

TORBAY 'BUZZ' FOR JANUARY 2009.

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TORBAY BRANCH, DBKA.

President : Mr. Ron Brown. OBE.

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

Tuesday, January 13th. *The Gerston Christian Centre, off Torquay Rd., Paignton. Winter evening meeting commencing at 7-30 p.m.. Phil Chandler will be describing bee keeping using the Top Bar Hive.*

Friday, January 23rd. *The Paignton Club. The Branch Annual Dinner. See @Chairman's Chat'.*

Tuesday, February 10th. *The Gerston Christian Centre, off Torquay Rd., Paignton. Winter evening meeting commencing at 7-30 p.m.. Mr. Richard Ball presents 'The Foundation of Good Comb'.*

Saturday, March 28th. *Cockington Apiary. Spring-clean of the Apiary. Working party commences at 10 a.m.*

Saturday, 11th. April. *Cockington Apiary. Commencing at 2-30 p.m. Start of the summer programme. Checking all colonies, etc.*

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

Tuesday, April 21st. *Provisional announcement of a talk by Prof. Ellis at Kelly College, Tavistock. See Chairman's Chat for further details.*

Saturday, 25th. April. *Cockington Apiary. Commencing at 2-30 p.m. A talk over the proposed Apiary summer programme.*

THE CHAIRMAN'S CHAT.

A Report on the DBKA Executive Council Meeting at Buckfast on 6th. December.

I attended the above Meeting together with Kingsley to represent the Torbay branch I thought that you may be interested in some of the matters discussed. As one would expect at these meetings, a lot of time is taken up with some seemingly small points. A lot of hot air!

1) The Holsworthy and Newton Abbot Branches gave insights into their respective Branch activities. Holsworthy Branch has a small apiary with a membership growth over the past 18 months of some 50%. Winter meetings are held at a local pub. They also hold a Spring Convention along the lines of Stoneleigh with speakers, stands, etc. Worth going along to on the 28th. February next.

Newton Abbot Branch. They state that they have a nice apiary at Clay Lane, Newton Abbot. (It can't be better than ours!) where the bees were quite a nuisance and followed everyone – even going home in the cars but with re-queening this has stopped. Everyone is encouraged to handle

the bees with a rent-a-hive scheme for new members.

Queen-rearing courses are run alongside bee keeping courses during the winter with the cost put at £60 for ten evenings. Glyn Davies hosts these sessions. The Branch has always found that requests for funds from various bodies have been looked upon very favourably.

2) Torbay Branch has been invited to speak at the next Executive Meeting. Any ideas on subject??

3) There was a request for the names of Branch members with at least 50 years membership of the DBKA. I have put forward John Vyle's and Maurice Satterly's names to receive a presentation in due course – probably at the AGM at Exeter.

4) With the increase in DBKA membership, our magazine, 'Beekeeping', now has a publication of 925 copies in place of the 900 copies previously. This is obviously very good. Glyn Davies, our editor, is continuing to ask for contributions for the journal. Please think about a comment or an experience during your bee keeping this past year that you may wish to share with others and send it along to Glyn.

5) The Devon Bee Keeping Association is the second largest in the British Bee Keeping Association – Yorkshire being the top of the pile. However, Devon is only SEVENTH in the pecking order when it comes to exam entries and passes. We are encouraged to improve on this. Interestingly, the Husbandry Examination entry was the lowest. Perhaps Torbay Branch could lead the way this year with the 'Basic' exam. for starters. How about it, members? Speak to Jack Berry for details. It's easy enough to pass and passing it will give you great satisfaction!

6) Another question that was discussed at some length was 'Do we want the DBKA Year Book?'. It costs a £1000 each year to publish this. Is it a waste of money or do you read and use it? Perhaps a few copies per Branch would be sufficient. Could you let me or Douglas know your thoughts on this ASAP? We have to report back!

7) It was stressed that winter losses this year will be probably due to colony starvation during February / March. Make sure that you have a supply of candy ready to put over the feed hole in the crown board if you think that any of your hives is giving you cause for concern.

8) Holsworthy Branch was granted a sum of £1500 from DBKA's funds to proceed with their plans at their Branch apiary. The loan is to be repaid at £300 p.a.

9) We have a Professor Ellis from the USA on a visit to the UK. It is proposed that he speaks to us here in Devon on Tuesday, April 21st. The venue has yet to be arranged but will probably Kelly College, Tavistock. We have a flavour of Prof. Ellis's thoughts on GMOs and honeybees from articles in recent BBKA News. There are several other topics that he is prepared to lecture on. These top lecturers from the USA never visit this part of

the country and Prof. Ellis should be very interesting to listen to. Do come along. More details will be published in 'Beekeeping' later. P.S. There will be NO CHARGE!!

