



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – June 2021

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



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As things have been getting slightly easier with the world, I have had the good fortune to meet and chat with some of our new members. The amount of enthusiasm and knowledge that they already possess is amazing and something to be admired. The feedback from them on the recent beginner course has just been amazing and that is all down to the tremendous time and work spent by Derek and his education team. A hearty well done and thank you to all concerned, and it is something that other associations envy us for.

Due to increasing family commitments in the next year, I will not be putting myself forward for a third year of Chair at the next AGM in November. Our association has just come through a couple of dull years, but we now have an exciting time in front of us with a growing membership, excellent committee, and growing respect in the beekeeping field. What a chance for a new Chair to head this marvellous club. If anyone is excited by this, please make contact with me so that we can chat over tea and cake for more ideas. Thank you so much to all of you and now let's get on with showing our great craft to others.

Malcolm

Beginners Practical sessions from last year



Tony, Those flying bees look monstrous in this photograph. Thank you for the photo, Hilary

Beginners practical sessions

"Even the greatest was once a beginner. Don't be afraid to take that first step."

Muhammad Ali who famously used the phrase

"Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee!"

Keith, Derek and Malcolm who are running the beginners practical sessions at the apiary and would love some help if anyone can spare a couple of hours to support the beginners in their learning and maintain the ability to socially distance in small groups. We have all been beginners at some stage or another in our beekeeping journey. Newbee's are, I'm sure the life blood of any group or club so this is a perfect opportunity to help ours and do a spot of revision at the same time in the craft.

They meet at The Apiary, Knightshayes from 1pm to 3.30pm. The beginners are divided into two groups and they have an hour each 1-2pm and 2.30-3.30pm to comply with Covid19 rules

If you have any questions as to what is involved and would like to help out, give Derek a call on 01884 257726

Swarm collections

Owing, largely to our inexperience, this was one of far too many swarms from our hives in Kentisbeare, taken last year. (I can hear a groan coming from somewhere over in Uffculme)

The bees favoured the crab apple tree just over the hedge from the hives. Thankfully this year with the benefit of hindsight, and a heavy dose of foresight we were more prepared and added supers sooner to give the stronger colonies adequate space. So far so good. The weather of course has been very different from last year and we now have our hives in a new home where there is much more shade in the height of a sunny day which I am sure has also benefited them. Interestingly we have had three occasions on an inspection when there were sealed Queen cells but her majesty was still in residence. This was during the recent spell of wet weather. The bees had obviously decided to delay their departure so were were able to perform the necessary artificial manipulations. Every day as they say is a school day!

Hilary (Editor)



At the moment we have not had many swarms calls but with the weather improving we are expecting. June to be busy - those waiting to receive one, stand by. Tony



Tiverton Beekeepers' Branch Members Meeting Programme .

Summer 2021

We are still hoping, subject to further lifting of Covid19 restrictions, to plan some visits to our Knightshayes Apiary or Safaris to members Apiaries during the summer but, as you will appreciate, it all depends....

Happy Beekeeping.



Due to the present circumstances the Bee Marquee at the show is reduced in size, to save money, and this means there will not be a Stevenson Trophy this Year. Due to our Clubs previous good record in this event at the show we have been invited to make a display for people who may wish to take up Beekeeping in Devon. Details to follow. I understand that most of the usual events will continue e.g. Honey Competition, Honey Tasting, Honey Sales, Candle Making, Observation Hive, etc. If you have any specific questions, please contact Liz Westcott the Bee Marquee organiser via email lizwestcott@me.com.

Derek is still looking for volunteers to help at the show. Please get in contact with him if you are able to spare some time. From personal experience, it is always fun to be there and soak up the atmosphere and enthusiasm of the public and of course have a natter with fellow beekeepers.

Derek Evans, Display Organiser 01884 257726



24th July 2021

Non Stop Activity from 9.00am to 5.30pm
A true celebration of Mid Devon Life

Entertainment - Food - Shopping - Music - Farm Life

This will be another very important date to Tiverton Beekeepers which hopefully will still take place subject to the further lifting of restrictions. Malcolm has a stand planned for this and any assistance would be welcomed in setting up and stewarding for an hour or two.

The stand will be slightly smaller than previous years, (for this year only) but will still give us plenty of room to meet the public and also sell members honey.

Please contact Malcolm if you can lend a hand. 01884 821927

Around the apiary in June

By Keith Owers



Apis Mellifera on Bistort, Pink Candles. Taken by Hilary Sanders.

It has been the wettest May that I have recorded and we are not at the end of the month, yet. I have been recording rainfall for the last ten years in Tiverton, the average for May is about 60ml but this year I have recorded 144ml so far. The poor weather has meant that bees have had little opportunity to forage and has also meant that it has been difficult to fit in hive inspections. My first inspections normally take place in late March or early April when the temperature reaches 15 -16 C. I made a start with some of my hives but it was the 25th of April before I could check the rest. What I found was hives full of bees and brood but very little honey.

