

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

# BUZZ

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## ~ AUTUMN 2019 EDITION ~

### EDITOR'S WELCOME

Did I blink? The summer seems to have whizzed by this year and just like that, it is suddenly autumn! The apiary at Cockington has seen a successful beekeeping season in 2019, with some challenging hives, all part of the learning. I always say the bees don't read the same beekeeping books that we read! This year we extracted a healthy 222 lbs of honey for the club, some of which will be for sale



at Cockington Apple day (see article below). We also started the season this year by trialling a shop at the apiary selling beekeeping sundries from National Beekeeping Supplies. The trial was successful, please see article later in this newsletter for information about the shop for next year. We also had the end of season BBQ, a very successful event and

lovely to see John Vyle's family there presenting the beautiful bench that they have donated to the apiary. While we do the final preparations on our own hives for the winter, I reflect on a personally successful and happy beekeeping year, I wonder what the following year has to offer for us and the bees.

***Jane Schindler-Ord***

***Buzz Editor***

## **(VICE) CHAIRMAN'S CHAT**

**October 2019**

Well this is a bit strange! As Liz is busy this month I have been asked, as the Vice Chair of TBBK to write the Chairman's Chat (or Vice Chairman's Chat as it will be of course...). Liz will be emailing members at some point with information about various winter events and meetings.

The end of the season at the apiary at Cockington saw a flurry of activity while we finished treating the colonies for varroa and feeding them in readiness for winter. We also took an inventory of equipment so we can be ready for next season. The shop has been very successful this year and we have also learned a few lessons about how best to run it. We are of course very grateful to Alan for his hard work and dedication in making it such a success. The end of season BBQ was a great success and it was nice to have John Vyle's family there to present the beautiful memorial bench that they had donated to the branch in his memory. Thanks again to Alan for laying the flagstones in front of the clubhouse for the new bench to stand on.

By now you should be well into feeding your bees ready for winter, if you haven't already finished by now. The Apiary is wrapped up for winter and we are looking forward to the programme of winter meetings that have been arranged, some of which are already diarised on the website. These include our October speaker Graham Kingham who will be speaking about Honey Bee Microscopy which should prove to be a very interesting evening, and on the 11th November I will be talking about the first steps in mead making which will include a tasting of and the recipe for my prize-winning Orange melomel! Our AGM will be held on November 9th at 2:00 pm and will be preceded by a talk by John Risdon about The Rural History of South Devon (please note that the November 9th and 11th dates are back to front in the Devon Beekeeping Magazine).

You may or may not have heard also that a further Asian Hornet nest has been located and destroyed in Christchurch, Dorset. DEFRA are continuing to monitor the situation there and the public are being asked to keep an eye out for possible further sightings around Ivy where many insects are gathering the last of the

year's nectar at this time of year. As the leaves begin to turn and fall from trees we are also asked to look up when out and about as nests may become more easily visible as the trees become bare. If you suspect that you have found a nest or sighted an Asian hornet please report it immediately. For more information see <http://ahat.org.uk/> .

The new apiary site near Occombe farm is being prepared and will prove to be a great place for new members to keep their bees as they begin their journey as beekeepers. A few of the committee members visited it recently and were impressed with the site. With some help from other volunteers (subtle hint...) Alan will be putting up some stands over the winter and we have space for a shed as well! We are hugely grateful for the generosity of David Robinson at Suttons Seeds for providing the space for us and supplying the heavy equipment to level the site and start preparing it.

I am glad to report also that Glyn is recovering well, it was good to see him at the last apiary meeting of the season advising on feeding and final winter preparations.

I look forward to seeing you at some of the winter events.

**James Schindler-Ord**  
**Vice-Chairman**



## DIARY DATES

### **Branch Winter Talk: Honey Bee Microscopy**

Speaker: Graham Kingham

**October 14 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm**

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

### **Cockington Apple Day**

Visit the TBBK stall at Cockington Apple Day and stock up on local honey and other hive products!

**October 20 @ 10:00 am - 4:00 pm**

Cockington Court, Cockington Lane, Cockington, Devon TQ2 6XA

### **Branch AGM**

The formal business will be preceded by a talk by John Risdon about The Rural History of South Devon. Please come along to contribute to the AGM.

**November 9 @ 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm**

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

### **Branch Winter Talk: First steps in mead making**

Speaker: James Schindler-Ord

**November 11 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm**

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

### **Branch Christmas Social**

Christmas Social - Please bring a small plate of food to share.

**December 9 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm**

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



## BEE KEEPING GALLERY

A few photos from late summer and early autumn...



The end of season BBQ was a great success, it was well attended and the family of the late John Vyle, a respected local beekeeper who was a member of TBBK for years came to present the branch with a beautiful hand made bench in his memory. As well as the delicious BBQ food, members also contributed a host of delicious cakes and other food!

No, not bees, but very inquisitive new neighbours at our new apiary site near Ocombe Farm. A few of us went to have a look at the new site which will provide somewhere for new beekeepers to keep their hive for their first two years of beekeeping.





