

# TORBAY 'BUZZ' FOR OCTOBER 2008.

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TORBAY BRANCH, DBKA.

President : Mr. Ron Brown. OBE.

Web sites: southdevonbees.org & devonbeekeepers.co.uk

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

**Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>.** *The Gerston Christian Centre, off Torquay Rd. , Paignton. Commencing at 7-30 p.m. Speaker, Mr. Fred Rice. Subject: 'My Beekeeping Experiences'. plus the usual light refreshments & Branch library.*

**Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>.** *The Gerston Christian Centre, off Torquay Rd. , Paignton. Commencing at 7-30 p.m. Speaker, Mr. Glyn Davies plus the usual. light refreshment & Branch library.*

**Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>.** *The Paignton Club, The Esplanade, Paignton. The Branch Annual General Meeting. Commencing at 2 p.m. with guest speaker Mr. Brian Maddock who will present an illustrated talk on Antarctica.*

**Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>.** *The Gerston Christian Centre, off Torbay Rd., Paignton. A light-hearted Branch Christmas quiz evening plus Christmas refreshments.*

**Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>.** *The Paignton Club. The Branch Annual Dinner. Details to be announced later.*

**Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup>. April, 2009.** *Stoneleigh, Warwickshire. The BBKA Spring Convention. Details of Branch visit to be announced.*

## THE WINTER PROGRAMME.

Our 2008 / 9 winter programme commences this year on the second Tuesday ( 14<sup>th</sup> ) of October Mr. Fred Rice will be giving us a talk describing his experiences gained ( suffered ? ) during a lifetime of keeping bees. Fred intended to speak to us last year but, due to a lost letter, arrangements went 'pear-shaped'. Hopefully, this year's talk will come to pass and we shall have a first-class evening of beekeeping reminiscences. The Branch library will be available during the evening to enable members to take out some beekeeping books for the forthcoming winter evenings - plus the usual light refreshments of tea, coffee and biscuits..

## THE BRANCH AGM.

Our Branch Annual General Meeting will be held at the Paignton Club on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will commence at 2 p.m. with an illustrated talk by Mr. Brian Maddock of Brixham who will dazzle us with photographs taken during his visits to Antarctica. The serious business of the AGM will commence around 3 p.m. after members have partaken of the always generous light refreshments. Those

members who have attended our AGMs in past years will know that the necessary business of reports, acceptance of minutes and the election of your new committee is pushed forward by our chairman with the minimum of formality. As Jim has so often said: "beekeeping should be enjoyable" – and that includes the AGM! However, on a more serious note, yet another year has passed since our last AGM at the Paignton Club and your committee members and officers are now a year older. If Torbay Branch is to survive as a bastion of good beekeeping in Torbay the younger members Branch MUST get involved in the running of our 'club'. Please give serious consideration to coming onto the committee and giving a little of your time to help keep the Branch's wheels oiled. Call your Secretary on 01803 325750 and volunteer to stand for election.

The minutes of last year's Meeting, plus this year's agenda, will be posted out to members with the November 'Buzz'.

*Doug Westaway.*

## MORE DIRE WARNINGS!

British honey is expected to run out in three months, bee experts predicted yesterday. A third of bees are thought to have died in the last year, killed by bad weather, insecticides and the soaring number of mites. Tim Lovett, the president of the British Beekeeping Association, also said apple and pear harvests could be cut by 90% because there would be no bees to carry out vital pollination, leading to a failure of the fruit to develop and grow. Other fruit and vegetables likely to be badly affected include strawberries, raspberries, runner beans and oilseed rape. Mr. Lovett said: "It is likely that bee losses next year will be 40%. Food production may be badly affected." He added that: "We have asked the Government to commit more money to beekeeping research. We need about £8 million over five years to prevent this very negative scenario developing further."

*Geoff Maynard, Daily Express, September 5<sup>th</sup>. 2008.*

## RAIN STOPS PLAY!

Twelve million honey bees were accidentally released after the lorry carrying them overturned on a Canadian motorway. Police said a downpour of rain had helped to contain the bees near New Brunswick. "Bees don't like the rain and thousands of them are hanging onto the back of this truck and on the pavement" said a spokesman.

