

NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

DECEMBER 2008 www.northdevonbees.org



Editorial The Apiary is a little like a hive; there are many workers doing really important jobs that are not seen, so some would say not appreciated. BUT this is not the case. So, should we have a mutual appreciation event, maybe this could be the dinner on the 18th January.

We will be starting the new year with a new Committee. Some members are new to the Apiary and to the committee. Wish them well and give them your support.

A Very Happy, Peaceful Christmas and a Prosperous

Chair Chat

I would firstly like to take this opportunity of thanking last years Committee in its entirety plus the very many support workers who have helped keep our Branch strong. This is despite the fact that these are not the easiest times for beekeepers. During the last year our Branch Apiary and grounds have blossomed – our courses have produced confident and committed beekeepers – and we have managed to encourage much interest from the general public in all things beekeeping by being present at various shows, fairs and even a TV appearance. I would particularly like to thank, both personally and on behalf of the Branch, those officers who are retiring from the committee – Jim Slade, Tony Wright, Dave James, Peter Warrilow, Wendy Dunlop-Jenkins and of course Judith Westacott who has patiently been taking the Minutes for many years.

I warmly welcome our new Committee and am looking forward to us working together. We have a conscientious committee with a good balance of fairly new beekeepers with fresh visions, and the more experienced members who have been keeping bees for a long time. Our experienced officers will be there to support the newer ones if needed, whilst giving them (us) the space to grow into our new roles. Our overall aims remain the same as the DBKA: to promote and further the craft of beekeeping and to advance the education of the public in the importance of honeybees in the environment. I would add one more aim: to enable all of our members and any visitors to enjoy the Apiary and take away with them a positive attitude towards Horestone and the North Devon Branch.

We must of course not forget the bees in all this and our priority for the next beekeeping season will be to build up our colonies and increase/improve our stocks. I would like here to thank the IHP who came to our rescue earlier in the year when we had winter losses of almost a third of our stocks. They loaned us some dozen colonies. Our agreement was that we would return the colonies to them as and when we were in a position to. We are hoping that

this winter treats us more kindly so that we can, in agreed stages, return some of their colonies so that they can continue with their planned activities.

We are very lucky to have Flowa and her support team who will be working on a code of good hygiene practice in order to keep our colonies healthy and free from disease. We are also fortunate to have on our Committee Peter Auger, Seasonal Bee Inspector. As Horestone is a teaching apiary the onus is on us to acquire the knowledge and discipline of good bee husbandry.

Finally, may I take this opportunity of wishing you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Sylvie

Apiary Managers Update

Thank you all very much for electing me as your new apiary manager. I would like to offer my/our thanks to Tony and his Apiary Support Team for their amazing construction work and enthusiasm during his 3 years in office. Unfortunately, your new Manager cannot even hammer in a nail, so this is a plea for all handymen/ladies to offer their services in order to complete the outstanding jobs, please!

We will be meeting at 09:30hrs Tuesday mornings with our work schedule, (sounds posh, so you'll think I'm organized!!), to save everyone's petrol and traveling time, prior to our afternoons' bee-keeping.

Talking of the afternoon, our meetings will begin a little earlier, 1330hrs, from next Tuesday, in order to maximize the working daylight hours.

Tuesday November 18th was a wonderfully warm autumnal day and the bees from our 20 colonies were enjoying the surprise sunshine. Some were busy collecting bright yellow pollen, although we are unsure as to the plant source - anyone any ideas, please ?

The Apiary Support Team has yet to be finalized, and once arranged, will be announced at the following meeting. One idea I would like to introduce is to offer members who have never been to an AST meeting before, the opportunity to join us occasionally, by prior arrangement. This gives members the opportunity to gain a wider knowledge of how apiary decisions are reached, plans are formed and our problems solved. This practice will be explained and expanded on, once all the details have been agreed.

