

NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

APRIL 2015

www.northdevonbees.org



Chair Chat

Horestone Apiary has re-opened and is ready for the summer season. You will see from the photographs how tidy and spring-like the grounds are looking.

Our meeting hut has been given a good spring clean ready for the Beginners Course which has transferred from Barnstaple Library to the Apiary. The course continues on Sunday mornings. There are seventeen students so the education team is fully stretched.

Our winter talks ended in March. The next event will be the Nosema testing day on Sunday, 12th April. Please see the details from Chris Utting included in this edition. Following this, Sylvie and the committee will be planning our stands at the Dowland, mid-Devon and North Devon shows – see details are in her article below.

Mave

Events 2015

12 April	10:00 - 14:00	Nosema Clinic, Castle Centre, Barnstaple
21- 23 May		Devon County Show, West-point
21 June		Dowland Fair
25 July		Mid Devon Show, Knightshayes
5 August		North Devon Show, Umberleigh
12 -13 September		Branch Honey Show, St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple

Bee Quotes

'The busy bee has no time for sorrow.'

William Blake

News from our Show and Events Co-ordinator

I will find it hard to keep to Chrissie's high standards, having taken over from her as our Branch Show and Events Secretary. Chrissie and her team have done a fantastic job over the last few years.

Our events are important because they help to raise the public's awareness of bees – and all that beekeeping involves. It gives us the opportunity to talk about our Branch and activities, our courses and shows, and the many directions our interesting hobby can take us. We try and make our show stalls interesting, with information on plants and flowers, cleaning wax, the bees' year, microscopy, preparing honey and candle making. We sometimes take live bees and this always creates great interest and the opportunity for a glimpse into the inner workings of a colony.

Our own Branch Honey Show this year will be the weekend of 12th and 13th September – we join the Barnstaple Horticultural Society at their Annual Autumn show at St Johns, Barnstaple. We not only show our honey and hive products, but our cookery skills as well!

We have already made a start on organising shows for this year (see dates below) – please check your diaries and if you think you could help please let me know – my email is barber645@btinternet.com or 01398 341624.

Show dates **June 21st** – Dowland Fair, **July 25th** – Mid Devon Show, **August 5th** - North Devon Show, Umberleigh, **September 12th/13th** – Branch Honey Show at St Johns.

Sylvie

Committee News

The Committee met at the Apiary on 23 March. Our winter meetings were held in The Cedars, Barnstaple. The following is a brief record of our discussions.

We need to be aware of new members and visitors, who come for the first time on a Tuesday, to ensure that they are made to feel welcome.

Equipment etc., which is ordered for the Apiary, needs to be entered in the record book as before.

A Taster Day is to be held in July. We are not taking part in the spring event at Rosemoor on the 18 and 19 April as we are preparing for the Dowland Fair on 21 June.

Our membership is increasing due to late applications. Members need to be reminded to complete the Gift Aid section next year.

The Committee wishes to thank Peter Auger for all the improvements to the site and the management of the colonies.

Mave, on behalf of the Committee

Trees for Bees

David Charles gave a spirited and beautifully illustrated talk about how important trees are to honey bees at the Castle Centre on 26 February. He is a Master beekeeper and an authority on Horticulture.

David explained that trees give nectar, pollen, propolis, and to a lesser extent honeydew, necessary for the nourishment and well-being of bees. He delved into the beekeeping methods of the 17 century with illustrations of honey gatherers using pulleys and ropes to extract honey from tree cavities.

David explained how the extended period during which trees provide 'goods' for the bees ranges from the willows in the spring to the rowans in the autumn but not all trees are as fruitful as others. The amount of forage from a large tree is considerable compared to some urban flower beds.

Perhaps the most surprising thing to me were David's photographs of trees collected from the 1970's to the present day. These showed that David had watched the trees grow as the environment changed around them over many years. Clearly trees have been important and fascinating subject for David from an early age whether related to beekeeping or not.

The talk has certainly encouraged me to look up more often to see if there are bees in the trees.

Mave



Flower of the Month - Bluebell

Bluebell, now known as *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* has had many name changes but I always liked the name in my old flower books of 'Endymion', and well remember that tediously long poem by Keats of his story beginning with that famous line, 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, It's loveliness increases.....', so true of our much loved English bluebell. Endymion was granted one wish by Zeus and asked that his youth and beauty should be preserved for ever and so he reputedly still sleeps in a cave on Mount Latmos!

The bluebell that carpets our woods, banks and cliffs in April and May with its honey scent and ethereal blue (pink and white forms are common too) is in Keats's

words again 'a flowering band that binds us to the earth'. Bluebells secrete a lot of nectar but the tubes are too deep (9mm) for honeybees to reach. It is of great value to the longer tongued Bumble bees and the solitary bees like the Mining and Mason bees. The honeybees and the shorter tongued Bumbles like the buff tailed *Bombus terrestris* can poke their tongues through the space between the petals at the base without giving the flower the benefit of pollination, called 'base working'. Honeybees do collect the pollen, a very pale blue colour but the extent to which they work bluebells seems to depend on the weather, where they are growing, out in the open or deep in the woods and what else is available locally, very often abundant Oil seed rape at the same time.

