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December 2018 - January 2019

BEEKEEPING

Published by Devon Beekeepers’ Association Registered Charity No. 270675
www.devonbeekeepers.org.uk

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For independent subscribers in the UK the annual subscription to Beekeeping in 2018 is £14.50.

Outside the UK the rates are:
Within Europe £30.50
Outside Europe £37.50

Payment must be made in Sterling drawn on a UK bank. (If paying from any non-UK bank, a supplement of £6 to meet bank charges will apply.)

Please apply to:-
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Items for the February 2019 edition of the magazine must be with the Editor by the 10th January 2019.

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Asian Hornet ahat.org.uk
Action Team
British Beekeepers bbka.org.uk Association
Devon Apicultural dargbees.org Research Group
National Bee Unit nationalbeeunit.com

Vol 84 No 10

December 2018 - January 2019
From the Editor
Lilah Killock

Welcome to the final issue of Beekeeping for this year. The next magazine will be the February one. This will be sent out automatically to all members (except Social members) who have paid their subscription by the end of December.

Every year there are some people who contact me in February or even March to say they have not received their copy, and, on investigation, it materialises they have forgotten to renew their membership! If you haven't yet sent your form off to your Branch Membership Secretary, don't delay. Late renewals do cause a lot of extra work.

I am continuing as Editor for the time being, but we now have a new member on the Editorial Team. Thank you to Nicky Langley from East Devon who has joined us as Subeditor. She is looking forward to hearing all your Branch news in 2019.

Chairman’s Brood Box
Tony Lindsell

Superorganism. No I’m not going completely mad - yet. Those of you who were fortunate enough to attend the South Devon Beekeepers’ Convention in early November, as I did, will realise it is the description given to a honey bee colony and the subject of an excellent presentation by Keith Delaplane. A superorganism is a social unit with an organised division of labour where the survival of the unit is more important than the individuals within the unit.

It got me thinking that the Devon Beekeepers’ Association is a bit of a superorganism itself, where all our members have a common aim in promoting beekeeping and educating the public about the importance of bees. Right across Devon, our eleven branches are presenting courses, putting on displays, events and apiary demonstrations and supplying information through websites and publications; all slightly different from each other but all with the same aim. There are plenty of examples of where branches work together and co-operate on joint ventures. Now I’m not saying that we take it to the extreme where we will sacrifice our lives for the good of the
cause (like the bees) but a great many members devote a significant amount of their
time, energy and effort on behalf of the DBKA, and for their commitment we are very
grateful.

The South Devon Beekeepers Convention was a very good example of all those
things I’ve mentioned and everyone involved should be very proud of their efforts. If
you missed it, don’t worry; they are already planning bigger and better things next
year.

There is also a chance to get to Devon Beekeepers’ Day on 15 December where
you can hear about the Asian hornet in Jersey and the results of the Bee Stings
Survey you may have taken part in recently. It also includes the Association’s Annual
General Meeting. It would be good to see you there.

Another example of our superorganism is the Holsworthy Spring Convention on
23 February. Guest lecturers include Gerry and Jim Ryan, beekeepers from Ireland,
and Phil McAnespie from Scotland.

As we reach the end of the year it’s a good time to reflect on another beekeeping
season and it seems to me every year is different which makes beekeeping so
interesting and enjoyable. This was my year. A very cold period of snow and ice
in March had us worried as to whether our bees would survive but most of them
did. (Apologies if you weren’t so lucky). The weather then turned to produce a hot,
dry and explosive late spring and summer - plenty of bees and plenty of forage.
Surprisingly few of my hives swarmed or prepared to swarm. The autumn has proved
disappointing and difficult to read with plenty of bees still flying in the warm weather
but not sufficient food to satisfy their appetites. An extended period of feeding was
needed. I’m sure your own experiences will all be similar and yet different than mine
but I hope you’ve enjoyed it. We can now start making plans for next year.

I hope to see a good number of you at Devon Beekeepers’ Day on the
15 December but to those that I don’t see, Tracy and I send our best wishes to you
and your bees for a warm and peaceful Christmas and a healthy and happy New
Year.

Letter to the Editor

Acetic acid fumigation and EFB

Ken Basterfield’s recent piece about acetic acid fumigation must be read as a
useful introduction to the practicalities of the process. I am keen to use this but
wanted to check the limitations. Although effective for wax moth, nosema and
chalkbrood I was uneasy about his statement that it has ... long been used ... against
EFB. I felt I should seek more authoritative evidence.

EFB was addressed in the delightfully concise article by Richard Ball in
BBKA News August 2010, page 11. In essence, acetic acid does not reliably
eradicate EFB where brood has been present. This is reiterated in the National Bee
Unit Hive Cleaning and Sterilisation Update of March 2018, page 6, that states There
is no evidence that this is effective against AFB or EFB.

Still, I, and some others, will give it a go.

Andrew Stainer-Smith, Okehampton Beekeepers
South Devon Beekeepers Convention

The South Devon Beekeepers Convention 2018 opened with a large black and white photo of the late Brian Gant in an apiary of WBC hives. Graham Brown, the Chair of Totnes & Kingsbridge Branch, welcomed the audience and explained that many local beekeepers owe much to Brian who, while with his calm manner could not really be described as an evangelist, believed in the importance of expanding the knowledge of all beekeepers through education and learning at many levels.

