

HELENSBURGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER No. 172 JUNE 2012

NOTE: NO MEETING IN JUNE: NEXT MEETING THURS 27 SEPTEMBER

SBA CENTENARY CELEBRATION CONFERENCE 15-16 SEPTEMBER

Discounted early booking rates close on 30 June so why not save £10 per day on the daily rate by booking by the end of the month. We are also arranging to book a table for the dinner and ceillidh on Saturday evening and the 8 or so who have already booked would welcome as many association members as possible to join them to make this a memorable night (which only comes along once every 100 years). Added to this are world class speakers and an array of trade stands at a purpose built conference venue in the beautiful grounds of Stirling University. Details on the SBA website and bookings can be made to: Christine Matthews, 4 Annanhill, Annan, Dumfriesshire DG12 6TN phone 01461 205525 or email [silverhive@hotmail.com](mailto:silverhive@hotmail.com)

CABA SUMMER OUTING STARTS IN HELENSBURGH SUNDAY 8 JULY

This takes place to Graeme Sharpe's teaching apiary and processing room at Auchincruive, near Ayr on Sunday July 8. Neil Sandison, who is the CABA chairperson this year, has suggested that, instead of us having to go individually into Partick Burgh Hall, the bus run should start and finish in Helensburgh, picking up the rest in Partick on the way. So let's see this as our own association's summer event and have a big turnout to support Neil in his year of office as well. It should be an instructive day, allowing people the opportunity to go into hives and see Graeme's bees so bring along your clean bee suits etc. Details on times and costs will be sent out soon but please put the date in your diary. Note that total numbers are limited to 25 so please let Neil know as soon as possible if you would like to go.

SBA TRAVELLING SPEAKER 9 SEPTEMBER 7.30pm PARTICK BURGH HALL

Another date for the diary when Richard Ball the recently retired National Bee Inspector is speaking on the control of Varroa: not to be missed.

TREATING SWARMS

Talking of Varroa when you take a swarm it is a good time to treat for Varroa. First this is because they may have come from untreated or under-treated stock and pose a threat to your own bees, second they are broodless and third there are no supers of honey involved. Leave them for about 3 days to settle in and then treat with whatever you have to hand (but not oxalic acid trickle if you intend to do that in December). Any strips only need to be put on for a short time as there should be no mites in brood at that point.

## HIVING BEES ON THEIR OWN COMBS

While we are on about swarms, and there were plenty of them in May, I had a phone call from a friend in Shandon who had honeybees in one of his outbuildings. When I went to investigate I found that they were flying in and out of a north facing sash and case window that was slightly open at the top. As they had been there some time and had built their own combs on the window frame and timber shutter about three feet from the floor, with a good view out the window. I enlisted Nikki and Eddie's help and later that night we went back with a travelling box with a couple of old drawn frames.

We initially sprayed the cluster with a fine spray of cold water before Eddie vaulted over the work bench in front of the window and got himself into the reveal. Taking out a long thin metal spatula he carefully cut away the combs from the window frame and for a moment we thought we had all of it one piece before it slowly started to disintegrate as we transferred it into the box. What had started as well planned surgical operation swiftly turned into a damage limitation exercise but by much brushing and with amazingly well behaved bees (well of course they would be in Shandon) we had nearly all of them in the box that was quickly taken away to the other side of Helensburgh.

Next day Nikki found that not only was there brood in their own comb but that the queen had started to lay in the drawn combs as well. Soon with more frames added it was possible to remove the wild comb and to inspect for the queen. Eddie opened the box and to his amazement saw this enormous yellow queen striding across the comb, quite unlike any of the darker queens that he had seen before and, as he put it, impossible to miss. So we wonder where she came from? However the abiding memory was of the fragility and vulnerability of the mass of bees on their combs. No wonder only a quarter of swarms survive in the wild, even before taking into account the depredations caused by Varroa.

## OBSERVATION HIVE

An observation hive that can take a deep and 2 shallow frames has been very kindly donated to the association by Sandra Kelly. Gordon Smith has custody of it at present so get in touch if you'd like to use it.

## PHOTOS FOR SBA CENTENARY DISPLAY

A reminder that as part of the SBA Centenary display, we would like to get photos of all members. These will be mounted on deep frames and put in a brood box for people to browse. The twist is that we would like pictures of you doing your day job or involved in another hobby.

So, a digital picture from you all please, emailed to the secretary ([gordon@windsmiths.co.uk](mailto:gordon@windsmiths.co.uk)) - portrait orientation suitable for printing at approx A5. Target date, end of June. There may be prizes for the first entry and the best entry...

A TRIBUTE TO DAVID EDWARD – by Allan Adam

Sad to report that David Edward of Cardross who joined HDBA in November 2005 died last month at the age of 85. Latterly due to ill health, he was not able to look after his bee's and I took them over in July 2011.

David who originally lived in the Vale of Leven, had kept bee's for decades, following in the footsteps of his uncle a well known bee keeper in those days. David was my mentor and introduced me to bee keeping in 1994. In those days I had difficulty in keeping my bees (nothing has changed) and I have fond memories of David showing me how to collect the swarms and consequently uniting hives. David had great patience and was always willing to help. I have many special memories of our time together working with the bee's and a deep sense of loss, for the friendship and knowledge that has gone.