

East Lothian Beekeepers Association

(Founded 1887 - Scotland's oldest Local Association)

www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk

Newsletter 151

May 2009

Another (short) newsletter together with contact details of those members who agreed to make them available, and a reminder that your help will be needed for the Association display at the Haddington Show on 4th July.

One of our important functions as a local beekeepers Association is to help novice beekeepers get started. For the last few years, Mike Bain has been running a beginners class – so popular this year that he had to run two sessions each week! We also held a series of evening meetings last winter that covered the SBA Basic Beemaster syllabus. Following on from all that theory, George Barton is now running practical sessions at the Association apiary (100 yards east of the Burns' Memorial at Grant's Braes on the B6368, 1 mile south west of Haddington) each Thursday (until 30th July) at 6-7pm.

However, getting beginners started takes more than just theory and practice – they also need hives and bees. This is where we as an Association can be a big help. I asked in the last newsletter for more experienced beekeepers to try and make up some nuclei from their own stocks when they are practicing swarm control, and suggested that it might be reasonable to ask £25 for such a stock in recompense for the frames, wax, bees and the beekeeper's time.

The other side of the equation came together last week. I was offered a number of hive boxes, frames, floors and lids (Smith and National of each) in exchange for one of my own colonies. This equipment will be the start of an Association clearing house for hive bits and pieces from which we can supply beginners with a floor,

brood, frames, queen excluder, super, crown board and roof. Hopefully, any members with odd pieces of surplus equipment will add them to this stock - a few odd frames or an extra crown board might just make up another complete hive. Hives will be sold for £25 and these funds will be used to buy any items that are missing so that we can make up more hives!

Beginners wishing to buy one of these hives will need to be members of this Association (since it's an Association initiative) and the SBA (so they have insurance), to have attended beginners classes (so they know what to do), to have identified a site for their apiary and have acquired a veil, gloves, smoker and hive tool (so they are ready to take bees) and to have asked an existing beekeeper to act as their mentor (so that they have someone to turn to for advice). Members marked with "M" in the contact list are willing to act as mentors – and no doubt others may be persuadable! Those wanting a nucleus will obviously need to have all this in place and a hive! I will store and supply the hive equipment and put beekeepers with nuclei in touch with those wanting bees.

Observation Hive

The observation hive gifted to the Association (which came from Tom Broomhouse of Humble through Tom Ramage and Drew Stenhouse) now has bees inside it (and queen cells – I lost the queen!). Anyone wanting to see them is most welcome to visit at Garden Cottage.

New members

We welcome Nicola Semple, Marcus Wilberforce, Nicholas Hardwick,, Niki Fallowfield, and Nicki Borthwick.

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