

East Lothian Beekeepers Association

(www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk)

Newsletter 134

August 2005

We have had a busy summer with successful and sunshine-blessed visits to the apiaries of Bill Fife, George Barton (a visit from “Slow Food” which we combined with a trip to George Hood’s honey processing facilities in Ormiston), Mark Hedderwick and Pat McErlean (joint meeting with Peebles BKA).

Our stall at the Haddington Show was never quiet – we took £165 in honey sales and for candle rolling. We also enlightened some innocents about bees and honey, backed up by our new Association leaflet, got lots of people mellow with Pat’s mead, satisfied hordes of sweet teeth with our tasting pots, tempted kids to don veils and open our “virtual hive” and made contact with some potential beekeepers. Meanwhile the queen in the observation hive just got on with her laying. Despite all this there was no first prize – our tent as a whole got a rosette for third place and a letter of thanks from the Agricultural Society. Any ideas for improvements next year - without opening a hive!

Despite giving the names of some members to East Lothian Council as swarm collection volunteers, I have had very few swarm enquiries this year, though quite a few about bumblebees!

Diary Dates

20th and 21st August Gifford Show. Entries can be taken in on the Friday evening or Saturday before 10am. The 13 categories are: 1lb jar blossom honey (clear, naturally granulated or soft set), 1lb

jar heather honey, 8oz of cut comb blossom or heather honey, a section of flower or heather honey, a shallow frame of blossom or heather honey, one bottle of mead, 8-12oz beeswax, and honey cake (one recipe is on the website). As well as prizes and kudos there are two trophies to be won. The Judge for the honey section will be George Duncan who was kind enough to visit us in March to explain what he is looking for. So go get those prizes!

28th August - Heather picnic hosted by Ross Langlands. Take the B6355 Gifford – Duns road for about 4 miles. You will see a sign for a fishery and cross a cattle grid just before you pass Darent House. Take the next turn off on the left. Bring your own picnic. Meet 1 pm. Non-beekeepers welcome and safe!

24th September SBA Autumn Convention – Oatridge Agricultural College, Broxburn, West Lothian. 8.45am – 5.10 pm. Tickets £22 from Iain Steven, 4 Craigie View, Perth, PH2 0DP. There is a very good program of speakers (see Scottish Beekeeper magazine). Anyone needing or offering a lift please contact me.

3rd October SBA Touring Lecturer – Glyn Davies will be speaking to the Caddonfoot BKA on “Beekeeping in Revolution” at 7.30 pm in St Margaret’s Primary School Hall, Galashiels. Further information from Paul Gibson, 01896 750110 or alisongibson@onetel.com. Any offers or requests for lifts to me.

November – Beekeeping Social Evening. Our Association had a long tradition of organising a winter dinner for beekeepers and their families with one or two guests from neighbouring Associations invited to join us for dinner (without having to give a talk). Is there any interest in reviving this event or any suggestions for a suitable venue? Let me know and we will revive the custom.

Extractor

The Association has bought Colin McIntosh's 9-frame stainless steel, radial, variable speed extractor. George Barton will keep it on behalf of the Association, and it will be available for borrowing to members at a modest fee (to be decided). Despite this acquisition, our Treasurer, Rosemary Carthy, tells me that our funds are healthy (several hundred pounds) and that we ought to think about how we want to use our resources. Any ideas?

Disease leaflets

I have copies of two new leaflets from DEFRA entitled "Managing Varroa" and "Tropilaelaps: parasitic mites of honey bees". Tropilaelaps is like a small and thin Varroa mite, but the good news is that it requires the continuous presence of brood and is "unlikely to survive where there is complete brood interruption during the winter." You can borrow these leaflets from me. I have written asking for more copies of the Varroa leaflet, but they are scarce and if you want to try as well write to Scott McDowell, Animal Health and Welfare, Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, EH14 1TY (0131-244 6616, animal.health@scotland.gsi.gov.uk).

History of Beekeeping in East Lothian

A recent addition to our website is a history section containing a collection of old articles and letters about beekeeping from the Haddingtonshire Courier and dating from the 1860s – 80s. There are some superb descriptions of the production of queen cells and the development of brood written by a Mr Shearer of Yester Gardens who kept an observation hive on a table at his bedroom window with the sash raised a little! There are also some spats and exhortations to practice "humane" beekeeping from the Rev. John Kerr of Dirleton. The first proposal for an East Lothian Beekeeping Association was published in 1887! If anyone has

any other historical information about beekeeping in East Lothian then I would very much like to add it to our developing archive.

Apistan strips

I still have a number of Apistan strips for testing hives for the presence of Varroa. These are available free to members thanks to a donation from the Lothian, Borders and Angus Cooperative Society. You can use the strips only once you have removed all your supers. The strips are best used in conjunction with a Varroa floor or hive insert.

Basic Beemaster

All five of our members (Maureen and Alan Cameron, Margaret Dunning, Jane Will and myself) who sat for the Basic Beemaster Certificate in June under Mike Bain's tutelage have passed! Certificates to be handed out at some suitably embarrassing public event!

Beekeeping Supplies

Braeside Bee Supplies is a Thorne's agent in Penicuik who attends the Haddington Farmer's Market each month and can bring orders there for collection. 01968 674947

New members

We welcome the following new members: Graham Rankine, Alan Hamilton, Lesley MacGregor, Nigel Souter, Charles Ingle, and John Young. Our membership now stands at 36.

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