



Bees Abroad

Poverty relief through beekeeping

Registered Charity No: 1108464

BEEES

ABROAD

NEWSLETTER

www.beesabroad.org.uk

No 20, October 2011

A Busy Summer

It is a great pleasure to report the steady and positive growth of the work we do and the unique way to relieve poverty through beekeeping. We continue to receive pleasing reports from our projects and the way communities benefit from the Bees Abroad input

The summer months have been taken up attending the many agricultural shows and events around the country where we have the opportunity to promote the work of Bees Abroad talking with not only beekeepers but also the general public. One of the major talking points that attracts attention has been the Bees Abroad 'A-maizing' beesuit which is the protective clothing made by project members from locally available materials such as maize sacks

Thank you to all who supported our raffle this year. Well over a 1000 tickets were sold for the prizes which were a hive of bees, donated by Bid4Bees, and a beekeeping course run by Juliet Moore. We would like to thank them very much for their sponsorship. Congratulations to our winners, Derek



The 'A-maizing' beesuit



Bees Abroad at the shows

Atkinson from Chesham and John Price from Market Drayton.

Further thanks to Jane Franks who has supplied us with an interesting range of cosmetics that have proved very popular at all the events.

There were fears that the recession would diminish the income from the events we attend but I have great pleasure in reporting the generosity of both beekeepers and the general public as our income has not just stood still but has increased markedly.

Julian Wellford, one of our volunteer project leaders, farmer and commercial beekeeper, organised and instigated the first ever Exmoor Honey Fest to celebrate the honey harvest and beekeeping on Exmoor. This was held on 27 August at the historic town of Dunster near Minehead. Proceeds from the event will go towards the Bees

Abroad work that Julian undertakes in Uganda. Further details can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter.

One further encouraging trend for our charity is the welcomed addition of folks who have come forward following our project training event here in the UK. This means that new assistant trainee project leaders will be strengthening our team and visiting potential projects in the near future. This is a great source of encouragement to BA Trustees.

So, if you are reading this newsletter as a first timer and you think you have a skill and maybe some limited time, we would always be pleased to hear from you. Adrian Davies recently joined us to look after the Bees Abroad website. Please visit www.beesabroad.org.uk as it contains a lot more information about our work and is well worth following.

John Home, Chairman

Faustina Urassa: A Remarkable Lady

Pam Gregory

Faustina is the leader of the Kilimanjaro Association for the Spinally Injured – Women’s Co-operative (mercifully shortened to KASIWOCO). I met her when Bees Abroad undertook to plan a beekeeping project and offer training to this group at the request of Motivation UK. Not only is Faustina inspirational but she is also one of the nicest people you are ever likely to meet. Her beautiful beaming smile and positive attitude belie the fact that she is often in pain and has been in a wheelchair for the past 11 years. She sustained a broken back following a dreadful car accident when she was thrown through the windscreen and terribly injured. As so often happens to African women when things go wrong, her husband couldn’t cope with her injuries and abandoned her.

She was months days pregnant at the time of the accident and, miraculously, the baby survived. Faustina’s lovely daughter, Tunu, which means ‘most precious gift’, is now 10 years old. Faustina makes huge sacrifices so that Tunu can attend an excellent boarding school, chosen because she will learn English from an early age. Tunu loves school but misses her mum during term time (and her mum misses her desperately too). Faustina says Tunu is very bright and is often top of her class.

In the days after her accident, Faustina says she did not want to live. However, the first sight of her baby daughter gave her a new purpose in life and made her determined to make the most of things so she could give the baby a future. The peer training she received from the Kilimanjaro Association for the Spinally Injured (KASI)



Pam Gregory

Faustina Urassa – an inspiration to us all

showed her there was still plenty to live for and she has fought back, despite the difficulties, to become a dynamic and fashionable career woman. Today she works for KASI, giving the peer group training that helped her so much when she was recovering from her accident. She is looking to improve her qualifications with a certificate in community health care.

Earlier this year Faustina crowned her achievements by being invited to New York to present the case for peer group training for the disabled to the United Nations.

Her husband has even wanted to come back to her but Faustina says he has lost his chance – silly man. Although they are friends, she has a new relationship and new life.

