

# NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

May 2014

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



## Chair Chat

The end of April and our colonies are full of brood and drones! Throughout the next month we will need to keep a watchful eye on each colony. The key to swarm control is regular inspection and being ready to act promptly when queen cells are seen. I have already done an artificial swarm at my home apiary. Even the most experienced beekeeper can miss a queen cell so make sure you have your swarm collecting things ready – and take great care if using ladders – your personal safety is paramount. Many thanks to Chris Utting and his team for organizing the Nosema testing day. It was a bit disappointing that more of you didn't take up the opportunity to have your bees tested by our experienced microscopists – but those of us who did now know which colonies, if any, require a comb change using the Shook Swarm method or which would benefit from a feed additive such as Vita Gold or Nozevit.

The Beginner Beekeepers course has gone well with only a couple more sessions to go. I'm glad that once again our Club has done its bit to help prospective and new beekeepers acquire the information and skills they will need to manage their own colonies. We wish you luck with your future beekeeping.

*Sylvie*

## Events 2014

<b>7&amp;8 Jun</b>	<b>All day</b>	<b>Bees Honey and Plants Weekend, St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple</b>
<b>15 Jun</b>	<b>All day</b>	<b>Dowland Fair</b>
<b>26 Jul</b>	<b>All day</b>	<b>Mid Devon Show, Tiverton</b>
<b>6 Aug</b>	<b>All day</b>	<b>North Devon Show, Umberleigh</b>
<b>13&amp;14 Sep</b>	<b>All Day</b>	<b>Branch Honey Show, St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple</b>
<b>16 Nov</b>	<b>14:00-16:00</b>	<b>Branch AGM, Castle Centre, Barnstaple</b>

## Notes from Horestone



We are very pleased with things at Horestone; after a good spring clean, paint and lots of work in the garden, it all looks very good.

We only lost one hive this winter, and now that the weather is so much better the bees are building up at an amazing rate.

Our Queen rearing has started, and were busy getting Nucs made to sell. If you want to be put on our 'want list' then contact any of the committee, and don't forget that for a very small fee wax and honey extractors can be hired. We are hoping the weather is kinder to us this year and all our work and efforts get a better result than last year.

Beekeeping is still busy on Tuesdays, come along for coffee if you can. We have the Taster Days set and because these are so popular, places will fill up quick. Check with Cathy Backway if you or friends are interested; for only £10 these make a great treat or birthday present. Check in the NL, we are out and about at the shows and love to have a chat with all our members.

*Barbara*

## Bees at York Cemetery



As part of my pleasant exile in York I occasionally help out with beekeeping at York Cemetery. The two hives are owned by the York Conservation Volunteers. The Cemetery is still a working burial ground but is now run by a the York Cemetery Trust who also promote it as a wildlife site but needless to say the hives are located in a remote part. I am grateful to Catherine Bentley who took these excellent pictures.

*Jeff*



## Topical Tips for May

- Hefting a hive to identify the weight of winter stores can be misleading if the stores are from the Ivy. Often this honey will granulate so hard that the bees will not be able to consume it. You think that the colony has plenty of stores but they are not accessible.
- If you want a swarm and you get a call are you prepared to respond quickly ? A swarm may be clustered available for easy collection for as little as half an hour or even for up to a couple of weeks.
- If your bees swarm and you do not see them emerge you have legally lost your ownership as they have reverted to the wild state over which neither you, nor anyone else, has control.
- If you see a swarm emerge from your hive and it lands on private land you have to get the owner or occupier's permission to enter the land to collect the swarm.
- Don't take unnecessary risks to collect a swarm. It can be tempting but it's not worth it if something goes wrong.
- If your colonies are working Oil Seed Rape the timing of removing the honey from the hive is important. Too late and it will start to set in the comb – too early and there will be too high a water content and it will start to ferment in the jar. Lift out a frame of unsealed OSR honey and give it a shake over the open hive. If it drips it is too soon to take it. If it is sealed with cappings then it is too late.

*Chris Utting*

## A Snippet of Apiary History - *the Sheds*

In 1980 five of us moved colonies, equipment and the 6' by 4' shed from Pottery Lane in Yelland to our existing site at Horestone. It's hard now to imagine that everything was stored in this small shed. Extracting was done in the Apiarist's home, but we made tea, mixed sugar and stored the smoker, supers and everything in it.

A couple of years later the then apiarist, Bernard Pritchard, saw an advert for a sale of redundant item from a chicken farm in Braunton. He persuaded the committee to buy one of the sheds, depleting our reserves by over £400 (the branch has been running in a shoestring ever since). This still remains our main meeting shed.

We soon had a partition wall at the far end so that the front was the meeting area with demonstrations and lectures and we also now started serving delicious teas! There was a workbench at the rear for frames and other maintenance jobs.

In the early '90s one of the beginners, a rather wealthy man, was persuaded to buy and oversee the construction of the gravel path and the honey shed so that we had a clean place for extraction and storage. It gets unbelievably hot in there, I remember Ruth Neal nearly passing out whilst extracting, so we now cover the windows to keep some of the sunlight out. It houses the jars, supers of honey, buckets, the extractor which members can hire, plus our own beautiful electric extractor.

