

NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

DECEMBER 2015

www.northdevonbees.org



USEFUL LINKS

www.devonbeekeepers.org.uk

www.bbka.org.uk



WISHING ALL
OUR READERS
A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS

AFTER THE MINCE PIE LUNCH

SKITTLES EVENING

Fun night out - At The Plough Inn, Bickington

Saturday 5th December 2016

Meet in the bar at 7 pm for a 7.30 pm start.

cost £6 pay on the night, skittles and food.

The plough is a two minute drive from Cedars roundabout, on the right hand side. There is a car park just past the pub on the same side, no charge after 6 pm.

All drinks to be bought and paid for at the bar – no tabs allowed.

CONTACT Barbara on 01271 882303 or baranlyle@hotmail.co.uk

FULLY BOOKED

NEXT WINTER TALK IS FROM JACK MUMMERY

Jack is working towards his BBKA National Show Judge exam and will be at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple on Friday 29 January 2016 to give a talk on 'Judging Honey' - 7.00 for 7.30pm—£2.00 donation please to apiary funds and including light refreshments.

Events 2015-2016

5 December	19:00 for	Skittles evening, Plough
8 January	19:00 for 19:30	Devon Wildlife Trust talk 'Devons Amazing Hedges' Castle Centre, Barnstaple
29 January	19:00 for 19:30	Talk 'Judging Honey' by Jack Mummery. The Castle Centre, Barnstaple
26 February	19:00 for 19:30	Talk 'The Devon Honey Show' by Ruth Neal, DBKA Show Committee Chair. The Castle Centre, Barnstaple
29 March	19:00 for 19:30	Talk 'Nosema' by Glyn Davis. The Castle Centre, Barnstaple

Scientists say they have found the "missing link" in the debate over the risk of pesticides to bees.

French researchers say neonicotinoid pesticides harm individual honeybees, but whole colonies are able to recover in the wild. This accounts for discrepancies between lab and field studies, they report in the Royal Society journal 'Proceedings'. A Europe-wide ban on neonicotinoid use on flowering crops is due to be reviewed at the end of the year. It was introduced two years ago.

The population inside the hive was able to compensate for the increased loss of worker honeybees by increasing brood production Dr Mickael Henry, INRA, Avignon. The debate over the use of neonics has centred on discrepancies between toxicity assessments in the laboratory, where bees are dosed artificially with insecticide, and the findings of field trials in the countryside. The big unanswered question is whether harmful effects seen in lab studies occur in real-life conditions and cause population declines. The new research provides an explanation for the "missing link", say French researchers. Their monitoring of tagged honeybees in the wild suggests bees foraging around treated crops die off at a faster rate than normal. However, colonies are able to make up for those dying off by boosting the number of worker bees in the hive. Lead researcher Dr Mickael Henry of the French National Institute for Agricultural Research, INRA, in Avignon, said the average life expectancy for an individual honeybee foraging on crops treated with neonics is lower than expected. He told BBC News: "We could find evidence of troubles at the individual scale in the field but these troubles were compensated for by the colonies. "The population inside the hive was able

to compensate for the increased loss of worker honeybees by increasing brood production." A field study found harmful effects on the solitary bee. The decline of bees around the world has increased focus on neonicotinoid chemicals. Dr Scott Hayward of the University of Birmingham, who was not connected with the study, said the work "re-ignites arguments to ban neonics", and similar studies are now needed on other pollinator species. His comments were echoed by Dr Christopher Connolly of the University of Dundee.

"It is important to remember that all other insect pollinators do not possess the enormous buffering capacity of honeybees and are therefore more acutely at risk to the impact of pesticides," he said.

Dr Peter Campbell of the pesticide manufacturer Syngenta said while the study raised unanswered questions "reassuringly... there were still no effects reported at the colony level". And Dr Alan Dewar of Dewar Crop Protection Ltd, added: "The conclusions from this work, which are very simple in contrast to the study itself, show that bees, or at least honey bees, can compensate for adverse effects of pesticides in their environment."