All ideas and subjects for discussion are very welcome, and a 'constructive comments' box will hold pride of place alongside the food table.

I'm really looking forward to all of us working and laughing together to thoroughly enjoy our hobby, for the best advantage of both bees and beekeepers.

Thank you all

Mary (Flowa) H

The National Honey Show

A bit of a misnomer ... it is multinational [and not just UK and Eire, but entries from the West Indies etc as well!], and isn't just a Honey Show, but also a programme of excellent lectures, exhibitions and trade stands of many and unusual natures, and lots of time to "network" with old friends and to make new ones.

"The National" , as I'll call it, moved venue this year, from the RAF museum in Hendon to St George's College in Weybridge, only a few minutes from the M3/M25 junction, and altogether a nicer venue and far more convenient driving from North Devon. The National committee had put on more workshops this year - two each half day, all fully booked - and had hoped this would ease the pressure on Lecture Theatre seating. Sadly it didn't, and this is one issue that must be addressed by them before next year. Mind you, it isn't really surprising that the Lectures were well attended ,with such excellent speakers addressing us.

Dr Dewey Caron, who as you may recall came to the DARG [Devon Apicultural Research Group] meeting at Horestone Apiary recently, flew over from the States again, and spoke twice, on Colony Collapse Disorder, and on "Pollination - integrating native bees with honey bees". Both were excellent lectures in his usual enjoyable style.

On this trip "over the pond", Dewey was joined by Professor Keith Delaplane, from the University of Georgia. He spoke thrice, once on Small Hive Beetle, and twice on pollination topics. He is a joy to listen to ...one of those speakers who has the knack of holding the audience. He will be travelling over again early next year, and will be speaking at Somerset's Bee Day. I do urge you to get to hear him speak if ever the opportunity arises for you.

Other 'home grown' speakers included Dr Giles Budge, research co-ordinator at the National Bee Unit speaking on colony losses, viruses,varroa and the two species of nosema; Clive de Bruyn (you may well have read his book "Practical Beekeeping") speaking on "Bee Keeping around the World"; and Dennis Ryan FIBKA President and a member of the Galtee Bee Breeding Group speaking on " Queen Rearing". There was another lecture, but so dire I shudder to recall it and will mention it no further. There's always one!

The "Trade Stands" ... well , there just has to be somewhere to spend too much money, doesn't there! These included Thornes, Sherriff, Bee Bay, Northern Bee Books, Bee Basic, BB Wear, 'our very own ' Kevin and his Hiveclean, and Freeman & Harding [the jars people]. The nice ladies from Ninemaidens Mead [near Redruth] were being generous in their tasting offers ...cunning, as I ended up buying a bottle of Apple Melomel and a bottle of Currant Melomel. Very tasty. It also turned out that one of the ladies knows my wife's cousin who lives in the same village. Small world, innit? But also in the "Trade Area" were a number of other organisations' stands which were very worthwhile visiting and getting to know better. Most of them also show up at Stoneleigh, but somehow there never seems enough time to talk to them there.

The most "worthy" included Bees for Development (<http://www.beesfordevelopment.org/>), Stevenage World Forum, Hives Save Lives Africa (<http://www.hivessavelives.com/>), and Careco (Rodrigues) ... formerly the Rodrigues Island 'Craft-Aid Project' ... all of whom are organisations supporting third world bee keepers with exciting and innovative projects that make a real difference. On the Friday evening, Bees for Development had a 'launch meeting' for their new Membership scheme, with many signing up on the spot. I do commend you visit their website and see what they are up to.

Amongst the "educational" organisations represented were IBRA (<http://www.ibra.org.uk/>), CABK (<http://www.cabk.org.uk/>), The Beekeeping History Group, and BIBBA (<http://bibba.com/>) all of whom can extend your breadth and depth of knowledge of bees and beekeeping whatever your level of experience.