The venue with its ample free parking and spacious auditorium with rooms alongside for trade stands selling beekeeping equipment, products of the hive, books, art and crafts, and with teas and biscuits laid on, set the scene for a congenial day to soak up information on a range of topics.

There were four talks by three speakers: Keith Delaplane, the scientist at the forefront on honey bee research, Claire Barker, businesswoman, juggling the demands of entrepreneurship, and Andy Willis, the gardener, who presented a slideshow of interesting photos, talking about life from the bees' point of view, reminding us of a slower, more traditional, pace of life.

As MC, Graham made sure the speakers, all beekeepers, were given a friendly introduction and gently kept to their allocated time slots, ably helped by Tammy Skinner who ran around with a microphone so that questions from individual audience members could be heard by all.

The variety of speakers and the inclusive format made for a Convention with a very warm atmosphere and no doubt every type of beekeeper attending would have gone home knowing much more than they did before they arrived.

Brian Gant would surely have been pleased with the enthusiasm of the audience on the day of the South Devon Beekeepers Convention 2018.

Rachel West, Okehampton Branch
There can be few better things to do on a wet Sunday in November than attend the South Devon Convention. After greeting many friends, consuming the proverbial cup of tea and glancing at the trade stalls, we were summoned to the lecture theatre.

In an entertaining talk, Claire Barker recounted the circumstances and shaky economic theory which led to the founding of her business *Hive Originals*. She went on to demystify cosmetic formulation. We were reminded of the health-enhancing properties of honey and beeswax, and learnt the functional necessity of incorporating emulsifiers and preservatives. Finally, Claire touched on the very comprehensive regulatory framework employed to ensure consumer safety, and explained that what some people perceive to be overpackaging is simply a means to provide a big enough surface on which to print text stipulated by regulation.

For his first talk Keith Delaplane gave himself the very ambitious title *The Honey Bee Superorganism and how it explains everything*. We were reminded of the genetic basis behind laying down one's life for two brothers or eight cousins. Keith took us through the different equation encountered by the honey bee due to its haploid/diploid genetics, and hence the logical evolution of the female caste system. Everything, including thermoregulation, comb construction and foraging could be explained by the co-operative principle.

Following a delicious pasty and cookie lunch, and an opportunity to study the trade stalls in more detail, Andy Willis, in a well-illustrated talk, reminded us that bees evolved to live in trees.

Keith Delaplane's second talk was on multiple mating in the honey bee. This is the honey bee's strategy to ensure genetic diversity and a healthy population within the colony. We learnt of the super-gene, such as the one for hygienic behaviour or grooming, and its propensity to be rare and recessive, since two copies frequently take the behaviour to excess and result in colony damage.

Keith then considered what might be the optimal number of drones for a queen to mate with. When left to their own devices queens mate with an average of 12 drones and a maximum of 28 or 40 (depending on one's source).

He presented some results from his recent work in which queens had been instrumentally inseminated with the semen from either 9 or 54 drones. A number of attributes were measured. Preliminary results suggested colonies with greater genetic diversity performed better.

For the small-scale beekeeper, the simplest method of increasing the genetic diversity within one's colonies would be by mixing the brood from several colonies but this may lead to greater disease transmission. Does equalising work on two levels: through both an increase in bee numbers and a temporary increase in genetic diversity in the previously underperforming colonies?

Annette Quartly, Totnes & Kingsbridge Branch
The opportunity to hear Keith Delaplane speak at the South Devon Convention was something I did not want to miss. Professor of Entomology at the University of Georgia, lifelong beekeeper, regular contributor to *American Bee Journal* and author of many articles and books about bees and beekeeping, Keith is a globally respected researcher and speaker on the subject. He has worked with British beekeepers for more than a decade and is a well-known ‘bee celebrity’ in this country, so much so that in 2014 he was awarded an MBE for services to beekeeping. This prestigious award was something apparently that fellow Americans struggled to understand. Was he now royalty, a knight, a Lord? After some amusing discussion with his colleagues, friends and family, with a glint in his eye, he agreed that the term ‘Squire’ would be acceptable!

Back to the present day. Were the two presentations from the Squire worth attending at the South Devon Convention? Absolutely, and judging from comments I heard from other people during the Convention, this was a sentiment shared by many. Keith’s presenting style was humorous, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. His first talk *The Honey Bee Superorganism and how it explains everything* discussed the bee colony as a superorganism and why this is such an apt description. Beginning with a consideration of why an individual worker bee gives up the ability to reproduce and is even prepared to sacrifice her life for the benefit of the queen and the rest of the colony was fascinating. Keith touched on the subject of *super sisters* and the important role they play to ensure the queen is the only individual to lay eggs; the value of multiple mating, thus creating a genetically diverse colony; the fact that unlike most ‘cold-blooded’ animals, honey bee colonies are able to regulate their temperature as efficiently as warm-blooded animals. It was also very interesting to hear that comb-laying and the hexagonal shape of comb, is not predetermined; it gradually evolves as each bee simply follows on from the previous bee laying down more wax, and as each row is laid down the shape gradually emerges.

