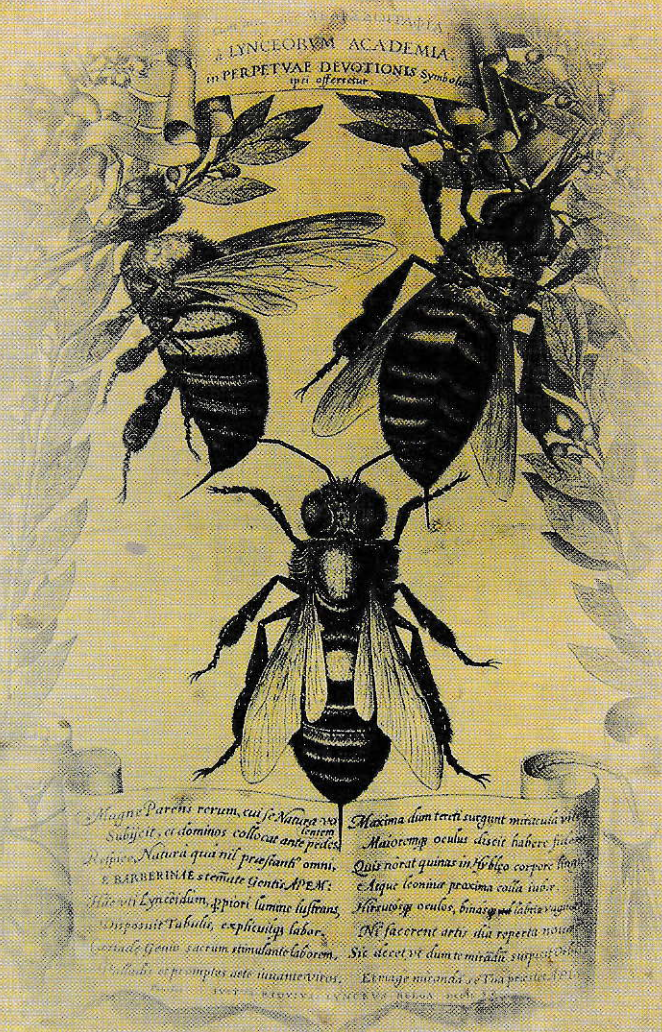
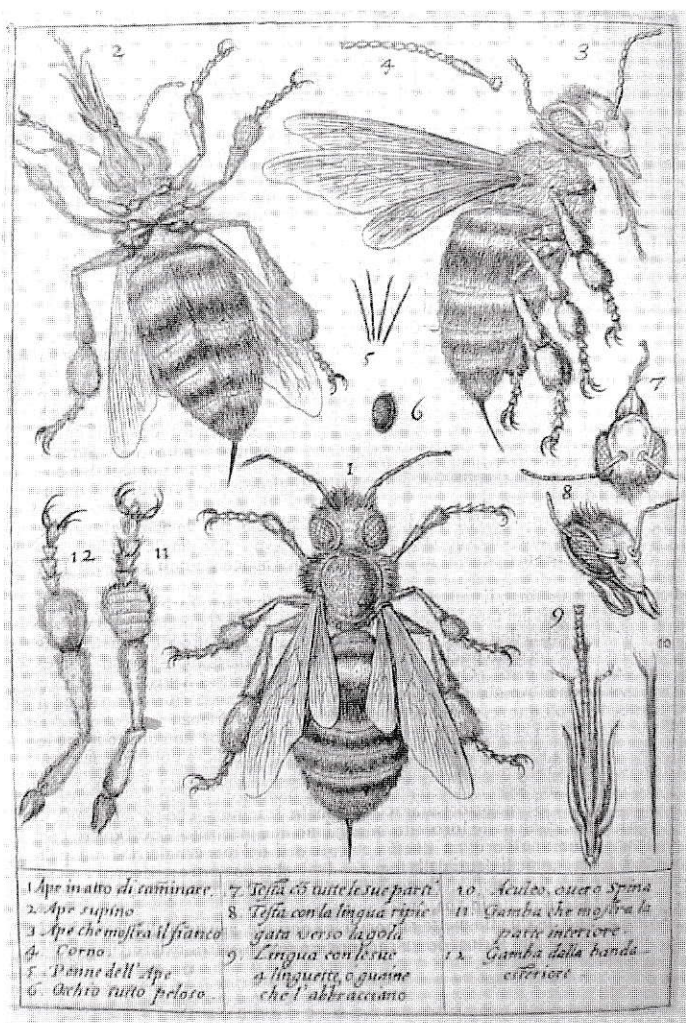


Scottish Beekeepers' Association

The Early Years



Una A. Robertson



Both the illustration here and on the front cover are taken from an engraving, made in 1625, of the first drawings of bees to be prepared with the aid of a microscope in 1618.

(The Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

Scottish Beekeepers' Association

The Early Years

Una A. Robertson

Published by The Scottish Beekeepers' Association 2012
Printed by Rannoch Press, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 3RU
Copyright © 2012 Una A. Robertson

Foreword

To have been in existence for 100 years is an amazing achievement for any organisation and for the Scottish Beekeepers' Association (S.B.A.) it is a milestone that we are particularly proud of today. It is indeed a great honour for me to be President in this Centenary year and to have the privilege of writing the foreword to the S.B.A. centenary booklet 'The Early Years'.

Reflecting on momentous changes which have shaped our history during the last hundred years, challenged us to look at our past and the way that beekeeping in all its various aspects has changed. With the centenary celebrations in mind we were delighted to ask one of our own members, Una Robertson, to collate information which would give a flavour of the history which has created the S.B.A. as it is today. Una was the ideal person to tackle this onerous task, not only a beekeeper in previous years, she is also a historian, former S.B.A. President and currently Library Convener with responsibility for the renowned Moir Library. I am delighted and very grateful that Una agreed to take up the challenge.

The history of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association is packed with interest deriving from the many personalities involved, from the way the S.B.A.'s foundations have been built upon and extended and from the development of beekeeping over the years. Una has, from our own Scottish Beekeeper magazine and many other sources, unearthed fascinating information about the history of the S.B.A. and the many people who have shaped it throughout its one hundred years in existence.

As you read on I feel certain you will be impressed by the skill, dedication and aspirations of those who have moulded the S.B.A. thus far. As I digested the Association's history, I paused to reflect on the motto of my old school which used the Latin words '*Respice, Prospice*', essentially meaning '*learn from the past and look to the future*'.

It is very evident that we face challenges today which were never envisaged. Changes in our environment, ecology, chemical engineering, cross species mite transfer and viruses have made present day beekeeping complex at best. However, though beekeeping in the past may have been simpler, it was undertaken initially with far less knowledge of the honeybee than we currently have access to and with little practical support compared to that available now. The dedication, skill, research and understanding of those beekeepers who have gone before us have created a heritage of which we can be justifiably proud and which affords us their skills, combined with development in techniques, to cope with modern day challenges.

As you grasp the history of the S.B.A. I trust that, like me, you will appreciate the legacy we have been gifted by our forebears and join with me in expressing a sincere desire to reflect their zeal, understanding and knowledge as we, in turn, mould the future of beekeeping.

To Una Robertson for all the work involved in the preparation of 'The Early Years', and, to those many beekeepers who are the subject and source of all this material, as President, on behalf of the membership of the S.B.A., I extend our grateful thanks and appreciation.

Phil McAnespie
President S.B.A.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are due to Phil McAnespie, President of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association, who first suggested that I should write a short history to mark the occasion of our Centenary and to the Centenary Committee for their support and encouragement. It was an honour to be asked and I was delighted to accept the invitation as it is a subject that has interested me for many years. As time passes it is all too easy for details of our early history to be lost and for the personalities who laid down the foundations of our Association to be forgotten.

I am also grateful to Mike Thornley who kindly agreed to check my text prior to completion and gave me the benefit of his advice.

To the printer Rannoch Press, thanks are due for their expertise in the layout of the booklet in general and for the cover design in particular.

Most of the illustrations were taken from early issues of *The Scottish Beekeeper* and they convey a flavour of the period. I appreciated Phil McAnespie's help in enhancing them ready for publication. However, I am indebted to The Trustees of The National Library of Scotland for permission to use their reproduction of the *Melissographia*, an engraving of the first drawing of bees to be made with the help of a microscope. It is, undoubtedly, one of the treasures of the Moir Library.

Una A. Robertson
Edinburgh, 2012

Introduction

This is the Centenary year for the Scottish Beekeepers' Association and, in the midst of celebrating such an achievement and looking forward to our next one hundred years, it is also a time when it is right that our thoughts turn back for a while to remember our origins and those who made the Association what it is today.