All in all, I commend The National to you, and suggest that if you can you attend it next year. Details will be on their website, <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/>

Patrick Moore

A plea from your new Treasurer

Your subscriptions and insurance is now due.

Please remit without delay to the Membership Secretary.

Members not renewing by 31st December will not be insured.

Thank you

Derek

Are you a Microscopist ?

North Devon Branch needs YOU!

As you will see from the "list of Branch Officers" etc, the position of Branch Microscopist remains unfilled. There are one or two people who would very reluctantly be pushed into the role, but they—and the committee—are very keen to uncover hidden talent and enthusiasm elsewhere among the membership.

So if you have the skills and aptitude to take on this role, please give very serious thought to taking on the post of Branch Microscopist, then say "yes" and contact the Secretary for more information.

New Branch Officers

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

Chair - Sylvia Barber - sylvia.d.barber@dsl.pipex.com - 01398 341624

Vice Chairman - Chris Tozer - info@thebeeteam.co.uk - 01237 471928

Branch Secretary - Patrick Moore - patrick.moore@nhs.net 01271 323636

Treasurer - Derek Hunter - derek-hunter@lineone.net - 01769 561033

Apiary Manager - Flowa Houldsworth - mhouldsworth@hotmail.co.uk - 01271 321911

Shows & Social Events Co-ordinator - Margaret Kay - mkay761@googlemail.com - 01769 560749

Examination & Education Officer - Chris Utting - chrisutting@btinternet.com - 01237 474500

Committee Members

Jack Mummery - jack.mummery@tesco.net

Peter Auger - pete@auger14.freemove.co.uk

Victoria Hull - ms.victoriahull@gmail.com

Mike Hayward - hayward_plaistow@yahoo.co.uk

Minutes Secretary - Lesley Jones

Membership Secretary/Mailings - Denise Oldaker deniseoldaker@aol.com

Newsletter Editors - Mel Browne and Sylvie Barber

Librarian - Julie Elkin

Webmaster - Ruth Blake ruth.blake@btconnect.com

Spray Liaison Officer - Chris Tozer

Swarm Liaison Officers - Dave James, Chris Tozer, Derek Hunter, Kay Thomas, Tony Wright, Roy Pink

Apiary Garden Team Leader - Julie Elkin

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

Apiary Quartermaster - Albert Cannon

Honey Shed Organiser - Liz Wilson

Branch Representatives at DBKA EC meetings - Sylvie Barber and Patrick Moore

Branch Microscopist (as yet unfilled...see advert on Page 2).

TWO NEW COURSES STARTING IN FEBRUARY FOR BEGINNERS AND IMPROVERS

BASIC BEEKEEPING

If you are a complete beginner as a beekeeper we will be holding a course just for your needs based on the well tried BBKA Basic Syllabus that includes both the practical and theory of beekeeping. There will be emphasis on the practical handling of colonies. The courses will start toward the end of February next year and be held at Horestone Apiary mainly on Saturday mornings. The course organisers, Chris Utting and Beryl Smailes have been running a similar course at North Devon College for several years.

IMPROVERS

This course will suit you if by next Summer you will have kept bees for at least 12 months. It will also be based on the BBKA Basic Syllabus but you will be trained to be able to take the BBKA Basic Assessment if you wish. Many of the branch members as well as the committee hold this Certificate. The course will also be held at Horestone Apiary but on Saturday afternoons starting at the end of February. The course organiser is Kay Thomas who has been running a similar course for many years at Braunton College.

Further details of the above courses will be made available after Xmas but if you wish to put your name on the waiting list now you will be treated on a first come basis as the courses may soon get full. Please 'phone Chris Utting on 01237 474 500 to reserve you place.

Chris Utting - Branch Education Officer

TRAIN THE TRAINERS COURSE

This is a new idea and has a less formal structure. It is intended that the members of the course hold at least the BBKA Basic Certificate and work alongside the teachers of the new Basic and Improvers courses as the subjects are being taught. They will build experience and confidence and develop as future trainers of basic beekeeping. We already have several volunteers. If you are interested in joining us please get in touch with Chris Utting on 01237 474 500.

