

# East Lothian Beekeepers Association

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

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

Newsletter 148

October 2008

It has been a poor summer for most of us, even for those lucky enough to have bees. I hear of poor crops, few swarms, and lots of people looking for bees. I have been feeding syrup continuously for the last month, and still they are hungry. My feeling is that my colonies are weaker than they should be, and I wonder what spring will bring. On the plus side, we have several new members and an exciting development at North Berwick High School where Jane McCormack is hoping to set up an apiary and introduce sixth year students to beekeeping.

## **Forthcoming events – Haddington Town House unless stated**

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm Talk by Faye Gibbins on her experiences establishing an apiary at Edinburgh University.

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 7 for 7.30pm Association Dinner at Maitlandfield House Hotel, Haddington with a honey theme to every course. Cost per head £22 . Numbers to me in advance.

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm Bob Dawson of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust will speak on “The Plight of the Bumblebee”

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009 7.30pm AGM and round table discussion of the elements of beekeeping. This is the first of four such meetings that the Committee hope will allow beginner and novice beekeepers to learn and explore the practice of beekeeping through conversation with experienced beekeepers in the

Association. By the end of the series, participants should have enough knowledge to sit the SBA Basic Beekeeper Certificate (only if they want to!). For the first meeting the topic will be “Equipment and the manipulation of colonies”

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm “The Practice of Beekeeping”

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm “Natural History of the Bee”

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 7.30pm “Diseases, Poisoning and Pests”

## **Committee meeting**

At a meeting of the committee last month it was agreed that George Barton would take on the management of the Association apiary and that the association would buy mesh floors, frames, foundation and honey jars for the apiary. As well as providing a focus for teaching practical aspects of beekeeping, it is hoped to produce nuclei from the Association apiary in order to set beginners up with bees. Rosemary Carthy has taken on the job of extracting and bottling Association honey to sell at public events.

## **Apiary sites and Observation hive, and equipment**

We have offers of potential apiary sites at Bankton House and Prestonpans, and of an observation hive – contact me if you want further details. Dylan Bell ([emaldylan@yahoo.com](mailto:emaldylan@yahoo.com)) would like to swap a Smith hive with three supers for a National hive. Gordon Biggar has all the bits and pieces for several Smith hives, varying in quality – prices half to fifth of list price or less! 01875 821611. These offers are for members of the Association only.

## **Gifford Show – Honey section results**

601 Clear dark Blossom honey 1<sup>st</sup> James Bell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mark Hedderwick

602 Clear light to medium Blossom honey 1<sup>st</sup> John de Pree, 2<sup>nd</sup> James Bell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mark Hedderwick

603 Naturally granulated honey 1<sup>st</sup> Sandy Boggon, 2<sup>nd</sup> James Bell

604 Soft set honey 1<sup>st</sup> John de Pree, 2<sup>nd</sup> James Bell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sandy Boggon  
605 Heather honey 1<sup>st</sup> Mark Hedderwich, 2<sup>nd</sup> James Bell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sandy Boggon  
606 Cut comb blossom 1<sup>st</sup> James Bell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sandy Boggon  
607 Cut comb heather 1<sup>st</sup> John de Pree, 2<sup>nd</sup> James Bell  
608 Section Flower & 609 Section Heather – no entries  
610 Shallow frame Blossom 1<sup>st</sup> James Bell, 2<sup>nd</sup> John de Pree  
611 Shallow frame Heather 1<sup>st</sup> James Bell, 2<sup>nd</sup> John de Pree  
612 Mead – class discounted  
613 Beeswax – 1<sup>st</sup> John de Pree, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mark Hedderwick, 3<sup>rd</sup> James Bell  
614 Honey cake 1<sup>st</sup> Mark Hedderwick

The Gifford Horticultural Society Trophy was won by James Bell, and the George Turnbull Trophy for the best exhibit was won by John de Pree.

### **Beginners classes**

Mike Bain will be running beginners classes in late January 2009, meeting on Tuesday evenings in Pencaitland. Contact him for further details on 01875 341226 or [bees@msbain.co.uk](mailto:bees@msbain.co.uk). The Scottish Agricultural College is also running free classes on honey bee management (10<sup>th</sup> December) and diseases (11<sup>th</sup> December) in Edinburgh – details from Graeme Sharpe 01292 525375 or [Graeme.Sharpe@sac.ac.uk](mailto:Graeme.Sharpe@sac.ac.uk) Courses are also being run by the SAC in Inverness, Ayr and St Boswells.

### **Previous events**

Our visits to the Association apiary in May and to Bill Fife's apiary in June were not blessed with the best of weather, but those who did turn up all learned something! The Association had very successful stalls at the Haddington Show in July and at the East

Lothian Horticultural Show in September, with considerable interest, several new members and our honey selling out!

### **Honey analysis**

Out of the blue I received a letter from East Lothian Council with the results of analysis carried out on a sample of my honey bought in a Haddington store. I'm glad to say that it passed with fructose and glucose at 70.6% (the minimum is 60%), 16.2% moisture (limit is 20%), <0.2% sucrose (limit is 5%), hydroxymethylfurfural at 3.68 mg/kg (limit 40 mg/kg), and pollen identified as Trifolium (clover) and to my surprise, Calluna (heather) – perhaps from local gardens.

### **Bee Health Strategy**

I have received a “working document” from the Scottish Government about the Honey bee Health Strategy. My impression is that it promotes better communication and training but no new funding to do this or to initiate research. If you would like to read and comment on the document before 14<sup>th</sup> November it is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Agriculture/animal-welfare/policies/PolicyInfo/Bees>

### **New members**

We welcome new members John Chaundler, Jo Dods, David Fowler, Colin Mackay and Philip Revell.

Donald Smith (Secretary)  
Garden Cottage  
Clerkington  
Haddington EH41 4NJ  
01620 822441 `

[gardencottage@virgin.net](mailto:gardencottage@virgin.net)