

NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

March 2007

www.northdevonbees.org



A New Broom

As most of you will know by now, since my move to Somerset I have been looking for someone to step into my shoes as Editor of this newsletter. Well, finally my pleas have been heard and, as from next month, Barry Neal will be the new Editor. Many thanks to him for "volunteering".

As this is my last edition, my thanks go to all those who have contributed over the last 12 months of my "reign" and please give Barry all your support in the future. It doesn't take much to scribble down a few words of your beekeeping experiences, anecdotes, reports on visits etc. so please keep the copy coming. You write it, we'll print it!

If it ain't broke, don't fix it

During our move, my bees have been somewhat neglected. In fact, on my recent trip back to them (they are still at the old place whilst I find them a new home) I was amazed to consult my beekeeping log and find that I had done no form of inspection (other than a quick visit to see the roofs were in place etc.) since the end of September. It was with some trepidation therefore that I planned a check on their progress on one of the few fine days at the end of February – primarily to examine food supplies.

Imagine my delight therefore to find all five colonies up and running, with 2 of the colonies bringing in pollen. I did give a couple of the colonies some fondant, but apart from that, all seems fine. I know that I am going to regret saying this, but in the three years I have been keeping bees, I have yet to lose any of my colonies over the winter. This is not I think due to any great expertise on my part, but perhaps more due to the local strain of bee I have, and to the fact that I have consistently lost queens during the summer and therefore have young queens going into the winter! Every cloud has a silver lining.

Anyway, I know that I have raised this issue before, but I am warming to the view that ignoring my bees is beneficial to them. They seem to do better without my "assistance"! Obviously there are some things that must always be done (eg varroa control) but I am resolved this year to significantly restrict the number of times I open up the hives. I love to tinker, but that is a characteristic I will try and resist.

Kevin Tricker

Subscriptions Reminder !

Our Treasurer reminds all those who have not yet renewed their subscriptions to please do so as soon as possible! If any member has lost the double-sided form sent earlier, please download one from the Branch web site or request one from Dave J (tel. 01769 561 002 or dave@greenover.net). If you are aware of new or potential new members, please advise them similarly. Of course members can join any time of the year (with reduction towards the year end), but if action is not taken very soon, members will not be listed in the very useful DBKA Yearbook. Renewing now also helps the Branch's cash flow and avoids much chasing by 'phone, e-mail and letter.

Please also supply your e-mail address where applicable (and if you omitted it on the form submitted already, please e-mail to Dave). It is the agreed policy of the Branch Committee, and indeed DBKA

now, to actively encourage e-mail usage wherever possible to reduce costs and to facilitate more timely information to, and interaction with, our members. Dave also notes that some members appear to have not paid quite the correct BDI sums with their membership forms. He will be in touch with those members shortly. See also the reminder re. BDI rules elsewhere in this issue.

NDBKA Show Dates 2007

Listed below are the show dates that the Committee has agreed that we will attend this year. We have tried to spread them out a bit so it's not too onerous for the "gallant few"!

28th April	Rosemoor "Go Wild in the garden"
30th June	Instow Garden Safari
1st August	North Devon Show
7th October	Eggesford Countryside & Wildlife Show
27/28th October	St Johns Garden Centre, NDBKA Honey Show

We will also be doing our bit for the DBKA's marquee at the Devon County Show on 17/18/19th May

The Holsworthy Branch of the DBKA are holding their Spring Convention on Saturday 24th March at Chilsworthy Village Hall. Further details on page 2

It may be boring but ...

... if you are going to "do" insurance, do it properly!

As a member (presuming you have paid this year's subscription!) of the North Devon Branch of DBKA you - indirectly at least - part "own" the BDI - Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd.

The BDI was established by beekeepers working voluntarily, as a self-help tool, with the aims of:

- * providing a measure of compensation in the event of colony destruction under the Bee Diseases Control Order
- * supporting research into bee health in general
- * educating beekeepers to ensure that our bees are healthy and productive

The BDI is run by beekeepers for beekeepers, and is owned by member Beekeeping Associations.

As a paid up member, you are automatically covered by the BDI for up to 3 colonies - and you should be aware ('cos it says it on the membership renewal form!) that if you have more colonies than this, you need to pay additional sums to cover the number of colonies you have.

*** the BDI has written to remind us that you should be insured for **THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF COLONIES YOU COULD HAVE THIS YEAR** this includes your regular hives, nucs you have split off, other forms of increase, **AND ANY SWARMS YOU MAY TAKE**. Apideas / mini-nucs do not "count" as insurable colonies.****

If you don't insure your full number of colonies, the BDI may be minded to regard you as uninsured against **ANY** claims.

