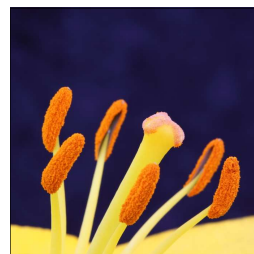


# NORTHERN LIGHTS

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



**SEPTEMBER 2010** [www.northdevonbees.org](http://www.northdevonbees.org)

**Editorial** Some would say we start the new beekeeping season with our winter preparations— others that we start the new season in the spring. Which ever it is, it would be very good to hear from you and share some of your beekeeping experiences. How has your beekeeping year been? What have you learned.? What are you going to do next season? Where are all your stories and pictures? It is important that we all network - your stories are very important and more interesting than you think. So please, don't be shy - get your thoughts down and send them to [sylvia.d.barber@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:sylvia.d.barber@dsl.pipex.com) - we look forward to hearing from you. If you have a story but don't want your name attached - that's fine too. I was thinking of the escaped queen in the car, attacked and murdered by a giant spider story!! Anon.

## Chair Chat

It's Show Time!! Yes, it's Honey Show time again - 30th and 31st October. The frantic efforts of summer beekeeping are gradually slowing down and it's time to take a deep breath and take stock of what we've achieved. It's been a good season for honey so hopefully you've all got a few pounds bottled up for the winter which you can put into the show. Or perhaps you'd prefer to enter the Honey Cookery Class - all excellent recipes which you can enjoy eating when you take them home (I recommend the Tozer's Honey Loaf!!!) . There's a Class of Exhibit for everyone - Art, Photography, Wax, Mead, Honey - Classes for Novices and for those of you who are 'old hands' at this. Whether you enter for fun or because you're fiercely competitive, I hope you'll enter something. These little Branch Shows rely upon individual members to keep them going. The Show Schedule and Exhibitor's Entry Form will either be attached or will very shortly be sent out to you. So before you forget fill it in - and send it off. Good luck. *Chris Tozer*

## August/September Notes from Horestone

August at Horestone was both busy and interesting. We have continued with our rota for Chairing the meetings - it has been quite a learning curve for some of us and given us an insight into caring for a teaching apiary. Every Tuesday we have enthusiastic beekeepers from beginners to very experienced, sharing their knowledge and debating the many styles of keeping bees. We are all learning from each other, which sometimes includes learning from each others mistakes.

We have had well attended Apiary Support Team meetings, a Honey Show meeting and a Work Day.

The Work Day was very successful with about a dozen or so members working their way through a long list of "things that need doing". The lawns were cut, we weeded round the colonies, all the dirty equipment was cleaned and sorted, wood was chopped, the honey shed had a spring clean and the windows prepared for repainting. We even had time to make up a supply of sugar syrup ready for the autumn feeding. It was great to see Horestone looking so well cared for and many thanks to all those that turned out to help.

We hope to have another work day before the season closes. Although our "things that need doing" list has got shorter, there are still a few things left. We would like to do an autumn tidy up of the bee garden. We are also planning to clear and level an area around the stores shed and put a few slabs down. This will make a more user friendly work area which would be much less slippery. Several of the hive stands could do with levelling up and some of the slabs below them are cracked and need replacing. So if you have a few hours to spare when a work day is announced, you would be warmly welcomed. Not all the work is heavy though - we do have some light work including some computer inputting.

During our August meetings Kay gave a talk on queen introduction (re queening) and Julie gave another on preparing the colonies for winter. Jack Mummery joined us last Tuesday and talked us through our Branch Honey Schedule and gave tips on preparing products for Show. Chris Utting has prepared a slide talk entitled "a Brief View of the Importance of the Honeybee" to be given on a Tuesday when its too cold or wet to do bees.

Albert is being kept very busy in the stores, not only keeping track of all our equipment but showing our new beekeepers how to make up frames and foundation and put their hives together.

And as for the apiary bees ..... they have rewarded us well with lots of golden honey.

Our autumn preparations are way under way - all the colonies have been tested for Nosema. The 2 colonies with mild Nosema will be treated with Fumidil B. The colonies have been checked for laying queens and colony strength. A couple of them have been united. We hope to go into winter with about 11 colonies. They have all had the 2nd Apiguard put on and most have been bottom supered. We have commenced with assessing the amount of stores and have started feeding.