Gadget corner

Here is a nice little microscope unit you can use to take reasonable pictures with your PC. It costs around £50 from Maplin, but you can easily manage to get a small discount if you sign up for their newsletter. It covers x10 to x200 through a single knurled central zoom ring and simply connects to a USB port. It is 3cm dia., 10cm length.



OK, it's not a precision instrument, but it's not bad either. Certainly quite good for some insects and related pictures. Obviously the focus distance is very close for the high magnification, and it comes with a little stand and suitable, simple video and still photo capture software. The resolution is just 640 x 480 pixels, but the colour is quite good and it will cope with 30 fps. It contains its own LED illumination. Examples here are those I took of the head of a standard match, and a small screw sitting on a £10 bank note. The final one is of the Queen's right eye on a £5 note. Quite good for children of all ages as Christmas approaches ... !

Dave J

Autumn Lamb with Honey and Blackberries (serves 6)

3lb lamb leg joint
2 sprigs of rosemary
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and cut into slivers
3 red onions peeled and cut into wedges
2 tbsp olive oil
150 ml white wine
2lb red potatoes, skin on and cut into wedges
4 oz fresh blackberries (frozen can be used)
2 tbsp runny honey
Grated zest and juice of 1 lime
Salt and freshly milled black pepper



Blackberry and Honey Gravy:

1 tbsp plain flour
1 pint lamb stock

- Preheat the oven to Gas mark 4-5, 180 – 190C, 350-375F.
- Place the lamb on a chopping board and make several slits all over the joint, and season. Divide the rosemary into smaller sprigs and use to stuff the joint with the garlic.
- Put the onions in a large non-stick roasting tin and place the joint on top of the onions, arrange the potatoes around the joint and drizzle in the olive oil and white wine. Open roast for the preferred calculated cooking time, basting occasionally with any meat juices, tossing the potatoes if necessary.
- In a small bowl mix together the blackberries, honey, lime zest and juice, gently mash and set aside.
- One hour before the end of the cooking time smear the blackberry mixture over the joint and return it to the oven. Cover the joint with foil during cooking if browning too quickly.
- Remove the joint and vegetables from the oven, transfer to a warmed plate, wrap loosely in foil and allow to rest for 10-15 minutes.
- To make the gravy, place the roasting tin on the hob, spoon off any excess fat from the tin and discard. Place the tin over a medium heat and sprinkle over the flour. Stir well with a small whisk or spoon. Add a little stock and stir again, scraping the base of the pan to release any rich lamb sediment.
- Add the remaining stock and any meat juices from the plate with the lamb, adjust the seasoning, and simmer for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until reduced to a well-flavoured gravy. Strain before serving.
- Serve the lamb with the gravy, roast potatoes and red onions.

NOTICE BOARD - The National Bee Unit (through the Regional Bee Inspector, Adam Vevers) and DBKA are discussing holding "Nosema study days" in the Spring. A day at the SouthPark Centre (Buckfast) and a day at Horestone Apiary are being considered. The events and procedures will be explained in the January edition of Bee-keeping. The plans are in the very early stages but we would hope to have a talk/discussion about Nosema followed by the opportunity to test samples of bees. This will take place towards the end of March. **In order to gauge the level of interest please speak or email Flowa.**

DIARY DATES B4B Sale- **9 December** 11.00-13.30 (at the shop)

Sunday 18 January-NEW YEAR MEAL (see page 5).

