

# HELENSBURGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER NO. 166 NOVEMBER 2011

PHIL MOSS "HOW THE HONEYBEE SEES THE WORLD"

THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 7.15 pm RHU CHURCH HALL

Phil Moss is the recently appointed SBA bee diseases convenor and a leading light in Oban Beekeepers Association. He asked me to say that his talk is not just about how bees physically see the surrounding world but seeks to raise awareness in beekeepers on how bees live in the hive and how our beekeeping activities and manipulations can impact, sometimes negatively, on the way they organise the colony and its lifecycle.

Phil also would like me to say that he is not responsible for the following, but it is very relevant to his talk.

A hive monitor, installed as part of the Dundee University bee research project, recently picked up the following message:

" Crash. Here he comes again and that awful aftershave as well.

OK girls we have only got 2 minutes. You foragers get up into the super, quick. He usually lifts up the super before the smoke gets there so when he takes it off give it him. Guard bees stop running that queen round the hive to slim her down and get her onto the floor where she won't be found. Nurse bees cover up and hide those queen cells we built along the inside edge of the frame. If not you are going to get Pagdened, and you know what that means. I can feel that high pressure weather system building up so tomorrow looks like "S Day". 1300 hrs.; usual place on the apple tree behind the hives. The scouts tell me that they have found a nice cosy roof space down the road. Hell here comes the smoke. Action stations and good luck girls."

Who says that bees don't read the books?

## GIANT BEES FOUND IN LOCAL SCHOOL ALASTAIR CAMERON

Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of November saw Rosneath Primary School invaded by a 6 metre by 6 metre beehive into which groups of pupils disappeared during the day. No stings, but it was maybe a bit scary with full sound effects, and the live enlarged images of active bees projected onto a central moving voile suspended from the middle of the octagonal 'bee tent' looked amazingly convincing. There were also two man sized 'bees' with wings that worked, proboscis that you could wind up and collect nectar with, and there was even a gruesome looking varroa mite the size of a frying pan, made of 'dead flesh' rubbery stuff - yuk! All this was produced by 'Pif-Paf', a two person theatre company concerned for the welfare of the bee and sponsored by the Co-operative as part of their Plan Bee campaign to save the honey bee.

The 45 minute show called 'Honey' was a great hit. The children and staff loved it and learned to do the bee dance, what bees do and that they need our help. So now the children know more than just that bees can sting. Adults, who were Co-op members, had the opportunity to attend at three o'clock, and we all got a tiny jar of honey from their apiaries in Aberdeenshire and a packet of wild flower mix to sow next year. Very appropriately Ben Bellamy won the free raffle and received a magnificent mason bee home made of canes in the shape of a miniature house on a 5 foot stand. Will tenants appear next summer? We await with interest.

## LIBRARY BOOK OF THE MONTH ANNE RITCHIE

"BEEKEEPING: A SEASONAL GUIDE" RON BROWN

An excellent book and well written too (a bonus). The illustrations are good but (for me) insufficient. For beginners this book is detailed, clear and not too daunting. For intermediates - great for reference and seasonal advice. For the expert - much to debate and dispute! Overall this book will encourage and inspire rather than intimidate the beekeeper.

*( Thanks to Anne for the review and we all hope she recovers quickly from her nasty ankle injury that involved, among other things, being lifted off from Ardmore Point in a helicopter! ).*

Mike Thornley

Secretary