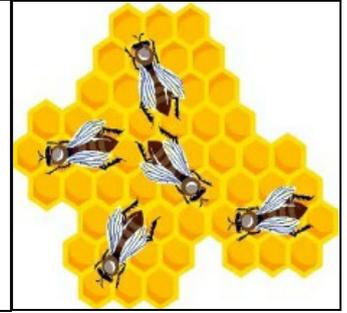


'BUZZ' for SEPTEMBER 2017
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TORBAY BRANCH,
DEVON BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION.

Founded in 1875

Registered charity no. No. 270675

Torbay Branch web site: www.tbbk.co.uk



FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 2nd. September. The Branch Cockington Apiary. Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m. See Branch web site for proposed Apiary beekeeping programme. * Light refreshments will be available.

Saturday, 9th. September The Branch Cockington Apiary. Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m. See Branch web site for proposed Apiary beekeeping programme. * Light refreshments will be available.

Saturday, 16th. September The Branch Cockington Apiary. Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m. **END-OF-SEASON BARBECUE** plus the usual tea and coffee.

Tuesday, 12th. September. Branch executive committee meeting in the Paignton, Sainsbury's restaurant. Commencing at 7-30 p.m.

Tuesday September 19th. Bee Craft webinar commencing at 10 p.m. Live online beekeeping discussion. See below for further details.

Saturday, September 23rd. The Branch Cockington Apiary. Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m. See Branch web site for proposed Apiary beekeeping programme. * Light refreshments will be available.

Saturday, 30th. September The Branch Cockington Apiary. Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m. This meeting will conclude this season's formal apiary meetings. See Branch web site for proposed Apiary programme. * Light refreshments will be available.

* This information is as up-to-date as is possible but is subject to the vagaries of weather and bees!

WINTER PROGRAMME DETAILS.

Tuesday, October 10th.The Francis Norrish Room, St. Paul's Church, Torquay Rd., Preston. TQ2 2DH Branch winter talk. Commencing at 7-30 p.m. Speaker, Mr. Glyn Davies who will present 'An Evening With Glyn'. See below for details. Light refreshments will be served during the evening.

Tuesday, November 14th.The Francis Norrish Room, St. Paul's Church, Torquay Rd., Preston. TQ2 2DH

Branch winter talk. Commencing at 7-30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served during the evening.

Saturday, November 25th.The Francis Norrish Room, St. Paul's Church, Torquay Rd., Preston. TQ2 2DH

The Torbay Branch Annual General Meeting. Commencing at 1-30 p.m concluding at 4-30 p.m. Guest introductory speaker: Mr. John Risdon. Light refreshments will be served during the evening.

Saturday, 27th. January. Unit 8, Hanbury Buildings, Bradley Lane, Newton Abbot. TQ12 1LZ

Branch skep-making course tutored by Mick Male. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Refreshments available during the day. See below for full details.

Saturday, 17th. February. Unit 8, Hanbury Buildings, Bradley Lane, Newton Abbot. TQ12 1LZ

Branch skep-making course tutored by Mick Male. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Refreshments available during the day. See below for full details.

THE CHAIRMAN'S CHAT.

August is the month when most beekeepers take the honey off the hive and extract it. I have just finished doing mine. Everything has gone well except one colony where I went to put the clearer board on and discovered that the queen was above the queen excluder and laying in the supers. Of the two supers, half seemed to have brood in them so I sorted them so that there was a super of brood and a super of honey. I put the super of brood above the brood box, then the queen excluder, then the clearer board and then the super with the frames of honey. I went back the next morning to take the super of honey off but on inspection found that the super was still full of bees. I went back several times but still the bees refused to leave the super. I suspected that

there were eggs in one of the frames of honey and, of course, bees will not abandon eggs or brood and so refused to leave them. However, the bees that had left the super couldn't get back up again and so they were on the outside of the super trying to find a way in. So, in the end, I had to give the bees back their super, complete with honey but as there wasn't a lot there I didn't mind. I inspected the queen excluder and there was nothing wrong with it so I am assuming that it wasn't correctly placed over the brood box and the queen found her way up into the super. This is the first time I have had a queen above the excluder, so will take more care in future.

