



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – April 2020

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



AROUND THE APIARY – APRIL

April is the month when most of us start proper beekeeping looking in the hives. My flowering currant in the garden is in full flower but I need a little more information before I go looking at the bees. The temperature needs to be around 15-16 C and no cold wind before I consider it safe to take a crown board off.

What are you going to look for? I shall be looking to see if the queen is laying, that does not mean you have to see her majesty, if you can see eggs or young larvae that is good enough. Next, is there plenty of food? The weather can quickly change in April to cold and frosty and the bees will be unable to search for food, so be prepared to feed if necessary. Space is the next consideration is there room in the brood nest for the queen to lay or is it full of old pollen and poor frames? If the weather is good and the brood box is full you will need to put an early super on; queen excluder first unless you wish to keep your bees on a brood and a half. It is not unknown for bees to start swarming in late April if they are overcrowded. When you visit your hives if the weather is good if you see lots of bees going in with pollen it normally means the queen is laying well.

I have 30 hives of my own to look after plus helping with the bees at the Branch Apiary, and, at the moment it looks as if the bees have come through the winter well, I hope your bees have as well. Next month I will tell you how we have got on. Coronavirus is a big problem for us all but we can still look after bees, if you do have a real problem please let the secretary know and we will help if we can. As much as I dislike using the computer it may be our main source of information.

I hope this helps and I will try again next month.

Keith

CHAIRMAN'S



What a fantastic monthly edition this has become, and it's not down to just one person! Each and every editor has added their own personal touch to it over time and made it into the brilliant informative publication which it is today. Very well done to you all, and I think that now more than ever in these troubled times, we should all be using the Buzzette to communicate with each other. So please if you have concerns, need advice or help, or just have a funny story to tell, please submit it to the editor. (secretary@tivertonbeekeepers.uk)

It has been a long twelve months for our club, in one way or another, and I would hope that every one of you will be honest with yourselves about how this current situation regarding coronavirus is affecting our daily lives. If you are self-isolating, (as I know many members are), or just unable to cope with things, need assistance, or are worried about your colonies then please contact me at chairman@tivertonbeekeepers.uk and I will do everything I can to help you.

We are strong club with a tremendous membership, YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

While I am writing, may I encourage you all to make sure that your apiaries are registered on BEEBASE. Not only will it make sure that you receive information from the National Bee Unit, but it may prove you have a reason to be out and about, if you are going to 'check your livestock'. If you need a pass for travelling to an out apiary then please contact myself or Jessica on the above emails.

Don't forget to keep an eye out for Asian Hornets, too.

We, as a committee, will try and keep you up to date with anything that is going on in our Beekeeping world, but for the moment, we send you our very best wishes for your good health, wellbeing – and sanity!

LANGSTROTH HIVES WITH BEES FOR SALE

**Six good Langstroth hives with bees
Complete with queen excluders and two supers.
£300.00 each.**

**Contact Keith Owers on 01884 254977
Email keithowersbees@gmail.com**

A BIG WELCOME TO IAN DUNCAN WHO HAS RECENTLY JOINED OUR COMMITTEE

Fellow Beekeepers,



May I introduce myself as the new Membership Secretary and Treasurer. I have been a TBKA club member for about six years now and have been eager to contribute by joining the committee but have not previously found the time to do so.

Whilst not a natural accountant I think I can give it a go and I volunteered at the end of last year and I was the first in a very short queue and was readily accepted. I am part way through taking over from William Lines and have some notes from Kim Orchard which is great and although the new eR2 membership scheme will take some getting used to, I will persevere.

I was a military gypsy for many years and on leaving the Army in 2013 I settled in Uffculme and have felt very at home there ever since. Tony Lindsell soon introduced me to the gentle art of beekeeping and I have been an avid keeper of bees ever since. I currently have six hives at the Corn Barn in Cullompton. I may not have time to be a regular at the club Apiary or events but will try my best to support the club that has been such a great support to me in my early years.

I would have taken over the role last November were it not for the fact I had an ocean to row and thankfully William held the role until I returned.

As soon as the bank account transfer is completed I will take on full responsibilities for both roles but until then William and I are sharing the role duties. Both William and I will answer to the treasurer@tivertonbeekeepers.uk email address should you wish to contact me.

Best regards,

Ian Duncan

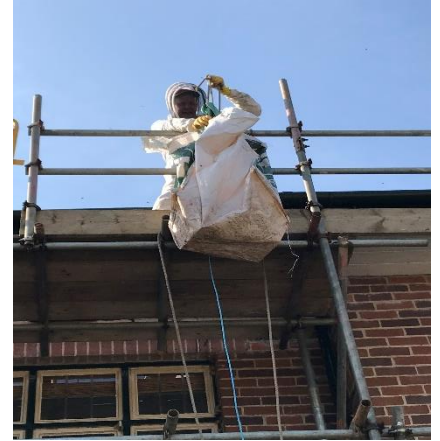


Apiary News

Members of the committee have been visiting Knighthayes on a fairly regular basis to check on the colonies. Ten colonies were taken into the winter and up to last week, the number still remains at ten. They were fed when needed and on four of the colonies supers were added above the crown board to give them extra room. All looking good at present.