A report given to the first A.G.M. states:

'The Scottish Beekeepers' Association was founded on 25th May, 1912, to unite the beekeepers of Scotland, for their mutual benefit, in a national confederation, and to promote, by the concerted action of its members, the extension and general advancement of beekeeping throughout the land.'

Thus the record, in the fewest possible words, of a momentous event for the beekeepers of Scotland - an event that continues to have lasting effects as we arrive at the Centenary of that foundation.

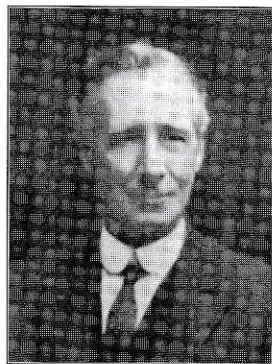
The world of 1912 was very different to that of 2012. Things commonplace now were rarities then: aviation and the cinema, for example, were both in their infancy and few houses had central heating, a telephone or a refrigerator. Television was well into the future. Memorable events of the era included the sinking of the Titanic, the deaths of Captain Scott and his party returning from the South Pole, and the Coronation of George V, while the First World War was just two years away. Also to be noted should be the recent introduction of the old-age pension and the ongoing campaign to achieve 'Votes for Women'.

In terms of beekeeping, many beekeepers had made the change to wooden hives, of which there were numerous designs, but there were, equally, those who kept on with the old-style straw skeps. However, at this date thousands of colonies were dying from an unknown cause, termed 'Isle of Wight Disease' ('IoW') which was sweeping across the country and causing devastation and despair.

This was the background to the formation of The Scottish Beekeepers' Association (S.B.A.) in 1912. It was not the first attempt to form an association to unite the beekeepers of Scotland; two previous attempts had failed to survive. Would this be third time lucky?

The Founding of the S.B.A.

The impetus for a third attempt at forming The Scottish Beekeepers' Association came from G. W. Avery, newly appointed Lecturer in Beekeeping at the Edinburgh & East of Scotland College of Agriculture. Shortly after arriving in Edinburgh he had written a letter to the press asking for a response from anyone interested in such a project. Even at that stage the infant scheme was in peril as he had then moved house and replies had not been forwarded! A second appeal went into the press. Promises of support were received from all parts of Scotland, from Stornoway to Dumfries it was said, and a preliminary meeting was held in Edinburgh:



G. W. Avery

'On 27th April 1912 a meeting of Beekeepers was held . . . the object being to consider what steps, if any, should be taken with regard to forming a Beekeeping Association for Scotland. There was a fair attendance and a large number of letters promising to support the movement were read. Delegates from several counties spoke in support of the proposed association: and it was ultimately unanimously resolved to proceed with the formation of a Scottish Beekeepers' Association. A committee was appointed to make the necessary arrangements for the inaugural meeting to be held on 25th May in the College, with the hope that many beekeepers and others would be present.'

A public meeting was held in the College as proposed '*to inaugurate a Beekeepers' Association for Scotland*'. The Revd. J. W. Blake, M.A. of Temple presided. He said that they were there that day to see if they could set on foot a National Beekeepers' Association. He thought that they were all in agreement that it would be desirable to have a central association which would have a connection with all the beekeepers in Scotland, stimulating those who were already engaged in the industry and inducing others to take it up. The meeting agreed to form such an association and then proceeded to draft the rules and regulations. The report continued by saying the Association would endeavour to accomplish its objectives by:-

- arranging for the delivery of public lectures about bees and bee culture in various towns and villages in all parts of the country
- promoting the establishment of County or District Associations
- offering to all its members facilities for obtaining first class expert advice
- maintaining a library of the most advanced works on apiculture
- holding an annual show of bees, honey, wax, hives, appliances &c., in connection with the show of the Highland & Agricultural Society
- granting . . . medals and other prizes to be awarded at that annual show
- convening a beekeepers' Conference at that said show
- fostering combined effort in the extirpation of bee disease
- organising the disposal of produce on the most profitable terms
- working an 'Exchange and Mart' for the sale or exchange of bees, hives, &c.,

- arranging for the supply of hives and appliances to the members of the Association at wholesale prices
- holding examinations in beekeeping

The inauguration of the S.B.A. was greeted by the Beekeepers' Gazette with the words: "*We heartily welcome the advent of Scotland's Association, and sincerely hope that this long-expected and much required movement may have complete success.*"

A further meeting was held that August when an urgent appeal was made asking for more beekeepers to become members. This was followed by a discussion on Isle of Wight Disease during which the need for a powerful association was emphasised.

Background to the formation of the SBA

In 1874 Scotland's first attempt to form a national association had taken place with the founding of The Caledonian Apiarian and Entomological Society (C.A.E.S.). The driving force for this, although other elements lay in the background, came about through C. N. Abbott, the appliance dealer, who had launched The British Bee Journal (B.B.J.) the previous year. He called for a great Show of Living Bees, Hives, Honey and 'Apiarian Appliances' to be held at the Crystal Palace in London. Here, Scottish competitors proved very successful which led, shortly afterwards, to the formation of the C.A.E.S. It was in existence for about 15 years. The membership came largely from the West but it failed to attract a wider following, despite staging a number of successful shows around the country.

In 1889 when the C.A.E.S. was unable to participate in that year's Highland & Agricultural Show at Melrose, Mr (later Sir) Thomas Gibson Carmichael of Chiefswood, near Melrose arranged for an alternative exhibition. Whether he rescued the failing C.A.E.S. or created a new association is unclear but by 1891 The Scottish Beekeepers' Association had been formed and had outlined its objectives. He acted as Secretary. This Association drew its membership largely from the east of the country. It organised six major shows within three years at which a giant model bee, provided by Sir Thomas at a cost of £200, was used for demonstration purposes.

When Sir Thomas was elected to Westminster as Liberal M.P. for Midlothian in 1895 he resigned as Secretary and the Association dwindled without his support. However, in 1898 there appeared a fortnightly journal called The Scottish Beekeeper: it ran for just over two years and stopped as suddenly as it had started.

There were some who saw the S.B.A. of 1912 as a resuscitation of the 1891 Association but those writing in the 1920s and '30s, who held strong memories of the actual events, refer to G. W. Avery as 'The Founding Father'.

Developments after 1912

The newly-formed S.B.A. got off to a shaky start. The number of individual members increased slowly but Midlothian was the only association to affiliate. In 1914, a further effort was made to link up all

the existing beekeeping associations in Scotland. Beekeepers, therefore, were asked to attend a series of meetings in order to consider the way forward. 'There was', it was reported, 'evidence of the growth in desire among beekeepers for greater co-operation' and certain proposals were tentatively brought forward at a meeting in July. At the second meeting in October, when '27 prominent beekeepers and others' attended, the Chairman urged all present to weigh well the matter in hand. The rules revised at the previous meeting were then submitted, revised still further and in their amended form were to be sent out to the beekeeping associations in Scotland. At the final meeting in February 1915 it was agreed to restructure the S.B.A. on the basis of federation, replacing the original 'affiliation'. This decision proved decisive and the reconstituted national association came into being. Thereafter membership numbers soared.

At the Quarterly Meeting of the S.B.A. Executive Council, Chairman Robert Steele reported that since the previous meeting there had been a significant increase of 280 in the membership and, counting 'isolated' members (ie. individuals outwith a local branch) now stood at almost 800.

The following year, 1916, membership was close to 1,000, which meant that in eighteen months numbers had quadrupled and three new County Associations had been formed, namely Fifeshire, West Stirlingshire and Sutherland.

At the A.G.M. of 1917 the Secretary, Henry Crombie of Dunkeld, was able to report that within two years membership had risen from 250 to 1,400 and the number of federated associations had risen from 7 to 12 within the past year *'and that these associations range from Sutherland in the north to Ayrshire in the south, and from Argyllshire in the west to Aberdeenshire in the east, so there could be little doubt of the success of the movement. The Executive Council'*, he continued, *'may well congratulate themselves on the fruitfulness of their efforts, and may feel amply rewarded for all their strenuous and whole-hearted endeavours.'* This was especially commendable when set against the background of the War and of the devastation caused by Isle of Wight Disease.

The A.G.M. held in 1918 was told of further progress: membership of over 1,700 and an additional 5 federated associations amongst which were the South of Scotland, one of the oldest associations, and the youngest, namely the Glasgow and District. There were few associations that had not federated and the S.B.A., therefore, could be seen as Scotland's national association of beekeepers.

