

## **HELENSBURGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER No.159 APRIL 2011**

### **MARGARET THOMAS ON “SPRING MANAGEMENT” THURSDAY 28 APRIL 7.15 pm.**

Margaret Thomas is one of the few people in Britain who has obtained the National Diploma in Beekeeping. Margaret moved to Scotland a couple of years ago and brings with her a wealth of practical experience. When I went to hear her speak to the Kelvin Valley Beekeepers the audience found that, instead of sitting back comfortably and hearing a talk, they were cross examined by the speaker. It took some of (what shall I say?) the more senior beekeepers a little time to get into the swing of this participatory style but soon they were all pitching in. I thought this is a must for Helensburgh beekeepers who on the lecture circuit are not known for being slow in coming forward. I appreciate that this year there has been almost a surfeit of training type talks (Education, Education, Education) but this is a chance to show what we have learnt. With the swarming season almost upon us it could also be quite useful. The meeting is in the usual place: the Hall at Rhu Church.

### **APIARY VISIT FOR BEGINNERS: SATURDAY AFTERNOON 30 APRIL**

There will be an introduction to beekeeping event at the association's apiary on Saturday 30 April. New beekeepers will be kitted up and get involved with the basic tasks for opening up and inspecting colonies. Further details will be available from Jim McCulloch at 01436 831664 and [jmcculloch@btinternet.com](mailto:jmcculloch@btinternet.com) and at our next Thursday meeting.

### **ASSOCIATION APIARY USE AND EVENTS**

At the last committee meeting the members reconfirmed the main objectives of the association apiary. These are for the training of members, production of nucs and queens for members, and to provide a mating station for members, particularly those in isolated locations, who wish to ensure the maintenance of healthy gene pools in their own apiaries. Neil Sandison, the apiary manager, is keen for members to use the apiary and he should be contacted on 01389 841408 and at [neilsandison@aol.com](mailto:neilsandison@aol.com).

A number of events are to held at the apiary this season including the successful queen marking day which took place on Saturday 9 April, the beginners afternoon details of which are provided above, and a simple queen rearing event on Saturday 14 May (meet in the public car park in Helensburgh behind the Bank of Scotland to leave at 1.30pm in shared cars). All these events are weather dependent and the contact persons are Jim and Neil whose details are provided above.

### **BEEKEEPING COURSE**

The course that we have been running in February and March came to a close with Ian Craig's talk at our last meeting. More than 20 people signed up for the course and the attendance has been exemplary. I would like to thank everyone for making the effort to attend and, in some cases, to drive considerable distances. I hope for the established beekeepers that the course was worthwhile in cementing knowledge and for the new beekeepers that it was not too confusing. For the latter group we are organising an apiary visit so that you can experience handling of bees (details in this newsletter). For the former group it is hoped that some of you will now feel confident enough to take the Basic Beemaster's Certificate examination, which Gordon Smith, on 01436 820591 and at [Gordon@windsmith.co.uk](mailto:Gordon@windsmith.co.uk) is coordinating.

### **SALE OF NEW BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT**

Knowetop Community Farm in Dumbarton is selling new beekeeping equipment at reduced prices following a decision not to go ahead with beekeeping on the site.

The proposal is to advertise the items in the SBA magazine but if any member is interested in possible purchases please get in touch with Neil Sandison whose contact details are included in the item on the association apiary earlier in this newsletter.

### **ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW 23-26 JUNE**

Enid Brown, a good friend of our association, is looking for stewards for the SBA tent at the Royal Highland Show. Jim McCulloch and Ben Bellamy will be going over on one of the days at the weekend and are looking for 2 more people to fill the car. You don't need to be an experienced beekeeper to act as a steward, entry to the RHS is free and it is interesting day, as well as a great help for Enid.

### **CLYDE AREA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION.**

This year's CABA outing will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in August to Andrew Scarlet's (bee farmer) apiaries in Couper Angus. All HDBKA members are eligible to attend. It should be a great day out. This year's 'tour speaker' will be Ian Holmer who has worked at the National Bee Unit and is a regional bee inspector and an excellent lecturer with lots of practical experience. It is hoped that he will be speaking at Partick Burgh Hall around the end of September on why bee colonies fail, but the final topics and venues still have to be decided by the SBA.

**Mike Thornley Secretary**