

# The Tivvy Buzzette



The newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers ~ July 2018

Tiverton Beekeepers are a branch of The Devon Beekeepers Association. Registered Charity No 270675.

**Welcome to the July edition of the Buzzette.**

## **Branch Programme for July & August.**

Saturday 7th July. 2-4 pm. Visit to the Apiary of Baruch Livneh. Meet at Huntsham Village Hall car park - directions at the end of this programme of dates.

Wednesday 18th July Apiary Meeting from 6.30 pm at Knightshayes. Following the success of our newly introduced meetings at the Apiary in June, we will be holding another one on the 18th July. It is not intended to inspect the hives but have your suit with you just in case. The theme for the meeting will be 'Removing supers & Honey extraction'.

Saturday 28th July - visit our stand at Mid Devon Show

Saturday 28th July - Bee Health Day at Kennford hosted by the Exeter Branch. A very enjoyable & informative day - you must register in advance to attend.

Thursday 2nd August. Visit our display in the Bees & Honey Marquee at Honiton Show

Saturday 4th August. 2-4 pm. Visit to the Apiary of Keith Owers - more details in next month's Buzzette.

Saturday 18th August. Fellow Beekeepers from the Okehampton Branch will be visiting our Knightshayes Apiary, please come along to welcome them and help with refreshments.

## **Finally don't forget our Annual BBQ on Sunday 2nd September.**

Directions to Huntsham Village Hall

Huntsham, EX16 7NA. The sat-nav will bring you to the village.

Without sat-nav, go as thus:

Starting at **junction 27** on the M5, head west on the **A361** to **Tiverton** and **Barnstaple**. Take the **first exit** (only 200m from the M5) signposted to **Sampford Peverell** and **Halberton**. At the roundabout just off the motorway turn **Left** and drive for about 1/2 a mile right through the village of Sampford Peverell until you pass the last house on the Left, where you take a **Right** turn signposted **Uplowman** and **Huntsham**.

After just 100m turn **Left**, again signposted Uplowman and Huntsham, and drive about 1 mile to Uplowman, where you cross the main village street and continue straight on (there is a pub on your Right and a high signpost on your left which reads 'Huntsham 3.5 miles').

(If coming from Tiverton, drive to Uplowman and turn left at the village centre)

You now drive **slowly** for about **3.5 miles** along a narrow winding road, ignoring two left turns, until you reach the village and come to a triangle T-junction and turn **left** into the village of **Huntsham** (Right is to Bampton).

Passing the T-junction there is a large red gate on the right, and some 20 yards before that gate, also on the right, a steep uphill drive takes you up to the Village Hall car park; you can also park at the bottom of that drive.

**This year's  
Bee Health Day will be held on  
Saturday 28th July 2018  
at The Kenn Centre,  
Exeter Road,  
Kennford,  
Exeter EX6 7UE.**

**Organised by Devon Beekeepers' Association, Exeter Branch and sponsored by Bee Diseases Insurance Limited.**

Programme

- 0900-0930: Registration (complimentary tea and coffee available on arrival)

- 0930-1030: Talk on apiary hygiene and disease control

- 1030-1600: Workshop groups; break into small groups covering:  
Varroa biology,  
Integrated pest management and approved new veterinary medicines.  
Small hive beetle  
Asian hornet.

Diseased comb recognition - a range of diseased comb available to examine in detail selected by Bee Inspectors; test your knowledge; use of lateral flow devices.

Practical apiary disease inspection including checks for foul brood and exotic pests.

- 1600-1630: Question and answer session.

Presentations and workshops will be delivered by Bee Inspectors while practical sessions will take place at the centre or nearby.

**Cost:-** The cost of attending this event is £10 per person.

**To book:-** Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

**To reserve a place, please register online at [www.exeterbeekeepers.org.uk/bee-health-day-2018](http://www.exeterbeekeepers.org.uk/bee-health-day-2018)**

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**Used Beekeeping Equipment for sale:**

1 X Complete National Hive ( 2 supers). In very good condition.

1 X National Hive - no queen excluder , roof needs repair. In used condition.

1 X National Hive - no queen excluder , no roof. In well used condition.

1 X National Hive Floor, Brood Box & glass cover board. In well used condition

1 X heavy duty equipment box including beekeeping suit, hive tool, gloves, smoker etc in good condition.

Price for the lot - £ 260, can be sold in separate lots.