The Spanish bluebell *H. hispanica* once popular as a garden plant is now regarded as an undesirable invasive alien that hybridises freely with our own bluebells. It should not be grown.

Other more desirable close relations of the Bluebell which bring a welcome splash of blue to the late winter/ early spring garden are Grape hyacinths and Scillas, they provide vital early pollen so plant them en masse in borders and grass in sunny areas.

If you haven't already sown lots of summer annuals for the bees to enjoy later on now is the time to do it, Borage and Phacelia are wonderful companion plants around the vegetable plots and sunflowers among the climbing beans.

Julie

Work Day & Horestone Re-opening

Much work has been done at Horestone during the “quiet” months! The colonies now allocated to their team areas – each team, fingers crossed, has the number of colonies they requested – all with their supers and brood boxes numbered. Equipment has been examined and repaired where necessary and the apiary tidied and organized. We have acquired a deep freeze to store combs and help with disease control (thank you Barbara) and Chrissie has returned all the beesuits beautifully laundered.

We had about a dozen volunteers for the work day – so the water system is now up and running, the hut roof cleaned of moss, more wax melted and frames cleaned, and thanks to Alan, our new stove has been fitted. It looks amazing.

The 17th March was our first official day back. The sun came out and the team leaders got the chance to watch their bees flying and bringing in pollen – and start to plan their beekeeping season.

The apiary is now open for business.

The Apiary Managers



March Winter Talk – Turkey Beekeeping by Chris Utting

We had a very good friendly and chatty evening; we made the most of the chance to catch up with fellow beekeepers on how they are getting on and how their bees were behaving.

It's great when we have the opportunity to all get together; there are few chances for working members to have so much beekeeping and experience all together in one room. The help, advice and knowledge is all there and freely given by our very clever senior members; members who can't make our Tuesday meetings should not miss these winter talks.

For those of us who have not had the opportunity to travel far and wide getting Chris's first hand thoughts and pictures on how other cultures cope with our hobby is fascinating. The pictures are great fun to see and make a good change from the library books.

After the question and answer section, Mave and Chris ended the evening by handing out the certificates won by Graham Kingham, Jack Mummery and Julie Elkin; congratulations to them all.

Thanks to Chris for the talk, to Mave for the drinks and cakes and all those who helped make the evening such a good one.

Barbara

National Honey Show Newsletter

As each year's National Honey Show draws to an end, the planning is underway for the next year. We have to be patient and wait through the winter for the bees to make their contribution, but not only do all you beekeepers continue with background preparations through the winter, but so, also, do your National Honey Show committee for the next Show. As you know, our website is currently being redesigned and updated, watch for the new site which will be launched very soon: www.honeyshow.co.uk

The new, early, **National Honey Show leaflets and raffle tickets** for 2015 will be available to collect at the BBKA Spring Convention http://www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/spring_convention.php. You can order them in advance for collection at the show, or to be posted to you for your association or local show e-mail us at: nationalhoneyshownews@gmail.com letting us know how many of each you need.

Our planned programme for 2015 lectures will be Dr Deborah Delaney from the University of Delaware on Honey Marketing, Honey Bee Pests, Integrated Pest Management for the Small Scale Beekeeper and Why Genetics are Important to the Beekeeper. Dr Juliana Rangel from the University of Texas plans to talk about The Biology of Mating, of Swarming, and of the Colony. Ben Harden, NDB will be talking on Bees in Winter, and Professor Dave Goulson, University of Sussex, on Neonicotinoids, Bees and Politics, followed by Bumblebees, their Ecology and Conservation. Finally Professor Robert Pickard plans to tell us about Queens he has Known. These are the current plans, which will be consolidated as the Show draws closer.

The Friday Bee Craft Lectures will take place again this year, as will the Saturday series of lectures for those new to beekeeping, and/or just interested in the subjects. These will include Yearly Beekeeping Activities, Swarm control, Pests and Diseases and Products of the Hive for showing.

On the subject of showing, we hope you will continue to give our staging committee lots of work in 2015. Your superb efforts for 2014 entailed an overflow of the exhibit exhibition area into another hall – well done all !!! and please keep it up!

As we write this, in addition to the lectures from 2013, five videos from the 2014 lecture programme are now available to view on the National Honey Show YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/nationalhoneyshow>.

