

The newsletter of the Torbay branch of the Devon Beekeepers' Association

# BUZZ

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## ~ SUMMER 2019 EDITION ~

### EDITOR'S WELCOME

Summer seems to be finally here (although I won't say that too loud!) and the bees are thriving. The rain and sunshine have provided lots of good nectar for the bees, although we all need to keep a close eye on stores in the hives at this time of year. We have so far enjoyed the Spring Conference (where some of us braved -3 c temperatures under canvas!) which was a very interesting and informative weekend, the Devon County Show where Torbay Branch enjoyed great successes (see Chairman's Chat and the picture feature below) and the first Branch BBQ of the season. The Hives at the Apiary are doing really well and we will soon be opening our new additional apiary at Occombe, very exciting! In this edition of Buzz we will have a look at Britain's youngest beekeeper, at a tender five years old! I recently met possibly one of Britain's oldest beekeepers. Jim had his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday this year and he came with me to help me with some of my bees. Although he no longer keeps his own bees, he certainly hadn't lost the knack of inspecting hives. As we looked through the hives he told me about how he trained with Brother Adam of Buckfast Abbey, and how they used to take his bees to the heather every year.



***Jane Schindler-Ord***

***Buzz Editor***

## CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

### Summer 2019

What a lot has happened since the last time we read the Buzz! One of the most memorable events since last writing my Chairman's Chat has to be Spring Conference. Around a dozen Torbay members attended this year – the most for many years – and were delighted with the variety of workshops and lectures, the quality of the Trade Show, the friendliness of all the beekeepers from around the country that they met and the variety of things that they learned. We were all so elated at our experience at Harper Adams College in Shropshire that when we met for dinner at a local pub in Shropshire on the Friday night we unanimously agreed that we should have a Spring Conference Debrief when we got back to Devon. It is impossible to attend all the lectures and workshops that you find of interest and so there are some really good things that you miss out on. The purpose of the Debrief was to share all the best bits so that others can have the benefit of your experience. The Debrief was on Monday, 3rd June and it was really interesting to hear what others had discovered.

We all agreed that we would definitely go again next year and so I look forward to another rewarding trip to Shropshire in April 2020. Incidentally, if you plan to go, do find and book a hotel early to avoid disappointment. This year there were several other big events in the area and hotel rooms were in short supply. Steve and I ended up staying 20 miles away in Wolverhampton. Also, I understand that they college is going to allow students to retain their rooms over the Easter break which will mean there will be fewer rooms available on the campus. Some of our members took their tents and camped for the weekend. The venue is excellent and right where the action is. However, this year the temperatures fell to minus three on one night, the car windscreens were completely iced over, so a bit harsh for those sleeping under canvas.

Memorable event number two has to be Devon County Show. Torbay members were stars in the effort they put into ensuring that the Bees and Honey tent was one of the best features on the Show Ground. And we have the certificate to prove it! There are 12 feature tents around the Show ground and there is a competition for the best feature. Bees and Honey was awarded the Silver Medal – second to the Children's Farm feature. The Honey Show had a significant increase in entries which also made for an excellent display of all that is best in Devon beekeeping. I was delighted with the number of entries put in by Torbay beekeepers. All the more so because the points are all added up and the Branch that has the most points wins the Association Trophy. I couldn't believe it when Chris Utting announced that Torbay had won it this year –

the first time we have ever won! So if you entered anything into the Devon Honey Show give yourself a pat on the back. And if you didn't win don't be discouraged. This year there were a lot of entries and all the classes were big – many of them had twelve or more entries. All the entries were top quality and the trick is to ensure that yours is perfect – or more perfect than anyone else's. Perhaps this calls for another talk on 'Preparing Honey/Wax for the Show Table' this winter. Thank you to all the Torbay members who worked so hard to ensure a wonderful Show was enjoyed by all. Thank you, especially, to Gill Cockerill who worked hard in assembling the Torbay Stevenson's Trophy entry and stewarding it every day with Stephen Reed and co. Having undertaken Stevenson's Trophy entry single handed myself in the past I know what a daunting task it is. It really needs to be planned and executed by a team. Gill's ideas were fabulous and I think we can build on the excellent concept put forward by her this year to make a stunning display next year. Of course, we need volunteers to take on the various aspects of this project, so if you have a few hours to spare over the winter months please let me know and we will set to work.