His second talk *Multiple Mating in the Queen: Liability or Asset?*, explored the value of multiple mating in queens, and why this process can be so important to the survival and efficient functioning of the colony. Keith started by considering
how our present day honey bees evolved, and compared the honey bee colony to colonies of ants or termites that operate with several queens, each producing their own ‘family’ that co-exists within the general colony. So even though they function in different ways, all these species become more efficient by embracing genetic diversity and it behoves beekeepers to ‘encourage’ multiple mating to achieve the most favourable characteristics in their colonies. Apparently the average number of drones a queen mates with is 12, although Keith has found evidence of queens mating with 28, and even 40 drones. So is it true that more drone matings create more successful colonies? Studies have shown that only 6 matings are required to provide 90% of the possible genetic diversity. However, by mating with more than 6 drones the queen has a greater chance of gaining some of the rarer ‘super genes’ that can strongly influence a particular characteristic. All the genes we want in our colonies to produce our ‘perfect’ bees are out there. The queen just has to find them!

Both talks were equally fascinating and there is no doubt that Keith gave the Convention an impressive presence, and the audience some thought-provoking ideas. In conjunction with the other two presentations by Claire Barker (Beauty and the Bees) and Andy Willis (A Bee’s Eye View of Beekeeping) this was yet another fascinating Convention programme, and from my point of view was well worth the 130-mile round trip from North Devon. I’ve been attending the South Devon Convention for several years now and certainly look forward to next year.

In conclusion, if any reader gets the opportunity to hear Keith speak, don’t miss out, you won’t regret it! In the meantime, if anyone has access to YouTube you can easily download several of Keith’s talks for free. Well worth a look!

Brian Sharp, North Devon

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Jerry Burbidge of Northern Bee Books  
Lilah Killock

The South Devon Beekeepers Convention is a great opportunity to catch up with people I don't see very often. One such person is Jerry Burbidge of Northern Bee Books. In previous years, Jerry has been unable to come to the Convention because of clashes with other events, but he has always given us his full support, sending or delivering books that we sell on his behalf and rewarding us with commission on titles sold. This year was the first time that Jerry could attend in person. It was great to see him. He is such a character, and, of course, a legend in the beekeeping world.

I visited Jerry at his home two years ago when we'd arranged that I would pick up boxes of books for the 2016 Convention. I'd long been intrigued by his postal address which suggested a very rural spot - not the sort of place I would expect a successful bookselling business to flourish. (Northern Bee Books have the widest range of English language beekeeping titles in the world.)

His house was as difficult to find as I'd feared. To be fair, ordinarily it would have been much more straightforward - Mytholmroyd is a substantial village near to Hebden Bridge - but a landslide on Boxing Day 2015 had blocked the easy route to the village and in Autumn 2016 the mud was still there. To get to Jerry's place I had to take a very roundabout route down some narrow country roads with steep inclines and sharp bends. Now, we in Devon are used to roads like that, but those around Jerry's home are fenced in by substantial stone walls, unlike our soft Devon banks, and it made for an interesting detour. Eventually, I reached the other side of the landslide right next to the village school.

After rather bemusedly driving through the village school's car park - I was sure my satnav had got it wrong - I found Scout Lane and, at the end of it, the Head Office of Northern Bee Books. This is a rather grand description of the lovely cottage Jerry and his wife, Ruth, call home. They made Chris and I very welcome, and Jerry gave generously of his time to answer my questions about himself.

Ruth is an accomplished musician, proficient in piano, flute, recorder and harpsichord, and Jerry also owns Peacock Press which deals in music. (Nobody in the country carries as much recorder music as Peacock Press.) Jerry was already producing *Beekeepers Quarterly* magazine, which he began in 1984, when he bought *The Recorder Magazine* title and subsequently began to stock music. Peacock Press
now has over 20,000 music titles, and in terms of turnover is a bigger business than Northern Bee Books. As Jerry points out Beekeepers can do without books, but musicians must have music.

I asked Jerry when did he start dealing in books on beekeeping? Forty years ago! What had started out as a hobby had grown and grown. Nowadays, not only do NBB sell books, they publish 150 titles themselves.

A few years ago, Northern Bee Books bought out Bee Books New and Old when John Kinross retired, and in a recent venture have launched another beekeeping magazine *Natural Bee Husbandry*. Like *Beekeepers Quarterly*, it is available on subscription at £20 per year for four issues (October, January, April, July). Jerry has also invested in the music business, buying up other music publishers.

Despite all this growth, Jerry still views his business activities as a hobby, and insists he has never taken anything from the business, or paid himself a salary, putting everything back in order to expand. Ian, his office manager, started out working a few hours a week, but is now kept busy working full-time, and, keeping it in the family, Jerry employs both of his sons on half-time contracts. He credits the success of the business to the team effort of all involved.

Jerry reckons he started beekeeping when he was about 12. His grandfather, a builder in the Thames Valley had bees, and put together WBC hives made from ammunition boxes from WW1. When Jerry’s grandfather died in 1946, Jerry’s uncle took on the bees and got Jerry involved. After his uncle died, Jerry became the beekeeper. He went from 6 hives to 26 hives, then up to 70 hives while in Yorkshire.
But it seems you can't do books and bees at the same time: the two clash. And so when Jerry's back went some years back, he gave away most of his bees, and now keeps just a couple of hives.

It's obvious talking with him that Jerry loves his books and what he does. To him, his authors are all living people. Even if they have passed on, they still live through their books. And, Jerry is still buzzing with ideas for new books.