Subscriptions at that point were as follows: 'independent' members paid 5 shillings (25p) per year. Associations federated to the S.B.A. by adopting its Rules and paying a one-off entry fee of 5s and an annual charge of one-tenth of their minimum annual subscription of each member, the minimum annual payment to the S.B.A. being 2s 6d (12.5p). Due to the fact of there being a credit balance of over £29 at the A.G.M. in 1920 it was resolved to reduce the subscription of federated associations so that the minimum would be 5s (25p) and the maximum £1 1s (£1.05).

The A.G.M. of 1919 was told of yet greater progress: membership had risen to considerably over 2,000, federated associations numbered 23, 'independent members' showed a significant increase, while few counties remained unrepresented. Furthermore, the S.B.A. was now being given due recognition as the national association and the Board of Agriculture for Scotland was so impressed by the S.B.A.'s successful efforts in fostering beekeeping in Scotland that it had decided to give a grant in aid of such work. Equally, the S.B.A. had had its work recognised by the Highland & Agricultural Society and arrangements were in place to hold a honey show in conjunction with that association's show during July. (However, this statement is a little confusing since the S.B.A. and its predecessors had been staging a show at the Highland for a number of years.)

Standing Committees

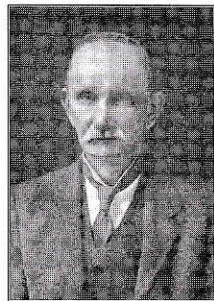
In the course of those early years several standing committees were set up that were designed to cover specific aspects of the S.B.A.'s objectives. The first would seem to have been those relating to the Library, to Markets, Propaganda, Shows, Legislation and Diseases, with those for Education and Finance not far behind. In addition to these, by 1950 there were Committees for Insurance, Publications, Films and Lantern Slides (formerly dealt with by Library), Research and The Scottish Beekeeper Business Committee. The basic framework has lasted to this day although some committees have been absorbed into others with similar functions; some have had a change in title and their remit has been adapted to current needs.

THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE had John Moir as its Convener. The work of administering the collection and sending books out to borrowers will have changed little over the years. Even then, borrowers only paid for the return postage on their books, a tradition that continues to be maintained. By 1918 members had access to over 500 books and the number increased each year.

THE PROPAGANDA COMMITTEE was set up to organise and establish new associations throughout the country and to encourage beekeepers to join their national association. The remit also included publicising the work of the S.B.A. and overseeing the publication of various leaflets. Early plans encompassed a scheme to have a census of all necessary information relating to beekeeping throughout Scotland.

To begin with it also looked into legislation affecting beekeepers, together with educational matters; one early task was to present a memorial to the Board of Agriculture asking for the institution of graded exams in beekeeping alone, without a compulsory study of related subjects. However, separate committees were soon established to take charge of these aspects but it was not until 1973 that the post of Membership Convener was created.

THE MARKETS COMMITTEE'S first Convener was R. Steele, of Steele & Brodie, the appliance dealers. One of the S.B.A.'s early objectives to be set in train was the provision to members of beekeeping equipment at wholesale prices. Robert Steele presented the Council with three possible schemes. This was discussed, a decision was taken and the scheme came into operation immediately. In the first year alone it was said to have saved members over £100, with sales of more than 200,000 sections, over 1.5 tons of foundation and *'a large output of hives and appliances'*. Within a few years other suppliers were advertising that they were an *'Official Contractor to the S.B.A.'* – firms such as D. G. Purdie, Glasgow, 'Seed Merchant & Nurseryman, Specialty Beekeepers' Supplies' and E. H. Taylor Ltd., Welwyn, Herts. By 1924 there were 8 such *'official contractors'* – 3 in Glasgow, 1 each in Perth, Forfar and Wormit, plus 2 English companies.



Robert Steele

The Committee also launched a second scheme which saw the opening of depots in Edinburgh and Perth during 1915 for the sale of members' produce. Despite a shortage of honey that season, as a first experiment the results proved most satisfactory. The prices secured were considered generous: one thousand five hundred sections had been sold, in addition to extracted honey, and the demand for heather honey could not be met. By 1919 the value of honey disposed of through the depots was reported to be £500.

There is a constant theme of regret running through the annual reports regarding the enormous expenditure on importing foreign honey and wax when there was so much potential for Scottish beekeepers to produce more of the home-grown product. This was not new; exactly the same stance had been taken in 1750 by Robert Maxwell, author of *'The Practical Beemaster'* and by subsequent authors such as James Bonner who wrote *'A new plan for speedily increasing the number of bee-hives in Scotland'* in 1795.

The average annual value of imported honey between 1904-1923 amounted to £122,621; the value of imports fluctuating widely from £29,127 in 1904 to £892,888 in 1919.

The Committee's guidelines as to prices for 1920 were as follows: 1st grade sections at 3 shillings each (15p) and a similar price for 1st grade extracted honey. In 1923 prices for blossom honey had been revised downwards with a recommendation for a minimum price of 2s (10p) per lb. That season the heather bloomed 'luxuriantly' but the bees could only work it intermittently and comb was to be sold at 4s or 5s (20p or 25p). Even at these prices demand outstripped supply, the Committee said, and there would be little profit to the beekeeper. Members were urged to use the S.B.A. labels on their produce as a guarantee of excellence to all concerned.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE took decisions on general income and expenditure. The Treasurer for some years was John Moir, better known as the Librarian. The sums involved seem tiny: for example, the income for 1921 showed an increase of £4 on the year, balanced against a decrease in expenses of nearly £30.

In 1919 the Board of Agriculture gave a grant of £100 to aid in the work of promoting the Association: one of its conditions was the preparation of a Register of Beekeepers and Hives in Scotland and this was undertaken by Miss Beveridge (presumably sister or daughter of Revd. John Beveridge, President in 1918 and one of the few surviving members of the earlier S.B.A.). She gained the necessary information by contacting the District Food Controllers for their lists of beekeepers who had applied for the wartime sugar ration; she also asked the County and District Secretaries for names and the numbers of hives and whether these were frame hives or straw skeps; thereafter, individuals in areas without associations were approached. By 1922 the Census was completed as far as was possible although it was recognised at the time that 30% should probably be added to the final figures.

The Census recorded 8,971 beekeepers and 31,281 hives (unspecified) in total, but the figures were given by individual county, along with calculations of the number of beekeepers per square mile, the number of hives per acre, and the population of the area. It was suggested that the ongoing work on the Census should continue under the auspices of the Propaganda Committee. Interestingly, it was reported that the Norwegian Beekeepers' Association intended to follow Scotland's example.

THE SHOWS COMMITTEE was inactive during the 1914-18 War as no annual show took place. In 1919, the Highland & Agricultural Show was held in Edinburgh. Despite the small amount of honey being exhibited, due to the late season, the display of appliances, the schedule of talks and practical demonstrations in the Bee Tent, the giant model bee (on loan from the Midlothian Association) used for lectures on anatomy, the examinations for Beemaster and Expert Beemaster, and the Annual Conference – all contributed to a memorable Show and many casual observers, the report continued, decided then and there to take up beekeeping. Thereafter the annual shows developed around a similar format although the displays of honey and hive products were liable to fluctuate depending on each season's weather.

In 1920 the S.B.A. Treasurer reported an outlay of over £50 on the Highland Show, held that year in Aberdeen. The 1922 Show held in Dumfries saw a much larger display than in previous years with 126 entries and some beautiful specimens of honey, including heather in sections. Seven demonstrations and lectures were given each day in the bee tent. There were several classes for hives and appliances, including one 'for Cottager's use, unpainted, price not to exceed 35 shillings' (£1.75). The honey classes generally demanded 6 jars or 6 sections; there were classes for wax, for products made with the aid of honey 'recipe to be attached'; and for 'a display of honey in any form, staged in a space 3 ft x 3 ft, height from table not exceeding 4 ft'. The ladies did rather well, prizewinners included Miss P. E. Mackenzie, Dumfries; Mrs A. McGeorge, Torthewold; and Miss Rachel Munro, Dufftown.

LEGISLATION & DISEASES COMMITTEE - The question of legislating to prevent the spread of bee diseases had been ongoing even before the onset of Isle of Wight Disease. Legislation for Ireland had been passed in 1908, although it had been too early to include 'IoW', and numerous beekeepers in both England and Scotland expressed regret that they were excluded from such benefits. Over the succeeding years, attempts to obtain such legislation for Great Britain as a whole were hotly debated. The controversy rumbled on throughout the War years and continued thereafter: drafts were prepared and presented, deputations talked to various official bodies, improvements, amendments and revisions were discussed. In Scotland opponents of legislation were dubious of a nation-wide Bill due to the arbitrary and seemingly unlimited powers proposed for the inspectors and the lack of any mention of their specific qualifications. Even more pertinent was the question as to who would be conducting their training, let alone issuing the essential certificates on completion. There were additional fears of unwarranted interference from London and the expense of the expanded bureaucracy required to run the scheme.

