



July 2009

Meeting: on Sunday, July 5 we meet at Riverford Farm to see Phil Chandler's bees in their top-bar hives, and a cream tea for those who enjoy such a treat.

We meet at 3.00 for a 3.30 start, probably starting with the tea, to give time for members of the public to disperse before we open the hives.

Please note this late starting time.

The full Riverford cream tea costs £5.00, the alternative is just to have a cup of tea.

Directions: From the A384, Buckfast to Dartington road turn into the lane signposted with HGV "Riverford Organic" signs (not the farm shop). This lane is about one mile north-west of Riverford Bridge, where there are traffic lights. Follow this lane and turn into the car park where we will gather before moving on to the Field Kitchen.

The **Totnes Show** takes place at the end of the month on July 30th, we have enough volunteer helpers now we need honey etc. to sell. In particular we need someone, or more than one, to make some honey fudge for sale since this always sells well. Brian has a recipe if you need it. For all show sales we agree the price and then you get 90% of that price, the 10% goes towards the cost of the stall.

The **branch committee** meets on July 2 to arrange the autumn and winter programmes, do tell us what you would like to see there.

Next month we meet on August 2 to visit bees and beekeepers in Bridgetown and later in the month we will see how the bees are doing at the heather. If you wish to take some colonies to the heather then please contact Jeremy soon.

Do note the visit on August 2 in your diary now.

Last month

About twenty of us met in the pouring rain and decided not to open hives so we crowded together in the store room where RBI Adam Vevers was able to show us the Small Hive Beetles which he had brought with him. He then went on to show examples of combs showing signs of brood disease, this was a new experience for most members and much appreciated.

Adam was also able to tell us that the National Bee Unit plans to spend some of the extra money it has been promised on extra Seasonal Bee Inspectors, he brought Clare Densley to meet us, and also on collecting a large number of samples from hives which will be analysed to give a picture of the incidence of various diseases across England.

We also enjoyed cakes and fruit juices provided by Brian as a celebration of his 25 years of bee-keeping.

Despite the dreadful weather we had an enjoyable and instructive afternoon, the only minor problem being that Brian had postponed the collection in aid of Cancer Research UK, in the expectation that very few members would be present.

Old brood combs

The only sensible way to recover the wax from these is to use a solar wax extractor. If you have such combs you could donate them to the branch for melting down. Give them to Rod or Brian, well wrapped, while we have good weather please.

Bees on the radio

This may well be a first, but aspiring beekeepers can now tune in to local radio station, Soundart Radio 102.5fm, for regular insights into the world of beekeeping. In April, John Laidler visited the radio studio as a special guest on beginner beekeeper Nell Harrison's radio show to talk about beekeeping and the show was such a success that John has been guesting on the show ever since. In fact the whole hour is now dedicated to all things bee-like. Says Nell, "John's a bit of a natural for radio and certainly enjoys his bees. He's talking the listeners through the bee-keeping calendar, lightly sprinkled with anecdotes, on-air honey-tasting, even some poetry". The Bee Show can be heard locally (Totnes, Dartington area) on 102.5 fm, or live on the internet via

www.soundartradio.org.uk
(no listen again service available yet).
The next show airs on Friday 10th July, at 6pm and continues fortnightly thereafter.

New members

I have recently joined another club, not beekeeping, and been to a few meetings at which I have chatted to another new member while the older members talked to each other.

Now I hope that we are not like that, do please look out for new people and welcome them into our group. At apiary meetings if you can bring along your spare veil to lend to a newcomer then that will also help as well as "breaking the ice".

The winter course

Many of our new members come to us because of the winter course.

Plans are well-advanced for the next one and detailed information should be ready soon and several people have already booked their place. Members have first option on the available places but only until July 12.

There will probably also be a rather more advanced course running for those wanting to study in more detail, Tell Brian if you wish for more information on this.

Moving Bees

Some of our new members have been buying bees recently and any one of us might want to move bees to Dartmoor for the heather crop next month, so read this note if you are not familiar with the practice.

Timing: aim to move the bees when they have finished flying, or before they have started, this is difficult in the summer months and I have known people to leave a covered super with some empty combs on site to collect the stragglers. It is possible to close the hive in the late evening ready to move early the next day so that you arrive in daylight, helpful in a strange place.

Closing up: an obvious starting point is to make sure that the hive body is sound; a bee-sized hole where they have nibbled away at the corner where you insert your hive tool need to be spotted and sealed with tape of a piece of foam jammed in. The entrance is easier to close if

a well-fitting entrance block is in place, then the smaller entrance can be filled with plastic foam. Not metal gauze which may lead to bees crowding the entrance. In summer bees often hang around outside the entrance; a water spray will drive them inside.

Ventilation: several thousand bees shut in on a warm day will generate a good deal of heat, enough to melt the wax combs into a horrid mess. So adequate ventilation is essential, and should be in place before the entrance is closed. The conventional way of ensuring adequate ventilation is to replace the crown board with a travelling screen, a wooden frame covered with wire gauze, this needs to be put in place a few hours before the move. For short journeys it is easier to take out the varroa tray so that the mesh floor acts as a screen. On long journeys you will need the travelling screen on top so that the bees can be given an occasional spray with water to help them keep cool.

Strapping: do use two proper straps done up very tightly. While you do not intend to drop the hive it needs to stay in one piece if you do.

Carrying: two people are safer than one, especially if using a proper hive carrier, you may be on unfamiliar rough ground and wanting to see where you put your feet.

Transport: a trailer is an asset here but for most of us they go in the boot of the car. Have veils to hand, just in case. Good luck!

For Sale

Get your bees to make round section honey. Cobana/ Ross Rounds: in section rack for National or Commercial with sundry spares. See Thorne's 2008-9 catalogue page 9. £25.00 o.n.o.

White poly-cotton boiler suit with zip-front, no veil, hardly used, 108cm (42.5inch) £10.

Brian Gant tel. 01364 642233

Needing help?

Our branch has two Master Beekeepers and Ken holds the highest UK bee-keeping qualification, the National Diploma in Beekeeping, so if you feel the need of some instant advice then you can telephone with a good chance of getting through to one of us. If you need help then phone one of:

Ken Basterfield NDB 01404 815885

Brian Gant 01364 642233

If you have a brood disease problem then phone our Regional Bee Inspector

Adam Vevers 01364 653325

or Seasonal Bee Inspector Clare Densley 01626 211684

Branch contacts:

Web site for news of meetings in south Devon, and many other matters
southdevonbees.org

Chairman: Jeremy Wells 01364 72180,
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Collections from 12 Hembury Park, Buckfast TQ11 0ES

The Totnes & Kingsbridge Beekeepers' Association is a branch of the Devon Beekeepers' Association which is a registered charity no. 270675