Bees have all been fed again in preparation for better weather in June.

What have we got to look forward to this month? The June gap is often talked about when we run out of flowers. At the moment the Hawthorne is flowering well and the fields are full of buttercups and daisies. Bees can work a very wide range of flowers if necessary. The above I hope will keep our bees going till the blackberry and clover come into flower later in the month.

A good spell of weather may well see colonies swarming this month. Beginners are often concerned with the prospect of their bees swarming. I have always considered it an interesting challenge. Sure it is best to find your bees preparing to swarm, producing queen cells than to find you have bees hanging in a cluster in a tree or a worse location. At high risk times do try to check your hives every 7 days, strong colonies in particular. A simple method of control is to move the said hive to a new site which need only be 3 meters from the original site. On the original site place a empty hive or a nuc box. The flying bees will fly back to their old site. Now look through the swarming hive and find the queen and put her in the empty hive on the old site. If you are concerned about handling the queen move the frame to the nuc box but make sure there are no queen cells on the frame. Fill the nuc with drawn frames if possible, if not with foundation. With all the returning flying bees the queen will be well looked after.

The original hive on the new site needs to be looked through to reduce the number of queen cells to one, unless you wish to try and make up a second nuc next to the original hive on the new site. With a good queen cell in each plus half the store you can raise two new queens with luck, be sure to remove all but your one good queen cell.

If you do finish up with a swarm ask a experienced beekeeper to give you a hand. It might be an easy swarm to collect or it may be difficult.

Good luck, more fun to come next month.

Keith Owers

These lovely photos are of Ashy mining bees, and were kindly sent to me by Ian Sorenson one of our members. It was taken on 31st March . As he said,
" They had chosen to make a nesting site in the Bank in front of my house in Burlescombe. In the sun yesterday there were probably in excess of 50 females ."
My apologies for omitting to include them in last months edition.



Asian Hornet – Non Native Invasive Insect



Asian Hornet actual size

At the close of my report to the committee at the January meeting I suggested that the effects of Covid-19 and Brexit would play a part in the spread of the hornet. Namely the reduction of tourist traffic to and from France would reduce the incidences of sightings on the UK mainland yet new economic transport links would provide new avenues for incursion.

Observations and opinions from the scientific research community have indicated that the spread of the Asian hornet is not just confined to biological population growth factors. Weather variations and human transport mechanisms play a significant part in the rapid and distanced nest locations.

This Spring the island of Jersey has been on the receiving end of predominantly NE / ENE winds from the Cherbourg Peninsula. The net effect of these prevailing winds has been felt on the NE Jersey coastal areas. The majority of this year's sightings of Asian hornet queens has been in this corner of the island. The Cherbourg coast is only 17 miles from Jersey. The DNA markers of the captured queens show that the hornets are not of the same genetic line found previously in Jersey nests but are more aligned to their French brethren. The inference is clear in that the hornets have been blown over by the unseasonal gale force winds.

The queen found in Hamburg on 3 September 2019 has been DNA analysed and the results show that this particular individual belonged to a group of hornets found 350 km away in northern France. For a single queen to make such a journey is outside her biological ability. The conclusion is that she was a stowaway on freight transport which ultimately ended in the port of Hamburg where she jumped off.

My thoughts on new freight routes due to Brexit have been proved correct. Due to the increased administration load and attendant fees and custom delays, EU traffic to Ireland has abandoned the previous road haulage routes through the UK. By leaving French ports and sailing direct to Cork and Dublin the fee cost has been saved and the paperwork simplified as it is free movement from one EU member state to another. (figure 1)



My worst fears have materialised. On 3 May 2021, a queen Asian hornet was found in a container of fruit in the secure customs area in the port of Dublin. This is the first known sighting in Ireland.

It is also one of the more northerly areas in which the insect has been found alive. It has previously been thought that the environmental range of the hornet is confined to a more Mediterranean climate. The fact that Dublin and Hamburg lie on the same line of latitude gives the lie to this.

To date Jersey has now recorded 71 queen incursions, more than the annual total for 2019. The wind transport mechanism seems to be bringing the hornets across in waves. The image (figure 2) shows how the NE of the island is bearing the brunt of the invasion.



The hornets are opportunists in terms of their predatory behaviour and now seemingly in their population / ecological dispersal behaviour. Human activity in terms of travel when Covid restrictions are lifted will provide even more opportunities for the hornet's dispersal on to the UK mainland and to a beehive near you!

It is important that we get as many people on the look out for the hornets especially when people return from Europe in their caravans, motorhomes, cars with trailers and camping equipment as well as the sailing community.

From the Dublin and Jersey experience its not if the Asian hornet nests in Devon but when.

Gavin Nuttall-Owen

Asian Hornet Coordinator

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