



Plymouth Branch Newsletter

April 2015

PLYMOUTH BEEKEEPERS' APIARY PROGRAMME 2015

APRIL

Saturday	11 th		Joint Nosema Day with Totnes & Kingsbridge (Details in this Bee Brief)
Sunday	12 th	10 am	Novice Meeting (3)
Sunday	19 th	10 am	Improvers Meeting
Sunday	26 th	10 am	Novice Meeting (4)

MAY

	(Bank Holidays Mon 4 th + Mon 25 th)		
Sunday	3 rd	10 am	General Meeting: discussion on topical items – all members welcome
Sunday	10 th	10 am	Novice Meeting (5)
Sunday	17 th	10 am	Improvers Meeting
Sunday	24 th		No Meeting (Bank Holiday Weekend)
Sunday	31 st	10 am	Novice Meeting (6)

JUNE

Sunday	7 th	10 am	General Meeting: discussion on topical items – all members welcome
Sunday	14 th	10 am	Novice Meeting (7)
Sunday	21 st	10 am	Improvers Meeting (JEF)
Sunday	28 th	10 am	Novice Meeting (8)

JULY

Sunday	5 th	10 am	General Meeting: discussion on topical items – all members welcome
Sunday	12 th	10 am	Novice Meeting (9)
Sunday	19 th	10 am	Improvers Meeting
Sunday	26 th	10 am	Novice Meeting (10)

AUGUST

	(Bank Holiday: Mon. 31 st)		
Sunday	2 nd	10 am	General Meeting: discussion on topical items – all members welcome
Sunday	9 th	10 am	Novice Meeting (11)
Sunday	16 th	10 am	Improvers Meeting
Sunday	23 rd	10 am	Novice Meeting (12) – End of Course
Sunday	30 th		No Meeting (Bank Holiday Weekend)

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 6th 10 am General Meeting - Apiary Maintenance – all members

OCTOBER

Thursday 8th 7.30pm Winter Meeting
(* Elburton Village Hall)

NOVEMBER

Thursday 19th 7.30 pm Branch AGM (* Elburton Village Hall)
(OK with Bernie)

DECEMBER

Sunday 13th Branch Christmas Lunch (tbc)

(* Booked)

NB. Meetings will be held at the Branch Apiary Site unless advised otherwise.

Directions to Branch Apiary at Lee Mill, Ivybridge:

- Turn left off the A38 at Lee Mill and follow the signs for Tesco.
- Drive past the Tesco entrance and take next right for Central Avenue on the industrial estate.
- Drive down the hill of Central Avenue, looking for East Way on your right.
- Drive along East Way, looking for Cadleigh Close on your left.
- Drive into Cadleigh Close and the apiary site is behind the big iron gates of the tyre factory.
- Park inside the gates, walk up the concrete path and you will see the portacabin on your right.

BBKA 50/60 Years of Beekeeping Certificate

If anyone qualifies for this certificate please let me know as we can then arrange for this certificate to be presented to you.

Tony Curnow is the proud owner of this prestigious certificate.... is there anyone else?

Jean French

Chairman's Blog



Image from BBC website

First of all, many congratulations to Valerie McAuliffe for winning the Frank Alston Skep at the Devon AGM and Presidents Day. This is the second successive year that a Plymouth member has won it, so all you budding beekeepers out there, who have not yet taken the Basic Assessment, ought to have a go. You need to have kept bees for at least a year and we have not had any failures yet!

The speaker at President's Day was Richard Ball. His subject was the Devon Apicultural Research Group (DARG) and he covered some of the history and work that they are currently undertaking. If any of you wish to attend a meeting or find out more about it;

[CLICK HERE for DARG](#)

The DBKA Celebrity Lecture takes place on April 14th. Full details are in Beekeeping. I cannot stress strongly enough how beneficial it is to listen to these top speakers. As many of you know, I am not an academic, but talks I have attended over the years have (mostly) left me better informed. So don't worry if you think that the subject will be too technical for you, I very much doubt that it will be. £5 to listen to Keith Delaplane from the USA is exceedingly cheap!

