

August 2023

Hi All Members

### News

July weather was not the best – a different challenge for bees and beekeepers. Most noticeable was the reduction in stores – bees unable to forage and lots of bees and brood to be fed. I know of colonies being fed – in JULY!! I did see evidence of worker policing in a couple of small colonies – eggs and sealed brood but no larvae - and I reckon the workers have eaten the larvae to conserve stores. It's good to be able to read your bees.

On Saturday 22nd July 8 members attended the monthly meeting, which was kindly hosted by non-member James at Port William. James is experimenting with Flow Hives which are a bit controversial. Unfortunately the weather was in our favour but we saw the inside of an empty flow hive and how it all works, then we saw the bees in situ when the rain stopped for a few minutes! A very interesting concept.

Thanks have been sent to James for his hospitality.

The members also visited my shed to see what equipment I have, what it is all for and how it is stored. Some great chat and ideas shared – thanks to those who attended.

Bee hive stolen!! John has lost a colony + equipment – this is the first I have ever heard of stolen bees in this area. John is convinced that it would have to be someone with knowledge of bees who took the hive. The police have been informed, and the SBA for insurance purposes.

Kevin had a really good article in the Scottish Beekeeper last month, entitled “the Queen in the Toilet”. The editor is always looking for informative and practical beekeeping articles so if you fancy submitting a piece then please use this medium to share your experience with fellow beekeepers.

### Bee jobs this month

Weekly inspections are less important now that swarming season is over. Queen cells now are more likely to be supercedure cells – the workers deciding to replace their queen due to ill health or age. Supercedure cells are more likely to be fewer in number than swarm cells and in the middle of a frame of brood. Best to leave them to get on with things and hope that the virgin queen gets some good weather for mating.

Extracting – my mentor always said that surplus honey should be extracted before the end of August. This reduces the size of the hive and encourages storing of honey in the brood box as brood reduces. Any extracted supers can be placed above the crown board to be cleared up by the bees, then removed and stored. Once supers are off then any feeding required + varroa treatments can begin – more of this next month.

WGBA has extraction equipment for members to use, including a 4 frame extractor – simply drop a note to this email address to find out where to pick it up.

Don't forget to jar up some honey in 1lb jars and set aside a nice frame for the Honey Show!

Wasps can be a problem towards the end of the summer and can quickly rob out a colony

- Strong colonies are more likely to keep wasps out
- Wasp traps near, but not in, the apiary can help reduce the numbers

- Keep inspections short and don't spill honey/nectar around the hives when inspecting as this will attract wasps (and robber bees from other hives) and the word will spread quickly
- Reduce the entrances to 1 or 2 bee space to help the guard bees keep the wasps/robbers out

#### Committee activity

The committee will meet again in August to discuss the winter programme and the Honey Show + Schedule, among other things.

#### Meetings over the rest of the summer

Queen rearing group – John will keep in touch with the queen rearers

2<sup>nd</sup> August – Wigtown Show stand – look out for the banner

10<sup>th</sup> August – committee meeting

20<sup>th</sup> August Pests and Diseases workshop – all welcome

26<sup>th</sup> August (provisional) – all being well a visit to Fiona, Younus and Shivani at the Dunragit. Details nearer the time.

Autumn meetings are coming together. You may recall Rev Kristina Bradley, our Honey Show judge last year – she will be coming over from Northern Ireland as our September speaker. Lorraine Johnston, SRUC Bee Adviser is booked for October and Heidi has secured the services of Moira Davidson from Auchencairn as our qualified judge for the November show. December will be a social event. Details in the next newsletter.

Happy Beekeeping!

Linda  
Chair