Some beekeepers 'of great experience', including a few from Scotland, came together in The Bee Defence League to oppose the 1921 Bill and again in 1924 when yet another proposal came from the Ministry of Agriculture. In summoning the League to take action again, the Editor of the Beekeepers' Gazette announced: *'A common danger brought live men together last time from the most distant parts, and it was a most glorious fight. We could even welcome another Bill for the enjoyment of such conferences, and good fellowship, and determination and fun, as characterised the last one.'*

In 1924 legislation was passed for England and Wales; responsibility for administering the Order was given to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. At this point, Scotland's beekeepers were given a further opportunity to present their views on the subject but the situation remained unresolved for another twenty years or so. Eventually, it was decided to ask for an expansion of the College Advisory Services together with general beekeeping advice and education. It was not until the passing of The Bees Act, 1980 which was accepted by Scottish beekeepers because of the threat of varroasis infection that responsibility for notifiable bee diseases was passed to the then Department of Agriculture for Scotland.

Other areas of legislation exercising the Committee's attention included the labelling of imported honey with its country of origin. In 1920 it was resolved to appeal to the Board of Trade to incorporate a clause on honey in the Merchandise Marks Act in order to protect the home product. Although further representations were made, the matter took its time to be resolved and eventually The Order in Council requiring the marking of honey imported into the United Kingdom came into operation on 13th January 1929.

In 1939 The Legislation Committee was concerned about the recently passed Food & Drugs Act which included a section governing the composition and sale of honey. It recommended that an approach should be made to the Minister of Health to establish a legal definition for honey and proposed a form of wording to be put to him.

That year there were also concerns about the serious increase of bracken throughout the Highlands to the detriment of the heather and the fact that, while the government grants were helpful, they were insufficient for the problem. It was decided the S.B.A. should approach the newly-appointed Minister on the matter.

The perennial question regarding the legal ownership of swarms and whether the owner of the hive from which the bees had swarmed had the right to follow them looked like being resolved once and for all as a case was actually before the Court of Appeal. However, the Convener's report on this ended '*Conditional leave to appeal to the House of Lords has been given*'. It would seem that no appeal was made thereafter as the beekeeping press remained silent on the matter. Although the judgment given referred only to England and Wales, it caused considerable anxiety in Scotland.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - In July 1916 a new Committee to oversee Education was appointed, with instructions to consider the question of examinations for beekeepers. It was asked to formulate a scheme and advise the Council as to procedure at the next meeting. By October the Committee had drawn up a scheme and recommended that it should be submitted to the Board of Agriculture for consideration.

In January 1918 the Convener, Revd. John Beveridge, reported to Council that a meeting had taken place between representatives of the three Colleges (of Agriculture) and the S.B.A. on the subject of examinations in beekeeping. It had become evident that the Colleges did not altogether favour the idea of uniting with the S.B.A. on this scheme. After much discussion, Council decided that the time had come for independent action and the Committee was then charged with drawing up a schedule of examinations to be run by the Association alone. By June 1918 it was ready to be launched. The A.G.M. of 1919 was told that the first examinations had been held.

Specimens of the certificates for 'The Beemaster' and 'The Expert Beemaster', devised and drawn up by J. Langlands, architect, of Dundee, were much admired and a provisional list of examiners was made. The Highland Show of 1919, the first to be held after the War, was blessed with near-perfect weather; the S.B.A. held its annual exhibition there; and many beekeepers took their examinations – a noticeable feature being the number of ladies who came forward to be tested.

Three years later, the 1922 A.G.M. was told that wherever 5 candidates from any one district had applied, an examiner would be appointed to test them in their own area. There were currently 14 candidates awaiting examination for Honey Judge, 8 for Expert Beemaster and 12 for Beemaster. Up to that date the total number of certificates achieved amounted to 25 for Honey Judge, 65 Expert and 196 for the Beemaster. Later that year, after another season of examinations, over 300 certificates had been awarded, the average candidate having been a beekeeper for 11 years, with 6 stocks of bees.

INSURANCE COMMITTEE - The S.B.A., it is said, was the pioneer in Britain with regard to insurance for beekeepers. Schemes were certainly proposed and although a Committee is mentioned in 1922 it is another two years before there is evidence of a Convener reporting to the AGM.

Beekeepers' liability was seemingly a cause for concern since the subject came up early in 1913: 'A further discussion took place' it was stated, 'regarding insurance for beekeepers against liability for damage caused by their bees, the scheme proposed being, to insure for the sum of 1d per hive, with a minimum of 6d' (2.5p). This was unanimously adopted after several speakers emphasised the necessity for this insurance, as they themselves had had some very narrow escapes the previous year.

The subject was brought up again in January 1921. However, in 1924 a scheme was launched which provided individual beekeepers with insurance against fire, theft, loss due to Foul Brood and claims by Third Parties because of stings: the premium was 2s (10p) for one stock and 4d (2p) for each additional hive or stock. The advertisement ended by stating: 'This insurance only covers bees in movable Comb Hives.' A few years later similar terms were announced although the premiums had been reduced to 1d per stock with what were described as 'No hampering conditions' and with 'Additional advantages'.

From time to time the terms were slightly changed and came to include the provision of insurance against Foul Brood on a block basis so as to enable associations to provide compensation for all their members and to encourage beekeepers to make an early report of any signs of disease.

BEEKEEPING FOR WOMEN - this Committee was set up during 1920-21 with Lady Salvesen as Convener and Mrs J. E. P. Robertson as Vice-Convener. Their objective was to offer advice and assistance to members of the Women's Rural Institute and other women's organisations that might wish to have lectures and practical demonstrations, and to give guidance to those thinking to start in beekeeping or to extend their knowledge. It did much good work but was dispensed with in 1927 'as the ladies were equally eligible on the other committees'. Co-incidentally or not, that year the S.B.A. elected its first 'Lady President', Mrs J. E. P. Robertson of Edinburgh.



Mrs J. E. P. Robertson sits on the left of this group of beekeepers at Collesie, 1927.

In 1929 at the 7th National Honey Show in London she gave the first lecture, speaking on 'The Value of Honey', a lecture which, the report said, 'showed much preparation and experience - moreover, those who were present were delighted with her charming brogue.' Much discussion followed and it was hoped her paper would be printed. The next day Mrs Robertson presided over 'Ladies Day' when Miss Pratt, Miss Flower, Miss Milne and Mrs Edgell were the lecturers and Mrs Anderson, wife of Dr John Anderson of Aberdeen, gave the vote of thanks.

However, the Revd. John Beveridge writing in 1940 considered the situation had been very different some 50 years before when women were not as knowledgeable or expected to have much practical experience about bees. Was this memory an accurate one? Their names might not have appeared among the S.B.A. Office Bearers very often in the early days but they were certainly around. Whether Miss Beveridge was a sister or a daughter to the Revd. John Beveridge is unclear but she was appointed as General Secretary in 1920 as well as Registrar for the census of beekeepers.

Women are to be found as S.B.A. members, as successful candidates at every level of the examinations and as prize-winners at the major shows. They are listed as Association Secretaries and as Presidents; they gave lectures, held demonstrations, took their place on the Committees, wrote articles for

the beekeeping press and pamphlets for the S.B.A. Mrs M. M. Hooper contributed her column 'To Beginners' for The Scottish Beekeeper over a remarkable 25 years, from January 1930 to December 1954, stirring up controversy at times: she was from Glamorgan and was thought sometimes to be out of tune with Scottish needs.

The apiarist to Mr Wood of Glassel, the generous benefactor to Scottish beekeeping, was Miss N. M. Robinson who was an S.B.A. Honey Judge, as were one or two others. Also in Aberdeenshire was Mrs Farquhar, described as '*competent and successful*', who was prominent in the development of beekeeping in the area, being District Secretary, a Touring Expert and a member of Council. For a short time she was in charge of the Craibstone apiary and assisted Dr John Rennie in his researches into 'IoW'. As well as Mrs Farquhar there was Elsie Harvey, a laboratory assistant, and she is credited with being the first person to actually see the as-yet unidentified tracheal mite although she played no further part in its identification.