All of which was previously stored in the main shed. . .

A couple of years later the committee agreed that Kevin Stach and his cohorts should purchase another shed. They levelled the ground then inexpertly erected it; they built four sturdy con-

crete pillars to keep the whole thing level and off the floor, but failed to realize that the distance between them was too great, the floor behaved like a trampoline (I exaggerate)! Initially we had to walk round the outside to avoid damaging the centre area until further supports could be built. This holds all our equipment and is known as Albert's shed.

All of which was previously stored in the main shed. . .

Every year several men undertook the job of painting the main shed roof. One year Michael Duncan suggested that we put some corrugated plastic on as a more permanent cover; this idea was tossed around for some time and expanded upon, so, we now have an extended roof which makes the veranda and canopy over the door and log store. Tony Wright, an expert carpenter, did all the woodwork, roof supports and balustrade, so that it now looks like a cricket pavilion. Also in his tenure the partition was reinstated, one half of the space forming the Library, the other our very own flush toilet.

Around the same time this fine group of workers lined both the honey and main sheds. They also wanted to perform some private experimental work with the colonies, so Tony designed and they built the shed at the top of the site, known as the Green shed for obvious reasons, it now holds all the Show paraphernalia.

All of which was previously stored in the main shed. . .

The final shed houses the gardening gear, it is 6' by 4', not much different from the original. You can now see why we run on a shoe string, all this expansion and improvement comes at a cost.

Bye the bye, our gardening team are really short of tools, so if you have anything spare, forks, trowels, rakes, anything, please consider donating it too them.

*Kay*

## Recipe - Pork and Mixed Bean Casserole

1 lb pork cut into cubes  
4 tbsp vinegar  
1 4oz tin of beans  
4 tbsp tomato puree  
1 onion, chopped  
1/2 tsp chilli powder  
4 tbsp run honey  
1 tsp mustard  
2 peppers, sliced  
1/2 turmeric  
4 tbsp orange juice  
1 tbsp walnut oil  
3/4 pint chicken stock  
2 tsp plain flour  
2 tbsp water

Heat the oil in a large ovenproof pan, fry the onions. Mix together the honey, vinegar, chilli, turmeric, tomato puree and mustard and add the onions.

Mix the stock and orange juice and add to the onions and bring to the boil.

Put beans and pork into the pan and cook at 180 deg C for 1 1/2 hours

Mix the water and flour and add to the pan with the peppers and return to the oven for a further 20 minutes or until the sauce thickens. Serve with rice and salad.

## Devon County Show

The standard of entries at our Branch Honey show in the autumn must have been amongst the highest from any branch in Devon. So for members who still have some honey or good wax, why not consider putting some entries together to support the County Show. Although the official closing date for entries is May 1, Steve Ide the show secretary will always accept entries right up to the last minute: the day before judging. The County show is always a good event for beekeeping and worth supporting.

If anyone plans to enter I can take your entries and bring them back. Please contact me on 01598 760209 or mail: [jackmummery@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:jackmummery@mypostoffice.co.uk). I will need your entries by Tuesday 20 May. Also if any member has honey, candles etc. they want to sell at the County show I will take them for you, again all I ask is that you get them to me by Tuesday 20 May. Selling prices can be found on the DBKA website or follow this link: <http://www.devonbeekeepers.org.uk/Honey%20Sales%20%20price%20list%202014.pdf>

Please contact me on 01598 760209 or mail at [jackmummery@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:jackmummery@mypostoffice.co.uk) if you are interested.

*Jack*

## From the National Bee Unit

As many of you know, the Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*, is a predator of honey bees and other beneficial insects. It has recently extended its geographical range from Asia to mainland Europe following an accidental introduction to France, and is now also present in Spain, Belgium, Portugal and Italy. Adult hornets are highly mobile; the rate of spread across France is approximately 100 km/year. There is concern that this exotic insect could reach the UK, either by hitching a ride on imported goods or simply by flying across the Channel.

### The message to Beekeepers from the NBU is as follows:

- Now is the ideal time of year to look out for emerging queens, who can build new nests;
- Make sure you know how to recognise Asian hornets – a very helpful ID sheet can be downloaded from the NNSS website at <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/index.cfm?id=4>
- Know where to report sightings: [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)
- Our best defence against the Asian hornet is to quickly detect any arrivals and prevent them from establishing;
- Trapping is expected to aid this;
- Please visit the Asian hornet pages on BeeBase [click here](#) to read updated guidance for beekeepers, including information on early monitoring and trap design. You can also access the full Response Plan through these pages.

National Bee Unit

## Bee Quotes

‘The slight regard at this time paid to the medicinal virtues of honey is an instance of neglect men shew to common objects, whatever their value; acting in contempt, as it were of the immediate hand of providence, which has in general made those things most frequent, which have the greatest uses; and for that reason, we seek from the remotest part of the world, medicines of harsh and violent operation for our relief in several disorders, under which we should never suffer, if we would use what the Bees collect for us at our doors.’

*John Hill, MD (1759)*

Edited by Jeff Orr, e-mail [jeffjorr@aol.com](mailto:jeffjorr@aol.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.***