

# NORTHERN LIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH DEVON BRANCH  
OF THE DEVON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

January 2007

[www.northdevonbees.org](http://www.northdevonbees.org)



## Editorial

### *A New Beginning*

Traditionally, Autumn, or that period after the honey harvest, is seen as the beginning of the beekeeping year. However, personally, I still see the year as starting in January. This is not because there are any major activities – in fact it is the quietest month - but more because it is the time that I start to look forward to the new season, rather than back at the old one.

For me, this season will truly be a new beginning because I am actually moving house (after a few false starts) and this will involve me in moving my bees as well. Moving, as I am sure you will know, is a stressful time (for us, more than the bees !) but what has amazed me is the amount of beekeeping equipment I have amassed in just 3 full seasons of beekeeping. Supers piled high from floor to ceiling, queen excluders, feeders, sugar stocks, nuc boxes, honey containers, jars, extractors, frames by the bucketload and of course those rather “tired” cast-off brood boxes & supers, gleaned from a number of sources, which are awaiting repair and refurbishment – which, in truth, should probably be speedily consigned to the bonfire !

For some strange illogical reason, in a year that we had planned a house move, I have increased my colonies from 2 to 5, and this will add to the logistics problem of moving them. Fortunately, I have an out-apiary, and this will obviate the need to transport the hives on moving day, as I can transfer my “home” colonies there in the interim, whilst I search for a suitable site on or near my new home.

Where am I going ? Well, that’s the rub as, at the time of writing, I do not know, although the plan is to head into Somerset and rent for a few months whilst we search for a new home around that area.

So what sort of property are we looking for ? Well I’ve started to make a list of our requirements ..... protection from prevailing winds, south facing aspect, not near a busy road or footpath, good foraging, away from close neighbours, nearby water source .....

*Kevin T*

**Footnote.** My move will mean that I will shortly have to give up the Editor’s job, and someone else will have to take up the enjoyable task of producing this newsletter (yes, strangely enough, I do enjoy it). Anyone interested in shouldering this responsibility should talk to Chris Tozer or any member of the committee. If you require any information on what it entails, get in touch with me, and I’ll fill in the details.

## Chairman’s Notes

Just a short note this month to keep you abreast of an important change.

At the AGM I was elected both as Chairman and Secretary. However, since no one person can take on two trustee roles, this has had to be changed. With the agreement of the Devon Beekeepers Association, it has been decided that Patrick Moore will take on the Secretary role but all the documentation will come through me as his assistant.

If anyone objects to this, please let me know and an EGM will be arranged in order to formalise the situation.

Wishing you all a very productive beekeeping year in 2007

*Chris T*

## “Hive Clean” Marketing Flyer.

Due to some confusion over the above leaflet, the following clarification is being published here, and on our web site for wider, more public exposure.

## 2007 Subscriptions

These are now due. Your early remittance will be very much appreciated. The Subscription Form and Gift Aid declaration are being sent out with this newsletter. Alternatively, or for new members, they can be downloaded from our web site; or you can pick them up from Horestone Apiary or directly from Dave James.

### ‘Hive Clean’ and Bee-Bay Ltd

Bee-Bay, the new UK distributor for ‘Hive Clean’, has distributed a marketing flyer that refers to trials that have been conducted by the North Devon Branch (NDB) and by Branch members. The overall tone and the references to North Devon and especially the North Devon Branch of the DBKA, might suggest that

this product is thereby endorsed in some official manner, or even that there is some financial connection between DBKA and Bee-Bay.

Although the NDB uses ‘Hive Clean’ in its Apiary, as do many of its members, it would be incorrect to state that this constitutes - or is the result of - extensive, scientific trials with properly conducted control sampling. There is also no financial relationship with this distributor.

Nevertheless this easily applied, oxalic acid based product has indeed been found useful in the IPM programmes of the NDB and many of its members, and supplies are purchased locally from Community of Beekeepers Ltd (‘Bitz4Bees’).

We hope this clarifies the matter, but further information can be obtained from Tony Wright, NDB’s Apiary Support Team Manager ( 01271 865 516).

## New Branch Officers

At the recent AGM and subsequent Branch Committee Meeting, the following elected offices and appointed positions were filled.

