

East Lothian Beekeepers Association

Newsletter 128 May 2004

Dear All,

Since the last newsletter my computer has died and we have had two meetings. The first was a talk on the 18th March by Bob Simpson of Flower of May Apiaries on "Modern Beekeeping". I came away with the messages that beekeeping conditions have changed markedly over the last several decades through changes in agricultural practices, that beekeeping will change again with the arrival of Varroa, but that this isn't the end! We are all invited to attend a Beekeeping demonstration at Bob Simpson's Pitcullo Castle Apiary on Saturday 22nd May at 2pm. Pitcullo is halfway between Balmullo and Dairsie on the A92. Turn at Muirhead of Pitcullo Farm where it is signposted to Logie.

Varroa

Our other meeting on 22nd April was dedicated to Varroa. It was hosted by George Barton and Colin McIntosh who were our delegates at a recent Scottish Beekeepers Association Varroa training meeting. We had a strong turnout (23) with several new faces alerted by a piece in the East Lothian Courier. We were presented with a lot of information but crucially, George and Colin helped us navigate through it. What emerged was positive and all the less frightening for being a problem faced jointly.

George distributed a number of useful summary sheets and if you would like a copy, contact him:

Living with Varroa

- Anti Varroa treatments (organic acids)
- Using Drone Brood as a Varroa Control
- Healthy bees (integrated pest management)
- Apiguard
- Exorsect for bees (fruit extract used against head lice)

Colin McIntosh displayed his beautifully made Varroa floors. These are available for both Smith and National hives at £35 each. Gordon Biggar demonstrated a home made oxalic acid sublimator kindly made by his brother and available at the cost price of £5 (the proceeds very generously going to our Association).

Mapping of apiary sites

We have now mapped the position of 43 apiaries in East Lothian and hope that this will allow us to alert members as Varroa begins its invasion (still no reports from East Lothian).

Library Display

I put together a small display on beekeeping for the Haddington library including a comb of heather honey, veil, smoker and various beekeeping books and magazines. The highlights of the display were brought to me by Tom Ramage. The oldest was an 1887 illustrated catalogue from Thomas B. Blow of Welwyn Herts. with beautiful etchings of long-forgotten hive designs.

Next was "Beekeeping up to date" by A.B. Flower 1925 (reprinted in 1941), the initials hiding the fact that this was written by a woman. The slightly condescending introduction by W. Herrod-Hempsall (a man) reveals that she was a motor-cyclist. Finally, a copy of "Bees, Honey & Beekeeping" published by the Scottish Beekeepers' Association in 1938 for the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow and featuring an advertisement for J.S. Elder's East Bearford Apiaries. Anyone who would like to borrow these items, please contact me. The library are keen for us to mount another display – has anyone any good ideas for a theme (my wife suggests beekeeping!)?

East Lothian Beekeepers Association books

On the subject of our lost beekeeping books, the Moir library have no records of any accessions from our Association, the Haddington Library or Lt. Col Hall of Campdown House Drem. The Head of Library services, David Moody (an ex-secretary of our Association) remembers the books being kept at library headquarters in a separate stack in about the mid 1980s, but the library have no record of what has happened to them since they were transferred to Haddington Library in 1960. The trail seems to have gone cold – has anyone any further clues?

Future meetings

Sunday 16th May at Rhelonie, Jerusalem, near Pencaitland where George Barton is temporarily housing the Association Apiary hives. Meet at 2pm.

Saturday 22nd May 2pm Pitcullo Castle, Fife (see above)

Sunday 20th June at Michael Croughan and Peter Radband's apiary near Trafalgar, Gifford. Take the B6355 out of Gifford towards East Saltoun. When the road turns right, keep straight on past the Golf course and then take the first right. Park at the entrance to Trafalgar which lies amongst the trees on the left. Meet at 2pm. We will then visit Sandy Boggon's apiary in Gifford which features two WBC hives.

Saturday 3rd July at the Haddington Show, Westfield, Lennoxlove. We will need ideas, exhibits and volunteers to repeat the success of last year's stall.

Membership List 2004

By popular demand, I have compiled a list of members and their contact details.

If your name has been highlighted it means that you haven't yet renewed your membership for this year. All you have to do is send a cheque for £5 to Rosemary Carthy with a note of your name, address, telephone number and number and location of your hives.

Let me know if you no longer wish to receive a copy of the Association newsletter, or if you notice any mistakes or omissions.