Glyn has been busy extracting the honey from our apiary at Cockington with kind assistance from his friend, Fred. Thank you very much!

Now is the time to treat for Varroa and feed for the winter. Do make sure you treat for Varroa in good time as the treatment needs to be on the hive when the temperatures are still reasonably warm in order for the thymol to vaporise and spread around the hive.

Five of our beekeepers took the Basic Exam this summer and I am delighted to say they all passed. Well done! Once you have passed the Basic you are then able to continue your beekeeping education and go on to study the Modules which is the really interesting bit. Hopefully, we will run a study group for Module One this winter. If you are interested in finding out what aspects of beekeeping are covered by the Modules you can find them on the BBKA website.

I hope that you all had a good honey harvest and will be able to enjoy a little honey on your toast for breakfast!

Liz Westcott, Chairman. Torbay Branch.

WE HAVE MOVED!!

A final reminder that all of this winter's evening meetings plus the AGM will be held in the Francis Norris Room at St. Paul's Church, Preston.

St. Paul's is the fine brick-built church with the prominent tower and illuminated cross situated on the seaward side of Torquay Road in Preston. For members wishing to use a sat. nav. the Post Code is TQ3 2DH. There is ample members' off-road car parking in the front and rear of the church.

THE OCTOBER WINTER EVENING MEETING.

Tuesday, October 10th sees our first evening meeting of the 2017/18 winter season. Mr. Glyn Davies will begin by leading a half-hour informal

interactive discussion ranging over eggs, egg-laying queens and queen-rearing plus what went right and wrong with our queen-rearing at the Branch apiary during the last season. Glyn will follow this up with a half hour illustrated talk. As ever with Glyn, audience participation will be encouraged!

Come along and enjoy a thoroughly interesting and informative and ENJOYABLE beekeeping evening.

REMEMBER!! We have moved. Meeting will be at the Francis Norris Room, St. Paul's Church, Torquay Rd., Paignton.

SOMEONE'S PLEASED WITH OUR WEATHER!

The urban bee project above Exeter's city-centre Princesshay shopping complex has had a fine early season harvest producing four times the honey yield for last year. About 400lb. is expected from the project's five hives making this the best season since the project was started in 2012.. This is claimed to buck the regional trend of what is reported as being a mixed year generally for the SW region. Cornwall in particular seems to have suffered from lower-than-usual yields due to a lack of extended periods of good weather. Kate Bowyer, chairman of the West Cornwall beekeeping association commented that: "The honey yield in Cornwall is well down. This year we have had some nice days followed by days of mixed weather when the bees eat what they have brought in previously. Part of the problem was that while some flowers on which the bees forage for nectar had come out early, the blooms had finished flowering early too. For example, bramble which is the main forage for bees in Cornwall was very early this year but the flower went very quickly".

Barry Neal, secretary of the Devon Beekeepers' Association commented that he was not aware of any reports that the 2017 season had been any better or worse than previous years and pointed-out that, even in a good year, Devon with two coasts, two major moorland areas and its large land area could expect reports of wide yield variations.

The Princesshay honey will be sold within the shopping centre in the Chandos Deli at the start of September. The proceeds will be in aid of the Children's Hospice, South West. The rooftop garden was created for the bees as an environmental initiative which is part of the shopping centre's biodiversity strategy. Visitors can visit the project to get an insight into the world of bees.

*Extract from the Western Morning News .
August 2017.*

BRANCH SKEP-MAKING WORKSHOP.

The Branch has organised a two-day skep-making workshop tutored by Mr. Mick Male of Newton Abbot Branch. It is intended to limit the course to a maximum of six pupils. During the course, students will learn how to become competent in the making of beautiful straw skeps. The course lasts two days and you will be rewarded by coming home with your very own straw skep. The details are:

Saturday, 27th January and Saturday 17th February.

