

# East Lothian Beekeepers Association

Newsletter 130

September 2004

Dear All,

This seems to be the autumn of the wasps! Unfortunately, the last couple of months haven't been so good for my bees. My hives are all very light and I am feeding belatedly and heavily.

## Talk – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October at 7.15

Edinburgh and Midlothian Beekeepers Association have invited us to attend the lecture being given by this year's Scottish Beekeepers Association touring lecturer Ian McLean. The venue is the Administration block of the Royal Botanic Garden, Inverleith Row, Edinburgh.

## Past Meetings

The last two apiary meetings were relatively quiet affairs. The one I hosted on 18<sup>th</sup> July was an object lesson in how not to unite colonies – a queen that was due for the chop couldn't be found, another was laying above the queen excluder. The only success was my crate of sections ready for the Gifford Show. Ian Robertson hosted a heather picnic at his new apiary on 8<sup>th</sup> August. The bees were well behaved despite the windy day, were all doing well and piling in the heather honey.

Another date in our last calendar was the Gifford Show on 21<sup>st</sup> August – I forgot (despite my sections)! The results were:

Class	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
216	11b Jar Clear Blossom Honey	W. Fife	P. Radband M. Hedderwick
217	11b Jar Naturally Granulated Honey	M. Hedderwick	P. Radband J. Sheldon
218	11b Jar Soft Set Honey	P. Radband	J. Sheldon M. Hedderwick
219	11b Jar Heather Honey (liquid)	M. Hedderwick	P. Radband S. Boggon
220	8oz cut comb Blossom Honey	W. Fife	S. Boggon
221	8oz cut comb Heather Honey	P. Radband	- -
222	Section Flower Honey	S. Boggon	- -
223	Section Heather Honey	P. Radband	- -
224	Shallow Frame Blossom Honey	S. Boggon	M. Hedderwick
225	Shallow Frame Heather Honey	P. Radband	
226	One bottle Mead wine	P. Radband	- -
227	8-12oz Beeswax	M. Hedderwick	W. Fife P. Radband
228	Honey cake	-	- -

The winner of the Gifford Horticultural Trophy for Honey for the most points in classes 214-225 was P. Radband.

The winner of the George Turnbull Trophy for Beekeeping for the best exhibit in Section 6 excluding class 226 was W. Fife

### **Bee Boles**

We have been invited by East Lothian Life to write an article about beekeeping in East Lothian. One angle I have been following up is bee boles – wall alcoves that skeps were held in. There are several examples in the county. However, there is a “missing” one in Dirlton – no grid reference or details available – does anyone know of it? Does anyone have any historical tidbits that I could put in the article?

### **Scottish Beekeepers Association Convention Inverness**

My family gave me permission to attend the SBA meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> September. I wasn't the youngest there by any means and the beekeepers were friendly (of course). On the Friday night there was a talk by Murdo McDonald about Highland bumblebees. There have been large changes in species distribution in recent years and more information is needed – I will be asking you all to collect bumblebees next spring! There were two lively talks by Paul Metcalf from Norwich about reading a colony and queen rearing. More academic was a study of pollen transfer from GM oilseed rape by wind and insects. There was detectable transfer by insects more than 20km away from the test site (see [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/research/epg-rg0216.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/research/epg-rg0216.htm) for details). Finally, there was a very good talk from Willie Robson about beekeeping at Chainbridge and I think I have the hang of how they process the rape honey and practice swarm control (he has sent me the text if anyone is interested).

### **Varroa**

I still have no reports of Varroa in East Lothian, but hives at Butterfly World outside Dalkeith are infected.

### **Library**

Our library is a success as only two books are left! As secretary I receive the Scottish Beekeeper each month – contact me if you would like to borrow them. We are entitled to borrow a “box” of books from the Moir library in Edinburgh– any specific requests?

### **Future meetings**

Several people have made suggestions to me about our winter programme. In no particular order:

- How to make a solar extractor – a practical session
- Visit from George Duncan, honey judge at the Gifford Show to talk to us about our honey samples
- Mike Bain on how to make hand creams
- A members night with three or four contributions on whatever people have bees in bonnets about
- 'Future of association apiary – site, funding
- Visit to Thornes for wax exchange / equipment
- Mike Bain has offered to guide regular study groups (in a pub!) These would follow the SBA examination module syllabus, but examinations would be optional.
- Video evening

Could people let me know which of these topics fire their imaginations, or indeed if they have any other ideas.

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