



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – February 2022

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

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LETTER FROM THE (returning) CHAIR!



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Since the AGM, I have managed to gain some spare time from family commitments, so just to let you know what is going on with club items. I have temporarily taken back the Chairs reins to try and keep things gently running along. This does not solve the problem of helpers.

I am in desperate need of members who have an interest in being Vice Chair, Education, Queen rearing, Finance, maintenance etc.

I am not looking for one person to take on each task, but a group of people who have an interest or expertise in that area.

So do you have an interest? Is your great hobby of beekeeping worth just a very few hours a year? if so please make contact with me.

As the sun is getting stronger and warmer and you are out around your sites, why not take a picture and send it in to the Buzzette to lift all our spirits. No story needed, just a warming picture.

Malcolm
01884 821927

Welcome back Malc!





Tiverton beekeepers members meeting

Wednesday 16th February 7.30pm via zoom

Lesley hopes to have a talk arranged from our local bee inspector Leila Goss. This will be via zoom with a link arriving to your email addresses nearer the time, so keep the evening free as it should be very interesting and useful. It would also be good if you have some questions ready to ask her. I certainly have.

Hilary (Editor)

Tiverton Beekeepers committee meeting

Thursday 10th March 7.30pm via zoom

Worker bees needed ...

The committee still has vacancies for the position of Vice Chair, Queen rearing, Finance, maintenance etc.

If you wish to discuss this please contact:

Malcolm Crook (Chair)
01884 821927

Tony Lindsell
01884 841257

Hilary Sanders (Editor)
01884 266297



BBKA Spring Convention.

This will once more be held at Harper Adams in Shropshire, 8-10 April 2022. This is a unique opportunity to bring the national beekeeping community together again, after two years of lock downs, cancellations and virtual events. Choose from more than 20 lectures and 40+ workshops, together with the Trade Show and the usual opportunities to meet old (and make new) friends from around the country.

BOOK NOW!



Spring 2022 Convention

Friday 8 - Saturday 9 – Sunday 10 April 2022

Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

Lectures, Workshops and Seminars covering a wide range of practical and scientific topics, directed at all levels of experience, presented by leading experts. Bumper Trade Show Saturday 9th

Speakers and Tutors include; Marin Anastasov, Mark Barnett, Shirley and Richard Bond, Norman Carreck, Lars Chittka, Celia Davis, Joyce Nisbet, Juliet Osborne, Julian Parker, Sara Robb, Nigel Semmence, Jo Widdicombe, Geraldine Wright, and more...

For further information, **and to book** from 31st January
see the Spring Convention pages at www.bbka.org.uk

Around the apiary in February

By Keith Owers



Catkins from Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) taken 30th January 2022. Note the absence of any bees as it was too cold! Hilary (Editor)

Hazel shrubs are monoecious, which means they have male and female flowers on the same plant. They can't self-fertilise though. The female flowers are a small vase-shaped bud with red filaments sticking out. If pollinated, these buds become the hazel nuts in autumn.

The Woodland Trust

Over to Keith

So far January has been a very quite month but next month can be very unpredictable. I like to start the month by hefting the hives to be sure they are ok for food. With a little luck that may be all I have to do till the end of the month. Depending on the weather our bees should be starting to build up by the end of the month. The rate of expansion is dependant on the strength of the colony. The queen will only increase egg laying if she has the workers to look after the brood and plenty of food, honey and pollen, hence the need to heft the hives. If in doubt about food give them some some fondant, if they eat it give them some more. Pollen supply is normally ok in Devon. I have tried feeding it in February but it was not wanted. Next month is the critical time as more old bees are dying of and young bees are in short supply.

With time to spare check your equipment for the coming season.

Looking to the coming season read up your notes on foul brood diseases, there was a big increase in Devon and Somerset last year. I will tell you more next month and ask me when we next meet which I hope will not be too long.

Qs and As



You may recall that in the December issue, I put a few questions to Keith (Owers) and he has kindly come back with some more answers!

So here we go!

What is the most enjoyable part of beekeeping for me?

Meeting other beekeepers and helping new beekeepers.

Do I get away in the summer for a holiday?

An annual holiday has always been important to my family and I. Work had to take priority over beekeeping. Every year we would be off on 2 weeks holiday the first two weeks in June. Most years the bees would fend for themselves. An ex club member would help me some times He had a key to my shed for spare equipment if required.

On one occasion we returned from holiday to have him knocking on the door the next morning, to tell me I needed to start extracting as I was out of supers, all full or almost. Bees are good at looking after themselves, give or take the odd swarm that also wants to take a holiday.

