middle of the New Row in Dunfermline! Willie's comment was, "I've never heard so many cuss-words uttered all at one time, some indeed, by beekeepers never previously known to give vent to even the mildest of oaths." Resourcefulness and improvisation eventually triumphed and the expedition was able to proceed on its way without too many of the worthy citizens of the Royal and Ancient Burgh having suffered from the bees' displeasure! At any rate no bye-law prohibiting the moving of bees within the burgh was ever enacted.

Quite a different (but no less fortuitous for the Association) introduction to the craft of beekeeping happened to a man who became one of our most distinguished and expert members. Mr W. L. Browne went on a visit with his wife to the Empire Exhibition in Bellahouston Park in Glasgow in 1937 or 38. While there he picked up a leaflet on beekeeping in the Department of Agriculture pavilion and put it in his pocket along with a good few other pamphlets.

Without in any way being cranky about the matter Mr Browne and his family enjoyed what nowadays would be called "health foods" or wholefoods and, indeed, the children had a very enthusiastic liking for honey. "Dreadful imported stuff it was," recalls Mr Browne, "But then we didn't know any better!"

With the coming of the war preparations in 1939 the supply of imported honey dried up somewhat abruptly and the Brownes, both W. L. and his wife Daisy, determined to produce their own, having at last studied the DOAS pamphlet collected at the exhibition. So began a career in the hobby which spanned very many years.

In 1940 or 41 Joe Roger, at that time assistant to James Cunningham, the beekeeping adviser in the East of Scotland area of the Department of Agriculture, gave a course of lectures on beekeeping at Kirkcaldy High School: attendance at these, which he found fascinating, sealed Mr Browne's fate and he became a committed devotee of the craft until advancing years and failing sight forced him to give up an active role. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm for bees and their culture is undiminished even today at the age of 94 plus.

Walter L. Browne of Burntisland is the oldest of the association members and one of the most experienced beekeepers in previous years. He obtained the Beemaster's Certificate in 1943, Expert Beemaster's Certificate in 1945 and became a Honey Judge in 1947.

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Mr Browne recalls that, in the first year, when they purchased a WBC hive with a brood box and two crates of sections and a colony of bees from Steele & Brodie, their total crop was 21b of honey. A lesser man would have been deterred by that but not W. L. He set about reading and studying everything he could find on the subject of beekeeping and by 1945 he had not only obtained his Scottish Beemaster's Certificate but the Expert Beemaster Diploma as well. Anyone who has seen the test papers for that diploma will acknowledge that the written work required is both comprehensive and technical, while the practical tests are no less exacting. Another year or two and Mr Browne still wasn't satisfied and in 1947 he obtained the highest amateur qualification in beekeeping — that of Honey Judge. "After all," says Mr Browne, "I had been judging my own honey for a good few seasons before putting it on the show benches and I thought I had better make sure I was on the right lines." Not that he needed any reassurance by that time because one of his treasured possessions, which he showed me, is the silver medal he won in 1947 for the most meritorious exhibit in the Fife Beekeepers' Show.

Having got on the subject of honey shows, it is apparent that there are as many stories connected with that side of beekeeping as with any other facet of the craft. There was one exhibitor (who shall be anonymous) who for years showed a near perfect frame of heather honey and for years collected the first prize until, at last, Mr Browne had a particularly fine frame and pipped him at the post. "I've won the first prize for years with that comb," said his antagonist, "I'm no coming back!" After that somewhat unconscious confession of 'bending the rules', the Association concerned amended its schedule to restrict entries to the current year's honey production. In those days of course, the few shillings which constituted the "First Prize" meant a lot more to folks than they do today. Which perhaps accounts for the fall-off in entries which most shows complain of nowadays — or have latter-day beekeepers become a less competitive bunch than their predecessors?

The hazards and excitements of showing honey do not, however, extend only to the competitors; the judge too can have his trials.

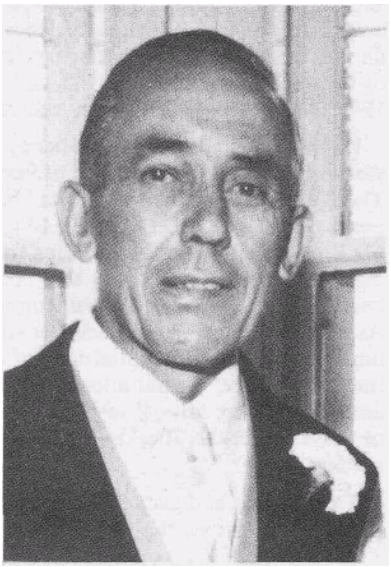
In one show where Mr Browne was judging he had reduced the order of merit in the medium coloured honey class to two entries. He looked at them this way and that, swapped them round on the show bench and looked again. At last he turned to the show secretary and the assembled bystanders and said, "We'll have to award a joint first prize for these, I can't separate them." "Ye'd better no try," said a voice from the crowd, "They're baith mine — Jimmy here had nae entry for this class so I lent him two jars." Sad to say, Mr Browne couldn't recall how the committee got out of that one, but he was indeed thankful that he couldn't separate the entries and kept his reputation as a judge intact.

And so it goes on; wherever beekeepers gather and get on the crack the stories and reminiscences come tumbling out, always apposite, often funny and, strangely, nearly always true!

OBITUARY

James Ritchie, Past — President of the Association

In 1985 we lost one of our most experienced and enthusiastic members with the passing of James Ritchie. He was a beekeeper of great skill and his help and advice at demonstrations was always most valuable. He started beekeeping in 1954 after seeing an observation hive which fascinated him at the Royal Highland Show in Alloa. He contacted George Lochtie of Aberdour, who was the Association Secretary at the time, and with his help and support, never looked back. Even in those early days Grace, his wife, knew that his enthusiasm was such that he would become ever more deeply involved.



