



September 2009

Meetings: It's all happening on **Saturday, September 19.**

We start at 10:00 with a seasonal clear-up in the branch apiary at Dartington, please bring along a selection of gardening tools to cut the grass edges, trim the hedges and whatever else is needed to make all tidy for the winter. I hope that any novice beekeepers will also have a chance to look inside a hive. Then at 12:00 there will be a sale of some of Brian's surplus equipment at bargain prices. That is all weather dependent, if in doubt then please phone our Apiary Manager, Rod, tel. 01803 782190 before 09:00 when he will advise you. If necessary we will postpone the morning session to September 26.

The afternoon session will go ahead on September 19 whatever the weather, starting at 1.00pm with a barbecue at the home of our Chairman, Jeremy and his wife Ena. After the barbecue there will be a sale of whatever surplus equipment members bring along and possibly a chance to see a neighbour's bees.

Partners and children are welcome at the barbecue

But (1) please phone Jeremy and Ena, tel 01364 72180, to let them know how many people to expect, do this no later than Thursday 17 September, and

But (2) please bring along some form of pudding to share and a drink.

Directions: If you need directions to the apiary ask Brian.

Jeremy and Ena live at Southview, Wrangaton, near South Brent TQ10 9HJ.

If travelling towards Plymouth leave the A38 at The Woodpecker, at the end of the slip road turn right over the dual carriage way then left at the end of the road going through Wrangaton, then take the next right, When you reach the crossroads turn left and stop outside Southview.

If coming from the Plymouth direction leave the carriage way at the Carew garage turn right under the A38 and then a short distance on the A38 before taking the slip road as above.

Last month

Early in August we toured three apiaries in Bridgetown to see how new members were getting on with their new bees. The weather was kind to us and a good crowd of members were there to advise and encourage. A very pleasant afternoon, so thanks to you all.

Carole writes: Can you pass on my thanks to all those who visited the Bridgetown sub-division at the beginning of August. It was great having so many people - experienced beekeepers and keen novices. I have made copious notes of all the advice received. It was also lovely to have such encouragement. Thanks also to all your help and advice.

The second August meeting is too late in the month to be included here.

Next month

Buckfast Bee Day on October 10. This is organised by DBKA and will have lectures and book and equipment stalls. Tickets are selling quickly so make sure you book your place soon since fire regulations limit the number of people in the hall to 140. Details were in the August issue of BEEKEEPING, ask Brian if you need a copy.

Courses

The regular winter course for beginners starts on September 24, this year we are meeting at St Luke's church in Buckfastleigh. We have a limit of 30 people on the course and to date we have signed up 31 (oops!).

Beecourse2

As good a name as any for the new discussion group for members who wish to go into more depth. There will be a meeting on Friday, September 11 followed by meetings on the first Wednesday of each month up to the end of the year. These will be small group discussions rather than lectures, there is room for another two or three people. Ask Brian for more information and to suggest topics for discussion.

Cheap sugar

Members of UK beekeeping associations are now welcome to shop at any of Booker's 173 trade-only Cash and Carry stores. Booker's price for granulated sugar is about 60p per kilo.

Booker is a trade-only wholesaler, and each member should register individually with their local store. When registering, each member should present their current BBKA membership card. They will then be registered and able to shop straight away. A membership card will be sent by post within 14-21 days.

Payment is by cash or debit card when leaving the store. Members can visit www.booker.co.uk to find their nearest Booker store.

Beekeepers Quarterly

This is a glossy A4 magazine with interesting information. We arrange a group sub which brings the annual cost down from £26 to £16. Also available on-line, ask Brian for details.

Webmaster wanted

Some years ago Phil set up southdevonbes.org as a joint venture with other branches. Now we want to move on and redo the website. We have the expertise in beekeeping but are short on www experts; could you help? It would be good to have a very small group, perhaps three people to share ideas and update the web site. Contact Secretary Adrian if you would like to be involved.

DO NOT BE COMPLACENT WITH YOUR BEES

I am a beginner Beekeeper and have this year completed the winter course which entails both the theoretical and practical aspects of Beekeeping. I obtained my first colony of bees at the end of June and was doing everything I was taught; checking them regularly, watching them fill their hive up with honey, brood, etc and maybe that is why I began to become complacent thinking my bees were good tempered and were doing well. However, I must admit over the last month or so due to the weather, lack of forage and the time of year my bees seemed to become a bit more temperamental. I was feeding them regularly but even so it never seemed to be enough. Anyway, during a visit to the site to feed them, I stupidly decided only to wear a thin observer veil, no gloves and had forgotten to take my smoker but didn't worry too much as I was only replenishing their food which won't take long. Well, all went well until I got the sugar syrup out and

then they went completely mad, attacking me and I know they say stay calm but when you have that many bees suddenly stinging you and swarming round you, you just panic. They got inside the veil, my clothes, stinging through my trousers and it must have taken me up to 5 minutes or so to get them all off me. I was shocked and sore but knew I had to close my hive up. Ironically, I went back to the car, where my full beekeeping suit, gloves and wellington boots had been all the time, (how stupid is that) put them all on and closed my hive up which I must admit was done very quickly and a bit nervously. Worse was to occur, however because during the rest of the day I was violently sick and over the next few days I swelled up beautifully, being told my one friend I looked like Mr Potato head as I had been stung on the face and ears as well.

I write this piece to tell all beginners that it is very easy to become complacent but DO NOT. Your bees are still wild animals and have deadly weapons in their arsenal. Take the words of the older beekeepers as gospel and always wear the correct clothing and take the recommended tools with you every time you visit your bees. I have learnt a valuable lesson but I have done it the hard way – DO NOT BECOME COMPLACENT WITH YOUR BEES.

From an anonymous member

See comment on the top of page 4.

Comment

Fortunately this sort of experience is unusual but most of us have had a similar experience, perhaps only once. The very thin and inexpensive bee suit does need full clothing underneath. Bees in August are often tetchy because of the crowding and lack of forage often made worse by robbing or perhaps some other disturbance.

So do take note of the warning.

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,
ena@jeremywells.entadsl.com

Secretary: Adrian Kyte, 01803 712159, adrian.kyte@btinternet.com

Treasurer: John Harler 01364 642517, fire221@btinternet.com

Off the Comb, and Education: Brian Gant 01364 642233,
brian.gant@which.net

Apiary Manager Rod Saffery, 01803 782190, downtoearth30647@aol.com

HEMBURY BEE SUPPLIES

Your local agent for beekeeping equipment of all kinds, including varroa treatments, frames and foundation.

Phone John Harler on 01364 642517 or mobile 07769 878476
or e-mail to fire221@btinternet.com.

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