

# East Lothian Beekeepers Association

(Founded 1887 - Scotland's oldest Local Association)

[www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk)

Newsletter 150

April 2009

One of the joys of spring is seeing the bees taking pollen into the hive – the beautiful weather over Easter saw my hives abuzz once again. A quick inspection to remove feeders and mouse guards and add queen excluders and supers (to some) showed brood in all, although to varying extents. I have had very few reports of losses over the winter – quite a contrast to the previous two winters.

With three of the four SBA Basic Beemaster syllabus evenings under our belts, East Lothian beekeepers ought to be well prepared for the season ahead. These informal sessions have been a good source of anecdotes and contrary opinions, and everyone will have learned something. For example, inspired by Mike and Rosemary's methods, I have instituted a new improved record keeping system for my own hives – a jotter (to be technically known as "The Book")! The final Beemaster session is on "Diseases, Poisoning and Pests" at 7.30 pm on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April in the Haddington Town House.

## Association Apiary

Excellent though theory is, there is no substitute for opening up a hive and handling bees yourself. Our President, George Barton, has taken on the management of the Association apiary and will host sessions every Thursday evening from the 7<sup>th</sup> May until the 30<sup>th</sup> July from 6pm until 7pm at the latest. Inspections will not take place if it is wet, windy or cold (<

11°C) – use your common sense to decide if it is worth going – if you aren't comfortable in shirtsleeves then the bees won't be happy when their hive is opened up! George will lead most of these sessions, but any experienced beekeepers who would be prepared to substitute when he is on holiday should contact him. These sessions will replace our usual weekend visits to member's apiaries.

## Nuclei

One of our main challenges as an Association is to provide bees for the many beginners who are hoping to get started each season. Unfortunately, swarms have been very scarce over the last couple seasons, partly because the summers have been relatively cold and wet, but possibly also because feral colonies are dying out because of Varroa. One way that we can help beginners is to provide nuclei for them, and hopefully the Association apiary will be able to produce at least a couple nuclei this year. However, there are many more beginners than that! Any members who can produce some nuclei will find a ready market for their bees – I'm told that a fair rate for a five frame nucleus with a mated and laying queen is about £25.

## Observation Hive

I have had an observation hive sitting in my bee shed for a couple of years now – this was donated to the Association by Drew Stenhouse. I will install some bees this year and anyone interested in "observing" is welcome to visit.

## Haddington Show

Our principal public event each year is to host a stall at the Haddington Show – this year being held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July. Ideas for this year's show include skep making (Maureen

Cameron) and the very popular “beekeeper making up frames” live exhibit (Michael Hill), as well as candle rolling, the observation hive, display boards and the sale of honey from the Association Apiary (George Barton organizing the honey and Rosemary Carthy and Michael Hill doing the bottling). Would anyone like to take on the challenge of setting up the display observation hive as I will not be able to attend the show?

### **A new Bumblebee record!**

Following the talk by Bob Dawson of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust last autumn, one of the members of the public who attended was inspired to photograph a bee in her back garden. She sent the picture in for identification and it turned out to be *Bombus monticola* the Blaeberry bumblebee – a new record for East Lothian. There is an excellent identification guide on their website:

[www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk/bumblebees\\_id.htm](http://www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk/bumblebees_id.htm)

Let's not let the amateurs beat us at our own game!

### **Bees at Bhopal**

One of our members, Eurig Scandrett, is involved in a project at a Health Centre in Bhopal, India, where there is a garden growing medicinal herbs. There were hives of bees in this garden until recently when they were lost in a flood. Following a presentation by Eurig at our last evening meeting, the committee agreed that the Association would provide a grant of £250 to assist with re-establishing beekeeping there. This sum is roughly equivalent to our annual income from honey sales at the Haddington Show. Eurig will prepare a display about the project for the next show so that we can make a connection with the project when selling our honey.

### **Beekeepers Quarterly**

Mike Bain has forwarded the information that the excellent “BeeKeepers Quarterly” can now be seen on the web at [www.bkq.org.uk](http://www.bkq.org.uk) This will be a free, try it and see service to beekeepers for the March & May 2009 editions - after this there will be a small charge to subscribe.

### **Equipment**

Alastair Smith would like to acquire a nucleus box for Smith frames – 01620 829731. Drew Stenhouse has a honey extractor for sale – 01620 829629. Kenneth Dickson has a selection of section equipment for Smith hives for sale for modest prices – 0131 449 7916.

### **New members**

We welcome Rosie Patrick as a member of the Association. Dylan Bell has been co-opted onto the committee. There seem to be quite a few beekeepers from Berwickshire coming along to our meetings or making contact with me. I thought it might be useful to put this group in touch with each other by email so that they can support each other more easily. Let me know if you would like to be added to this list.

If you receive this newsletter by post this will be your last mailing unless you let me know that your wish to continue receiving newsletters or become a member.

Donald Smith (Secretary)

Garden Cottage, Clerkington

Haddington EH41 4NJ 01620 822441

[gardencottage@virgin.net](mailto:gardencottage@virgin.net)