**The times are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on both days.
The cost of the two day course is £30.**

The venue is:

Unit 8, The Hanbury Buildings
Bradley Lane,
Newton Abbot, TQ12 1LZ
(Opposite Dip Demons)

Refreshments will be provided as will all the necessary materials. However, it would be helpful to bring along a piece of 5/16" copper piping and a plastic water bottle. Allocation of course places will be on a first come, first served basis. Contact Mike Ticehurst on:

miket@freedom-computers.co.uk

Mike will let you know if your booking has been accepted.

Doug Westaway.

NEONICOTINOID AND FLOWER POWER.

Leading garden retailers have given commitments to stop the flowers they sell being grown with the aid of neonicotinoid pesticides. *A Friends of the Earth* survey found that nine of the ten top garden centres did not want the plants they sell to be grown with the aid of the three neonicotinoids currently restricted within the European Union. The garden centres were working with their suppliers to prevent their use. This comes after a study recently released found that retailers were selling 'bee-friendly' plants which contained high levels of the insecticides. Researchers tested blooms from a number of stores and found that more than 70% contained neonicotinoids including the three restricted ones!

B&Q announced in May that it had banned suppliers from using any of the nine neonicotinoid pesticides in growing the company's flowering plant range available in its stores from February 2018. Major retailer, Wyevale, has recently confirmed that it does not want the three restricted neonicotinoids in its plants.

Friends-of-the-Earth is handing-in a petition to the government from more than 33,000 people

urging it to support a permanent comprehensive ban on all neonicotinoid pesticides.

*Extract from the Western Morning News.
August 2017.*

VARROA INFESTATIONS AND TREATMENTS.

With September now upon us the active nectar-gathering season for our bees is drawing to its close. The great nectar flow of July is now into the past and the foraging bees will be bringing back to their colonies only small quantities of nectar and pollen from late summer flowers until such time as the ivy bursts forth into flower at the end of September.

However, all is far from quiet within our hives. The winter stores are being 'ripened' and sealed whilst the queens are still busy laying the eggs which will become the all-important winter bees whose task is to see the colonies through to the spring. Also within the colonies will be their populations of Varroa mites. An effective treatment last winter may well have then greatly reduced the numbers within the hives but some mites will have survived and, during the past active season, many more mite will have arrived by piggy-backing on the bodies of drifting worker and drone bees. No doubt some beekeepers will have convinced themselves that their colonies are mite free but unless you have diligently practiced an effective Integrated Pest Management technique throughout the past season mite populations within colonies will, by now, have reached a point when the winter loss of the colonies will be inevitable. Remember that without effective season-long intervention from the beekeeper the mite population within your colonies will have increased exponentially until it will now be at crisis point! There is no such thing as a mite-free colony nor is there such a thing as a colony of bees which has successfully adapted to living with the Varroa mite. Thankfully, there is now a range of effective, commercial miticide products available from our bee equipment suppliers. Bear in mind that with the exception of Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS) the honey crop MUST be removed before hive treatment. Also, due to widespread mite immunity, the two pyrethroid-based miticides, Apistan and Bayvarol are now best avoided. With excellent timing, BBKA News commenced publication in its July edition of '*Meditating on Medicines*' by Jason Learner. This and the August issue contain a wealth of information plus 'do's and don'ts' on the usage of the various miticides, the necessity to treat your colonies and the most effective ways of doing so. My advice to all members is to carefully revise these articles, obtain

your chosen treatment and treat all of your hives. The over-winter survival of your colonies depends upon you taking effective action now.

Doug Westaway.

GOING TO THE HEATHER.

Your aged editor is in a reflective mood.

