

# NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

**JUNE 2013**

[www.northdevonbees.org](http://www.northdevonbees.org)



## Chair Chat

It has not been the best month weather wise, just the few odd days when the sun at last showed us a bit of summer.

Can we sit back and enjoy it? No, we're all climbing trees and running around gathering in the swarms.

We are surrounded by OSR at Horestone, so we have been busy adding supers and extracting the first of the honey crop.

We have also been busy getting tidy for the Open Day/Plant Sale; it all looks very smart. It would be nice if it could stay that way, but we are always far too busy. So if things don't always get put away properly, I know people will rally round and make it good on the day.

I started the year with a very long and very optimistic 'wish list'; with the arrival of a chest freezer, my list is complete.

I send a very big 'thank you' to all the people who have not only donated things to the apiary, but have given their time and effort to get things in, fitted, fixed and set up. We must be the luckiest bee club in Devon. Thank you everyone.

Now for my next 'wish list' I would like.....perhaps I had better wait till next year!

*Barbara*

## Bee Quotes

'Bees do have a smell, you know, and if they don't they should, for their feet are dusted with spices from a million flowers.'

Ray Bradbury, *Dandelion Wine*

## Events 2013-14

<b>Sunday 2 June</b>	<b>13.30 - 16.00</b>	<b>Plant Sales and Members Open Day, Horestone</b>
<b>Sunday 16 June</b>	<b>10.00 - 16.00</b>	<b>Dowland Country Fair, Nr Winkleigh EX19 8PG</b>
<b>Sunday 30 June</b>	<b>14.00 - 16.00</b>	<b>Taster Day, Horestone</b>
<b>Saturday 27 July</b>	<b>All Day</b>	<b>Mid-Devon Show, Nr Tiverton (in Rural Skills Marquee)</b>
<b>Wednesday 7 August</b>	<b>All Day</b>	<b>North Devon Show, Fishleigh Rock, Umberleigh</b>
<b>Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept</b>	<b>All Day</b>	<b>Our Honey Show, St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstable</b>
<b>Thurs 3 October</b>	<b>19.00 - 21.00</b>	<b>Talk 'Bees and Flowers' by Leila Goss, Castle Centre, Barnstable</b>
<b>Thurs 16 January</b>	<b>19.00 - 21.00</b>	<b>Talk 'Bee Bits' by Chris Utting Castle Centre, Barnstable</b>
<b>Thurs 13 February</b>	<b>19.00 - 21.00</b>	<b>Talk 'Nosema' by Glyn Davis Castle Centre, Barnstable</b>
<b>Thurs 13 March</b>	<b>19.00 - 21.00</b>	<b>Talk 'Predator Mites' by Richard Ball Castle Centre, Barnstable</b>

# Education, Education, Education

Well, it's been a long slow learning curve for our Beginners this year. It all started well enough when in February we all jammed into a room at the Castle Centre to talk bees then moved to Horestone in March for more information and practical "hands-on" sessions. Little did we know at that time that the weather would have other ideas, keeping bees and beginners unacquainted. By the end of the course, no hives had been opened and so we set an extra date. Surely 12th May would be an ideal date for bee



inspections? Apparently not. Heavy rain and temperatures of around 9 degrees stopped play. At the time of writing, we still have to set an extra day for beginners to have an opportunity to see and handle bees in the apiary. It doesn't seem to have diminished their enthusiasm. Feedback from participants is very favourable to our approach - only commenting with disappointment that Master Beekeepers seem to have no control over the weather! Perhaps weather control should be a new BBKA module for coming years?

We are still underway with organising and advertising our forthcoming **Taster Day at Horestone on June 30th from 2 - 4 pm**. If you know of anyone who would like to join us for a look at bees and beekeeping and to sample hive products, then let me know. Costs are £10 per person which are deductible from next year's Beginners Beekeeping course fee should you wish to continue. If June 30th is not possible, then 8th September will offer another opportunity to join us.

*Cutting out a queen cell at Horestone - picture thanks to Martin Hadrill*

There is also still time to sign up for the **Improvers' Course** being offered at Horestone this summer, in preparation for the BBKA Basic Assessment. If you've managed bees for a year or more, it's a good opportunity to revise and consolidate your knowledge - the assessment itself is relaxed and informal (over tea) and the certificate is not only useful for waving at the neighbours but is a thing of beauty for your wall.

*Cathy*

## Plant of the Month

*Rubus idaeus*

### European Red Raspberry

Other species come in blue purple and yellow, the latter is a sport which has lost its colouring whilst retaining its flavour. They used only to be available in high summer but now they are in the fruit shops all year round. I am not sure if this is plant breeding or imports from warmer climes



In 1968 we moved into our brand new house and garden, the first things we planted were lettuces and raspberries. As they came into flower they were covered with bees gathering nectar and greyish pollen, the more I watched the more fascinated I became - the rest is history.

I am still learning; every year and colony is different: this period the worst ever, 3 out of 5 dead, survival of the 4<sup>th</sup> doubtful whilst the 5<sup>th</sup> is very weak. I cannot do anything about it, they have had all the help I can give them.

The berries, aggregates of hollow droops, are full of good things for us, a rich source of fibre, vitamin C, folic acid, with traces of catechins, pelarganidins, cyaniding and flavonoids, all of which are antioxidants.

The leaves can be used as a tisane and the berries eaten on the day or frozen, used to make a liqueur, put into ice cream, pureed or, as I have seen recently, an addition to yeast buns.

