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REGULAR *iScot* readers will know that we love bees. It's a topic we've covered in depth on a couple of occasions, recognising the importance of the wee beasties to our climate, planet and, well, everything really! So, it's good to be able to highlight some positive news in the bee world right here on our doorstep, in Kinross actually, where a young couple are building a sustainable honey business together. Daniel Webster and Emily-Kate McDonnell are the founders of Webster Honey and are currently engaging directly with schools all over Scotland in educational projects about honey bees. They are also planning to use a custom-designed log cabin to house a special Beekeeping Centre at Scotlandwell, where they can train and educate people aiming to keep their own bees.

They established the company in 2015 as an eco-friendly and sustainable business offshoot to Daniel's other business interests in construction, eco-friendly office space, and self-storage. After initially buying a few hives and keeping them in gardens around Kinross-shire, Daniel and Emily-Kate distributed them around a number of different Scottish primary schools, as far afield as Ballachulish, and also the Highland Titles Nature Reserve in Glencoe.

The schools, and rangers at the Nature Reserve, were supported to look after the bees. Webster Honey's beekeeper, Meik, delivered age-appropriate lessons on the importance of bees to the ecosystem, and the processes and timescales involved in honey production. The schoolchildren also decorated the hives with funky designs and patterns. Once the honey is ready, it's harvested and sold under the Webster Honey label in farm-shops and delicatessens all over Scotland.

Daniel, a serial entrepreneur who also lists a ballooning company, Webster Adventures, in his diverse portfolio, takes up the story: "Emily-Kate and I started this business together, partly to be green, as we believe bees are so important to the ecosystem but have been in decline in recent years, and partly to counteract the huge stress of

running a construction company which is full on for me. We like to make business fun, and wanted something to give us a different focus, and that we could be involved in together. I'm happy to say it's really taken off, with the hard work of Emily-Kate and Meik who have put their hearts and souls into growing it."

Emily-Kate is an equally busy young woman, holding down a full-time job at *Children's Hospices Across Scotland* (CHAS), also based in Kinross, as well as developing the honey business. "I've really enjoyed getting on board with this. We are aiming to have over a hundred hives all over Scotland by this summer. Honey is a seasonal product so it's not something we can sell all through the year. It sells out straight away at our stockists when we have it, but we had to look at a way of making it a year-round venture that brings in money all the time. The tie-in with the schools is a win-win as they pay our beekeeper to carry out his lesson plans with the children, and it's also so rewarding to see the children so interested and excited to learn about the bees.

"The Beekeeping Centre will add an extra dimension to this business, as more and more people are speaking to us about wanting to have their own hives. We'll run day courses and workshops catering for people who would love to keep their own bees, but also for people who are just interested to learn more about the inner workings of the hives. We could not be more enthusiastic about how this business is growing – we want to be Scotland's biggest bee employer!"

The educational aspect of the business has also recently been further boosted through the appointment of Webster Honey's first Educational Manager, Michelle English, with a remit to extend the bee education programme to reach around 600 Scottish primary schools. Michelle is clearly committed to her new role, adding, "It's crucially important to educate children about the importance of honey bees - no bees, no food for us basically!"

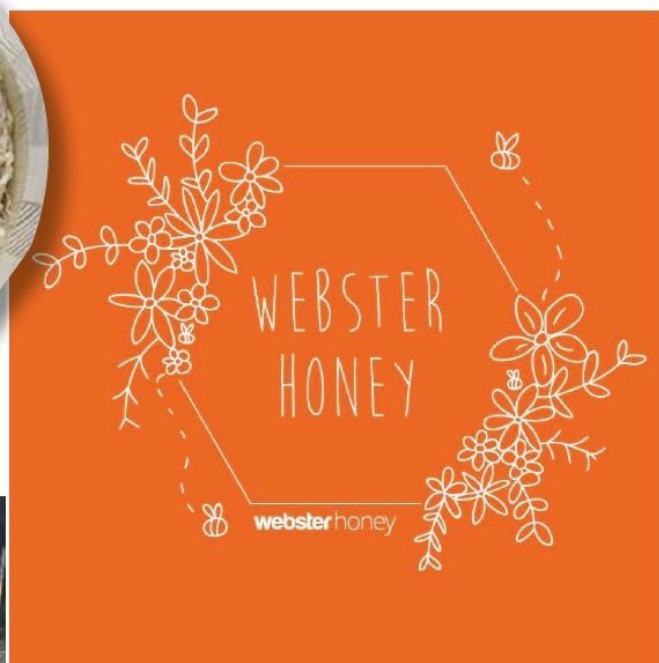
Currently engaging directly with schools all over Scotland in educational projects about honey bees



bees!



by Gordon
Craigie



This is a great feel-good story about two young Scots putting something back into their community, and our environment, while also earning a living and providing employment. And it's given *iScot Magazine* another opportunity to promote our favourite strippit beasties – 'mon the bees!

Follow the Webster Honey story at www.webstergroup.co.uk/webster-honey-bee-webster