James Ritchie; 1959 — 1962 and 1981 until his death in 1985.

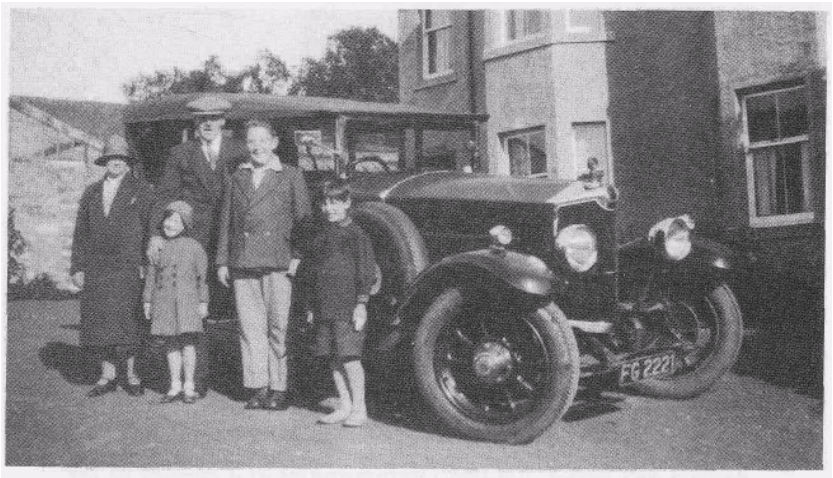
His first bees were kept in the garden at Halbeath, but later he moved his hives to Duloch Farm, where they remained for some 10 years before finally moving them to his apiary site above Otterston Loch. He usually kept up to a dozen stocks of bees and managed them on variations of the Snelgrove system. In those days oilseed rape was not a problem to contend with, and he was able to separate out his crop into early dark sycamore honey and later season light clover and willowherb honey. This was to stand him in good stead when it came to presenting honey at the shows. In good years he could manage to take up to a hundredweight of honey from each hive, which is adequate testimony to his management skills. However, he went further than that and was able to selectively breed a bee that was hardy and relatively easy to handle.

Jimmy was a technical and principal guidance teacher at Woodmill High School for some 25 years. His vocation made him admirably suited to passing on his skills to others in the Association. He made an observation hive which was sited in the school science room and was able to mate a virgin queen from this observation hive. He always said that this was one of his greatest achievements, to be able to show the children the mating of a queen.

In 1957 the Scottish National Honey Show came to Dunfermline and Jimmy played a part in its organisation at a local level and greatly helped in its success.

Andrew McClymont (on right) demonstrating at a meeting of the Clackmannanshire Beekeepers' Association in the early 1960's. Centre looking on is J. Dunn, postman from Blairingone, and far left Alex Muir, Dollar. Dunfermline beekeepers sometimes attended these meetings but unfortunately the Clackmannanshire Association no longer exists.

A recent demonstration at the Crossford Apiary of John Hoskins (near right) who successfully reared a number of queens last year. The queen rearing stock is an extremely powerful one which is occupying three brood chambers.



James McDonald (centre), nurseryman from Cairneyhill who kept a large number of hives when this photograph was taken in 1938. He was the President from 1938—40. On his left is his son who still keeps bees in Cairneyhill.

The years 1967 and 1968 were busy for him, and he was very successful with his exhibits at the Royal Highland Show, gaining 1st prize with his heather honey against stiff opposition. In 1967 he also sat the examination for the Expert Beemaster's Certificate of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association, and passed. He continued to teach the practical aspects of beekeeping at his school and set up a small apiary for the benefit of some of his pupils. In 1969 he lectured at the Technical College in Cowdenbeath to Adult Education Classes, and even became an examiner for the local Scouts and Guides Beekeeper's Badge. Despite a full professional life and his numerous activities, he served the Association as its President from 1959 to 1962, and its Secretary from 1967 to 1969. In 1981 he was asked to return to the Presidency which he did willingly to help us out, despite his failing health.

But behind all this lay a struggle with illness and a determination to continue in the face of adversity. Jimmy had developed renal failure and had to contend with years of hospital attendance and being tied to a dialysis machine. He was loyally supported through all this by his wife, Grace, and though he suffered the traumas of chronic renal disease, he was not the man to bow to this, seeking to help others in a similar predicament. To this end both he and his wife travelled widely in support of the Kidney Research Fund, and he did much useful work as Chairman of the Scottish Federation of Kidney Patients' Associations.

We still miss the stimulus of his lively participation at our Association meetings.

John Durkacz

BEEKEEPERS' CALENDAR

By W. Richard Rozycki

January — February

The colony is confined to a cluster and daily consumption of food is low because it is used only to maintain the temperature within the cluster at about 20°C, and the queen is resting.

A check should be made to see that the hives remain weather-proof, the ventilation channels are clear and that the colonies are not disturbed.

March

This month is difficult for the colony to survive because the queen laying intensifies and food consumption increases rapidly. One cell of honey and half a cell of pollen are required to produce one bee. The temperature within the cluster must be maintained at about 34°C and to achieve this the bees must consume a lot of food resulting in fouling the combs if inclement weather delays cleansing flights.

After this flight, winter ventilation should be restricted. A sample of bees should be prepared for testing in order to establish the state of health of the wintered colonies.

The first spring inspection can take place when the outside temperature exceeds 12°C, and it should be limited to the check of food stores, changing the floors and the removal of unoccupied soiled combs. It is vital that the residue from scraping the floors is not scattered around but collected and removed from the apiary.