Etickets are available from Kathy Lovegrove: anemone75@talktalk.net

This year March has not been very good for the bees; relatively cold and windy and wet, unlike last year. When there were a few a good days, the bees have been bringing in pollen galore, which is a good sign that the colony is queen right. However, as daylight gets longer, the bees will be itching to get out and forage.

Look out for signs of nosema. Indeed, we are joining with Totnes and Kingsbridge branch on 11th April for a Nosema Testing Day, so why not take a sample of 30 bees (no more, no less) from each of your hives and see whether you are clear or not. Full details in this issue.

Keep buzzing!

David Milford

Valerie McAuliffe, receiving the Frank Alston Prize from Colin Sherwood, President of the DBKA, for achieving the highest marks for the basic Assessment within Devon.

Didn't she do well!!



**For the second year in a row a Plymouth member has won this award
– can we make it 3 in a row?**

NOSEMA DAY 2015

Details of the joint Nosema Day between Plymouth and Totnes & Kingsbridge Branch:

Date: Saturday 11th April, 2015

Venue: South Brent Village Hall, Station Approach, South Brent TQ10 9JL

Doors Open: 11 am – 3 pm

There will be refreshments available.

Plymouth branch have offered assistance with this event and would appreciate volunteers to help with:

- the preparation of samples (bee crushing)
- preparation of slides
- analysing slides the under the microscope
- I've offered to run the Reception Desk but will need a volunteer to assist with the paperwork

To help with the collection of your bee samples:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SAMPLING:

- 1) Find suitable containers for each sample, either a plastic bag, plastic box (an empty, clean margarine tub is a good idea) or empty honey jar.
- 2) Write your name, hive reference and apiary location on the outside of each container.
- 3) Thirty (30) mature bees will be needed for the test. To achieve this it will be easiest to catch flying bees around the entrance.
- 4) Choose a day and time when the bees are flying actively.
- 5) Close the entrance for a while until returning bees are crowding the entrance.
- 6) Brush or scoop 30 bees into the container – it can be done!
- 7) Seal the container, check the label and place in a freezer immediately.
- 8) Remove the bees from the freezer only on the day of the test to minimise decomposition.
- 9) Bees and details can be sent with a fellow member on the day.

Those members unable to come along on the day and wish samples of their bees to be tested, please get in contact with myself.

This should be an interesting day out so please support this event.

JEAN FRENCH
Branch Secretary

Tel: Plymouth (01752) 338279
Email: JeanFrench1957@yahoo.co.uk

‘Combating Nosema’

Historically, since 1952, bees were treated with Fumidil® B which is an antibiotic known as Fumagillin. Authorization to use this product expired at the end of 2011 but beekeepers who held a stock were permitted to use it until the product expiry date. Fumagillin represses nosema spore increase so is not particularly successful unless combined with brood comb exchange and empty comb sterilization. Theoretically it may be possible to obtain Fumagillin with a veterinary prescription but it is probably not worth the trouble as the methods outline below can be just as, or more effective.

Treatments

The feed supplements VitafeedGOLD™ and Nozevit are plant extract preparations, which induce the production and secretion of mucous and coats the peritrophic membrane. The preparations may therefore ensure protection from new invasion with Nosema sp. spores. Follow the label instructions and as with Fumagillin ensure that all the brood combs are replaced in spring and empty combs sterilized. Evidence indicates that spraying or dribbling directly onto the bees as described in the instructions is more effective than using it as a feed supplement. This is probably because the ‘mess’ is cleared up quickly by most of the bees.

Maintain strong healthy colonies

This may seem obvious but strong colonies are more able to combat pests and diseases. Consider when you make ‘splits’ that the ensuing colonies will be able to build up to be strong units and not left as small or weak units to overwinter or go into a period with insufficient income of natural stores.