However Miss Margaret Logan was unique in her appointment as a Junior Lecturer in Beekeeping to the North of Scotland College of Agriculture which was announced in January 1938. Her book, '*Beekeeping: Craft and Hobby*', co-authored with A. R. Cumming of the Inverness Association, was published in 1950. When Miss Logan died she left her collection of beekeeping books to the S.B.A.

Although many items written by Scots women appeared in the magazine, they seem a little chary of writing actual books, apart from Margaret Logan - unless they are hiding their authorship behind initials rather than giving their Christian names, a practice followed by women authors in other fields. Miss Stirling Graham was of a much earlier era: a well-known figure in Edinburgh society she translated de Gelieu's book '*The Bee Preserver*' in 1829 and a second edition was published in 1876. She kept bees, or rather her gardener looked after them, at her house outside Dundee and was a founder member and patroness of the East of Scotland Association.

Annie Betts was added to the list of Honorary Associates of the S.B.A. in 1922. It is not so much for her own writings that she is remembered but for the twenty years from 1929 that she was Editor of Bee World. This magazine had been started in 1919 in conjunction with an association of beekeepers called The Apis Club which had an international flavour. When Annie Betts resigned due to almost total deafness her place was taken by Eva Crane who played such an important role in the Bee Research Association (later to be I.B.R.A.), founded in 1949. The following year Eva Crane was in Scotland as '*The Touring Lecturer*' and visited six locations during one week in October - Aberdeen, Dundee, Cupar, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Ayr. She spoke on '*New Discoveries in Beekeeping*', seemingly giving the same talk each time.

Moir Library

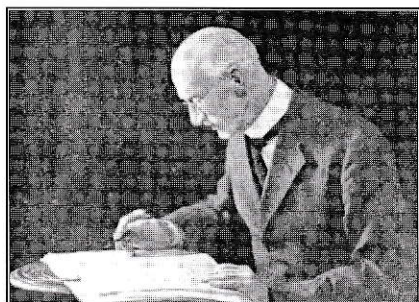
One of the first objectives to be pursued by the newly formed S.B.A. related to the library of beekeeping books. John Moir, the man charged with taking this on, was a founder member and an early Chairman of the Council and Treasurer but it is as the creator of the library that now bears his name that he is remembered. He began almost immediately, as he recalled, by buying a few old books on bees and a couple of newer works: then, on 10th January 1913 he bought 8 books. By the end of the year he had bought 34 books at a cost of £3 8s 7d (£3.42p). Having started purchasing he continued with the greatest enthusiasm and the collection grew apace. The following year, 1914, he added 99 books at a total cost of £6 14s 11d. The year after it was 127 books costing £30 3s 2d and

in 1916, he spent £10 10s on 61 volumes. It was at this point, when the Library numbered over 300 volumes, that he donated it to the S.B.A. although he continued to maintain it in his own house and to act as Librarian. From the very beginning, members were encouraged to make use of the books.

Each year saw the collection increasing in size and John Moir paid for all the books himself until 1931. When he found the expense becoming more than he could afford he was adept at persuading beekeepers and others either to donate items or to contribute to the cost of purchases. At this point the S.B.A. started to make him an annual grant of £10.

John Moir also corresponded with Messrs Dadant and sent them some early bee books, unwanted duplicates and so on, and received in exchange a number of American works. By 1924 he was able to assert: *'It has been said our library is second to none, except the British*

Museum's. It may be right, but ours is certainly far more valuable to beekeepers than the Museum's, because of these and other publications from the United States and Canada which our library possesses.' He also took in and, unusually, kept many journals and magazines including duplicates which he was happy to exchange with other libraries. Indeed, it was the magazines that came to be regarded as one of the most important aspects of the Library.



John Moir

In 1932 John Moir, for the second time, made over the entire collection to the S.B.A. by Deed of Gift, although he continued to look after it in his home and to be the Library Convener. However, thoughts turned to the future of this by now celebrated collection and in 1936 an agreement was reached with Edinburgh Public Libraries Committee (E.P.L.) whereby they would, in due course, house the collection while the S.B.A. would continue to retain ownership. When John Moir's health began to fail the books were transferred in November 1939 to the Edinburgh City Library on George IV Bridge. John Moir died a few months later.

Since then, the Library has been administered by a partnership of the S.B.A. Library Convener and a (retired) staff member of the City Libraries who prepares the books for borrowing. Amazingly, in all those years there have been only three E. P. L. staff members – Mr C. S. Minto who was assigned as an assistant to John Moir in 1935 and continued working for the Moir Library for many years thereafter; Miss Catherine Dickson who was with Mr Minto for a while and then worked in the Library until 1991 when she retired through ill health; and Miss Frances Scott who took over at that juncture. There have been rather more in the way of Conveners but, even so, they barely muster the proverbial handful.

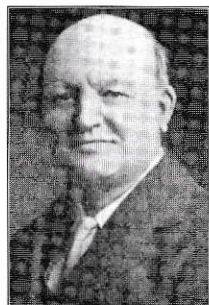
The Library continues to grow but probably not at quite the same rate as in John Moir's time. Books have been purchased, others donated, still others have come as the result of bequests, sometimes a single copy of something exceptional or an entire collection such as that of Dr Tennent who was an Executive member for almost 30 years and Library Convener for many of them. After his death in 1967, his collection of beekeeping books was offered to the S.B.A. and a special bookplate was created for them.

The Moir stayed on George IV Bridge until 1993 when it was packed up and taken across the city to be re-housed in the Fountainbridge Public Library. The removal was organised and carried through by S.B.A. and Local Association members. At some point prior to this over 200 books considered to be particularly rare or valuable had been taken off the shelves to be kept in secure storage, although they

were still available for members to read. However, in 2002 the S.B.A., while retaining the ownership, put those books on long loan to the National Library of Scotland (N.L.S.) where they are catalogued as the 'Moir Rare Books' (M.R.B.); a further handful joined them recently. The 250 books forming the M.R.B. are available to be read on site under N.L.S. conditions.

The Colleges of Agriculture

G. W. Avery's appointment in 1911 as Lecturer in Beekeeping at the Edinburgh & East of Scotland College of Agriculture was the first to be made and, with the encouragement of Principal McCallum, he played a vital role in the formation of the S.B.A. Robert Steele was appointed to assist him in covering the northern part of the area. A beekeeping department was set up in the Northern College of Agriculture in 1915 and John Anderson took charge. Meantime J. Tinsley, first class Expert of the B.B.K.A., was the Lecturer at the West of Scotland College. By 1924 all three Colleges mustered a staff of two and numbers then increased further, thanks to the representations made by the S.B.A. who always endeavoured to maintain friendly relations with the Colleges, while pressing for high standards of academic attainment for the staff, allied to scientific training and laboratory experience.



John Anderson

The College Lecturers held classes, lectures and practical demonstrations throughout Scotland, wherever and whenever there was a demand. For example, the West of Scotland College was advertising a 'Short Practical Course in Beekeeping' to be held at the Auchincruive Apiary over three days in July 1928; the fee was £1 – or 7s 6d (37.5p) for one day's instruction. Alongside this aspect of their work they contributed widely to the literature of beekeeping, whether by single page bulletins, short pamphlets or full-length books. By 1917 it was announced that the Board of Agriculture for Scotland had agreed that all Colleges would grant certificates in beekeeping although the question of practical certificates by the S.B.A. was at that point still under consideration. The following year the S.B.A. had formulated its exams for Beemaster and Expert Beemaster Certificates and held the first examinations (see Education Committee for details).

Immediately after the ending of the 1914-18 War, each College was ordered to set up an apiary containing 50 colonies to assist in the restocking programme after the ravages of 'IoW' and Foul Brood. Nucleus stocks with fertile queens were to be sold to beekeepers at a uniform price of 10s (50p) per comb. An experienced beekeeper was to be appointed as the apiarist at each College. Some research was also carried on into matters such as the efficacy of the native honey bee measured against imported bees and the many and varied treatments put forward as cures for 'IoW'.

The Lecturers liaised between Government, the S.B.A. and the beekeepers of Scotland. The North of Scotland's Report for 1922-3 noted the Lecturer had given 131 lectures and demonstrations with a total attendance of 4,343 and that he had paid 273 visits to advise or assist beekeepers. A large number of bees had been examined under the microscope for *Acarapis woodii* and many reports made and given. It was hardly surprising to find that in his efforts to cope with the burden of instruction the previous summer John Anderson overtaxed his strength and was off work for several weeks.