DULFORD HOUSE



One day recently I telephoned Tony and said what are doing tomorrow morning? “Nothing” was the reply “as my appointment book has dried up!” So, we collected our suits and set off to Dulford House to meet with the owner and the builder.

The owner had lived with a bee colony in the front soffit of the house for the last twelve months but work was needed in the loft so they had to come out. The builder arranged for some scaffolding to be erected and for some slates to be removed. The house was built in 1935, and under the slates and battens the whole roof was covered in planking (very posh).

The builder offered to cut away the boarding to gain access, so we dressed him up like Ms Marple, gave him some safety advice, (bees do not like noise or vibration!) and sent him up on his way. The bees were remarkably good tempered, but the builder did not hang around long and we were left to our own devices.

The bees were remarkably well behaved and appeared very healthy as we began to cut the combs away from the roof timbers. There was a small amount of sealed brood and this was duly placed into hive frames and tied with string and placed undercover.

Once all the comb had been removed we then had to find the queen. Bees everywhere but nobody was wagging their tails, just going about their daily business. We eventually saw a small ball of bees clumped further inside the roof! Oh dear! The weather forecast for that evening was a frost, so we took a chance and placed the three frames of brood back inside the rafters. The hope was that the workers would steer the queen back with the brood to keep everyone warm during the coming night.

The next morning, SUCCESS! All the bees were back on the three frames including ‘Herself’! The frames were recovered, placed in a nuc and unceremoniously lowered to the ground in a dumpy bag.

The worst part was sorting out all the comb later!

By Malcolm Crook



SWARMS & BRANCH POLICY ON SUPPLY TO MEMBERS

We are now fast approaching the swarming season and I just wanted to clarify how the branch will be dealing with swarms notified to us by members of the public, normally via the BBKA website.

We have a number of members approved & authorised by the branch to collect swarms. This year they will only be doing that having made an assessment of the risk in respect of the Coronavirus as guided by the BBKA. During the process of collecting the swarm they will notify me as Branch Swarm Coordinator.

Our policy is that swarms collected on behalf of the Branch will be made available for Branch members. Initially priority will be given to beginners without any bees or members who have lost bees but any member can go on the list.

If you would be interested in homing a swarm please contact me with your name, telephone numbers & reason for wanting a swarm, please do so by email. If you are unable to access email then by phone.

When I have been told that a collector has a swarm, I will contact members on the list so they can make arrangements to take the swarm. The transfer of the swarm between members, again, has to respect the risk of Coronavirus.

There is no charge for the bees but if the bees do come on frames supplied by the collector then that member must be reimbursed for the frames & foundation.

If you are involved in this process please take great care this year, staying well is most important. As always only collect-swarms when it is safe to do so.

Happy swarming season

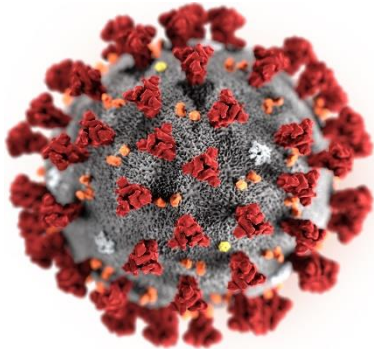
Tony.

tony.lindsell@btinternet.com 07412610502



Many congratulations need to go to Gavin Nuttall-Owen for successfully passing the AHAT on-line learning with a score of 100%!!!!

Gavin is the first person in the DBKA to be certified as a First Responder. What a true ambassador Gavin is, not only for the Tiverton Beekeepers Branch, but for beekeeping in general, and it also shows how much commitment Tiverton is placing in the AHAT programme.



CORONA VIRUS

I was hoping not to mention the dreaded “C” word too much but unfortunately it seems that this is impossible these days as it seems to have affected everybody in some way or another. There is a useful article on Bee Base which covers what we should be doing during the outbreak which you may already have received but if you haven’t you can find it here

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadNews.cfm?id=170>

although I’m not sure if you need to sign up first!

Cancellations have now taken place of all bee-keeping events until at least September so no apiary visits, no beginners or improvers courses, no branch meetings will take place until then. Hopefully those involved in these meetings have been contacted and a plan will be put in place for those members affected. It is a real shame but unfortunately there is nothing we can do about the current circumstances.

The committee are talking via email and over the phone to try and make sure that behind the scenes we are still working towards a display at the County Show and that the branch apiary is well looked after. A big thank you goes to Malcolm, Tony, Keith and Derek plus any other members involved in this vital work under difficult circumstances.

As mentioned above there are permits available for those who ***have to*** travel longish distances to get to their bees and we can send you one via email if you need one – they do need to be signed by you before use.

Don’t forget there is an Asian Hornet Quiz on-line <https://www.ahat.org.uk/node/1/take/1> which you can take and we should be putting out monitoring stations in April if we can. This is useful link which shows you how to make the bait traps

<https://www.ahat.org.uk/article/asian-hornet-queen-monitoring-13-30-april-2020>

In the meantime hopefully we can continue to keep ourselves and our bees safe and don’t forget ...

Nothing gives a person more confidence... than to be zipped snugly inside a bee suit.

Sue Hubbell (**some American woman**)

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