



Editorial : The Year of the Swarm ?

Having brought my three colonies successfully through the winter, I thought that I was beginning to understand this beekeeping lark. Think again ! The bees have given me a sharp reminder that I don't. Despite having young queens, large areas of unused foundation and plenty of TLC (and no problems last year), my three colonies have indulged in a swarmfest this year, all three producing swarm cells, and two of the colonies attempting to swarm twice - and it is only June. What is even more worrying is that, having completed Pagden artificial swarms, I have lost all three old queens, not immediately, but after a week or so.

What is going on ? Is it me, was it the May weather, or can this be some latent effect of treating them with Oxalic Acid over the winter ? Are any of you experiencing similar problems ? If so, please let me know and I will try and put together some general observations. *Kevin Tricker*

Chairman's Notes

I'm using this as an opportunity to provide you with a very brief synopsis of the new regulations governing bee diseases and pests.

I'm not claiming that it's definitive but a reminder of the circumstances which require the bee inspector to be called in.

BEE DISEASES AND PEST CONTROL (ENGLAND) ORDER 2006

Purpose?

To protect the English honey bee by preventing the introduction and spread of disease and pests. It makes mandatory the notification of suspicion of notifiable diseases and pests.

Who?

This Order applies to anyone who is involved in beekeeping or with its products.

What Diseases?

American Foul Brood and European Foul Brood.

Pests?

Small Hive Beetle and any species of the Tropiclaelaps Mite.

If you suspect the presence of any of the above, you are required to inform the NBU - in effect, your Seasonal Bee Inspector. He will advise you what is to be done next, e.g. Prohibition Order.

(Note : Varroa is no longer on the list but EFB continues to be)

Importation:

This Order regulates the controls that apply to the importation of bees; anyone who intends to do this needs to check the regulations with the NBU.

The above is a very brief summary, but if you wish to read the complete and lengthy document, the full Order is available from DEFRA and the NBU.

Happy Beekeeping

Chris Tozer

Apiary Manager's Report

If you have been into the apiary in the last few weeks you can't help but have noticed just how beautiful and peaceful it is, and be impressed by all the tree blossom and wonderful flowers in the bee friendly garden, created by Peter's group last year, not to mention our chairman/ groundsmans efforts to strike the fine balance between wild and orderly.

We are used to a range of birds and animals walking about the place and only last week a hare crossed the apiary right in front of June's chair.

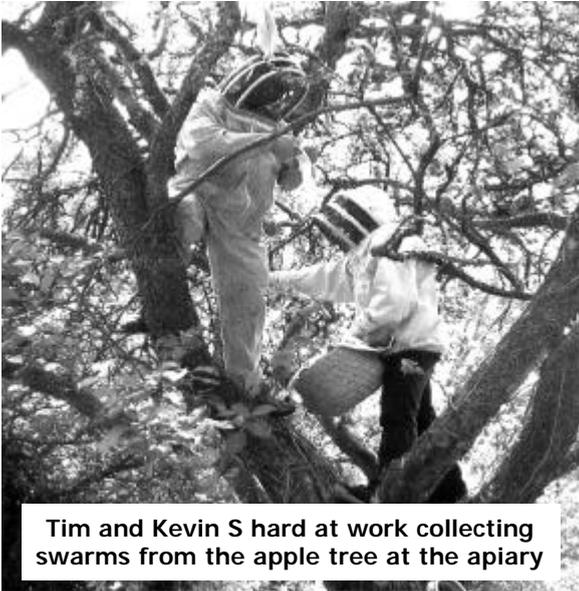
The Honey Producing section headed by Michael has completed its anti-swarming measures and preparations are well under way to maximise the honey gathering potential of the colonies.

(Continued on page 2)

NEW !! Beeswax Handling Course. Saturday 29th July 2006 at Ashburton. See article on page 2 for details.

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Our newly formed honey processing team headed by Ruth is pacing the floor in anticipation of handling a bumper crop using our new all-singing all-dancing electric honey extractor. They have already processed a few pounds of oil seed rape honey.



Tim and Kevin S hard at work collecting swarms from the apple tree at the apiary

Our Queen Rearing group, led by Kay, has moved up a gear and one colony now is surrounded by a ring of potential nucs all waiting for queens to hatch and go on their mating flights.

Chris and Beryl have nearly completed their students hands-on programme, and have also started a number of nucs and eight mini nucs are now in place on their posts. We have orders for nineteen colonies for the students and others and will need some successes in our queen rearing to fill these, since to date we have only collected about three swarms for quarantining and re-queening.

Average attendance on Tuesday at Horestone is about twenty five people and we are seeing new people every few weeks. There are many things still to do both in the apiary and the factory - we could get much more done if only we had two Tuesdays each week.

Tony

Beekeeper Wanted

Lynda Elt of Lapford/Chorley area has a site for a beekeeper to keep some hives.

Phone 01769 580 592 or 077922 66298 for details.

Beeswax Handling Course

By popular demand another course has been organised for Saturday 29th July 2006 at Ashburton at Orleycombe, the beautiful home of Jenny Buckle. Here you will learn how to clean beeswax, the selection and-preparation of wicks and moulds, the wax handling techniques and the production of many types of candles.

The course will start at 10.30 am and finish about 4.00 pm. A Ploughman's Lunch will be provided for a donation for the Devon Air Ambulance Trust and drinks will be provided during the day. The cost of the course is £10.00 (with 50% going to the Devon Air Ambulance Trust).

Beeswax will be provided but you will need to bring 3 medium size clean ex-food tins (e.g. Heinz Baked Beans type). Also bring some suitable protective clothing for drips or splashes of molten wax!. Please phone Beryl Smailes on 01271 329 643 to book your place and to arrange to share a car -parking is limited.