And talking about feeding - the cakes at afternoon tea have been up to their usual high standard - so thank you to all you cake makers.

## Notes from a talk by Julie on preparing colonies for winter.

### AUGUST / SEPTEMBER PREPARING FOR WINTER

i.e. after taking off supers for extraction at end of July/ early Aug.

- ◆ Reduce entrances to help avoid robbing
- ◆ Set out wasp traps
- ◆ Assess colony strength & Queen quality / age – do colonies/nucs need uniting?
- ◆ Unite using newspaper method. Remove old Q. put in cage + few workers + fondant and keep in case new Q is rejected.
- ◆ When colonies have united, ( chewed paper at the front of hive & on floor ) check and rearrange frames, removing any not needed for wintering. ( surplus brood frames with stores can be wrapped in plastic, labelled with colony No. and stored in freezer in case they are needed for stores in early spring)
- ◆ Rearrange boxes i.e. put ½ brood on bottom in colonies wintering on a brood & a ½ . Remove the Q. excluder.
- ◆ If possible change boxes and crown boards for clean ones – good IPM.

### NOSEMA

- ◆ Take samples (30 bees) from each colony and test for Nosema spores. Nosema tends to build up over the winter so treat infected colonies with Fumidil B (antibiotic) mixed in with 4.5litres of tepid heavy syrup.
- ◆ Do NOT treat if no spores are present.

### VARROA

- ◆ Wash inserts and count the drop of mites before starting treatment.
- ◆ Put a narrow eke on top of the brood box and put on 1<sup>st</sup> Apiguard in early August for 10 -14 days replacing with the 2<sup>nd</sup> treatment for another 10 -14 days.
- ◆ Apiguard treatment needs an ambient temperature of not less than 15C for the Thymol to vaporise so put floor inserts in and cover crown board holes.
- ◆ Monitor the drop during treatment.

### FEEDING

- ◆ Assess the amount of stores present ( 5lbs full Nat brood comb & 3lbs Super comb ) & calculate the amount of sugar needed to make the stores up to between 40 -50 lbs.
- ◆ Use only pure white refined sugar ( cane or beet ) made up into heavy syrup i.e. 2lbs sugar to 1pt water ( 61.5% ). Bees are able to store this rapidly.
- ◆ Clean feeders before use and check for leaks. Keep one feeder for each colony.
- ◆ .Feed only at dusk to avoid excitement &/or robbing.
- ◆ Feed all colonies simultaneously
- ◆ Aim to finish feeding **before the end of September**, when night temps drop bees cannot produce wax to cap stores properly. Uncapped stores may ferment and cause dysentery.
- ◆ **Do not overfeed**, it creates unnecessary work and bees need some empty comb in which to cluster.
- ◆ Fondant can be used for emergency late winter/early spring feeding but it is not a substitute for good autumn preparation.

### Newspaper cutting: And so do farmers

Sadly farmers can be their own worst enemies. The number of farmers, big and small, who were flail-mowing their hedges in the first week of August because it was too damp to harvest their cereals is quite disgraceful. Are they so environmentally illiterate that they don't realise some birds (linnets and yellowhammers) are still nesting, and what about all those hedgerow berries and fruits the birds should be eating in autumn and winter? With all the agricultural awards given out each year, it is about time an annual Pig Ignorant Farmer Prize was given for the most wildlife unfriendly and unthinking piece of farming. I can think of several contenders - any suggestions?

## North Devon Show

A very big thank you to all the people who helped at the show. By taking it in shifts we all got to see the show and do our bit on the stall.

We had a really good day; and we sold lots of honey.

The crowds were good; we talked to lots of interested people.

Everyone enjoyed the new venue and the sun came out.

We have the Chapleton Steam Fair, the Rosemoor Food Fair and the Honey Show at St Johns. All in the NL.

If you want to have a good day out, come and join the fun.

*Barbara*

## 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 7th November, at 2pm.**

The meeting will be run according to the Rules that you will find printed in your DBKA 2010 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 etc 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, Apiary Manager, Show & Social Events Coordinator, Education & Exam Secretary, 4 Committee Members.

