

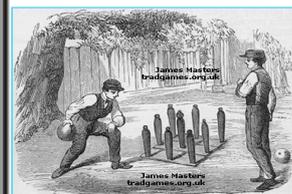
NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

NOVEMBER 2008 www.northdevonbees.org



SKITTLES



Chairman's Chat

It was with great regret that the St John's Honey Show had to be cancelled this year.

The Committee was very well aware that for many, honey was in very limited supply and the rule that only the current year's honey could be exhibited made it even more problematic. The number of members that had contacted the show secretary by the date in the schedule was zero. Although it was not absolute that the show secretary be aware of all entrants by that date, and that members could enter on the day of the show, the fact that nobody had contacted the show secretary was taken as an indicator that the final entry number would be so low as to make continuing difficult or impossible. All members of the Committee understood the problems and were involved in the decision. We can only hope that 2009 brings a little more sunshine and a glut of honey.

Back to the Apiary. In the main things are well with the bees. I think that only one, weak colony succumbed to wasps and only two other colonies had to be united because of their weakness. By now for my part, syrup feeding is past and only fondant from now on. Mouse guards should be on and entrances to minimum. *Jim Slade*

Subscriptions reminder !

Please send your subscription/GAD form for 2009 to Denise Oldaker (ask or go on-line if you've already mislaid your form from last month !)

Apiary Manager's Report

We are now at that period in the beekeeping year when we hope we have done all we can to provide all the things our bees need to get them through the winter. Fed, treated for varroa and snug in a dry and warm brood box and protected from the ravages of mice.

The flower year has been turned on its head. In my garden flowering dandelions abound. The fuchsia hedge just along the road is ablaze with deep red blossom. Even the buddleia is breaking out in new blooms.

During the last few warm, though windy days, huge numbers of workers are flying, returning to the hive carrying good loads of bright yellow pollen. Let us hope that augers well for the spring.

During the next few weeks the bees will need less of our time so we will be able to concentrate on the maintenance list. The main shed still requires its outer cladding, new kitchen to install, and fitting of an electric water heater. Not to mention work needed in the garden, hive repairs, and planning for the next bee-keeping year. If you have the time and wish to help the maintenance team on a Monday, have a word with members of the Apiary Support Team. *Tony Wright*

Skittles Night

A date for your diary

Skittles and Great Pub Grub

Saturday November 8th 2008—7 o'clock

At The Plough Inn, Bickington

Please call Wendy 01271 867397

£6.50 per person



Education

There has been great interest shown by potential newcomers for next years beginners course and I think that we should look forward positively irrespective of who might be education officer for 2009. I can only at this point put forward my thoughts regarding future education and how I would continue. It is on this basis that I put the following notice:

In addition to the course for new beginner beekeepers that was so successful last year, we are looking to increase the number of members that have done their basic assessment. If you feel that you would like to do the assessment please let me know so that we can have a little get-together (meeting No 1) and arrange an ongoing series of discussions through the late winter and spring. Similarly there are those that may wish to take the General Certificate in Bee Husbandry. Like the basic it is a practical assessment that goes a little further and would be of great benefit to those amongst us that want just that little extra tuition. The meetings will again be very informal, as for the beginner's course last year.

In addition to the Basic and Bee Husbandry assessments, a number of us are looking to attempt the Certificate in Microscopy. Anybody that has an interest in the Certificate in Microscopy, let me know. When I have a better idea of those that are interested we can sort out a framework for the meetings. What I have in mind at the moment is that we meet fortnightly in the spring and cover the topics in order, ie cover the basic assessment and then husbandry. As microscopy is a little more problematic with regard to equipment (microscopes etc) the meetings for that will be on an *ad hoc* basis around the requirements of those attending.

There will be no charge for any of the meetings, which will again take place at the apiary, unless otherwise determined by those attending. If the number of persons wishing to do the microscopy is small we may go for a more domestic arrangement. *Jim Slade*



DEVON BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION - North Devon Branch

89th Annual General Meeting
Horestone Apiary. Sunday 16th November 2008 at 2.30 p.m.

****Open Day from 1pm with a light buffet lunch, followed at 2.30 pm by AGM****

A G E N D A

Welcome from the Chairman

1. Apologies for absence; an attendance sheet will be circulated.
2. Minutes of the previous AGM.
3. Matters arising from those Minutes.
4. Chairman's Report.
5. Branch Secretary's Report.
6. Treasurer's Report.
7. Apiary Manager's Report.
8. Show Secretary's Report.
9. Resolution as proposed by the majority of the Committee concerning the election at an AGM of officers: " It is proposed that the new Committee shall consist of the following:
Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary and Treasurer
Apiary support team manager, Education officer, Shows & social events co-ordinator
4 additional members, who may or may not have specific roles/positions,
all of whom shall be elected at the AGM. Further members may be co-opted for specific roles/positions for a stipulated duration, up to a maximum of 3 at any time. All members shall have full voting rights, save for co-opted members."

