

# NORTHERN LIGHTS

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

SEPTEMBER 2013 [www.northdevonbees.org](http://www.northdevonbees.org)



## Chair Chat

We have had a few very busy weeks and the bees have been very busy too.

We had a wonderful day out at the North Devon Show; the sun shone and the show was crowded. Thank you to all those who came to help; and to those who sent in their honey and wax to be sold. We sold an amazing amount of honey, and talked to lots of very interested people.

Our honey show at St John's Garden Centre in September will give us all the chance to exhibit our bees' hard work. You should all have got your Show Schedules and there is a class for everyone to try. We will need helpers for this two day event, so contact Chrissie if you can come and help.

Our AGM is in November, so if anyone is interested in joining the committee or the administration side of the club please let me know.

*Barbara*

## Branch AGM

The AGM will be held at the Castle Centre, Barnstaple, at 2pm on Sunday 17th 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 Barbara or Martin Pollock as soon as possible.

## Events 2013-14

Sun 8 September	14:00 - 16:00	Taster Day, Horestone
Tues 10 Sept	10.00 - 16:00	Workday, Horestone
Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept	All Day	Our Honey Show, St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple
Thurs 3 October	19.00 - 21.00	Talk 'Bees and Flowers' by Leila Goss, Castle Centre, Barnstaple
Thurs 16 January	19.00 - 21.00	Talk 'Bee Bits' by Chris Utting, Castle Centre, Barnstaple
Thurs 13 February	19.00 - 21.00	Talk 'Nosema' by Glyn Davis, Castle Centre, Barnstaple
Thurs 13 March	19.00 - 21.00	Talk 'Predator Mites' by Richard Ball, Castle Centre, Barnstaple

## North Devon Beekeepers

### TASTER DAY

**Sunday 8th September 2013, 2 - 4pm**

at Horestone Apiary between Bishop's Tawton and UMBERLEIGH (postcode EX32 0EU)

Come along and get an insight into the bee year and into the equipment needed to start this fascinating hobby. You will experience wax rolling and honey tasting and, weather permitting, there will be an opportunity to look into a hive. Protective clothes will be supplied, but please wear cotton T shirts, long light-coloured trousers and Wellington boots.

**Cost only £10 each**

Contact Cathy Backway

☎ 01271 858236

e-mail: [catherinebee@btinternet.com](mailto:catherinebee@btinternet.com)

*The number of places is restricted, so sign up today and book your place. Tea, coffee and cake are provided.*

## North Devon Show



Unlike last year, when the North Devon Show had to be cancelled due to the site being water logged, this year the sun shone and the visitors poured into the grounds.

The North Devon Beekeepers stand was placed next to the entrance of the Crafts Marquee which was very fortunate as the temperature steadily rose during the day. We had a display of colourful posters and leaflets, the observation hive, and wax, fudge and honey for sale. We sold all the fudge and most of the honey raising much needed funds for the club.

Barbara, Sylvia, Denise, Glenis, John, Kay, Martin H, Rob, Sue and Chris all took



turns to explain, sell and encourage the visitors to linger and perhaps taste our honey. The appearance of pale oil seed rape honey resulted in many questions and explanations. The observation hive was a great attraction particularly for the children who also were fascinated by the samples under the microscope.



Much planning, time and hard work went into running the event. Barbara, with the help of her faithful Ian, put into action the plans made by the 'show section' of the committee and made the day happen; and without all their talents it would not have been so successful....and fun.

*Mave*

## 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)**

## Horestone Workday

On Tuesday 10th September we plan to have a **WORK DAY** at Horestone from 10 am to 4pm.

The main job is to strim the rough grass areas so we can plant out masses of Purple loosestrife, very beautiful and a good bee plant.

If you can only come for an hour or two, your help will still be appreciated by the AST; bring a rake and a cake.

*The AST*

## Member's Apiary: Cathy Backway at Eastleigh



So this is where I keep my bees - my mini-apiary. It's on sloping ground, south facing and about 50 metres from the house. I'm not sure I could have an "out-apiary" somewhere far flung from all that's familiar. I think I'm too disorganised - I'd just get there and realise I'd left something crucial behind. It wouldn't make for relaxed beekeeping. So it's here at home.

I can go out with my tea and watch the activity day by day. We are surrounded by pasture for the local dairy farm. Usually that means clover, but this year just a dry hay patch with nothing growing. (I can't believe I've just written that after the last two years...). There is, however, plenty of woodland. A large deciduous wood with some larch further up the hill and a winding riparian mix of just about everything follows the stream further downhill.

We are close to several villages with large gardens, lime trees and some small orchards which I hope contribute to the forage mix and there are plenty of dishevelled hedges with blackthorn, bramble, dog roses and gorse. There is an arable farm close by - mostly potatoes and sometimes field beans, but luckily for us, no oilseed rape.

The little apiary plot itself is protected from the south-westerly's which surge through the valley by the house, a large oak and an ash tree, but the hives are rather exposed to the east wind through an open livestock fence. Brrrrrr. I have tried planting a hedge but the cows keep eating it. Being open to the east does mean that the hives get the sun almost as soon as it rises which compensates for the breeze.