So **PLEASE** review your position!

Current Insurance Rates -

Up to 5 colonies (including the basic three) an additional £2.00

Up to 10 colonies (including the basic three) an additional £5.25

Up to 15 colonies (including the basic three) an additional £7.75

Up to 20 colonies (including the basic three) an additional £9.50

Up to 25 colonies (including the basic three) an additional £11.10

For 26 colonies (including the basic three) and up to a maximum of 39 please consult your Association Treasurer..

The compensation rates from January 2006/7 are as follows -

BS Standard Brood £1.80

Other Brood £ 2.50

BS Shallow £1.35

Other Shallow £ 1.85

Plastic QX £3.95

Wire QX £13.30

Glass Quilt £11.20

Crown Board £10.55

Honey £1.00 per lb

This, and more, information can be found at:

<http://www.bbka.org.uk/articles/bdi.php>

Patrick Moore, Branch Secretary

Do you know what this is ?

Here's a little puzzle for all practical beekeepers. What is the purpose of this little item ? Does it have a name ?



We're making a little competition out of this puzzle this month, for he or she who provides the correct - or nearest - answer will receive a little credit card size magnifier (See separate item in this issue on this new product now available from Bitz4Bees.)

See how generous we can be !

Answers to Tony Wright (on a card, or tel. 01271 865 516 or e-mail wright1939@btinternet.com). Next month's issue will reveal the correct usage and the newly blessed winner.

Dave J

Holsworthy Branch DBKA
invite you to their

Spring Convention

Date :	Saturday 24th March 2007
Location	Chilsworthy Village Hall
Cost	£5 for the day
Refreshments	£3 for Ploughman's Lunch incl. tea & coffee

Programme

- The view from the CSL - *Richard Ball, NBI*
- Global warming and its impact on beekeeping - *Glyn Davies, former president of BBKA.*
- Workshops on various beekeeping issues.

Please book your place via your own association by 18th March, indicating whether you require refreshments.

Bitz4Bees will also be there to supply you with your beekeeping needs at competitive prices.

Chilsworthy is about 2 miles North of Holsworthy on the Holsworthy to Bradworthy Road

New lottery to Raise Branch Funds

The Branch Committee recently accepted a proposal from the Instrumented Hive Partnership (IHP) to run a joint lottery, with the majority of proceeds going to the Branch. This is a '100 Club' style system, with a few twists. All prizes are cash. The key features are as follows:

- * it is styled as: *North Devon Beekeepers 100s Club*
- * the minimum cash prizes start at £25 (1st) and £15 (2nd).
- * each 'ticket' (chance) costs £1 for any month of the year.
- * 'tickets' are sold only in units of twelve, so you are automatically entered for a whole year for £12
- * you may buy more than one set of 12 'tickets' if you wish
- * tickets are available for purchase throughout the year
- * at the starting level of eighty participating tickets for that month, the cash prizes represent a 50 % total return
- * for ticket sales above this stipulated minimum, the cash prizes steadily increase !
- * each lottery entrant is given a Certificate of Participation bearing his/her ticket no./s for the 12 month period
- * all winners shall be notified within ten days of each draw

All lottery sellers are urged to carry and display an Authorised Seller card and provide an immediate receipt of some sort. It is important to communicate sales details promptly to Wendy (see below).

Ticket sales are already off to a great start, following the launch at Horestone on 23rd February. Once the stipulated minimum is reached, the lottery draw takes place on the first Tuesday of each calendar month, for which purpose we are most grateful to Jim Slade for so quickly devising, fabricating and donating the magnificent tombola drum machine.

Importantly, the official promoter is our new member Wendy Dunlop-Jenkins from Ilfracombe. Please contact her at:

Wendy Dunlop-Jenkins
2 Montpelier Road Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 9HP
Tel. 01271 867 397
e-mail wendydj@btopenworld.com

Note that this lottery differs in one important respect from our recent '100 Club' of 2005. Now it is purposely open to not just Branch or DBKA members, friends and family, but also to the general public. In this way, we should be able to raise more funds and on a more consistent basis, and moreover try to move away from always relying on just our loyal members for support. Accordingly we have an appropriate NDDC licence (L00555).

www.instrumented-hive.co.uk
www.northdevonbees.org

Please do your bit - buy a ticket (or two), sell some, tell others about it !

Dave J, Wendy D-J

Handy New 'Bitz4Bees' Item - and News from CoB

The Community of Beekeepers Ltd announce that they now stock those very handy credit card size magnifiers (Fresnel type). These make an ideal way to get a closer look at the 'varroa tray' on your mesh floor hives, or for taking a look at any bees or other insects in the apiary, for they are easily popped into your pocket or purse.

