

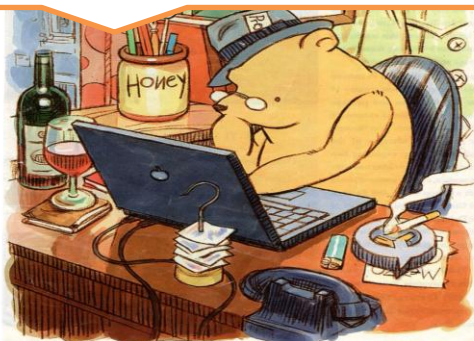
# BEE BRIEF

## PLYMOUTH BRANCH NEWSLETTER

November 2011

VOL. 1 ISSUE 4

Pay subscription Remember to attend AGM  
Preprepare honey for honey show. It's all go being  
a beekeeper with Plymouth Branch



### Off the Shelf Book Review

"The Bad Beekeepers Club" by Bill Turnbull  
How I stumbled into the curious world of bees  
and be-came (perhaps) a better person  
Published by Sphere in 2010 RRP £15.99 (hbk)  
£7.99 (pbk) £4.49 (e-bk)

While dedicating yourself this winter to  
studying the very instructive tomes on your bee  
bookshelf, you would proba-bly welcome  
something more light-hearted. Can I recom-  
mend a dip into Bill Turnbull's "The Bad  
Beekeepers Club"? It is full of amusing  
anecdotes and a very realistic view of our  
slightly eccentric hobby/craft.

Bill Turnbull is well known as a news  
correspondent and presenter of BBC's  
Breakfast programme. This is where I first  
learnt about his passion for bees. In the course  
of this "handy guide as to what NOT to do", he

also gives the inside story of how his bees and  
local BBKA branch mem-bers appeared on  
"Strictly Come Dancing" and how Ted Hooper  
helped him earn a creditable 16 points in the spe-  
cialist subject round of "Celebrity Mastermind".  
I chuckled aloud throughout the book as I read of  
Bill's mishaps, not laughing at him but sharing  
the humour of his well-intentioned efforts to find  
queens, catch swarms or harvest his honey crop.  
He also explores more serious sub-jects such as  
the devastating effect of diseases and why he is a  
patron of the Bees for Development Trust but he  
never preaches at the reader. His admiration for  
these wonderful creatures shines out in every  
chapter.

Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned  
beekeeper, this book will be one to enjoy.  
Kathy Lovegrove

### Next Meeting AGM

Elburton Village Hall 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Start 7.30 pm

Chairman Mr Bill Finnemore Tel 404184

Hon Sec Mrs J French Tel 338279

E-mail [jeanfrench1957@yohoo.co.uk](mailto:jeanfrench1957@yohoo.co.uk)

Hon Treasurer Bernie Talling Tel 709470

E-mail [Bernie868@hotmail.com](mailto:Bernie868@hotmail.com)

Editor F Poole e-mail

[f.poole3351@btinternet.com](mailto:f.poole3351@btinternet.com)

## What are apiary meetings for?

The proposed Apiary Diary for next year is very ambitious and our committee has come up with an impressive programme. I don't know of any other branch that will have a meeting of some kind every week-end of the beekeeping season. It is a great credit to those who have volunteered to run these events. So, what are all these meetings for? By popular demand, Mike Hogan's structured course for beginners and David Milford's sessions for improvers will run again. There will also be periodic meetings on a Saturday led by Bill Finnemore following requests from those who cannot attend on Sundays for one reason or another. But that's not all ...

Visitors to our winter meetings always comment on the friendly "club" atmosphere at Elburton. This has become a feature of Plymouth Branch, a tradition passed down by the long established members. These visitors would be surprised, however, to learn that many members are strangers to each other in October since their paths haven't crossed during the 6 months of the summer. Beginners have met on their course, Improvers kept in touch through their course and more experienced members have floated in and out. But it was difficult to draw everyone together in the tight schedule and space.

Over the last couple of years this has been partially rectified by re-introducing General Meetings, at first in the form of working days when people got together to clean the portacabin, service equipment, clear the undergrowth etc. This has helped to give members a vested interest in their branch apiary since the committee and the apiary team cannot be expected to do all the mundane work. Yet, if this is the only reason experienced members are encouraged to go to Lee Mill, it is not enough of an incentive.

Towards the end of this year's programme, extra sessions were added but these General Meetings were not well attended. Perhaps it was too late in the season to introduce something new. Beekeepers love to talk bees and they are probably most animated in the spring and summer when they want to compare notes and get advice on problems they are experiencing.

General meetings are back on the agenda in 2012 but this time they are on one Sunday each month throughout the season. I think this is a great opportunity to forge an even stronger branch identity. My concern would still be that members need a good reason to come to the apiary and not have a lie-in, walk the dog, take a day out on the beach or simply catch up on their own bees!