Two months before the anticipated local nectar flow, the bees can be stimulated to increase the rate of brood rearing. For this purpose the uncapping of food stores, the feeding of syrup and the supply of candy or pollen substitute is practised. It is also vital to provide a clean water supply.

April

Old bees are fading out being replaced by the new generation. When the outside temperature reaches 16°C it is reasonably safe to carry out an inspection of the colony to establish the amount and pattern of brood laying, also the state of pollen and food supplies which should not be less than one frame and 5kg respectively.

Weak and queen less colonies should be prepared for uniting in order to equalize the strength of the colonies in the apiary,

May

During this month a very fast build-up of colonies is usually assisted by the spring pollen and nectar flow. This is associated with the secretion of wax; therefore it is time to put supers on incorporating some foundation frames so that the bees are made to draw the comb, otherwise the wax scales drop off and are lost,

At this time of the year there is a lot of crop spraying; therefore the establishment of amicable relationships with local farmers is vital to avoid loss of bees due to poisoning.

June

The colonies which have wintered well and utilized the early nectar flow are reaching full strength and will be making preparations to swarm. Therefore the introduction of some form of swarm control is necessary in order to avoid losing swarms.

This is the right time to make artificial swarms for an increase in the number of colonies and the production of young queens, also to take off honey which is prone to granulation in the combs,

July

The colonies are in full strength and when weather conditions are favourable they should produce the main honey crop. Because of their strength they are also vulnerable when the weather is bad. This is also the time when the replacement of old queens should be made.

As soon as the nectar flow comes to an end the honey supers should be taken off and extracted. Selected colonies are prepared for the heather honey harvest which normally begins in the last week of the month.

On the completion of honey extraction the combs should be given to the bees to dry; serviceable brood combs should be disinfected, if necessary, and safely stored.

August

Since there is still an intensive laying of eggs it is essential that after the removal of the honey crop there is sufficient food and pollen for the development of bees that will be hatching, hopefully to survive the winter.

In order to create optimum conditions for wintering, old dark brood combs are removed from the brood chamber and replaced with sound light-coloured combs from which the bees hatched in the current year. It is advisable to reduce the number of combs in the brood chamber to correspond to the strength of the colony so that the food is not spread over a large number of combs which will not be covered by the bees during the winter. A measure of judgement is required because too small a nest makes it easy for the cluster to contain heat and is therefore conducive to premature brood rearing during the winter. The combs containing pollen should be distributed evenly in the nest to avoid its deterioration when stored at the periphery of the nest. Frequent manipulation of the hives is conducive at this time of the year to robbing; therefore combs with honey must always be covered and any attempt at robbing, frustrated.

September

There is still a large number of old bees which have no chance of survival through the winter; therefore they should be used to convert sugar syrup into winter stores, thus saving the strength of the younger bees that are emerging.

Concentrated syrup in large quantities should be fed from a fast feeder over a short time so that supplies are properly sealed and the egg laying by the queen curtailed. Feeding should be completed by the end of the month with the exception of the colonies that may still be at the heather moors. These should be rapidly fed on return to the

apiary in order to avoid desperate measures such as feeding candy, syrup or bags of sugar during the winter months. The food stores should, not be less than 401bs for an average colony.

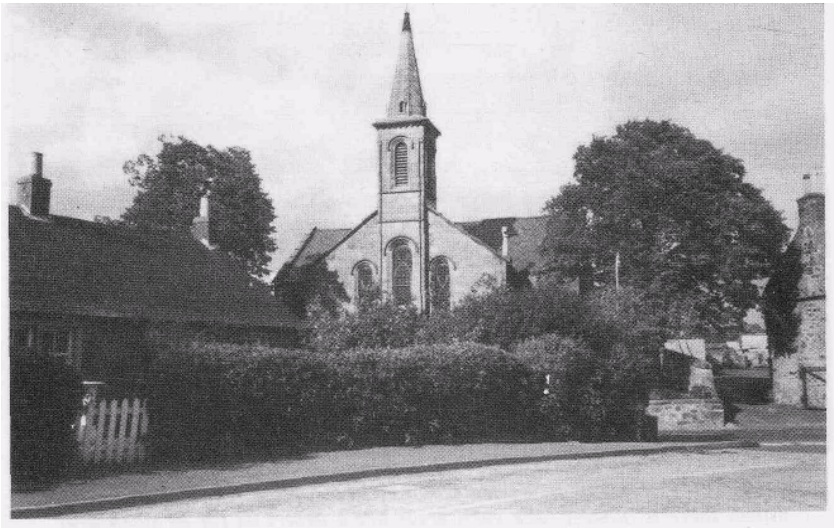
October

Combs in the brood chamber are filled up with stores and there should be no more sealed brood in the combs. The bees should occupy the combs near the entrance forming a loose cluster when the temperature falls. Nevertheless, when conditions are favourable, the bees may still collect pollen and nectar.

