

# NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

**OCTOBER 2015**

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



## Chair Chat

The colonies at Horestone are busy, when the weather allows, although I have seen few flowers other than the Himalayan Balsam in the lane.

There have been recent reports (not from Beebase) about EFB in my area so the Seasonal Bee Inspectors has been visiting those who are registered. No new cases have been reported but there are said to be a number of neglected and poorly managed colonies in this area.

At the Apiary we have a problem with leaking roofs, both in the honey shed and the equipment shed, following the heavy rain. Fortunately we have willing and able members who are planning to repair these roofs.

Our AGM is being held on Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> November. This is when new members may be elected onto the Branch Committee and other committee members chose to 'resign'. Martin Pollock, Branch Secretary, will be sending out the agenda for the AGM mid-October, together with a request for you to send him any items for discussion. Any items for discussion at the meeting have to be received by Martin at least 14 day before the AGM. In particular, please could you suggest how our teaching apiary could retain the beginners following the annual, well-attended course? Many of the beginners are of working age and so cannot attend meetings at Horestone on a Tuesday. The Committee has been mulling over this for some time. Should we hold some meetings at the weekend etc?

Best wishes,

*Mave*

## Events 2015-16

<b>23 October</b>	<b>19:00 for 19:30</b>	<b>Talk 'The Small Hive Beetle' by Martin Hann, Bee Inspector. The Castle Centre, Barnstaple</b>
<b>15 November</b>	<b>13:30 for 14:00</b>	<b>North Devon Branch AGM, Castle Centre, Barnstaple</b>
<b>29 January</b>	<b>19:00 for 19:30</b>	<b>Talk 'Judging Honey' by Jack Mummery. The Castle Centre, Barnstaple</b>
<b>26 February</b>	<b>19:00 for 19:30</b>	<b>Talk 'The Devon Honey Show' by Ruth Neal, DBKA Show Committee Chair. The Castle Centre, Barnstaple</b>
<b>29 March</b>	<b>19:00 for 19:30</b>	<b>Talk 'Nosema' by Glyn Davis. The Castle Centre, Barnstaple</b>
<b>17 April</b>	<b>09:30- 12:00</b>	<b>Branch Nosema Clinic. The Castle Centre, Barnstaple</b>

### The Next Event

is 'The Small Hive Beetle' – a talk by Martin Hann a Devon based Bee Inspector at the Castle Centre, Castle Street, Barnstaple on Friday 23 October 7.00 for 7.30 pm start. This beetle is expected to arrive in the UK soon so come and find out the latest identification and control methods.

## Congratulations to Jack Mummery

Jack has been successful in obtaining the BBKA General Husbandry Certificate.

This is an intense three hour experience with two master beekeepers visiting to inspect the apiary, equipment and honey handling equipment. You are asked to carry out three randomly selected manipulations of the colonies and give a demonstration of a method of queen rearing.

Well done Jack

### EXTRACTOR FOR SALE

10 frame, stainless steel, radial electric extractor with sloping floor.

Thorne's 3 year old reversible motor with speed control.

20" wide x 33" high

Reason for sale - downsizing.

Can deliver £475

Chris Utting 01237 474 500

## Flower of the Month - *Ivy, Hedera Helix*



A plant either loved or loathed by beekeepers and often not popular with gardeners and foresters too, in some areas it is regarded as a curse and killer of trees. It is our only native evergreen climber and a wonderful provider of food and shelter for a huge range of wildlife. In the West Country in addition to common ivy we have Atlantic or Irish Ivy, *H. helix* ssp *hibernica* with larger leaves and less inclination to climb, this can cover cliffs and grow on shingle banks.

Folklore tells many tales of ivy's powers and uses and it even gets mentioned in a Christmas carol. Once considered a cure for hangovers; using wine goblets carved from its wood protected the drinker against poisoned wine. Ivy covered poles were set up to advertise drinking taverns. The herbal uses of this poisonous plant are numerous from a cure for warts and verrucas, as an appetiser for a sick cow or ewe to the use of liquid from the steeped leaves for sponging down suits and serge gymslips to make them look like new.

Although mostly thought of as a climber using the sucker pads on its juvenile shoots and putting out roots whenever the host substrate allows it will equally happily scramble across the ground and also stand alone on its own roots. The mature (arborescent) shoots with smoother more oval shaped leaves bear the flowers and fruit but if you have just planted one you will have a long wait before it gets to the flowering stage, about 15 years. For the beekeeper ivy is a very important late, the last of the year, source of pollen and nectar flowering from late September until November. Its greenish flowers are made up of 30 or more individual florets with a central yellow disc from which nectar is produced copiously as the flower ages, sometimes the nectar can be seen either dripping from these discs or crystallised around them. They attract a myriad of insects, bees of all sorts, wasps, and flies smothering the flowers, the buzz can be heard from a considerable distance. Ivy's distinctive, slightly unpleasant odour will tell you when the bees are working it as will the dull yellow pollen going in. According to F N Howes the honey from ivy is greenish in colour with a distinctive aromatic flavour.

