

2025 Conference Program

Friday 7th March

- 5.30 p.m. **Welcome & Introduction**
- 5.35 p.m. **2025 NIHBS Beekeeping Posters**
- 5.50 p.m. **Minnowburn: A Queen Rearing Year**
James McCreight
- Tea & Coffee Break**
- 6.50 p.m. **Queen Rearing a way forward**
Panel Discussion with conference speakers.
Chaired by Paula Somers-Kennedy

Suppliers Marketplace



Don't forget to buy tickets for the Raffle!

Saturday 8th March

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9.00 Welcome & Introduction
NIHBS Chairperson, Loretta Neary 9.05 A whistlestop tour of latest scientific research.
Grace McCormack 9:30 How to manage the treasure of genetic variability in black bees
Jacques Van Alphen 10.30 The Story from Scotland: how they are protecting what they have
Gavin Ramsay 11:00 Tea & Coffee Break 11.30 Climate Change: measures for the protection & monitoring of native Irish bees are urgent.
Maria Bouga 12.00 The Pattern of the Irish Beekeeping Industry - findings from a recent survey of Irish Beekeepers in 2024
Norman Carreck | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12:30 Lunch
Opportunity to view <i>Paddy na Meachain's TG4 Documentary</i>, view the Posters & shop in the Suppliers Marketplace 14:00 The Rev. Sam Millar Award
For outstanding achievements in conserving & protecting our Native Irish Honey Bee. 14.15 Rights of Nature - the Way Forward?
Cliona Kimber 14:45 Parasitic burden of free-living Irish honeybees
Alex Valentine 15:15 Tea & Coffee Break 15.45 Advantages & disadvantages of small islands for maintaining purebred populations of honeybees
Andrew Abrahams 16.30 Drones for all
Colm O'Neill 17.15 NIHBS Annual Raffle |
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www.**NIHBS**.org **Protecting the Native Irish Honey Bee**



Image by Conall
www.flickr.com/people/conall

Native Irish Honey Bee Society
Apis mellifera mellifera



Annual Conference

7th & 8th March 2025
at the Athlone Springs Hotel



James McCreight

Minnowburn: A Queen Rearing Year

James McCreight has been keeping bees for 10 years and was fascinated by queen rearing from the beginning. He started by looking over Jonathan Getty's shoulder, who encourages anyone who is interested to have a go. He is part of the apiary team which looks after the Association apiary at Minnowburn Co. Down, where they keep native Irish honey bees. The goal this year was to produce 1,000 queens for members and for other clubs under the NIHBS queen rearing initiative. At home in Holywood, County Down Phillipa & James have 12 hives, all with *AMM* queens mated at Minnowburn.

Professor Jacques Van Alphen

How to manage the treasure of genetic variability in black bees?

Jacques van Alphen is emeritus professor of animal ecology, Leiden University, Netherlands. From 2007 to 2009, he held an EU Chair d'Excellence, teaching behavioural ecology at the University of Rennes 1 in France. He has published on honey bee behaviour and on natural and artificial selection for *Varroa* resistance in honey bees and he is author of the book '*Honeybees: a natural and less natural history 2024*'. He is Fellow at the Naturalis Biodiversity Centre. He keeps black bees in the North of France. He has also published widely on the behaviour, life history and evolution of parasitic wasps, their application in biological pest control and on speciation in tropical fish and amphibians.

Professor Grace McCormack - NUIG

A whistle-stop tour of latest scientific research

Grace McCormack is a Professor in Zoology at NUI Galway. She has run funded research projects and published scientific papers in the area of apiculture and honey bee science, established and directed the Diploma in Apiculture at University of Galway. Grace has been beekeeping for about 10 years and currently manages 20 colonies. She became interested in free-living colonies in 2015 and has been investigating their survival, diversity and distribution since. She is interested both in conservation of *Apis mellifera mellifera* and resilience of untreated bees to varroa & other challenges introduced by humans.

Gavin Ramsay

The Story from Scotland: how they are protecting what they have.

