

East Lothian Beekeepers Association

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

www.eastlothianbeekeepers.org.uk

Newsletter 145

January 2008

The Headline news of this newsletter is the date of the Association AGM: **Thursday 31st January at 7.30pm** in the Haddington Town House (in the bar lounge on the right, or you can you can take your chances with Weightwatchers on the left!).

AGENDA:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM held 25th January 2007
3. Treasurer's report and setting of membership fee
4. President's report
5. Election of Office Bearers
6. Any other business

Following the AGM, I have invited those beginners who first got their hands on some bees last year to give a brief description of their experiences (good or bad). Hopefully, the audience will be able to provide them with some useful comments, and we will be able to discover the sorts of things the Association can do to help get beginners going. I will also bring along several items of beekeeping equipment donated to the Association by Kay Kemball, and which are languishing in my shed waiting for someone to adopt them. A full list can be found in the May and August newsletters. Please also bring along any books that you may have borrowed from the Association library so that these can be re-circulated. If you have any suggestions for speakers or events for the coming year these would be appreciated.

Past events We were very lucky to be selected as one of the venues for the SBA touring lecture given by Bryan Hateley, and

indeed the audience at the meeting on 1st October was swelled with visitors from the Edinburgh and Caddonfoot Associations. Bryan's theme was the importance of wax recovery in the beekeeper's economy. He told the story of visit he had made to clear up the apiary of a beekeeper who had recently died, and how shocked he was to find masses of old honeycomb festering away in sheds and in stacked boxes. Not only was this a breeding ground for wax moth, but a waste of a valuable hive product – it's a scenario that certainly rings bells with me! His top tip for using a solar extractor was to use a piece of plastic drainage pipe as a mould and ram the comb into a sausage shape within several thicknesses of tights – all the wax runs out and the crud is left behind. Several members bought copies of his drawings for the construction of a large solar extractor. He also donated a copy of a booklet he has written about observation hives – available for members to borrow (as also is a very fine observation hive!).

A month or so later we were treated to another welcome visit from Graeme Sharpe of Auchincruvie who managed to cover the entire spectrum of bee diseases in an hour. His message was to be aware of the appearance of healthy brood frames so that you notice any problems such as gaps, uneven cappings or shrivelled larvae. There was an outbreak of European Foulbrood in North East Fife last summer, so it is well to be on the lookout.

Finally, at the end of November, the largest turnout of the year was for the Association Dinner, transferred at the last minute due to the closure of Bonar's to the Maitlandfield House Hotel. Despite the short notice, the chef still managed to produce a fine honey-themed menu. Enconced in a room to ourselves around a very long table, the conversation ran on late into the evening, though there were sufficient numbers of non-beekeeping family members to ensure that there wasn't too much bee-related talk.

Association Apiary

I took off another two full supers from the Association hives in August which I have extracted and sold through my normal contacts, with the proceeds going to Association funds. The hives have been treated with Apistan, and George Barton added some old oil seed rape honey supers to keep them going through the winter. Hopefully, the coming season will be less inclement so that we can make more use of the apiary as a teaching resource.

Association library

I have acquired two new books – “The complete and easy guide to Beekeeping” by Kim Flottum, 2005, beautiful photographs and very clear instructions, and “Beekeeping” by Andrew Davies, 2007, a chattier, less daunting book that would be good for a beginner.

Beginners Class

If there is sufficient interest, Mike Bain intends to run a beginners class again, possibly running on Tuesday evenings. This is the best way of preparing yourself for your first hive of bees! Contact him on 01875 341226 or by email to: bees@msbain.co.uk

Hives for wanted / for sale

Gordon Biggar has Smith hives and parts for sale. Contact him on 01875 821611. Drew Stenhouse has both National and Smith hives for sale as well as an extractor: tel: 01620 829629. Peter Wright is looking for some extra colonies in Nationals. Call him on 0131 667 2941 or p.wright@ed.ac.uk

SBA secretaries meeting, Perth 10th November

In order to comply with the data protection act I will have to ask on the 2008 membership form for permission before I can provide your contact details to outside bodies such as the SBA. The SBA

website has been revamped and, as always, is worth a look (www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk). The SBA will conduct a survey of feral bees this year, as well as questioning about 10% of members to monitor changes in the pattern of colony loss.

Gifford Show Results

Numbers of entries were low. 601: Clear, Dark Blossom Honey 3rd James Bell; 602: Clear, Light to Medium Blossom Honey, 1st John De Pree, 2nd William Fife, 3rd, James Bell; 603: Naturally Granulated Honey, 1st Sandy Boggon, 2nd James Bell; 604: Soft Set Honey, 1st James Bell, 2nd Sandy Boggon; 605: Heather Honey, 1st John De Pree, 2nd James Bell; 606: Cut Comb Blossom Honey, 1st James Bell, 2nd Sandy Boggon; 607: Cut Comb Heather Honey, 1st John De Pree, 2nd James Bell; 608: Section Flower Honey, no entries; 609: Section Heather Honey, no entries; 610: Shallow frame Blossom Honey, 1st John De Pree, 2nd James Bell, 3rd Sandy Boggon; 611: Shallow frame Heather Honey, 1st James Bell, 2nd John De Pree; 612: Mead, 1st John De Pree, 2nd James Bell, 3rd, Sandy Boggon; 613: Beeswax, 1st John De Pree; 614 Honey cake, no entries. James Bell won the Gifford Horticultural Society Trophy for most points and John De Pree won the George Turnball Trophy for Beekeeping for best exhibit.

Membership

I will send out a 2008 membership form following the AGM when the membership fee will be decided.

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