

The Tivvy Buzzette

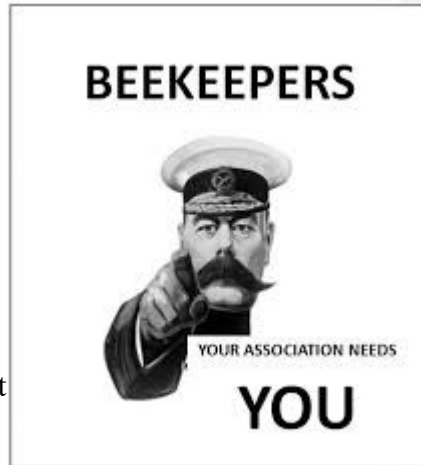


The newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers ~ September 2019

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

Welcome to this months edition of the Buzzette.

The club events over the past few weeks have shocked and saddened many of you with the resignation of our Chairman, Malcolm Jenkins and the apiary manager Baruch Livneh along with our treasurer Kim Orchard, but we cannot change history. We must be able to learn from it and move to the future.



The amount of energy and enthusiasm that was seen on the recent Bee Health Day was highly commented on by many of the

delegates and also by the Bee Inspectors. Other events like the Mid Devon Show Day and the Honiton Show, were very successful which goes to prove what a solid and loyal membership this club has.

Now more than ever, the club needs help in the form of volunteers to assist with all aspects of providing social, learning and practical sessions and events for the members. Like arranging for outside speakers to attend or helping with refreshments at beginners sessions, not hard work, but an enjoyable couple of hours every now and then.

There is so much talent in our membership, why not share it with others.

Asian hornet Week 2019 Asian Hornet Week: September 9th-15th 2019

I could be coming your way – are you ready

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We are asking everyone to be vigilant in looking out for this alien species, the Asian Hornet, *Vespa velutina*. This hornet could decimate our pollinators including our honey bees, it is important to have everyone actively looking for it.

Now is the time for trapping and spending a little more time watching to see if hornets are hawking your hives in your apiary, put an hour aside to watch each day for hornets during Asian Hornet week.

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See it, Snap it, Send it

Asian hornets are rather like large black wasps with a single yellow band, orange face and yellow tipped legs. If you see it Report it to the [Non-Native Species Secretariat](http://www.nonnativespecies.org) (NNSS) <http://www.nonnativespecies.org>

If possible take a photo or video and send it with the specimen, if it is dead, to the NNSS.

'Meet the Bees'

Last Saturday we had a very successful 'Meet the Bees' session at the Apiary. Our new club members were invited to don beesuits and gloves for their very first time to meet our bees eye to eye!

This was their introduction to the 'Beekeeping for Beginners Course'. Everyone appreciated the experience and they had plenty to talk about. The course will now continue through the winter with 7 talks at Uplowman Village Hall and followed by 7 practical sessions in the spring and summer next year.

I would like to thank everyone who helped; Baruch and Malcolm C for showing the students inside a hive. Tony, for providing refreshments. Gary, who did a great job on car park duty and made sure no one annoyed our resident neighbour.

Each group had twenty minutes looking inside the hive, most of whom had never had this opportunity before and some were lucky enough to see the Queen.

One member from this year's course, which has not quite finished yet, has already spun 12 pounds of honey in his first year. In April Mark did not even have a hive!

Thanks once again to Baruch, Malcolm C, Tony and Gary.

Derek EVANS

Education Coordinator

Farewell note from the apiary - September 2019

We are coming to the end of our fifth year and it has been the best we've had. We started in spring 2015 with three nucs donated by Jon Gubb, and the following year purchased five colonies of black bees, including two from the Isle of Man (the blacks are still represented in the apiary in spite of the medley of swarms that have been brought in every year.) After some teething problems and some serious losses over previous winters, the twelve hives all came through the last one in good shape and the good summer weather then conspired to produce strong stocks.

We managed to avoid much swarming earlier in the season and after making a number of artificial swarms and receiving swarms collected by members, we ended up with an extended apiary that was able to satisfy the demand for nucs from the beginners as well as from other members, and also for the first time deliver to the shop at Knightshayes all the honey they asked for - 327 lbs. Elsewhere we sold or gave away a further 50 lbs, and there is still close to 200 lbs of excess honey on the hives, which the new team at the apiary might be able to extract and bottle for the benefit of the club. (The shop at Knightshayes has indicated that they may be able to take more later in the year.) We left plenty of honey in the hives so that practically no feeding will be necessary, although we'll probably feed one colony to demonstrate the method to the beginners.

We've made only one attempt at queen rearing this year, and this started well with nine cells accepted out of ten, but then went pear-shaped when we were a little late to harvest them and the first queen to emerge killed the other eight - this brave one is now ruling over hive no. 7. We have all been on a steep learning curve with queen rearing - an interesting exercise which requires some planning - I hope this can be continued in the coming years for the benefit of interested members.

In the Committee over the past few months there has been some discussion and questions raised with regard to the appropriate size of a teaching apiary and the related question of whether honey production should be part of the work. These are 'legit' questions that members may have a view on which they should relay to the committee. My own view

is that there are four good arguments in support of a decent size apiary that is capable of providing nuclei to the beginners and can supply the shop at Knightshayes with honey.

The first is that it generates income for the Association which can be used for running expenses as well as for longer term goals, such as acquiring a purpose-made building. The second is that the apiary location on the NT estate is an especially favourable one, and since the shop is very keen to have the honey - a unique local product - it forms part of the club's relationship of give-and-take with the NT.

Thirdly, our ability to provide the beginners with a nucleus of bees each is a feature of the course that many associations aspire to and few are able to deliver. The idea has originally come to us from Exeter, but they have not been able to actually realise it. In 2016 when we brought bees back from the IoM, two beginners paid £150 each for nucs which they then went on to lose before the end of the season - even the most experienced make mistakes and beginners are naturally vulnerable, and it becomes an expensive and dispiriting experience. Much better to start with a £30 nucleus from the club apiary instead of an expensive one from some supplier - beginners will no doubt agree. A good size apiary would be needed to guarantee this.

Finally it's a fact that the vast majority of us as well as most of the beginners we enrol on our courses are partly interested in bees for the honey. It will therefore be odd if the teaching apiary couldn't produce the stuff. In fact part of the course involves the extraction of honey, even if not very much is required for that purpose. Of course, the size of an apiary is proportional to the amount of work it entails, and I guess the team doing the work will ultimately have the deciding say in the matter. If a team is found which is prepared to put in the work then a good size apiary of 10 - 12 hives going into winter would be best. During the season it is bound to expand, of course, and spare hives would be needed.

Whoever takes it on will need the support of members. If you come out on a Sunday you add to your own bee-keeping experience and you also support the association at the same time. It is much more enjoyable to work as a team, I think, and several pairs of eyes find a queen more quickly and are more likely to make good decisions. The actual physical work becomes lighter when shared between a few pairs of hands. I hope this project continues to be supported by members and continues to be as enjoyable as it has been.

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.