The current beautiful weather plus the stunning outline of Dartmoor on the western horizon bring to mind that in years past it was normal for several of our Branch members to take hives up onto Dartmoor in August to take advantage of the heather. We, here in Torbay, are fortunate that this late season crop lies within easy travelling distance from our homes around the ' Bay. In past years John Vyle, his dad, Fred Vyle, Maurice Satterly, Jim Mogridge and myself - and, no doubt others - made regular journeys to the heather below the Warren House Inn. Tucked discretely away amongst the heather would be the hives of other beekeepers, particularly those of Brother Adam from Buckfast Abbey who always worked the heather on a large scale.

In recent years this annual bit of beekeeping fun appears to have fallen by the wayside with only our President, Jim, continuing to maintain the Branch tradition. Working the heather demands planning and careful colony preparation well ahead of the moving of the hives up onto the Moor. Waking up one morning, seeing the sun shining, and then deciding to take a couple of hives up to the Moor is a recipe for disappointment and possibly colony losses. It does take organisation and planning to select a suitable site, obtain the owner's permission, carefully prepare two or three hives, arrange suitable transport and then, very early one morning, head off into the crisp Dartmoor air. It is a unique beekeeping experience. Unfortunately, the fickle natures of the nectar yield of heather and the Dartmoor weather make this an uncertain crop and some years of disappointment must be expected. When all things come together and the hives are brought back from the Moor - each with a full super of aromatic heather honey - there really is nothing to match it!

So, what about next year? Any takers?

Doug Westaway

THE BRANCH APIARY BARBECUE.

The end-of-season Apiary barbecue will be held on Saturday, 16th. September. Members have always been asked to bring along their own victuals for previous barbecues. However, at our last Branch committee meeting it was proposed and accepted unanimously that our loyal members who have supported our Apiary programme throughout the past season should be rewarded. The Branch will, therefore, be providing - free of charge - all of the necessary provisions. So please come

along and enjoy yourselves. However, if you do wish to bring along your own tasty items for barbecuing, please feel free to do so.

Doug Westaway.

THE BRANCH HONEY SHOW.

Our Chairman, Liz, is now planning our Branch Honey Show. The date is January 9th. although the venue has yet to be decided. Expect the Show schedule to be very similar to last year's so members are in a position to be putting aside their best honey - light, medium and dark - as they extract this year's crop. Also put aside the cleanest wax ready to make your candles and wax cakes. Mead? Get brewing! Keep our Show in mind as you harvest this year's honey bounty!

Doug Westaway.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

An early reminder that the Branch's Annual General Meeting will be held in the Francis Norrish Room at St. Paul's Church, Preston on Saturday, November 25th. The meeting will commence with a talk by Mr. John Risdon who will be describing the fascinating history of Paignton with particular emphasis on Oldway Mansion and the Singer family. John introduced last year's AGM with a much-acclaimed illustrated talk on the history of Cockington. This year's talk will be equally enthralling.

Doug Westaway.

A WASP PLAGUE?

Despite the large number of queen wasps which seemed to be a feature of last year's autumn, worker wasps, this year, appear - so far - to be quite rare. This is good news for all beekeepers but, nevertheless, do make certain that you have applied adequate defensive measures to all of your hives - particularly any over-wintering nuclei. Ensure that hive entrances are tightly restricted to a couple of bee spaces to enable the guard bees to successfully repel any attacks by these voracious robbers.

The British Pest Control Association (yes, it does exist!) however, believes that wasp populations could be at an all-time high this autumn. They are warning that a plague of wasps could hit the Westcountry after this year's mixed summer weather created a delay in the insects' usual pattern of emergence. The cooler summer weather has seen the wasps concentrating on feeding their larvae on their necessary diet of insects. However, as this phase in their life cycle draws to its end and the amounts of larvae in the wasps' nests rapidly declines, the adult worker wasps will increasingly need to find sources of sugar to sustain themselves. For wasps, a poorly defended bee hive filled with winter stores of honey, is a bonanza too good to miss and will be targeted and robbed-out unless the beekeeper has taken proper precautions. So make certain that your hives are wasp proof and the entrances carefully restricted.

Doug Westaway.