



#210 November 2015

Honey for Sale There will be an opportunity to buy association honey at £5 per jar. Not much left, so grab it while it is there. Otherwise it will all disappear at the Helensburgh Winter festival

Oxalic Acid This is the night when we all get an early Christmas present for our bees. It is vital that you collect enough filled dispensers to treat your bees in December. Varroa mites will be itching to get into the brood in and do their nasty stuff as soon as the queen starts laying again in January. So get at them with the oxalic acid in mid /late December. Ask another member to help if you have not done it before. It only takes a few minutes. One dispenser should be enough for three hives.

Next Meeting Thursday 26 November at 7.15 pm in the Hall at Rhu Church

Dr Ewan Campbell on Research against Varroa

Dr, Ewan Campbell has been working at Aberdeen University in association with the National Bee Unit and the bee health company Vita Ltd. on developing practical solutions to help fight the Varroa mite. He has also carried out research into the bee disease Acarine, working closely with the SBA and local associations. Ewan is a gifted and engaging speaker and we are very pleased that he is prepared to travel some distance to speak to us on this crucial issue.

Winter Festival Saturday/ Sunday 28th, 29th November. We will be running a stall again this year. Last time we ran out of honey! So if you want to sell honey contact Cameron Maccallum at 01301 702295. It is essential that it is properly labelled and that you are a SBA member as the product liability is then covered. Please put this in your diary and come along anyway for a couple of hours, to chat and to enjoy the great food and drink at the other stalls. It is a great occasion.

Why do we need HDBA?

The first reason is to conserve our bees. To maintain a self sustaining gene pool a minimum of 80, ideally unrelated, colonies are required, spread over a maximum area within a 5 mile radius. This level of distribution is not achieved at present along the Cardross/ Helensburgh/Garelohead corridor where, also, many of the colonies are related. The situation is much worse in more isolated areas such as Arrochar or along Loch Lomond side. Over time in- breeding will occur and members may already be seeing the effects, instanced by poorly performing colonies year on year. Varroa has destroyed feral colonies so bees will not survive without beekeepers. We need numbers of beekeepers to maintain a sustainable gene pool and, where this cannot be achieved, a willingness by beekeepers to swop stocks and/or to introduce new queens, for instance through breeding initiatives based, say, on the association's apiary.

To achieve this, and this is the second reason, we need to be able to attract and train new beekeepers, promote and coordinate treatments against diseases, particularly Varroa, and to share information on the art and science of beekeeping. These activities don't just happen which is why

we need a local association, but local associations don't just happen either, which is why we need the active support of our members. If not all our bees will gradually decline. The idea of a self sufficient beekeepers, looking after bees for and by themselves is no longer an option.

In the December newsletter I will indicate where the association needs help and how members can contribute, for the benefit of all, and for our bees.

Farewell from your newsletter editor We are moving to south of London and hope to get going with the bees again down there. I am not taking bees or any used equipment with me (it has all gone to good homes!) but may start again with poly hives and local bees. Thank you all for your friendship, encouragement and many happy hours taking care of the bees. Alastair Cameron