*Chairman* Chris Tozer

*Vice Chairman* Albert Cannon

*Treasurer* Dave James

*Secretary* Patrick Moore (Chris Tozer acting temporarily) assisted by Dave James

### *Ex-Officio Committee Members*

Liz Hall & Peter Warrilow

### *Other Branch Positions*

*Education* Jim Slade

*DBKA EC Delegates* Chris Tozer and Dave James

*Microscopist* Brian Marchand & Mary Houldsworth (to be confirmed)

*DBKA Honey Show Committee Delegates* Beryl Smailes & Chris Utting

*Foul Brood Recognition Advisors* Chris Utting, Beryl Smailes and Kay Thomas

*Magazine Distributor* Denise Oldaker

*Membership Sec.* Denise Oldaker

*Social Secretary* Vacant

*Apiary Support Team (AST) Manager* Tony Wright.

*Shows Manager.* (under AST) Ruth Neal

*Librarian* Elizabeth Reynolds

*Apiary Gardener* Chris Tozer

*Swarm Liaison Officers* Kay Thomas, Tony Wright, Chris Tozer & Jim Slade

*Spray Liaison Officer* Chris Tozer

*Minutes Secretary* Judith Westcott

*Newsletter Editor* Kevin Tricker

*Webmaster* Ruth Blake

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## Something Missing ?

Those of you of a more discerning nature will have noticed the surprising absence of both Chris Utting and Beryl Smailes from the above list of Branch Officers. This is not because they have been summarily dismissed, or because they will be heading off to pastures new, but entirely due to the fact that they have both decided, after many, many years of faithful service to the Branch, to cut down on their activities and make way for new blood and new ideas. They will still be around however to offer advice and practical support and still be involved in bringing new recruits to the Branch via their beginners' courses, as well as providing the Branch's input and expertise to the Devon Show.

I am sure that you would like to join me in thanking them for all the tireless work they have put into this Branch and the Branch Committee over many years.

*Editor*

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## Microscopy – The Kill and Cure Approach

At the AGM, Brian (Marchant) summarised some very interesting statistics from his annual microscopy work for the Branch. For those of you who were unable to attend, here is a short digest :-

During the year, Branch members had submitted some 59 samples of their colonies for examination. In total some 2,672 bees had been examined, making an average bee sample of 45 bees per colony.

Of the 59 samples, 23% were affected by Nosema, 3% were affected by Malpighamoeba Mellificae (**Note 1**) and no colonies tested positive for Acarine. This last result is interesting in that it may point towards the effect of varroacides on the Acarine mite. There is no scientific basis for this assumption however and there could be other causes for this apparent decline of Acarine..

Once again, Brian added a final plea. Would members please remember that, when submitting samples, they ideally should be composed of live bees. Alternatively they should be killed in a freezer and sent, with minimum delay, in a breathable container. (Personally, I always use Swan Vestas matchboxes, but any small cardboard box will do.) Avoid, at all costs, glass or plastic containers as the bees can quickly turn to "soup" which can cause significant problems for him, and jeopardise the accuracy of the final results.

### *Note 1 Amoeba disease*

#### *Symptoms and cause*

*The causative agent of this infection is the organism Malpighamoeba mellificae. There are no outward symptoms of the infection and a positive diagnosis of M. mellificae can only be made by microscopic examination to identify the amoebic cysts. It has been suggested that infections of M. mellificae are associated with spring dwindling, dysentery and shortening the lifespan of infected bees. However, there is no evidence to support this and the effect of an infection is not clearly known. M. mellificae infections are very often found in association with nosemosis and it is likely that a dual infection will be more damaging to the health of the bee.*

#### *Treatment and control*

*Once again hygiene is the key to controlling spread of the organism as with Nosema. There are currently no approved proprietary products registered for the control of M. mellificae in the UK.*

*Ref: Central Science Laboratory website [www.csl.gov.uk](http://www.csl.gov.uk)*

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## Website of the Month

<http://beeman.se/index.html>

### **P-O Gustafsson's Personal Website**

There are a large number of personal beekeeping sites on the Web, but this is one of the best I have come across. Granted that Per-Olof is a commercial beekeeper in Sweden, but the personal approach (look at "My Beekeeping") and the large number of excellent photographs make this a fascinating (and large !) site for the amateur as well.

I was particularly envious of his pictures of hives with ten - **yes ten !** - supers, and some of the close-up shots of queen bees emerging and artificial insemination are amazing !

