



Editorial

Northern Lights now has a new Editor. Marnie has been finding it increasingly difficult to fit compiling this newsletter into her expanding workload, so I have stepped into the breach.

Many thanks to Marnie for the hours she has spent burning those beeswax candles, hunched over her ancient Olivetti typewriter, carbon paper on one side, a bottle of Tippex on the other, producing those monthly gems of entertainment and information.

You can still e-mail your articles to newsletter@northdevonbees.org and they will come direct to me. Alternatively, please post them to the address at the bottom of this newsletter.

On the personal beekeeping front, I have tentatively stepped into the scary world of queen rearing, albeit on a very basic level, so you may be seeing an article in the near future on my successes and/or failures.

(Couldn't have picked a worse time weather-wise !!!)

In the meantime, may you all have strong queens, healthy colonies and bumper crops.

Kevin Tricker

Chairman's Notes

My wish (a pipedream according to the rest of the Committee) is that at the next AGM there will be at least two nominees for each officer post on the Committee - a genuine election.

All of you out there who have something useful to contribute to the branch, please pick up the phone and contact someone on the Committee. I promise you will be met with nothing but enthusiasm and encouragement.

Many of these roles do not require beekeeping expertise but practical, organisational or management skills gained in commerce or industry - or you could start as an assistant if a major role doesn't appeal immediately. I am in the process of compiling a set of job descrip-

Food & Hygiene Course
Sunday 18th June,
A few places remain,
Details below in Diary.

tions which will clarify each of the roles. When people know what is really involved, hopefully this will generate more interest. I know the AGM is not until November, but please indicate your interest now as this would give you the opportunity to learn the job from the present officer.

While I'm asking for help, the show season is upon us and we need volunteer stewards at the various shows where we have stands. If you're at all interested, please contact Chris Utting or me for more information.

Take care.

Chris Tozer

Diary Latest

JUNE 18th - Sunday

Certificated Course on Food Hygiene, with Tutor, Terry Clarke. From 9.30am Contact Beryl Smailes for details 01271 329 643

JULY 16th - Sunday

Open Day at Horestone Apiary from 2.00pm.
Topic: Use of the Apidea

JULY 21st/22nd - Friday/Saturday

DBKA Summer Conference
Exeter University

AUGUST 2nd - Sunday

North Devon Agricultural Show
Branch Stall

AUGUST 5th & 6th - Saturday/Sunday

Rosemore Gardens, Torrington.
Branch Stall for Family Weekend

AUGUST 13th - Sunday

Open Day at Horestone Apiary from 2.00pm

Apiary Manager's Report

Due to illness, there will be no report this month. I am sure you will join me in wishing Tony a speedy recovery.

Fancy a Bailey's ?

This spring, most of my brood combs had reached the ripe old age of 2 years and were due for replacement – but what method to use ?

Chris U has been singing the praises of the Shook Swarm for some time now, but I wondered if that was a bit stressful for my delicate little children, so I decided to act upon an article in the Feb 2004 issue of Beekeeping, by Richard Ball, outlining the Bailey Comb Change.

(For a read of this article, see the Branch's website - www.northdevonbees.org - and select "For Members" then "Advice & Info".)

This seemed an altogether gentler way of replacing comb, and whilst it obviously has some disadvantages in that disease and varroa can be carried from one brood box to the other over a number of weeks, I decided to give it a try. The cold spring delayed implementation, but, eventually, on 14th April, I decided to go ahead.

The process however, depends on finding the queen (not my strong point) and whilst I achieved this in one of my hives, the other one defeated me. I went ahead anyway, hoping that I had correctly isolated the queen in the upper box (I hadn't !!)

Inspection a week later soon confirmed my error – however, with the colony now split between brood boxes (and with a QX in between the two), it was easier to work out which contained the queen – and I was able to locate her and move her to the upper box.