The advisory service was gradually expanded: by 1958 there were some 25 beekeeping advisers and

back-up staff employed between the three Colleges. In addition, a Beekeeping Research Department was set up in the North College with an official S.B.A. microscopist and its own apiarist. During this period the Scottish advisory service was the envy of the rest of Britain, if not of Western Europe. However, major changes in agricultural practices in the mid-1950's caused the governing bodies of the Colleges to divert funds into what they considered more viable branches of farming and away from the services aimed at amateur horticulture, small-scale poultry keeping and beekeeping. Posts were rarely filled when staff retired and at the West College in 1972 it was the horticultural advisers who took over the responsibility for beekeeping advice in their respective areas: when the last beekeeping lecturer in the Edinburgh & East of Scotland College retired in 1976, the College apiary was disbanded. With the slow demise of these Departments a huge amount of beekeeping expertise was lost.

The S.B.A. often expressed genuine appreciation of the *'fruitful and harmonious relations'* with the College Lecturers and benefited greatly from their input. College lecturers acted as honey judges at shows as well as giving talks and practical exhibitions at them; they frequently made the arrangements for the Quarterly Meetings of the S.B.A.'s Executive Council (which at that point moved round the country) and provided the facilities for them; they produced topical leaflets and pamphlets without number and wrote countless articles for *The Scottish Beekeeper*; one served as an early Chairman of the S.B.A. Executive while another, after the title was changed, was elected as President and three took on the Editorship of the magazine at different times.

The Scottish Beekeeper

Although a fortnightly magazine called *The Scottish Beekeeper* had been published at the end of the 19th century it was not until 1924 that the present S.B.A. resolved to publish its own magazine under the same title. A few years before, a similar decision had been taken; title (not the one eventually chosen) and front cover had been agreed but the printer then pulled out on account of the increases in the costs of printing and of paper, so that particular scheme came to nothing. However, on 31st May 1924 it was decided to try again and *The Scottish Beekeeper* made its debut a few weeks later, in time to be distributed at the Highland & Agricultural Show which was held that year in mid-July. It was accorded a genial reception by *The Beekeepers' Gazette*: *'We cordially welcome the first number of The Scottish Beekeeper'*, wrote the Editor, Revd. J. Digges, *'... the S.B.A., always positive and enterprising, is to be most warmly congratulated upon the contents and style of its new paper, for which we wish a prosperous career ... Welcome Scottish Beekeeper, and the best of luck to you.'*

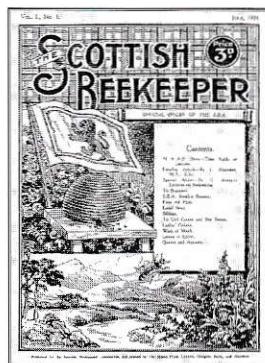
The good luck message must have had its effect: the *Scottish Beekeeper* has kept going from that day to this, despite the many difficulties it has faced over the years.

S.B.A. President, Henry Crombie took on the Editorship. In the first issue he wrote:

'The aim is that the paper be instructive, educative and interesting, and this can best be accomplished by a united effort, by constructive, not destructive criticism, and by loyal support.' He appealed to members to not only consider it as their magazine but to make it their own as well and, he continued, *'It is intended to keep members in touch with the schemes and activities of the executive by monthly reports, and so lead them to realise how much has been and is being done on their behalf by ladies and gentlemen who have ungrudgingly given of their time, thought and energy for the good of their Fellow-Beekeepers.'*

Those early issues of the magazine had an attractive, unmistakably Scottish cover. Inside could be found a wide-ranging mix of leading articles by some of the College lecturers, reports 'From All Parts', news from Local Associations, columns directed to 'Beginners' and 'Girl Guides and Boy Scouts', the S.B.A.'s monthly report, Letters to the Editor, Questions & Answers and much, much more. It was on sale for 3d (1.5p) per copy.

The advertisements make for interesting reading. Ladies walking shoes 'sensibly but attractively constructed', pictured, and priced at 12s 6d (62.5p) from A.T.Hogg of Strathmiglo, Perth; W.B.C. hives, complete with shallow frames or sections, 41s (£2.05); and Steele & Brodie's advert for 'HIVES AND APPLIANCES, Of every Description, and to suit all requirements. PRICES and QUALITY right'. A year or so later it was men's shoes that were shown costing 22s 6d (£1.12) from Norwells Perth Footwear Ltd., and pure wool blankets, advertised at 42s (£2.10) the pair, carriage paid. The costs of placing an advertisement per issue were given as: whole page £2 2s, half page £1 5s, one-third page £1, quarter page 17s 6d (87p); with a 10% discount on orders for 12 issues.



Cover, first issue of
The Scottish Beekeeper

For many years the actual size of the magazine was larger than today's A5 and the two-column format was only introduced in the late 1980s.

The covers of the magazine have seen a number of changes in both design, the use of colour and now full-cover colour photography. The framework of the magazine has altered little over the years, although information and its presentation has moved with the times, and it has always lived up to its declared intentions.

The Editors have also changed but to no great extent: there have only been eleven in its history to date. The first was Henry Crombie, a founder member of the S.B.A., Secretary for five years, President 1924-5 and Editor. Ill health forced his resignation eighteen months later which was when John Anderson, of the North of Scotland College of Agriculture and former S.B.A. President, took over. He stayed in the post for 13 years until his sudden death in 1939. His son Harry succeeded him as Editor but was called up for military duties soon afterwards and killed in a flying accident when only 25 years old. James Cunningham of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland College stepped in and served from November 1940 until July '47: a colleague from the West College, Jas. H. F. Smith was Editor from May 1965 - December 1977. Between these two came Robert Skilling (late '47 - April '65) who was in charge of the Scottish Beekeeper for an amazing 17 years.

Some Beekeeping Personalities

To pick out just a handful of personalities from a cast of so many is difficult. How to choose between them? Given such a challenge it will not be too surprising that the spotlight has fallen on some of those who were involved in the early days of the Association, as they created the foundations on which others have built and their framework has stood the test of time.

G. W. AVERY was considered by his contemporaries to be the S.B.A.'s 'Founding Father'. His interest in beekeeping had started in childhood when he was encouraged by a neighbour, a maiden lady, who

lent him books on the subject. He successfully transferred some of his father's skep bees into moveable frame hives and introduced an Italian queen into one of them. He spent much of his life as a farmer in various English locations, eventually moving to Cumberland where he set up a large apiary. From 1900 onwards he took an active interest in the formation of the county's Beekeeping Association and became its 'Touring Expert', offering advice and assistance to local beekeepers. When the Association's Secretary retired due to ill health Avery filled the post. Foul Brood was widespread in the area at the time but under his guidance the number of infected stocks examined reduced from 28% to 3%. Membership increased rapidly and the Association became the largest and most successful in the U.K. Due to Cumberland's progress, Westmorland joined with them.

It was a sad day in 1911 when he left for Edinburgh to be the first Lecturer in Beekeeping at the College of Agriculture there; this was a position newly-created in response to the devastation being caused by 'IoW'. Almost immediately he began working towards establishing the national association and became its first Secretary, although he was forced to resign shortly afterwards owing to the pressure of work at the College where he set up a museum and an apiary for research and breeding purposes. Despite his resignation he continued to support the S.B.A. by lecturing on many occasions, holding demonstrations at the apiary and providing innumerable articles for *The Scottish Beekeeper*.

When advising beginners, Avery considered the best beekeeping plants to be white clover and heather, seeing it was rare for both sources to fail in the same season. He also listed raspberry and strawberry, wild mustard, fruit blossom such as apple, currant and gooseberry, together with sycamore and lime. One trend obviously puzzled him. Writing in 1924 he said: *'We have noticed that there is an increasing number of folks who keep bees in places such as city or suburban gardens where there must seldom be any chance of a paying honey-harvest . . . Beekeepers so situated are perhaps unconsciously doing a very worthy duty in lessening the distance between the point of view of the city and the country dweller.'*

He was a staunch advocate of the native black bee: *'In a poor district such as Edinburgh, the despised blacks can more than hold their own against all comers'*. He thought that beekeeping had become too complicated and too expensive in recent years which had acted as a deterrent to those thinking of taking it up; that legislation was necessary in the fight against disease; and that education was important but so, to an even greater extent, was unity among beekeepers.

JOHN MOIR, an original member, an early Vice-Chairman of the Executive Council and Treasurer is best remembered nowadays for being responsible for the S.B.A.'s celebrated collection of beekeeping literature. He had come to beekeeping by way of farming in East Africa where his crops needed bees for pollination purposes.

