

# East Lothian Beekeepers Association

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

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

Newsletter 147

May 2008

Not the kindest of Springs for our bees – too much cold and wet weather for them to get off to a great start, though the oil seed rape is ready for them when the good weather comes. I've had a smattering of reports of winter losses. Results from the questionnaire on the membership forms show a total of 7 winter or spring losses from an over-wintering total of about 80 hives. This is about the level (10%) that you might expect, and lower than the previous winter when there were 39 losses out of 116 hives (33%). Summer losses last year were 15 colonies – we have nothing to compare that figure with, but it seems quite high to me.

Look out for a feature on the Association appearing in the East Lothian Courier in the next week or two – for a change, they approached us!

## Past events

The Beekeepers' Show and Tell night on 28<sup>th</sup> February was a event filled with mystery, intrigue, poetical license, musical mayhem and honey themed gorging – but you had to be there to know what I'm talking about.

The talk by Mike McInnes on "Honey and the Hibernation Diet" was a departure from our normal beekeeping territory with more biochemistry than most of us are used to. There was plenty of scepticism about his ideas that honey can help you diet and recover from exercise. Time will tell who's right.

## Forthcoming events

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2pm Apiary visit to Association hives at Lennoxlove. Approaching from Haddington on the B6368, after 1 mile turn left at the lodge house just before the memorial at Grant's Braes. The hives are 100m along the wall to the West.

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2pm Visit to William Fife's apiary at 12 Kingston Cottages, Kingston, North Berwick.

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July all day Haddington Show – this is our main public event of the year, a chance to get beyond their "bees sting" fears. We will have an observation hive, honey tasting, candle rolling and a variety of educational displays. Come and help!

16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> August Gifford Show – time to start thinking about how you are going to win some prizes or one of the cups – the Gifford Horticultural Society Trophy for Honey for most points in classes 601 -613 and the George Turnbull Trophy for Beekeeping awarded for the best exhibit in classes 601-613. Entries can be made from 6pm on the 15<sup>th</sup> or before 10am on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The categories are:

- 601 1lb jar clear dark blossom honey
- 602 1lb jar clear light to medium blossom honey
- 603 1lb jar naturally granulated honey
- 604 1lb jar soft set honey
- 605 1lb jar heather honey (liquid)
- 606 one piece cut comb blossom honey (approx 8oz)
- 607 one piece cut comb heather honey (approx 8oz)
- 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 oz

614 honey cake (no recipe given)

5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> September - we have been asked to provide a display on bees and honey for the East Lothian Horticultural Society Flower Show – any ideas and/or volunteers welcome.

### **Library books**

One of our former members, George Cairns, has kindly donated several books to the Association library:

Maeterlinck	The life of the bee	1920(?)
Edwin Teale	The Golden Throng	1946
G.Gordon Samson	Bees for Pleasure and Profit	1892
Karl von Frisch	Bees: Their vision, chemical senses and language	1968
Frank Vernon	Beekeeping	1976
Tickner Edwardes	The Lore of the honeybee	1913
J.G.Digges	The practical Bee Guide	1941
Henry Taylor	The Bee-keeper's manual	1880
A.B.Flower	Bee-keeping up-to-date	1952
HMSO	Swarming of Bees	1969
HMSO	Beekeeping	1972
SBA	Introduction to bees and beekeeping	1980
SBA	Scottish Beekeeper Magazine	1977-1985

These and all the other books in our impressive library can be borrowed from me at Association events, or by contacting me. Any suggestions for additions most welcome – we have the funds to spend!

### **Feral Bees**

The SBA has launched a survey of feral bee colonies which are now under threat because of varroa. There is a form inside the April edition if you would like to participate. Alternatively, let me know of any feral sites and I will register them on your behalf.

### **Beginners Class**

The beginners class have now moved on to apiary visits at the Association site. These are weather dependent and sometimes arranged at short notice. Contact Mike Bain on 01875 341226 or by email to: [bees@msbain.co.uk](mailto:bees@msbain.co.uk) if you would like to be put on his email list to be advised of meetings.

### **Bees & Swarms**

Quite a few people have asked me for bees – several are beginners wanting to get started, but its also a reflection of the heavy winter losses in 2006/7, the rarity of swarms last summer and the increased summer losses last year. Let me know if you have any spare colonies or swarms (but bear in mind George Hood's warning about the danger of introducing diseases to your own apiary when taking swarms of unknown provenance).

### **New members**

We welcome new members Alex Craigie and Ian McMullian.

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