Emergency lifting

Bees are in decline in Europe and North America due to a number of factors, including pesticides, habitat loss and diseases. Neonicotinoids contain synthetic chemicals similar to nicotine, which as a plant toxin is damaging to insects. In the UK, the government has temporarily lifted a ban on neonicotinoid pesticides in parts of England. Two neonicotinoid pesticides can be used in four counties on oilseed rape crops following an emergency application by the National Farmers Union. Source BBC NEWS 18.11.15

(source BBC NEWS 18.11.15)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Two members attended the **National Honey Show** in London last month. This is the biggest honey show in the world with trade halls, workshops, courses and many talks over the three days.

The **South Devon Beekeepers Convention** in October at Totnes was attended by two members who heard four talks including a fascinating explanation by Gareth John on managing the controversial Warre hive.

The **International Bee Research Association (IBRA)** held an open meeting at Quince Honey Farm which was well attended by members to hear a talk by William Kirk on his new book 'Plants for Bees'.

Already nine people have paid to attend the branch **Beginners Course** starting in Barnstaple in January.

The **South West Counties Joint Consultative Council (SWCJCC)** that comprises ten associations (incorrectly known as the South West Mafia) holding about 25% of the national vote met at the end of November in Somerset. The JCC considered the nominations and propositions to be heard at the BBKA AGM in January. It was attended by one branch member.

The leaking **Horestone Apiary honey extraction shed** has been provided with a new steel roof by Derek Hunter assisted by Cliff Davis and Peter Auger.

The **electric extractor advertised for sale** last month has been sold and is now living in a garage in Teignmouth.

At the **Devon Apicultural Research Group (DARG)** AGM held in Buckfast last month Kay Thomas was appointed the Secretary.

Vast quantities **of mince pies were enjoyed at Horestone Apiary** last month by several members and entertained by a quiz arranged by Cathy Backway.

STARVATION WARNING

I am hearing tales of how hive weights have gone down. The mild weather and late brood rearing, mine were taking a lot of ivy pollen in in the first week of Nov still, means they have been eating into stores. If in doubt feed with blocks of fondant

Julie Elkin

BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This took place at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple on Sunday 14 November 2015 starting at 2.00 pm and

finished at 3.15 pm. Below is the Secretary's Report together with reports of other officers.

The Branch Committee

The North Devon Branch Committee has met on 9 occasions since the last AGM (according to my diary, but subject to correction). All of the meetings have taken place at Horestone Apiary and the responsibility for taking minutes has been shared, but thanks go to Lynda for taking most of the minutes. I continue to exercise vigilance when sending out group emails by not including members' individual email addresses. Some emails come back as 'undeliverable' because members have changed their Internet Service Providers but not told me of their new addresses. If you change your ISP and want to continue receiving copies of Northern Lights, please let me know so that I can change the group list.

Martin J Pollock Branch Secretary,

Chair's report

I have been Chairwoman for a year and have come across many unexpected challenges. I am willing to remain in post, with the support of the committee members, for another year if re-elected.

I need to thank the many members and supporters who have worked hard in many ways during this year. I shall name a few but cannot mention everyone. I apologise in case of any omissions.

The Education Team led by Cathy Backway have had another very successful year with a well attended Beginners Course and two Taster Days. Thank you, Cathy and the team including Chris Utting who organises the Winter Talks and the Nosema Clinic. (Cathy has set out a detailed report)

This year we have had two apiary managers, Sylvie Barber and Peter Auger, who have put in many extra hours looking after the colonies, the equipment and the site generally. Horestone Apiary is looking immaculate and the colonies are strong. However our apiary managers are standing down. The new committee will be discussing how best to organise the apiary in future and, in particular, how to enable the members to have greater involvement with the colonies.

Derek has been our treasurer for seven years during which he has kept our accounts in good order. Derek is resigning so we need another willing treasurer to take over.

Sylvie has been our Show secretary this year and has managed three country shows, two events at St. John's including our very successful Honey Show, together with other social events. Sylvie has been helped by other members but the responsibility has remained with her. In future the management of the shows may rest with a committee rather than with one person.

Jeff Orr has resigned after three years as the editor of Northern Lights. I am pleased to say that the very experienced Chris Utting has taken over the role. Jeff managed to produce an information packed Northern Lights every month in spite of living in York.

Another change is that Charmain Woolley, who has been Membership Secretary for several years, is also passing on the role.

