



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – August 2020

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



AROUND THE APIARY – AUGUST

Harvest time is coming up fast - are you ready? Checking all your equipment is clean and ready for the off. Think how you are going to operate probably in a confined space. Most of us will be extracting in the kitchen. Make sure your booking has been accepted. Life still has to go on so cooperation is essential, we all need to eat! How you set out your equipment is important for the smooth running of the operation uncapping and then extracting needs to be as close as possible to avoid dripping honey over the floor. Sticky floors can be a real problem, my answer is to cover the floor with newspaper if you drip some honey just cover it with more newspaper. When extracting is over just collect up all the newspaper and put them out for recycling. Have a space for full supers and empty ones. I aim to bring in enough supers for the day.

Autumn treatment for Varroa needs to be as near to the middle of August as possible. This treatment is important to see that you have as healthy bees to go into winter, they need to live for six months not six weeks. I always recommend new beekeepers to treat. If you only have one or two colonies it would be very disappointing to lose them to Varroa. When you have been keeping bees for a year or two you may wish to go down the route of not treating your bees but by then you will know the pros and cons of not treating. I will be treating all my hives with Apiguard as normal, it has served me well over the years. It is closer to being a natural product and less toxic than many others on the market for Varroa treatment.

Be prepared to close the entrance down on your hives if you suspect robbing or unnecessary attention from Wasps.

Good luck with your extracting, and remember next year will be better.

By Keith Owers

A BUZZ on the line



Two weeks ago, we had a call from a painter asking for our help. He was not the normal type of painter. He painted Pylons!!

It takes the painters two days to paint a Pylon, so they leave their ropes after the first day, etc in a bag hanging on the Pylon.

Unfortunately, for them their kit bag had a small hole at the bottom and a swarm of bees had decided it made a good home.

When they went back the second day, the painters realised their mistake and called for help. It took over a week to arrange a convenient date to meet up and sort out their problem.

They assured us that the electricity would

be turned off if we accepted the mission and there would be three men to help us. We agreed to accept as it was interesting and unusual. The bees had now been in the bag for more than a week so we decided another week would not harm. We arranged a date.

Pub quiz question: How often are Pylons painted?

Answer: Every 20 years!

In the bag were the climbing ropes and harnesses used by the painters to hang from when they are painting the Pylons.



When we arrived at the site in the middle of nowhere three men, a pole and a ladder met us. Fortunately, I was not expected to climb the Pylon. One of them borrowed a veil making him feel more secure when he used the pole to lower the bag of bees.

We caught the bag gently and then proceeded to cut the comb out and rehome the bees into our nuc box. Later that evening we returned to collect the nuc and all the bees in the rain.



Mission accomplished!

Derek and Jenny EVANS

Bulk Buying Scheme - NOW even better!



I am bringing forward our sale of Honey Jars and Ambrosia Syrup to August.

This means that I would like all orders in by the **Friday 14th August**.

I am expanding our **Honey Jar** range to include the usual Gold Cap 1lb and round 12 oz jars and now additionally round 1.5 oz, 8 oz, Hexagonal 4 oz and 8 oz. All Honey Jars include the caps/lids.

I am aware it is a little early, but I am also selling the **Ambrosia Syrup** a month earlier than usual, to reduce carriage and number of journeys required.

People who have used this to feed to their bees in the past have found the convenience and results very beneficial to the bees. Most people used at least one can per hive. This depends upon the colony and the beekeeper. Most colonies require about 20 kg of stores to see them through the winter. This can be made up of their own stores (leaving a super full of honey) and/or giving them syrup, either Ambrosia syrup or your home-made sugar and water syrup (in the ratio 2:1).

HOW TO ORDER Jars and/or Ambrosia Syrup

Download the Order Form from this 'Tivvy Buzzette' and either post or email it to me.

This year I would like as many of you as possible to pay by BACS beforehand, to reduce my trips to the bank. If necessary, a cheque on collection will be accepted as usual.

The club is collecting sugar from Tesco and Morrisons for free and is available for all our members from Malcolm Crook, our chairman.

Information on Ambrosia Syrup The syrup comes in 12.5kg jerry cans and is ideal to feed to your bees after you have taken your honey from the hive and treated for varroa.