One of the books he'd just published when I visited him was *A History of Taylors of Welwyn*. (Taylors were big beekeeping suppliers in the 20s, 30s and 40s, who were eventually bought out by Thornes.) He'd like to publish a book on the history of beekeeping and the BBKA, and is keen to hear from any Devon member who is interested in writing about that.

**Jacob Trood**
Chris Killock

*Note: You may remember the review of Jacob Trood's book The World of Beekeeping which appeared in September's Beekeeping magazine. As a result of that review, Jacob was invited to bring examples of his work along to the South Devon Beekeepers Convention.*

One of the pleasures of this year’s South Devon Beekeepers Convention was seeing the artwork of 19-year old Somerset-based artist Jacob Trood.

I was drawn to his vibrant images of everyday beekeeping and highly original sculptural pieces. Somehow, one could sense that here was an Artist who was making authentic images because he was grounded in the craft of beekeeping.

And so it proved to be. Jacob and I had a chat during the morning and he explained how the Trood family are based in Somerset and Jacob has been involved in beekeeping from an early age. His grandfather and father took up beekeeping at the same time (before Jacob’s arrival on the scene). Dad, Timothy Trood, in particular, has been very active in the Somerset and Devon beekeeping scene. It must be quite
Jacob’s grandad, Neil, was also very interested in Art and has clearly been a big influence on Jacob. Jacob studied Art at school, progressing through GCSE and A-Level, and then attended Strode College to do his Foundation Year. The work the delegates saw at the Convention was part of his Foundation Year studies and contributed to the Distinction he was awarded after his final assessment.

Jacob recalls some comic, if painful, episodes, when his enthusiasm to get images led to him risking leaving off his bee suit - a sting in the eye when he was working on his wax model of a bee being one example.

The SDBC was the first time Jacob had organised a stall and printed cards for sale. This was quite a daunting venture, but he felt much more confident after meeting and talking to potential clients. He is very interested to see which images prove most popular, with a view to marketing his work in the near future. Jacob also studied Business Studies at A-Level and he was pleased to see how useful this was proving to be for him.

He is already thinking of future projects and a book focussing on *Urban Beekeeping Around the World* looks to be next on his agenda. He is very aware of the need to spread the word about the importance of beekeeping and beekeepers to younger generations who will have a key role to play.

Like most young Artists, Jacob markets his work through social media: -Tumblr, Twitter and Facebook, with Instagram being his main form of communication.

If you want to find out more about Jacob’s work and in particular see his range of high quality cards, check out https://twitter.com/jacobtroodart or https://en-gb.facebook.com/jacobtroodart.

Jacob comes from a family with three generations of active beekeepers. Do you know of any family in Devon with members who span the generations? Please write in with information about them to Nicky Langley, Subeditor.
Holsworthy Spring Convention
Saturday 23 February
Memorial Hall, Holsworthy EX22 6DJ
Trade Hall and Breakfast Butties from 9 am (Last orders 9.45 am)
Lectures start at 10 am and finish at 5 pm. Top speakers:

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<td>NBU Inspector</td>
<td>The View from Here: A Devon update</td>
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This promises to be a tremendous day.
Also this year is a Trade Hall with Thornes, BB Wear, VitaEuropa and others.
Tickets include teas, coffees, super lunch with hot puddings, homemade cakes and other yummies.

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Cost: Holsworthy Members £18, under-16s £10, all others £20
Holsworthy Spring Convention

Saturday 23 February 2019
Memorial Hall, Holsworthy EX22 6DJ

Breakfast Butties from 9 am (Last orders 9.45 am)

Speakers from Scotland and Ireland throughout the day - don’t miss:

**Shorter talk**

Beekeeping in a Barrel: ways to augment weak colonies and nuc production

Beekeeping in Scotland: kind of bees kept, the challenges and support mechanisms.

Assessing Brood Viability and Queen Quality

Jim Ryan
Keeping Bees in the Swarming Season: Management and Practices

Assessing Brood Viability and Queen Quality

NBU Inspector
The View from Here: A Devon update

Also this year is a Trade Hall with Thornes, BB Wear, VitaEuropa and others.

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This year Plymouth Branch held its Annual Honey Show on 9 October at Blindmans Wood Scout Centre, having made the decision earlier in the year to move this event together with our winter meetings to bigger, more roomy premises.

The event was not as well supported as the previous year but we still had 16 entrants exhibiting 51 items in 14 of the 15 classes.

Whilst judging was in progress and results collated, members were invited to ask bee-related questions to the Q&A Panel (Neil Downing-Waite, Martin Hann, David Milford) who were as equally entertaining and informative as their Radio 4 counterparts on Gardeners' Question Time!

Once all questions had been answered, members enjoyed tea and refreshments, a good chinwag and the customary raffle.

Back again by popular request, was the informal Honey Tasting; this year won by Jean Russell with her jar of fermented honey!

The evening concluded with the Prize Giving; our Chairman, Terry McAuliffe, announcing the winners and Bill Finnemore, Honorary President (and Judge for the night), presenting the trophies.

