



Autumn Edition

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TORBAY BRANCH,
OF THE DEVON BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

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EDITOR'S WELCOME

I wish you a warm welcome to the new look 'Buzz'. The quarterly newsletter of the Torbay Branch of the Devon Beekeepers Association. I would like to start this newsletter by giving my thanks to my predecessor Doug Westaway who spent many hours over many years compiling and editing the monthly Buzz newsletter. Doug's editing skills are a hard act to follow, but I will do my best!

My hopes for Buzz are that it will become somewhere where we can all share beekeeping related stories, poems, tips, recipes, pictures, successes, failures and more! I welcome articles written by yourselves as well as interesting articles from around the world. Future editions may even offer prizes for the best members submission!

A new feature which will be included in each quarterly edition is '**Beekeepers Top Tips for the Season**' a section where I will be asking a different member of TBBK their top tips for the season, something that I am sure will be an interesting and varied feature, especially when you consider the old saying that goes "Ask five beekeepers the same question and you will get at least ten different answers"!

I will also be including a honey related recipe (or perhaps a few!) in each edition. ***This is where you can be helpful!*** I would really like it if you can send me your tried and tested recipes to include in this section. Please email recipes to jane@jso.me.uk and please state whether you would like your name included, or whether you would rather remain anonymous.

Jane Schindler-Ord

THE CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

September 2018

Welcome, Jane Schindler-Ord as our new editor of our now quarterly magazine! For years our monthly Buzz magazine was expertly edited by Douglas Westaway who has now retired after years of faithful and dedicated service to the club. We already miss his quiet and friendly presence at our meetings but wish him a very happy retirement.

What a very successful year we have had at our apiary this year - in every respect! A few years ago we were lucky to have six beekeepers turn up to our Saturday afternoon meetings at Cockington. Now there are regularly twenty or so enthusiastic beekeepers - all ready to pitch in and learn the finer points of beekeeping. Of course, this doesn't happen by accident and the excellent talks given by Glyn at the beginning of each session, the experienced beekeepers who lead each group and explain what is going on in the hive and the people who give their time and experience to keep the apiary in such good order are all responsible for making sure that we have an efficient and supportive club. And our rewards are not just a thriving club - we also had a good honey crop this year. Our colonies have yielded 256 lbs of honey, approximately twice that of last year. However, last year we were more concerned with queen rearing which may have made a difference to the honey harvest.

The weather this summer has been extreme which has certainly affected the honey harvest - for better or for worse depending where you live. From about the first week in July it was very hot and very dry for weeks. Beekeepers whose apiaries were near either a river or a lake fared much better as the local flora still had access to water to produce nectar. However, where I keep my bees in Brixham the only nearby water is the sea which is of little use to flowers or to bees. Consequently my bees have struggled to build their colonies and certainly very few of them have produced any honey over and above that which they needed to stay alive. I shall unite some of the weaker colonies in hopes they will make it through the winter and make sure their stores are fully topped up. Fortunately, bees also make honey from trees which flower and that has been a boon in this dry weather as tree roots go much deeper and they can access water that plants can't reach. If you have been lucky enough to have chestnut or lime close to your apiary you should have some very nice honey which you have probably already taken off.

This month will see us winding up our activities at the apiary. We shall have the end of summer barbeque on 15th September, when we will also be treating the colonies for varroa and there will be activities to demonstrate how Asian Hornets and their nests are tracked. The 29th September will be our last meeting at the apiary when we shall be cleaning out the sheds and making an inventory of our equipment. Thereafter we will be meeting at St Paul's Church, Preston, on the second Monday of the month at 7.30 pm. The first meeting, on 8th October, will be 'How to process honey for the Show Table'. With the South Devon Honey Show being hosted by Totnes BKA this year on 5th January it will give you plenty of time to practise and

hopefully produce two good jars of honey to enter in the competition. Our AGM will be held on Saturday, 10th November, 2 pm at St Paul's Church, Preston. The speaker will be David Charles who will be telling us all about Bees and Trees. We usually have a break between speaker and the business of the day when we bring a plate of something nice to eat to share - sandwiches, cakes, biscuits, whatever. Then it will be the election of the Club officers.

I hope you have all had a good summer and look forward to seeing you at the winter meetings.

