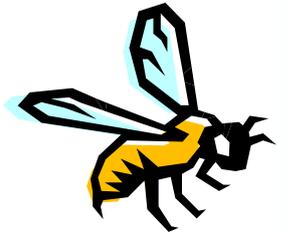


NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

JUNE 2012

www.northdevonbees.org



CHAIR CHAT

Those of us who went to the County Show, in Westpoint, Exeter, had a wonderful day out. The entrance fee is a whopping £18, so why do they have such a hard time finding people to take the offer of free tickets. It's a great show and a good day out. Try helping at the Show next year and see what you are missing.

Jeff Orr is busy getting our own annual honey show up and running; don't forget it's a month early this year, in September.

Our bees, and everyone else's have been busy swarming this week. We send a big thank you to all those who have taken the calls and collected the bees

On our table at Horestone sits the pot labelled 'tea fund'. Tea fund, fits the label, where as 'general maintenance, apiary upkeep, amenities payments, first aid and bee suites doesn't. All members can join us at the apiary and are most welcome. All we ask is that you 'feed' the tea fund. A suggestion of a minimum of £1 a visit has been made; are we asking too much from our members?

If you visit the apiary what do you get for your £1.

FREE information and FREE help. Knowledge FREELY given by master beekeepers, our bee inspector and the education team.

FREE computer and printing use.

FREE library use of books and pamphlets that cover every aspect of the hive, wax and honey products. The chance to look after hives other than our own.

Good company, biscuits, cake and yes - TEA!

A bit of a do . . . at Horestone

The Horestone Members Open Day on 27th May was enjoyed by many members, both regular Tuesday attendees and some much less regular. The weather, although threatening rain, was kind to us and with homemade cakes, plants for sale (at bargain prices) and much chat, a good time was had by all. We even had to do a bit of beekeeping with the season being so swarmy.

Many, many thanks to all members who contributed their time, cakes and plants.

Jeff Orr.



DIARY DATES

17th June - Dowland Country Fair

Sunday 1st July - Beekeeping Taster Day

Wednesday 1st August - North Devon Show - Umberleigh

Saturday 11th August - North Devon Branch - Nosema Clinic

Branch Honey Show - 15th and 16th September - St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple.

North Devon Beekeepers
Horestone

North Devon beekeepers are a happy lot
Some keep bees others do not
At midday they all arrive
To gather in there wooden hive
Around the table for cakes & tea
To talk about the honey bee
Off to work the queen will say
It's off to work, it's work not play
Out the door go all the workers
No place here for idle shirkers
It's back to the hive, the work is done
Tired & weary from the noonday sun
Around the table for more cakes & tea
To discuss again the honey bee.

Alan Barrow



Notes from Horestone.

We are certainly being kept on our toes at Horestone at the moment.. Every time the queen rearing team turn up to queen rear they have found a few extra jobs to do. Last week Jeff found a clipped queen wandering around the grass near the Beginners corner with a swarm hanging in a nearby tree. She was clipped and he put her in a cage and hung her up at a convenient height. Within half an hour or so the swarm had moved down and was then housed in the Long Hive. Then just before we had finished our queen rearing duties and were about to go home, Kay discovered another lost queen wandering along near some nuc boxes. It does show the importance of keeping the area around the hives clear of weeds and long grass.

Which brings me to our last AST meeting last Tuesday. We do seem to get busier and busier at Horestone. We are very pleased to have welcomed about 10 new members/prospective beekeepers to the apiary over the last few weeks. The only down side to taking the time to talk, and encourage everyone is that we don't quite get round to some of the regular work like keeping the lawn mowed. As there are so many forage flowers out at the moment we have decided that Julie will draw up a plan of the areas and walkways to be cut, and then we would ask if there are a couple of members that would pop in, at a time suitable to them, and keep the grass down. We feel that its important that 2 people should always work together for Health and Safety reasons. If you are interested and feel you could help please contact Julie.

We also plan to use yellow rattle seed on the long areas as this semi-parasitic grassland annual suppresses grass and helps with wild flowers. It will in time reduce the mowing requirements.

