



September 2010

First of all: You may notice some changes to OTC this month. Brian Gant, our stalwart editor, has been ill and in hospital, and so this edition has been put together by Lilah Killock under the supervision of Dick Everett, our new Publicity Officer. We're sure you'll join us in sending Brian our best wishes for a speedy return home.

Congratulations to Dan Basterfield who was awarded two Distinctions in the recent Beekeeping examinations. Dan is a tutor on our Beginners Course. The next course is due to start on Thursday 16 September. Please note that any enquiries about courses should be directed to Lilah in the first instance while Brian is unwell.

Can you help? A volunteer is needed to repair 3 or 4 of the Branch's veils this winter. The waist elastic needs replacing and the odd seam needs to be repaired to make the veil beeproof. Also, the veils could do with washing. Has anyone got a large box we can use to store the veils in? Also, we could do with a large piece of carpet to suppress the weeds in the Branch Apiary. If you can help, please contact Rod Saffery in the first instance, or Lilah. See back page for contact details.

Next Meeting: "IDEAS FOR BETTER BEEKEEPING!" An Equipment Ideas Forum with some Favourites on Display - and some for Sale! Wednesday 22 September, 7.30 pm, at Totnes Fire Station, TQ9 5DF (next to Morrisons Supermarket. Car parking available. (Please drive around to the rear of the building.) Some of our members will talk about items of equipment they have made to help with their beekeeping.

We are also planning to have a Bring and Buy table. Have you any equipment you have acquired because it seemed a good idea at the time, but which you've hardly used? Or perhaps, you have some surplus equipment you'd like to sell. Now is a good time to sort out your shed before storing away what you really need for next year! Please bring your items labelled with your name and the price you'd like. All of the money paid will go to the seller – no commission charged! (Note: This meeting was arranged too late to be announced in Beekeeping magazine.)

Last month: Celebrate Start Bay Day 2010: The branch took on a stall for the Celebrate Start Bay event on 21st August. The event is a celebration of what goes on in the Start Bay area showcasing local arts, crafts, skills, food and the great outdoors. The event took place in the Slapton Field Study Centre and Village Hall in Start Bay. This year was a special occasion, as it is 50 years since the area was established as an AONB.

The stall was organized by Grant Elliott and Susan Martin. It was particularly popular with the children, who especially liked the honey fudge. The stall sold honey and cut comb from the branch apiary and from branch members. There were a number of enquiries from the grown up customers on how to join TKBKA and on taking up the winter course. John Laidler gave a public talk on beekeeping in the South Hams which was particularly well attended.

Although the weather was rather grey and wet, this did not deter people coming to the event. The number of visitors was still roughly the same as last year and everyone enjoyed themselves whether learning bush craft skills, watching a falconry display or just picking up a jar of honey on the way home.

Our thanks to Grant, Susan and Hester for manning the stall.

Meet the Bees was held at the Branch Apiary on Sunday 8 August (immediately before the Branch visit to Buckfast Abbey Home Apiary). Our thanks to Rod and Jeremy who organized and supervised the event.

Visit to Buckfast Abbey Home Apiary: Our first meeting in August was on the 8th, and 30 or so members visited Buckfast Abbey to hear Clare Densley explain her changed role, administering the new educational charity that has been established there. Clare has been busy running courses for new beekeepers throughout the summer. The Apiary shed is now a classroom and most of the Abbey's bees have been sold - Clare's goal is to have 15 hives in the Home Apiary. The bees are gradually being moved from the Modified Dadant hives preferred by Brother Adam into new Langstroth hives. Clare showed us inside several old and new hives. One colony was unusual in that we spotted two queens on the combs. It seems that the old queen was still proving useful while her daughter became established.

Extracting Liquid Gold! On Saturday 14 August, half-a-dozen of us gathered in David Thavenot's kitchen to use the new Branch extractor (see below) under the guidance of John Laidler. Thanks to John for his clear instructions and his patience! And thanks to David and family for their hospitality (and delicious cake).