And talking of Honey Shows – Honiton Show is on 1st August. It is a splendid Show with all that is good about agricultural shows without the commercialism of Devon County Show. There is a Bees and Honey Tent run jointly by East Devon BKA and Exeter BKA and, of course, a Honey Show. It is very well attended by beekeepers across the county and for the first time this year they have decided to introduce a trophy for the Branch which gains the most points across the Show. So, Torbay beekeepers, you should have a couple of jars of honey by August to put into a competition. There are also Classes for Wax, Art, Photography, Mead, Cookery and Novice Classes for those of you who have never attempted Showing before or have not yet won a prize. I look forward to seeing your entries on the Show table.

A couple of weeks ago we held our Summer Barbecue. Fortunately, the weather was kind – the rain held off and we saw some sunshine. In our request to 'bring a plate of food to share' everyone seemed to interpret that as 'bring a cake'! We had so many stunning cakes we didn't know where to start! Tony Lindsell, our Devon Chairman, joined us for the afternoon and being a bit of a baker himself was very impressed with the quality of baking here in Torbay! The next EC meeting is on 29th June and it is Torbay's turn to provide the refreshments, so Tony is rather excited at the prospect of all the cakes we are going to bring – no pressure on the three of us who are attending! (This is the Executive Committee of Devon Beekeepers who decide on all the bureaucratic elements of administration.) We inspected the hives early so the barbecue could start at 3 pm and had a really relaxed and pleasant afternoon. Thank

you to all those who came and brought food to share. Our end of season barbecue will be on Saturday, 7th September. Inspection of hives 1 pm – 3 pm, barbecue 3 pm – 5 pm.

We are just about to start the course for the Basic Assessment – seven people are joining me on a Monday evening so hopefully we will soon have some more candidates for the Module classes in the winter. I know quite a few people have indicated they would like to learn how to make a skep. I am exploring different avenues of how we can do this. Either ask a lady to come from Dorset or possibly join Newton Abbot on a course with Mick Male. Maybe both... I'll keep you posted. Microscopy starts on Tuesday, 25th June with approximately ten people interested.

We have recently received a warning from NBU with regard to the June gap and starvation. Inspection of the hives in the same apiary produces a very varied and interesting state of affairs. Some colonies have not a crumb left in the cupboard and are dangerously low on stores. Others have two supers of honey. Possibly colonies with a large population are more prone to dying out as there are more mouths to feed and the stores are used up faster. Do not be complacent. Check your colonies and feed if necessary.

Our new apiary at Occombe is a step nearer to being realised. Mike and I had a site visit last week and identified the patch of ground that will soon be ours. It will be big enough for 20 hives, a shed and a picnic table. Suttons Seeds are in the process of fencing, putting in a gate, preparing the ground and finding us parking. They think it will be ready for us in about three weeks. Then we will need to erect stands and move our bees in. Happy days!

I hope all is well in your apiary and look forward to seeing you at the Cockington apiary.

Happy beekeeping to you all.

**Liz Westcott**  
**Chairman**

## DIARY DATES

**Honiton Agricultural Show**, Honiton Showground, Thursday 1st August 2019

**End of Season Barbecue**, Cockington Apiary, Saturday 7th September 3 – 5 pm

## BRITAIN'S YOUNGEST BEEKEEPER

Five year old Archie Cridland, from Guildford, Surrey has become Britain's youngest certified beekeeper. Little Archie keeps a colony of 60,000 bees, despite apparently being stung by one at the age of two.

Archie received his British Beekeeping Association (BBKA)'s Junior Certificate in Apiculture last month. To qualify, he was required to submit a portfolio of three months' work, and a diary, to an external examiner.



Archie's grandmother, Lorraine Ragosa-Rout, is one of the directors of Surrey Bees Training, set up in 2013 to provide training to new and existing beekeepers. She said: "This was quite a task for someone who is just starting to read and write. "To learn the BBKA syllabus meant a lot of repeating topics but like a sponge he sucked it all in. I'm so proud of him for learning so much and passing exam, but also how he cares about the environment and supporting the bees."

When asked about his passion for beekeeping Archie said: "They're important because they pollinate. They pollinate our trees, food and crops." "We do microscopy and I like to look at bees close up under the microscope."

From [www.smallholder.co.uk](http://www.smallholder.co.uk)

# DEVON COUNTY SHOW 2019



## MOROCCAN BEEKEEPING IN PARADISE VALLEY

By Simon Morgan Vale

“Look Michele! If we go in May there’s a honey festival on.” That sealed it, we were going to go then, no matter what. The trouble was it was going to be Ramadan so a trip to the largest beehive in the world at Argana would be a wasted trip. Plan ‘B’ (or Bee) swung into operation.