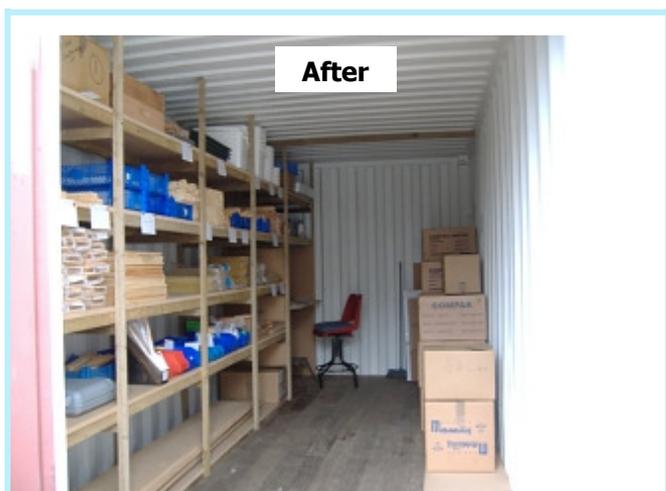
Also, lots of info and pictures from other countries and sources.

## BITZ4BEES wish you a Happy New Year.

Here we are, relocated in our new home, hopefully to stay for the foreseeable future.



The Painters painted it!  
The Carpenters fitted it out!  
The Packers packed 40 odd boxes of stock!  
The Removers moved them from Bideford!  
The Shelf Stackers stacked them!



### WE ARE NOW UP AND RUNNING

Our supplier of Hives and hive Parts has confirmed deliveries will begin in January. Those of you with orders already placed watch this space.

Thank you for your support over the past year, we will endeavour to continue to give you the service you require.

Have you had any thoughts on your future requirements? Early ordering would be appreciated.

Dave & Jean Morris

### Beeswax Wanted

Beeswax wanted for candlemaking.

£2.50 to £3.50 per pound paid, depending on condition.

Don't bother struggling to Stoneleigh with it - I will collect.

Contact Chris Tozer on 01237 471928.

## The Thunderbolt Kid ?

If, like me, you are missing something at the Apiary but can't quite grasp what it is, could it be the phenomenon known as Kevin Stach?

The brilliant, generous, elusive, innovative, sometimes infuriating Kevin Stach set about re-inventing North Devon Branch only about four years ago. His aim was way higher than you and I ever envisaged, namely to make our Branch and its Apiary "The Best".



Of course he had a wonderful team to help him, and I know he is only up there in Newcastle and will be back from time to time, but I miss him a lot. He could handle anything. Whenever I caught that amused glint in his eye, it was quite apparent he could handle any one of us.

Good luck to you Kevin, and thanks for your presence.

*Beryl*

## Quick Diary

### Thursday 11th January

7.30pm, Castle Centre, Barnstaple.

### Mid Winter Puzzles

All welcome for a team-work evening. Questions will be about beekeeping, and also some general knowledge. Unusual presentation offered, also prizes! Come on in, North Devon Beekeepers.... Formez vos Bataillons! Prepare for some fun. Usual super shared supper and raffle apply. Prompt 7.30 start

### Wednesday 21st February

7.30pm, Castle Centre, Barnstaple.

DBKA President Dr Mick Street - no stranger to our Branch and its Apiary - will be speaking about "The Drone". Please support Mick, it will be an interesting evening

### Thursday 8th March

7.30pm, Castle Centre, Barnstaple.

Talk by Bill Finnemore. *Apiary Spring Planning.*

First Beekeeper : "OOOOOUCH !!!"

Second Beekeeper "What's the matter with you?"

First Beekeeper "A bee's stung my thumb."

Second Beekeeper "Try putting it in cold water"

First Beekeeper "Don't be silly, she'll be miles away by this time."

## The North Devon Branch Annual Honey Show Awards



**Jack Mummery**  
on one of his  
many trips to  
the prize table.

**Elizabeth Hall**  
receiving the  
Hustwayte  
Plate from  
Chris Tozer



**Kay Thomas**  
receiving the  
Croyde Cup at the  
Apiary.  
(I wonder if the  
"bonhomie" has any-  
thing to do with the bot-  
tles standing around in  
the foreground ?)

### Award Winners

- 1 Devon Beekeepers Association North Devon Branch Trophy. **Jack Mummery**
- 2 The Yeo Jenne Trophy. **Jack Mummery**
- 3 The Croyde Cup **Kay Thomas**
- 4 The Hustwayte Plate **Elizabeth Hall**
- 5 The Bernard Pritchard Trophy **Ruth Neal**
- 6 The Chris Utting Trophy **Elizabeth Neal**
- 7 The Beryl Trophy **Jack Mummery**
- 8 The Weaver Trophy **Jack Mummery**
- 9 The Certificate of Merit .... **Kay Thomas**  
(for her entry of light run honey)

**Congratulations to all prize winners.**

## North Devon Search & Rescue

Mike Long of the North Devon Search & Rescue Team (who gave a very illuminating talk at the Castle Centre after the AGM) is pictured below describing some of the equipment used in their work.



