



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – May 2022

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

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR!



Following on from our last month's committee meeting, I will try and keep you all informed with what your committee is trying to do for you and what plans we have as we move to having more face to face activities (and not just lots of tea and cake)

The branch library seems to have run its course with no one wanting to borrow books in this modern age of computers. Any books of value will be retrieved and the libraries at Tiverton and Cullompton will hopefully be only too pleased to place these on their shelves so that the general public can use them.

The National Trust have appointed a new park Ranger at Knightshayes, Sam Tyson, who we will work with and his team members, and Sam has now arranged our new lease for our apiary. (It only took two years plus to obtain).

We needed a way of contacting members in times of need and at short notice, for example for maintenance at the club apiary or to help with a swarm, so Jon Davis (secretary) has set up a "Whats App" group called WhatsApiary which is working very well and beginning to get members involved and communicating again.

We were very conscious that members needed to know what events were being planned for the summer months so that they could plan ahead.. We have now organised a series of events which are available on our website as well as in The Buzzette.

Over the past two years our education of members has suffered with The Covid 19 pandemic and this has meant that very few practical sessions could take place. The committee decided not to start a beginners course at present, but to complete courses that the current members are enrolled on. Beginners courses will be organised for the next academic year ie. September 2022/2023 so this can be advertised at the Mid Devon Show. Thanks to Keith Owers for taking this on. There are also plans for an improvers course to take those who have done the beginners courses forward and gain further confidence. We should have more information on this in the next issue of The Buzzette.

Sue Francombe is very keen on entering the Stephenson's Trophy at the Devon County Show this year. Please see the additional information on pages 4 and 5 below.

Please use you committee to help you. We are always here for suggestions and help if we can.

Malcolm

Apiary Update

A few of us joined Malcolm at the Beginners practical session yesterday, Saturday 30th April

It was a good opportunity to meet up, help to support the Newbees and recap on some important bits of knowledge from our own beekeeping experience.

There was a spot of apiary maintenance that needed doing too and a very pleasant couple of hours were spent there. Feel free to join in on these dates.





At the Apiary in Knightshayes

Sat May 7th Beginners practical training sessions 13:00hr-14:00 and 14:30-15:30

Sat May 14th Apiary general maintenance come prepared.

Sat May 21st Beginners practical training sessions 13:00hr-14:00 and 14:30-15:30

Sat May 28th Queen rearing (see note below)

Sat June 4th Upplowman Fair

Sat June 11th Making increase. (increasing your colonies)

Sat June 18th Beginners practical training sessions 13:00hr-14:00 and 14:30-15:30

Tiverton Beekeepers committee meeting

Thursday May 12th 7.30 pm Upplowman village hall

Thurs June 30th-July 2nd Devon County show (see further information below)

I would like to commence some Queen rearing days at the end of May beginning of June this year, but I will need help. It is not the rearing of Queen cells which is the problem, it is the number of mating hives and bees needed at that time. So if you are interested and have some spare equipment to rear some new Queens, then please contact me. In the mean time, please research the different types of Queen rearing/ mating hive ways to be prepared for when they are needed.

Malcolm



The Stevenson's Trophy competition "Beekeeping in our area"



As mentioned by Malcolm last month the club is entering The Stevenson's Trophy competition for this years Devon County Show. This year the format has changed and each association is invited to submit a display (1 meter squared) depicting "Beekeeping in our area".

The task we have been given is:

"The theme can be interpreted in any way that the branch sees fit but should aim to interest and educate visitors to the Bees and Honey Feature and showcase the branch's home area or situation; for instance one or more benefits, features or challenges of beekeeping in the home area may be represented"

It is the club's, not an individual entry and the organisers aim is to get people working together rather than it being just one individual's effort.

Sue Francombe and myself are working together on this in order to kick start things. We have some basic ideas for it but it is still in it's infancy and we would love your input. We are working along the lines of the different benefits/challenges that we might have in the place where we keep our hives, bearing in mind the type of topography, crops, etc in our club area.

I am working on a collection of photographs to be put into a small folder, that will hang in the cube and it would be lovely if you could send me a photograph of your hive/s that depicts the particular area that you keep your bees. For instance, in an orchard, a wildflower meadow, near oilseed rape, brambles, a riverside or canal a steep hill, livestock to contend with nearby, a leafy glade, an urban area, your own garden, heather or a rooftop perhaps. You might like to give me a short sentence that states a benefit or challenge to keeping bees in your particular environment but keep it short. You could include in there something about what your bees predominantly have forage on.

We would also like some 1oz honey samples but please could you send me a photograph of yours first, as we want to demonstrate a variety of honey colours. We will then choose a few to showcase the differences in honey ask you for a small sample. Please could you email me your snaps to sandershills1@yahoo.co.uk. Feel free to contact me if you need to.

Hilary (Editor)

First Asian Hornet of 2022 confirmed on UK Mainland

Friday 29 April 2022

The first Asian Hornet of 2022 on the British mainland has been confirmed at Felixstowe in Suffolk. The sighting has been confirmed but no further details are available.

Last year there were 2 Asian Hornet nests found on the mainland at Ascot in Berkshire and Portsmouth in Hampshire in October.