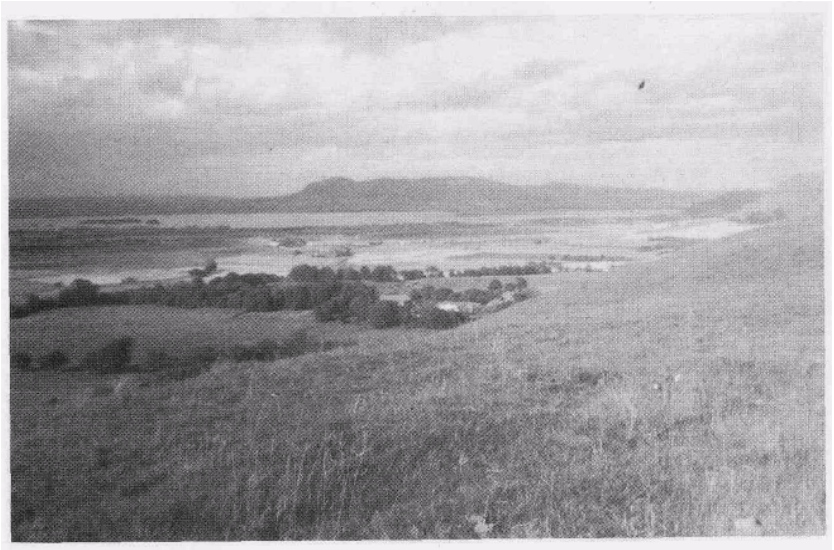
The hive entrance should be protected with a guard to prevent invasion by mice. Bee escape holes in the crown board should be left clear or covered with perforated zinc and an empty super box placed between the crown board and the roof to provide sound ventilation during the winter, thus avoiding the formation of condensation and dampness in the hive,

November — December

The bees remain in a cluster; however when conditions outside are favourable there may be a cleansing flight. Food consumption is very low, approximately lib per month unless the bees are disturbed.



The village of Carnock to the west of Dunfermline where William Reid kept bees for many years. Once an excellent beekeeping area there is no longer much clover but it still retains its charm.



Looking north — east from the Cleish Hills towards the great expanse of Loch Leven and the Lomond Hills beyond. The Cleish Hills lie in the northern part of our area.

Large expanses of cereal fields are common. Few hedges or trees are left and unless there is oilseed rape such areas are a desert as far as successful beekeeping is concerned. Fortunately parts of West Fife are not suitable for this form of agriculture.

Rough ground with sheltered spots make excellent apiary sites. This apiary has large areas of wild raspberries, bramble and willow herb available for bee forage.

HONEY SOURCES IN WEST FIFE

By John Durkacz

It has been said of Fife that it is a land of contrasts, with a cold soil "that girned all Summer and grat all Winter", but such a gloomy description is not entirely true. In the Dunfermline Beekeepers' Association we do not attempt to draw strict boundaries to our activities, but for the purpose of this article I shall confine myself to the district of Dunfermline itself, stretching some dozen miles or so to Kincardine in the west, northwards to the pastoral scenes of the Devon Valley, including the windswept Cleish Hills, and east towards Aberdour on the coast and Lochore by Benarty Hill. Many of our Association activities over the years have taken place in this area and so many statements will be borne out by local experience and may well apply to other areas in Fife.

In some early 19th century agricultural reports it was considered that keeping bees in Fife was fraught with difficulties, largely on account of the climate and was "better confined to the few hives found in gentlemens' gardens". Certainly in West Fife in recent years there have been no large scale commercial operators, though in East Fife there are some successful operators with large numbers of hives. However, about 50 years ago James McDonald, a nurseryman from Cairneyhill and a Past President of our Association, worked about 50 hives in the Cairneyhill and Newmills area as a small scale commercial interest, and by all accounts very successfully. For the most part beekeepers in West Fife have been hobbyists running up to a dozen hives.

The coastal area along the shores of the Forth from Aberdour to Kincardine is undoubtedly milder and has a fertile soil. Here there are plentiful woodlands with excellent stands of mature sycamore which are ideal for bees. Just inland from Dalgety Bay the sheltered woodlands around Otterston are an excellent area and it was here that the late James Ritchie kept bees for many years. Travelling northwards from the coast the land rises in a stepwise fashion to the heights of the Cleish Hills towards the north of Dunfermline. Here the terrain contrasts sharply with the undulating woodlands and fields near Otterston and the pastoral setting of Saline, and becomes a bare and windswept panorama of moor and outcrops of rock. Spring flowering of plants on higher ground can be 2 or 3 weeks behind the coastal fringes depending on altitude and exposure. In the eastern range of our area are the towns and villages of old industrial Fife, such as Lochgelly, Lochore, and Ballingry which have borne the brunt of industrialisation and then recession. Here the landscape has been impoverished, but praiseworthy attempts are being made to regenerate it, as at Lochore Meadows Country Park.

Dunfermline itself offers surprisingly good opportunities for the beekeeper with numerous early spring flowers in its gardens and the well wooded parklands of Pittencrieff and the "Glen" with fine stands of sycamore and lime. Sycamore is plentiful along the coastal fringe and also in the wooded policies of the fine estates

which still exist in West Fife. Broomhall near Limekilns and Charlestown, and Inzievar near Oakley are prime examples. Good early season flows of strong dark sycamore honey used to be common but the recent pattern of cold late springs we have been experiencing seems to have put a stop to that. Also the advent of oilseed rape which is so attractive to bees usually overlaps the sycamore flow and eclipses it. In some ways the loss of hedges and small fields of clover under a blanket of barley has been offset by the growing of oilseed rape. This crop has been of great value to our bees but has met with a very mixed reception from the beekeeping fraternity.

Rape has only appeared in this locality in the last few years and supported by the EEC Intervention Board Subsidies has increased rapidly in acreage as it fits in well with cereal growing. This year I counted nine brilliantly coloured fields of rape within foraging distance of my apiary. Now the bees can be virtually assured, given the weather, of sufficient spring flows of nectar to stimulate the colonies to full expansion and with already strong colonies the chance to store creditable surpluses of honey. A further development has been the sowing of new varieties of rape in spring and late summer, giving a succession of fields in flower from May till July.