Cull queens that may be susceptible

Some strains of honeybee may be susceptible to infection with Nosema sp. spores so if there are ongoing problems change the queens to a different strain from apiaries without a problem. Where Fumagillin has been used on a regular basis in the past it is quite possible that selection to nosema susceptibility has occurred. In the case of colonies where high levels of nosema spores are found or concerning levels of nosema spores are regularly found it may be appropriate to cull the colony to remove the risks of increasing spore loads in adjacent colonies.

Effectively control other bee disease especially varroa

Infection with Nosema sp. as a sole disease is not generally fatal but it becomes so when acting in concert with other disease issues such as Acarine, Chalk brood, Viruses, etc. It is a major problem when Varroa is present at significant levels, say over a mite population of 1,000 but the size of the colony must also be considered in the equation. It is therefore important to effectively control varroa and monitor closely for other bee diseases.

Reduce *Nosema* sp. spore loads

Nosema spores will be present on the bee housing, frames, combs, floor, etc. especially where defecation has occurred. Wooden parts can be sterilized by light blow lamping (Darken the timber not scorching or burning it!) Plastics can be scrubbed clean by using a suitable disinfectant or washing soda.

Brood comb can be changed in spring or early summer using the Bailey comb change, or by using a shook swarm method where bees are shaken into a new clean brood box containing clean frames of foundation and the old brood combs together with brood destroyed. The 'Bailey Comb Change' was specifically developed for use in connection with *nosema* infections. It is best carried out in early spring. The chosen colony has a brood box of foundation placed over the existing brood box. If there is no or little nectar flow then the colony is fed sugar syrup using a contact feeder. After a few days the bees will have started to draw out the foundation and when this occurs the colony is examined and the queen found. She is then placed on the new drawn comb in the upper brood box. The hive is then reassembled with a queen excluder between the two brood boxes effectively trapping the queen in the upper brood box.

Twenty-one days after this procedure all worker brood in the lower chamber will have hatched so the bottom box is removed and the combs destroyed. To reduce the amount of nectar and pollen stored in these bottom combs it is best to move the hive entrance so it is above the lower box and queen excluder.

Used combs can be fumigated by using 80% acetic acid. Scrape the wooden frames to clean off propolis and other excess material. Clean out the brood box or super and coat any exposed metal parts with Vaseline and replace the combs. Place a clean wooden hive floor on the ground and put on it an absorbent pad containing 140 millilitres ($\frac{1}{4}$ pint) of acetic acid. Absorbent pads can be made up from lint or cotton wool. It is better to do this away from the house as acetic acid has a very distinctive smell, which many find objectionable. Place two supers of comb on the floor and then build a stack by placing absorbent pads as used on the floor between each two supers. The stack is closed with a crown board and roof. Seal up the stack using sticky tape around the joints. Polythene tubing, as used for wrapping carpets, makes a very good covering effectively sealing the stack if you make each end airtight. After a week the stack can be opened and the boxes 'aired' for at least two days before use.

Though old brood comb can be fumigated in this way it is best not to but render the wax and replace with foundation.

Do not use acetic acid in the presence of bees as it kills them.

Alternatively heat at 49°C for 24 hours also kills *nosema* spores but should not be used in the presence of honey and care must be taken that the temperature does not exceed 49°C.

Apiary sites

Selecting suitable apiary sites is often Hobson's choice, but try to avoid cool, humid and shady locations and make sure there is a regular supply of forage. If there is a lack of forage at any time during the season feed, and in particular make sure you feed pollen if it is lacking. Protect hives from prevailing winds and make sure they have adequate ventilation.

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2015 DBKA Celebrity Lecture

Tuesday, 14th April

7.30 - 9.30 pm

At

Hannah's at Seale-Hayne Newton Abbot

TQ12 6NQ

REGISTER FOR eTICKETS by email with Kathy Lovegrove:
anemone1975@talktalk.net



Reception from 6.30 to meet our guest
and members from around the county.

Cost: £5 payable on arrival.
(Tea /coffee included.)

Professor Keith Delaplane MBE (Hon)
University of Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Keith Delaplane is life-long practical beekeeper and one of the world's leading bee scientists. He has been a great friend of DBKA for many years. He has a long family history of beekeeping, his grandfather was a beekeeper in Indiana during the early 20th century. He had his first hive at 13 and his love of bees continues to this day.

