



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – November 2020

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



Wednesday 18th November at 7.30pm Tiverton Branch AGM

Zoom Meeting – link to follow

Saturday December 12th at 10.30 am Devon Beekeepers AGM

Zoom meeting followed by Lynne Ingram (Chair of Taunton Beekeepers) talking about Adulteration of Honey & how to promote your local honey.

Wednesday December 16th at 7.30 pm Tiverton Branch Christmas Forum

Zoom Meeting – link to follow



PLEASE CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR BRANCH

The following roles need people to take them on:

VICE CHAIR:- Desperately needed this year!

1. To promote and support the Tiverton Branch and its members to achieve their aims and objectives.
2. To support, assist and deputise for the Chair in their duties as may be required.
3. You shall have the second or casting vote when deputising for the Chair.
4. You may be called on to represent the Branch and lead projects.

BULK-BUYING CO-ORDINATOR:-

As a club we bulk purchase goods 3 times a year - January - Frames and Foundation
August - Ambrosia Syrup and September - Honey Jars – saving members lots of money!
The coordinators tasks are basically:

1. Negotiating good prices with suppliers
2. Advertising in the Buzzette
3. Collating the orders from members
4. Arranging - delivery and collection

APIARY CO-ORDINATOR:-

Keith Owers is currently our apiary co-ordinator but we desperately need someone to take over this role under his guidance.

Whoever is prepared to volunteer will also get lots of support and help from the committee.

The main tasks are:

1. Smooth running of the apiary in line with DBKA training requirements
2. Organising a team of volunteers to maintain a tidy apiary
3. Checking the hives regularly (or organising a rota) and giving reports to the committee
4. Liaising with the National Trust at Knightshayes
5. Working with the education team to sort out dates for members to visit apiary

BUZZETTE EDITOR:-

If you like being creative then this is the role for you!

Main jobs:

1. Creating a newsletter for the branch membership each month
2. Chasing members for articles!
3. Sending out group emails occasionally

Members are always welcome to come on board as committee members not assigned to any particular role until they feel they are able to take something on or if you want to be part of the Apiary team or AHAT team but not a committee member that is also a possibility.

Please get in touch as it's so important to keep the branch moving forward - we are always open to new ideas and suggestions – we want to keep thriving as a bee-keeping group.

Contact me – secretary@tivertonbeekeepers.uk or Malcolm chair@tivertonbeekeepers.uk



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The BBKA annual honey survey is open on the website. It really does only take a few minutes to complete and we would like to encourage as many members as possible to take part. Here is the link:-

<https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=160092551774>



AROUND THE APIARY NOVEMBER

BY KEITH OWERS

I hope by now you have finished feeding your bees and have tidied up around your apiary site ready for winter. What is still to be done before you can put your feet up?

Wasps have been a problem again and for the first time in over forty years of beekeeping I have two or three strong hives that have been decimated by wasps. I have always closed wide entrances down to about eight centimetres but that has not proved to be small enough to enable the bees to fend off the wasps. With the problem hives the entrances have now been closed down to one centimetre, that has helped a lot but I would put the colonies in a high risk category to survive the winter. I have always considered that it was small or weak colonies that wasps trashed. I now know that is not always the case. For the last few years we have had to wait till January before we have had a frost. Gone are the days of my youth when you could almost guarantee that you would have a good frost by the third week in September. It is not uncommon for wasp nests to carry on into December or even January, for this reason I will not be putting mouse guards on until the middle of the month. Mice are about around the hives, I found one pair making a home under a roof and on top of a crown board, needless to say I evicted them.

Some of you will be aware that my IT skills are not very good, but the local wild life does not help. We have been without a land line for best part of a week due to Squirrels chewing through the overhead cables.

Enough about the Wasps and the wild life what else needs to be done ?

It would be good to make a start cleaning frames and equipment. I like to start by going through all my super frames, just scrape the ends if they are waxed up, remove any wax that is damaged or is looking very dark. The wax can be put into black bin liners for melting in a solar wax extractor next spring. The empty frames will now be ready to clean in boiling Soda water or flame with a blow torch. Any brood frames should also be cleaned. Brood frames are always a problem to over winter as the Wax moth is sure to find them. It will often mean wasting some honey and pollen stores but the bees will thank you if you present them with clean wax and frames next year. Brood boxes and supers are best scraped and flamed. Frames that have been washed in boiling Soda water (1 kg to 5 litres of water) only need to be washed for a few minutes to come up almost like new when washed off in clean water and left to dry.

CHAIRMAN'S



It gives me great sadness to inform you of the recent death of Nicholas (Nick) Morse. Nick lost his very courageous battle with cancer on Saturday 10th October. He died very peacefully with his loved ones around him.

Nick was a great lover of music and the Arts, and later in years the craft of beekeeping, and was always very keen to learn and take part. He was a true gentleman and will be sorely missed.

I sent a card of condolences from all club members, and the family asked if I would represent the club at the cremation service, which I was very proud to attend.

When I'm at a colony and a lone honey bee comes around me to see what I am doing, I will always think of Nick.