10. Election of Branch Officers

Chairman
Vice Chairman
Branch Secretary
Treasurer
Apiary Support Team Manager
Show & Social Events Coordinator
Education & Exam Secretary

Retiring Officers

Jim Slade
Chris Tozer
Patrick Moore
Dave James
Tony Wright
Wendy Dunlop-Jenkins
Jim Slade

4 Committee Members.

Sylvia Barber Tony Wright
Mary Houldsworth Peter Warrilow

Any of these positions not filled at the AGM will need to be co-opted by the new Branch Committee.

These are all "voting", representative positions though the Chairman's vote is a "casting vote" only.

11. Election of other post holders

The members present at the AGM will be invited to elect the following :

Membership Secretary (*currently Denise Oldaker, who is content to continue*)

Newsletter Editor(s) (*currently Sylvia Barber and Mel Browne, who are content to continue*)

If either of these positions is not filled at the AGM the new Branch Committee will co-opted appropriately

(The Clerk to the Branch Committee, Branch Librarian, Quartermaster, Webmaster, Branch Microscopist, Swarm Liaison Officers, Gardening Team Leader, Foulbrood Recognition Advisors, Examiner of Accounts, Spray Liaison Officer will all be appointed by the new Committee.)

(Note: Branch Officers and elected Committee members may also hold any of these positions.)

12. Date and place of next Committee meeting will be Tuesday, 18th November at 7 p.m., at Horestone Apiary.

13. Any Other Business

(To ensure smooth and timely running of the meeting, any items of "other business" should be notified in writing to the Branch Secretary at least 48 hours before the AGM, and must be notified to the Branch Secretary – preferably in writing - before the AGM commences)

****Open Day from 1pm with a light buffet lunch, followed at 2.30 pm by AGM****

(though the committee will provide food, bring and share contributions are warmly welcomed)

Note:

Candidates for election to the North Devon Branch Committee at the AGM must be members of the Branch. Their candidacy must be proposed by another branch member, and seconded by yet another branch member. They must also indicate their preparedness to serve,

either verbally in person at the AGM or (if they are unable to attend) in writing to the Branch Secretary before the AGM commences. A contested election will be subject to vote, votes being cast by full members in attendance at the AGM, and the candidates may themselves vote in this process. In the event of a confirmed tie, the Chairman (who may not otherwise vote) will have the casting vote.

Other notes:

i) The Chairman and the Branch Secretary are *ex officio* Trustees of the Charity, The Devon Bee Keepers Association, and are normally expected to attend DBKA Executive Committee meetings as voting representatives of the North Devon Branch.

ii) The Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor(s) are usually invited to attend Branch Committee meetings, though not as voting members of the committee.

iii) Members *may* serve in more than one post/office simultaneously, but of course it is preferable that different individuals hold each of the elected Branch Officer positions.

iv) Whilst it may be helpful for the "Ordinary" Committee Members to hold other roles, it should not be regarded as obligatory – we are keen to have representation from the wider membership, and especially those members who cannot take part in Tuesday Apiary activities.

What about the Bees !

I'm still pondering the message of Professor Dewey Caron's talk at the North Devon apiary. He is an expert from the University of Delaware, and is involved with the authorities looking into the causes of CCD.

It is all so disturbing – but somewhere in this darkness there are keys to other doors. And I'm not talking only bees but money markets and environmental ferment. The good Professor took us to the edge. We looked into the abyss. This is what I heard him pointing out.

Commercial Beekeeping in American is driven by such powerful economic pressures that it is inherently unsustainable. The more it encounters problems, the more it demands quick fixes that not only do not resolve the problems but create further problems.

Thus the bees and the natural and cultivated environment are being destroyed by the agricultural industry's insatiable demands (more in the name of pollinating food crops than producing honey) And of course the industry is part of the whole web of manufacturing, finance, politics and our teeming greedy culture. All the old sustainable systems of co-habiting and cooperating with nature are being undermined and swept away. And not slowly.

I heard the professor say that some of the best brains of American Etymology and Epidemiology have been on the case for a year and a half and have no clear grasp of the causes of CCD. Is it Varroa induced? Is it a Virus? Is it from Pesticides - particularly Nicotinoids ? (all wax foundation is now found to be chemically contaminated) Is it from Stress? Is it from feeding artificial pollen and inappropriate syrups? Is it from all of the above?

'Where there is man there is a mess,' said one of our wise beekeepers afterwards.

