

#214 March 2016

**Next Meeting: Honey and wax workshops.
Thursday 24 March 7.15 pm in the Hall at Rhu Church**

Who knew set honey was so simple?

First note of the month is a big thank you to Janet Macallum, Neil Sandison, Mike Thornley and David Norton for providing 4 great workshops on set honey, assembling frames, double brood colony management and feeding bees respectively. It's hard not to believe that everybody in attendance learnt something new.



Janet with her 2015 set honey and Mike rearranges his frames

Products of the honeybee

Think of produce from bees and you think honey. True, but a) it doesn't always have to be on toast and b) there's also wax (among other things). Following a similar format to the last meeting, the coming meeting will involve different activities to do with utilising the produce of beekeeping. Activities will include candle making, cosmetics and confectionary.

'Spring'

The days might be getting longer but stores will be getting lower at an ever faster rate, with not that much time to forage; it's a critical time. As tempting as it might be, now is not the time for the first inspections of 2016: wait until a really warm day in April. At this time of year, as well as hefting to keep checking stores, simply

observing the entrance will be one of the most informative things you can do. Are there *any* bees? If so how many? How much pollen is being collected – lots would be indicative of a healthy, queenright colony. Dead bees blocking the entrance can always be cleared using a bent coat hanger. Have you got all hive components you'll need for the coming season?

Club apiary

So far all four of the club colonies have survived the winter, with some activity seen on warmer days. However, as yet there are no signs of pollen being taken in.

Exams

The Basic Beemaster award should be a consideration for anyone yet to take it. As well as the sense of achievement, holding the certificate is an indication of competence to others – potential apiary hosts for example - that you're a competent beekeeper. Registration is now easier than ever, either by post or online: <http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/learn/exams-dates-fees>.

Who's who?

Last month's newsletter mentioned that the association is currently without a President and is instead being overseen by a committee. To give a bit more information as to who's who they are as follows:

Chairman:	Tim Syddall
Secretary:	Cameron Macallum
Treasurer:	David Norton
Web master:	Gordon Smith
Apiary manager:	Neil Sandison
Others:	Andrew Shaw, Janet Macallum, Nick Davies and Jane Leach along with help from Flora Brabender and Sandra Crawford,

Reminders

- Please remember to pay your **annual subscriptions** if you have yet to do so (please see David Norton regarding payments).
- Please remember to rinse and return the **oxalic acid trickle bottles** at the next meeting.
- Don't forget that there is the **Growing West Dunbartonshire Spring event** at Dumbarton on Saturday 19 March. Please contact Cameron Macallum (cameron.macallum@yahoo.com) if you're interested in helping out.

Link of the month: <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/subjectlist.html>

As well as being an influential beekeeper to many, Dave Cushman assembled a comprehensive website encompassing many aspects of beekeeping, not least a long list of hive component plans for those keen on DIY (importantly, in British national dimensions).