TORBAY '*BUZZ'* FOR NOVEMBER 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, November 11th. *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 15th. *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. AGM from 3 p.m.*
Tuesday, December 9th. *The Gerston Christian Centre, off Torbay Rd., Paignton. A light-hearted Branch Christmas quiz evening plus Christmas refreshments.*
Tuesday, January 13th. *The Gerston Christian centre, off Torquay Rd., Paignton. Winter evening meeting. Details of speaker to be announced later.*
Friday, January 23rd. *The Paignton Club. The Branch Annual Dinner. Details to be announced later.*
Saturday, 18th. April, 2009. *Stoneleigh, Warwickshire. The BBKA Spring Convention. Details of Branch visit to be announced later.*

THE WINTER PROGRAMME.

Elsie and Fred Rice very kindly came along from Sidmouth on the evening of Tuesday October 14th. to get our Branch winter programme off to a great start. Fred held his audience enthralled with his excellent talk entitled 'Honey and Hive Products for Health' from which I think, everyone took away a better understanding of how honey, propolis and pollen are currently finding important applications across a range of difficult medical conditions. It was also very pleasing to see a large and appreciative audience of Branch members.

On November 10th. Glyn Davies of Newton Abbot Branch, past President of the British Beekeepers' Association and current editor of 'Beekeeping' will be presenting his talk on 'Beekeeping and Global Warming'. After the past two summers, Glyn may have an uphill battle on his hands to convince us that that our weather IS getting any warmer! So come along and let the ever-persuasive Glyn change our minds.

PRESERVATIVE POWERS OF HONEY!

Alexander the Great conquered the then-known world and died in mysterious circumstances thousands of miles from home. His soldiers carried his body home to Alexandia in a golden coffin filled with honey – one use Fred Rice failed to mention!

The Roman Emperor, Augustus, worried that he might not live forever, asked a centenarian how he had managed to live to be a hundred. The reply : "Oil without and honey within".

Donated by Sarah White.

THE NEONICOTINOIDS.

The proposed causes of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) have, over the past year or two, been many and varied – and have often found mention in past issues of 'Buzz'. Phil Chandler of Totnes has e-mailed details of another possible suspect – a relatively new class of insecticides, the neonicotinoids. These turn up with at least five different chemical names- including imidacloprid and clothianidin - and a bewildering variety of commercial brand names - 25 at the last count! Most are rated 'highly toxic' to bees both on contact or orally ingested and even the 'best' are rated 'toxic'.

Maryann Frazier of Penn State University reports: ' Honey bees are vulnerable to many of the insecticides used to control damaging pest species by fruit, vegetable, nut and seed growers. Growers dependant on honey bees for the pollination of their crop(s) must constantly maintain a delicate balance between protecting their crops from pests and pathogens and protecting the insects that are necessary to pollinate these crops. The recent dramatic die-off of tens of thousands of honey bees has left many beekeepers devastated and possibly many growers without the quantity and quality of bees needed to pollinate crops. A research group, the Colony Collapse Disorder Working Group is trying to determine what factors are responsible for these unprecedented losses. Chemical contamination is one of several contributing factors that are being investigated. These include chemicals used within the hives as well as chemical pesticides used on crops that may inadvertently find their way into hives. It is advisable to use pesticides with care, erring on the precautionary side. The neonicotinoids are a relatively new class of insecticides that impact on the central nervous system of insects. They act either as contact insecticides or, applied to plants, they are translocated throughout the plant tissue, making all parts of the plant toxic to pests that feed on the plants. While Imidacloprid (first registered in 1992) is the best-known insecticide in this class, there have been a number of new neonicitinoids introduced since then. Their use has increased dramatically over the past few years and they are now the most widely used group of insecticides in the US. Their uses include seed treatment for corn, cotton, canola and sunflowers, foliar sprays of fruit, nut and coffee crops, granular

and drench applications in turf, ornamentals, fruit crops and in forests.