**Prizewinners:**

Slater Cup (Light Run Honey)  
Roger Round  

Edwards Cup (Medium Run Honey)  
Terry McAuliffe  

Tucker Cup (Dark Run Honey)  
Ian Staples
239
Prosser Tray (Pair of Candles)  
Phil Aitken
Mansfield Tray (Mead)  
Steve Russell
Eric Goss Tray (Frame for extraction)  
Steve Russell
Interserve Tray (Honey Label)  
Jean French
Poole Tray (Beeswax Blocks)  
Martin Hann
Bandvulc Tray (Wax Open Class)  
Phil Aitken
Ward Cup (Honey Sandwich Cake)  
Martin Hann
Barton Cup (Honey Fudge) Martin Hann
Mayflower Marina Cup (Open Class)  
Ian Staples
Overall Winner’s Cup  
(Crysanthemum Trophy) Phil Aitken

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There are two native subspecies of ivy in the British Isles: *Hedera helix* species *Helix*, and *Hedera helix* species *Hibernica*. The subspecies *Hibernica* does not climb but spreads across the ground. There are also many cultivated varieties of ivy, with differing leaves which are variable in size, number and depth of lobes. The leaves are often variegated green with white, cream or yellow.

Ivy is an evergreen, woody climber; it has climbing stems with specialised hairs which help it stick to surfaces as it climbs. It can grow to a height of up to 30 metres. It has two different forms: juvenile and mature. Only the mature form of ivy produces flowers and fruits. They are yellowish green and appear in small clusters known as umbels. Ivy flowers from September to November and fruits are black and globular in clusters and ripen in November to January. The leaves are dark green and glossy with pale veins. Leaves of juvenile forms have 3-5 lobes and a pale underside. On mature forms, leaves are oval or heart-shaped without lobes and can be self-supporting.

The pollen is dull yellow. The nectar is very concentrated which helps the bees when trying to remove the excess water when making honey. The honey is greenish with a pleasantly aromatic flavour.

Ivy grows well throughout the UK and can be found in many habitats including woodland, scrub, and wasteland and on isolated trees. It is tolerant of shade and survives in all but the most dry, waterlogged or acidic soils.

Nectar, pollen and berries of ivy are an essential food source for insects, including honey bees, and birds during autumn and winter when food is scarce. It also provides shelter for insects, birds, bats and other small mammals. The high fat content of the berries is a nutritious food resource for birds and they are eaten by a range of species including thrushes, blackcaps, woodpigeons and blackbirds. All parts of the plant are toxic to humans.

Ivy uses trees and walls for support, allowing it to reach upwards to better levels of sunlight. It is not a parasitic plant and has a separate root system in the soil and so absorbs its own nutrients and water as needed. Does ivy kill trees? Only if it becomes too prolific and over-bearing.

*All pictures by G Kingham*
Sweetener v Health Food Part 2
Jeremy Barnes

Last month's contribution ended with the contention not only that honey is the most potent brain food of all but that it was an integral part of the critical evolutionary steps that helped define our species.

In a TED talk titled Hunter-gatherers, Human Diet, and Our Capacity for Cooperation, Alyssa Crittenden, a nutritional anthropologist at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, outlines the findings from her fourteen-year long study of the pre-agricultural, nomadic Hazda people in Tanzania. For example, she recounts how men interact with the honeyguide bird as it leads them to a feral honey bee nest and sits on a nearby branch as the honey hunters scramble up a baobab tree, using burning embers to retrieve comb honey. Most striking was the excitement of the children as they anticipated, and then shared, the rich food source as it was brought back to camp. She realised that every foraging population for which we have data targets honey. Every ape species eats honey. It’s nutritionally rich. It’s highly preferred. Honey is the highest ranked food by the Hazda themselves and makes up more than 15 per cent of their daily calories. If we accept that today 2,250 calories indicate a healthy, balanced daily diet, then based on the Hazda example, 335 should come from honey, which is equivalent to a little over 5 tablespoons, or 110 grams, per diem.

In his remarkable new book Buzz: The Nature and Necessity of Bees, Thor Hanson explains in some detail how for centuries it was assumed that the natural counterpart of the honeyguide was the honey badger, that the two worked in tandem, until it was realised that the latter is nocturnal and the hours of their respective foraging barely overlap. Hanson describes the now accepted theory that the honeyguide and early hominids co-evolved some three million years ago, and that honey, collected and shared as the Hazda still do, played a critical evolutionary role in helping to define our species.

The brain is an obligate glucose consumer Alyssa explained to Thor. Because the brain burns energy for both neurotransmission as well as cell function, it can consume up to 20 per cent of our daily energy requirements even as it weighs only 2 per cent of our body weight. It demands all that power in the form of glucose, and no natural food contains more glucose in a pure, digestible form, than honey - one third is pure glucose, with the balance being fructose. It is the most energy-rich food in nature, Alyssa stresses, and there may be a connection between the typical sweet tooth of children and a craving for honey to feed their active, hungry growing bones and brains.

If one lines up the skulls of hominids over the last three million years, from Lucy (Australopithecus africanus) to modern humans (Homo sapiens sapiens) one is struck by the rapidly expanding brain case (an increase of 250 per cent in all), the retraction of the lower jaw and a reduction in the size of the teeth. Most theories for brain expansion credit a combination of increased meat consumption through hunting, the use of tools to gather and prepare new food sources, and the control of fire. Alyssa argues that early humans could not have afforded the metabolic expanse
of larger brains without an accompanying boost in calories, and that honey needs to be added to the hypothesis. After all, hunting would have increased exposure to feral bee nests, the new tools would have facilitated the collection of the honey therein, and the control of fire would have provided the smoke necessary to calm the bees. Additionally, the larvae and pollen in bees' nests would have provided additional proteins as well as further micronutrients.

