

HELENSBURGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER No 171 MAY 2012

“THE SEASON SO FAR... AND WHAT NEXT?” THURSDAY 24 MAY  
7.15 pm. HALL AT RHU CHURCH

R.O.B. Manley was of the view that seasons tended to repeat themselves in cycles. So are we seeing a repeat of last season with a rapid build up in April, a strong urge to swarm in early May and, with a poor long term forecast, difficult times for mating ahead? This meeting allows members to compare notes on the season so far and to look ahead and learn from last year. What should we expect and be looking for? How can we reduce our risks and ensure the continuity of our colonies? Already, perhaps, we should be thinking about how many colonies we want to take into the winter, headed by which queens? And of course there will be the perennial discussion about what went wrong with swarm control procedures. Grumpy old Manley also thought that early swarming was a bonus but he looked after his bees in the sunny summers of the south.

#### GRAEME SHARPE'S BEEKEEPING COURSES

Following his lecture to us last month Graeme Sharpe kindly sent details of his beekeeping courses at Auchincruive near Ayr. These have been circulated to members but here is a reminder of these excellent one day courses.

Beginners 23, 24, 31 May and 13 June  
Intermediate 3,4,11, and 18 July

The cost is £25 per day. Contact [Graeme.Sharpe@sac.ac.uk](mailto:Graeme.Sharpe@sac.ac.uk)

#### ASSOCIATION APIARY

Catch up with what is going on at the club apiary by reading Neil Sandison's report that has been posted on the protected area of the Association's website; [helensburghbees.com](http://helensburghbees.com)

Neil is still looking for volunteers to help with inspections at the apiary, ideally with people signing up for a month. This gives members the opportunity of not only helping the association but also to widen their experience of looking at bees other than their own. It could also be linked to mentoring, thus providing invaluable training for new beekeepers. Please think about this and contact Neil at [neilsandison@aol.com](mailto:neilsandison@aol.com)

#### NEW BEEKEEPERS

There was a report in the last Newsletter about the Introduction to Beekeeping night which attracted over 20 participants, with subsequent apiary visits for those who were interested. What we now need to do is to identify those people who attended the course and are keen to take up beekeeping so that mentoring arrangements can be put in hand and bees subsequently supplied to those who show the necessary commitment and a basic level of competence, working

always with your mentor who will be there to give advice. If you are in this category of new beekeeper please contact the Chairman Alastair Cameron at [lynne.cameron1@btinternet.com](mailto:lynne.cameron1@btinternet.com) or Secretary Gordon Smith at [gordon@windsmith.co.uk](mailto:gordon@windsmith.co.uk) if you have not already done so.

## WARNINGS

With the strong build up of stocks there is a high risk, if the weather deteriorates, of bees starving. (We have been putting back combs of stores taken off earlier in the season). Similarly there are reports of swarming. A sure fire tell tale sign is the appearance of orange tip butterflies. (It never fails for us). If you have 2 colonies you will need 4 hives (or alternatively swarm boards and additional deeps as described by Ian Craig in the May issue of the Scottish Beekeeper”) and have you enough frames and fresh wax? And Varroa monitoring? Sorry to nag.

## CABA SUMMER OUTING

Date for the diary is Sunday 15 July for a visit to Graeme' Sharpe's apiary and honey processing facility at Auchincruive, near Ayr: further details to follow.

## LAST CALLS:

### GARDENING SCOTLAND

Last call for volunteers to get a free pass to Gardening Scotland 1-3 June to spend some time on one day promoting beekeeping at the wall of beeboles being constructed by our local drystone wallers association.

### APIVAR

Our next meeting on 24 May is the very last day for orders for Apivar. To date nine orders have been placed.

Both the above to Mike Thornley at [masthome@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:masthome@dsl.pipex.com)