Ivy seems to know the bees cannot drive off large amounts of water at this time of year and obligingly provides a highly concentrated nectar, high in glucose so that it crystallises rapidly. Both the pollen and the nectar are welcome additions to the winter stores and rarely cause problems. Do I hear howls of protest? Some beekeepers have had problems with crystallised stores the bees seem unable to access but many consider the advantages of ivy far outweigh the disadvantages.

There are some very attractive cultivated varieties of ivy for garden use that will eventually flower but most of us rely on the wild ivy that grows so abundantly all around us. Nature's bounty indeed.

*Julie*

## The Showing Bug

I hope that our excellent honey show has given members who entered the "Showing Bug" Keep all your entries ready to enter the Devon County Show in May. Honey will probably need to be warmed, strained and put into your best clean jars and soft set honey and naturally granulated honey can be prepared now if you haven't already done so. Wash those cappings off from your extracting and make some mead with the water; it is unlikely to be ready in time for the county show but should be OK in a couple of years' time. Dry the cappings, pick out any propolis particles and flakes of dark wax, heat them carefully to about 90°C, no higher and strain through a fine J cloth ready to cast some 1oz bars or a pound cake of wax.

If you can't get to the County show, don't worry there is usually somebody from the branch who will take your entries and bring them back; if enough members enter we might stand a fighting chance to win the County trophy for the branch with the most points.

*Jack*

# Committee Summary for September

We did not hold a Branch meeting this month but I did attend the DBKA Executive Council meeting last Saturday.

For four years an EC working party has been reviewing our Devon Beekeepers Constitution to ensure that it meets the rules governing the Charity Commission legislation. What a meticulous process! But on Saturday a vote was taken to endorse the amendments and these will be coming our way shortly.

The EC considered the need for a Press Officer as the Organisation is asked for our views on matters of national interest such as the use of Neonicotinoids and we need to give an official response.

Further changes regarding the labelling of hive products and VAT charges for beekeeping equipment were discussed.

The need to encourage young beekeepers was raised and this corresponds with my 'Chair Chat' this month as young and working beekeepers cannot attend our meetings at Horestone on a Tuesday. The EC meetings are always held on a Saturday so that employed people can contribute.

*Mave on behalf of the Committee*

## North Devon Branch Honey Show 2015



Our Branch Honey Show on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> September at St Johns, was a busy and enjoyable event. From wondering if we would make 50 entries, with encouragement from Jack Mummery, and twisting of arms from me, our entries reached an amazing 125. I am very pleased to say that we were able to award a BBKA Blue Ribbon. It was won by Alan Barrow for his beautiful English Section. I would also like to mention David Easton who won three 1<sup>st</sup> prizes for his honey and the Croyde Cup for best exhibit in Class 1 – light run honey. Congratulations to all the prize and trophy winners – the display of honey entries was beautiful.

Our judges this year were Mrs Suzette Perkins for the honey, wax, mead and photographs. And Mrs Pat Kirby for the cookery classes. Mave Dowling and Alan Barrow were their stewards. The feedback from the judges on our entries, was very helpful and the stewards enjoyed and learned a lot from the experience.

Many thanks to all the exhibitors and helpers who contributed to the success of the Show.

The cups will be presented at this year's AGM on Sunday November 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Sylvia*

HONEY SHOW TROPIES AWARDED IN 2015	
Bernard Pritchard Trophy (Class 11 – Novice Honey)	Cathy Backway
Chris Utting Trophy (Class 12 – Novice Wax)	None this year
Weaver Trophy (Classes 13 and 14 – best wax exhibit)	Jack Mummery
Hustwayte Plate ( <i>most points cookery classes 20 - 25</i> )	Sylvia Barber
NDBKA Branch Trophy ( <i>most points in honey classes 1 – 10</i> )	Alan Barrow
Yeo Jenne Trophy ( <i>overall winner of Classes 18 &amp; 19 Mead</i> )	Barbara Carlyle
Croyde Cup ( <i>best exhibit in Class 1 – Light Run Honey</i> )	David Easton
Pam Yeo Jenne Plaque (Class 15a – any wax item)	Sylvia Barber
Beryl Smailes Trophy ( <i>most points overall</i> )	Barbara Carlyle
Blue Ribbon ( <i>best exhibit in Honey Show – over 100 entries</i> )	Alan Barrow

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***