It can get very wet in there too - heavy clay on shillet means poor drainage so after a lot of rain it's quite boggy - and was nearly responsible for a nasty accident when our local Bee Inspector slid down the slope arms flailing and through the gate in a very ungainly manner. Probably not an ideal spot for a beehive ..... but it does have 24 hour room service.

*Cathy*

## HONEY SHOW

St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple

14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013

*Our Honey Show will soon be here. Please make a note in your diaries and look through the Show Schedule as soon as it arrives. Hopefully you will receive it with this copy of Northern Lights, but if not it will be emailed to you within the next couple of days.*

*There are classes for everyone – so don't hold back – have fun and enter all you can.*

*Chrissie Preece, Show Secretary*

[cpandbmh296@btinternet.com](mailto:cpandbmh296@btinternet.com)



## PLANT OF THE MONTH

Blackberry Genus *rubus fruticosus* Family  
Rosaceae

A cane growing aggregate fruit that is found throughout Europe, America and probably other countries as well.

With more than 200 species this is one of our most ancient fruits. It's dark red colour informs us of its value, antioxidants, essential oils (omega 3 & 6) and minerals, fibre; the list is endless.

Most species are tip rooting enabling their spread as the 6ft long arching branches drooping down to the ground. These arches make

woodland walking difficult for us but so easy for animals, especially Deer who are fond of the leaves.

The plants prefer a loam or sandy soil and flower from June to September. I was once told that they had very deep roots and were therefore drought tolerant but I cannot find evidence to back this claim.

All types of insect visit the open petals with nectaries at their base and the green berry providing a perfect landing platform. In September the ripe fruit provide food for marauding wasps too.

The pollen, a soft grey colour

The nectar, medium to dark, coarse granulations

I remember in the 1950s my mother, along with other village women spent days working the hedgerows of the Somerset Levels picking the berries for the jam factory in Bridgwater, they were paid the princely sum of 6d per bucket!!

*Kay*

### The National Honey Show

The 82<sup>nd</sup> National Honey Show is just weeks away. It is the U.K.'s 'gold standard' honey show – the equivalent of Wimbledon for tennis players. It will be held in Weybridge, Surrey from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October. There are almost 250 classes and beekeepers come from all over the world to enter so it is truly an international show. Why not book a ticket now to see the best of the best?

#### What's on?

Apart from the world class honey show there will be a full programme of workshops and lectures throughout the event and a wide selection of trade stands with lots of equipment and books to buy.

You can see the line-up and download the show schedule on the NHS website [http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lecture\\_convention.shtml](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lecture_convention.shtml) and you will receive all the details in the programme that comes with tickets purchased in advance. Advance tickets plus the 2013 schedule of classes and show entry application are available now. New for this year is Class 57, a microscopy slide plus there are even more lectures and workshops. So there is something for everyone.

Nicola Simcock, a PhD research student in the honeybee lab at Newcastle University, will be visiting this year's National Honey Show. She needs our help for her research, which is primarily focused on trying to understand what honeybees are able to taste. She has recently begun work on assessing the contents of honey in order to compare what the bees can taste with what the bees actually eat. In addition, the data collected will be used in a larger project: the insect pollinators initiative, that involves a number of labs across the UK.

To accomplish this goal, Nicola is appealing to any beekeeper willing to get involved, to please provide her with a small sample of honey from their hive, and complete the collection sheet downloadable from: <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/nicola-simcock.shtml> (there will be copies available at the show if you don't have internet access). Once published, this data will be accessible to the public.

#### How much does it cost?

You can become a member of the National Honey Show for £12 and then entry for the duration of the show is free. Admission for non-members is £15 per day. Accompanied children of 16 years and under are free. You can join the NHS by filling out the form at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/membership.shtml>. You can also pay on the door but it is better to get an advance ticket and avoid the queue.

The official closing date for show entries is 1<sup>st</sup> October but late entries will be accepted until 20<sup>th</sup> October on payment of a £5 late entry fee. Entry forms for classes 54 -62 i.e. Video, Photographic, Microscope Slides and Essay Classes must be received by 9<sup>th</sup> September; late entries are not accepted.

#### How do I get my entries to the show?

Exhibitors delivering personally to the show must bring their entries on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October between 2.30pm and 6pm. You hand them over to a steward who will stage them for you. You could use a courier or post. In this case your entry must arrive at St Georges College after Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October and before noon on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Why not persuade one member of your association to bring all the entries from your association to the show. You could split the fuel costs. Don't forget someone will also need to collect them on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October after the show closes at 4.30pm. Thornes have, once again, kindly agreed to take exhibits to the show on your behalf. You can drop your entries at any Thornes agent south of the Scottish border. Jeremy Burbidge of Northern Bee Books has kindly offered the same facility to anyone who can deliver to him by Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October and please call him before you visit. Scout Bottom Farm, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire HX7 5JS Tel: 01422 882751 – [jeremy@recordermail.demon.co.uk](mailto:jeremy@recordermail.demon.co.uk)

#### Where is the show?

The show is at St Georges College, Woburn Hill, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2QS  
Opening times: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 9am to 6pm (open in the morning but limited to lectures)

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 9am to 6pm

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 9am to 4.30pm

#### How do I get there?

**By road:** from junction 11 of the M25 (marked Chertsey) follow signs to Weybridge. At the roundabout, take the third exit, A317 to Weybridge. Turn left at the next roundabout into the college.