All that was required now was to wait (and feed so that the colonies could draw out the foundation) until all the brood in the lower boxes had emerged – at which point the old brood boxes and frames could be removed with the QX.

This seemed simple enough. However, what I had not counted on was that the colonies continued to use the old boxes as food stores, laying up copious quantities of pollen and significant quantities of honey. In fact, they seemed very reluctant to move or store any food in the upper boxes, despite the fact that they had drawn out a lot of the foundation, and were using it for brood rearing – very laudable, but not helpful in my desire to remove the lower boxes. I hatched a cunning plan :-

Plan A – Remove the 4 outer frames in the old box (with little food on them) and push all the remaining frames to the back of the box behind a dummy board.

Result - No effect that I could see.

Plan B – add a super (with drawn comb) surely they would respond to this ?

No, they ignored the super and continued to store food in the lower box. If I removed it now, they would have hardly any food stores.

Plan C – move the lower brood box above the super with a cover board between them – surely they would then move their stores – particularly pollen – down nearer the brood nest.

Well some progress. They were now storing new supplies in the new brood box, but were not moving stores from the old box (2 stories up) back down nearer the brood.

Exasperated, I decided to teach them a lesson – slapped a porter bee escape on the cover board, gave them 24 hours to get out and stay out, and removed the old brood frame with all its valuable stores. That will teach them to do what they are told !

So there it is - my first experience of the Bailey Comb change. Not the smooth transition I had expected. Presumably I had made some mistakes. Perhaps I had left the change too late in the spring - perhaps I should have taken the plunge early on and removed the bottom brood box at the earliest opportunity and forced them to renew their stores in the new box.

Anyway, I tried, now, where's that article on the shook swarm ?

Kevin Tricker

South West Festival of Beekeeping

SATURDAY JUNE 10th

10.00 am to 4.00 pm

A lecture programme, candle making, wildlife photography, archery, falconry, live beekeeping demos, organic foods, honey sales, lunch and afternoon teas, arts and crafts, beekeeping equipment. A fun day for beekeepers friends and family. Admission £3.00 (under fourteen free).

Allercott Farm, Timberscombe, Minehead TA24 7BN
- phone 01643 841 555 for more details.

Beekeeper Wanted

Apiary site available.

Gardeners Delight Nursery is on the Old Barnstaple Road near Roundswell, Barnstaple. They produce soft fruit including 2 acres of strawberries that flower from April to August - 'phone Nick Wade on 01271 861 461 for details.

Creating a Buzz about Insects

NATIONAL INSECT WEEK

Visitors to www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk can learn how to make their garden more insect friendly, take part in a range of insect surveys, and have their own event listed on the events page. The Royal Entomological Society's second National Insect Week will build on the success of the first initiative, held in June 2004. Once again, it will engage with children and adults, scientists and nature lovers around the country, raising awareness of insects, their diversity and the crucial role they play in our everyday lives.

BBC Springwatch presenter Kate Humble will launch National Insect Week 2006 on 19 June in London.
National Insect

Week 2006 is supported by the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) Growing Schools Campaign, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Forestry Commission. Partners include Buglife, the Amateur Entomologists' Society and the British Dragonfly Society.

ChrisU

Community of Beekeepers (Bitz4Bees)

In stock are the following items:

Smokers, Hive Tools, Crown Boards, Frame Feeders, De-capping Forks, Queen Excluders, Crown Boards, Cuprinol, Hive Clean, Frame Nails,

1lb & ½lb Jars (with Lids),

Fondant (25lb Blocks),

Frames :-

SN1, DN1, SN4, DN4 (Hoffman), Manley.

Foundation.

Other items can be ordered using the THORNE catalogue as a reference. Please quote page number and description of item.

Orders may be made by phone / e-mail or on a Tuesday at the Apiary. Orders will be brought to the Apiary or arrangements can be made for collection.

Prices are approx 10 – 15% lower and no carriage charges.

