



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – November 2021

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

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

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



by Unknown Author is licensed under

I am not politically motivated in the slightest, but it greatly saddens me to hear that on the one hand, an employee (Footballer) is paid £1M per week, and on the other hand a family has to sell one of their children to buy food to live!

If only we as a human race could learn some lessons from our bees.

I do feel very privileged to be involved in the craft of Beekeeping, as they always show me that they are always working for the colony and not just their selfish selves.

The workings of your committee, work along that very road, and being the current Chair is so easy, as you only have to make sure that the jobs are carried out when needed. The committee have never failed me yet and never need chasing. So please step forward, put your hand up and take over this marvellous team of people, and enjoy the ride. For information please log on to the Tiverton Beekeepers website.

Malcolm

Sugar for feeding bees.

We have just received another batch of sugar kindly donated by Tesco. If you would like some to use or if you have room to store some for future use please contact me. Tony
01884841257 tony.lindsell@btinternet.com



Tiverton Beekeepers' Branch Members Meeting Programme .

Autumn 2021

**Wednesday November 17th 7.30 pm via Zoom
Branch Annual General Meeting**

It has been a difficult couple of years for us all, for our new beekeepers and those organising the branch. Please join us at this meeting and offer your support.

Additionally our Treasurer, Ian Duncan, has kindly offered to tell us about his experiences (no, not about beekeeping) of rowing across the Atlantic Ocean. It was a huge challenge & amazing experience for him join our meeting to hear all about it.

Wednesday 15th December 7.30pm via Zoom

Chance for a little Christmas fun, join us for a light hearted quiz , mainly about bees & beekeeping but who knows what else might pop up.

You will have to provide your own mince pies & sherry !



Asian Hornet News

The first reported sighting of an Asian Hornet in the UK for 2021 has been confirmed in Ascot, Berkshire on 8th October 2021 by Defra. NBU inspectors were able to track Asian Hornets back to a nest and destroy it. Although searches continue for any other hornets in the surrounding area the department has not released any further information or updates.

Currently Jersey has found and destroyed 49 secondary nests which is 10 more than this time last year. This can either be interpreted that the Jersey AHAT team are getting better at discovering and eradicating or there has been a greater influx of Asian hornets from the Cherbourg region of France than previously to Jersey due to the prevailing wind pattern. From the data narrative it would seem more likely the latter situation.

Video clips from the Jersey team when eradicating nests have shown some new behavioural aspects of the Asian hornet. Within the same nest video evidence shows nest incumbents attacking and devouring other members of the nest. This cannibalistic behaviour was only seen taking place on seemingly weaker hornets. Also developing grubs which are not going to survive the autumn / winter nest shutdown have been cleared out of the nest and dropped onto the ground to die. This behaviour seems to be repeated by other hornet nest observations and indicates that the queen hibernation process is underway as she is no longer laying, and the workers are no longer going to expend energy feeding grubs that will not have time to become adults. Interestingly Asian hornets from other nearby nests were seen making off with this free source of protein. Maybe grub drop is an indicator of a nest's population robustness with the early onset pointing to a weaker collection of hornets whose queen is initiating the survival hibernation mode earlier than the more robust populations?

Early in October Dutch AHAT teams near Amsterdam filmed European hornets attacking and killing Asian hornets. This was seen on a number of occasions whereby a single European hornet pounced on and stung an Asian hornet to death. Perhaps our native hornet species has the behavioural capacity to resist the non-native and act as a bio-deterrent. So, rather than peoples first reaction being to kill the European hornet, as they are perceived to be dangerous – Hollywood has a lot to answer - we ought to educate the public into living in harmony with these wonderful members of the insect world as they may be part of our Asian hornet defence strategy.

Giant bees of the Himalayas, *Apis laboriosa*, build a single immense ray or comb in the open air on the side of cliffs of northern Nepal. They then shimmer their wings in a coordinated rhythm similar to a Mexican wave at a football match. The resulting large flash as the sun reflects off hundreds of wings generates a display mimicking one great being or organism which seems to successfully deter Asian hornets from attacking the hive.

Gavin Nuttall-Owen

AHAT Coordinator ahat@tivertonbeekeepers.uk



Around the apiary in November

By Keith Owers



Apis mellifera on English Ivy.

At last it is autumn, leaves are changing colour and a few are starting to fall off. There is not much flower to be found in the hedgerows but there are a few. Ivy will be in flower for a week or two more.

Ivy is a good flower to watch to see what is around. I have been watching bees working the flowers along with a few bumblebees and hoverflies and of course a wasp or two but no hornets.

My bees are all fed and should be fine until the new year when I start hefting the hives in case they need a top up with some fondant. Not everybody bothers with mouse guards but if you have ever had a problem with mice you would put them on when the weather gets cold. If you use the metal strips with holes in them try and make sure you put them on with the bottom of the hole lined up with the floor board, this will make it easier for the undertaker bees to drag out the dead. This prevents a build up on the floor of a hive which restricts the entrance. If you put mouse guards on too soon, say early October you may find that the guards knock the pollen loads off the back legs of returning bees.

Having completed the work on your bees and hives, you can sit back and relax. It still pays to have a look around the hives every so often especially after bad weather. I have twice had problems, once stray cattle had gone walk about and knocked a hive over and the second time a large tree had blown down and tipped three hives over. On each occasion no real harm was done. The hives were put back together, frames and cross bees returned, all came through the winter in spite of their ordeal.

Do not forget to let Father Christmas know what you would like for Christmas, a new hive tool or a interesting book maybe.

Keith