There is conflicting information about the effects of neonicotinides on honey bees and different chemicals in this class are known to vary in their toxicity to bees. However both imidacloprid and clothianidin are highly toxic to honey bee. clothianidin has the potential for toxic chronic exposure to honey bees, as well as other non-target pollinators through the translocation of clothianidin residues in nectar and pollen. In honey bees this exposure may include lethal and / or sub-lethal effects in the larvae and reproductive effects on the queen. Documented sub-lethal effects of neonicotinides include physiological effects that impact enzyme activity to impairment of olfaction memory. Behavioural effects are reported on motor activity that impact navigation and orientation and feeding behaviour. Research has found that imidacloprid impairs the memory and brain metabolism of bees, particularly the area of the brain used for making new memories. Recent research done on imidacloprid looked at crops where it was used as a seed treatment. The chemical was present by systemic uptake in corn and sunflowers in levels high enough to pose a threat to honey bees. In 2002 a broad survey for pesticide residues in pollen was conducted across France. Imidacloprid was found in 49% of the 81 samples!

For more information on insecticides and much, much, more look in ***www.biobees.com*****.**

THIS MONTH IN THE APIARY.

Clean up all equipment in storage. Stack brood boxes and supers with a sulphur burner to prevent wax moth damage. This is particularly important if you decide to retain used brood comb for use next year. If you have a problem in your apiary with nosema, then make sure that you destroy the spores in the combs by fumigating with acetic acid. Better still, why keep used brood frames? Do away with disease by melting them down and exchanging your old wax for new foundation at the Spring Convention in April! Repair any damage to boxes and roofs. Make sure that the roofs on your 'working' hives are totally watertight. The winter weather will soon find the weaknesses and a wet hive will soon lead to the loss of a colony! Give your tarred-up smoker an overhaul and good clean-out and you can feel smug in the spring when it 'smokes' perfectly. There will still be some activity at the entrances of the hives on sunny days. Foragers will bring home scraps from the odd flowers that are still out in bloom. Cleansing flights will take place and some 'youngsters' will take their first flights, memorising landmarks around the hives.

The main treatment for varroa using a thymol-based miticide must have been completed. Air temperatures are now too low for the thymol to be effective. Those mites, hidden away in the sealed brood cells of August / September, will be exposed to formic acid treatment as temperatures continue to fall and the queen minimises her egg-laying in December / January.

The ivy flower still retains some of its flowers and will continue to form a useful source of late pollen. A further use for ivy – or at least the leaves – is in forecasting true love:

Ivy, ivy. I love you,
In my bosom I put you,
The first young man who speaks to me,
My future husband shall be!

Based loosely upon Messrs. Thorne's 'This Month in the Apiary'.

YES, IT'S BEEN A MISERABLE SUMMER !!

The county's oldest honey fair came close to cancellation for the first time in its 731-year history because of a shortage of its main ingredient. Honey is in such short supply this year that several exhibitors had to pull out of the event at Callington, Cornwall - which dates from 1267.

Beekeepers say that the shortage was caused by wet weather during July and August which led to some colonies starving because of the shortage of flowers. Others blame the parasitic varroa mite.

David Jones, secretary of the Callington Honey Fair, said: "I was concerned that there would not be enough honey". The shortage led to an increase in the price of a 1lb. jar of honey to nearly £4.

Steve Morley who has been keeping bees for 15 years estimates that honey production in Cornwall is down by **80%** on previous years. He had to feed his bees sugar solution to prevent them from starving as they have been unable to produce enough honey to feed themselves through the coming winter.

Newspaper article submitted by Jim Mogridge.

BEE HEALTH – A CONCERN FOR ALL.

The plight of the honey bee is becoming an increasingly high-profile issue in the light of the serious impact on the environment and agricultural output if honey bee numbers continue to decline.

It is estimated that the value of UK agricultural pollination provided by honey bees is £165 million. The NFU has, this week, met with the British Beekeepers' Association, the Bee farmers Association and Rowse Honey Ltd. to discuss the crisis.

Rowse Honey Ltd. has confirmed that it will invest £100,000 in honey bee health over the next three years . The group has agreed to meet regularly during the coming months to campaign, monitor and tackle the issues arising from the declining bee numbers.

Advertiser/ Post article submitted by Peter Tattersall.

DO *YOUR* 'BIT' FOR YOUR BEES!

Make certain all colonies have generous stores for the winter. Always fit mouse-guards. Ensure roofs and hives are in good condition and fully weatherproof. Tie or weigh all hives down ahead of winter gales. Always treat for varroa in December / January. In out-apiaries make certain that fences / gates are secure against cattle, horses & sheep. Regularly visit the hives throughout the winter; monitor the entrances and check the weights!