I have been asked to sell this on behalf of a local neighbour who's father kept bees. All the equipment can be seen at my garage. Tony 01884 841257

## Notes from the Branch apiary – July 2018

We've used the hive below – our strongest – to rear a few queens. The bees accepted 7 out of the 10 punched cells we gave them. Five of the 7 nucs we made up seem to be making good progress.



*The top part of the hive is isolated from the queen by a board with top entrance*



*The bottom brood box has the queen, the top one the queen cells*

We have more than a dozen colonies at present, including nucs and swarms collected. The plan is to rear queens again after the honey flow, and then divide most of the hives to make up nucs. Most of the bees will then go into winter in nuclei with young queens.

## To treat or not to treat, that is the question – chemotherapy for bees

The question of whether to treat or not is controversial. I've stopped treating my bees three years ago and have advocated refraining from using insecticides in beehives, feeling that the bees themselves will ultimately learn how to control this pest, and that treating them chemically only weakens them and postpones the day when varroa is no longer a major pest.

This essentially remains my view, but after seeing the damage caused by Deformed Wing Virus over the winter and having discussed it with others I'm now ready to moderate this approach somewhat. Although we think that the bees will ultimately learn to cope with the mite on their own, it may well be that this process of adaptation is going to take longer than we wish it to take; it may well take many years, possibly decades, and in the meantime where there is a substantial varroa load it does take its toll on the bees. It is undoubtedly a factor in the failure of some of our Branch colonies to come through the winter in good shape, and has clearly affected the development of some of them during the season.

In the Branch apiary we have lost more colonies than we had hoped, and in some (but not all) of the ones that came through there is evidence of Deformed Wing Virus (DWV) which the varroa mite helps to spread.

It is a genuine dilemma. The conservationist within us says 'nature knows best' so let us support it by not getting in the way with our crude and indiscriminate chemicals. But the honey producer within us snaps back that there is no honey in that idealism, and to be honest, though most of us don't depend for our living on our beekeeping, we do want to see some honey at the end of the season, and a good amount too. And we want our bees to be healthy now, not only in thirty years' time.

A compromise seems to be called for - life is full of those. What's a good compromise? First principle, never treat a colony that doesn't need it! It is poor practice to treat wholesale, regardless of the extent of the infestation. The chemicals harm the bees, reduce the fertility of both queen and drones, and damage the ecology of the hive by destroying hundreds of beneficial organisms. These chemicals are also expensive. Treating hives wholesale regardless of whether there is a problem or not is like administering chemotherapy to a whole town just in case there are some people with cancer. Let's be reluctant to treat, rather than trigger-happy. A mesh floor is a must, and a careful record of the mite drop should be kept over a period of time.

The average daily drop that should trigger a chemical intervention is another subject for debate and official recommendations vary widely. The NBU (National Bee Unit) recommends approximately 8 per day between February and November (but only 2 in December and January). In the State of Virginia they recommend 40! In that spirit of compromise, shall we say perhaps 10? Swarms often don't require treatment in their first year or more.

If you have the occasion to artificially swarm a colony, then the swarm you create has no brood for a few days and can be treated with Oxalic acid (3.2% solution dribbled between the frames, 5 ml per seam). The Parent colony will have no sealed brood after 3.5 weeks, and can then have the same treatment. In both cases only apply such a treatment if it is necessary.

We might like to try MAQS strips (which are based on formic acid) in cases of strong colonies suffering a substantial infestation. This treatment, suggested by our seasonal bee inspector David Packham, is applied for just a few days, kills the mites within capped cells as well as the phoretic ones, and can be applied at any time of the year. (Instructions have to be followed rigorously.)

This sort of drop over a week does require some action or the colony may well collapse later on.



Baruch.

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### **Offer of an Apiary site**

Good morning,

I am contacting you on the suggestion of Val Bone (sec EDBK).

We are located near Blackburn on the Blackdown Hills and are wondering if any of your members would be interested in siting hives on our land. We have twenty acres set to gorse, pasture, deciduous woodland and parkland oak/ash grazing; we are establishing a small orchard and happy to sow this with bee-friendly plants too if it proves a suitable site for hives.

I really know nothing about bees but would love to encourage pollinators on our land and especially round our new orchard. There are combs hanging off an oak on one of the internal boundaries, so some bees like it here, anyway!

Please let me know what you think,

Best wishes,

Susannah Commings

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If you have any interesting articles relating to Bees & Beekeeping, please do not hesitate to forward them to me [jon.gubb@voddens.co.uk](mailto:jon.gubb@voddens.co.uk) by the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in the next months edition of the Buzzette.

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