This week we have had our bees checked by the bee inspector. We had one colony with signs of varroa so will be carefully monitoring the rest. We are helping with monitoring for Asian Hornets and have hung a trap in the grounds. Let's hope we don't trap any.

Honey Show recipes.

Jeff our Honey Show Secretary and his Show Team, have been very busy updating the Honey Show schedule. The Honey Show is earlier this year to fit in with St Johns flower show. It will take place on 15th and 16th of September instead of the end of October.

We like to change a few of the recipes each year to make the whole thing more interesting. We have more or less chosen this recipes for a carrot, honey and raisin cake. It was made and tried out at the recent Horestone Open Day and the plate was empty before you could blink.

For show purposes it is just the cake that is being judged so the decision is not to put a topping into the Schedule. It wouldn't be very nice for the judge to taste a rich creamy topping that had been hanging around for most of the morning. If you want to try it at home a nice topping would be 450 g of cream cheese, mixed with 5 tbsp honey and 1 tsp of vanilla extract. But on the day of the Show, naked cakes only please.

Carrot, Honey & Raisin Cake (class 24)

Ingredients: 3 medium carrots, 125g (4oz) self-raising flour, 125g (4oz) wholemeal self-raising flour, 1 teasp. (5ml) baking powder, 1 teasp (5ml) ground cinnamon, 25g (1 oz) brown sugar, 85g (5oz) honey, 3 eggs, 1 teasp (5ml) vanilla extract, 125 ml (4 fl oz) sunflower oil, 85 g (3oz) raisins, 2-3 tablesp milk.

Preheat the oven to 170C/325 F/Gas Mk 4. Line a 20cm (8ö) round cake tin with greaseproof paper and brush with a little oil. Peel and grate the carrots. Place the flours, baking powder, cinnamon and sugar in a bowl and mix together. Put the honey, eggs vanilla and oil in a separate bowl and mix well with a whisk or fork. Add to the flour mixture and mix well. Stir in the grated carrots and raisings. Add a little milk to give a soft consistency. Spoon the mixture into the lined tin. Bake for about 1 hour. Check the cake is cooked by inserting a skewer into the top. Leave the cake to cool in the tin for 10 minutes then loosen the sides and turn out onto a wire rack. Remove the lining paper and leave to cool.



Bitz4Bees
Tuesdays
10.30 - 12.30
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NEWSPAPER CUTTING - BBC NEWS web site 28th May Extinct' short-haired bumblebee returns to UK

By Rebecca Morelle Science reporter, BBC News

Nikki Gammans explains how the short-haired bumblebee has been brought back to the UK

A species of bee not seen in the UK for a quarter of a century is being reintroduced to the countryside.

The short-haired bumblebee was once widespread across the south of England but it vanished in 1988.

However, after a healthy stock of the bees was found in Sweden, conservationists were able to collect some to seed a new UK colony.

About 50 queen bumblebees are being released at the RSPB's Dungeness reserve in Kent.

Nikki Gammans, from the Short-haired Bumblebee Project, said: "Normally, extinction means a species is gone forever. "But it is magnificent that we can bring back this bee species and give it a second chance here in the UK."

Plan bee The loss of the short-haired bumblebee (*Bombus subterraneus*) was caused by the dramatic decline of wildflower meadows that occurred after World War II as agriculture intensified to feed the growing population. It is estimated that 97% of Britain's flower-rich grasslands, which the bees needed to forage and thrive, has vanished over the past 70 years.

The short-haired bumblebee was hit hard by the loss of wildflower meadows in the UK

But in southern Sweden, the species is doing much better as fewer people live there and farming practices are more bee-friendly. Dr Gammans said: "The bee population in Sweden is expanding and growing whereas for everywhere else in Europe it has been contracting - it is either rare, threatened, or extinct like in the UK. "So Sweden was really the only place we could go to collect the bees."

A team of conservationists, with the permission of the Swedish authorities, captured nearly 100 spring queens to bring back to the UK. Before the release, the bees were put in quarantine for two weeks at Royal Holloway, University of London. Dr Mark Brown, from the university's school of biological sciences, said: "We've screened for four different parasite species, which can all damage bees in different ways. "The key reason why we are looking for them is we don't want to introduce populations of these parasites from Sweden into the UK. Those with the parasites haven't been released."



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