

East Lothian Beekeepers Association

Newsletter 129

July 2004

Dear All,

I have run out of supers, frames, foundation, floors, queen excluders and anything else you can name – time for a bit of uniting I think, scaling down my operation and better forward planning! I hope that you have been better organised.

We have had two apiary meetings – the first on 16th May at George Barton's. We went through the two Association hives as well as several of George's own. He cunningly split us up to work in "small groups" so we got a lot done. The second meeting on 20th June in Gifford was hosted jointly by Peter Radband, Michael Croughan and Sandy Boggon. The weather was threatening, but never came to anything. I made note of Peter's handy dummy boards made by nailing a board onto the side of a frame, and I was amazed that Sandy's WBC hives functioned so well without the inside set of boxes being flush. Our stand at the Haddington Show on 3rd July won second prize in the "small trade" category (third last year). The star of the show was Peter Radband's superb observation hive with co-starring contributions from Mike Bain, George Barton, Gordon Biggar and Pat McErlean and Colin McIntosh.

Website

Mike Bain who has recently joined the association from Shropshire has very generously obtained the domain name www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk and is in the process of creating a web site for us. If you have access to the web have a look and see what is there already. He would appreciate any digital photographs

of group events or beekeeping matters to add into the site as well as any suggestions about the content.

Email addresses

On the subject of things electronic, if members with email addresses forward them to me then I could send Newsletters electronically and save some postage, envelopes and time.

Swarm collectors

East Lothian Council has asked me if there are any beekeepers who would be willing to collect swarms in their area. The only names they have so far are George Hood and John Grieve. Volunteers so far are Colin McIntosh for Pencaitland, Bill Fife for North Berwick and Peter Radband for Gifford. Please let me know if you would like to be included.

Library

Since our own library seems to have been lost or sold or given away or something, I thought it was time to begin a new library. With Association funds I have bought the excellent Guide to Bees and Honey by Hooper. I also found I had duplicates of Principles of Practical Beekeeping by Couston and The Bee-Keeper's Handbook by Herbert Mace. Added to these are the books brought to me by Tom Ramage:

"Beekeeping up to date" by A.B. Flower 1925 (reprinted in 1941), "Bees, Honey & Beekeeping" published by the Scottish Beekeepers' Association in 1938 and the 1887 illustrated catalogue from Thomas B. Blow. These items are available for borrowing from myself. Mike Bain has also kindly put a list of books that can be borrowed from him on the website. Please let me know if you have any books that you would like to make available and I will produce a full list. Alternatively, are there any books that you would like to see in the Association library?

Wax exchange

Colin McIntosh has made the excellent suggestion that we organise a collective wax exchange trip to Thornes at Tayport rather than taking up dribs and drabs ourselves or squandering the wax in postage. The plan is for a couple of us to go up sometime in the winter months to swop clean rendered wax for foundation. Let me know if you would like to participate.

Equipment for sale

1. Wooden stretchers with metal hooks used for carrying hives. Offers to Bill Fife with proceeds going to the Association.
2. National super to make up – free to good home, but prefer swop for Smith super! Apply to Donald Smith.

Future meetings

18th July 2pm Donald Smith's apiary at Clerkington. Take the Pencaitland Road out of Haddington and turn left at North Lodge immediately before the unrestricted speed sign. Continue up the rough track past a stable building and high wall until you come to Garden Cottage.

8th August 12.30 Heather picnic at Ian and Rosamond Robertson's apiary at Park Cottage, Newlands. On the Gifford to Duns road, turn right at Danskine crossroads to Newlands. Go past the steading and farm cottages and the driveway is on the left. Look out for the wind turbine. Bring lunch and drinks.

21st and 22nd August Gifford Flower Show, Honey Section. Details of classes in Newsletter 127. The more the merrier.

Varroa

I still have no reports of Varroa in East Lothian. My thoughts are to forgo taking the bees to the heather this autumn since that seems the most likely way of picking up infection. However, some apiaries are so close to the heather moors that they don't need to be moved and some mixing of bees may be inevitable. Equally, swarms coming from Edinburgh could also bring infection with them. Any thoughts? The address for sending your Varroa floorboard scrapings is: Mrs Susan Irvine, S.A.S.A. East Craigs, Edinburgh, EH12 8NJ, (clearly marked Bee Diseases).

Leader+ funding

I have picked up a leaflet on funding to support "economic and community development in rural areas". Initial enquiries suggest that we would be suitable candidates especially if our project was directed at young people or marketing/branding. Funds are up to 45% of project costs up to £30,000. Any ideas?

Donald Smith (Secretary)
Garden Cottage
Clerkington
Haddington EH41 4NJ
01620 822441 gardencottage@ntlworld.com