The stimulus to the colonies is, of course, welcome but not all beekeepers are overjoyed at the prospect of large surpluses of oilseed rape honey. Some who have been unwilling to change have even given up, but for the rest of us we simply have to "set to" and extract as soon as possible because of its rapid granulation in the comb.

Whatever we might think about it our beekeeping methods are being transformed. The subject is so important to beekeepers that Steele and Brodie of Wormit organized an Open Day last year specifically dealing with oilseed rape and managing the colonies in preparation for this. It was a resounding success, with beekeepers attending from all parts. Mr Robson from the Borders was there to explain how the extensive commercial beekeeper handled the crop and Bernhard Möbus, the College Adviser in Beekeeping from Craibstone, lectured almost nonstop all day, barely pausing to draw breath. Surely some of us must have learned something!

Before the flow the beekeeper has the choice of whether he will go for a crop of honey from the rape or to make increases of his stocks and get new brood combs drawn out. If he plans to go for the honey then the stocks must be strong and uniting some weaker colonies may be necessary. For most small scale beekeepers the ideal is to remove the honey, even before it is sealed, and extract it as soon as possible. This honey will usually have to be heated gently in a "warming cabinet" and later preferably blended with other honey. One problem beekeepers have been experiencing in this area is the high moisture content of this honey in wet springs and its tendency to ferment. It all adds up to making life just that bit more complicated.

Following the oilseed rape there is generally a gap until the later summer flows but if apiaries are located close to rough uncultivated areas a fair flow from wild raspberries may be obtained. In certain parts of East Fife there are, of course, good areas of raspberries under cultivation which is not generally the case for West Fife. There are, however, at least two areas to the west of Dunfermline where raspberries are cultivated on a significant acreage worth moving the bees to. But

unfortunately there are problems with spraying of insecticides on these fruit farms and beekeepers must liaise with the fruit growers. For the most part they are extremely responsible people and realise the benefit they are receiving from the pollinating activities of the bees and will attempt to modify their spraying activities. From my discussions it seems that spraying of the blossom is required in some cases which is, of course, highly dangerous for the bees. All that can be done is to come to some arrangement to spray in the late evening and on overcast days. Fortunately spraying of the rape crop has not been a problem in our area of West Fife as it has not been grown for long enough to encourage a build up of pests.

Areas of "wild ground" are now at a premium especially along the intensively cultivated coastal parts. They can still be found further inland in estate grounds or in areas previously cleared of woods and allowed to regenerate. Here many useful nectar producing plants such as wild raspberry, bramble, and willowherb will abound, the result being an excellently flavoured honey. The willowherb is an especially useful crop in West Fife and can be found almost anywhere on waste ground, by railway embankments and especially in areas where forest has been cleared. A few years ago there was an excellent area of willowherb in Dunning Glen in the Ochil Hills Forest but unfortunately this has gradually receded with the growth of the young trees. Where all else fails it can certainly produce a crop for the beekeeper.

Unfortunately for us in this district clover is the plant of yesteryear. It produces fine honey and at one time was the beekeepers' main crop. The beautiful scent of the flowers on a warm, humid summer's day can never be forgotten, but modern farming practices have changed all that. Take the Crossford and Cairneyhill areas for example; some older beekeepers have spoken of very large yields of clover honey they remembered and the reasons are quite simple. There were once several dairy farms with small fields bordered with hedges and permanent pasture with an abundance of clover. There were also numerous trees, mainly sycamore, giving shelter. All this has disappeared and the fields are now vast open affairs under a sea of barley.

However, for the beekeeper who is prepared to search, clover can be found but it is not always of a good nectar yielding variety. Potentially good areas are north of Saline, towards the Devon Valley, and in areas around Rumblingbridge which are, strictly speaking, not in our county. But despite this I have been pleasantly surprised to find the odd meadow or two within flying distance of apiaries, with excellent clover but unfortunately not enough to be predominant sources of nectar. Significant numbers of lime trees are not common in our district but are mainly found within parks around some of the remaining country estates.

The gradual demise of some of the main nectar producing plants means that many beekeepers have made the annual migration to the heather the zenith of their calendar of activities. In the early days of the Association, when the use of vehicles was at a premium, special transport was arranged to collect members' hives by the lorry-load to travel to the heather. Favourite areas were traditionally Little Glenshee, the Sma' Glen and Sheriffmuir at the western end of the Ochils. At one time considerable areas of Blairadam Forest, the Cleish Hills, Lomond Hills, and the Ochil Hills were under heather but this has dramatically declined and in some cases disappeared altogether because of forestry activities, grazing pressures and years of burning. Some of the lowland areas of West Fife with poorer soils were also good heather moors at one time and patches remain in the Tulliallan

Forest and Brucefield areas in the extreme west of our range. It is said that such low-lying heather moors are not suitable for nectar secretion but some time ago excellent yields were obtained in the Tulliallan Forest by members of our Association before the trees had attained any size and smothered the heather for good.

Over the last 50 years there has been a gradual change in beekeeping activities with the loss of wild flowers, clover and wooded areas in West Fife. Beekeepers were "thicker on the ground" in those days and those following modern methods of management were able to obtain excellent surpluses of honey. In some ways the loss of forage has been offset by the advent of rape but this has necessitated a change in beekeeping practices. And what of the future? It is likely that there will be more oilseed rape with different varieties and a flowering period extending from May to Mid-July. The days of removing the honey at the end of the season will be replaced by continual extraction through the summer as soon as the honey is ready to come off. We are likely to see a gradual increase in oilseed rape acreage but there are further economic pressures coming which may well see some land going out of agricultural production. People are coming to realise that the countryside is an amenity to be enjoyed by all and that it is worthwhile keeping it diversified and beautiful.