In 1878 he and his brother Fred heeded the call of David Livingstone, became Joint Managers of what became known as the African Lakes Company and set sail for East Africa. Their objectives were to establish new routes to the interior as a means of providing alternatives to the use of slaves as transport; to build depots and to trade honestly with the local people; to create employment for them; to assist in exploration; and to support the missionaries already working there.

They arrived at the port of Quilimane and set to work rivetting up the shell of the small steamship called 'The Lady Nyasa' which had been shipped out in a vast number of crates. This craft, some 60 ft long and 12 ft broad was flat-bottomed in order to float on as little water as possible and this was intended to be their main means of transport as they worked their way via Blantyre and Lake Nyasa, along the Zambezi towards Tete and Lake Tanganyika.

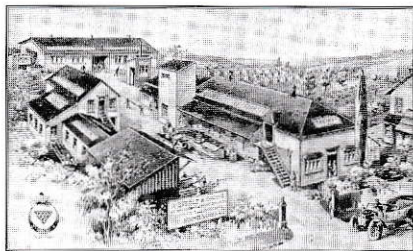
It was a challenging time for the two men as their activities stirred up much opposition. In due course it led to a war against the slavers and their allies that lasted for over two years; they were both seriously wounded but eventually their opponents were defeated.

Once things had calmed down John Moir took up farming in the Shiré Highlands where crops such as rubber, cotton and coffee were introduced – supplies of the latter coming from Edinburgh's Botanic Garden. New fruits and food plants were grown. The local people gave John Moir the title of 'Mandela' which referred to the twinkling of the light on his spectacles but the word also came to be found over a wide area, symbolising fair dealing and honest treatment.

John Moir's brother Fred wrote a book about their time in Africa called *'After Livingstone'*. There were periods when their wives accompanied them on their travels and Jane Moir, Fred's wife, wrote a series of letters home to their families that were subsequently collected together and published as *'A Lady's Letters from Central Africa'*. She was described as *'the first lady traveller in south central Africa'* and her arrival in one village caused astonishment: *'The second white man is a woman!'* they exclaimed; while her husband's beard was considered awesome, the smallness of her waist was a further cause of amazement.

In 1900 John Moir was invalided out and sent home to recuperate in Edinburgh where he spent his time in charitable work and in beekeeping. In 1936 he was created a Companion of St Michael and St George for his work in Africa some fifty years earlier and, aged 86, travelled to London to receive the honour.

ROBERT STEELE, founder of the firm of Steele & Brodie Ltd, (suppliers of beekeeping equipment and appliances) was another original S.B.A. member, Chairman of the Council in 1916, Markets Convener and a College Lecturer. His career in beekeeping had been stimulated as a child in 1865 when, aged 11, an elderly aunt gave him a skep of bees. For a few years he made his own straw skeps but after hearing about wooden hives with combs that lifted out, he began making them instead, not only for himself but for neighbours and then for beekeepers further afield. He is generally credited with being the first person in Scotland to set up a business supplying the needs of beekeepers; at the time there was no ready-made foundation, no honey extractor, no sections and appliances were rudimentary. He outgrew the space in his father's workshop and moved the business to premises in Gauldry, Fife, in about 1880 where the firm stayed for almost 20 years. After a fire destroyed his main workshop, extensive new premises were built at Wormit, Fife. A few years later he sold the business and travelled widely in Australia and New Zealand for the sake of his health. On his return to Scotland he was offered the business and with Mr Brodie of New Zealand he bought it back which was when the firm became Steele & Brodie. Their catalogues presented many innovations including the earliest extractors and their own 'Wormit Hives'. Although Robert Steele left the firm for ten years or so after joining the Beekeeping Department of the Edinburgh & East of Scotland College of Agriculture, where his lectures were considered to be inspiring, and a further period of travel, he returned to it in 1922 as Managing Director.



Wormit works 1922

Like his colleague G. W. Avery, Robert Steele was a firm believer in the efficacy of the native black bees as honey gatherers while giving the minimum amount of trouble. Although he had had Italian queens

since the 1870s and continued to keep them he considered them poor at producing comb honey.

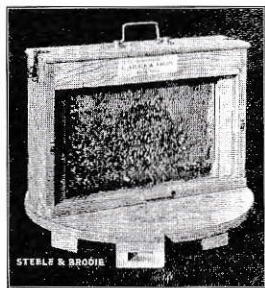
Steele & Brodie's anniversaries were usually noted in the *Scottish Beekeeper*, whether the firm was being congratulated on their '*Eighty Years of Service*' in 1955 or their own advertisement in 1995 which announced '*120 years of helping beekeepers*'. Sadly, the firm closed its doors in 1998.

Dr JOHN ANDERSON is the fourth in the quartet of original S.B.A. members and had travelled from Stornoway, where he was Science Master at the Nicolson Institute, to attend the inaugural meeting. In 1915 he was appointed as the first Lecturer in Beekeeping at the North of Scotland College of Agriculture. From the researches he and his students had carried out at the Institute he believed that the official 'Cambridge' report of 1912 into 'IoW' was wrong in stating *Nosema apis* to be the cause and that further research was needed. He collaborated with Dr Rennie, Lecturer in Parasitology at Aberdeen University, and in 1916 they published a joint paper that disposed of the official theory and led the way to further investigations. Dr Rennie's proposed research project was successful in securing funding whereas his own plan to set up a breeding programme for native bees on an isolated island failed. Anderson himself recorded that he had taken no further part in the work that eventually pinpointed the cause of 'IoW' as being the previously unknown tracheal mite *Acarapis woodi* (Rennie).

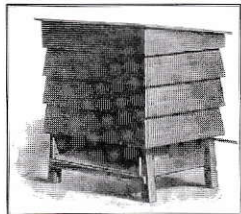
John Anderson was elected President of the S.B.A. in 1919 and took on the post of Editor of the *Scottish Beekeeper* in 1926 despite the heavy work schedule at the College and all his other activities. His interests included research into endocrinology but he gained his Ph.D. from Aberdeen in 1929 for a thesis on '*Contributions to the Natural History of the Hive Bee*'. He was Chairman of the Aberdeen District Beekeepers' Association with its 1600 members, Honorary President of the Glasgow & District Beekeepers' Association and a popular lecturer and judge at Honey Shows throughout the country. As an acknowledgment of his research work he was made a Fellow of the (International) Apis Club and served as its President and was also appointed a Vice-President of the British Association 'in recognition of his valuable work'.

While in Stornoway John Anderson invented the Nicolson Observatory Hive and then developed the 15 frame Glen Hive that was 50% larger than the standard type and this was widely adopted under his influence. He was the first person to recognise and to write on addled brood, proving it was inherent in the queen. He was a man of strong opinions and delighted in provoking a debate. Unlike Avery, he argued against the introduction of legislation to combat disease and became a member of the Beekeepers' Defence League, established to fight any such proposals. Unlike Avery again, he considered that commercial bee farming would be perfectly feasible in Scotland as the country had its own native bees, its climate was generally suitable and the availability of flora was perfectly adequate.

To this day Dr Anderson's name is remembered as an award was instituted to honour his memory: the Dr John Anderson Award is the S.B.A.'s highest award which is given for exceptional service in the furtherance of beekeeping in Scotland and beyond. A fund was set up after his sudden death in 1939 and contributions were invited. £100 was given to Dr



Nicolson Observatory Hive



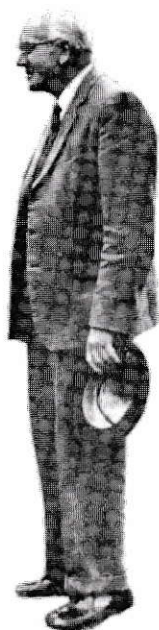
Glen Hive

Anderson's family and the remaining £150 was invested and the income provides for the purchase of the Anderson Award.

W. W. 'WILLIE' SMITH is the fifth and final 'personality' to come under the spotlight. Willie Smith arrived on the beekeeping scene rather later than the others but as his name is perpetuated among the beekeepers of Scotland he cannot be omitted. Willie Smith was a professional beekeeper, earning his living from his bees, and he created the hive that now carries his name. Originally it was known as '*the Traquair*' but the name was changed in recognition of his achievements.

