

NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

JUNE 2010

www.northdevonbees.org



Chairman's Chat

I don't know if I'm the only one, but this year has rather caught me out, with colonies expanding and then becoming "swarmy" at a rate that I haven't seen in the last four years. I was caught out in the sense of not having enough frames ready for them. However, I'm not complaining as all this activity will hopefully result in a good honey harvest.

On a less optimistic note I've been reading an article, in a magazine devoted to Woodland and its management, about a bacterium which attacks and kills the Horse Chestnut tree. This disease has been given the rather quaint name of Bleeding Canker.

Even more disturbing was the argument presented in the magazine that since the Horse Chestnut doesn't supply structural timber (the wood is brittle and doesn't even make good firewood) that its survival shouldn't be a matter of concern. Although about 50% are thought to be dying, the only purpose which was attributed to the Horse Chestnut was its aesthetic appeal. What they neglected to add was that, although introduced to Britain only five-hundred years ago, this beautiful tree has been adopted by our native fauna and over seventy species depend upon it for habitat or food source. One of these, of course, is the honeybee.

I shall be writing to the magazine to remind them that nature is not merely a resource for human beings - the Horse Chestnut's fate cannot be decided on the basis of its usefulness to humans alone.

Good luck next month, *Chris*

Newsletter We have over 30 members who receive hard copies of the newsletter. We would very much like to keep our postage costs down so if you are receiving one by post, but have an email address - please can you e-mail Denise and let her know so that she can amend her records (deniseoldaker@aol.com). Thank you for your help with this.

Auction of Beekeeping Equipment

A big thank you to Derek for all his hard work that made the Auction Day on Sat. 15th May, so good.

All those that came had a very good time; some of us went home with a bargain and others recycled their goods for a profit! For those that didn't make it, don't worry we will be doing it all again next year. Store all your goodies ready to be recycled early in 2011

Barbara

Apiary Manager's Resignation.

Mary (Flowa) Houldsworth has resigned as Apiary Manager. As those of you who attend the Apiary will know, Flowa managed Horestone with characteristic energy and enthusiasm, giving it 100% at all times.

She started her work at the Apiary in the gardens, extending Peter Woolard's projects and increasing the bee friendly plants, a particular passion of hers. She became the Garden Team Leader and it was Flowa who instigated the digging of the pond, lining it and planting all those wonderful waterlilies - last week the pond was inches deep in bees gratefully gathering water. She negotiated a grant for the fruit trees and started work at 9.30 am every Tuesday to make the gardens beautiful. When she was elected Apiary Manager in 2008 she set up the Hygiene Policy, Record Sheets and a Welcome Pack for new beekeepers. She supervised Work Days, still finding time to help with the Shows, while always ensuring that the bees were managed to a very high standard.

She was particularly helpful to new beekeepers, often visiting them in their own apiaries when they encountered difficulties. She knew them all and encouraged them to become confident beekeepers. I have no doubt that there are many new beekeepers out there who are grateful to her for her help.

Flowa has overseen massive improvements during her time at Horestone and I'm not sure how we will manage without her.

Chris Tozer

DIARY DATES

Sunday 6th June - Dowland Fair

Sunday 20th June - open day (see back page)

August 4th - North Devon Show

18th & 19th September - Chapleton Steam Fair

26th September - Rosemoor Food Fair

30/31st October - St John's Honey Show



Horestone

Rough Notes 25th May 2010

Weather was hot and sunny.

Peter Auger started the SHB monitoring by taking floor debris from R3 & W3 to send to NBU.

Chris U brought back 2 more Apideas and set up another during the afternoon.

Green team

G1 Floor very messy but 10 varroa counted. Repeated the Vitagold treatment 80mls. QCs found so queen found and moved to a Nuc. 2 charged cells left, 2 foundation + super 3/4 full + crown board, then an empty super to encourage bees down to draw foundation in brood.

G Nuc marked 2. 5 frames, 2SB, 2drawn comb + 1 stores.

G2 Reduced with dummy board to help small col. build up last week. Improved. Vitagold repeated 40 mls. Queen not seen, 4 frames eggs, SB. 2 QCs both removed. Are they trying to supercede?? Super put on.

Red Team

R1 This was the drone laying col. that was given QC + eggs.

Bottom box 9 sides stores, cells polished, no eggs

Top 1/2 box 8 sides stores, polished cells, no eggs, possible virgin present? Varroa 5

R2 Good col. B on 18 sides. No QCs seen. 2 supers on both 2/3 full. Varroa 5

R3 1 1/2 Brood Lower box 12 sides B + 2 sides Pollen.

Top (1/2) 10 sides B, 7 E. Floor debris taken for testing for SHB

Blue team

B3 needs young Q ASAP. Wax moth & chalk brood.

QX + super added – only 1 drawn frame. Rapid expansion in 2 weeks.

2 new F. in brood. Floor too much debris to count V. Clean floor+ brood box. Fogged

B4 Modified Snelgrove in progress. Only bottom box examined, Q not seen but laying well. Clean box + 1 new F added. QX + super added (now getting very high!)

Top box will need 2nd super next week.

White team

W1A Artificial swarm 4/5/10 – queen cell colony. Not checked today as hopefully new Q in process of mating.

W1 Artificial Swarm 4/5/10. 5 frames E B SB. This is the old Q on the original site.

PROBLEM brood frames unstable, liable to break. Q not seen.

W3 Double brood Box QCs + eggs found (some well developed but not sealed). ?? Supercedure or are they about to swarm?