*Western Morning News, July 2008.*

### **BEE DISEASE INSURANCE LTD.**

All members with bees pay their Bee Disease Insurance ( BDI ) premiums whilst paying the annual DBKA subscription. Except for the 'big boys' with large numbers of colonies, the average member insures their colonies under Scheme 'A'. Currently, the threat from the varroa mite tends to mask the very real menace to the honeybees' health posed by a variety of well-established 'traditional' diseases – the American and European Foul Broods, Acarine mites, Nosema, Chalk Brood and the many other viruses which can infest a colony. Scheme 'A' provides some compensation for the losses incurred by a beekeeper due to incidents of American ( AFB ) and European ( EFB ) Foul Brood diseases. During the past accounting year BDI received 68 claims from 54 beekeepers resulting in payments of £5593. AFB accounted for 7 claims from 7 beekeepers at a cost of £507. EFB was the cause of 61 claims received from 47 beekeepers at a total cost of £5085. These claims were received from 35 separate Associations.

Dull, dry stuff, perhaps, but the BDI Schemes do very much more than merely compensate beekeepers for the loss of their equipment. They encourage the early detection and reporting of Foul Brood diseases permitting prompt treatment and eradication to the benefit of all beekeepers. BDI also works assiduously to promote and support research into bee health. All of its officers are unpaid with many serving the beekeeping community over many years. To put a friendly face to BDI, the current President is our good friend from Newton Abbot Branch, Glyn Davies, who will be giving us a talk ( not on BDI! ) this coming winter.

*Doug Westaway.*

### **THE CHAIRMAN'S 'CHAT'.**

There isn't one! Our Chairman has set off with his mates on their motorcycles for a touring holiday. He left without leaving a written word behind him for your desperate editor. We wish him an enjoyable and safe holiday with good, dry, 'biking' weather.

*Editor.*

### **THE HIVE INSPECTION.**

*Through late October siftings of sunlight and leaf-shadow,  
The quiet come-and-go of bees around my head,  
still launching  
Up and away into volumes of shining air, off to forage  
While I fan smoke, and lift in turn the frames.*

*A black jostle of bodies from a ferment in darkness  
Into sunlight they stalk their cells ,*

*purposeful, intent.*

*It's what they came here for . Every one a fuse-particle.  
Every one burning up a life.*

*Weeks back, one windless afternoon, they filled the air  
With their sailing, cruising, thin murmuring voices,  
Until some signal homed them in on a bramble bush, and  
they clotted.  
A black ball, badged, fizzing and dripping among the  
manacles of thorn.*

*I blew smoke across the seeth of their fusion, lifted them –  
so light!  
Laid them on a white sheet to coalesce with waifs and  
wanderers.  
Later, up-ended onto frames, they broke the core and  
sank away  
Like dark waters lowering, going to ground. I fed them  
syrup.*

*Watched. And waited. Scouts returned swaggered with  
pollen sacs.  
Now, children of that swarm are the foragers who've  
found the ivy wall.  
They come trousered in pollen, burrowing into the  
scrumble of bodies,  
Brewing enzyme-alchemy, mixing grains and nectar to  
make gold.*

*I am closing up their hive for winter. Seeing they have  
stores enough  
To last them through. And still they fyl, in the mesh of  
sunlight  
Anf leaf shadow, garnering and murmuring in the Autumn  
sun.  
I leave them to winter in their golden darkness.*

**By Rowland Molon, East Devon Branch.**

### **JACK'S 'TOPICAL TIPS'.**

Well, everyone, the honey-gathering season is now well and truly over and all extracted, equipment all washed and cleaned and put away until next year. Apiguard should all be finished by now and those members treating with Oxalic acid will need to wait until December before using; there should be very little brood then. Now is the time to start thinking of the plans for next year such as making an increase or whether to unite colonies to decrease. By now all colonies should have been checked to make sure the colonies are queen-right. If any look wrong or too weak to go through the winter they should be united to another colony rather than lose it during the winter months. Feeding should be nearly finished by now and a National colony should have about eight frames of stores. Our President, Ron Brown, always used to put a super above a queen-excluder and let the bees store the syrup above. This, to me, seems a good idea as you know they will have enough stores to last the winter. Nothing much else to do except to clean up the apiary site. Make sure that all the brood boxes are sound and the roofs watertight.

*Jack Berry.*