**By rail:** Either take a taxi from Weybridge Station or change at Addlestone. From Addlestone, turn left and the College is approximately 5 minutes walk on the far side of the roundabout. The Trains leave from Waterloo Station. Rail connections from Weybridge to Addlestone are not guaranteed. For further details Tel: 08457 48 49 50 or [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk).

If you apply for membership before the show you will receive a programme which includes maps and directions or visit the website [http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/transport\\_links.shtml](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/transport_links.shtml)

#### National Honey Show 2014

St Georges College has been our best venue yet, but the show is so successful we are outgrowing the venue. Look out for details about the 2014 venue at this year's National Honey Show.

See you there!

The Organising Committee

## Gormanston FIBKA Summer Course 2013

The Franciscan College of Gormanston is in County Meath 40 miles north of Dublin and about a mile from the coast of the Irish Sea. Every July for the last 53 years it has been the location for the annual 'Summer Course and Workshop' of the Federation of Irish Beekeepers. This was my third consecutive year. It is attended by about 200 beekeepers mostly from Ireland but there are many people from the UK and the rest of the world. This year there were twenty four lecturers and seventeen demonstrators. This year's main speaker was Flemming Vejsnaes a leading bee researcher from Denmark. The UK provided Dan Basterfield from Devon, Roger Patterson and Pam Hunter from Sussex and Terry Clare from Kent.

Although the Irish modestly call it a 'summer course' it is much, much more than that. It runs for five days from Monday to Friday from 9.30 to late in the evening and includes lectures, workshops and demonstrations at preliminary, intermediate and advanced levels so you have to choose to attend one of three locations. The national honey show, albeit a modest turnout about the same size as the North Devon Branch honey show, is held during the week as well as the FIBK written examinations, Basic Assessments, Lecturers and Honey Judges examinations and choosing of the Honey Queen.

As Gormanston is a residential school the accommodation includes the cheaper dormitories or the more expensive (and much more comfortable), single or family ensuite rooms. The 'school dinners' are very tempting and I usually succumb. The massive dining hall has been compared to the Hogwarts School of Harry Potter fame. There is an enclosed swimming pool and a running track for the over active but the local 'pub' – the Hunters Inn - is only a mile way and serves the famous Guinness.

Typical of the preliminary lectures is 'Getting Started', 'Occupants

of the Hive' and 'Apiary Selection and Management'. The intermediate choices included 'Bee Nutrition', 'Bee Husbandry' and 'Beeswax and Its Uses'. The more advanced subjects covered 'Swarming Scenarios', 'Bees and Honey for Money' and 'The Varroa Mite – an exciting creature'. The workshops covered about 26 subjects such as 'Microscopy disease diagnostics', 'Section Honey Production' and 'Queen Rearing with Mini Nucs'.

One of the highlights is a very Irish social evening on the last night that includes volunteers that provide poetry readings, story telling and country dancing supported by a small band and with what appeared to be unlimited food and wine – generally a wild night. This year there was a choir singing competition and I was persuaded to join one of the nine choirs. We sang 'That'll be the Day' – a famous Beatles song that included my own violent and embarrassing version of an 'air guitar' solo. After two encores – we won!

A more civilised highlight was the Lecturers' Examination. An Irish version of public torture. In front of a large audience and three daunting examiners the candidate provides an illustrated lecture on an advanced apicultural subject for 30 minutes. Each examiner then asks two very testing questions. This year the subjects were 'Health and Hygiene in the Apiary' and 'Hive Side Observations'. Then the candidate is given a subject with 10 minutes to prepare and has to provide a 10 minute talk. The audience must keep very quiet but is allowed to applaud at the end. The sympathetic audience provides a thunderous applause.

The main speaker next year is Tom Seeley – a professor of biology at Cornell University and a passionate beekeeper. Tom is the author of 'Honeybee Democracy', 'The Wisdom of the Hive' and 'Honeybee Ecology'. I have attended several of his talks and he is one of the best that I have heard.

I have already booked for next year.

*Chris Utting*

## Honey Baked Pears

8 pear halves  
2 tbsp lemon juice  
2 tbsp honey  
1 tsp cinnamon  
2 tbsp butter

Arrange pears in a shallow buttered dish. Pour over honey and lemon juice. Dot with butter. Bake in a moderate oven 180 deg C Gas mark 4 for 20 to 30 minutes. Serve hot with cream.

Edited by Jeff Orr, e-mail [jeffjorr@aol.com](mailto:jeffjorr@aol.com). The views expressed are the authors' and not necessarily those of the North Devon Branch of the Devon Beekeepers' Association.

***Member's contributions are very welcome: by 23rd of the month prior to publication please.***