A Somerset beekeeper Patrick Mouldsdales wrote this to me; *“Modern beekeeping has developed from a human perspective not a bee perspective. Bees have evolved and adapted effectively for 50 million years yet, in just 150 years of modern beekeeping, we have driven them to the end of the line. It is now not possible for them to adapt and evolve; we don't let them. It is totally clear to me that CCD is just the bees not being able to cope any more, like the bloke who pops out one morning to buy the Daily Mail and is never seen again. We need to be bee watchers and bee listeners not bee keepers (as in jailers). We need to be more conscious of what they do and have done for so long. We need to treat the bee colony as the super-organism that it so obviously is.”*

He then lists 10 pointers to a more conscious, whole way of being with bees. And a link to a website. Each reader will have their own further suggestions and reflections.

“1. Treat the colony as a complete organism not as separate parts

2. Allow the retention of nest scent and heat

3. Allow each colony to make all its own comb

4. Only use swarm bred Queens or natural supersedure

5. No suppression of the swarm process

6. Over-winter bees with sufficient quantities of their own honey

7. Maintain a colony density supportable by the local forage with good flower diversity

8. Maintain a low colony density per apiary

9. Use a locally adapted bee

10. And finally use only natural, breathable materials for the hives.

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/warrebeekeeping/> “

Human consciousness is like an iceberg – nine tenths of it is invisible. Our unconscious drives are more influential than we like to think. Despite our best intentions the global markets will not stay in equilibrium, the well-being of the planet spirals into ruination and nations rarely learn to live together peacefully. The globe is showing us, it seems to me, that we need to be more conscious of our actions. Bees are an indicator species – the canary in the coal mine.

How do we become more conscious of our behavior? At this stage of history isn't that the most important question?

Consciousness, in my understanding, is not only another word for the stuff of the universe. It is also the self-reflective quality that only humans have that allows them to see themselves as body-minds that are born, live and die. In other words we can be the non-material watchers of the material body-mind.

My understanding is that only through a collective rise in human consciousness is there a way through these crises. There are no technical fixes that will solve the problems that the old unconscious mind has created. We have to question all the current and traditional assumptions and values – yes even us oldies – because we are so clearly on the road to chaos. And how do we become more conscious? By stepping out of our shoes. By looking at ourselves and our actions with detachment. It's as simple and as puzzling as that. There are not any quick answers – but there are a lot of questions that we need to ask ourselves. And we need to *keep* asking them. I'm looking into the abyss once again. Do we support the pursuit of profit or do we turn about and pursue the welfare of our earth and its inhabitants? Let's take the questioning and conscious route so that there will be a planet for our grandchildren to inherit. *Rashid Maxwell*

Chapelton Steam Rally

Despite being a new member of NDBKA and a new bee-keeper of only a few days, having just taken my nuc home, I volunteered to help man the beekeeping stall at the Chapelton Steam and Vintage Rally on Saturday afternoon, 27th September, with Dave James. The event, originally planned for August Bank Holiday, had been cancelled due to a waterlogged site following the weeks of rain during August. Today, though, the weather was perfect; warm, sunny and dry, ideal for a day out looking at the beautifully restored traction engines, vintage cars and tractors, gypsy caravans, old fire engines and local arts and crafts.

Our stall was in the model tent where hobby clubs were showing working models of engines, military memorabilia and model battleships. There were also stalls around us selling cakes and preserves, framed aerial photos of local scenes, a wood sculptor and artist who copied your photos into oils. Our stall was set up with the WBC model, smoker and hive tool and lots of bee pictures and books. We had leaflets about the branch, aspects of beekeeping and introduction courses which we could give out.

During the afternoon there was a steady stream of people passing the stall and many stopped to chat and ask about the current plight of the honeybee and share their swarm stories. I was surprised how well informed and concerned people were about diseases and the bee's importance in pollination. Several expressed an interest in keeping bees and took away information on our courses. The afternoon seem to pass really quickly and Dave kept us sustained with tea and chips. After the model tent had closed for the day we managed a stroll around some of the exhibits in the late afternoon sunshine. It struck me that these owners are as absorbed by their vehicles as we are with our bees.



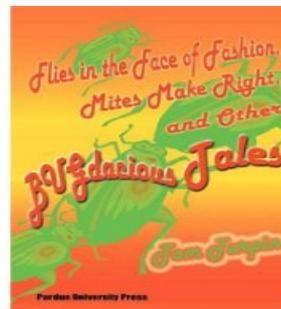
Lesley Jones

<http://gears.tucson.ars.ag.gov/soft/vpop/vpop.html>

is the URL for Carl Hayden Res Centre's varroa calculator computer program (simple simulator). This is version 2.1. Free, some 2.5 Mb in size. There is also a slide show of the varroa mite available from the same page.

