



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – December 2021

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

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LETTER FROM THE (Stand -in) CHAIR



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Branch Update.

At last some decent cold weather - it will sort out the last of the wasps and settle the bees down for winter.

For those of you not able to join us for the AGM I am sorry to report that we no longer have a Chair or Vice-Chair. Malcolm has warned us for quite awhile that he would have to stand down as Chair & Derek as Vice-Chair has his hands full running our Education Programme. I would like to thank Malcolm for his period as Branch Chair, he took it on at a difficult time for the Branch and we were then hit by Covid - he has done a great job in keeping members spirits up and ensuring everyone who wants to be involved can do so. Derek has worked with him for the last 12 months and they have been a formidable pair particularly at the Apiary or in the classroom. Thank you to both of you, we are very grateful for your commitment & leadership.

We also need to thank a number of committee members who have also stood down including Barbara Brannam - a past Chair and wonderful supporter of the Branch & Norma King who has moved out of our area. John Knowles & Gary Dufton weren't at the AGM so we've had to assume they were no longer standing for committee but we'd welcome them back if they change their minds.

Thanks to all four of these members they have all given great support to the Branch .

On the positive side we have welcomed 3 new committee members: Clive Rowe, Geoff Kirton & Simon Tapp.

It is our intention not to lose the momentum we have gained from Malcolm's leadership & we will discuss a sharing of the Chair's role between committee members when we next meet in January.

Lesley Ayre has kindly taken on the Programme Secretary role & will begin putting a programme of speakers together from January . But don't forget on **Wednesday 15th December** we are holding a **Bee Quiz** via Zoom so please join us. Bring a glass of Sherry & mince pie!

Depending on the Covid situation, which is very uncertain as I write this, we are hoping to have a **Social Get Together** with a little bit of food & drink in **January 2022**. It won't be on our normal Wednesday as we would like to use the large room at Uplowman Village Hall and it is booked out on Wednesdays . Watch this space.

We are here for the benefit of all our members and if you can help us in anyway, even if it is just to turn up at the Knightshayes Apiary to help clean equipment, you'd be very welcome.

Apologies for the length of this update but we just wanted to make sure you were aware of what's going on.

Merry Christmas to you all and, as Beekeepers, you'll be pleased to know next year will be better!

Tony - on behalf of our committee members.



Tiverton Beekeepers' Branch Members Meeting Programme

Wednesday 15th December. 7.30pm

Bee Quiz via Zoom . Be ready with a glass of something and a mince pie!



www.abarty.com - ASERA1

Asian Hornet News

Second Asian hornet sighting in the UK.

Defra has reported that, following a sighting of a suspect on 29 October 2021 in Portsmouth, it was positively identified as an Asian hornet by the NBU. Subsequently on Saturday 30 October the nest was found about 20m (65 feet) up a tree and then destroyed and removed on Sunday 31 October. Defra have stated on their website that further monitoring has taken place of the surrounding area. The website does not state where in the Portsmouth locality the nest was found or how long the monitoring is in place. This is the third occasion over the past 2 years that Portsmouth has been an Asian Hornet hotspot (5 out of 21 sightings since 2016 being in Hampshire). Therefore, the occurrence is either due to an established colony lying undiscovered except for these satellite nests or maritime traffic being the periodic conduit. Whatever the situation the importance of monitoring, prompt verification and nest finding cannot be over emphasised.



Image copyright Defra

From the Jersey frontline

Alastair Christie, Jersey's Asian Hornet Co-ordinator, has produced a summary of this season's activities. This year has seen an upswing in the number of nests found and destroyed, 63 as against 38 in 2020 although not back to the levels of 2019 in which there were 83 nests. The increase in numbers were attributed to the predominantly NE winds blowing throughout this year which caused the queens to be blown across from the French mainland.

He has observed that every year has seen a different pattern of behaviour in the hornets. This year the majority of nests have been found low down and in bramble patches. The usual pattern is for the secondary nest to be sited higher up in trees. Alastair has stated that this change in nest building potentially creates dangers for the public, which didn't exist before, as if this an evolutionary shift towards lower placed nests, then, it increases the risk factor associated with human hornet interactions. Against this backdrop the methods of control adopted by Jersey have successfully kept the hornet at bay.

