

Moray Beekeepers Association

October 2012

News Bulletin

Established 1919
Scottish Charity No: SCO42185

BEE AWARE IN MORAY

All the funding for the £42K 'Bee Aware in Moray' (BEAM) project has now been confirmed and the project officially started on 8th October. The early stages will involve a lot of planning and consultation with schools and community groups in order to fill the diary for visits to Birnie Training Apiary next summer. Also the apiary and portacabin will be re-furbished over the winter so that they can accommodate wheelchair users. A disabled access toilet will be installed and a solar power station fitted to provide power to the classroom and kitchen.

We will also be working with a number of community groups to create two Community apiaries in Moray and will be giving away free wildflower seeds and Honeybee Conservation Packs.

MBA members will be able to benefit from a number of training courses aimed at improving your beekeeping skills on subjects such as honey bee health and disease, queen rearing and microscopy to name just a few.

Moray Leader has provided funding for a part time Project Manager's post to drive the project and it is hoped that the post holder will be in place by December. Adverts will be distributed locally and throughout Scotland in order to give as many interested beekeepers the opportunity to apply for the job.

It will then be down to the hard work of volunteers to help us create a state of the art apiary and classroom so watch this space and the website for working party dates. The success of the project is dependent on us all as volunteers so please make every effort to support your Committee in implementing it.

OCTOBER MEETING

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 23rd October** when MBA member and past Scottish Beekeepers Association President, Mr Les Webster will give a talk entitled 'Judging Honey Products'. Some brave committee members will be bringing exhibits to this meeting for Les to judge so if you want to see some grown men and women crying, and learn how to prepare exhibits for the Show bench, come along to Elgin Library on the night. Time: 7-9pm. Admission is free to MBA members (show membership card at the door), non-members can pay £2 and refreshments will be available.

WINTER PROGRAMME

All meetings to take place at Elgin Library, 7-9pm, Free admission to members, visitors £2 on the door

Monday 26th November, Several short talks of 15 minutes duration with Q & A session after each. 'The Moray Bee Improvement Group', Gerry Thompson, 'The Bee Aware in Moray Project', Tony Harris & an Oxalic Acid Demonstration, Andrew Tassell

Tuesday 29 January, Annual General Meeting' followed by 'Beekeeping Question Time'.

Thursday 28 February, 'Preparing for the New Season', Tony Harris

FONDABEE FONDANT

MBA Equipment Officer, Andy Watson, has managed to source a supplier of fondabee fondant and will be putting in a bulk order in November. Fondant is the recommended feed for your bees during winter and it is available at £20 for a pack of 5 (2.5kg/pack) or £4 for one pack. Pre-ordering is essential and you can do so by contacting Andy on Tel. 07786247327

BEEKEEPING COURSE, FEBRUARY 2013

Moray Beekeepers begin a lecture course entitled '*Introduction to bees and beekeeping*' on Tuesday 5th February also at Elgin Library and it is hoped that at least 24 students will sign up for the course including MBA members and potential new beekeepers. There will be six classroom sessions hosted by Dr Stephen Palmer, with full day practical sessions run by MBA Training Team later at Birnie apiary. Individuals without bees and wishing to get some will be asked to make a donation of £100 for the course. On successful completion of the course, they will receive a certificate of competence, a hive of bees, bee suit and gloves and necessary beekeeping equipment. They will also receive mentoring for the first season. The hive will be on loan to be returned to the MBA 'pot' after 1 full year.

MBA members wishing to brush up on the beekeeping knowledge can attend at a cost of £10, payable on the first evening of attendance. Full details will be published in plenty of time but if you would like to book a place on the course please contact Secretary, Tony Harris.

BASIC BEEMASTER COURSE

The Basic Beemaster Course will again be run in 2013 and will tie in with Dr Palmers lectures mentioned above. There will then be several practical lessons at Birnie Apiary with the actual assessments usually taking place in June. It is condition of the Scottish Beekeepers Association that applicants must have owned and managed bees for one full season but as the bees at Birnie belong to all the members, if you have been regularly helping out at apiary sessions, then you meet the criteria. Again, to book a place on the course or for further information, contact the Secretary, Tony Harris. Numbers are limited so book early to avoid disappointment! There will be a small charge.

COMMITTEE RE-STRUCTURE

In order to implement the BEAM project the Committee will be re-structured in order to spread the workload and responsibility. Andrew Tassell is standing down as Chairman and Committee member after 10 years so we are looking for a new Chairman. The main criteria for the Chairman's post is that you are skilled at running meetings so don't be put off if you think you are not experienced enough as a beekeeper.

Tony Harris will be standing down as Secretary at the AGM but intends to remain heavily involved in MBA affairs. The Secretary's post is to be streamlined to avoid over loading the post holder. Basically, the Secretary is the nominated contact person for the Association, responsible for answering correspondence, arranging meetings and taking minutes of meetings. The Committee feel that the Secretary post should be filled by a competent beekeeper of at least Basic Beemaster level.

So we need a new Chairman and Secretary. If you are enthusiastic about bees and their future it really is an exciting time to come on board. You will be given lots of help and support while you settle in and will enjoy being part of a committed and happy team of volunteers! Please contact any member of the Committee if you would like to find out more about either of these posts.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We have recently welcomed Paul and Helen Webster onto the Committee as co-opted members and Bob and Joy Malcolm will be joining us soon. Welcome guys and thanks for agreeing to help out!

TRAINING TEAM

Four MBA members recently attended a National Diploma of Beekeeping course in Perth entitled, 'Train the Trainers'. Subsidised by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Beekeepers Association the course is aimed at teaching beekeepers to teach beekeeping to beekeepers and to the general public. So, Tony Harris, Arlene Ritchie, Yvonne Stuart and Andy Watson now form the core of the MBA Training Team and will be preparing lesson plans, courses and presentations over the coming months that will benefit bees and beekeepers.

HOSPITALITY TEAM

Committee member Anne Black has agreed to head up a new MBA Hospitality Team to look after the catering and hospitality aspects of the BEAM project. We plan to send all members of the team on a Food Hygiene course and this will not only be beneficial to MBA when refreshments are being provided but will also benefit any member who extracts and jars their own honey. If you have any skills in the catering or hospitality field or would just like to get involved please contact Anne on Tel. 07710710431.

Your bees should be prepared for winter by now, in a sound, waterproof hive, preferably with some wind protection, and some insulation on top of the crown board below the roof. They should have plenty of stores in the brood box and have been treated for varroa. A mouse guard should be fitted over the entrance. Don't forget to secure the hive with rope or straps to keep the roof on or do what I do and place a large boulder on the roof. If you've done all of the above there is not much more you can do so leave them alone over winter. You do need to remove the apivar strips at the correct time if you have left them in the brood chamber and to do this, suit up, remove the roof and crown board and use a pair of pliers to prise the strips out. If you are quick, the clustered bees may not realise that you are there before you have finished the operation. I usually trickle my bees with oxalic acid in late December and at the same time place a block of fondant over the feed hole of the crown board or place the fondant directly over the cluster of bees on the top bars. (come to the November meeting to find out more)

If you have any questions about any of the above or would like to find out more or volunteer for Chairman or Secretary, please contact me. E-mail tonyharris316@btinternet.com Tel. 07884 496246

Tony Harris
Secretary, Moray Beekeepers Association