Book review: bugdacious tales

This is an unusual little book, and might be an attractive modest Christmas present for some. Although this was published a couple of years ago - and I normally review only recent introductions - I thought it might be of interest whilst the author's next book along these lines nears publication date ("What's Buggin' You Now? ,,,"). The title here is "**Flies in the Face of Fashion, Mites Make Right and Other BUGdacious Tales**" by Tim Turpin (compact format, 248 pp., Purdue), available for around £6-7.



Turpin is an entomology prof. at Purdue U and is the creator of that agriculturally-biased university's annual Bug Bowl, which is a sort of two day cross between a circus and an interactive, modern science museum, all with an insect theme. In short he is a consummate insect populariser, well known in the USA. The book is arranged in seven main sections (insects and humans, lepidoptera, hymenoptera, insect biology etc) and each of these contains a number of easily digestible little essays or selective vignettes of just a couple of pages. It's the sort of title you can read over your cereal and honeyed toast. And afterwards you could bore your friends and Branch members with a host of interesting little tidbits, and I'll try not to do just that here !

This book probably won't help you become a better bee-keeper, but can round out a little of your wider understanding of entomology, and in an easy manner with a tad of humour, albeit US. Fine for children, too. To get some idea, consider chapter titles such as "Take 2 maggots and call me in the morning" (medical use, also mentioning honey); "2003 insect achievement awards"; "Insect legs are not just for walking"; "Dance, honey bee, dance"; "Most insects exhibit poor parenting skills", and so on. Did you know which insect symbols are used for states; that flea glass was an early term for a microscope; how to distinguish quickly between a moth and a butterfly; that there are some million insect species, with a biomass some 70 times that of humans; that "of all orders, this [hymenoptera] is probably most directly beneficial to humans" ? Well, you get the picture. There's even a little bit on what is meant by social insects, but this is no text book. Dip into it and you'll feel refreshed, but please don't come up to me after and start pestering me with "Did you know which insect produces Turkey Red dye ?" etc.; I could find it very irritating.

Dave James

DECEMBER SALE

CoB/Bitz4Bees will be having a **SALE at the SHOP** on Tuesday 2nd December between 11am and 1pm. Selected items include :

BBWear Jackets in Sage Green (Medium & Large) - £59.50

Cane Sugar in one Kilo bags - 65p
and other items.

Watch the Apiary notice board and your inbox for further details



Contact: Dave & Jean - 01237 475 705

(see October Northern Lights for map showing Shop.)

DIARY DATES

Wednesday November 5 Bonfire Night at St Michaels School, Tawstock (free to members).

Saturday 8 November—Skittles Night (see page 1)

Sunday 16 November AGM—Open Day from 1pm with a light buffet lunch, followed at 2.30 pm AGM.

Friday November 21st Christmas Fayre, 3—6 pm at member St Michael's School, Tawstock (we have a stall).

Sunday 18 January 2009 A New Year Meal (as above)

No Cost Informal Study Forum Possibility

Interested in learning about the latest bee, and related insect, research ? Fed up of talk of exams, beekeeping lore and endlessly differing opinions on all matters beekeeping ? Frustrated by the new terminologies in evolutionary biology, social insects, genomics etc ? Want to learn more but baffled in working your way around so many web sites, and just don't know which books to start with ? Muddling phylogenetics with filenames ? Perhaps you can help by explaining it all to me/others ?

Declare your interest and I'll explain what I have I mind *viz.* basically just an informal, non-craft forum, to be held in a great location near Barnstaple and occasionally in the apiary.

Contact: Dave James on 01769 561 002

A New Year Meal



Due to so many pre Christmas engagements it was proposed we had a post Christmas dinner in the New Year.

So a date for your diary-

Sunday 18th January 2009
12.30 for 1 p.m. @ The Royal and Fortesque Hotel, Barnstaple

Cost of meal £ 13.50

A traditional Roast Dinner (choice of 2 meats)

A selection of homemade deserts

Fresh Filter Coffee and mint Chocolates

Please let Wendy know if you would like to reserve a place

01271867397 or e-mail wendydj@btopenworld.com

BBKA Module 4 & 5 Study Group

This not-for-profit course is structured along the principles of some of BBKA's foremost teachers and lecturers. We have chosen for our subject this time HONEY BIOLOGY which includes Anatomy. We believe that a firm understanding of form and function of the honeybee is essential before the student can begin to grasp why and how the bee behaves as it does, and how different treatments are effective or otherwise. At the same time, we all want to enjoy ourselves, and let's face it, no-one will ever know for sure why our honeybees behave the way they do!

For six Monday evenings — 10 & 24 November and 8 December 2008, 5 & 19 January and 2 February 2009. To be held at the Castle Centre, Castle Street, Barnstaple.

Cost Approx. £15 to cover hire of room

Open to all members of DBKA

Organised by Chris Utting 01237 474 500 and Beryl Smailes 01271 329 649.

Please phone to book your place or for more details.

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