The pandemic reduction in boat and vehicle traffic between the Channel Islands and mainland UK has played a part in stopping the Asian hornet gaining a foothold. Yet as Jersey has shown, a change in the wind patterns and climate disruption are enough for this opportunistic predator to expand its environmental niche. Studies in France have shown that the spread of the Asian hornet has been greatest along the hinterlands of rivers. A scenario whereby one lands at Exmouth docks could herald a fast spread along the whole of the Exe valley reaching into Dulverton and beyond. A traditional cold winter may not be welcomed but it might play a significant part in keeping the Asian hornet queens from having a cosy hibernation.

Gavin Nuttall-Owen

AHAT Co-ordinator

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Qs and As

By way of something a little different and to fill this gap I thought I would ask a few questions of our learned beekeepers in the club for those of you who are new to the club and the hobby and would like to find out more, to add to your knowledge or to just make us feel a little more connected in these socially distance times. Perhaps this could be a more regular item where people can ask other beekeepers questions. If that is something you would all like please send me your questions for next months Buzzette.

So these are a few questions I will put to Keith and he has said that he will send his answers to appear in the January issue. Here goes!

“ Keith, what lead you to take up beekeeping?”

“How long have you kept bees?”

“ How did you learn the craft of beekeeping?”

“ What is the most enjoyable part of keeping bees for you? “

“ Do you get away in the summer for a holiday and how do you arrange this around caring for your bees?”

“ How would you distinguish or describe a nice colony of bees as opposed to an unpleasant colony ?”

“If you have an unpleasant colony, what would you do?”

“ What is your preferred type of hive and why ?”

Bulk Buying Scheme



It's now time to purchase your frames and foundation through the bulk buying scheme and if anyone is interested you have until the middle of December, to place your orders. As you are aware the aim of the Bulk Buying Scheme is for 100% of the money saved to be passed on to the members, no money goes to club funds. All prices listed on the order form are with a 20% reduction and if we meet the £200 limit for both frames and foundation separately, then these prices will remain. If a £200 limit is not reached then all prices will revert to the listed price + 20% (based on previous years this is usually reached).

THE DEADLINE FOR ALL ORDERS WILL BE 17TH DECEMBER 2021

HOW TO ORDER Frames and Foundation

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

Payments

I would be grateful if everyone could pay by BACS before the collection date and ensure they show their Surname as the reference. BACS is the preferred and safest method of payment and request this option is used where possible. Cheques however, will be accepted, where necessary, on collection.

Frames and Foundation

All details of the items are listed on the order form and cover the usual BS National, Langstroth and Hoffman. Please note the foundation is sold in packs of 10 and the frames sold in packs of 25.

Collections will be from the address shown on the order form but please let me know if you have any problems, my telephone number is 01884 849377.

Cath Davies
Bulk Purchasing Coordinator



Around the apiary in December

By Keith Ower

17/11/2021 Hilary Sanders

Apis Mellifera on feeding on Hedera Helix (Native Ivy) with Holly in the background

As I write this we are half way through November and the trees, Oaks and Beech are well clothed in bronze leaves. What does this mean for our bees? The mild weather so far this autumn has enabled our bees to keep foraging. If my hives are any thing to go by, the bees have been out and about bringing in nectar from Ivy. All of my hives are heavy and will not need feeding before Christmas. Please do not go looking under the crown boards at this time of year, our bees are better left in peace.

Looking in the hedge rows there is not much for our bees to find. Ivy is still in flower if the bees still want it, although I am only seeing small wasps feeding, but not for long, one good frost and they will be gone. White Dead Nettle is in flower but this is normally the preserve of bumble bees. What is good to see is the bright red berries of Guelder rose Viburnum opulus. Not of particular interest to our bees as it is pollinated by Hoverflies. In the hedge around my apiary I have another gem Spindle wood, Euonymus europaeus, the bright red fruits split at this time of year exposing their brilliant orange seeds, this plant is good for bees when in flower. With Christmas nearly here, I have to mention Holly, Ilex aquifolium as a good hedge plant for bees, Holly is not good every year but on a good year when in flower in late May you could mistake it for a swarm in the hedge.

Back to our bees, what's to be done in December? Not much I hope. A quick walk around the hives and heft any hives you think may be light. Check that hive roofs are on and mouse guards in place. Watch out for woodpecker damage and if necessary surround the hives with chicken wire or plastic strips, I have not had to do it but I am told it works.

A question I am sometime asked is what happens if we have a really cold weather and snow. Providing your hives are on stands it should not be a problem. Snow can build up on alighting boards, not a problem with my Langstroth hives. Should the snow melt then freeze again this can block the hive entrance.

Have a good Christmas and I hope next year will be a good year for bees.

Keith