Liz Westcott
Chairman

DIARY DATES

End of Season Clean Up Day

September 29, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Cockington Apiary, Cockington

Branch Winter Talk

Speaker: TBC - Preparing honey and wax for the show table.

October 8th, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

St. Pauls Church, 19 Locarno Ave, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2DH

Cockington Apple Day

Sunday 14th October 10 am to 4 pm

Branch AGM

The formal business will be preceded by David Charles' talk about Bees & Trees.

November 10th, 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

St. Pauls Church, 19 Locarno Ave, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2DH

Branch Winter Talk

Speakers: Gerry Stewart and Judith Norman - Tracking the Asian Hornet in Jersey.

November 12th, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

St. Pauls Church, 19 Locarno Ave, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2DH

Branch Christmas Social.

December 10th, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

St. Pauls Church, 19 Locarno Ave, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2DH

TOP TIPS FOR AUTUMN

With the nights drawing in and the last rays of summer shining on our hives, we are well and truly into the 'preparing for autumn and winter' phase of the beekeeping calendar. With the approaching autumn days (and nights) in mind, I asked Glyn Davies what his top beekeeping tips are for this autumn...

Autumn Tips for Torbay Beekeepers

Autumn starts for Beekeepers as soon as the honey has been removed.

*Tip 1. After extracting your honey supers. Put them back on the hives **over the crown board**. Make sure the bees have access to them so that they can lick them dry and store or eat the honey residue.*

Tip 2. Leave the supers on for about two weeks. By that time they will be perfectly dry. And, the bees will have calmed down as they are often a bit cross immediately after their honey has been stolen.

Tip 3. Store the dried supers in fresh air on a stand and on top of a queen excluder, now acting as a mouse excluder, over winter. Frost kills wax moth in all stages.

Tip 4. Check your precious colonies all have at least the equivalent of or actual one frame of stored honey on the outside of the brood nest; both sides, to keep them going before winter feeding and the Ivy flow. (Which some years doesn't happen.)



Tip 5. If you have plenty of Ivy growing around your apiary and it's starting to flower, check the increasing weight of your colony at least weekly by hefting each side of the brood chamber. By the end of October, a healthy, strong colony must have about 50lbs of stored food. A strong heft of each side must make you grunt. Or check with a spring balance. You do the maths! Feed a strong syrup if necessary. It usually is.

Tip 5. Treat every colony with a varroacide as soon as possible after removing your honey. Some treatments require an ambient temperature minimum of 15 C. You choose but not the same after a year or two. Follow treatment instructions strictly and you should record amounts and product batch number in your apiary notes. Have a monitoring board in place to count, or at least estimate, the varroa killed. Record the result for at least two weeks. Treat again if your mite count is high.

Tip 6. Reduce hive entrances and ensure your hive parts are tight together to be proof against wasp and robber bee invasion. Don't invite wasps into your Apiary with baited wasp traps. Help your bees to defend themselves.

Tip 7. Never spill sugar or syrup in the apiary without thoroughly washing the spill away with plenty of water.

Tip 8. Check at the end of September you have plenty of brood for winter bee production.

Tip 9. If your bees are reluctant to take feed or there are drones present these are signs of a queenless colony. If you cannot acquire a laying queen to introduce then consider uniting with another colony. One that might need boosting perhaps.

Tip 10. Heft your colonies at least monthly, both sides. especially after Christmas. If you're anxious, feed them fondant or your own crystallised honey. But now we are on to Buzz winter tips. Please wait here!

THE FLOW HIVE

Torbay Beekeepers were offered the opportunity to become an ambassador for Flow® and were subsequently gifted a £405 national Flow® super to play with this year, unfortunately we aren't learning fast enough and even with the expertise of experienced members and members who are Flow® hive users it looks unlikely that we will get much honey off the Flow® super. Next year we will begin the season with better understanding of what we need to do in order to make the most of this opportunity to experiment with this interesting new bit of kit and hopefully get a decent harvest off it!

James Schindler-Ord



NEWS FROM THE APIARY

The first week in September saw a busy time at Cockington Apiary, with branch members counting varroa and feeding any hives that needed feeding in preparation for autumn and after the honey crop had been removed. The next stage was to treat the hives that need treating with either Apiguard or VarroaMed. In the next couple of weeks 'hefting' and feeding will continue, alongside a general apiary clean-up in preparation for winter.