Alan Barrow has been a supportive Vice-Chairman, Martin Pollock continues to be our efficient Branch Secretary, Barbara Carlyle and Lynda Partridge have offered to stay on the Committee for another year, Angus Basil continues to manage the library and Ruth Blake updates our website. Finally there are the members and supporters who regularly help at the apiary with the colonies and maintenance, shows, socials etc.

We have a great list of volunteers. On behalf of the Branch, I thank you all for the work you have done to keep the North Devon Branch up and running. The retiring committee has tried to run the apiary as best they could. We are hoping that the replies we received from the questionnaire will help to modify the management of the Branch in the coming year for the benefit of the members and colonies.

Mavis Dowling

Treasurers Report

Looking back over the last 8 years thanks to the hard work of the various committee members our Apiary has come a long way. From a debt of £2000. to a healthy balance of £6475. and an excellent range of equipment.

This year is no exception with income slightly up on last year's thanks to Cathy and her education team, and the efforts of the small number of people who do a tremendous amount of work running shows and other fund raising. Please note however that the income shown in the accounts is increased by £600 due to 2 years Gift Aid refund being included.

As far as expenses are concerned Devon imposed an extra levy to cover their own expenses, we have purchased a new stove for the hut as well as a considerable amount of new equipment while managing to hold down the day to day running cost of the Apiary

In conclusion North Devon Beekeepers are financially sound, and have plenty of equipment which is in good order.

Derek Hunter

MORE REPORTS NEXT MONTH

The AGM appointed the following

Chair Mave Dowling

Vice Chair Alan Barrow

Branch Secretary Martin Pollock

Education & Exam Secretary Cathy Backway

Committee Members Barbara Carlyle

Lynda Partridge Sylvia Barber

Membership Secretary Brian Sharp



GRAHAM KINGHAM ON POLLEN RESEARCH

At the end of the AGM one of the branch microscopists, Graham Kingham, gave a short talk on the pollen sampling research project that had been going on at Horestone apiary this summer. Guided by Kay Thomas our apiary managers and their helpers they have been collecting and sorting pollen taken from the foraging bees using a special pollen trap. The above photo shows Graham in full flow and holding the attention of Mave Dowling. The photo at the side shows pollen that has been stained and mounted on slides prepared by Graham and the pollen trap used.

The First Winter Talk on Friday 23rd October: The Small Hive Beetle – by Marin Hann

Martin Hann is a Devon based Bee Inspector. His excellent talk was on The Small Hive Beetle which is expected to arrive in the UK soon – it is a statutory notifiable pest in the EU. The SHB is native to South Africa but jumped ship and has reached the USA, Australia, Mexico, Cuba, Canada and Jamaica.

The SHB was detected in Italy in September 2014 when 61 apiaries were found to be infested and 3,500 colonies were destroyed. The Italian Authorities established a 20 km radius protection zone and a 100 km surveillance zone around the initial site – with movement restrictions of bees, bee products and equipment. When infected colonies are found the destruction of the entire apiary and the removal and treatment of the ground around the infested hives and apiary follows. It went quiet until September of this year when 4 new cases – all within the 20 km protection zone were discovered.

Martin showed us slides of the larva and adult SHB and explained the life cycle and the devastation these beetles cause. The beetle can multiply to huge numbers and destroy the colonies by eating the brood, honey and pollen – they spoil more than they eat leaving the combs with a slimy appearance.

Martin talked about the National Beekeeping Units contingency plan and the sentinel apiaries near ports and airports to give us early warning. He described his role as a bee inspector and the work involved in checking the colonies within the sentinel apiary network – he encouraged us all to improve our colony management – by maintaining strong colonies, good hygiene practices and apiary management - and of course to be vigilant about looking for SHB in our hives.

Martin ended on a more positive note by saying that he thinks we will cope with SHB – which implies that it is very likely that it will arrive before long – he also said that the Asian hornets were also a cause of concern.

Mave thanked Martin for his excellent and informative talk. We finished with our usual tea and cake, and were given the opportunity to check through Martin's virtual hive for some hidden virtual beetles.

Sylvie Barber

This is my first attempt at producing a Newsletter and I would like to thank the previous two editors, Sylvie Barber and Jeff Orr for their help and advice.

I will probably make a few mistakes but I hope that as I get more familiar with 'Publisher' that future editions will get better. I will value any feedback. - Editor

Edited by Chris Utting e-mail chrisutting@btinternet.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