KASIWOCO is a group of 50 spinally injured women who live in Moshi, Tanzania. They wanted to take up beekeeping for a variety of reasons. The most important is that constant confinement in a wheelchair often gives rise to pressure sores. Honey is one of the best treatments for this and they use a lot, but it is expensive so they want to be able to produce their own. In addition, the organisation needs to develop more reliable sources of income to be able to continue with the invaluable work they do in helping spinally injured

people both in Tanzania and other parts of East and South Africa. The women themselves also need a means of making a living. Not an easy brief, but we came up with an ambitious plan.

As a result, Bees Abroad is making a second visit to this group in November 2011 to move the project into its next phase. Culturing stingless bees and making cosmetics have been identified as the most immediately useful means of going forward for the first phase of the project. Ideally qualified, new recruits to Bees Abroad, David and Margery Bonner, will be giving training in making cosmetics and medicinal products to the women.

I have to confess I was shocked that there should be so many injured people just in one city. Fifty injured women suggests there will be even more injured men (as men are more likely to be in cars) – each one a human tragedy. This carnage results from unsafe vehicles and reckless driving styles.

I learned a lot about being spinally injured during my visit last year – not least about the great courage people show in the face of their disabilities. Life is hard enough even for the able bodied in Africa – being disabled makes it doubly difficult. The Motivation group in the UK helps to raise funds for this group and other organisations for spinally injured people throughout the world – but the demand is huge. Bees Abroad is proud to help with this project.



*The KASIWOCO
beekeeping group*

Empowering Women Through Beekeeping in Monze, Zambia

Roy Dyche

I've just returned from a very productive trip to Zambia's Southern Province. Thanks to a handsome grant from the Rufford Foundation, a generous gift from Mr Paul Murray and one or two smaller donations from the Thanet BKA and members of my own association, we were able to launch our project with two women's co-operatives in the Monze District recently.

Now I wanted to see for myself how the small implementing NGO, the Sustainable Rural Development Agency (SRDA), was faring and to take part in the initial training.

I was rather nervous about what awaited me. Despite having done what it could to support local beekeepers for some years now, SRDA had never handled a project of this size before or been entrusted with major donor funding. Moreover, the women had absolutely no prior experience of beekeeping. I had found on my exploratory visit a year ago that they were keen enough to get started but, of course, I could not be sure how capable and truly committed they would prove to be.

I soon discovered that I need not have worried.

The SRDA Director, Phillip Nsakilwa, took me to see the two apiaries which his team had set up with the help of the women. They were impressive. Posts had been driven into the ground and the hives, 15 in one apiary and 18 in the other, securely suspended from them. The sites had been properly cleared and sturdily fenced to keep animals and children



Roy is asked a searching question at the apiary

well away. The hive bodies themselves were fine, though the top bars were not. The widths of the bars were erratic. Phillip certainly ought to have understood how important the 32 mm width is and he immediately agreed to call in the carpenter to put the matter right.

I took part in a training session with both groups and it was immediately obvious that SRDA's programme officer knew what he was about and was determined that the women should not be merely a passive audience: the smoker-lighting contest, for example, certainly enlivened proceedings! The trainees themselves were very enthusiastic and the questions they asked were shrewd and kept us on our toes. Clearly they will rely heavily on continuing technical support from the SRDA field officer and I am confident that this will be readily forthcoming.

I also checked on Phil's documentation of the funding he had received and of his expenditure and found that he had a firm grip on the financial situation and was keeping detailed and accurate records.

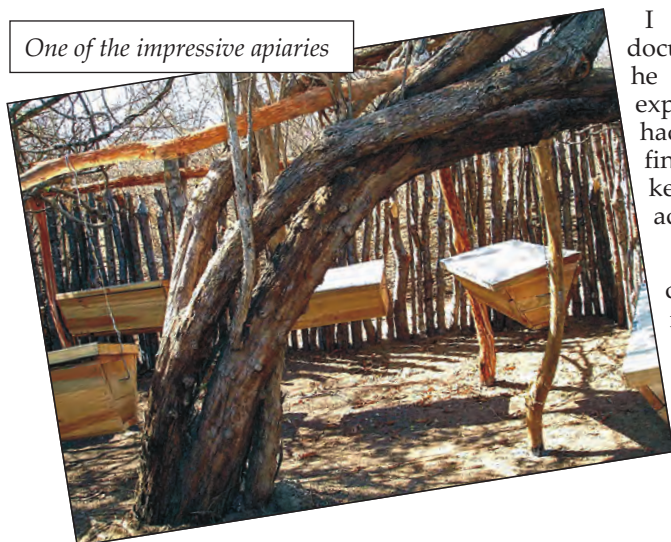
In order to assure the co-ops and other beekeepers in the district have a reliable and fair market for what they produce, SRDA has been provided with seed capital to purchase and bottle 500 kg of honey.