The Bees on the Heather: On Sunday 22 April, some of us visited Pizwell Farm near Postbridge to see how Jeremy Wells and Dick Everett tend to their bees who were there to take advantage of the heather crop on the moor. Two different beekeepers – two contrasting styles. Most interesting! And Jeremy let us into his secret ingredient for tempting the bees to take down sugar syrup – garlic! A lot of those attending were new to beekeeping and were pleasantly surprised at the good temper of the bees - a testament to the confident handling demonstrated by Jeremy and Dick. Our thanks to them both.

Note: Someone left behind a small dark blue rucksack with two orange vertical stripes on it at Pizwell following the meeting. There is no identification within but only some waterproof clothing. Contact Jeremy for more details.

Branch equipment: At the last Committee meeting at the end of July, it was decided to purchase a new extractor for lending out to members of the Branch. Accordingly, we have added a 9-frame radial manual extractor and a honey bucket with honey tap to the equipment now available. Contact Lilah for details. The extractor has already proved popular. You can see it in action on the Meetings page of the website.

Winter programme: Can you help in the Apiary? On 10 October, we're holding an Apiary Clean-Up Day and we're looking for volunteers! There are lots of jobs we'd like to get done, such as:

- Putting in a better fence between the greenhouses and tall gate.
- Painting the shed.
- Cleaning up supers and spare equipment for winter storage.
- Strimming both apiaries and cut hedge vegetation.
- Servicing the lawn mower.
- Levelling out the approach road by filling in potholes.
- Filling in some of the large holes in the apiary with soil as they are dangerous.

This list isn't inclusive – why not come along and help sort things out. Beginners are particularly

welcome. Come along and see how the apiary is run. If you haven't yet got a veil, don't worry. Please contact Rod or Lilah if you can give up a couple of hours of your time either in the morning or afternoon. Remember: many hands make light work!

On 30 October we will be holding our annual Honey Show. More details in next month's OTC. 19 November is our AGM, and in the period December to March we hope to hold some practical workshops: mead-making, nuc-construction, etc.

Queen breeding workshop: DBKA in association with DARG present a workshop Breeding & Improving Devon Queens Saturday 16th October 2010 Kenton Village Hall 9.30 am. to 4.30 pm. See Beekeeping magazine for further details. Leaflet also available from Lilah.

Research: Louis Rummer-Downing is a wildlife photographer who has been photographing and writing about honeybees for the past 12 months. He has recently been funded to work with a Cornish beekeeper who is breeding Varroa mite resistance into his bees. Louis is filming this behaviour, and recording other aspects of beekeeping including the heather honey flow, from start to finish, and also keeping a diary of events over a 5-week period. Louis's work can be viewed on his blog www.louisrd.blogspot.com.

For Sale:

Queen Bees £16.50; 5-frame nucs (BS National) £100 each from Alex Marsh, Nectar Haze Apiary, Pyworthy, Holsworthy EX22 6SW 01409 259404. Alex is a member of Devon Beekeepers Association and has been keeping bees for 28 years.

Frame Rests: Made in Britain from stainless steel by a member of Manchester Beekeepers Association. Prices: 1 pair £5.00 (+ £2.00 P&P) 2 pairs £10.00 (+ £2.00 P&P) 5 pairs £22.00 (+ £2.50 P&P) 10 pairs £40.00 (+ £3.00 P&P); e-mail enquiries to beeprepared@virginmedia.com or tel. 07530 630772. Copies of flier available from Lilah.

Don't forget to put Apiguard in ... Contact John Harler for supplies. See below.

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.

Branch contacts:

Website for branch news <http://www.britishbee.org.uk/local/totnes-kingsbridge>

Chairman: Jeremy Wells 01364 72180, jeremy.ena@gmail.com

Secretary: Mrs Lilah Killock, 01803 866 028, lilahkillock@hotmail.com

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

Off the Comb, and Education: Branch Secretary

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

Publicity Officer: Dick Everett, 07855 419505, bees@everetts.co.uk

Need help? Our branch has two Master Beekeepers, Brian Gant and Ken Basterfield. Ken holds the highest UK bee-keeping qualification, the National Diploma in Beekeeping, and if you feel the need of some instant advice, you can telephone him on 01404 815885. 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).

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