The observation hive at the apiary houses the colony which will be used in the large observation chamber at the Devon County Show next year. In the picture on the left you can see that the bees have started to build their comb down nicely off the bottom of the top-bar only frames. In the picture on the right the bees are being fed Ambrosia in an unusual metal rapid feeder.



And finally, when we were taking the super's off our own hives, I accidentally spilled a drop of honey. When I looked back at the hive, I noticed a little huddle of bees having a feed from the honey. Very cute!

## COCKINGTON APIARY SHOP



Following on from the success of the apiary shop this summer, we have decided to run the shop again next year stocking essential sundries such as frames, foundation and supers. Alan will be compiling a price list which will be published in Buzz and will also be available to look at on the website and at the apiary.

The shop will be open **strictly between 1 pm and 2 pm on Saturday afternoons**, so be prepared with your orders! This will give Alan a chance to partake in the apiary beekeeping.

Any supplies needed from the shop for the afternoon's beekeeping at the apiary must be run by Alan so he can keep a note of the stock used.

*Please note we will no longer be providing a service for special orders.*

Also, on another note, Wendy Ashley has a stock of new one-pound and half-pound honey jars for sale if you need any.

## HONEYBEES MAKE THEIR HOME IN A CELLO

The Bee Cello at Holme Pierrepont Hall, Nottingham, is truly unique and is a colony additional to the eight beehives now located in the estate gardens at Holme Pierrepont Hall. The cello, which is home to over 20,000 local honeybees can be seen by visitors on days when the gardens are open to the public.

The apiary installation is part of 'B-Good', a 4-year project being conducted in collaboration with Nottingham Trent University and other European partners and is the UK base for a European project aimed at further understanding bee behaviour and promoting healthy and sustainable beekeeping. The project will involve field studies and hive monitoring using new and innovative technologies, never before used in this field.



Holme Pierrepont Hall is believed to be the perfect setting for the hives, because of the estate's proximity near Nottingham. Local honeybees typically thrive in a semi-rural environment like Holme Pierrepont Hall, because of the access to suburban gardens with a wide diversity of planting for the bees to forage in. Honeybees situated in more rural areas typically have fewer foraging opportunities, because of the intensity of crop-farming in many areas. The gardens at Holme Pierrepont Hall are also the perfect home for the bees because there's no use of pesticides on the estate.

The Nottingham Trent University contribution to the B-Good project is coordinated by local expert, Dr. Martin Bencsik, who is responsible for looking after the apiary. Martin says, "Honeybees are quite lazy in nature and don't travel far unnecessarily. They fly as little as possible and typically stay within a 3-mile radius of the hive. Only 10% of the hive will forage daily - even on a busy day, but this still represents 36 thousand bees contributing to pollination in Holme Pierrepont's neighbourhood.

At this time of year, the bees can often be seen covered in a white powder (as pictured) which is often the pollen from Himalayan Balsam, found in abundance in the area.

Dr Martin Bencsik originally came up with the idea of using a cello as a hive, after working for a year with Wolfgang Buttress, the Nottingham modern artist responsible for creating the multi-sensory sculpture 'The Hive' at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

Part of Martin's work is to study the sound and vibrations made by bees and as his wife is a professional cellist, it was a natural thought to consider using a cello as a hive. Up until recently, Martin had the cello in his garden in West Bridgford.



The Bee Cello can be seen in the estate gardens at Holme Pierrepont Hall on days when the gardens are open to the public.

Article adapted from <https://www.holmepierreponthall.com/the-bee-cello.html>

# COCKINGTON APPLE FESTIVAL

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

Apple Day has been a popular event at Cockington for 25 years. This year Cockington Court are holding a smaller version of Apple day, though it looks like there will still be a lot to see and do.

Torbay Beekeepers will be having a stall at the Apple Festival selling the club's honey. **If you would like an opportunity to sell some of your own honey**, or other products of the hive, then come along and volunteer for an hour or so. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me and let me know what times you can do.

Further information from Cockington Court's website...



## **A Free & Fun Family Day Out**



**Cockington Apple Festival - Sunday 20 October**

A bite-size version of the traditional day, celebrating all things Apple.

After 25 years of Apple Day we are introducing Cockington Apple Festival, a bite-size version celebrating the history, wildlife and all things apple.

Along with the tradition of the day there will be games, craft, cider and apples galore. The stalls will also be apple related. will be Apple Sculptures and Workshops along with the traditional Apple Press demonstrations.

**Come along and join the fun!**

For further info: <https://www.cockingtoncourt.org/whats-on/apple-festival>

## MALE HONEYBEES BLIND QUEEN WHEN MATING

### Male honeybees inject queens with blinding toxins during sex

They say love is blind, but if you're a queen honeybee it could mean true loss of sight.

New research finds male honeybees inject toxins during sex that cause temporary blindness. All sexual activity occurs during a brief early period in a honeybee's life, during which males die and queens can live for many years without ever mating again.

UC Riverside's Boris Baer, a professor of entomology, said males develop vision-impairing toxins to maximize the one fleeting opportunity they may ever get to father offspring.

"The male bees want to ensure their genes are among those that get passed on by discouraging the queen from mating with additional males," said Baer, senior author of the study "She can't fly if she can't see properly."