The challenge, of course, is material evidence, and the expectation is that studies of prehistoric dental plaque will turn up traces of honey from each of the key points in our evolutionary history.

So yes, today we have a more extensive choice of foods, not least sweeteners, but honey should not be relegated to evolutionary history. As an effective nourishment for the brain it is as relevant today as it was three million years ago, and we need to promote it as such.

**Our Green Cathedral**

Jeremy Barnes has been contributing to *Beekeeping* magazine since 2013 and many Devon members have written in to express their appreciation for his thoughtful pieces over the years. They will be delighted to hear that those pieces, together with others that Jeremy has written for other publications, have now been published in a book *Our Green Cathedral*.

On the website [www.ourgreencathedral.com](http://www.ourgreencathedral.com) the book is described as: *A series of essays reflecting on what we can infer from honey bees about ourselves and our environment, written by Pennsylvania's 2018 Beekeeper of the Year, partly but not exclusively for beekeepers.*

It is possible to order the book through the website - cost $19.95 - but shipping charges to the UK have yet to be finalised. Readers who would like to buy the book now should email Jeremy on honeybeewhisperer@gmail.com for details. He will be delighted to hear from you.

**Exeter Improvers Course at Broadclyst Village Hall**

6 sessions starting 6th February 2019
7 pm to 9 pm
Cost of Course £110

David Packham, Bee Inspector, will be running a course for beekeepers who have had bees for a few years and now wish to improve their skills. Course will cover Honeybee Management, Queen Rearing, Bee Forage, Varroa and IPM, Bee Pests and Diseases.

If you would like to book for the course please visit Exeter website [www.exeterbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.exeterbeekeepers.org.uk)
The more senior member will remember his or her first summer days of driving the car when you had to stop to clear the windscreen from dead flying insects almost every hour! What has happened? Where have they all gone? This anecdotal evidence shows something is amiss!

The UK is proposing a new farming policy for when we leave the EU. It is being passed through Parliament now. The farmers think more needs adding to it and they are criticising the insect policy included. This, basically, is very good for our insects and wildlife as it will mean more (in a nutshell) hedges and wildflower meadows and fallow fields. Farming policy since the Second World War has put a lot of emphasis on simply producing more food in the UK; it currently supplies about 60 per cent of our needs. Innovative farmers are already cutting their use of chemicals. They’re finding they can cut costs and produce healthy crops by working with nature. However, the sobering news is that neonicotinoids are not the only pesticides affecting pollinators. The reality on our farmland is that wildlife is routinely exposed to a whole cocktail of chemicals. Evidence shows that fungicides, used to control disease rather than pests, could increase the toxicity of neonicotinoids to bees.

Have you stopped to consider broad-spectrum herbicides like glyphosate which are not selective about the weeds they kill so they reduce the availability of pollen and nectar from wild plants? The RSPB has commented Our beleaguered farmland birds have declined by 56 per cent between 1970 and 2015 along with declines in other wildlife linked to changes in agricultural practices, including the use of pesticides.

On Which Side of the Fence Do We Sit?
Graham Kingham

---

National & WBC Hives
made from Cedar

Includes:
1 Apex Roof
1 Crown board
2 Super box (1 for WBC)
1 Brood box (14x12 available)
1 OM Floor (WBC with feet)
3 Lifts and porch (WBC only)
Bee escapes, mesh & inspection tray, entrance blocks all included!

Call: 01896 850249 or visit
www.caddon-hives.co.uk
So we know that pesticides are harming our birds and bees. Ten years ago the hedgehog population was 30 million. Now there are less than 10 million. Farmers must protect their crops from pests and diseases but current levels of pesticide use are unnecessary as well as damaging.

A report from Germany on a study that took place over 27 years is abridged below. It sets out the grim reality.

*Global declines in insects have sparked wide interest among scientists, politicians, and the general public. Loss of insect diversity and abundance is expected to provoke cascading effects on food webs and to jeopardise ecosystem services. We measured total insect biomass using Malaise traps, deployed over 27 years in 63 nature protection areas in Germany (96 unique location-year combinations) to infer on the status and trend of local entomofauna. Our analysis estimates a seasonal decline of 76%, and mid-summer decline of 82% in flying insect biomass over the 27 years of study. We show that this decline is apparent regardless of habitat type, while changes in weather, land use, and habitat characteristics cannot explain this overall decline. This yet unrecognised loss of insect biomass must be taken into account in evaluating declines in abundance of species depending on insects as a food source, and ecosystem functioning in the European landscape.*

The full article by CA Hallmann can be read at [wwwjournals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0185809](http://wwwjournals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0185809).

All insects are of major importance to the ecology. However we need to sit down firmly on one side of the fence and decide to change or challenge things. Some of this is being addressed now, but beekeepers need to start thinking smarter and lobby our MPs on the particular issue of honey bees. Consider the following: the registration of all hives; setting up a UK-based queen rearing programme and banning imported queens; stopping hive products coming in without being analysed for disease and pests; keeping local bees that are best suited to their environment; allowing native European black bees to be kept in controlled areas.