Instow in Bloom - The Garden Trail

Saturday 17th, dawned bright and sunny (thank goodness), we unloaded yet another box of goodies on behalf of Horstone Apiary, into Instow Village Hall. We were met by a cheery crowd of village worthies, all pushing and pulling chairs and tables around, in preparation for "us" and other exhibitors to show and sell our wares in the afternoon.

A lot of interest was shown in our table, with Beekeepers ready to chat about their colonies and the size of swarms (it being the swarming season) which seems to equate with the fisherman's tale of the size of their catch!

There was a mixed reception from children, ranging from "Yuck" I don't like it, to an Oliver Twist "please can I have some more", luckily there was plenty of comb samples. (Thank you - Chris Tozer)

A number of Hay fever sufferers had heard that honey, local to their area, may be helpful and requested the name of their nearest supplier. Honey sales were a great success (sold out), and wax candles especially the rolled foundation with Bee attached, were a great seller.

Our day at Instow was well worth doing, and definitely raised the profile of Beekeeping in the area!!

David and Jean Morris.

BBKA Basic Assessment and Revision Days

Having attended the Basic Course and kept bees for at least 12 months several of you are willing, waiting and wanting to take the Basic Assessment.

Chris and Beryl have organised a Revision Day at Horestone Apiary on Wednesday 12th July from 10.00 to about 4.00 where you will be taken gently through the Basic syllabus with a mock assessment so that you know what to expect.

The cost of the course is £10.00 for the day. Drinks will be provided but bring a packed lunch.

Book your place by phoning Beryl on 01271 329 643 The actual Assessment Day will be on Wednesday 19th July when Assessors will be brought in from other parts of the south-west region.

Food Hygiene Certificate Training Course:

The Food Hygiene Course was excellent and much appreciated. Terry Clarke, our trainer, travelled up from Plymouth. Before becoming a food hygiene trainer he was a nurse tutor and he knows his subject inside out. He started by informing us that, as food handlers, whether work related or for family and friends, we have a legal responsibility to ensure that we do not endanger the safety of food. The symptoms and consequences of a food poisoning or food-borne disease can range from very unpleasant to life-threatening. He told us that cases of food poisoning in England and Wales had quadrupled over the last 20 years. I was startled to hear that one pathogenic bacteria, given the right conditions, can divide every 10 – 20 minutes to become a million within a few hours.



Although food safety is a serious subject – the course was given and received with much humour. Kevin showed us his 'hand washing technique' but Terry's 'bacteria showing gadget' spotted a few million he had

missed.

We discussed microbiology and illness, flies, cockroaches – vermin, unhygienic habits, high risk foods – and then stopped for lunch!! The afternoon was based around measures to protect food from contamination.

I certainly found the course of great value and shall be 'hazard spotting' both at home and at the apiary. My husband and dog are looking decidedly uneasy, but better than queasy!

Sylvia Barber

Community of Beekeepers (Bitz4Bees)

Ladies, Gentlemen and others

Roll up! Roll up! Get your Bee Bits and Bobs at your very own shop Bitz4Bees.

Since we started at the beginning of the year, we have expanded quite quickly, and stock held has increased. We can supply you with discounted items from Thorne's and other suppliers (usually 10-15% and no carriage cost) so you do save money.

We do not operate a mail order service, the cost being too great, but we are happy to bring items ordered, to the Apiary, if you live on our route home, or a reasonable Bideford/Barnstaple distance we will do a home delivery. We also use other members as carriers, for which we are very grateful!!!!!!

Ordering is easy, phone, e-mail, or talk to us at the Apiary, and we will to our best to help you.

Remember folks it is your orders that fill our shelves.

We aim to please!

David and Jean Morris.

Quick Diary

JULY 12th - Wednesday

BBKA Basic Assessment Revision Day, Horestone.

JULY 16th - Sunday

Open Day at Horestone Apiary from 2.00pm.

Topic: Use of the Apidea. Chris Utting will give a presentation on the Apidia Mini Mating Nuc. Come and find out how it works and how it is used. We have some at the apiary and they may have produced some mated queens. As usual, bring and share afternoon tea.

JULY 21st/22nd - Friday/Saturday

DBKA Summer Conference

Exeter University

JULY 29th - Saturday

Beeswax Handling Course Ashburton. See page 2 for details.

More Facts and Pictures from the Devon County Show

Some 79 Stewards helped during the three day show, with some 35 attendees at each morning and afternoon session. 18 stalls were contained within our marquee, which was a different size from last year - a fact that was not known until a week before the show - which caused some hurried last minute adjustments to the layout !



The weather during the show tested the displays, with high winds and driving rain threatening to cause major damage. Fortunately, apart from some minor water damage and disruption to the observation and bee handling sections, the exhibits stood the test.



The Stevenson Trophy, in memory of the late Jim Stevenson, and awarded to the best Branch stall, was won by Newton Abbot for a magnificent display of beeswax.

On the financial side, total takings for the show amounted to nearly £8,000, with the honey sales alone making sales of £5,000, earning the Association a commission of £1,000, more than 27% up on the previous best figure.



The “Candle Rolling” stall, run by Wendy Ashley, produced a surplus of £570, using 700 sheets of coloured foundation, 250 bee pins and 250 metres of wick in the process ! Takings on Saturday were nearly double that on both Thursday and Friday.

The “Taste of Honey” stall, managed by Maggie Saffery made some £1,190, exceeding last year’s figure by £100, despite the fact that donations of honey from members for this stall were greatly reduced this year and more honey had to be purchased from Honey Sales..



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