LAST CHANCE TO BOOK

NEW YEAR MEAL

Sunday 18th January 2009 12.30 for 1pm
The Royal and Fortesque Hotel Barnstaple

A Traditional Roast Dinner (Choice of two meats)
Selection of Homemade Desserts
Fresh Filter Coffee and Mint Chocolate

Cost of Meal £13.50

CLOSING DATE FOR RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSIT OF £5 - 10TH DECEMBER 2008

Please contact me - Margaret Kay (your new Show and
Social Events Coordinator) - to book a place and
arrange for a deposit

Tel: 01769 560749 or email:
mkay761@googlemail.com



Community of Beekeepers—Bitz4Bees

A Big Thank you to all our customers for your support
over the past year.

A Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year to every-
one from

The Community of Beekeepers (aka Bitz4Bees)

PS: Don't forget your Christmas stocking fillers, we have
a special size stocking for a Hive.

Ho! Ho! Ho!



B4B December Sale - was postponed from 2nd De-
cember due to road works and will now be "at the shop"
Tuesday 9th December 11.00—13.30.

Includes: tool trays, mini-ekes, Canadian clearer boards,
cane sugar 1kg bags, smoker grids, frame scrapers, BB
wear jackets, large & medium in sage green. Fogger with
gas and mineral oil. Assorted National Foundation.

Some Kiwi Beekeeping Friends for You

ABC stands for Auckland Beekeepers' Club. Having found
myself somewhat unexpectedly back home in Auckland in Oc-
tober, I contacted President Carol Downer who kindly put me
in touch with a member on the North Shore who might give me
a lift to their next meeting. Sure enough, Bruce McGregor
called on a Saturday morning, and we set off for the Club's
Apiary. Bruce is a retired prison officer, a genial one, who is
very happy with his two hobbies, fishing and beekeeping, plus
grandchildren. He loves his bees, and is proud to have passed
the course on recognition and treatment of AFB. AFB in New
Zealand is all but eradicated, and great vigilance is the name of
the game.

Bruce headed over the Harbour Bridge, I could see that the
citizens of the "City of Sails" had not yet taken out their boats,
the two huge marinas were crammed with them.

The Club Apiary is in the grounds of Unitech, within the Horti-
cultural Department which has experimental planting, beds and
tunnels. The club housing consists of two large cabins, with
awnings and gazebos for the popular summer meetings, gar-
dens and lawns. The membership is 150, expanding to 170.
This inner suburb of Point Chevalier is chock full of beautiful
gardens, with big colourful exuberant flowering bushes and
trees. The club's arrangement works well. The members give
demonstrations to the students in summer, and use a room in
the college for winter meetings. ABC meets once a month, but
this was to be an extra meeting because of the spring build-up
and need to do the "splits". The Italian strain of bee has adapted
to New Zealand conditions so well, is so prolific and gentle, the
six or seven hives were overflowing with bees. Something had
to be done with them all before swarms appeared. What they
did was a modified version of the Pagden. The hives are of
course Langstroth, usually with the one size box for both brood
and super. Smoker fuel? Long, very dry pine needles.

Remember that their bees do cluster on winter nights, but they
can fly all year round, and the getting of honey seems easy
compared to our rainy England. Varroa appeared eight years
ago, so the mites are not yet resistant to Apistan.. For Varroa
control, Formic Acid and ApivarLife are also used. Yes they
have the usual Nosema, Chalk, Sac, but no EFB so far, no
SHB. Bruce's latest letter tells of research into a fungus,
METARHYSIUM which is used to control locusts in Austra-
lia. The Kiwis may have this fungus available in about six
months for Varroa control. (Brenda Ball, we need you!)

CCD is attributed to pesticide build-up.

Import controls for plant and animal products into New Zea-
land are about the strictest in the world, for good reason. I gave
copies of our Newsletter, Devon Beekeeping magazine, some
BBKA News, and will send more.

It was time for the shared lunch. A neat little black boiler, wood
-fired and set up on the grass was ready for the inevitable mugs
of tea. The members were so kind, so interested it seemed like
being back in England. We'll keep in touch .

Beryl

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All contributions welcome, copy by 23rd of month for publication in following month's newsletter.

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