Although he had received the money at the very end of the last buying season, Phil had managed to lay his hands on 180 kg — which was no mean achievement. When the next buying season begins in late October, he should have little difficulty obtaining the remaining 320 kg and, indeed, more using the profits from earlier sales.

We spent a happy morning attaching labels to jars, including tamper-proof strips which I'd taken out with me. Actually these served no practical purpose since the lids were self-sealing but they did make the jars look attractive and rather more 'professional' than those of our competitors. Certainly when we later did a round of retailers, the few dozen we took with us were snapped up.

It was a most reassuring trip and all the signs are that this project will be a success.

One of the impressive apiaries



Bottling the honey



Julian Willford directs operations

Honeyfest Fun

John and Mary Home

What a huge undertaking to organise and run the first ever Exmoor Honeyfest on Saturday 27 August in the magnificent setting of Dunster Village, using the ancient Yarn Market in the high street and the tastefully restored Tithe Barn with the surrounding gardens by the church as the venue. The event was the fruition of a vision of Julian Willford, a farmer, commercial beekeeper and volunteer project leader for Bees Abroad in Uganda.

The dual purpose of the event was to celebrate beekeeping and the honey harvest on Exmoor and to offer a shop window to Bees Abroad to show how beekeeping can relieve poverty. The success of the whole event was down to the pre-planning, the hard work and the enthusiasm of the helpers and the Bee Crew on the day.

The delicious banquet



The Yarn market was the centre of story telling for youngsters together with poetry reading and other small displays. It also acted as a gathering point for those wishing to walk to a local garden to see a live bee demonstration and, at other times, to inform and guide people to the main area at the Tithe Barn. In the grounds by the Tithe Barn, there were many varied stalls with local produce, all creating interest to the visitors. There was a lecture theatre at the Tithe Barn in which varied talks and illustrations were held throughout the day

Early evening saw the stall holders packing up and the Bee Crew efficiently dismantling the covering tent awnings. Once this was done, most of them made a quick change into suitable clothing for the evening banquet. This consisted of a delicious meal in the Tithe Barn.



At the conclusion of the banquet, Julian auctioned hive of bees with proceeds going to Bees Abroad and added to excellent takings that Jackie and Jeff Bee had accumulated from the sale of items at the Bees Abroad stall during the day. The generosity continued during the evening when some of the 70 or so people at the banquet made donations through the gift aid envelopes on their tables.

The final event was the after-dinner talk by John Home, Bees Abroad Chairman, about the work of the charity including humorous stories of his experiences during project work in Kenya.

We cannot thank Julian and all those who took part enough for their wholehearted and enthusiastic support for our work.

RAISING FUNDS THE FUN WAY

Supporters have been busy raising funds in all sorts of ways. Thank you everyone and keep up the good work!



From the top:

Towpath Harvest on the Thames; the Royal Highland Show; the Bee Guardian Foundation shop in Gloucester and the Cheltenham Challenge

THE BIG CYCLE

Calling all cyclists for a charity bike ride from Land's End to John O'Groats, probably May-June 2012. Please contact Brian Durk (beesdurk@yahoo.co.uk; 07721 315684). Monies to Bees Abroad.

DON'T FORGET EVERYCLICK

Give to *Bees Abroad* at no cost to yourself. We are registered with **everyclick.com** so supporters can raise money for us simply by using this to search the web! Each mouse click generates a donation from advertising on the site. Click on 'How you can help' at www.beesabroad.org.uk. The total raised to date is £867.16. Help us to make it more!



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT

www.beesabroad.org.uk

CONTACT BEES ABROAD

Administrator: Veronica Brown, PO Box 2058, Bristol BS35 9AF. Tel: 0117 230 0231; e-mail: info@beesabroad.org.uk