

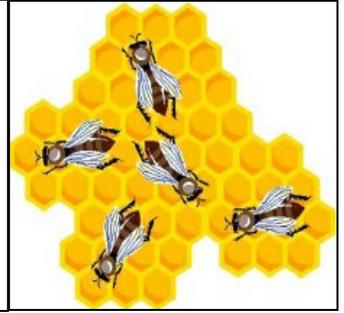
'BUZZ' for MAY

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



Torbay Branch Apiary.

Cockington Village, Torquay.

**(Apiary approximately 100 metres from the Drum Inn (TQ2 6XA) on
The right-hand side of tarmac lane leading up to Cockington Court.**

FOR YOUR DIARY.

**All meetings are at the Cockington apiary unless
otherwise stated.**

Saturday, 5th. May. The Branch Cockington Apiary.
Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m.

Saturday, 12th. May. The Branch Cockington Apiary.
Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m.

Thursday, 17th. May. The Devon County Show.

Friday, 18th. May. The Devon County Show.

**Saturday, 19th. May. The Devon County Show. (See April
Chairman's Chat)**

Saturday, 19th. May. NO BRANCH MEETING

**22nd. May. Study group for Basic Examination. See the
'Chairman's Chat, April, for further details.**

Saturday, 26th. May. The Branch Cockington Apiary.
Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m.

**Thursday, 31st, May, Friday, 1st June, Saturday, 2nd June,
The Showground, Shepton Mallett, Somerset. BA4 6QN.**
The Royal Bath and West Show.

Saturday, 2nd. June. The Branch Cockington Apiary.
Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m.

**Tuesday, 5th. June. Basic Assessment study group. See the
'Chairman's Chat, April, for further details.)**

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 7th, 8th, 9th, June.
**Whitecross, nr. Wadebridge, Cornwall. PL27 7JE. The
Royal Cornwall Show.**

Saturday, 9th May. The Branch Cockington Apiary.
Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m.

Saturday, 16th. June. The Branch Cockington Apiary.
Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m.

Tuesday, 19th. June. Study group for Basic Assessment.
See the 'Chairman's Chat, April, for further details.)

Saturday, 23rd. June. The Branch Cockington Apiary.
Branch apiary meeting. Commencing at 2-00 p.m.

Tuesday, 26th. June. Study group for Basic Assessment.
See the 'Chairman's Chat, April, for further details.

Tuesday, 30th, June. Study group for Basic Assessment.
See the 'Chairman's Chat, April, for further details.

THE CHAIRMAN'S CHAT.

So much happens in one month! It is impossible to talk about Beekeeping without reference to the weather. Spring turned into winter and I thought the bees would never get the chance to get out and forage. Then we went straight into summer for a week or so - the temperature rose and the sun came out and the bees were working their socks off! I had to put two supers on a couple of my hives just to accommodate the number of bees in them. Now we have reverted to spring and the days are cold, wet and grey. At least it will curtail any thoughts of swarming that the bees may have had a week ago in all that sunshine.

In the human world of beekeeping we have been busy preparing for the coming season. We started at the beginning of the month with the apiary clean up. However, with the busy members that we are fortunate to have these days, the apiary was already looking clean and smart and there was not a lot to do. In the following weeks Glyn has overseen the inspection of colonies, a shook swarm on the observation hive and is now preparing for some queen rearing. If you have any thoughts of becoming a good Beekeeper you should really come along to the apiary to learn from Glyn how to raise a few queens to replace old stock or Requeen a feisty hive. There are very few master Beekeepers in Devon these days and we are fortunate to have one in Glyn who is very generous in sharing his knowledge and expertise.

The Spring Conference took place earlier this month at Harper Adams Agricultural College in Shropshire. It is a long way to go but the lectures, workshops and trade stands certainly make it worthwhile. The lectures are now graded to indicate their suitability for beginner, improver or expert Beekeepers which makes it easier to choose which is the right one for you. Last year I did a hedge laying course and a chain saw workshop, both of which were really interesting. This year I attended several workshops in manipulating bees which I found very useful. I also did another soap making course because you can never know too much about making soap! When I began Beekeeping there would be twelve to fifteen Beekeepers who would all go to Conference. We would meet up at six in the morning and car share. At midday we would all have lunch together and on the way

home we would stop at a pub near Bridgwater for dinner together and share stories of our bargains at the trade stands and new things learnt at the lectures. This year there were two of us from Torbay. Do consider going next year, the lectures are not only educational but, I find, inspirational and I always come home with fresh ideas on how I am going to improve my Beekeeping.

The Torbay Introduction to Beekeeping course has just finished and there will be new faces at the apiary of aspiring Beekeepers who are eager to learn our craft. Please introduce yourself and help our 'newbees' to find their feet and feel at home. Our club has benefited enormously from the enthusiasm of new Beekeepers in the past and there is always a place for the skill or talent of all these new people who I hope will soon be joining us.

On April 17th we held a Nosema evening when Beekeepers brought samples of bees and they were scrutinised under the microscope for the presence of Nosema in the bees gut. This year the bees seemed to have fared quite well and not a lot of Nosema was found. Possibly because in general the most part of the winter was quite mild and perhaps bees could get out on cleansing flights which helps keep Nosema down.

The Devon County Show will take place from 17th to 19th May at Westpoint, near Exeter. The Bees and Honey Tent is a very interesting exhibit and you will find the best examples in the County of wax, honey and products of the hive on Show there in the Honey Show. It is an excellent day out and well worth a visit. If you wish to steward I have a couple of slots when Torbay BKA needs a steward for our Stephenson Trophy exhibit. Please contact me if you are available at all. You will receive a free entry ticket and will need to steward for half the day. The other half you are free to look around the show. Morning shift is from 8am until 1 pm. Afternoon shift is 1 pm until 6 pm. There is plenty of free parking.