The toxins identified by the team are proteins contained in male bees' seminal fluid, which is a substance that helps maintain sperm. Earlier work by Baer's team also discovered honeybee seminal fluid toxins that kill the sperm of rivals. All honeybees make these proteins, though some may make more of it than others.

Roughly 10 years ago, Baer and his international team began analysing which proteins could be found in honeybees' fluids.

"We found at least 300 of these 'James Bonds,' little secret agents with specific missions," he said.

The team was not entirely surprised to find a protein that attacks the sperm of other males, as this behaviour can be found in other insects. But they were

surprised to find the protein that impacts genes responsible for vision in the queen's brains.

To test whether the protein had this effect, Baer's team presented inseminated queens with a flickering light, and measured her response to it via tiny electrodes in her brain. The vision and corresponding flight-impairing effects kick in within hours, but Baer notes that it is likely reversible in the long term because queens do tend to fly successfully later in life when they establish new colonies.

As part of this project, Barbara Baer-Ihmhoof conducted experiments in which she installed tiny tags on queen bees' backs read by scanners at the hive entrances. "The tags were similar to those at the self-checkout counter in grocery stores," Baer-Ihmhoof said. The experiment showed queens had difficulties finding their way back to their colonies if they had been inseminated.



A molecular understanding of honeybee mating habits could eventually be used to improve breeding programs and help insects that pollinate many of the foods we eat.

"More than a third of what we eat depends on bee pollination, and we've taken bees' services for granted for a very long time," Baer said. "However, bees have experienced massive die-offs in the last two decades. Anything we can do to help improve their numbers will benefit humans, too."

Article adapted from:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190910080019.htm>

## HONEY RECIPES

### Dairy-free Honey Bread

A sweet, soft, wonderfully moreish tea bread. Makes 1 small loaf

#### Ingredients

225 g plain flour  
115 g caster sugar  
115 g honey  
150 ml hot water  
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda  
Zest of 1 lemon

1. Preheat the oven to 160 c/gas mark 3. Butter a 450 g loaf tin and line it with baking paper.
2. Mix the flour and sugar together in a large bowl.
3. Melt the honey and water in a small pan. Sprinkle the bicarbonate of soda over the water mixture and stir. Pour this over the dry ingredients, add the lemon zest and mix just until incorporated.
4. Turn the mixture into the prepared tin and bake in the oven for 50–60 minutes.
5. Remove from the tin and brush the top of the warm bread with honey for a nice sticky finish. Cool, then serve thinly sliced.

### Honey Cider Chutney

#### Ingredients

400 g apples, finely diced  
300 g pears  
300 g onions, finely chopped  
150 ml cider vinegar  
50 ml cider (plus a little extra, if needed)  
175 g honey

150 g prunes, destoned and chopped  
3 fresh bay leaves  
2 tsp mixed spice  
A pinch of salt  
1 thumb of fresh ginger, peeled and finely diced

1. Put all the ingredients into a large, heavy pan.
2. Slowly bring to the boil. Lower heat. Simmer for 30 mins to 1 hr. Stir regularly. If it starts to dry out towards the end of cooking, trickle in a little more cider.
3. The chutney's ready when it's glossy, thick and nicely melded together, though you want to keep discernible pieces of fruit/veg throughout. To test it's done; drag a wooden spoon through the pan. If it parts enough to reveal the base of the pan, it's done.
4. Place in sterilised jars with plastic-coated screw-top lids while it's still warm.

## **Honey Roasted Butternut Squash Soup**

Serves: 4

### **Ingredients**

1 kg butternut squash, peeled, deseeded & cut into wedges  
3 tbsp olive oil  
60 ml honey  
½ tsp nutmeg  
sea salt & freshly cracked black pepper, to taste  
2 onions, chopped 3 cloves garlic, crushed  
2 sticks celery, chopped  
1.25 litres vegetable stock  
3 tbsp chopped fresh sage

### **For the Yogurt Sauce:**

130 g Greek Yogurt  
1 tbsp butter  
50 g pine nuts, toasted, reserving a few for garnish  
2 tbsp chopped fresh sage, reserving a few leaves for garnish

1. Preheat the oven to 180 c/Gas Mark 4
2. For the yogurt sauce, place 100 g Greek yogurt in a bowl. Melt the butter in a small pan over a medium heat. Add pine nuts and 2 tbsp sage; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Stir until the nuts and butter turn brown. Stir the butter mixture into the yogurt. Season the sauce to taste. Cover and chill.
3. Place the butternut squash and remaining sage into a large roasting tray and toss in 2 tbsp of the olive oil, honey, nutmeg and seasoning. Roast in the oven for about 40 minutes or until the butternut squash is softened and cooked through. Set aside.
4. In a large pan heat 1 tbsp of olive oil over a medium-low heat and add the onion, garlic and celery. Cook until the onion is softened and golden.
5. Add the butternut squash to the pan along with the stock and sage. Stir to combine and then transfer to a blender and blend until smooth.
6. Add the contents back to the pan and return the pan to the heat to simmer. Stir through the remaining yogurt. Serve topped with the yogurt sauce, a sage leaf and a sprinkling of pine nuts.