We contacted ‘Mr. Couscous’ who operates tours from Agadir where we were staying. Despite the dodgy sounding name, he came up with the trip which included a nice new people carrier and a driver/guide called Mohammad all to ourselves, so we dictated where we should go. Eighty quid seemed a fair price for the whole day too.

We called in at a shop situated in a small group of houses and workshops about ninety minutes into the trip. They were ready for us and took us through the gardens behind the shop which were laid out with different beds of herbs and plants which were used for cooking and medicine. The beekeeper was getting ready to go with his smock and gloves already on. I was a bit taken aback when he handed me a hood! I rummaged



around in my first aid kit (which I always carry) and scooped down a couple of antihistamine tablets and I was good to go.



There were two types of hives. The first were traditional cane cylinders which had a ‘round’ of palm trunk blocking both ends but one end had a slice taken off an edge so that the bees could come and go. The whole

thing was smothered in clay and then stacked up, covered in stones and plastic or cloth. The second was more familiar, being a just a brood box. No supers as they take the combs that contain the most honey and extract from that whether there is brood or not. It's a bit attritional I think but they seem to go for quantity of hives rather than what I see as the more efficient way we do it by introducing supers.



They were very interested about the way we use queen excluders. Perhaps they may adopt this method. I promised to send a diagram along with some of my own honey to say thank you.

After half an hour I noticed a bee which seemed a bit too close and then realized it was inside my hood with four of her friends! I decided that it was time to retreat to the comparative safety of the Argan trees before the inevitable happened.



It was interesting to learn that bees feature in medicine throughout Morocco. Different honeys are used to help with all sorts of ailments. From stomach upset, headaches, sore throats and cuts and burns.

Mohammad was stung several times while watching but was pleased as he said it helped his rheumatism. Which I thought was strange as he got stung on the head! He said that he regularly went for bee sting therapy in his village.

We moved on to visit a beekeeper in a more rural situation running his honey and fossil business from a small hut at the side of the road. Through a mixture of Arabic, French, German and English I learnt that most villages in the valley had their own apiary and a percentage (as with all the other businesses) went

towards the local children's education and the upkeep of the mosque along with other community projects.

Altogether it was a very entertaining tour which I am glad we managed to arrange.

## **COCKINGTON APIARY RULES**

It is really important, and prudent as a beekeeper to have awareness about hygiene and safety in the Apiary. The Torbay branch of the Devon Beekeepers Association have apiary rules which we all must follow when visiting the apiary. These rules are listed below, please familiarise yourself with them, there will also be copies posted around the apiary.

Every beekeeper should make up their own rules, for their own apiaries, for their own guidance and particular ambitions and circumstances.

### **COCKINGTON APIARY**

#### **TEN GOLDEN RULES FOR HYGIENIC BEEKEEPING**

1. Make two specific disease examinations per year in every colony.
2. Keep apiary clean & tidy. Use a refuse bin for hive scrapings.
3. Never use second hand comb.
4. Reduce disease burden; scorch/sterilise equipment regularly.
5. Isolate external swarms and check for disease early.
6. No bees or unsterile equipment from outside sources. Use disposable gloves
7. Never feed honey from other sources.
8. Exchange comb with care; only within one apiary; includes supers.
9. Minimize robbing and drifting with hive arrangement and careful manipulation.
10. Regularly replace brood combs. (No comb over three years old or in poor condition).



## COMPETITION TIME!!

We had some amazing entries for the Spring Buzz competition where we asked you to send in your creative beekeeping themed creations. Here are just a few of them:



The winner of this competition is **Pam Lee** with her fused glass depiction of a honey bee (picture on the right). Pam wins a packet of frames and foundation for her hives!

**The competition for this Season's Buzz  
once again calls on your creative abilities!**



Submit your bee-related creations to [jane@jso.me.uk](mailto:jane@jso.me.uk) to win a bee-related prize! These can be anything you have made yourself: photos, drawings, paintings, embroidery, woodwork and so on!

**All ages are welcome to enter the competition!**

## HONEY RECIPE

This month's recipe comes from Gill Goddard. Thank you Gill, these sound yummy!

### Honey and Apricot Flapjacks

125 g of dried apricots

5 fl oz water

30 g butter

125 g honey

700 g oats

8 glace cherries quartered

1. Heat the oven to 160 degrees
2. Prepare a 1lb loaf tin with grease proof paper greased on the inside.
3. Put the apricots on the water and boil for 10 mins take them out and puree them.
4. Melt the butter on a pan with the honey and add the pureed apricots and the cherries.
5. Mix in the oats.
6. Turn the mixture into the loaf tin, level out and bake for 25 mins or until the top is firm.