EXPERIENCES WITH SCREEN BOARDS

By W. Richard Rozycki

In the early days of my beekeeping I was running the apiary on the basis of minimum interference with the colonies and the main task was to ensure that the bees had plenty of stores, were stimulated to reach strength early in the year and were not bothered by pests or disease. There was no attempt at swarm prevention; therefore when swarms issued they were often spectacular in size. Since I was normally informed of the issue of a swarm I would arrive at the apiary soon after the event to collect the swarm and hive the bees in the evening.

For several years the situation at the apiary was stable and no swarms were lost, the colonies were strong and healthy and produced a lot of honey. However, one year the time when the bees got swarming fever badly coincided with my being away for a couple of weeks and unfortunately several large swarms were lost.

This event prompted me to consider seriously some form of swarm control. In the past I was reluctant to experiment with this matter because a dispassionate comparison of apiaries showed that I was really getting good results with my simple method of beekeeping.

The idea of swarm control as devised by L. E. Snelgrove, described admirably in his book entitled "Swarming, its Control and Prevention" was appealing because of its logic and elegance. Therefore I decided to adopt it in my apiary.

Screen boards were made for every stock and placed in position in all the hives when two brood chambers were full, regardless of whether there were any signs of preparation to swarm or not. Often no queen cells were found in the queen rearing chamber which contained all the egg and brood combs and in such cases more combs with eggs were transferred to the chamber so that ultimately a young and fertile queen was produced.

The newly introduced method was showing good results, because young queens were produced to order and, in favourable seasons, a lot of honey as well. Also the hives taken to the heather always had a young queen and plenty of bees.

In theory it is a perfect system for a busy amateur to employ and in practice it works provided it is applied with comprehension so that it leads to the improvement and not the degradation of the strain of bees in the apiary. Queens should only be bred from eggs taken from colonies which are of good temper and behaviour whilst being inspected, are also good honey producers, have no tendency to excessive swarming, winter well and are reasonably resistant to disease.

Over the years my method of operation has undergone a number of alterations and now I use the screen board only on those colonies which, on inspection, show advanced or sealed queen cells which will inevitably result in swarming within the next few days. Since such a colony is normally large, the finding of-the queen can present a major problem and can be most intimidating to beginners; therefore

the whole colony is shaken upon a cloth on which a Taranoff board is resting and soon an artificial swarm forms. This large swarm containing the old queen is hived into a brood chamber containing drawn combs and foundation and mounted on the original stand of the hive. A queen excluder is placed above this chamber and all the supers that are necessary. Above the supers the screen board is placed with a bee escape hole covered with perforated zinc and on it rests the queen rearing chamber containing all the egg and brood combs and the remainder of the bees. If there is insufficient food in this chamber a feeder is installed above the crown board.

One of the top side entrances is open in the screen board and the normal "Snelgrove" procedure is followed in so far as the rearing of the queen is concerned. Should a queen be reared from an egg from a different stock, all the queen cells in the queen rearing chamber are destroyed and a frame of eggs from a selected colony is introduced so that the queen cells contain eggs from that colony alone.

If more than one queen is required, three frame nuclei are made with queen cells from the selected eggs a couple of days before the young queens hatch.

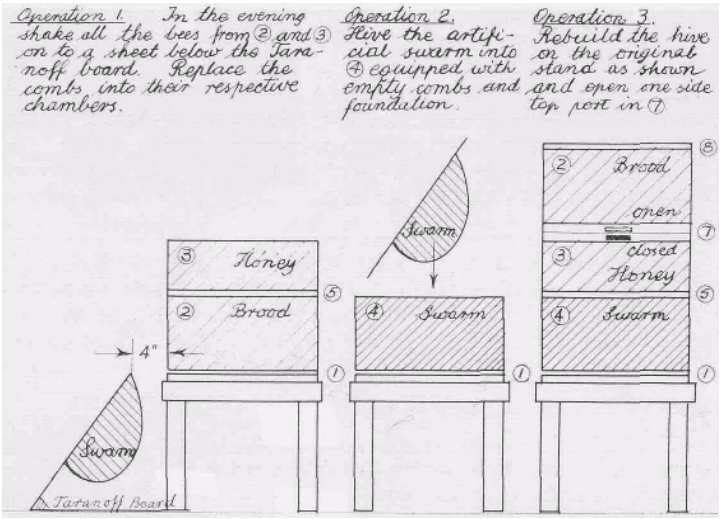
It is appreciated that the introduction of the Taranoff board may alter somewhat the composition of the artificial swarm as compared with that produced by the Snelgrove method, but this variation proved to be advantageous.

The Taranoff board is made from two pieces of about 10mm thick plywood 20 by 12 inches each, hinged at one of their short ends and made firm at about 60 degrees to one another. The top end of the board is aligned parallel with and 4 inches apart from the entrance to the hive from which the artificial swarm is made. The photograph depicts a model of a hive with a Taranoff board in position for making an artificial swarm and the diagram shows the sequence of operations to be carried out.

Experience indicates that the manipulation of a swarming colony with a Taranoff board in conjunction with a screen board will prevent the issue of a swarm, without looking for the queen, even at a most advanced stage.

