

East Lothian Beekeepers Association

(Founded 1887 - Scotland's oldest Local Association?)

www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk

Newsletter 141

December 2006

OK, I haven't completely run out of ideas – it must have been the honey laden food, the copious wine and the free flowing conversation at November's Beekeepers' dinner that got me going again. For those who weren't there, the evening was a great success with eighteen of enjoying another honey-themed menu at Bonar's, and there were enough spouses and partners to ensure that beekeeping talk was kept to a minimum.

Forthcoming Events:

Sunday 17th December 1pm - a demonstration by Gordon Biggar of "hive cleansing" (see below) by the oxalic acid trickle method at my apiary, at Clerkington, Haddington. Call 01620 822441 to confirm and for directions. Mince pies a distinct possibility!

Thursday 25th January Haddington Town House 7.30pm. A.G.M. (election of officials (including eager new secretary, see below), decisions about how to spend some of our accumulated funds, apiary plans) followed by talk by Peter Radband on "Preparing exhibits for honey shows and various cunning beekeeping apparatuses".

Thursday 22nd February Haddington Town House, 7.30pm Ross Langlands will talk on "Bees, Honey and Health" Everything from stings, hayfever, Manuka honey and treatment for burns from our own no-nonsense jargon-busting beekeeping GP.

Thursday 15th March Haddington Town House, 7.30pm Graeme Sharpe from the Scottish Agricultural College, Auchincruive will talk on "Honey from flower to jar". Graeme is Scotland's only professional beekeeping advisor. His last talk to the Association a couple of years ago educated us about Varroa and how to treat it.

Thursday 26th April, Haddington Town House, 7.30pm, DVD evening hosted by Mike Bain – items to include "Varroa" and a DVD on the honeybee dance produced by Sheffield University.

I'm also hoping to organise a visit to the National Library in Edinburgh to view the Moir Library rare books held there.

SBA Secretaries and Council meeting

The latest word from Alan Teale, the SBA Bee Diseases officer, is that Oxalic Acid is and will remain an illegal substance for the treatment of Varroa infection. However, oxalic acid can be used as a "hive cleansing agent" to remove fungi, bacteria and parasites. There is a caveat that beekeepers are then responsible for making sure that oxalic acid doesn't end up in their honey. If a problem with oxalic acid residues does arise then legislation against its use will no doubt follow and that will be that.

Professor Teale also requested that beekeepers send samples of 30 fresh dead bees to be tested for Kashmir bee virus by Susan Irvine, SASA, 1 Roddinglaw Road, Edinburgh, EH12 9FJ. Send in matchbox or paper bag, not polythene (see Scottish Beekeeper Vol. 11 p 289)

The other major item of interest to me was that the SBA magazine desperately needs more copy. The editor can only print what his membership sends in! You may have seen that Gordon Biggar contributed an article on oxalic acid earlier this year. There must

be many more members of our Association who have something to say about beekeeping that is worth sharing with a wider audience – the alternative is that the magazine will degenerate into a kind of news clipping service about beekeeping around the world. Just send your anecdotes, words of wisdom or questions to editor@scottishbeekeepers.org.uk or by post to Nigel Hurst, 11 Munro Way, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 8LP.

At the meeting I also returned the Moir library box to the librarian. I also presented her with the Czech and German beekeeping books which came to the Association through Gordon Biggar from Paul Millar, the honorary Consul for the Czech Republic. I thought they would be more useful in a larger library rather than in our collection. The librarian reminded me that members of the SBA can request individual books by post from the Moir library. Non-SBA members can borrow the Association library card. The postal service is free, but you have to pay for the return post or return the books in person.

Going to the meeting reminded me of how valuable the SBA is to us and what a lot of work is done on our behalf by the unpaid and overworked officials. Most Association members are already members of the SBA, but those who aren't are missing out on third party insurance for claims against injury caused by your bees or honey, as well as compensation if your stocks have to be destroyed because of disease or if they are stolen. There's also the monthly magazine with an eclectic range of topics from the local to the international, access to the Moir library, the website ...all for only £20 a year. Application forms can be had from me.

East Lothian Beekeepers Association Membership

Membership forms will be sent out after the AGM in January once the fee has been decided. It's also about time that another

list of members' contact details was produced – the membership form will ask for your agreement to include your details on this list. I should mention that the newsletter is circulated more widely than just the membership – if you no longer wish to be on the mailing list then please let me know.

Beginners group

Any beginners who would like to join Mike Bain's study group of aspiring beekeepers, please contact him (01875 341226 or msbain@globalnet.co.uk). Evening meetings will start in January.

Some musings on what the Association should do next year

I've been secretary for three years now, and I'm thinking that it's time for some new enthusiast to take over the none too onerous duty of being secretary. A computer and access to email helps, but my tenure has proved that being an expert beekeeper isn't crucial! Nevertheless, as secretary you get to dispense all sorts of advice, which gives you a satisfyingly similar sensation.

If you aren't up to being secretary, have a think about what sort of things you would like to see the Association doing next year, and how you could help organise them? A few starters:

- Establish an Association apiary for training beginners
- Surveying feral sites (being done by Helensburgh BKA)
- School visits to get the next generation enthused
- Adding to the Association library – books, DVDs?
- Preparing new exhibits for Haddington Show

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