I hope your bees are building up nicely and preparing a good workforce for your honey harvest. However, we are fast approaching the main swarming time so be sure to check your bees on a weekly basis and be prepared with adequate equipment to cope with an artificial swarm or hiving a swarm. It might be a good idea to make up a few brood frames in advance...

I look forward to seeing you at the apiary in the next few weeks.

Liz Westcott

THE ASIAN HORNET.

Since the April issue of 'BUZZ' a reported sighting of an Asian hornet in Lancashire has been confirmed by the National Bee Unit. The insect was found by a alert member of the public concealed in a cauliflower. The hornet was sufficiently comatose to allow it being photographed six times; three of the photos being of sufficient quality to permit a positive identification by NBU experts. Unfortunately the insect then proved to be camera-shy and flew away! Whether this insect was a founding queen or a worker has not been stated.

The cauliflower was traced back to a consignment delivered in a chilled container from Boston, Lincolnshire.

National Bee Unit staff are concentrating their resources in both Lancashire and Lincolnshire in an attempt both to 'capture' the escapee and to identify how it came to be in Lincolnshire in the first place!

This incident emphasises once again that every Branch member must be vigilant in keeping a careful eye open on spring-flowering plants and later in the season, apiary hives, for any sighting of an Asian hornet.

Our Branch Asian Hornet Action Team is 'up and running' and is available to provide help to members to confirm the identity of any suspicious / unusual insect. Mistaken sightings are far better than one Asian hornet going about its business unreported. So do not hesitate to contact our AHAT team via the 'Team's' web site www.ahat.org.uk and fill in and send in a 'SIGHTING REPORT' to obtain rapid expert assistance.

Doug Westaway

NOSEMA CLINIC.

Your committee organised the annual Branch Nosema Clinic on Tuesday, 17th. April at St. Paul's Church. A great deal of work went into the organisation and preparation of the 'clinic' and it is, therefore, pleasing to be able to say that the event was well-supported by our Branch members.

Members submitted forty-four bee samples from seventeen apiaries for analysis. All samples were identified and logged onto a laptop computer by the computer team before being forwarded to the sample preparation parties. Here the dead bees from each sample were carefully prepared and a microscope glass slide produced. Forward then to our four microscopists who had the responsibility of examining the slides for the presence of Nosema spores and allocating the degree of infestation - nil, low, medium or high.. This information then went to the computer where it was input against the original owner/apiary/hive identity. The accumulating data was updated every ten seconds and projected onto a screen to keep everyone 'in the picture'. The results were subsequently e-mailed out to the individual members.

Despite a long and wet winter and early spring, our Branch bees proved to be in remarkably good health with only a couple of hives showing a 'high' incidence of Nosema infestation.

This was a hard-working, close-knit evening which reflected great credit upon the Branch and everyone engaged in its organisation and operation.

Doug Westaway.

'BEGINNERS' TRAINING COURSE.

This year's course of eight lessons commenced immediately after Christmas and ended on Monday 23rd. April. The fee for this year's course was inclusive of a year's membership of DBKA / BBKA. This year we had a score of enthusiastic pupils many of whom will - hopefully - now come along to the Cockington Apiary during the active season to experience the practical aspects of beekeeping before taking up the challenges of having their own bees.

The Branch's 'Beginner' courses, based upon the BBKA's 'Course-In-A-Case' video, have proved to be an excellent way of introducing people to the world of the honey bee plus providing a good basic knowledge of bees and beekeeping techniques for those who wished to go on to keep their own bees. I am sure our long-standing members will 'buddy-up' to the newcomers and make them feel welcome to the world of beekeeping.

Doug Westaway.

BREAKING NEWS!!

It has been announced today (Saturday, 28th. April) that the member states of the European Economic Union have endorsed proposals by the European Commission to completely ban the outdoor use of the three neonicotinoids, Clothianidin, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam.

Currently these chemicals are banned for use on oilseed rape, spring cereals and sprays for winter cereals. The new measures will come into force after a phasing-in period of eight months.

In November last year, the Environmental Secretary, Mr. Michael Gove, said that tougher restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids are justified by the growing weight of scientific evidence that they are harmful to bees and other pollinators.

Mike Hambly, chairman of the National and South West Regional Crops Board commented that he was: "Very disappointed. We had hoped that there would have been a much more risk-assessed approach. Farmers would have to switch to multiple applications of insecticide sprays instead of the present seed treatment. Because of the Westcountry's warm and wet conditions, this region is most vulnerable to a cereals virus carried by aphids, barley yellow dwarf virus. There is no cure for this disease, so farmers are forced to use preventative measures". Mr. Hambly who grows wheat, barley and oats on his farm near Callington said: "The alternatives are more broad-spectrum and so will have some impact on other species".

Emi Murphy, bee campaigner at 'Friends of the Earth' said: "This is a major victory for science, common sense and our under-threat bees. The evidence that neonicotinoids pose a threat to our bees is overwhelming".

Mr. Guy Smith, the NFU deputy president said that the ban would make many crops grown in the UK less viable. "A ban could simply mean we import more crops from parts of the world where there is no political desire to ban these key insecticides".

Neonicotinoids or neonics, are a group of insecticides chemically similar to nicotine. One of them, Imidacloprid, is the most widely-used insecticide in the world. Compared to organophosphates and carbamate insecticides, they cause less direct harm to birds and mammals than to insects. But they have been linked in a range of studies to ecological harm including honey bee colony collapse disorder and also a reduction in bird numbers due to a decline in insect populations.

Based on articles in the Western Morning News.

