

**NEWSLETTER # 186 – August 2013**

## **HONEY CLASSES AT HORTICULTURAL SHOW**

Be a winner! Your honey is worth it!

Helensburgh & Gareloch Horticultural Society are holding their 163rd Annual flower and Vegetable Show on Saturday 24 August at Victoria Halls. The show will include the following classes for honey:

- 115 jar of set honey
- 116 jar of clear honey
- 117 a frame ready for extraction

Staging is at 5.00 – 10.00 pm on Friday and 8.00 -9.45 am on Saturday. Entries should be notified to the Show Results Secretary, ideally by Tuesday but it always possible to put in a late entry at the above times.

*Alastair Cameron*

## **Varroa Course**

Varroa Course will now be Sunday 25th August at the club apairy. Meet initially at the car park in Sinclair St Helensburgh at 2pm. We will share transport to reduce the number of cars at the site.

Course limited to a max of 8 members.

If interested contact Jim McCulloch at [jmcculloch1@btinternet.com](mailto:jmcculloch1@btinternet.com) before Friday 23rd August.

The course will cover methods of identification and monitoring. The treatments available and their application.

*Gordon Smith*

## **Association BBQ Sunday 11th August**

The Association had a very successful BBQ at Townend Farm where they enjoyed panoramic views of the Clyde in between the showers. A big thanks to Debbie and John as hosts. They provided delicious home-reared pork/sausages and burgers to go with the rolls/side dishes and puds. provided by the Association and members. John very ably did the cooking whilst Luca, their Italian au pair, guided members round the homestead. There was much to see including breeding pigs and Cuthbert, the boar. Also scampering round was a pet lamb named Andy who responded to calls from Debbie and slept in front of the Aga. Members were also able to purchase free range

eggs from the farms 400+ hens. Also of interest to many members was the mini apiary which included Nicki and Eddie's bees.

After such a successful afternoon members all expressed their gratitude to Debbie and John for being such perfect hosts and donations were given. Hopefully, this might become an annual event.



*David Norton*

## **Nucleus Colony Creation Workshop**

The Scottish Beekeeper's Association ran three workshops in various parts of the country to encourage established beekeepers to build nuclei for people starting beekeeping. Cameron Maccallum and I attended on in Dumfriesshire one, run by Ian Craig.

We learned how to make up mini 'nukes' using just a cupful of bees (to raise a new queen). More important, however, was how to make up a standard 5 frame nucleus. Recipe: Use 2 combs of mainly sealed brood plus stores plus bees, one comb of mainly unsealed brood, plus stores plus bees, one comb of food (pollen, nectar, honey) plus bees, and one empty drawn comb if available. A slight shake to these frames should dislodge the flying bees and leave the nurse bees. Likewise shake two other frames of bees over the parent colony and then vigorously over the nucleus to add more nurse bees to it. If the nucleus is to remain in the same apiary add nurse bees from two more frames. Place the frames in the nucleus box with the unsealed brood in the centre flanked by the sealed brood. Add a ripe queen cell in the middle and close up leaving only a small entrance to deter robbing. Don't feed for three days until all the field bees have returned to their original hive. Note before doing all this it is vital to find the original queen and cage her or put her somewhere safe so that she does not get accidentally shaken into the new nucleus - don't forget to release her!

We had a fascinating demonstration of the 'circle method'. You take a very strong hive (preferably double brood chamber) and draw an imaginary circle with a radius of one meter around the big hive. Five nuclei are placed at equal distances along the edge of the circle with their entrances facing inwards (towards the big hive in the centre). The queen in the big hive is found and removed somewhere else at a distance. The strong hive is totally dismantled giving each nuke pollen, food brood, young bees. A ripe queen cell is placed in the middle of each nucleus hive and any gaps filled with spare comb to fill them up. Any extra bees from the big hive are simply dumped in the middle of the circle and all the equipment from the parent hive removed. The bees sort themselves out. The next day check them all and swap the very weak ones with the very strong, which will even them out as regards strength, but thereafter don't move as the virgin queens will get lost. There were bees flying in all directions and about twenty of us all working away but no-one got stung despite threatening rain.

*Alastair Cameron*

### **Notes from Committee Meeting of 12 June 2013**

The main points from the committee meeting were as follows (apologies this has not appeared earlier newsletters – I have not included items that have been superseded by events)

- Google calendar now on website
- Questionnaire responses have a majority for HDBA not taking a stance on issues. This is in line with the conclusion of the previous committee meeting.
- Questionnaire responses have a majority for staying with CABA. This is in line with the conclusion of the previous committee meeting.
- It was noted that other associations are charging £100 or more for nucs and that commercial nucs (of varying quality) are over £200. It was agreed that nucs should be charged for as they certainly have value - and encourage recipients to value them but cost should be as reasonable as possible. On this basis it was agreed that the recommended price for nucs within HDBA should be raised from £50 to £75 next year.
- Dominic has stepped down as webmaster. Gordon will act as webmaster for the time being. A big thanks to Dominic for building up and maintaining such a good website over the years.
- Next meeting 28th Aug – please contact a committee member if there is anything you would like raised.

*Gordon Smith*