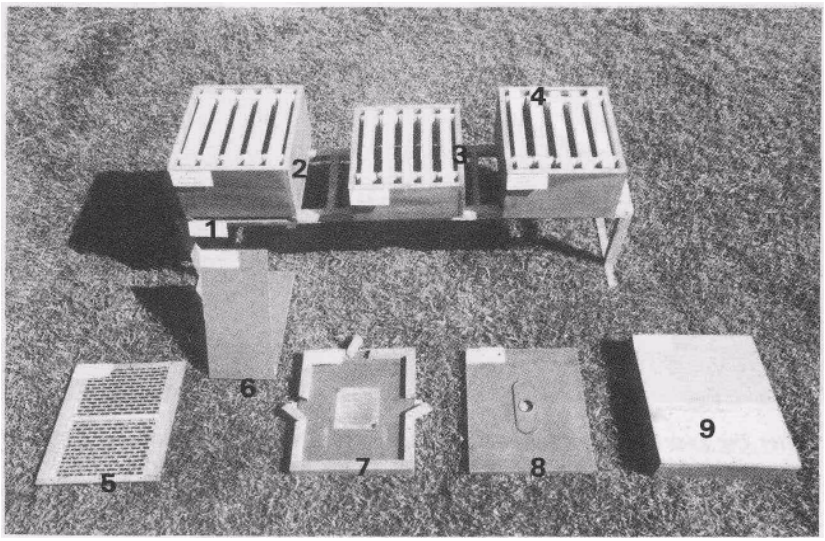
Using this method of swarm control to produce good queens calls for a certain amount of planning in the selection of eggs from colonies whose characteristics it is desirable to propagate.

In conclusion, I feel that a few screen boards and a Taranoff board in an amateur beekeeper's apiary are handy gadgets to have.



Photograph showing the equipment required for dealing with a stock about to swarm, using the Snelgrove board and the Taranoff board in front of the brood chamber.

(1) Floor
(2) Brood Chamber
(3) Honey Super
(4) Swarm Chamber
(5) Queen excluder
(6) Taranoff Board
(7) Screen board (Snelgrove)
(8) Crown board
(9) Roof



After the swarm has been hived into the lower brood box from the Taranoff board the hive is reassembled. The old queen with the swarming bees is in the lower brood chamber. The nurse bees are with the brood and queen cells in the upper box and have a side entrance open on the screen board to fly from.

ADVICE ON POINTS OF ETIQUETTE
By W. Richard Rozycki

It is reasonable to keep two or three beehives in a suburban garden and no-one should take exception to this. However, keeping ten or more hives would be unreasonable and is liable to lead to trouble with the neighbours.

When bees are kept in the garden, a jar of honey given to a neighbour will make one welcome when a swarm lodges in a neighbour's garden. The notion that it is permissible to trespass in pursuit of a swarm is ill-founded; permission to do so must be obtained.

Although bees are regarded as "ferae naturae" they are the property of a beekeeper until they break away from his custody, when they become the property of their next captor. If one is asked to remove a swarm from a place close to someone else's apiary, the swarm should be taken. However, before removing it the neighbouring beekeeper should be asked whether he has lost it; should this be the case the rightful owner should be allowed to hive the swarm, provided he can show some evidence that it was from his apiary.

Should one develop a good strain of bees, beekeeping neighbours should be offered spare queen cells. If one improves the stocks of neighbours this can only help to maintain the high quality of one's own bees since neighbour's drones may take part in the fertilisation of one's own queens.

One should be willing to look after the hives of a beekeeping friend when he is away. Perhaps some day help may be required in similar circumstances.

It is common sense to send annually bee samples for a disease check since such action helps oneself and neighbouring beekeepers to prevent the spread of disease.

Some beekeepers in suburban areas leave empty hives with brood chambers and old combs in the hope of catching stray swarms. Such action is of doubtful ethical merit and is avoided amongst good beekeepers since the scout bees from a swarm finding such *a.* desirable home may decamp before the rightful owner has an opportunity to capture it.

Local agricultural and horticultural shows should be supported by entering honey exhibits and meeting others so that they may be informed about the craft of beekeeping and the bees' undoubted beneficial effect on the environment.

HONEY-POTS

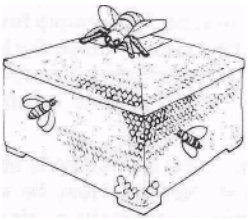
By Margaret Ritchie

The word "HONEY" is derived from the Hebrew "ghoneg" which taken literally means "delight" and so honey-pots could be described as "delightful pots", and delightful things are collectable things.

Let me tell you about my collection of pottery and china honey-pots. All the pots are practical as well as being decorative and hold up to lib (454g), as they were made before metrication.

A skep design is the most popular one and comes in various sizes and materials. There are all — white glass ones, a light — coloured pottery skep with colourful flowers and painted bees and dark — brown skeps from Devon, which are made sitting on little stools. I also have very dark coloured skeps which come from Portugal and creamy coloured Belleek china festooned with shamrocks from Ireland. One unusual honey-pot is in the design of a slim skep, resembling a windmill, which comes from Holland.

Another design is a hollowed tree trunk with a fitted lid adorned with a bee and is a favourite with our "foreign" potters. Some of these are very colourful such as the Marutoware pots from Japan.



Two — handled pots are rare, but I have a French one which supports a majestic drone bee. Another two — handled foreign pot with a honeycomb design and bees was featured in a television commercial for Stork margarine some years ago. Speaking about advertising, a larger skep design was shown on a breakfast table advertising Walls' sausages, so honey does enjoy some free publicity.

Square designs in china to take a standard section are very interesting. The most sought after one has a honeycomb design on the four sides and the lid has a knob in the shape of a colourful bee. One square dish has a basket-weave design with blossoms on the lid; another has a wooden hive design and the lid resembles the roof of the hive. Pooh Bear loved his honey out of a stoneware pot. Larbert Pottery created just such a pot for my Honey Market some 12 years ago. This also had a 6oz plastic tumbler which fitted inside the pot.