WAR DANCE OF THE HONEY BEE

One species has developed a novel waggle to warn about invading wasps.

The Waggle Dance

Honeybees are famous for their waggle dances—figure-eight boogies that foragers use to inform nestmates about the locations of food or water. But entomologists were unclear about whether the dances could also be used to help ensure colony safety.

Unwelcome Guests

Ayumi Fujiwara, a graduate student at the University of Tokyo, and colleagues simulated wasp attacks on hives of the Japanese honeybee (*Apis cerana japonica*) to test the bees' response to danger. "Giant wasps attack the nests of honeybees to feed their brood in autumn. As a result, wasps may sometimes annihilate a whole honeybee colony," she says.



Dance Off

The researchers found that the bees did use a waggle dance as a warning signal, but only in response to sightings of one wasp species, *Vespa mandarinia japonica*. "The hive entrance dance informs bees' nestmates of a specific emergency and of the urgent necessity to collect odorous plant materials as a counterattack strategy," Fujiwara says. The bees collect stinky plant materials, such as leaves from Nepalese smartweed (*Persicaria nepalensis*) and smear them at the hive entrance to deter the wasps.

Decoding the Moves

The information coded in this new waggle dance is not yet completely clear, notes Margaret Couvillon, a biologist and honeybee specialist at Virginia Tech. "What would be interesting to see is if there are any differences in the conveying of directional information in this defensive context versus the regular foraging context," she says. "Nature tends to be parsimonious in finding solutions, so we might expect that the bees use a similar mechanism in these different situations."

<https://tinyurl.com/ycfqmyo7>

ASIAN HORNET UPDATE

AHAT (Asian Hornet Action Team) work in the last few weeks has been varied and quite exciting for a few of us. Judith Norman and Gerry Stuart have both been to Jersey to assist with the hunting of Asian Hornets and tracking down their nests. Judith has become adept at marking and releasing insects and following them to the trees where she has found their nests, sometimes in spite of all the efforts of the Island experts and much to their admiration. In fact, she has been dubbed "The

Hornet Whisperer". Gerry found some fame, I believe, when he became involved in the removal of a nest from a tree which was filmed by ITV Channel Islands.



On the weekend of the 1st and 2nd of September, I was invited to speak about Asian Hornet and the Setting Up of AHATs to the Bristol University Pollinators Festival. This was well received by visitors to the festival and I have been asked to return to Bristol to give the talk once more to Bristol Beekeepers in the Autumn series of evening sessions they hold.

Saturday 15th September was the last day in the apiary and finished with the September Barbeque, but alongside this we had organised a day long watch for the Asian Hornet as our effort for Asian Hornet Week organised by BBKA. This was to be carried out in hourly shifts for 07:00hrs to 19:00hrs but Judith Norman wanted to add in some work on European Hornets in the afternoon. She asked us to bait up the apiary on Thursday to

pull in any European Hornets that might be around... we were fairly confident there were no Asian Hornets in the area. By Saturday morning at 07:00hrs when I opened up there were 6 or 7 European Hornets on the bait happily taking their early morning feed of Suterra, and no Asian Hornets to be seen (which remained the case all day). So I was keen, and set about trying to mark one. I managed to slip a crown of thorns over one and by pressing this into the tissue on the bait I was able to mark RED who flew off and returned within minutes totally unconcerned. Another member joined me at 08:00hrs for his hour watch, and by 08:30 YELLOW and GREEN were marked. When I returned at 11:30 Judith had arrived and seen the good work and WHITE and BLUE were marked up by lunch time. Everybody who came thereafter were very impressed and learned a great deal from the running commentary Judith and later Gerry were providing as they taught about marking and tracking.



Gerry gave everybody a run down on the kit boxes we have put together for AHAT teams and demonstrated the use of rangefinders and so on, while Judith showed people how to catch a hornet in a plunger type queen cage for marking, and our visiting hornets tolerated being repeatedly trapped and released by members.