"Biological clues for good bee management"

Unlike other agricultural animals, the modern honey bee occupies an ambiguous niche between "domesticated animal" and "wild animal." The history of agriculture has been one of increasing productivity of plants and animals far beyond levels required for their own reproduction. Much of what we do in beekeeping is, in fact, solidly in this camp, including things like breeding bees for productivity, swarm management, colony equalizing, and migratory honey production. But recent honey bee declines suggest that we may be pushing the limits of honey bee productivity. Perhaps we need to pay renewed attention to the "honey bee as wild animal" paradigm. How can beekeepers partner with honey bee biology to improve bee health while maintaining reasonable levels of production?



If anyone wants to share transport to Newton Abbot there are places available in cars with people who have already booked. If members let me know when they reserve a ticket I can put people in touch with each other.

BeeCraft Magazine Hangouts

Wendy at BeeCraft Magazine has asked us to let members know about their BeeCraft Hangouts (Live Webinars). The Beekeeping magazine is available only by subscription.

[CLICK HERE for BeeCraft Hangouts](#)

The next Hangout is on:-

April 15th

The Buzz – Bees in the news



4/4/15

HAVE you heard the buzz about 'Barnhenge'? Someone has decided to sweeten-up the roundabout in Barnstaple with some larger-than-life honey bees.

[CLICK HERE to READ MORE on the North Devon Journal website.....](#)



26/3/15

Reanalysis of a Food and Environment Agency study may provide first conclusive evidence that neonicotinoids pesticides are a key factor in bee decline, despite it originally being used to support the opposite view

[CLICK HERE to READ MORE on the Guardian website.....](#)



Member Adverts

NEW

FOR SALE
Brand new 5 frame
nuc box (wooden)
with OMF & feeder
£40

Contact: Bill Finnemore
Tel: (01752) 404184

I have twelve colonies of bees in brood boxes for sale.

£100 each

Patrick Mansfield
Apiary Manager

I have 2 colonies for sale on national frame.

Need to downsize as have to move.

Cost at £80 each

My bees are in Wembury, Plymouth

but I can transport them for you.

Contact: Sarah Rochester 07917276595

FOR SALE

NEW

Approx 70 complete frames, unmade, mix of SN1 & DN1

Approx 50 complete frames, used

1 Nuc box (wooden)

Castellated spacers (9 slots) 17 pairs

4 frame (super) extractor (manual)

Galvanised filter tower

Comb cutter

Antique wax purifier

1 WBC hive, complete

1 hive stand

Perforated Zinc sheet 1 x 36" x 10"

1 x 22" x 18"

Prefer to sell as one lot but if you are interested in anything please contact David Keogh
by email: dmk123@btinternet.com



Devon COUNTY SHOW

21, 22, 23 May 2015



Folks, the latest Devon
County Show news is on
the DBKA website

CLICK HERE for DBKA Devon County show information

CLICK HERE for the Bees & Honey Competition Schedule ; now available to download from the Devon County Show website.

On-line entries are now available, but the **absolute cut-off date for entries is the 22nd April** and there will be **NO EXCEPTIONS**.

Also, staging of exhibits early morning on Thursday 21st May is NO LONGER POSSIBLE.



Just one of the many beekeeping pages on Facebook.....

Historical Honeybee Articles - Beekeeping History

St. Ambrose was born in Gaul in 340. There is a legend that as an infant, a swarm of bees settled on his face while he lay in his cradle, leaving behind a drop of honey. His father considered this a sign of his future eloquence and honeyed tongue. For this reason, bees and beehives often appear in the saint's symbology.

The word for 'food of the gods' in Latin is ambrosia. Some scholars have speculated that ambrosia refers to honey or a honey-derived drink, such as mead (honey-wine). The title "Honey Tongued Doctor," initially bestowed because of his speaking and preaching ability, led to the use of a beehive and bees in his iconography, symbols which also indicate wisdom. This led to his association with bees, beekeepers, chandlers, wax refiners, etc.

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