He began his beekeeping after he returned from the First World War by borrowing a hive from a local beekeeper, making several copies of it and buying four stocks of native black bees at £5 each – an enormous sum at the time. His stocks were devastated by Acarine and by American Foul Brood; despite such set-backs he persevered, experimenting with various management systems and with assorted hives and appliances. He adapted some Langstroth hives to take 11 British Standard frames; they were single-walled, with a top bee space and supers that held either frames or sections or a mixture of both. His model was relatively cheap and easy to make, manipulation was straightforward and the parts were interchangeable. This simplified his beekeeping practices and in the 1930s he became a professional beekeeper, ultimately running some 500 stocks single-handedly. Living close to Traquair House, near Innerleithan, he asked permission to use an image of the mansion's historic gates on his honey labels and it is said that consignments of '*Traquair honey*' were regularly sent to London to be enjoyed by the Royal Family.

Willie Smith was a popular lecturer throughout the UK, always encouraging the young and keeping nothing back when speaking of the way he managed his bees. By his work he demonstrated that commercial beekeeping was not only possible in Scotland but also profitable and worthwhile. Dr Anderson would have been pleased to see his theory vindicated.



Willie Smith

Celebrations

Over the years there have been several occasions when the S.B.A. has felt justified in celebrating a major event in its history.

THE 25th ANNIVERSARY which should have fallen in 1937 seemingly passed unnoticed but the following year saw the S.B.A. participating in the Empire Exhibition, held in Glasgow's Bellahouston Park from May to September. This event was recorded in the magazine with some pride.

It had been with a certain amount of diffidence that the S.B.A. had agreed to take part but the Executive's decision, confirmed by Council Meeting, outlined their objectives as being 1) Propaganda; 2) Sale of Scottish Honey; 3) Sale of Beekeeping Literature; and 4) An Exhibition of Beekeeping Appliances.

A committee consisting of the President (Dr J. N. Tennent), the Past President (A. Limond) and the Secretary (T. B. Baillie) were charged with overseeing the necessary arrangements. They quickly established that no financial assistance would be forthcoming from official sources and that the estimate for a Pavilion, as drawn up by the Exhibition architect, would be far beyond the Association's resources. An outside architect and contractor were employed and the results proved most satisfactory. Despite the poor weather that year numbers visiting the Honey Pavilion were good and the lectures well-attended.

The Secretary's Report thanked the numerous helpers who had contributed so much. Many, he said, had come to see the Exhibition and, having gravitated to the Pavilion, had stayed on to help. It was their almost unanimous verdict, he wrote, that they would not have missed the experience for anything and that many expressed regret when the Exhibition closed. He singled out most particularly Mrs Shepherd, Secretary of the Glasgow Association, and her niece Mrs Adams for their expertise and he went on to thank Local Associations for the very great assistance so freely given. (Just for the record, Mr Shepherd was also mentioned as having given '*yeoman service*' throughout the period of the Exhibition).

The estimated number of visitors to the Pavilion was 750,000; the number of individual sales reached 17,820; and the quantity of honey sold was a little under six and a half tons. This comprised 7,216 lbs of heather honey, both extracted and sections, and slightly less of clover. A large number of books on beekeeping were sold, including many copies of Dr John Anderson's '*Bees, Honey & Beekeeping*' that he edited specifically for the occasion. When the exhibition closed the Pavilion had a substantial balance to its credit; all the more note-worthy since the building and its site had cost £293, only £15 of which was recouped when sold at the end of the Exhibition.



S.B.A. Honey Pavilion, Empire Exhibition, 1938

THE SILVER JUBILEE CONFERENCE of 1949 was held in Edinburgh to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of The Scottish Beekeeper. Five speakers from around the U.K. gave the lectures. A list of hotels in the city centre was provided, where prices quoted for bed and breakfast were around 15s (75p), presumably per person. Prices at The Caledonian Hotel in Princes Street, and the North British (today's Balmoral) were more expensive, at 18s 6d (92p) and 21s (£1.10) respectively. As food rationing was still very much a fact of life, delegates were instructed to make their own arrangements for meals and were advised to contact one of the restaurants, also listed, as soon as possible. The Edinburgh & Midlothian Association hosted a pre-Conference Dinner, for which tickets cost 10s each (50p). Booking for this was essential, as it was for the Lord Provost's Civic Reception the following evening. Friday afternoon saw buses leaving for Willie Smith's apiary at Innerleithan, a return fare costing '*4s approx*' (20p); alternatively, demonstrations would be given at the College Apiary, Nether Liberton. Two booklets were prepared especially for the Conference. One was a Scottish Beekeepers' Handbook packed with information for the beginner and experienced beekeeper alike, while the other was a book of honey recipes, costing 6d (2.5p), full of useful hints for the housewife.

The Scottish Beekeeper, the cause of such celebrations, sported a new cover for the Conference issue, designed by the winner of a competition set up for the purpose: fifty five entries were received and the design chosen depicted an enlarged honey bee superimposed on a honeycomb on a golden-brown background with what were termed '*appropriate Scottish emblems wrought into the design*'. The 'Leading Article' points out that this was the 300th issue and that month by month for 25 years the magazine had been providing beekeepers both at home and abroad with a constant flow of news and much sound practical advice. The three previous Editors were warmly praised but, it continued, the real credit for the magazine's ongoing success must go to the host of beekeepers who so willingly supplied it with news of their experiences, both good and bad, of local events, their views on current concerns and so much more. The following month the Editorial paid tribute to '*the regulars*' - those who wrote their contributions every month: Mrs M. M. Hooper and her article '*To Beginners*' was especially mentioned as were the two beekeepers who had conducted '*Question Time*' over the years. Past President A. Limond had been behind '*From All Parts*' until he was given his own column headed '*Topical Notes*'. Those who translated pieces from foreign journals were thanked, as were Local Association Secretaries for sending in news of association activities; finally, Herald Press of Arbroath received thanks, most especially for their help during the years of paper shortages during the War.

THE 50th ANNIVERSARY of the S.B.A.'s founding was marked in 1962 by a Jubilee Field Day on Saturday, 30th June. The day's programme consisted of visits to Mr Kirkwood's Honey Farm a few miles outside Blairgowrie and a demonstration on bees at the raspberries at Carsi some miles away; a Civic Reception in the Art Gallery, Perth; and the day finished with a Celebration Dinner in York House. Meticulous planning was necessary in getting buses and cars to their various destinations exactly on schedule, all the more so since some of the roads were extremely narrow. A '*transport controller*' was involved in supervising the parking for cars and guiding the delegates into the buses which took them to the Honey Farm and back, at the Farm a '*timing controller*' ensured that parties kept to their stipulated times.

Both 1949 and 1962 allowed for a certain amount of '*looking back*' and recording of memories though, equally, there was a strong motif of looking to the future. However, somehow or other, the 75th Anniversary passed unnoticed but this omission was more than rectified with a Conference held in conjunction with the British Isles Bee Breeders Association (B.I.B.B.A.) in St Andrews University over a weekend in September 1992. Accommodation and meals were provided in McIntosh Hall and lectures on the Saturday and Sunday were in a recently-upgraded lecture theatre where there was everything that current technology could provide. Trade stands and the honey show were elsewhere in the same building. A choice of activities was on offer for the Saturday afternoon: a workshop on morphometry, a tour of the town's Botanic Gardens with a look at their beehives or else a visit to an interesting walled garden in Gateside where there were bee boles holding skeps. Saturday ended with the Anniversary Dinner followed by Scottish Country Dancing. A post-Conference tour with visits to Heather Hills Honey Farm at Bridge of Cally and Bells Heather Garden, Perth was on offer for the Monday.

... From the Author

From the Author

The reports of all these events, quite apart from writing up the more serious, educational side of such conferences, stress the conviviality and good-fellowship that prevails whenever beekeepers are gathered together. It is therefore with high hopes that the S.B.A., again in conjunction with B.I.B.B.A., arrives at the Association's Centenary Celebration Conference.

The venue is Stirling Management Centre, within the extensive grounds of the University of Stirling, during 15th to 16th September, 2012. A programme has been arranged which is intended to provide for beekeepers and non-beekeepers alike. There will be lectures, trade stands, displays, workshops and demonstrations, exhibits by the Local Associations and an optional post-conference outing. On Saturday evening we are honoured with a Civic Reception, in addition to the Centenary Dinner and Ceilidh.

It is an occasion when the S.B.A. will be justified in looking with pride at its past and giving thanks for the work of all those who have voluntarily contributed so much over the years; when participants will be aware of the present and the many areas of activity in which the S.B.A. is involved; and when, above all, those gathered together will be looking to the future in launching the S.B.A. into its second century.

Una A. Robertson
Library Convener S.B.A.

The Scottish Beekeepers' Association
www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk
Registered Charity Number SCO 09345



The Scottish Beekeepers' Association

www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk

Registered Charity Number SCO 09345