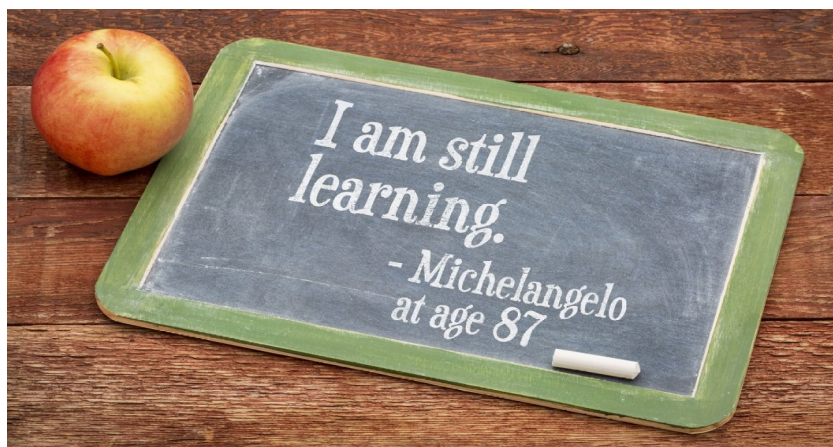
How would you distinguish or describe a nice colony as opposed to an unpleasant one?

You should be able to open a hive with out the bees trying to drive you off. Bees that stay calm on the frame and not race around or try to follow you home. Bees can all be a bit touchy when a honey flow comes to an end, or late in the season when removing honey.

THE KEY IS GOOD HANDLING.

Many thanks Keith.

These little gems of inside information are often what we Newbees need, to help us in our own adventures into beekeeping.



From the Science Lab

As the days start lengthening and the evening light lasting longer, the first shoots and buds of spring plants are already starting to appear. This in turn is announced by the increasing number of seed and plant catalogues coming through our letter boxes. Yet before we get too seduced by the glossy images and tempted to grow a new world record onion, let's pause a while and be guided by the latest research into making our own patch not only biodiverse but a veritable insect banqueting hall.

Small gardens are as important as big gardens for conserving bees and other pollinators in the UK according to a study by Nicholas Tew et al (Journal of Applied Ecology Jan 2022)

We know that bee populations, (wild and solitary as well as managed honeybees) are declining. Habitat destruction, pesticide use - both directly and indirectly applied - and climate change have led to the disappearances of some pollinators. Yet the researchers found that small urban gardens are some of the most pollinator friendly places.

Using Bristol as the study site the team found that the size of gardens had little relationship to the amount of nectar produced. Most of the nectar produced in gardens was likely to come from a shrub in the corner or a border around the edge of the garden. The study found that there are some very flower rich small gardens and conversely some very flower poor big gardens.

Previous studies have shown that gardens and allotments are important sources of nectar, yet allotments cover only 1% of cities and on average 85% of nectar in cities is produced in gardens.

The Bristol University researchers measured the nectar supply from 59 gardens each month from March through to October to track the differences between how much food gardens produce for pollinators and when nectar production peaks.

The flowers identified as producing the most nectar were shrubs. These plants are dense with flowers making them ideal nectar resources that can fit into smaller spaces.

The common daisy was another pollinator friendly plant due to their open shape thereby being available for short-tongued pollinators.

The variety of plants between gardens also provided the pollinators with a stable supply of food throughout the year. It was unlikely that two gardens would have exactly the same species of plants so together gardens create much richer nectar resources than they do individually.

The study shows that pollinator friendly management affecting garden quality is more important than the size of the garden. Hence every gardener has an opportunity to contribute to pollinator conservation. The researchers suggest that those gardeners interested in increasing the value of their

land for insect forage would do well in planting nectar rich shrubs with complementary flowering periods and prioritising flowers with an open structure in late summer and autumn.

So, creating gardens that are flower rich, flower at different times of the year and contain a number of shrubs would seem to be a recipe for insect population success.

The research article can be found at

Journal of Applied Ecology

<https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.14094>

Turnover in floral composition explains species diversity and temporal stability in the nectar supply of urban residential gardens (Jan 2022) N.E.Tew, K.C.R.Baldock, I.P.Vaughan, S. Bird, J. Memmott

Plant suggestions

RHS plants for pollinators rhs.org.uk

Nectar rich plants to grow gardenersworld.com 7 Jan 2020

Bee friendly plant guide friendsoftheearth.uk/bee/plants

Plants for bees- pollinator guidance buglife.org.uk

Gavin Nuttall-Owen

AHAT Coordinator and Microscopist



Finally.

<https://tivertonbeekeepers.uk/>

William Lines, one of our committee members, has recently taken over the running of the Tiverton Beekeepers Website the aim of which is to:

“ Keep members informed of what is going on (additionally to the Buzzette) and provide a gateway for anyone interested or needing to know about bees within the Tiverton/Mid-Devon area.”

William tells me that the website regularly gets people enquiring about the beginners' courses and how to get started with beekeeping, as well as a variety of other requests.

William is keen that we look at the site and would welcome any feedback, positive/ constructive or otherwise in order to assess how others might view it. Any feedback can be sent via the contact form.

Please look at the site and see how well you can navigate it and find the things you might be interested in.

Hilary (Editor)