Novelty pots for honey are always fun and the "Bee" from Harrods, made by an English firm, is no exception. Another "Bee" I have, has at one time had a belly full of honey and stands supported on its metal legs. From West Germany there is one which has a honey-bear posing on a tree stump guarding the honey.

The Americans favour pouring honey on to their waffles and for this purpose a honey jug with a lid conies in an elongated skep design. For a similar purpose there is a teapot with a honeycomb design and hollyhocks around the pot and a bee on the lid. I am assured this was the English way of having "honey for tea", but I have my doubts.

Of course there are many honey pots made in crystal, silver and other valuable materials, but they lack the colour and detail that the potter can give. There was a silver honey pot made by Paul Storr in 1880 which was of a skep design with silver

bees, 4 inches high and weighing 10 ozs. This was sold at an auction in 1972 for £1,875 and at the same sale a pair of vegetable dishes by the same silversmith, and weighing 116 ozs made some £500 less. There's money in honey-pots!

One of the most exciting honey-pots I have seen was a Wemyss Ware square design with blossoms, so beautifully made the bees seemed almost alive, but the sting was in the price! I should love to hear from other honey-pot collectors, as I do have a few duplicates to swap if anyone is interested

Margaret Ritchie shows her collection of honey pots to association members at Abbott house

"BEE IS FOR BAKING"

by Kathleen Morris

One of the best ways I know of enjoying honey is on a piece of fresh crusty brown bread. However, its potential in cooking is far greater than this. It can give a subtle but distinctive flavour to both sweet and savoury dishes and of course in baking.

Chicken in a barbecue sauce is sure to be popular with all ages, and is one of those useful store cupboard recipes. Redcurrant cheesecake is different, marrying the sharpness of the currants with a definite background flavour of honey. Raisin tea bread is a good 'cut and come again' cake that can also be frozen. Last, honey and coconut cookies are for the children to try.

Chicken in Barbecue Sauce

4 Chicken breasts
1 ½ oz Butter
1 med. Onion — chopped
½tin Tomatoes — chopped
½ pt. Stock
Chopped Parsley to garnish

Marinade

1 tbspn Soy sauce
1 tbspn Worcester sauce
3 tbspns Tomato ketchup
1 tbspn Honey
1 teaspn made Mustard
Salt and pepper if necessary

Method

Mix the marinade ingredients in a shallow dish and add the chicken breast to the marinade. Coat well and leave for 1 hour or longer, turning occasionally. Then heat the butter in the pan and add onion and drained chicken breasts. Cook gently to brown and when ready add stock and tomatoes. Simmer slowly with the lid on for 30 — 40 minutes until the chicken is cooked. Remove the chicken to a hot serving dish. Add the marinade ingredients to the pan and boil rapidly and stir continuously to evaporate some liquid and thicken the sauce. Then pour it over the chicken and garnish with parsley and serve with rice and green salad or vegetables.

Redcurrant Cheesecake

8 ozs (225 gms) Cottage cheese sieved
2 tbspns Honey
5 ozs Cream (double) (150 mls)
8 ozs (225gms) Redcurrants — Liquidized and sieved
2 teaspns Gelatine and 2 tbspns water

Biscuit Base

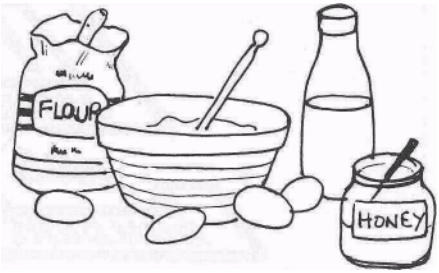
4 ozs (100 gms) Digestive biscuit crumbs
2 ozs (50 gms) Butter or margarine

Method

Line the bottom of an 8" loose based tin with greaseproof paper. Melt the butter or margarine and add crumbs. Mix well and press into the base of the tin. Place gelatine and water in a cup, stir well and stand in a pot of hot water. Add it while still warm to the redcurrants with the honey. Whip the cream to soft peaks then fold the cheese and redcurrant mixture into the cream gently. Pour onto the biscuit base, smooth the top then set in the fridge. Remove it from the tin and decorate simply with a small bunch of redcurrants.

Raisin Tea Bread

10 ozs (275 gms) Self raising flour
1 level teaspn Bicarbonate of soda
½ level teaspn Mixed spice
1½ gills (225 mls) Strong tea
6 ozs (150 gms) Raisins
3 tbspns Honey
4 ozs (100 gms) Margarine
2 Eggs



Method

Grease and line a large loaf tin (approx. 21bs or 1kg). Make tea and soak raisins in 1 !/2 gills. Allow this to cool and then sieve the flour, spice and bicarbonate of soda into the baking bowl. Melt the margarine and honey over a slow heat. Beat the eggs and add them, the margarine, honey and fruit mixture to the flour. Mix them thoroughly with a wooden spoon, and pour into the tin and spread level. Bake for approximately 1 hour till cooked. It should be well risen, brown and very slightly shrunk from the side of the tin. Cool in the tin for about 20 minutes, then finish cooling on a wire tray.

Honey and Coconut Cookies

2 ozs (50 gms) Coconut
4 ozs (100 gms) Rolled oats
3 ozs (75 gms) Honey
2 ozs (50 gms) Sultanas
1 oz (25gms) Soft brown sugar
4 ozs (100 gms) Margarine

Method

Cream the honey, sugar and margarine together. Add the remainder of the ingredients and mix thoroughly. Spread level in an oblong baking tin (7" by 11") and then bake for 25 — 30 minutes in the centre of the oven at 350 degrees F or Gas 4. The mixture should be light brown and slightly away from the edge. Cool in the tin for 15 minutes and the mixture will become crisp as it cools. Cut into squares when almost cold.