

Newsletter July 2026

Hi everybody, welcome to my newsletter for July '26, what a 'flaming June' that was. Swarms left, right and centre all over the UK

Linda was a steward again at the Royal Highland Show again this year, and she and Richard came away with prizes from the Honey Show. So, congratulations to Linda for taking a 2nd for her Light Honey and to Richard for taking a "2nd Chunk Honey, a 3rd for Light Honey, a 5th for a Frame for Extraction and a 6th for Medium honey. Heartiest congratulations to Linda and Richard for their fine achievements up against some tough opposition

Membership

No new members to welcome this month, all the recent joiners are throwing themselves into beekeeping.

June Events

Last Sunday some of us visited a shared, out apiary, managed by Linda and Richard. The visit was done in two tranches as space in this apiary is at a premium. Both Linda and Richard went through their hives, looking for Queens in some cases or signs of building up of colony strength, or weakness and how it was to be addressed. I went in the afternoon and it was a lovely warm day, and a pleasure to be amongst calm and placid bees who didn't seem to mind their homes being dismantled for the second time in a day. A marked contrast to my own Scottish Black Bees who I brought through the winter, fed and generally looked after which have turned on me with more treachery than the Cambells in Glencoe!

Tonys Bee Blog

The next blog will shortly be published and again I have to say a marked contrast in style from last year. We have been lucky to have had the blog volunteers, and Tonys stint comes to an end in October, so anyone who would like to take over the blog baton please contact Linda or myself.

Apiary Visits

The next Apiary visit is to be Sunday 26th, details to be advised.

WGBA Honey Show

I will be sending out the schedules for our honey show some time during next week (Week commencing 5th July) Entry forms will be sent out at the end of July, early August and no doubt frantic reminders on a weekly or daily basis.

The Honey Show organising group is now Graham and I, joined by Iain and Shaun – thanks.

Wigtown Show 5th August

We have volunteers to man the show stand – thanks to Jenny, Nick, Chris and Linda

Things to do in July

In July our colonies should be at maximum strength to take full advantage of the summer flowers. We beekeepers need to keep pace with them to ensure that they have enough room to store nectar and pollen and that the queens have room to lay. Before adding another super it's a good idea to check the ones already on and to maximise space by rearranging frames and even boxes, at the same time moving uncapped or partially capped frames to the middle of the super for the bees to complete: they work in a chimney fashion so will go straight up the centre of the hive, ignoring the outer frames unless they need them. This year

my bees have been very quick to fill supers but quite slow to cap frames: curious, but according to Beecraft it seems I'm not the only one to find this. With the main honey harvest of the year in mind you may find you need to order extra equipment, foundation, jars or labels. There have been very few reports of possible Asian hornet incursion into the UK but we must remain alert to the possibility of overwintered queens attempting to set up colonies. Any such queens will be confined to the nest now but workers will be seen hawking outside hives so remain vigilant, set up bait stations and keep checking trees in your vicinity for possible secondary nests. We also need to maintain our vigilance where colony health is concerned and to be alert to signs of robbing by stronger colonies and by wasps. Yes, it's time to make some wasp traps... July Summary Continue to add supers ahead of the bees' requirements when the lower box is full of bees not honey. Carry out detailed inspections on colonies that have not been split and take action if you find queen cells. Remove and extract sealed frames of honey and put the empties back in the evening for the bees to clean out. Always return them to the hives they came from and try not to leave bits of sticky comb lying about in the apiary. Reduce entrances to avoid the risk of robbing by bees and wasps. Make wasp traps – see guidance online from BBKA, National Bee Unit, Dave Cushman, et al. Continue to monitor the daily varroa drop and take action if the count is above 10. Make sure you have equipment, jars and labels organised for your honey harvest. Leave your bait hive out a bit longer, there may still be swarms about. Look out for Asian hornet workers hawking outside your hives; baits should be protein based, e.g. cat food, tuna, prawns; observe bait stations and change bait often. Check trees for large secondary Asian hornet nests. Keep watching, learning, and asking questions.

Dougie

Chair