10) There will be a 'Bee Disease Examination' at a date and a venue to be announced. Samples to be brought along for analysis on the day. Again, details will be published in 'Beekeeping' nearer the date. This is another 'MUST'.

11) The Devon County Show in May. The Show Committee would like ALL Branches to participate by putting together a Branch stand. – even more so than last year! To this end, please think about our stand entry from Torbay. Ideas and help needed, please.

12) There was a lot of talk on delegates to the British Bee Keeping Association's meeting in January and what they were instructed to say and what to vote for. To fully report on all of this here would be boring for you, I think.

To conclude, please have a look at the menu included with the January 'Buzz'. Hopefully, let me know your thoughts about this. Is it what you would like for the Branch Dinner on 23rd January. Is it too expensive? Too cheap? I **MUST** know numbers and your requirements by 12th January.

May I wish you all, on behalf of the Branch officials and committee members:

A HAPPY & FRUITFUL NEW YEAR.

Jim

Mogridge.

BRANCH 'OLD TIMERS'

Mr. ARTHUR JONES.

Our Cockington Apiary hut is named after him. He was a gentle man who used to doff his cap when he met a lady. He worked for a good part of his life in a furniture shop in what is now Fleet Walk. I think his job was measuring curtains but he was good at everything he did, including being our Branch Treasurer for many years. I remember at one of our Branch committee meetings in Kingskerswell, Arthur gave us a run-down on the Branch finances. This young guy told Arthur how he should be keeping the books. Arthur's face went a funny colour and when we got out in the car the air went blue! I had never heard Arthur speak like that before! I will not tell you the young chap's name but he now keeps our books.

Arthur was a good beekeeper. He had three or four WBC hives at the top of his garden in Coombe Lane, Torquay. You needed to be a goat to get up there. His workshop was up there too. Arthur would get a piece of old furniture and cut it down to make all his own frames. They were just as good as you could buy. He also made his own foundation.

People told Arthur that he would make more money if he kept his bees in national hives. His answer was: "I never get less than 40 – 50 lbs. per hive so why should I change?" His hives were kept in an immaculate condition, all with glass crown boards with a hessian potato sack over to keep the glass from causing condensation. But one thing he was no good at was finding a queen. Arthur also used to organise all the Branch annual honey shows.

Arthur's next door neighbour in Coombe Lane was also a beekeeper with four or five WBC hives in his front garden but they never got on with each other. It's a funny old world!

Contributed by Maurice Satterly.

A 'WILD ABOUT YOUR GARDEN' BEEKEEPER!.

Did you see the TV programme on 18th December? It was a garden in Milton Keynes and the couple wanted to make a wild life friendly garden. The money they spent on bushes, trees, etc! They also had a garden pond. Their idea was to attract all the insects and birds in the area. Near the end of the programme a van drove up whose logo said something about 'gardens and bees' and lo and behold, out came a lovely white WBC hive. They were lucky enough to get a swarm nearby and it was placed in the hive and covered about four frames. Some two weeks later the lady programme presenter turned up – why don't they get someone who knows what they are talking about? She inquired how are the bees were doing? The proud owner said that they were now on five frames and then pulled out an outer frame to show her. She was so delighted and said: "You have got some honey already!"

Contributed by Maurice Satterly

THE WINTER PROGRAMME.

Our December winter meeting turned out to be the enjoyable social gathering as promised in the program. Our chairman hosted the evening which featured a general knowledge quiz pitched at the right level to challenge us with questions we all knew - but whose answers just eluded us! Congratulations to the Wendy Ashley and Peter Tattersall 'team' who ended the evening convincing winners. To add to the occasion we all enjoyed Christmas cake, mince tarts and punch plus the usual tea, coffee and biscuits served before, during and after the quiz. A big 'thank you' to our chairman, the quiz master and the behind-the-scenes kitchen staff.

On Tuesday 13th January Phil Chandler has agreed to come along to explain to us how to keep bees using Phil's top-bar design of hive. This is a big departure from our 'conventional' bee keeping and this promises to be a fascinating and challenging evening with something for all Branch members. I know it's mid-winter but **please** make a real effort to come along and hear what Phil has to say - you'll not here this anywhere else!. Plus the usual refreshments – including some stale mince tarts!

IT'S A NEW YEAR. REMEMBER YOUR BEES!

It's been an unusually cold start to the winter. Shivers for us; ideal for wintering bees. Your bees will be tightly clustered with minimal brood. Now is the time to attack those remaining varroa mites exposed on the clustered bees by using a proprietary 'hive cleanser' or an oxalic acid preparation. For the sake of your bees' future survival : **TREAT YOUR BEES THIS MONTH!**

