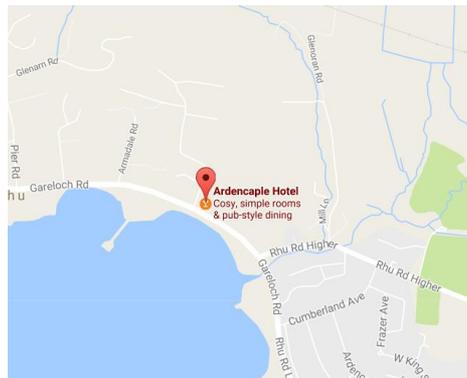


HDBA Helensburgh & District Beekeepers Association

#226 May 2017

Next meeting: 25rd May. Ardencaple Hotel in Rhu, from 7.15pm:

This month's meeting will be a social evening with buffet. Hopefully you have received an email from Colin – please let him know whether you will be attending so that he has numbers.



What's happening in the hive?

Hopefully things are in full swing. If they haven't already, colonies will likely be building towards swarming over the coming weeks. 'Be prepared' is the best advice; effective swarm control relies on precise timing and trying to scrape together the necessary equipment is a recipe for stress and/or failure. On the horizon also lies the prospect of the June gap when feeding may be required.

Swarm control – a demonstration

At our last meeting we received a thorough discussion regarding the artificial swarm (Pagden method). There are multiple nuances to this but Ben brought up the point that swarm control is primarily about separating two of the three colony components (brood + flying bees + Queen) from the third. In the case of the artificial swarm the brood is removed from the queen and flying bees.



Neil Sandison explains the intricacies of the Pagden method swarm control.

Mike Thornley has observed that the swarm control process in effect requires 6 inspections:

- 1) When the beekeeper finds queen cells and initiates a method of swarm control
- 2) Not more than a week later when a decision is taken on which queen cell is to be left and all other queen cells are removed. You may have already done this at the swarm control but usually the bees will build more queen cells. If you are really confident on timing this inspection might coincide with the next one.
- 3) Check that the selected queen cell is still OK and remove any further queen cells that have been formed, ideally a couple of days before the queen cell is due to open. As a general rule if there is any uncapped brood there is always a chance that the bees will try to build further queen cells and this is the cause of much grief to beekeepers.
- 4) A few days after the queen cell is due to be opened check that has happened (a quick in and out with minimum disruption).
- 5) Three weeks later or about 4 weeks after the swarm control was carried out check for eggs being laid.
- 6) And if you are real worrier like me, check a week later to confirm that worker brood is present and you don't have a drone laying queen or, worse, a laying worker.

As in many things timing is crucial so the beekeeper needs to make a best estimate as to when the queen cell will be capped and when the queen will emerge; Hooper has a chart. Also these inspections are best done as close to the date required and not left for events to unfold ahead of inspections. In that way the beekeeper can deal with any problems.

Joint beekeeping celebration

Ayr and District Beekeeper's Association and The SBA are joining forces for a celebration of beekeeping in light of Ayr and District's 100th year. Ayr Racecourse, 8-10th September. The event will include speakers as well as workshops. See www.sbaconvention.co.uk for more information.

Club apiary

For those who have been following the progress of the club apiary inspections it appears we have a colony with anger issues!

Link of the month: Due to nothing seeming to match textbooks, beekeeping remains very much a 'master and apprentice' affair. Additionally, local conditions will affect the finer details etc. so those new to it should primarily seek advice from their mentor. Nevertheless, here is an overview of the artificial swarm method of swarm control:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCReKLV6CB4>

...and the official SBA clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KE5vFLf0G0>