



July 2010

Meetings: Sunday, July 18 at 2.00pm we are invited to Rod and Maggie's new apiary at .Middle Well, Port Bridge near Stoke Gabriel, The apiary is in a beautiful 2-acre garden with a stream. When we have looked at the bees we will go to Rod and Maggie's home at 10 Orchard Way for tea. Please help with the arrangements by letting our hosts know how many people to expect, phone soon on 01803 782190

Directions: OS map ref SX 858 577. On the Totnes to Paignton road turn right on the bend to Aish and Stoke Gabriel at Longcombe Cross (garage on right). Drive through Aish and keep going to the cross road at Four cross, drive straight across, go over Port Bridge and Middle Well is on your left **PARK IN THE LANE AND WALK TO MIDDLE WELL.** Someone will be in the road to guide you.

Queen rearing course: this will take place at the branch apiary and is intended for members who have enough experience to handle bees with confidence and wish to move on to selective queen rearing to improve the standard of their bees. The organisation of the course will depend on the number taking part. Brian will lead the group and will provide notes on each stage.

Meet the Bees: this is an opportunity for members of the public to meet at the apiary and look inside a hive. The date will be fixed when we have more indications of interest. If you know someone who is interested in beekeeping ask them to contact Rod Saffery, see contact info on the back page.

The Totnes Show will be held on`July 25, a Sunday this year. Rod will need some honey to sell and some volunteers to help on the stall.

Last month

Our main meeting was at the branch apiary led by Ken Basterfield NDB. Again we had a good attendance notably from new members. Ken worked through some of the hives showing how he found the clues which showed what the bees were doing and throwing out hints and tips as he did so. Following the meeting we took ourselves off to the Roundhouse where we sat in the garden with tea and cake and talked about bees.

Thank you Ken for an instructive and enjoyable afternoon.

Wax conversion

This year we had 160lb of beeswax to convert into foundation. One member had just over 50lb and the others varied down to nearly 4lb.

By combining in this way we get a better exchange rate and all were pleased to receive stocks of Thornes Premier quality foundation.

Winter programme

Even though it is summer now the winter programme needs to be arranged so your committee will be looking for suggestions for evening or afternoon meetings.

What would interest you?

From our Chairman

Last Friday I attended a beekeeping meeting of the Hjørring branch of the Dansk Biavl Forening which was held near Hirtsals, in the very north of Denmark and I thought that some notes from here may be of interest.

As usual I was made very welcome and it was a splendid evening, terminating with "bee talk" around a crate of beer

placed nearby.

The branch apiary was sited behind a working museum that was used to give young people the opportunity to see old methods and breeds of agriculture in use, and an introduction to beekeeping was offered as part of this.

Most of the beekeepers present had experienced heavy winter losses due to the weather and the apiary was being managed to raise nucs to overcome this. Most of the hives were of the traditional Danish design, and are not dissimilar to the Robin Dartington style that we sometimes see in England, but are hinged at one end of the roof.

There were also two polystyrene hives present but condensation had been a problem with these, particularly in summer, but I noticed, and commented, that they were using plastic crown boards and asked if a different choice of material would be better for this purpose.

Ironically, two members who live in particularly exposed areas over looking the North Sea, had lost no bees despite the hard winter weather. Is there a lesson to be learned here ?? They did both say that the hive needed strapping down well and that a block on the top of each hive was not enough.

The apiary record cards included a section to grade, from 1 to 5, how well the bees adhered to the frames during inspection and this I thought was a useful characteristic to look for as it makes inspection easier.

Jeremy

Selective queen rearing

This follows from the last two issues. DrCC Miller's method starts by cutting the comb leaving triangular pieces hanging down.. The intention being to get the queen to lay in the old brood cells while leaving space around the queen cell.

This cut comb, or foundation, is put in to the brood area and checked every few days until eggs are seen. Quite often the gaps in the comb are also filled in. In which case they need to be re-cut so that worker eggs or tiny larvae are on the cut edge. The frame is then put into a suitable hive for the bees to raise queen cells.

In our case we will also lift some of the tiny larvae into artificial queen cells again for the workers to raise new queens.

The brood chambers

We will need to divide the single brood chamber (bc) between two bcs filling up the gaps with frames. It would be better practice to feed the bees from mid-March until they grew to fill two bcs.

I hope to be able to clear at least one super into the bc to make the hive more crowded and to reduce the lifting needed.

In Harry Cloake's original description the floor is reversed at one stage. An easier practice is to make an exit in the back of the floor. This can be opened or closed as needed without any lifting.

Also needed is an eke with a board so that the two bcs can be separated.

In the upper bc we need a frame with plenty of stores, honey and pollen next to this goes the frame with young larvae or in our case two such frames with stores. frames with larvae may be included to attract young workers, but if present will need to be checked for rogue qcs.

In the lower box the queen operates normally. A QX between the bcs keeps the queen in the lower box. The sequence is then:

Insert the board to make the upper bc queenless. Open the door at the back of the lower bc and close the original entrance. This will send returning foragers to the upper bc. When the upper bc bees have had time to realise their problem give the frames of young larvae in qcs. 24 hours later remove the board between the bcs and restore the entrances to the lower bc.

Ten days after inserting the young larvae distribute the qcs to nucs for emergence and mating.

A common problem is to find that the bees have built stray comb around the qcs. To limit this give them two frames with foundation and replace these if the foundation is drawn before the qcs are ripe.

Off the Comb

Could you write something for this Newsletter?

For Sale

Bees for sale, National and Commercial nucs now available
contact Rod Saffery 01803 782190

Not for sale (yet) please keep back some honey for our stand at the Totnes Show on July 25

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 branch news (still under development)

<http://www.britishbee.org.uk/local/totnes-kingsbridge>

Chairman: Jeremy Wells 01364 72180,
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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