They may be available all year but I prefer to keep them in their rightful season; eat lots then wait for next year. Oh happy days!

*Kay*



## Member's Apiary: Sue Madgwick

When I started to keep bees I didn't think I would want them in my garden: I wasn't sure about the relationship between the bees and our lifestyle, spending so much time outside in the summer months. A friendly farmer allowed me to fence off a small enclosure in the corner of the field opposite our house – it seemed like the perfect solution. I could walk to the hives (and walk back to get all those things that I was constantly forgetting) yet the bees didn't encroach upon our gardening activities.

Wind forward a couple of summers and I realised that even the small distance across the road was stopping my full enjoyment of these fascinating creatures so I paved a corner of the garden down behind the pond to site an additional hive – and now it is common place to wander down the garden with a mug of tea and just watch is going on outside the hive. The bees enjoy the water they get from the pond and we enjoy their activity in the garden; I'm sure our damson yield has increased!

Keeping bees in two different places that are so close together is fascinating; the bees in the field apiary get more sun in the early morning and are out and about much earlier but the bees in the garden stay out later. The forage is also different; the bees in the field are quicker to find the field of clover whereas the garden bees are distracted by the flowers in the garden and hedgerows.

For the past couple of years, the garden hive has produced far more honey. Perhaps I should find room for another .....?

*Sue*

## Spicy Honey Chicken



*A quick and easy recipe for two.*

2 chicken quarters  
1/3 jar Harissa paste  
3 tbsp run honey

Mix the Harissa paste and the honey, then spread over the chicken quarters and wrap in foil. Place in oven at 180°C for 45 minutes or till thoroughly cooked. Serve with rice or cous cous and salad.

## The National Honey Show

Are you new to beekeeping? Would you like to see what honey, combs, wax and mead should really look like? The National Honey Show is the 'gold standard' honey show, the equivalent of Wimbledon for tennis players, this year the 82<sup>nd</sup> National Honey Show. There are almost 250 classes and beekeepers come from all over the world to enter. Walking around the displays is an education in itself. A full programme of workshops and lectures will run during the show and there will be a wide selection of trade stands with lots of equipment and books to buy. Guest speakers this year will include, once again, a great cast from the world of beekeeping: Norman Carreck, Celia Davis, Ricarda Kather, Mike Palmer and Dr Robert Paxton will all be on the main lecture stage, BeeCraft have a great lecture theatre in the recital room on Friday and there will be a full day of lectures in the recital room on Saturday for those relatively new to beekeeping or those waiting to refresh on some common themes. For the first time this year there will be lectures on Thursday morning starting at 9.30am, with the official opening at 1.45pm. On top of that is another great line up of very popular workshops and The Honey Show. If that isn't enough then you can get some bargains, advice and socialise in the trade hall.

Also new for 2013: on the Saturday we have a New to Beekeeping day with a lecture programme for new beekeepers but all are

welcome, in the Recital Room. There will be lectures on Swarms and Swarm Control; Common Bee Diseases; Products of the Hive; Tasks Throughout the Year.

If you have already had success at your local or county show, why not enter some of the classes? Many counties have their own classes within the show – or you can put yourself up against the experts in the open classes to see how you measure up. As you do your extracting, why not keep that perfect frame aside? A little planning now will give you lots of potential show entries.

The 2013 schedule of classes will be published in August 2013 but in the meantime, you can get a good idea of what is needed by looking at the 2012 schedule. You can find this and lots of interesting information about the show on the N.H.S. website – [www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk)

The show is at St Georges College, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2QS on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> (1.45pm to 6pm) Friday 25<sup>th</sup> (9am to 6pm) and Saturday 26<sup>st</sup> October (9am to 4.30pm). Admission for non-members is £15 but you can become a member of the National Honey Show for £12 and then entry is free. Accompanied children of 16 years and under are also free. You can join at the door or visit the website – [www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk).

The Organising Committee

## Horestone History

The other day I was chatting with Bob Marsh. Bob was the Ministry Bee Inspector for 22 years from 1968 to 1990; Bob is now 86. Bob's area extended from the Somerset border in the north to the Cornish border to the west and as far south as Crediton. The area included 480 stocks of bees.

He was telling me about the bees at Horestone Cottages. In the area which is now the apiary car park was a thatched cottage occupied by Gerald and his wife Annie together with their son, also called Gerald. Gerald senior was the head gardener at the big house 'Hall' owned by the Chichester family and Annie was a nurse. They paid a nominal rent of half a crown (12½p / 2s 6d) a year. They kept 12 colonies of bees in WBC hives but with no extractor and were only able to produce honey as cut comb in

bass wood boxes. The cut comb was stored in McVities' biscuit tins under the bed.

Every year Annie put the cut comb together with fresh cut flowers such as daffodils into an old pram and walked to the railway station at Chapleton, then she took them to the pannier market at Barnstaple and sold them from her stall.

At that time there was a Mr. Shackson who was in charge of four bee inspectors, namely Phil Moseley, Roger Lancaster, Len Davey and Bob Marsh and between them they covered the whole of Devon, including Brother Adam's bees at Buckfast Abbey and Quince Honey Farm at South Molton.

*Chris Utting*

Edited by Jeff Orr, 4 Montegue Street, York, YO23 1JB. E-mail [jeffjorr@aol.com](mailto:jeffjorr@aol.com). The views expressed are the authors' and not necessarily those of the North Devon Branch of the Devon Beekeepers' Association.

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