

HELENSBURGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER No.180 FEBRUARY 2013

GRAEME SHARPE ON "BEE DISEASES" THURSDAY 28 FEBRUARY 7.15pm
RHU CHURCH HALL

Graeme is Scotland's only Bee Advisor and combines talking to beekeepers the length and breadth of the country with running his own apiaries. So we have a practical beekeeper's perspective on diseases, the symptoms and the solutions. He also puts on courses at Auchincruive and members who have attended these always come back with good reports about what they have learnt both in the class room and from the hands on experience they have gained opening up hives. In the West of Scotland we like to think we are safe from foul broods and the like but with the shortages of bees and the buying in of stocks from elsewhere things can rapidly change for the worse. This lecture, close to the start of the beekeeping season, will provide a timely and important reminder for the experienced beekeeper and a fund of information for the initiate.

2013 AGM

Gordon Smith

This years AGM was really well attended and was followed by a very enjoyable social evening. It was particularly good to see Gerry Flatman's son Adrian in attendance. The formalities were dealt with in record time by outgoing president Alastair and Ian Taylor then threw down the gauntlet, or at least bee glove, with a series of bee related puzzlers in his quiz. Congratulations to Sue Reid's team on its winning score and thanks to Ian for organizing.

We were then spoilt with copious amounts of very fine food and wine and a very pleasant time chatting and catching up. Thanks to all who contributed.

Ben Bellamy and David Brown were awarded Honorary Life Membership in recognition for their services to the association.

There were a few changes to the committee and the executive now as follows. Thanks to those who stood for re-election and welcome to the new members :

President	Jim McCulloch
Vice President	Alastair Cameron
Treasurer	David Norton
Secretary	Gordon Smith
Ordinary Member (to 2016)	Fi Bashford
Ordinary Member (to 2016)	Donnie MacDonald
Ordinary Member (to 2015)	Susan Reid
Ordinary Member (to 2015)	Ian Taylor

Please bring subscriptions to the next meeting if you have not already paid.

ASSOCIATION APIARY

Neil Sandison is putting out another request to members to help with the running of the apiary. The idea is that from April to August 2 members should get together to look after the apiary for one month. This will include occasional checks, inspection of the hives, cutting back the grass and other seasonal tasks, although some of these, such as queen marking, may also be undertaken as part any training that is being given. Keeping the hive records will also be important.

This is not a chore but an opportunity. First I find that I am far more confident (and competent) when opening up hives other than my own. Second it provides invaluable extra experience and, third, it is really good to get out and go to an out apiary in a different place. The association committee has agreed an outlay of £200 for a shed on the site for equipment but there is no point in progressing this if there are no volunteers. So Neil is looking for 8 people. Perhaps this is a good chance for a new beekeeper to twin up with a more experienced member or two beekeepers to share their experience with each other. Phone Neil on 01389 841408 or email neilmsandison@gmail.com

WHAT SORT OF BEES DO YOU PREFER?

Mike Thornley

The SBA executive has asked myself as the West Area representative to contact local associations to find out members views on the type of bees they would prefer. The background to this request are concerns, mainly from the east side of the country, on the level of imported bees, especially by bee farmers, and how it adversely effects local bees that are acclimatised to their area or efforts to conserve *Apis mellifera mellifera*.

I suspect that in a local association like ours many people will support the view that local bees are best. Others wish to conserve and promote the native dark bee while, at the other end of the spectrum, a few might prefer importing what are seen as reliable strains such as the Buckfast bees. For the beginner, who is finding it hard to source bees, any bees might be better than no bees.

I would be grateful to have your views emailed to me at masthome@dsl.pipex.com

LENGTHENING DAYS

Yesterday all our bees were flying which was a great sight as well as a considerable relief. But we, and the bees, are not home and dry yet and this bright spell in February is really a false spring. But if things are good in the hive the queen will have started to lay in earnest and the call on nectar and pollen will rapidly increase. Ask yourself if they have they got enough honey stores, because they are not going to get it from outside for a while yet. Don't just hope and pray but heft the hives to see if they feel light or lift the crown board to check if that fondant you put on at Christmas has all gone.

Sometimes you have to break the rules. Two weeks ago we gently prised off the crown board of a hive that was worrying us, slid it back a little to create a small gap, and pulled out the first comb of stores to see if it was heavy. (Viewed from the top empty combs can look very like full ones). It was heavy with honey and looking sideways we could see that the next one was capped too and, looking down, we could see the edge of the cluster and the bees gently moving and that lovely hive smell drifted up to us as we quietly replaced the crown board, put on the roof and stole away.

CABA DIARY DATES

Dr. Chris Connolly's talk to CABA is now on 27th March in the Large Hall at Partick Burgh Halls (not the 20th as previously indicated).

Ian Craig has also arranged for a CABA visit to Enid Browns apiary on Sunday the 21st July