Dave & Jean Morris

Phone Number: 01237 – 475705

e-mail: jeda@onetel.com

Bees in the Curriculum

DBKA is considering the organisation of a one day training course to demonstrate the methods of teaching beekeeping to primary school children. If the idea of teaching youngsters about our craft and helping to create the next generation of beekeepers is of interest to you, please contact me and I will inform Mick Street, President of the DBKA, who will be organising the course.

Chris Tozer

Beekeeping Library

Special Offer for June!

Come and browse through the books, make your selection and then enjoy a cup of tea in the garden. Partners welcome!

Please call me to arrange a convenient time on 01271 882940 and not the number listed in the 2006 Year Book.

Elizabeth Reynolds

Are You Missing Your BBKA News and Membership Card ?

It has been brought to my attention that a couple of members have not received their BBKA NEWS. This is posted to you direct from BBKA HQ with six editions a year. February, April, June, August, October and December. The April issue has a BBKA/DBKA membership card included. If you have not received this, please let me know (01237 474 500) and I will take it up with BBKA H/Q.

Apiary Day - Survey Results

This year's membership renewal form contained a questionnaire about the preferred day for Apiary meetings. A total of 24 replies were received. The results were as follows :-

Monday	1	Tuesday :	12
Wednesday	2	Thursday	1
Friday	Nil	Sat/Sun	7

The committee will be considering the whole question of apiary days at the next committee meeting.

How does the queen communicate with her workers ?

With a cellphone, of course !

Report & Pictures from the Devon County Show (more next month)

Our Branch Effort

For several years, Beryl and I have organised the Information Stall in Bees & Honey feature marquee. This year our branch agreed to take on the organisation and this was set up by the Shows SubCommittee. After several planning meetings we went into action on the Sunday before the Show with a visit to the show ground to find out the details of the stall site. The following day I met Kevin Stach at his factory and cut and prepared the backing boards for transporting the next day. With the boarding and a black covering fabric tied and stapled into position our 12ft by 16ft site was prepared.

Beryl and I went down again on the Wednesday to add the trimmings, but we had a problem. The weather was awful with heavy rain flooding across the floor and numerous leaks in the roof so we had to delay putting up all the display material, much of it paper and cardboard, until the first day of the Show.

The ambitious display was in four sections - Starting



Beryl on the Branch's Information Stand

Up, Microscopy, Information and Education. Each section was supported with photos, posters, leaflets etc. The high power and dissecting microscopes were available with a selection of slides provided by Brian Marchant. A continuous slide show on "Getting Started" using the newly purchased digital projector provided by DBKA was running all day.

During the three day show a rota of stewards, many from our branch, manned the stall. Hundreds of

leaflets about a score of beesy activities were handed out. The most popular was "Starting Up". There were very many enquiries about becoming a Devon beekeeper. Beryl had also organised a successful quiz competition for the children who had to tour the marquee to find the answers.

Over the three days the weather continued to pummel the stalls and each day we had to carry out running repairs. Lessons were learnt. The fibreboard backing panels were an experiment and, as they started to absorb moisture, distortion and disintegration started but with sticky tape and stitching they survived - just. The black fabric lifted the coloured displays but we were glad that we had an effective lighting system set up by Kevin Stach. We were nervous about the sticky little fingers moving around the microscopes so we kept close supervision and no damage was done. The slide show was also a first and was well received. This may be further developed next year as a separate feature with a bigger screen.

This is Beryl's and my last year on the Information Stall and we hope that other branch members can support the Branch Shows Committee in the same or a similar venture next year. We will still be around as we have other features to organise.

Chris and Beryl.



Glyn Davies teaching some young "volunteers" how to handle bees, in some very windy conditions !

Edited by Kevin Tricker, Fox's Orchard, Black Torrington, Devon EX21 5QB. Phone: (01409) 231149
Email: newsletter@northdevonbees.org. All contributions welcome, copy by 19th of month for publication in following month's newsletter.

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