Gavin has kept bees from the mid-1990s and since then he has managed to make most of the possible beekeeping mistakes! He chairs SNHBS, The Scottish Native Honey Bee Society, helps his local association and presents regularly on bee topics across Scotland and beyond. He used to be the Bee Health & Science Officer for the SBA until May 2020. He has also given up being a plant geneticist, & is starting to find out that running a beekeeping business is not for the easily distracted or the disorganised!

Dr. Maria Bouga

Climate change: Measures for protection & monitoring of the Irish bee are urgent"

Maria received her PhD in Biology, specialising in honey bee genetics. Her research and teaching activities cover aspects of Molecular Taxonomy, Genetics and Apiculture focused on the genetics of honey bees, honeydew insects and *Varroa* destructor. She is also involved in the conservation of native bee populations. She is a Scientific collaborator in the Laboratory of Agricultural Zoology & Entomology of the Agricultural University of Athens Greece. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the COLOSS honey bee research association and the Senior Editor of the Journal of Apicultural Research.

Norman L. Carreck BSc CBIol FRSB FRES NDB

Pattern of the Irish Beekeeping Industry-findings from a recent Irish beekeepers survey.

Norman Carreck has been keeping bees for forty three years, and has been a bee research scientist for thirty-two. He has lectured about bees on all continents where bees are kept, has written many scientific papers, book chapters, conference contributions and popular articles, has edited several books and regularly appears in the media in many countries. He is a director of Carreck Consultancy Ltd and Bee Publishing Ltd and is based at the University of Sussex, UK.

Cliona Kimber SC

Rights of Nature - the Way Forward?

Cliona Kimber is a Senior Counsel and member of the Inner Bar, with a special interest in Environmental law, she was a lecturer in International Environmental Law at the Faculty of Law at University of Aberdeen and on the Board of the Centre for Environmental Law and Policy. She is Chair of Comhshaol Climate Bar Association (CBA). She chaired a Task Force on a Model Environmental Law which reported in 2022 and included in its work an examination of the role of mediation and arbitration in resolving environmental disputes. She currently practices in employment and environmental law. Cliona and a team of Senior Barristers from the CBA analysed the legal issues around banning the importation of non-native honey bees and produced a discussion paper which fed into the drafting of the **Protection of the Native Irish Honey Bee Bill 2021**.

Alexandra Valentine

Parasitic burden of free living Irish Honey Bees

Alexandra is a PhD student at the University of Galway interested in diversity and adaptation of *Apis mellifera mellifera* in Ireland. She is co-author of a recent paper '*Introgressive hybridisation puts the distinctive population of Apis mellifera mellifera in Ireland at risk: evidence from a multidisciplinary approach*'.

Andrew Abrahams

Advantages & disadvantages of small islands for maintaining purebred honeybees.

Andrew has been beekeeping on Colonsay for a long time and, during the 1970's and '80s he established native honey bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*) colonies from isolated stocks acquired from around Scotland. For 10 years he lobbied Scottish Government to establish a native honey bee reserve for these dark bees. In 2013 he was successful and the Scottish Beekeeping (Colonsay and Oronsay) Order 2013 was established. This means that it is now illegal to bring any other sub-species of honey bee onto the island. Andrew is one of the founding members of the Scottish Native Honey Bee Society.

Colm O'Neill

Drones for All.

Colm has been beekeeping for over 50 years, he and his three brothers worked 30 colonies with their father until Colm took over the beekeeping operation in his early 20s. With his wife, Imelda, he manages 60 honey production colonies, and another 30 colonies and nuclei, for the production of *Apis Mellifera mellifera* (*Amm*) queens and nuclei for sale. Colm and Imelda only use *Amm* bees for local adaption, ease of management, and rapid Spring build-up. Colm is the education officer for his local association, a committee member for the Native Irish Honey Bee Society (NIHBS), and holds beekeeping, bee improvement and queen-rearing classes at his home and association apiaries during the summer.

Don't forget to buy tickets for the NIHBS Raffle!