\*\*\* Please note that I, Patrick Moore, will NOT be standing for re-election to the committee. I feel I have served as Secretary for long enough, and will not accept nomination even if no other nominations are forthcoming at the AGM! \*\*\*

*Patrick Moore, Secretary*

## Questions and Answers: How would you define the perfect jar of liquid honey?

The Perfect Jar of Liquid Honey should be: -

- \* Of good floral flavour and aroma, typical of the type of honey
- \* Clear and bright in appearance.
- \* Free from any debris (suspended or on bottom of the jar) e.g. insect debris, dust particles.
- \* Free from surface scum.
- \* Free from any sign of fermentation (gassy, streaky appearance).
- \* Free from any sign of granulation.
- \* Jar well filled (no light visible between honey and the lid) and tightly sealed.
- \* Jar clean, free from any stickiness.
- \* Attractively and correctly labelled.

## LIBRARY

There are still some outstanding books, please return these to Horestone or B4Bs.

Although we are very flexible with loan periods ( compared to public Libraries) we still do have to have a limited loan period i.e. 1 month, then if a book has not been requested by anyone else this can be extended for a further month.

The library contents are listed on our Website to help you search for books but if you have any queries please contact Julie or Barbara.

**Web watch:** the following is a website with information about the medicinal use of bee products.

<http://apitherapy.blogspot.com/search/label/Apitherapy%20and%20Beekeeping>

## Ripe Tomato Chutney

2lbs (900g) Ripe Tomatoes  
3 ozs (75g) Onions (optional)  
3 ozs (75g) Honey  
1 ½ ozs (35g) Granulated Sugar  
Pinch of Paprika  
Pinch of Cayenne Pepper  
½ teaspoonful of Salt  
¼ pint Vinegar  
¼ teaspoonful Mixed Spice  
Skin and cut up the tomatoes.

Mince the onions, place with the tomatoes in a saucepan and cook until a thick pulp is obtained. Add half the vinegar and spices and simmer until thick.

Dissolve the sugar in the rest of the vinegar, blend in to the Honey, then add all to the rest of the ingredients.

Simmer gently until thick and bottle while still hot.



Community of Beekeepers Bitz4Bees

Dave & Jean 01237 475705

Derek 01769 561033

## AUTUMN EVENING LECTURES

The theme this autumn for our evening lectures is Bees and other Insects and how they and the plants they pollinate live and adapt to Environmental Changes to survive.

As usual there will be no entry charge but a raffle to defray expenses. Refreshments provided after the talk.

Confirmed details of the autumn talks are:

Friday 15th October at 7.30pm at the Castle Centre. The Rev Nigel Dilkes, vicar of Pilton and a botanist before joining the Church will be talking about 'How Plants React to Environmental Changes'

Friday 26th November at 7.30pm at the Castle Centre. John Breeds of the Devon Wildlife Trust will be talking about 'Insects and Pollination' a reminder that there are a lot of other important pollinators out there.

*Julie*

## DIARY DATES

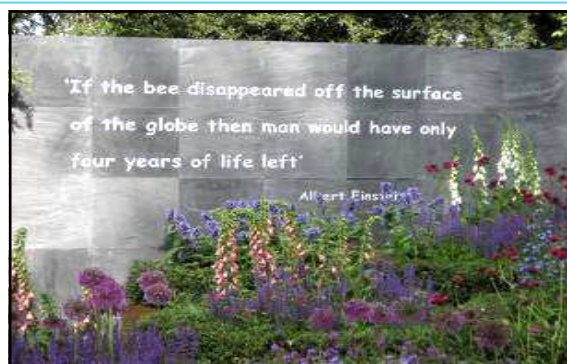
**Saturday/Sunday 18th/19th September** - Chapleton Steam Fair.

**Sunday 26th September** - Rosemoor Food Fair

**Sunday 17th October** - wax handling—rendering, cleaning, preparing - with Chris Tozer - Horestone Apiary 10 am - 3 pm.

**Saturday/Sunday 30th & 31st October** - Branch Honey Show, St. Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple.

**Sunday 7th November, North Devon Branch (of the Devon Beekeepers Association) - Annual General Meeting - 2 pm at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple.**



Chelsea Flower Show

Sylvia Barber, Foxpark, Waddicombe, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9RX (01398 341624)

E.mail [sylviad.barber@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:sylviad.barber@dsl.pipex.com)

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

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