

East Lothian Beekeepers Association

(Founded 1887 - Scotland's oldest Local Association)

www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk

Newsletter 152

August 2009

I hope that honey has been pouring into your supers – mixed success for mine – some doing very well, others just ticking over and a few going swarm crazy. By all accounts the Haddington Show at the beginning of July went well with all the Association honey sold and some enquiries from potential beekeepers. Eurig Scandrett produced a display about his beekeeping project in Bhopal which we helped to fund from last year's honey sales. Thanks to all those members who helped out to give bees and beekeeping a public face, and especially to Bill Fife who managed to get the Association a very positive mention in the East Lothian News!

Disease

The most important news this summer has been the report of an outbreak of European Foulbrood in Perthshire and Angus, with more recent reports in Perthshire and North East Fife. Getting on for 100 colonies have already been destroyed, and the assumption is that the disease has been present there for some time. The best source for up to date information are our own and the SBA websites:

<http://www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/services/html/diseases.html>

Be on the lookout for any discolored or irregular cappings – these are early signs of disease before it moves on to the more obvious “melted” yellowed larvae. More information about EFB is available on the Association website and on Beebase:

<https://secure.csl.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm>). Obviously it would be unwise to move bees into East Lothian from more northern areas, and we should all be vigilant in examining our colonies for signs of disease. Some East Lothian apiaries will be examined by Government bee inspectors next week as a precautionary measure.

European Foulbrood is a notifiable disease – contact our local SGRPID office in Galashiels – 01896 892400

SGPRID.Galashiels@scotland.gsi.gov.uk Compensation may be payable if you are an SBA member.

Email

The EFB outbreak has made me aware how useful it is to have email addresses for all members – Mike Bain has been updating our own website regularly and alerting members to additions by emails. This is much faster and more regular than waiting for my next newsletter to be posted. It's also cheaper for the Association! Emails are sent using a “blind carbon copy” so that your address is hidden from others. If you currently receive newsletters by post but have an email address, then it might be more convenient use this instead.

Gifford Show

The chance to show just how good your honey is just around the corner thanks to the Honey section at the Gifford Show which takes place over the weekend of 15th 16th August.

This year the honey judge is coming all the way from Dumfries, so it would be nice if the tables were groaning under the weight of honey, honeycomb and wax. The classes are:

- 601 1lb jar clear dark blossom honey
- 602 1lb jar clear light to medium blossom honey
- 603 1lb jar naturally granulated honey
- 604 1lb jar soft set honey
- 605 1lb jar heather honey (liquid)
- 606 one piece cut comb blossom honey (approx 8oz)
- 607 one piece cut comb heather honey (approx 8oz)
- 608 one section flower honey
- 609 one section heather honey
- 610 one shallow frame blossom honey
- 611 one shallow frame heather honey
- 612 one bottle wine type mead (not fortified)

613 one piece beeswax 8 to 12 oz
614 honey cake (no recipe given)

Don't be shy! Contact me if you need or can offer transport to Gifford on the Friday / Saturday or to collect exhibits on Sunday.

Nuclei and hives for beginners

Thanks to George Barton's efforts at the Association apiary and to several other members, we have been able to supply a good number of beginners with their first nucleus of bees. This is one of the most important functions of the Association at the moment - not only to train new beekeepers but also to put them in touch with a mentor and get them started with their first colony of local (and hopefully disease-free) bees. If any beginners are still looking for bees, please contact me. Several people have suggested that our asking price at £25 a nucleus, or £5 a frame is too modest, and perhaps this should be raised in future years. Some beginners have also obtained their first hive equipment from the Association stock – but what is left is pretty ropery – any contributions of odd bits and pieces would help greatly, especially if we are to continue the idea for next year.

SBA events

Those of you who aren't members of the SBA might like to know about two forthcoming events – the SBA Autumn Convention on 12th September in Perth at the Dewar Centre with talks on Varroa, Abnormal Colony Loss, Queen Rearing and Breeding programmes. Cost £25 including teas and lunch, bookings, SAE, cheque to "SBA" to Iain Steven, 4 Craigie View, Perth PH2 0DP by 5th September.

The following month, Peebles BKA are hosting a talk in the SBA lecture tour program by Clive de Bruyn entitled "What can the hobby beekeeper learn from commercial and professional beekeepers?" – Friday 16th October at Peebles Old Parish Church Hall, 7.30pm. The contact is Geoffrey Goldstraw 01721 722 040.

Apiary site

The offer has been made of an apiary site in Ormiston – contact Yvonne on 01875 615071 for further information.

Winter and beyond

It's not just the bees that need to plan ahead for the winter! We need to think as an Association what it is that we want to do together. Now is the time to send in your suggestions for the winter program. Another job is to find a new secretary – I have been doing the job for six years now and it time for someone else to bring fresh impetus and ideas to the role. At this time of year the job is mainly saving bumblebees from destruction by concerned members of the public, but more typically the secretary's function is to spread information. I started out (and pretty much still am) a novice beekeeper, so almost any member of the Association who can give up a day of their time every other month could do the job. The next AGM might also like to consider amending the constitution so that the Secretary (and possibly President and Treasurer) can only be in post for a given number of years. This idea has been successfully adopted by the Caddonfoot Association, and ensures that everyone gets a turn and stops the post from becoming a sentence.

Members' contact details

Several members have asked why their name was not on the list of members' contact details – the reason is that they either didn't fill in a membership form or forgot to fill in or ticked "No" on the section asking for permission to circulate their contact details.

New members

We welcome Hugo Straker, Robert Higham and Kate Darrah,

Donald Smith (Secretary)
Garden Cottage, Clerkington
Haddington EH41 4NJ 01620 822441
gardencottage@virgin.net