

## HELENSBURGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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### HONEY COMPETITION AT HELENSBURGH AND GARELOCH HORTICUTURAL

#### SOCIETY ANNUAL SHOW SATURDAY 27 AUGUST

After the great flow in July there must be entries for the honey classes at the local flower and vegetable show at the end of August. There are 3 classes; jar of set honey, jar of clear honey, and a frame of honey ready for extraction. We have avoided the rigours of the traditional honey show and have opted for this simple format to encourage everyone to participate and help raise the profile of beekeeping locally.

The event is at the Victoria Halls in Helensburgh and staging takes place between 5.00 pm and 10.00 pm on Friday night and 8.00 am and 10.00 am on Saturday morning. Competition rules and guidance notes will be sent out before the event. Please give it a try this year and have a record number of entries.

#### MONITORING AND TREATMENT OF VARROA EVENT AT THE ASSOCIATION APIARY SATURDAY 20 AUGUST

Research has shown that treating for Varroa in August, running over into September, is much more effective than delaying treatment until September, and running over into October. In addition there are real benefits to be gained if beekeepers are treating for Varroa at the same time. With this in mind there is an event at the Association's apiary on Saturday 20 August when methods of monitoring and treating for Varroa will be demonstrated.

Neil Sandison has sent out details of the event, and would like those who are intending to attend to contact him as places may be limited. Neil's telephone number is 01389 841408 and at <mailto:neilsandison@aol.com>

#### LIBRARY BOOK REVIEW FI BASFORD

The Association has a good small library and it is our policy to buy new books that will be appeal to and be useful to members. Here is a short review of a recent acquisition.

*"Green Guides-Keeping Bees"* by Pam Gregory and Claire Waring.

An expression of both joy and relief on my friends face said it all. A beginner beekeeper and interested in joining the HDBA I had initially given her a loan of my Clive de Bruyn then discovered this little gem to pass on. Up to date images and good straight forward text make this book a both accessible and appealing starter pack for anyone interested in keeping bees.

## **BASIC BEEMASTERS CERTIFICATE COURSE GORDON SMITH**

On Thursday evenings during February and March of this year HDBA ran a course covering the syllabus of the SBA's Basic Beemasters Certificate.

The aim of the course was to consolidate the knowledge of members who had taken up beekeeping over the last 3 years (the last time the course was run) and to prepare those who were interested (and who had kept bees for a year) to take the SBA's Basic Beemasters Certificate exam.

The course was attended by 22 people, including a significant number of new members and we were treated a series of 7 lectures over the period, including a couple that coincided with regular HDBA meetings.

As far as I can tell phrase "Basic" is a relative one, ie it is only true in the context of near infinite depth of the font of knowledge that is beekeeping! For those like me who are at the beginning of their beekeeping career, the material covered went beyond the basic knowledge that I had got by with over the last year and so there was plenty to take in. Printed notes and the reference texts eased the pain of note taking though.

At the end of the course, 12 of us felt we were ready to take the exam, or at least felt we wanted to take the exam. The exam consists of a short

practical (10 minutes or so) during which you open up a hive and then an oral session of 40 minutes or so. The exams took place over 2 days in early June when we were examined by Ian Craig, the SBA examiner.

The orals were very thorough and covered most of the course content and were the first time most of us had been in an exam environment for some years! Ian however was very fair and patient in drawing out the things we knew and giving feedback on things we didn't. The outcome of the exam is either a pass or a pass with distinction. A distinction allows you to continue on to do other beekeeping modules.

The course certainly achieved its aims of consolidating knowledge and the exam certainly acts as a focus to get that knowledge more firmly implanted! It was also good fun so I would certainly recommend it to others next time the opportunity arises.

Finally a big vote of thanks to Mike Thornley and the Committee for organising the course, to all who lectured and to Ian Craig for coming through to Helensburgh for the exams and his patience during them! Thanks also to those who opened their apiaries for the practicals and provided locations and refreshments for the orals.

MIKE THORNLEY  
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