Top box 7 frames E B +9/10 QCs.

Bottom 6 frames some E +B +1 QC,

Q not found so boxes split – top box with fewer bees left on original site and QCs removed (White 3A)

Bottom box 6 frames B (W3) moved to left + 1 Qc.

Check both next week to find Q right colony.

Floor debris sent to NBU.

Sustainable beekeeping in top bar hives.

This was the title of very informative talk given to the North Devon beekeepers evening meeting in April at the Castle rooms.

Phil Chandler kept the audience attention with a continuous power point picture presentation whilst he enlightened us with the facts on a potential contentious more 'natural' method of rearing honey bees. He invited question throughout the evening and stayed to answer yet more afterwards from an eager audience.

He started off by explaining the reasoning behind this style of bee keeping and its origins in other countries, the main premise being that it mimics the natural bee environment and does not use any supers but relies on extending the hive sideways as the bees grow, allowing them to produce their own comb which they suspend from the top bars provided. Inspection is kept to a minimum in order to help reduce any stress and heat loss.

This method is at odds of some of the current beekeeping methods but the main claims are that it is more natural, wax production is clean and disease free and is produced in abundance, the only down side being less of a honey harvest in comparison to say a National hive.

He gave full details of managing the hive and how to deal with the problems, his book does the same but it is not written for the novice, but is more of a method of managing this style of hive, low cost, low impact and natural beekeeping are his main claims. I found the book very interesting and easy to understand and alongside a more standard text book on bee basics a welcome addition to my ever growing library.

Being a novice beekeeper I was looking to keep a second hive and found this method attractive and thought I could run it alongside a conventional one, so I duly sent off for his book , 'The Barefoot Beekeeper' which is available through Amazon; I researched the internet sites and found some plans for building a hive. I must admit that I copied the 'best' of two designs as I wanted a gabled roof as it will offer better waterproofing and eye appeal. I have chosen to build the four foot long version as it creates space for a second hive or to be used as a nuc box as well.

So as you can see I have become a half a convert, I must admit that I did ask the opinion of my two teachers whom both encouraged me to venture forthwith my own experiment.

Further information can be found at his web site and blog.www.biobees.com

Detailed plans are available and members are welcome to come and inspect the hives as well if interested. Perhaps some other top bar hive beekeepers would like to swap notes over the season with each other?



The finished article waiting for the roof and paint finish. Internal view showing mesh floor and top bar with bead.

Graham Kingham

LIBRARY.

The winter amnesty is over! Please scour your shelves for all those outstanding books you have put to such good use while snowed in this year. Come and borrow some more. You can leave your books at the Bitz4Bees shop which you are sure to be visiting at this time of year if you cannot get to Horestone.

The latest additions to the library are :-

BBKA The Healthy Hive Guide.

Keeping Healthy Honey Bees by David Aston and Sally Bucknall. This is a very comprehensive and up to date guide not only to disease but to overall management and Integrated Pest Management.

For a full list of all the books we have in the library look at our Website.

Julie

Honey-Dijon Salmon and Asparagus

1 1/2 teaspoons cornflour
2 1/4 teaspoons butter melted
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons honey
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 dash white pepper
2 (4 ounce) fillets of salmon
1/4 cup chopped walnuts
8 oz fresh asparagus trimmed

Combine the cornflour, butter and Worcestershire sauce in a small bowl. Stir in the honey, mustard and pepper. Place each salmon fillet on a double thickness of heavy-duty foil (about 18 in x 12 in). Drizzle with honey mixture and sprinkle with walnuts. Place asparagus around the salmon. Fold foil around salmon and seal tightly. Bake for 15 – 20 minutes at 200 C or until cooked through.

Himalayan balsam

If anyone watched The Edible Garden programme recently on BBC, presented by Alys Fowler they may have discovered another use for this love/hate plant.

The programme was 'unashamedly aimed at 30 something female would be gardeners' (reviewer's description) so I was a bit out of my depth! Alys had a lot of good ideas including putting the seeds in home baked bread they are apparently delicious and nutty flavoured so if you can't get rid of the balsam any other way go out and eat it. Maybe should carry a safety warning, wear goggles to avoid being hit in the eye by the exploding seed pods.

Julie



How pretty are these!!

A bee will visit 50 - 100 flowers during one trip.



Community of Beekeepers

Bitz4Bees

Shop opening hours

Tuesdays 11 am - 1.30 pm

Dave & Jean 01237 475705

Derek 01769 561033

OPEN DAY 20TH JUNE AT HORESTONE.

Several local groups interested in bees and beekeeping, would like to visit our apiary at Horestone. We are organising an Open Day to show them around and share a little of our beekeeping knowledge. I know that you are all busy people, but we can only make this a good day with your help. Please can you phone on 01271882303 or e-mail baranlyle@hotmail.co.uk, if you are free to help on the day, or donate the goods we need.

Jack and Julia are doing the talks.

Derek is in charge of the observation hive.

Jeff is running the plant stall.

Sylvia is heading the tea section.

We need cakes to feed our guests and to sell, plants to sell on the stall, and people to help show an open hive if the weather permits and to help look after our guests.

More information about the day will be sent by messenger, last minute changes still have to be confirmed.

Barbara - Shows & Social Events Co-ordinator

Sylvia Barber, Foxpark, Waddicombe, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9RX (01398 341624)

E.mail sylviad.barber@dsl.pipex.com

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