



## NEWSLETTER – July 2015

**Next Meeting** BBQ Townhead Farm Sunday the 30th August, approx.1200, details next month.

### July Beekeeping

The watchword for this month is 'Patience' - plenty of patience with this weather and the worry of queens getting mated after all that swarming. I have written before about our second year of beekeeping when I used to phone George Morrison on Sunday nights; "No queen, no eggs, George" to which came the reply "Be patient Mike, be patient". last month's newsletter (and how about some news from the rest of you please?) I mentioned the much improved 'Scottish Beekeeper' magazine. This month those of you who are not SBA members will have missed another excellent article, this time on "Does removing queen cells prevent swarming?" which warns strongly against taking down queen cells indiscriminately: essential reading.

On 20 May Sue and I left one well developed but uncapped queen cell in a probably queenless colony. On 29 May we opened the hive to check that the queen cell was hatched and found the new queen emerging at that very moment (and quickly but carefully closed up the hive). Leaving the queen to get mated and to start laying we carried out the next inspection 22 June and found both eggs and newly capped worker brood.

As a rule of thumb, and confirmed by the dates above, our experience is that it always takes a minimum of 4 weeks from the date of manipulation ( i.e. when a decision is made to raise a queen from a selected queen cell) to seeing eggs of a mated queen. if your combs are old and black you might have to wait another week to see, hopefully, capped worker brood to confirm that the queen has mated satisfactorily and is not a drone layer. So be patient but take action quickly if at the end of this period there are no signs of a laying queen.

Mike Thornley

**Bee Suit** for sale. £20. Thorne's "Bees on a budget", XL, contact Janet Maccallum 01301702295

Thorne BS Wooden **Nucleus Hive** Flat pack for sale, still in its wrapping. List price £96. Will sell for £75 (and assemble free if you wish (list price then about £115).

This will all accommodate five frames and has an extra deep roof suitable for a small contact feeder. Made in Western Red Cedar, each hive comprises: floor with entrance block, brood body, crownboard with feed hole and metal roof. Contact Alastair Cameron 01436 674707

## **C.A.B.A Trip**

During a C.A.B.A meeting earlier this year, Murray McGregor kindly invited us to visit his queen rearing facilities in Perthshire:

So, on the 15th of June, an assortment of 31 beekeepers armed with bee suits, wellies and sarnies, swarmed from Scotstoun on a bus and made a bee line to Murrays for the annual C.A.B.A jaunt.

Neil and Sylvia Sanderson, along with Cameron and Janet Macallum from H.D.B.A were part of the enthusiastic mob that descended on Murray and Svetlana. Can I mention, we were Murray's first visitors to his Queen rearing venture (brave man).

We bailed out of the bus and refuelled with sarnies and tea whilst admiring the beautiful view. This consisted of a grassy area covered in little painted Apidea boxes (hundreds of them), trees and a lake at the bottom of the slope. To the side were various polynucs and brood boxes housing rows of potential queens.

Bee suits and wellies donned, we watched as Murray and Svetlana opened the brood boxes and explained how the rows of queen cells were produced. A bar of potential queens were passed round for closer inspection.

Once caped, the cells are transferred to an Apidea with a cupful of nurse bees. The box then joins the hundreds of other boxes on the array of stands under the trees waiting for nature to take place. We were able to look at any Apidea, numbered 1-50 as these housed successfully mated queens; however numbers 51- 300 upward were to remain undisturbed!

As Murray predicted, there were a few stung ankles from the wellieless beekeepers, this did little to dampen spirits as we boarded the bus to follow Murray's massive Tonka Toy truck to a nursery apiary. Here he had a collection of young hives building up for working on the heather later in the season.

To round off our excellent day we had tables booked at the Red Lion Hotel, where Murray and Svetlana joined the H.D.B.A gang for a great meal with lashings and lashings of ginger beer. I lamented that I would love to have a wee shot of driving the Tonka Toy. "Well, if you had said, you could have driven it, its private land" said Murray. Drat, and double drat, a missed opportunity.

Well done to Mhari from C.A.B.A. who organised this fantastic day out.

Thank you Murray and Svetlana, you may have inspired a few of us to try rearing a queen or two.

Janet Macallum

## **Royal Highland Show Ingliston Edinburgh June 2015**

For 4 days the Scottish Beekeepers' Association run a truly massive educational and publicity event, plus a honey show, in an immense marquee just inside the west entrance to the RHS. There are numerous show exhibits with amazing wax entries and every shade and type of honey possible. Two observations hives with the bees flying out of the back of the tent via drainpipe tubing attract great attention. There are tremendous poster displays, videos, honey tasting, and candle making for children. Several thousand of the general public pass through as do numerous school parties. It takes about 25 -30 beekeepers to man all the displays and you rotate through all the various sections during the day. So why not volunteer next year? You don't need to be an expert. Free entry and parking are provided, as are tea and coffee and biscuits throughout the day, and you get to meet a host of other beekeepers and can exchange ideas and get all your questions answered. It is a 'must' for every beekeeper to do at least once in their bee career.

Alastair Cameron

