

# East Lothian Beekeepers Association

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

[www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk)

Newsletter 144

August 2007

The summer has not been kind to our bees or our Association. The weather eased sufficiently for the visit to Mark Hedderwick's model apiary to go ahead on 26<sup>th</sup> May and this time I think I've got my head around his management system! Thanks to Peter Wright, we also learned the best way to orientate a queen excluder. But I was left on my own to do justice to all the scones and cakes afterwards. I failed. The visit to the Association apiary at Lennoxlove couldn't take place because of the rain, and then the Haddington Show was cancelled after a very wet week. Perhaps as a result of the odd weather I have only had two phone calls about swarms, and the Council had very few requests either.

The Association survey of colony losses last winter revealed that 39 hives were lost out of 129 hives (30%). Thirteen of the 28 beekeepers who responded lost hives. The dead hives generally had plenty of stores and there were no piles of dead bees. Two hives were probably lost to vandalism, one was queenless going into the winter, and two probably starved. Of the remaining 34 losses, most occurred in apiaries that had not been treated for Varroa (22 losses out of 25 hives, 88% lost) or had only been treated with Oxalic acid by either fumigation or trickling (9 losses out of 14 hives, 64% lost). In contrast, there were only 3 unexplained losses amongst the 75 hives that had been treated with Apistan or Bayvarol (4% lost). This suggests that the unusual losses observed over the last winter were due to the failure to treat adequately for Varroa infection rather than to the

more sinister "empty hive syndrome". These results should remind us all that treating for Varroa is not optional. Infection is widespread throughout the county and even if you don't think you have Varroa infection, you probably do. If you don't treat the infection your bees then they will die. Unless you are taking your bees to the heather then treat the hives as soon as you take the supers off - you will have time to take the strips out again before winter arrives.

## Forthcoming events

18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> August Gifford Show Honey Section- the classes are:

- 601: One 1lb jar Clear, Dark Blossom Honey
- 602: One 1lb jar Clear, Light to Medium Blossom Honey
- 603: One 1lb jar Naturally Granulated Honey
- 604: One 1lb jar Soft Set Honey
- 605: One 1lb jar Heather Honey (liquid)
- 606: One piece Cut Comb Blossom Honey (approx 8 oz.)
- 607: One piece Cut Comb Heather Honey (approx 8 oz.)
- 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 ozs.
- 614: Honey cake (no recipe given) – but see our website

You can take your entries along to the Marquee in the village square in Gifford from 6pm on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> or until 10am on the Saturday morning. Prizes are 1<sup>st</sup> £1, 2<sup>nd</sup> 60p, 3<sup>rd</sup> 40p. The Gifford Horticultural Society Trophy for Honey is awarded for the most points in classes 601-613 and the George Turnball Trophy for Beekeeping for the best exhibit in the Honey section excluding class 614. However, it's not all about winning – it's a great

advertisement for bees and beekeeping for visitors to see a good display of honey and honeycomb.

1<sup>st</sup> October Talk by Brian Hateley, Stockton-on-Tees, on “Recovery of beeswax / solar extractor”. Brian’s visit to us is part of the SBA autumn lecture tour, and we are very lucky to have been chosen to host this event – please put the date in your diary! 7.30 pm in the Haddington Town House – note this is a Monday.

15th November Talk by Graeme Sharpe from SAC, Auchincrivie on Bee Diseases. 7.30pm in the Haddington Town House.

29th November Association Social Dinner at Bonar’s, Haddington, with a honey themed menu. Dinner and wine £21.50 per head. The more the merrier! Numbers to me please.

### **Beginners**

Despite the poor swarming season several beginners have managed to get themselves set up with bees – notably Scott Hood, Jane McCormack, Jeanne Simpson and Dylan Bell. A few meetings have also been held at the Association apiary at Lennoxlove where the bees appear to be doing well, with two supers removed for the Haddington Show. All members are welcome to visit and work on the hives. Record cards and a pen have been placed in the roof of each hive.

### **Observation Hive**

Drew Stenhouse has kindly donated a very fine observation hive to the Association. It came to Drew from Tom Ramage who got it from Tom Brownhill of Humbie. The hive was made by Robert Lee of Uxbridge, Middlesex, and rotates upon a metal plate so that both sides can easily be seen – any ideas what to do with it?

### **Equipment for sale**

All of the equipment kindly donated to the Association by Kay Kemball is still unclaimed – no reasonable offer refused!

Smith travel screen	2
Smith zinc queen excluder (unframed)	1
Smith crown board	4
Smith hive stand	1
Smith Super	1
National floor	1
Queen excluder (smaller than Smith)	1
Mouse guards	7
Wooden entrance reducers	2
Box of metal ends	1
Honey pails with lids – large	2 large, 2 small
Leather gloves with sleeves – small	2 pairs
Sleeves	1 pair
Veil without hat	1
Hive entrance rapid feeder	1

In addition there are some items donated by Sandy Murray:

Smith super – flat pack	1
Smith DN4 frames	1 pack of 10

### **New members**

We welcome Dylan Bell of Portobello and Liz Mostyn of North Berwick.

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