Far less bulky than a conventional magnifier. In fact they are also quite useful more generally for the macular degenerate (!)

An absolute steal at £2 each including a protective plastic pocket ! Contact Dave M on 01237 475 705 or jeda@onetel.com.



Incidentally, please try to forewarn Dave of your requirements ahead of time, especially if they are relatively large or unusual. This helps CoB in planning its stocking policy, to everyone's benefit.

And on this same topic, and rather reluctantly, CoB will shortly introduce a £50 deposit requirement on all orders placed for over £100 where the items are not already in stock. Customers continue to get a great deal from the CoB new venture, so please help our ever-helpful 'Team Morris' to help us all.

CoB shareholders will soon be receiving notice of the first AGM, tentatively booked for late afternoon on Tues 17th April.

Bee Disease Insurance AGM

Do AGMs thrill you?

Can't get enough of them??

If you are going to the BBKA at Stoneleigh this year, you are welcome (or so I am advised) to attend the Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd Management Committee meeting at 1030 on Sunday 22nd April (where you can meet and talk with the committee and sit in on the meeting). This will be followed immediately by the AGM of BDI Ltd.

E-mail the secretary, Roy Norris, at roy@fulmar.demon.co.uk to be put on the distribution list for papers and lunchtime provisions.

Patrick Moore, Branch Secretary

Asian Hornets make it to France

Swarms of Asian hornets, renowned for their vicious stings have settled in South Western France.

Global warming has largely been blamed for the survival and spread of the Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*), which is thought to have arrived in France from the Far East in a consignment of Chinese pottery in late 2004.



These hornets are renowned for attacking colonies of honeybees, and can destroy a colony in a matter of hours. Entomologists are also afraid that, eventually, these hornets will spread to the UK. However, they do not tolerate frost very well, so they may not cope with cold winters.

The Asian Killer Fact File

- * The Asian hornet's usual habitat is the temperate and tropical Eastern Asia
- * Its body length is between 1.1in and 1.8in, although queens have been known to reach 2.2in
- * The Asian hornet injects a potent venom that can dissolve human tissue. It also uses its large mandibles to kill prey, including bees and caterpillars
- * Anyone with an allergy who is stung and does not receive prompt treatment may die. Generally, hornets will not attack humans, unless their nests are disturbed
- * Asian hornet attacks on honey bee hives are devastating.
- * A single hornet can kill as many as 40 honey bees per minute
- * After destroying a hive's defences, the hornets carry its larvae back to feed to their own young.
- * In parts of the Far East the hornets are eaten deep fried as a hornet sashimi.

Summarised from an article in the Daily Telegraph

Horestone Hilton Upgrading: Help !

Members will be aware from the last issue of *Northern Lights* of our success in securing an interest free loan from the DBKA for upgrading our Apiary sheds. We may even rename the largest - the ex-chicken Main Shed - the 'Meeting Hall' or similar !

Procurement of most of the material is underway, and the purpose of this brief note is to seek additional help for the necessary work on the roof, the new cloisters (yep !), the improved covered access each end, the re-cladding etc. and then the safety-critical remedial work on the Quartermasters Stores. Work on the Main Shed interior and the Honey Shed will follow.

So if you are fighting fit and would be able to assist with practical work in the near future, please contact the Apiary Manager, Tony Wright or myself. Importantly PLEASE indicate preferred day/s of the week or specific dates and we will endeavour to compile a suitable plan.

Clearly a limited amount may be done on Tuesday mornings, but the work involved is quite a lot and it is unfair that the wider membership simply rely on the same small number of volunteers each time for Apiary heavy work.

The ladies will have their turn soon with the interior of the Main Shed. Oh yes, and we will soon install the lovely new pot belly stove that will make those beekeeping meetings at Horestone even more inviting.

So any offers, please ? Work will probably start, on the roof first, around mid March.

Dave J

Out-Apiary Offered

I will shortly have to give up my out-apiary near Ashwater (some 4 miles south of Holsworthy off A388 to Launceston). Whilst it is rather a long way away from most of you, if anyone in North Devon Branch is interested in taking it on, please let me know in the next week or so and I will approach the owners of the land to see if they are amenable to a new beekeeper.

If no-one from ND Branch expresses an interest, I will offer it to members of Holsworthy Branch.

Kevin Tricker

The Bee's Knees

"The bee's knees" is a term indicating excellence - the highest quality. It became popular in the US in the 1920s.

Believed Origin : Bees carry pollen back to the hive in sacs on their back legs. The allusion is to the concentrated goodness to be found around the bee's knee.

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

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