What really impressed me was the nonchalance of the hornets who continued to return to the bait throughout the afternoon flying in and around members to get to it. Plenty of timing exercises were carried out and estimations of where the nest was, but no attempt was made to track the nest down as it was difficult to see which

direction the hornets flew off in, and this was all going on while we had the end of summer Barbeque in the area next door. Only one person got stung and that was by a bee, since work on hives was going on as well in the next paddock. And all the people around the hornets were not using veils... and in most cases no suits!

All in all, a really successful afternoon with a good number of our members being introduced to working with Hornets, albeit European Hornets, there would seem to be few worries about beekeepers getting involved with marking and initial tracking.

I think this exercise could be carried out by members in their own apiaries but if you have not obtained Suterra for bait then maybe you could try some of the bait concoctions that the French are using, which can be found on-line starting by googling AAAFA which is the French equivalent of AHAT. You can get a good translation by using Google Translate. The sweet baits, based on third each white wine, dark beer and Ribena or cassis with some added honey or glucose, work best on bringing in workers to feed, and who knows some Asian Hornets may be found elsewhere in the country during these sessions. Once you have got your Hornets to the bait try capturing on under a crown of thorns and marking it. Watch it and time its return to get an idea of how far away its nest is. As a very rough guide, for every minute measured between the hornet leaving the bait and returning to it, add another 100 metre to the expected distance between the bait and the nest. In practice it is quite variable.

Colin Lodge, Lead Torbay AHAT

COMPETITION TIME!!



What is this mystery beekeeping related object?

First answer to be drawn out of the hat on 28th October will win a pack of 10 sheets of super foundation and frames (national or commercial)

(committee members are excluded from this competition!)

Please send all contributions for 'Buzz' to jane@jso.me.uk

Stories
Poems
Recipes

Photos
Top tips
Ideas

Drawings
Crafts
Anything bee related!

Contributions from all ages welcome!

HONEY RECIPES

This month's recipes come courtesy of Liz Westcott. Both Recipes are from *'Spoonful's of Honey'* by Hattie Ellis "a complete guide to honey's flavours & culinary uses, with over 80 recipes"

Honey Nut Blondies

100 g / 3 ½ oz unsalted butter (plus extra for greasing)
175 g / 6 oz white chocolate
100 g / 3 ½ oz honey
50 g / 1 ¾ oz light muscovado sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten

1 ½ tsp vanilla extract
200 g / 7 oz plain white flour
1 ½ tsp baking powder
100 g / 3 ½ oz Brazil nuts, chopped
50 g / 1 ¾ oz dried cranberries

1. Preheat the oven to 170 C/340 F/Gas mark 3 ½
2. Butter a 20 cm / 8" square shallow baking tin.
3. Chop 75 g / 2 ¾ oz of the white chocolate into squares. Break the rest of the chocolate into squares.
4. Melt the butter and 100 g / 3 ½ oz chocolate in a heat proof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Be careful not to overheat. Stir together to mix.
5. Remove the bowl from heat and stir in honey and sugar, then eggs and vanilla. Fold in flour and baking powder, then nuts, dried fruit and the rest of the white chocolate chopped into chunks.
6. Scrape the dough into the prepared tin and bake for 20 - 25 minutes (or more if needed) until lightly brown.
7. Leave in tin to cool completely. Cut into squares and store in an airtight tin.

Honey Mayonnaise

200 ml / 7 Fl oz sunflower or vegetable oil
100 ml / 3 ½ Fl oz mild olive oil
2 egg yolks at room temperature
1 tsp Dijon mustard
Large squeeze lemon juice

Sea salt and pepper
1 Tbsp honey
½ tsp white wine vinegar
1 tsp finely chopped tarragon or 1 Tbsp chopped basil (optional)

1. Pour the oils into a measuring jug.
2. Put the egg yolks into a steep sided mixing bowl with the mustard, lemon juice and a pinch of sea salt.
3. Beat well with a hand-held electric whisk, then start adding the oil very gradually, a short dribble at a time, beating each addition into the yolks before adding some more.
4. After you have added about half of the oil, you can start adding it a bit faster because the mayonnaise will now be more stable. Don't pour it all in at once though, make sure each addition of oil is fully incorporated before adding some more.
5. Whisk in the honey, taste and add the vinegar or more lemon juice. Add salt and pepper if needed. Stir in the tarragon or basil if using.