

September 2023

Hi All Members

News – it was a very busy August!

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August Graham, Dougie, Heidi, Iain and I set up and manned the WGBA stand at Wigtown Show. It was very wet and muddy! which encouraged visitors into the marquees and we had a steady stream of interest. Some folks were interested in beginner's classes and a couple who have land at Whauphill offered it to anyone who is interested in using it for bees. If you are interested please contact us via the website contact page.

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August I attended the SSBKA “meeting the bee inspector” session. Kenny the bee inspector shared a bit about his role and how he goes about a disease inspection. One highlight was the need to have as many beekeepers as possible registered on BeeBase, which is then kept up to date. Now is as good a time as any to register/update your apiaries.

On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August 12 members attended our Pests and Diseases workshop. A great day covering brood diseases, adult bee diseases, poisoning, varroa (monitoring + biological and chemical treatments) and other pests. A great day of activity and knowledge shared.

On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August 9 members attended the final apiary visit of 2023, which was kindly hosted by Fiona and Younus at Dunragit. Fiona demonstrated how to clear supers and remove them for extracting. We then had a tour of the honey processing room – very impressive. We finished the final apiary visit with coffee and cake at Glenwhan Gardens.

Richard has purchased a whole load of fondant and Invertbee syrup. He has so much that he will share it with the rest of us - at a good price but with no postage costs.

Fondant – £6 per 2.5kg pack, or £25 for 5 packs

Invertbee - £28 per 14kg jerry can

Contact us via the website contact page if you want to take up this offer.

A wee reminder that a bee hive was stolen from a member's apiary in July. Think carefully about sharing information about where your apiary is situated!

Bee jobs this month

Extracting – if you have any honey to extract! 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! Use a refractometer to check the moisture content of any uncapped honey - anything over 20% (or 23% for heather) should be fed back to the bees.

Reduce the size of the hives to encourage 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. Cappings can be cleaned up in a similar way.

Feeding – 1:1 sugar for feeding, 2:1 sugar for storing - and only once the supers are removed. So we'll be moving to heavy syrup during September/October. Feed all hives at the same time and in the evening if possible. A brood box sized colony needs 18kg of stores to see it through the winter.

**A word of warning – we can be too good to our bees and overfeed, which results in no space for the queen to lay – as with all things beekeeping, it's a balancing act.**

Fondant is usually fed over the winter months if required.

Once supers are off then varroa treatments can begin. Most strips (or similar) need to be on for 6 – 8 weeks - follow the manufacturer's instructions and remember to diarise when to remove them.

Wasps will continue to be a problem until the weather gets cooler and they die off. Here are some tips

- Strong colonies
- Wasp traps nearby
- Keep inspections short and don't spill honey/nectar around the hives
- Feed in the evenings
- Reduce the entrances to 1 or 2 bee space

#### Committee activity

The committee met in August. We discussed - Winter speakers, AGM, Honey Show, Christmas social, Glenrazie trophy and our education programme. Honey Show schedule will be with you soon!

#### Meetings dates for your diary

24<sup>th</sup> September – speaker, Rev Kristina Bradley from Northern Ireland

29<sup>th</sup> October – AGM + speaker Lorraine Johnston, SRUC Bee Adviser

26<sup>th</sup> November – Honey Show – judge Moyra Davidson

10<sup>th</sup> December (prov) – Christmas lunch

Happy Beekeeping!

Linda  
Chair