A final thought on breeding. One common consensus is that we all want gentle bees and want to breed for this. I have a hive that is very defensive this year - from the bees' point of view, not mine. I would describe them as very aggressive! Now will this trait be an advantage to them when the Asian hornet arrives? They were a strong colony with no wasps around them this year either, unlike my other two hives. We are tinkering at all levels. Honey and wax are a luxury. It has been estimated that honey bees pollinate about 30% of human food crops and are the fourth most important animal to humans!

Look at your drug information leaflet about all the side effects; there is always a trade-off there in order to get better. We treat bees with chemicals but do not know all the side-effects; science is only now understanding the major importance of the human gut biome. What does medication do to the bees' gut for instance? They suffer from bacteria, viruses and moulds like us and are marvels in their own world, using senses we do not have. How do all these treatments affect their senses?

Ponder at will, but do not take too long. I am not against some methods used but we must start making informed choices in the interest of the non-human world.

Over to you neighbour.
South Devon Honey Show
Saturday 5 January

Newton Abbot/Torbay/Totnes & Kingsbridge Beekeepers will be holding a combined

Honey Show

in The Methodist Church, 40-42 Fore Street, Totnes TQ9 5HW
on Saturday 5 January from 9 am to 4 pm

Staging of entries to be completed by 10 am
Doors open to the public at 10 am

Judge: Jack Mummery, BBKA National Honey Judge

Honey Show Classes:

Classes open to any member of Devon Beekeepers' Association

1. Honey: Two 1lb (454g) matching jars of light honey
2. Honey: Two 1lb (454g) matching jars of medium or dark honey
3. Honey: Two 1lb (454g) matching jars of naturally granulated honey
4. Novice* Honey: One 1lb (454g) jar of honey
5. Honey: Two containers of cut comb honey of minimum gross weight 6oz (175g)
6. Honey: One shallow comb of honey for extraction (displayed in a bee-proof case)
7. Honey Label: Two jars of the same honey, with home-produced label for sale**
8. Wax: One cake of beeswax, min weight 8oz (225g)
9. Wax: Five matching blocks of beeswax, each with a minimum weight of 25g
10. Candles: A pair of matching beeswax candles made by any method
11. Novice* Candle: One candle made from beeswax – dipped or moulded.
   The candle will be lit and so needs to be in a candle holder if required
12. Mead: One bottle of mead, sweet or dry, in a clear glass bottle
13. Craft: One handicraft item with a beekeeping theme
   eg, handmade greeting card, needlework item, etc
14. Photography: One, or more, coloured or black and white photograph of interest to beekeepers, on photographic paper, not less than postcard size
15. Cookery: Four pieces of flapjack (using recipe provided)
16. Cookery: Honey and orange cake (using recipe provided)
17. Cookery: Honey fudge (using recipe provided)

* A novice is someone who has not won a prize at any Honey Show.
** Label produced in any medium to comply with current UK regulations

