

NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

October 2014

www.northdevonbees.org



Chair Chat

Well here we are in October. September was a busy month for the Branch, with a very successful Taster Day on the 7th – and our Branch Honey Show at St Johns the following weekend. Both went very well and thanks must go to all those who contributed their time and energy to make sure both events ran smoothly.

At Horestone we have almost completed feeding and uniting colonies. All the colonies have been tested for nosema and we are pleased to say all the results came back negative. Our main battle this year has been with high varroa counts on one or two of the colonies – hopefully the high counts in September were due to the Apiguard treatments working. As you will see in the newsletter we are organising 2 work days in October to catch up on vital jobs before the weather changes. Many hands make light work – and it would be nice to catch up with some of you that cannot make our usual Tuesday apiary days.

And don't forget our first autumn / winter talk with Clare Densley – "Let's hear it for the boys" – Friday Oct 17th at The Castle Centre, Barnstaple.

The Branch AGM is on Sunday 16th November. At this meeting the new committee will be elected and the administration positions filled. If you would like to be nominated for any position please contact me or Martin Pollock as soon as possible.

Sylvie

Events 2014

7 Oct	10:00-16:00	Horestone workday
17 Oct	19:30	Talk - 'Lets hear it for the boys', Castle Centre, Barnstaple
18 Oct	10:00-16:00	Horestone workday
16 Nov	14:00-16:00	Branch AGM, Castle Centre, Barnstaple

First Winter Talk

On Friday Oct 17th at 7pm for 7.30pm Clare Densley from Buckfast Bees is giving a talk called 'Lets Hear It For The Boys', a fascinating look at the life of the often maligned drones, a good start to the winter season of talks and one to gladden to hearts of all down trodden males.

Horestone Workdays - Tuesday 7th October and Saturday 18th October

Having had a very busy year with the bees and many new faces to be welcomed at the apiary, we have rather a backlog of outstanding jobs to be tackled before the winter sets in.

We would very much appreciate some help to tackle cleaning and repairing equipment, tidy and make safe the grounds, and various other essential jobs.

Both work days are from 10 am till 4pm, but even if you can only make an hour or two, that would be good.

If you are staying all day please bring your lunch. Tea, coffee and cakes will be provided.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the North Devon Branch of the Devon Beekeepers Association will take place at the Castle Centre, 25 Castle Street, Barnstaple on Sunday 16th November at 2 pm.

The meeting will be run according to the Rules that you will find printed in your DBKA 2014 Yearbook, using both the Branch Rules and those of the DBKA as parent organisation. You should note that only Registered and Partner Members are eligible to vote at the AGM.

A Register of Attendance must be signed and a list of eligible members will be available.

Agendas for the meeting will be available at the meeting. A Member wishing to propose any matter for discussion at the Branch AGM, shall notify the Branch Secretary in writing at least 14 days before the meeting in order that it may be placed on the agenda. I shall endeavour to circulate the Agenda to you by e-mail well before the AGM (though obviously not more than 14 days before!).

As at the previous AGM, the following Branch Committee positions shall be elected:

Chairman, Vice Chairman, Branch Secretary, Treasurer, Show & Social Events Co-ordinator, Education & Exam Secretary, 5 Committee Members.

Martin Pollock,

Secretary, North Devon Branch, Devon Beekeepers Association

Topical Tips for October

- What to do with those wet supers? If stored wet then this will discourage the destructive efforts of the wax moth. But by next spring the traces of honey will start to ferment. The books tell you that this is bad for the colony and will encourage dysentery. I have added fermenting honey in this form to my colonies for several years and found there is not a problem. Alternatively, you can return the supers to the colony in the autumn for the colony to clean up. But the dry supers must be carefully stored away from pests. I have a large chest freezer for this purpose. I only freeze the frames of comb for about three days to kill off unwanted bugs and then turn the freezer off.
- This warm autumn allows the *Apiguard* to be applied efficiently. The two sachets on top of the brood frames each for a consecutive period of 14 days controls not only the exposed Varroa mites but also those that emerge from a sealed drone cell on the 24th day after the drone egg was first laid.
- Now is the time to take the samples of 30 bees to be examined for the presence of Nosema spores. Send your sample to me or to Julie Elkin and we will carry out an examination under the microscope for a contribution of only £1.00 (towards branch funds). Fifteen samples from Horestone Apiary have been examined and found to be free of Nosema. Treatment using the antibiotic *FumidilB* is no longer available but both *Vitafeed Gold* and *Nozevit* claim to be an organic control.
- Before it gets too cold to work in the garden shed check the spare wooden equipment. Scrape, brush and scorch then re-nail or glue the joints and fill the gaps ready for next year.

Chris Utting

What does it take to run a teaching apiary?