What I suggest is that each General Meeting has a focus, a topic or a theme so that members who come know that they will be able to learn something, share something, do something constructive etc. For example, the first open meeting is on 1st April when there will be a chance to have your bees tested for Nosema. Do you just want to drop your sample off, have a chat and go away or would you like to find out how the results are obtained? I have taken part in all three Devon Nosema Survey days and would be happy to show and involve members in the testing/diagnostic process.

There are many aspects of beekeeping that I would like to learn more about in a less haphazard way than "try it and see". For example, I have little woodworking experience so have mini panic attacks at the thought of dealing with a flat pack roof or a wobbly brood box. What about a Carpentry Day where we could bring a problem project and confident woodworkers in the branch act as tutors? Another idea is swarm control – there are many different methods. Could a few members each advocate a particular one and demonstrate it?

What would you like to do at these General Meetings? Could you contribute something to them? I hope I have encouraged you to give it some thought and offer feedback to the committee.

Kathy Lovegrove

# Books

## Grin And Wear it

DAVID PROWSE

*Age is like a suit of clothes you never asked to wear,  
Ill-fitting and unwelcome as the silver in your hair,  
It doesn't match the image of the way you see yourself,  
Like something from the jumble on the bargain basement shelf.  
It tells the world you're past it and it's useless to pretend,  
Every time you say 'good morning' brings you closer to the end,  
Little ones gaze at you with the same, dismissive look  
That you once reserved for cabbage from the infant classes' cook.  
Things take a little longer but your birthdays never do,  
They arrive like bill reminders which suggest you're overdue  
And you don't get cakes with candles which record what it's about  
To avoid resuscitation should you try to blow them out.  
Your memory is incredible, it's amazing what you know  
Of minor little incidents from sixty years ago,  
It's only when you're questioned on events of yesterday  
That your brain cells turn to custard and the details slip away.  
You invent new games, replacing those you once performed with ease  
Like hunting for your glasses or the place you put your keys  
While the dog looks on with puzzlement, discovering, to boot*

*He's not alone in practising repetitive pursuit.  
Other challenges await you when you tumble from your bed,  
Each day, you find your feet a little further from your head,  
So pulling up your socks becomes an acrobatic art  
In which your back needs coaxing ere it deigns to play its part.  
Once there were father figures of authority's decree,  
Now your suit has seen more seasons than your neighbourhood PC,  
And a glance upon your doctor only concentrates your ills,  
She should be doing homework, not deciding on your pills.  
Now and then, a chance arises to rekindle that old spark  
Like the tree you vowed to conquer as you sauntered through the park,  
Your proud heart soared within you as you perched upon its crown  
Then crumpled when the fire brigade arrived to bring you down.  
Even that was not as foolish as was ancient Uncle Bill  
Who took a pair of roller skates to the top of Newlyn Hill,  
Alas, fate showed no mercy for our bold, misguided prince,  
They tell me he's been going downhill quite quickly ever since...*

For enquiries about David Prowse's books of poetry, call 01752 600366.

This is a piece of fun reading.

Grin And Wear it.  
Sent to Mike Hogan submitted by Noel Whittaker and the author David Prowse  
Noel is one of our retired members. A comment from Mike. It's just a bit of amusement, but awfully true as well.

### Another Item from Steve Murphy

Bees don't like blue clothes!  
You may think that this is folk-lore but I found this out in Spring when a beekeeper from Kingsbridge came on an apiary visit with the local branch of the Devon Association of Smallholders. Certainly those who were wearing smocks and blue jeans were getting much more attention than the others with smocks and other coloured clothes or full bee suits. -It may be a coincidence but since then I have stopped wearing blue jeans in the apiary and haven't been stung at all.

Calling all IT experts

The branch has two very nice microscopes one high power and one low power. and both can be fitted with cameras. The cameras are interchangeable, but the high power can be fitted with the DCM 130 digital camera for microscopes. This linked to a laptop the specimens viewed can be seen on the screen, or through a projector.

The problem is the camera has had very little use so it cannot be damaged, but when the software is activated, and attempts are made to connect camera to laptop, the laptop freezes.

The question is have any members any contacts with a PC savvy who could help. I have tried to contact the suppliers Brunel Microscopes Bristol five times phone and email, but the person who can answer the question will never make contact. Has any member the software PhotoShop, that we could make a copy this is also the software that can be used to operate the camera.

Freddy Poole

## **Beekeepers' Christmas Lunch**

Sunday December 11th  
Boringdon Park Golf Club

For this year's lunch we will be returning to the popular golf club restaurant for their Festive Carvery.

- Meet 12:00 to sit down at 12:30
  - £8.95 for one course, £12.95 for 2, £16.95 for 3 courses.
  - No deposit required – please pay on the day
- Please let me know if you are coming.  
trevorbushell@onetel.com  
Telephone 01752 255088.

Trevor

### **Local Bee Suppliers**

National Bee Supplies Tel: 0183754084

Beekeepers Supplies 01752 845783



John Harler Tel: 013646425

### **Visit the website,**

[www.plymouthbeekeepers.btik.com](http://www.plymouthbeekeepers.btik.com)