Funding these superb, professional, videos continues to be a major challenge. We were grateful for some National Lottery funding in 2013 and for a generous grant from The Garfield Weston Foundation towards the costs in 2014. Our raffle will be making a contribution towards this venture in future years but it is very much on our wish list for us to be able to sustain funding the video programme. Do please watch and enjoy revisiting the videos. We have such a full programme of activities during the show that it is a major bonus that if you miss one of the lectures due to a clash of opportunities, you can catch up on missed lectures at a later date and at leisure. Please support our raffle, meanwhile we're busy trying to identify and apply for funding for 2015 videos ~ all ideas and input very welcome!.

As ever, the National Honey Show relies on a large team of volunteers, and all offers of help at the show itself are welcome. Do contact us, - you can e-mail the Show Secretary at showsec@zbee.com and he will pass your offer to the right person – if you can spare some time at the Show, it all helps.

We have a unique collection of displays, lectures and networking opportunities at the National Honey Show, and look forward to seeing you at the Show this autumn: Thursday 29th to Saturday 31st October 2015 once more at St Georges College, Weybridge.

The Organising Committee

Edited by Jeff Orr, e-mail jeffjorr@aol.com. The views expressed in the articles are the author's and not necessarily those of the North Devon Branch of the Devon Beekeepers' Association.

Member's contributions are extremely welcome: by 23rd of the month prior to publication please

NORTH DEVON BRANCH NOSEMA CLINIC

Nosema reduces the life of the worker by 50% and is known as 'Spring Dwindling Disease'. Your colony will fail to build up compared to healthy colonies. Bring along a sample of at least 30 dead bees from your colonies for examination by the branch microscopists.

WE WILL BE IN THE SMALL ROOM IN THE CASTLE CENTRE, CASTLE STREET, BARNSTAPLE

SUNDAY 12th APRIL 2015 10.00am TO 2.00pm

A donation will be appreciated - £1.00 PER SAMPLE IS SUGGESTED

The invitation is open to all DBKA members and sampling instructions will be found with the application form in this Newsletter. Light refreshments will be available during the day.

Reception Team - *Mave Dowling, Barbara Carlyle*

Slide Technicians - *Peter Auger, David Easton, Angus Basil*

Microscopy Team - *Chris Utting, Graham Kingham, Sylvia Barber*

We are giving up our Sunday to help you so please support us. Further information from Chris Utting 01237 474 500

SO YOUR BEES HAVE NOSEMA – WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

HIGH INFECTION After treatment a complete comb change is essential when weather conditions are right in May, June or July using the Shook Swarm method. The Bailey frame change method is insufficient to clear the infection. Scorch Hive parts. Colony destruction is another option.

MEDIUM INFECTION Remove as many older combs as you can and feed an additive such as *Vita Gold* or *Nozevit* which have been useful for some people. (see *BBKA NEWS August 2012*) Remove any stained hive components and scorch. The antibiotic *Fumidil B* is no longer available. As with all medicines ensure that the label instructions are followed.

LOW INFECTION Be aware. Remove a routine number of old combs and consider requeening and feed an additive. Examine Apiary layout to avoid overcrowding of hives. Avoid squashing bees.

NIL INFECTION (Mostly around 70% of samples) Do not be complacent and make sure that all your colonies are monitored every year - not just the ones that look sick or fail to build up!

GOOD HUSBANDRY "Instead of using medicines for treatment of Nosema, beekeepers should maintain their colonies in good health and apply good husbandry practices. Such as maintaining strong well fed colonies headed by productive and disease tolerant young, prolific queens. Bee keepers should also consider re-queening susceptible colonies with queens from more tolerant stocks of bees better able to cope with Nosema infection" (quoted from *BeeBase – the National Bee Unit website*)

North Devon Branch of Devon Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity Number 270675

Nosema Clinic – Sunday 12th April 2015 10.00am to 2.00pm

Name..... Telephone.....

Address.....

..... Post code.....

Email

Apiary Names / Locations.....

SAMPLE 1 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 2 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 3 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 4 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 5 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 6 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 7 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 8 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 9 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 10 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SAMPLING:

1. Thirty (30) mature bees will be needed for the test. Choose a day and time when the bees are flying actively.
2. Close the entrance for a while until returning bees are crowding the entrance. Use a polythene bag and brush 30+ bees into it. Seal the bag and label with hive reference and place in a freezer immediately.
3. Remove the bees only a few hours before the test to minimise decomposition.
4. Bees and details can be sent with a fellow member on the day (on a separate form).
5. Please complete the details requested on this form clearly. Continue on a new sheet if required.
6. Please deliver the samples between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm to

THE SMALL ROOM IN THE CASTLE CENTRE, CASTLE STREET, BARNSTAPLE ON SATURDAY 12TH APRIL 2015

You will be notified of the results either by ‘phone or email

££ DONATIONS TOWARDS BRANCH EXPENSES WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED — AT LEAST £1.00 PER SAMPLE ££