Product Information

Ambrosia® bee feed syrup is a liquid ready-made feed with a balanced sugar type spectrum (fructose, dextrose, sucrose), based on beet sugar of the purest quality. The high percentage of fructose and lower portion of glucose prevents the formation of crystals in the honeycombs. The high sugar concentration makes the syrup resistant to microbiological decay. The ideal combination of the sugar type spectrum ensures the bee's optimal use of the nutritional components. The nutrient concentration is approx. 72.7 %. 1 kg (or, 1 litre) ambrosia® bee feed syrup is 0.73 kg (1 kg) sugar crystals.

Ambrosia® bee feed syrup is particularly beneficial in the early and later winter feeding:

- its formulation comes the closest to natural Bee feed,
- effortless acceptance and utilization-less inversion work needed,
- conserves the bee's energy balance. Tests showered energetic advantages on a scale of 15 %.
- High resistance to microbiological decay leads to longer shelf life
- Hygienic, time-saving, and practical handling

The aim of our Bulk Buying Scheme is that 100% of the money saved is passed on to our members. No money goes to club funds.

Derek Evans Bulk Buying Coordinator



Just a quick note to try and keep you up to date with what we are trying to achieve and what the current conditions will allow us to do.

The eleven colonies at the apiary were examined by a seasonal bee inspector on Tuesday 14th July and all received a clean bill of health. I asked Keith Owers who was present at the inspection to give me some idea of the colonies honey state: the supers totalled 14 full and 2 half full ones.

On Thursday 16th July, I called a virtual committee meeting, as a few important decisions were needed. We only had a time slot of 30 minutes so it was a very brief session.

We were proposing to hire the large hall at Uplowman in September (to allow for social distancing) for members to get together with tea/cakes and chat. We contacted DBKA and BBKA for advice, but there was no change in policy regarding meetings and association activities, so that idea went out the window.

Regarding the apiary, the committee agreed to keep visits limited for the safety of those members going there. For this season, we would place one super of honey on each colony for feed. This would ease the problem of honey extraction to about 3 supers instead of 14 or 15. It would also save making up liquid feed and having to visit Knightshayes to keep checking food levels. I will extract the remaining honey into bulk storing for use next year.

I raised the question of varroa treatment at Knightshayes. I realise that this is a thorny subject on whether to treat or not, and if so, what, or when? With the current conditions in place, for this season, the committee has agreed that the colonies will be treated for varroa without mite monitoring, again to keep visits to a minimum. Each visit has consisted of two members, in separate vehicles, and social distancing at all times - so visits are not easy.

The committee agreed that the varroa treatment would be Apistan strips, which would only require two visits and not three if Apiguard was used, again for the reasons above. We have not taken these decisions lightly, and I do hope that you can appreciate the reasons for making these decisions and will continue to support us.

Gavin and his team, continue to make brilliant progress regarding Asian Hornet matters, and have done some excellent work on mapping of monitoring sites. The Autumn monitoring period will begin on 7th September for two weeks.

Although we still have to abide by the current social distancing rules, this does not apply to email, texts and telephone calls, so please keep in touch with other members, and if needed offer advice or help if you possibly can.

Please stay safe
Malcolm - Chair



Asian Hornet Spring Monitoring 2020

The Spring monitoring period was conducted from 13 to 30 April 2020. Members were invited to conduct monitoring across the TBKA area. Monitoring sites were to be chosen away from hives and near spring flowering plants especially those gardens having Camellias. Camellias have been observed as good sites for carbohydrate

hungry queen Asian hornets as they come out of winter hibernation.

The original plan was for members to have an update meeting on 18 March 2020 where the latest information regarding Asian hornet monitoring would be given as well as the provision of 40ml samples of Suterra.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the meeting was cancelled and the planned Suterra distribution halted.

Our April edition of the Buzzette published guidance on the Spring monitoring, practical advice on equipment and siting as well as attractant recipes to be used instead of Suterra. Members were asked to email the AHAT coordinator with details of attractant, set up date, monitoring site position using What3words code and observations.

Reports were received from 6 members which approximately equates to 6% of the branch membership population. The recipes for attractants were fine-tuned by members' pandemic pantry stock – the report of using homemade blackcurrant vodka being more effective in attracting university students than hornets is still being tested!!

The collected data was recorded in a web-based database, Epicollect5. Our use of the tool was praised at the recent meeting of Devon AHAT coordinators. It was instrumental in the set up a Devon AH Epicollect database whose format mirrors that of Somerset. Lynne Ingram, Somerset County AHAT, has worked with the Jersey AHAT team to produce a template format. This will allow all our possible contacts and responses to be collated into a South West regional response to help inform the BBKA.