### SOLUTION TO BUZZWORDS (December Issue)

ACROSS: 1 paralysis, 3 castellated, 7 miller, 10 refractometer, 14 honey, 15 mouse, 16 varroa, 17 invertase, 20 pesticides, 23 venom, 24 wings, 25 cell, 26 venom, 27 housebees, 28 porter, 30 sealed, 32 glands, 33 stressed, 35 brood, 39 floor, 41 skep, 42 fanning, 43 patties, 45 queen, 46 spacers, 47 mating, 49 clearing board, 50 wax moths, 52 head, 53 foulbrood, 54 apis mellifera, 56 drones, 61 queen excluder, 66 wbc, 68 candy, 69 beespace, 70 spiracle, 72 fuel, 73 dummy board, 74 varroacide, 76 drifting, 79 bottling, 82 braula, 83 kashmir, 87 brace comb, 90 pheromone, 91 feeding, 99 playcell, 101 queenless, 103 propolis, 104 escape board, 105 ocelli, 109 virgin queen, 111 fumidil B, 112 nosema, 113 honeycomb, 114 apiguard, 115 dances, 116 sting.

DOWN: 2 requeen, 4 larvae, 5 entrance, 6 glands, 8 langstroth, 9 bee escapes, 11 caste, 12 marking, 13 frames, 18 nucleus, 19 thixotropic, 20 pupae, 21 colony, 22 feeding, 29 egg laying, 30 stinging, 31 cover board, 34 softset, 36 foundation, 37 yeast, 38 dadant, 40 robbing, 41 super, 44 tracheal, 48 cocoon, 49 chilled brood, 50 woodpecker, 51 killer bee, 55 extractor, 57 decapping, 58 excluder, 59 mandibles, 60 swarming, 62 cast, 63 foraging, 64 dysentery, 65 feeder, 67 bears, 71 pollination, 75 antennae, 77 healthy, 78 dyce method, 80 wax, 81 fermentation, 84 spring, 85 mouse guard, 86 royal jelly, 88 clustering, 89 fructose, 92 eggs, 93 grafting, 94 baldbrood, 95 acarine, 96 wild comb, 97 viscosity, 98 clipping, 100 labelling, 102 fondant, 106 guard, 107 mites, 108 frow, 110 bees.

*Yes, I know. A couple of the answers were repeated - my crossword compiler has a few bugs - but it was too complicated to amend manually.*

*Anyway, hope you enjoyed it (and learnt something in the process). Editor*

Edited by Kevin Tricker, Fox's Orchard, Black Torrington, Devon EX21 5QB.

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All contributions welcome, copy by 19<sup>th</sup> of month for publication in following month's newsletter.

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**DEVON BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION**  
*Registered Charity Number 270675 – Founded 1875*  
**North Devon Branch Membership**

**GIFT AID DECLARATION**

From April 6<sup>th</sup> 2000 charities are able to reclaim the tax on gifts of any amount from donors who are UK taxpayers and have completed a simple Gift Aid Declaration. The Government has introduced these measures to boost charitable giving in the country. 'Getting Britain Giving' is the title of the initiative.

Taxpayers making a donation to the Association can increase the value of their gift substantially. Completing the Gift Aid Declaration below will enable the association to reclaim from the Inland Revenue the tax paid on any donation.

This means that for each membership subscription of £28.00 the North Devon Branch can claim over **£7** for Branch funds from the Inland Revenue and **at no extra cost to the member**

***Please will all Members complete a GIFT AID DECLARATION, even if you have previously completed a covenant form or you are not a UK taxpayer, as this will help us with administration. If you have any queries, or require assistance in completing this form, please contact the Branch Treasurer (see below).***

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I **wish /do not wish** to treat as Gift Aid Donation all donations (including membership subscriptions) I have paid since 2000 and all donations (including membership subscriptions) I may pay from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise. I understand that I must be paying Income or Capital Gains Tax for this year, and that this tax is at least equal to the tax to be reclaimed by Devon Beekeepers' Association.

**I am/am not a UK taxpayer**

**(PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS)**

Full Name.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....Telephone.....E-Mail.....

Signature.....

Date.....

**Please send your cheque with this two-page form to the Branch Treasurer:  
Dr. David James, Bramble Cottage, Tray Lane,  
Atherington, Devon, EX37 9HY  
Tel. 01769 561 002**

**Cheques should be made payable to 'DBKA - North Devon Branch'**