Beekeepers in Suffolk are asked to be on alert for hornets around their hives.

Additional information from Beebase:

April 2022 - A confirmed finding of a single Asian hornet in Felixstowe, Suffolk

The National Bee Unit is carrying out enhanced monitoring and awareness raising together with local beekeepers after a single insect, confirmed to be *Vespa velutina* was killed at a sentinel apiary, reported by a beekeeper.

Further information regarding the yellow legged Asian hornet can be found on [Defra's Asian Hornet sightings page](#) and on [BeeBase's Asian hornet page](#). Please direct all media enquiries to the Defra Press Office: 0330 0416560



Qs and As from The Editor to The Chair!

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

Many years ago I used to work with a lovely bloke called Andy Hutton. Andy loved his bees, and actually had hives on the banks of the Tiverton canal near the golf course. He always said that I should keep bees, and my answer was always “ Why do I want to put my hand in there to get it stung?”

A few year later, my wife bought me a course on how to keep bees, and from that day forward I was hooked.

“How long have you kept bees? ”

This will be my 9th year now, and every year so far has been very different.

I started off by buying two second hand WBC hives and bees from a beekeeper called Jack in Shaldon. A proper “it will be alright boy” gent who had been keeping bees for years. We loaded the colonies into my car and he said that he had taped over the entrance so they couldn't get out for a while. I said “how long is a while?” And Jack “said about 30mins and you've have got a 45min drive, so don't be long”

“ How did you learn the craft of beekeeping?”

I had no knowledge of beekeeping whatsoever, never looked at any bee books or did any internet research. So on a dark winters night I went to Uplowman Village hall to start my beekeeping course. The two tutors were Bob Ogden and a certain Keith Owers. A lot of what they said in the early days made little sense to me, but as time went on they were brilliant tutors.

Keith was, and still is my mentor and I owe so much of my knowledge about the “girls” to him. I haven't learnt the craft yet as you will always learn new things about the craft.

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

I feel so privileged for the “girls” to allow me into their world. We as humans can and should learn so much from them. Each and every day, something different pops up and they just deal with it as a group. No drama just a need to “get it done”.

I find them very calming, stressful, happy, sad all in each session. Rearing your new stock? Fantastic achievement every time.

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

I try and work with the colonies, try and anticipate what they will need in the coming days, and I tend not to examine them every week. In the wild they manage just fine and I try and replicate this. Give them plenty of room and a young queen, then getting away for a summer break is no problem.

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

“You don't have to run away so fast when they get upset!”

All colonies are nice, but some aren't quite so welcoming as others. There is no enjoyment at all trying to live with an unpleasant colony, either you or your neighbours, so I try and establish why they are grumpy? Have they an unwanted visitor, mouse perhaps or wasps etc. Are they healthy are they restricted? Is it me with an unwanted pheromone? Stroking horses, just eaten a banana, a lunchtime pint? Maybe the weather, if they are normally good except today, then put the roof back on and come back another day.

If all else fails I move the colony to somewhere safer and hope they may supersede.

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

As above

Thank you Malcolm for this really interesting, honest and funny contribution. Love it!

Hils (Editor)

Buzz word

“Dandelions “

This is just a little interesting piece of information to fill this particular gap which Sue Francombe told me about yesterday. This is taken from an article in The Guardian Newspaper encouraging people to “No-Mow in May ”



“Plantlife” said just eight dandelion flowers may produce enough nectar sugar to meet an adult bumblebee’s baseline energy needs.

One 100 sq metre area of unmown lawn, according to their plant study, would produce enough pollen to stock up six mining bee brood cells and enough nectar sugar to meet the needs of six bumblebees a day. (food for thought)

Photograph: Pat Savage/Alamy

Please feel free to send me a small piece for future “Buzz word” articles.

Hilary (Editor)



Around the Apiary in May

by Keith Owers

Apis Mellifera on Crab Apple Yellow Hornet Hilary Sanders.

Spring has sprung and our bees have been making the most of it. I was able to take my first good look at my bees just before Easter and I was pleased to find all was well. As I write this it is near the end of April. The hedges now are showing more and more colour, Primrose and celandines are joined by bluebells and stitchwort. Hawthorne is now taking over from blackthorn and there is more for our bees to find.

April has been good for our bees but it only takes the weather to change cold and wet like last May to set our bees back. I am sure they will sort something out but we will have to be ready for swarming which could happen any time soon.

Do make sure you have the extra equipment needed for swarm control and know what method you are going to use. Regardless of the weather decide on how you are going to set about changing old frames.

If you are unclear about swarming or changing frames do come along to the practical training sessions at the branch apiary at Knightshays. Beekeeping is always a challenge but it is worth the effort.

Frame changing can be two or three frames or you could do a complete change such as a (Bailey frame change}, or a shook swarm, both methods sound drastic but the bees recover quickly and will race ahead. At this time of year we have a lot of young bees in the hive and they are our wax builders.

Providing you feed the bees they will make wax and do the building work. Your queen will be well pleased and will quickly lay eggs in the new cells. As a youngster I am sure you preferred a clean bed rather than a much used grubby bed. I know I did,

Good luck.

Keith