TBKA area findings:

- Total number of monitoring days = 18
- Sunny days = 11
- Cloudy days = 3
- Rainy days = 4
- Windy days = 8 (Beaufort scale 4 or above; 13-18mph or above)
- Maximum daily temperature: 13 to 23°C across the observation period
- No reported sightings of Asian Hornet.

By Gavin Nuttall-Owen AHAT Coordinator



BBKA - Positive Thinking June 2020 – By Chair, **Margaret Wilson**

We have been thinking about the delivering the module exams in November, taking into account the social distancing etc., the teaching could be by Zoom, certainly my own branch has managed that, or there are the correspondence courses as well, so I held back on further talk about the exams until the exam board met which they did Sunday 19th July and below I show you an extract of their decision:

'The global outbreak of COVID-19 has meant that we have had to limit socialising and gatherings, to help prevent the spread of this disease. Inevitably, this has had a huge impact on the BBKA exam system, that relies on candidates, assessors, and invigilators to meet in close proximity or travel some distance away from home.

Following the feedback from many associations and individuals on the matter, we have taken the difficult decision to cancel the BBKA assessments for the remaining part of 2020. These include Show Judge certificate in October as well as Module exams and Microscopy assessments in November.

The main concern of the Exam Board is the safety of all candidates, assessors and invigilators. While some associations have indicated that they may be able to facilitate the Module exams, others have advised against it. We want to offer equal opportunities to all members who wish to take the BBKA exams. With the current situation however, we do not feel this is achievable for all involved.

Candidates who have applied for assessments in 2020 will get free transfer for 2021, or get their fees refunded if they prefer. Due to the cancellations of the exams, the condition that candidates need to have taken all Modules within 12 years of the first module taken has now been removed.

We know how much value beekeepers put on the BBKA exam system. To support those who continue on their learning journey, we are exploring alternative ways to hold the Module exams and hope to have solution in place for the early part of 2021.'

The above statement is from the Exam Board who are independent from the Executive Committee of the BBKA. You will also find this statement on our web site and it will appear again in the BBKA News.

I know it will be disappointing to many of you, this virus is not doing us any favours at all, I wonder what the 'new normal' is going to be in the future. On a brighter note, the work on the apiary at Stoneleigh started at the beginning of June and I believe it is going well, I would love to go and see how the design is developing, but I do not think that we will be having our meetings there just yet, certainly the 25th July EC meeting will be by Zoom again. The apiary is used for education and training, so the bees are having a holiday this year, it will give them a chance to build up ready for any future plans we may have.

Our BBKA News editor has been investigating how we can make savings on the magazine - where the main cost is the postage and this seems to increase each year. The weight of the paper matters quite a lot and Sharron has found an alternative paper; it comes from Sweden and it is a virgin fibre paper from a sustainable forestry. Every tree which is harvested is replaced by a further two to three trees; younger trees are better at neutralising Co2 than the older trees so that is good: the climate benefit last year was the equivalent of neutralising 800,000 cars driving around the world. The paper Sharron has found is produced by an organisation called SCA which is the largest private forest

owner in Europe. The paper is not glossy, I have asked if the front cover could be glossed slightly to enhance its appearance and it is believed that they can do that. This paper will reduce the weight of the magazine which means the postage will reduce, at the same time helping the new trees planted in reducing the Co2 in the world. It also means that we can use paper envelopes which will again reduce the impact on the world and also reduced costs again. We should thank Sharon Blake for all her work on this and I do hope that you will approve the change this will result in. Certainly the budget will look considerably better and just at the moment that is quite important too.

To close, the new question is 'Have you downloaded the Asian hornet app'

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/questions-for-beekeepers>

Stay safe and look after each other.



Beekeeping for Beginners courses – Important Changes

1. For the present course members – 2019/20

As we are all aware we have not been allowed to run the practical part of the course this year. We hope to provide this part of the course next year between April and September 2021. We have tried to support all of you who that have bees and tried to give colonies that have been collected to those of you who wanted them this year.

Do contact me if you have any questions.

2. The new course which was planned to start this August has now been postponed to January and will run if we are allowed by BBKA.
3. We are joining with DBKA into looking into running virtual online course. Wait and see!

Derek Evans

Education Coordinator



Congratulations go to William Lines who joins Gavin Nuttall-Owen in completion of the on-line Asian Hornet assessment and is now on the map as another first responder for the Tiverton branch

The more the merrier – why don't you have a go?!

"Opinions expressed in articles in this publication are those of the author(s), and do not necessarily reflect either the opinions or the policies of the Devon Beekeepers' Association"