

NEWSLETTER #191 – January 2014



Next Meeting

Thursday Jan 23rd 2014 7:15pm AGM and the Big Quiz

After the formal meeting (which hopefully will be fairly brief), we will have a quiz with snacks and drinks provided.

For existing members, you will be able to pay this year's subs which we are keeping at £12 this year.

For new members or those who have not formally joined yet, now is the time to join!

Look forward to seeing you all there...



The Presidents Tips And Tricks for the month of January



I hope that you all heeded the advice about the storms and had sufficient bricks on your hives during the recent bad weather. The other danger has been from floods – but I suspect that few of us will be keeping bees in areas prone to flooding.

In fact this is a very good time to assess your out-apiaries or to look for new ones. Sites that look wonderful on a good dry spring or summer day can turn to quagmires with strong winds whistling through at times like this. Look for sites that have a good hard track right up to the hives, an open aspect – ideally towards the SW to SE quadrant (avoid north-facing or shaded places at all costs), and a good hedge behind to break the force of the wind.

Personal observation, together with information from other beekeepers around the country, suggest that our bees have been consuming stores rather rapidly recently. This often happens during a mild autumn when bees continue to be active - and rear brood - long after the last of the forage has gone. Of course, we want our bees to be able to gather nectar and particularly pollen late into the autumn, but once the ivy has finished then colder weather helps to reduce their activity with its

consequent depletion of stores. Some mild weather in the winter is desirable as it gives the opportunity to re-group within the hive – and allows the occasional ‘comfort break’!

If the mild weather continues then brood rearing could take off early and stores will then be consumed fast. As with so many things in beekeeping you just have to be vigilant, so keep hefting the hives and feed any light ones with fondant.

Beekeeping in New Zealand.



Just back from 6 weeks in NZ. Beehives everywhere in groups of 40, 60 or seemingly 80 hives. Often in groups of 4 hard against each other in a square with each entrance facing a different direction, possibly for defence against something. Blue and white seem the popular colours and they are built 4 or 5 hive (Langstroths, I assume) so they are looking for several hundred pounds of honey per hive and as I saw a jar of honey in one place selling for £14, it is a big money business. You can get it cheaper at farmers’ markets and I talked to one or two beekeepers and visited a beefarm. Some are purely relying on Bayarol to treat varroa. So they are in for a rude shock. The climate is however perfect for beekeeping and the flora abundant. Alastair

Swarms in 2014

If the association is contacted regards a swarm this year, we will keep a list of those interested in collecting swarms. Please contact the secretary (secretary@helensburghbees.com) if you would like your name to be on this list. In addition to being an association member, you MUST also be an SBA member to be on this list. This is for insurance purposes.

Swarms will be notified to people on the list with rough location. First to respond will be allocated the swarm and exact location and contact details will be sent.

Association Meetings in 2014

There has been a change of plan for the March meeting. We were going to have a beginners evening with an external speaker but instead, we are going to show the highly acclaimed film “More than Honey”, you can see a taster at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NT05qEJxUk>

Basic Beemaster Course

This course will run on the following dates: March 6,13,20 and April 3, 10, 17. There will be a final practical session at the club apiary on either 26 or 27th April. Jim McCulloch will give a brief overview of this and how it fits into the SBA curriculum at the AGM.

Committee Meeting (15 Jan 2014)

Main points from last week's committee meeting:

1. Noted that £208 was raised by the sale of club honey last year – big thanks to Neil for this.
2. We were approached by an organization asking what our advertising rates were for the newsletter. It was agreed that we would not have advertising in the newsletter or web site.
3. The committee recommends that the SBA constitution should be accepted and will put a motion at the AGM that the clubs vote is cast as a "Yes".
4. Next meeting 12 March 2014.