

The Tivvy Buzzette



The newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers ~ May 2019

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

Welcome to the May edition of the Buzzette.

Notes from the Chairman

Asian Hornet

This week, we received a report, of a captured Asian Hornet, the gentleman had researched information on the internet and based on that, was convinced, it was an Asian Hornet.

Derek Evans and myself responded, we found it to be a massive native species Hornet. The good news was that the message about these pest, is getting out there, but it is possible, there is some misinformation available, which led to this gentleman, being unnecessarily, being alarmed.

Nuc Boxes

We have upgraded, some nuc boxes, at the Apiary, as a result, we have some older boxes for disposal, if interested, please call and see Baruch at the Apiary on a Sunday morning, between 10.00 and 12.00. There are also, some syrup containers which need to be disposed of, if any use to anyone.

Christmas Dinner

We have provisionally, booked, our Xmas dinner, for December, we need someone, to co ordinate the event, if interested, please contact Jessica.

This year's display is making great progress!

We are in need of volunteers to help steward our display at the Devon County Show from Thursday 16th April to Saturday 18th April. Each day we need 4 people so they can work in shifts to cover 9am to 6pm. At least 2 people are required on the stand, per shift, throughout the day. We provide entry tickets.

Please can you let me know if and when you would be available, stating which day/s and morning or afternoon, so that I can organise a rota of help.

Contact me EITHER by email: jender008@gmail.com OR 07977 922173

Many thanks Derek



Notes from the apiary – April 2019

In February I estimated that at least 9 out of our 12 colonies would come through – I hardly dared hope for better after losing so many in winter 2017/18. It's a relief to be able to report that they have all come through, with just one struggling against Deformed Wing Virus. Although we have shook-swarmed this colony and are trying to revive it, if in the end it succumbs then our survival rate will be 11/12 or 92%. Unless like me you enjoy stretching the truth to its limit and recording a survival rate of 108% - a world record that defies the laws of mathematical probability: we went into winter with 12 and came out with 13! Naturally, this involves some creative accounting: the 13th colony was not taken into account in the autumn as it was not expected to survive, but was spared in the hope it would supersede before winter – it didn't, but came through anyway, with the same useless queen still doing her minimum, laying three eggs a day and enjoying the retired life when everybody else was working the flowers - the injustice of it all!



A view of seven of the hives from a familiar angle. On 21/04 we shook-swarmed the DWV-infected colony into the nuc box at the back. The double brood chamber in the middle is a strong colony that's being used to draw out brood comb in anticipation of making up nuclei later in May. The two colonies that are made up of supers only are being managed on the One Size Box (OSB) system. The WBC lifts were donated by the Knightshayes Veg garden, repaired, painted and floor made from scratch.

What is it that has made the difference this year, making possible a much better winter survival rate? The relatively mild winter and early spring compared to the snow we had in April 2018 must have helped; more crucially, our belated conversion from nature purists who preferred not to treat for varroa with chemicals, into boring pragmatists. We treated 4 hives with MAQs last September, and 5 others with oxalic acid vapour in January. One of the ones treated in September now calls for another treatment (with a drop of 6 or more per day), and this will have been done (28 April) by the time you read this report.

It is interesting to note that four of the colonies have not been treated at all in nearly four years, including no. 10, the one headed by our useless, retired queen. Taking it easy, not falling ill. No. 2 is another one, it is the colony we collected one cold January 2017 day from a roof in Lurley, where it had been in residence for years. On that occasion we found plenty of evidence of DWV, but a strong colony nonetheless. These bees have never known chemical interference and their varroa drop is low.

We are gradually painting the hives so they don't absorb moisture and chill the hives, especially in winter. (The paint used is exterior grade water based Dulux Weathershield paint.)



BEE HEALTH DAY

SATURDAY 13TH JULY

9AM- 4.30PM

AT UPLOWMAN VILLAGE HALL EX16 7DN

“EARLY BIRD” BOOKING PRICE ONLY £5 UNTIL

MAY 30TH

(This offer is only available to Tiverton Branch members so please get booking and reserve your place – after the end of May the price will revert to £10)

The day will be led by Simon Jones, our regional bee inspector, and his team. After an introductory session altogether, we will be divided into groups and given the opportunity to learn in smaller workshops all about the diseases and pests that currently threaten our bees.

Hopefully none of us will have to deal with European or American Foul brood but at this day, in a controlled environment, you will be able to see these diseases up close and personal and you will then be better equipped to know what to do should you be unfortunate enough to have these in your apiary.

There will also be live bees for inspection (weather dependent) and you can see how the professionals do it!! You will need to bring a clean bee suit with you.

Refreshments will be provided on arrival and will be available throughout the day but you will be expected to provide your own packed lunch unless you wish to order a light meal at the local Redwood Inn on the day.

Reserve your place as soon as possible to avoid disappointment by emailing:

beehealthday@btinternet.com.

Please then pay your £5 either by BACS using BHD and your name as reference: Acc No 06514553 Sort code 60-21-27 or by cheque made payable to DBKA Tiverton Branch and send to Mrs Kim Orchard, Little Orchard, 4 Orpington Court, Halberton, EX16 7DD

For the last few years Bee Health days have been held around the county and neighbouring counties and they have had very positive responses. This year it has fallen to Tiverton branch to host the annual event. However we do need a minimum number of 60 attendees in order for the day to go ahead so as a committee we would be grateful if you could free the day and come along to support your branch.

If you have any interesting articles relating to Bees & Beekeeping, please do not hesitate to forward them to me

jon.gubb@voddens.co.uk by the 27th of the month for inclusion in the next months edition of the Buzzette.