For recipes and entry details, see www.devonbeekeepers.org.uk

Entries accepted on the day
Members may attend meetings of any Branch but it’s advisable to telephone the Branch Secretary first. Contact details are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Devon</td>
<td>eastdevonbk.co.uk</td>
<td>01404 841629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>exeterbeekeepers.org.uk</td>
<td>01392 832956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holsworthy</td>
<td>holsworthybeekeepers.org.uk</td>
<td>01237 440165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton Abbot</td>
<td>nabk.org.uk</td>
<td>07935 041168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Devon</td>
<td>northdevonbee.co.uk</td>
<td>07791 679283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okehampton</td>
<td>okehamptonbee.co.uk</td>
<td>01363 82361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>plymouthbeekeepers.btik.com</td>
<td>01752 338279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tavistock</td>
<td>tavistock-beekeepers.org.uk</td>
<td>07824 627766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiverton</td>
<td>tivertonbeekeepers.org.uk</td>
<td>01363 860252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torbay</td>
<td>tbbk.co.uk</td>
<td>01803 844804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totnes &amp; Kingsbridge</td>
<td>totnesandkingsbridgebeekeepers.com</td>
<td>01752 894094</td>
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### DECEMBER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thu 6</td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td>East Devon</td>
<td>Christmas Social and members presenting own inventions (Kilmington Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 9</td>
<td>12 noon</td>
<td>DARG</td>
<td>Victoria Buswell, Plymouth University, <em>Apis Mellifera Project</em> (Uplowman Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 9</td>
<td>12.30pm</td>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>Branch Christmas Lunch (Boringdon Golf Club)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 10</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Torbay</td>
<td>Branch Christmas Social Evening: bring food to share (St Paul’s Church, Paignton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 10</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Holsworthy</td>
<td>Christmas Skittles (Bradworthy pub) Free to members: to book ring Andy on 07958684210 leave your name, or ring 01409 241563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 13</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Okehampton</td>
<td>Film <em>The Honeybee</em> (Whiddon Down Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 15</td>
<td>9.30am</td>
<td>DBKA</td>
<td>Beekeepers’ Day &amp; DBKA AGM (The Future Inn, Plymouth) See back cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 17</td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>Ken Basterfield <em>Upward Splits</em> (Topsham Rugby Club)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 19</td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td>Tiverton</td>
<td>Christmas Dinner (Tiverton Indoor Bowling Club)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 29</td>
<td>1.30pm</td>
<td>Totnes &amp; Kingsbridge</td>
<td>Demonstration <em>Applying Varroa Treatment</em> (Branch Apiary, Dartington) If weather permits.</td>
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### JANUARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat 5</td>
<td>9.00am - 3.00pm</td>
<td>Newton Abbot/Torbay/Totnes &amp; Kingsbridge</td>
<td>South Devon Honey Show (Methodist Church, Fore Street, Totnes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 7</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>Torbay</td>
<td>Introduction to Beekeeping, Beginners Course (St Paul’s Church, Preston)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue 8</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>Quiz Night (Blindmans Wood Scout Centre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 9</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>East Devon</td>
<td>Dr Gerry Brierley <em>Medicinal Apitherapy</em> (Whitchurch Canoniconorum Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 10</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Okehampton</td>
<td>Bridget Knutson <em>Beeswax</em> (Whiddon Down Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 12</td>
<td>10.00am</td>
<td>Devon Honey Show Committee</td>
<td>Honey Show Committee Meeting: Branch representatives invited to come to presentation about the Show (Whiddon Down Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 14</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Torbay</td>
<td>Glyn Davies <em>Bee Sex Part 2: The Mating Process - Evolution and Consequences</em> (St Paul's Church, Preston)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 16</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Tavistock</td>
<td>New Year Social: Board Games and Buffet (The Blue Lion Pub, Lewdown EX20 4DL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 16</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Tiverton</td>
<td>Liz Westcott <em>Products from the Hive and County Show</em> (Uplowman Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur 17</td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td>Totnes &amp; Kingsbridge</td>
<td>Beginners Beekeeping Course starts (St Lukes Church, Buckfastleigh TQ11 0DA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 21</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Torbay</td>
<td>Introduction to Beekeeping, Beginners Course (St Paul's Church, Preston)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 27</td>
<td>10.00am</td>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>Wax Extraction/Frame Making (Branch Apiary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 28</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>Graham Kingham <em>Bee Nutrition</em> (Topsham Rugby Club)</td>
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**FEBRUARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 4</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Torbay</td>
<td>Introduction to Beekeeping, Beginners Course (St Paul's Church, Preston)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 7</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>East Devon</td>
<td>Clare Densley from Buckfast Abbey <em>Chronic Bee Paralysis</em> (Kilmington Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 13</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Tavistock</td>
<td>Lea Bayley, Master Beekeeper, <em>Bee Indentification</em> (Parish Room PL19 8AU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 14</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Okehampton</td>
<td>David Packham <em>Bee Diseases</em> (Whiddon Down Village Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 21</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>North Devon</td>
<td>Talk (TBA) (The Castle Centre, Barnstaple)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 25</td>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td><em>Heat Production in Bees</em> - James Cresswell. (Topsham Rugby Club)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Okehampton Basic Beekeeping Training Course starting Wednesday 16 January  
8 evening sessions held fortnightly at Whiddon Down Village Hall  
7 pm to 9 pm  
Cost of course £75 payable in advance on arrival at the first session.  
Cost includes the book *The BBKA Guide to Beekeeping*.  
Candidates who subsequently sit and pass the BBKA Basic Assessment, will receive full reimbursement of the £20 examination fee. Candidates are also offered the opportunity of hands-on experience of handling bees at trainers’ apiaries to put learning into practice following course completion.  
Please contact Ray King for more details either  
by email at roadpark@btinternet.com or phone 01363 772007.
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Christmas gift ideas

Bee-merry with us this Christmas and choose from a stunning selection of gifting ideas each with a charming bee theme! This Christmas NBS have it covered! Visit beekeeping.co.uk/christmas-gifts

www.beekeeping.co.uk  0844 326 2010  info@beekeeping.co.uk

Visit our shop: Hameldown House, Hameldown Road, Exeter Road Industrial Estate, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1UB
DEVON BEEKEEPERS’ DAY AND AGM
(Hosted by Plymouth Branch)

Saturday 15th December 2018
Lister Room and Fleming Room
The Future Inn
Plymouth International Business Park
1 William Prance Road, Plymouth PL6 5ZD

Programme

Lister Room

09.30 Refreshments on arrival outside the Lister Room
10.00 Welcome and Introduction - Christopher Smith, DBKA President
10.15 DBKA Annual General Meeting - Chaired by Tony Lindsell
11.15 John De Carteret from Jersey Beekeepers and a leading member in their campaign to deal with the Asian Hornet

Lunch - see note below

13.30 Presentation of Awards including Education Certificates and Frank Alston Memorial Skep
14.30 Dr Claire Bethune – Consultant Immunologist at Derriford Hospital
Reactions to Bee Stings
DBKA Prize Draw
15.00 Q & A Session with DBKA Officers on any issues members would like to raise
15.30 Closure by Christopher Smith

Fleming Room

Branch, NBU and DARG Displays and National Bee Supplies

Free entry including a cup of tea/coffee on arrival but does not include refreshments

Parking: there is plenty of free car parking but drivers must register their cars at Reception as soon as they arrive. Failure to do this could result in the vehicle being clamped and its driver incurring a £100 release fee.

Lunch: can be taken on site in Fishbones Restaurant or you may bring your own packed lunch but this must be eaten within the confines of the conference rooms. A variety of meals are available from sandwiches, salads and main courses.

Printed by Newton Print, Collett Way, Brunel Ind. Estate, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 4PH
Tel: 01626 368986 - www.newtonprint.co.uk