North Devon Branch are very fortunate in having had a teaching apiary for so long (more than 30 years at Horestone) and we have a lovely site even if we can't always keep on top of all the grass mowing and tidying it needs.



You may not need or want to come to Horestone but it is there for all members, would-be members, new beekeepers and improvers to develop their beekeeping skills.

A teaching apiary involves a lot of discussion, alright argument, as beekeeping is the most complicated and contentious of all forms of animal husbandry; if only there was one simple answer to each question or situation. Work behind the scenes is largely invisible and all done by volunteers and covers ensuring the meeting hut and facilities all function, information/hand-outs are

always available, doing Nosema tests, finding mentors for new beekeepers, continual cleaning/scorching of equipment, making up frames and rendering wax and frames down later on, extracting honey and all the outside ground works. At the moment we have a large pile of chippings (free) waiting to be used to improve the safety underfoot on the veranda and main path.

As members of the BBKA we all have a responsibility towards other beekeepers and the safety of the public and running a teaching apiary is a vital part of this work.

This year we have had an unprecedented number (very welcome) of beginners and returning beekeepers and we hope that we have helped a lot of people to sort out their beekeeping problems. All this has meant that we end this season with an even greater backlog of outstanding jobs to be done before the winter so we will be having 2 or 3 work days in October to deal with this. So please even if you can only spare an hour or 2 on one of these days come and help us make Horestone a teaching apiary to be proud of. It's really quite fun when we get a good group working and amazing how much we can achieve.

Julie

North Devon Branch Honey Show 2014



This year's Honey Show took place with almost unprecedented warm weather! Along with Barnstaple and District Horticultural Society our Show was held at St John's Garden Centre on the 13th and 14th September.

This year we had 76 entries – a little down on last year but we prefer quality to quantity and there was some pretty fierce competition raging out there in the Show area! Our judges, Mrs Alicia Normand and Mrs Sally Wilson, were very complimentary about the quality of the produce. There are a couple of our members who have been urged by the judge to enter some of their produce in the next Devon County Show!



The display looked wonderful; we have so many members with hidden artistic and creative talents, and chaps with amazing culinary skills! As usual there was

a huge amount of interest and concern for the bees from the general public, (encouragingly so much better informed than they used to be) who are more than willing to help provide improved habitats for all of our pollinating insects.

It was a great show, we all enjoyed it and it was good to see some old friends again – the bees have no excuse for not surviving the coming winter and haven't they done well this summer!

Chrissie

Bee Quotes

'Veiled in this fragile filigree of wax is the essence of sunshine, golden and limpid, tasting of grassy meadows, mountain wildflowers, lavishly blooming orange trees, or scrubby desert weeds. Honey, even more than wine, is a reflection of place. If the process of grape to glass is alchemy, then the trail from blossom to bottle is one of reflection. The nectar collected by the bee is the spirit and sap of the plant, its sweetest juice. Honey is the flower transmuted, its scent and beauty transformed into aroma and taste.'

Stephanie Rosenbaum

National Honey Show: Latest News September 2014

Thursday 30th October to Saturday 1st November at St Georges College, Weybridge

- 1) **Booking for workshops** is now open. Our on line booking system can be accessed at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/booking>

If you don't have access to the internet, ask at your local library, most libraries now have internet facilities.

- 2) **The National Honey Show Schedule** is also now available. Members should have received their copies in the post. It can also be accessed online at:

<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/files/2014/NATIONAL-HONEY-SHOW-2014-Schedule-Last.pdf>

- 3) We'll be launching the revised series of **National Honey Show Booklets** in the Exhibition Hall at 2.30pm on Thursday. The revised booklets are:

Preparation of Liquid Honey & Judging Honey in the Jar
Mead and Meadmaking
Wax for Show
Granulated or Crystallised Honey
Production and Exhibition of Comb Honey & Comb Honey for Show
Management, Production and Exhibition of Heather Honey
The study of Pollen
Showing Honey Products
Candles for Show
History of The National Honey Show

The booklets will be available all three days in the Trade Hall at £3.50 each.

- 4) **National Honey Show Leaflets and Raffle Tickets**

If you have a local meeting, county show or other event before the end of October, please e-mail nationalhoneyshownews@gmail.com and let us know how many of our latest leaflets, and raffle (in support of the lecture videos) ticket booklets you can display, and the address to send them to. Thanks.

- 5) **Daily Programme for the Show**

Printed copies will be available each day, but can be accessed on line now, and between now and the Show will be updated regularly with any new information:

Thursday



Friday



Saturday



<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/files/2014/Thursday-30th-October-NHS-2014.pdf>

<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/files/2014/Friday-31st-October-NHS-2014.pdf>

<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/files/2014/Saturday-1st-November-NHS-2014.pdf>

Look forward to seeing you there!

Edited by Jeff Orr, e-mail 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.