RIP "Matey"

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I have been very conscious over the last few months of the importance of getting club members together just to meet up for any reason, share experiences and generally chatting about beekeeping. This of course has not been possible. I have heard from some members how this was affecting them personally, and getting them disillusioned with beekeeping, without apparent support.

To try and overcome this, I asked Jess and Tony if it would be possible to organise a "Zoom" members meeting?

They triumphed again and at 7:30 pm on Wednesday 21st October, Tiverton had its first Zoom Branch meeting. 22 members managed the challenge and it was good to see most of them. Some spoke but didn't appear on screen.

I asked them all how their summer had gone and any bee keeping problems that they had. It was very interesting to hear how the members had the same problems, good early filled supers, wet June, and no flow in July followed by large numbers of wasps.

I hope and believe that this 90 minute get together helped everyone in knowing in the fact, that other members had the same experiences and pitfalls and that they weren't alone.

We will continue to monitor the situation and get members together as soon as it appears safe to do so.

The AGM is due to be held via Zoom on Wednesday 18th November, and the committee requires 10% of the membership (14 members) to be present for it to take place or it would have to be postponed. Please find time to log in and let's get it out of the way.

In the meantime, we are members of a strong team of individuals and if help is needed, then please make contact.

Malcolm Crook

ASIAN HORNET UPDATE



The only confirmed occurrence of an Asian hornet nest in the UK to date by DEFRA was that in Gosport, Hampshire. The sighting was confirmed on 8 September and destroyed on 11 September 2020.

The Channel Islands have also reported a decline this year in the population of Asian hornets. The AHAT volunteers in Jersey have only discovered 38 nests from spring to the end of October compared with 77 at the same point last year. To put this into context, 55 nests were discovered during the whole of 2018. No nests have been discovered this October while 12 nests were discovered in October 2019. The number of queens being caught has also dropped, 42 this year compared with 69 during 2019. This data is against the trend as there was an expectation that the exponential growth would continue with nest numbers entering the low hundreds.

The reasons for this decline are yet to be discerned but speculation is centred on the winter weather, presence of trained AHAT teams and Covid-19 ramifications.

The damp and variable temperatures between January and March are thought to have created conditions favouring fungal disease growth to which the hibernating queens are susceptible. The ramifications of Covid-19 restrictions to human movement from Europe into Jersey and the UK could have been a significant factor in hibernating queens not being transported unwittingly in trailers, caravans, motorhomes, boats, and freight.

We must not be complacent though as numbers of *V. velutina* have increased this year in northern France and so the scenario for an influx in 2021 awaits. The Galicia region of northern Spain has seen 60% of its bee population wiped out by these hornets over the last 5 years which has caused the local economy 4.5 million Euros loss of income.

We have heard the tales from various members that there have been increased wasp activity, the cousins of hornets, around our hives. This has resulted in the loss of colonies in some cases. Imagine the destruction if Asian hornets arrived to greatly increase the predator pressure not only on honeybees but the entire pollination web.

October through to November is the time when the sexually mature Asian hornet males and gynes (females who will become colony queens next spring) are created. On average three times more males than gynes are produced from mid-September to the end of November. The longer favourable conditions continue in the autumn the more gynes will reach maturity.

Male Asian hornets do not die as a result of mating although research suggests that they only mate once, eventually dying around December. Males may forage for their own sustenance during their search for mates with ivy flowers being an autumnal source of nectar and pollen for many insects. The ivy may also be a rendezvous site for both sexes, if so, then gynes should also occur on these plants. The use of a saucer or wick monitoring station (Suterra attractant) for a short time period near the flowering ivy will be useful to observe the ebb and flow of insect attraction. Hence, we must continue to be vigilant to reduce the viability of these 'sexuals' despite the data from Jersey and DEFRA showing a downturn.

Traps (NBU "green bottle" type) set near hives approximately 1 to 2 meters off the ground are still useful tools for hive monitoring. Should any member require Suterra for their traps then please contact me via email and I can arrange a socially distanced Covid-19 compliant collection.

Thanks are due to all the members who were able to contribute to the spring and autumn monitoring sessions this year especially with all the pandemic restrictions in place. Without your help TBKA would not have progressed as well as we have in being organised and prepared for the Asian hornet. There is still much to do but we now have a solid foundation of procedures and data from which to work.

The preface picture is from Blaine, Washington State. The previous year a nest was eradicated in Vancouver, Canada. However note that Vancouver is just to the north across the estuary and shows that species will invade other environmental niches whether humans like it or not. (Could this be the new look for Derek and his vacuum trap?!)

Gavin Nuttall-Owen

AHAT Coordinator

ahat@tivertonbeekeepers.uk



Well it just falls to me to say that this is my last newsletter and to wish my successor all the best – I'm looking forward to receiving it next month ha ha! Thank you for all the kind words about the Buzzette that I have received recently – it really isn't something I should take credit for as it comes down mainly to all the great contributors even if they do dread my nagging phonecalls/emails each month!

A big thank you to you all and see you at the AGM!

"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"