



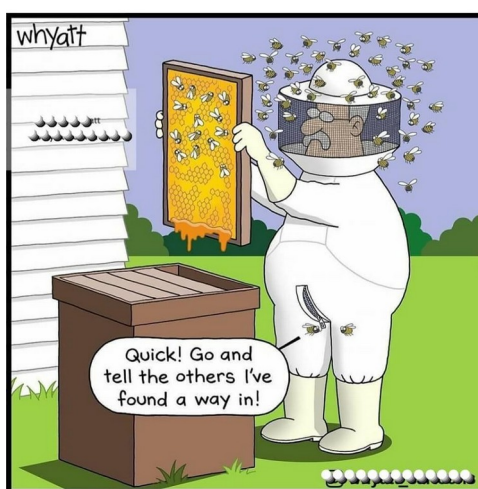
THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – January 2023

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

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The Chairman's Brood Box



Happy New Year to all members of Tiverton Beekeepers. I hope that you've all had a pleasant and warm festive season. It's the start of a new year, a new beekeeping season and no matter how long anyone has kept bees it is always an exciting time.

Hopefully all your bees are well fed and tucked up in their hives and all of your equipment is cleaned and stored. I always promise myself that I will be ready but have yet to achieve that landmark, however I'm nearly there this year. The best thing is that we can start planning the year ahead for our apiaries, which is essential whether we have 1 hive or 100.

Our new branch officers & committee will meet early in January when we'll put together a timetable of what we are planning for the branch over the year and a calendar of beekeeping events locally and nationally. When it's done we will share it with you & please feel free to contribute if you can add something. The branch is very much about supporting each other and we would really appreciate your involvement and value your presence at any of our events, or your comments on what is happening.

The Buzzete, which you are now reading, is one of the ways that we communicate with you and we are very grateful to Hilary who works hard to put it together each & every month. It is only as good as the contributions that she gets from members so don't hesitate to send in an article about your bees, a comment about some bee related issue or interesting photographs. *(Please see footnote)*

Branch Celebration & Beekeeping Equipment Give & Take
Friday 13th January. 7.00 pm Upplowman Village Hall.



This month instead of a normal members' meeting when we usually have a guest speaker to talk with us about beekeeping, we will be having a social get together. We haven't had the chance or opportunity to do this since before Covid 19 struck so come along to meet other members of the branch and amongst other things, share your beekeeping stories. The branch will provide drinks; hot, cold, alcoholic, non-alcoholic but please can you kindly bring along a plate of buffet food for sharing (savour/sweet). Also if you have any beekeeping equipment (clean & in reasonable condition) or books that are surplus to your needs then bring them along so others members can make use of them - free of charge on a just "Give or Take." basis. If it's not taken I'm sorry but you will have to take it home with you. I look forward to seeing you there. For catering purposes please let our Secretary, Jon, know if you are coming.

Tony Lindsell (Chair)

Footnote

*Whilst photographs are lovely to include, and much appreciated, please be aware that you should **not** send me photographs of other people. This is because of data protection ie GDPR.*

Photographs are subject to copyright and cannot be used without your consent but if you sent me one I will assume implied consent, however, If they do include other people I would need to gain their consent to include them in an article which would be rather time consuming and not straightforward and therefore I probably wouldn't use those ones. I hope that makes sense. The whole issue is complex. This advice was sought from a friend who does a newsletter for the parish council and from The DBKA.

Hilary Sanders (Editor)



Member's Branch meetings

New Year Branch Social and Celebration evening see *Chair's note above*.

Friday 13th January 7pm Uplowman Village hall.

Bring and share buffet plus "Give and Take". Drinks provided by club

Further meetings all at 7.30pm at Uplowman Village Hall

Leila Goss Wednesday 15th February with a talk on Bees and Plants.

Dan Basterfield Wednesday 15th March with a talk on simple Queen rearing.



Beginners Course dates

Wednesday January 11th Reasons for swarms, causes and prevention. Control and collection.

Wednesday January 25th Pests and diseases and general hygiene.

Wednesday February 8th Bee products and plants for bees.

Wednesday February 22nd Getting started - setting up an apiary.

Don't forget to renew your club membership

Deadline 31st December 2022

Jon and Cath Davies – Our Introduction to Beekeeping.

It was a cold day at the end of January 2019 when the door bell rang. It was our friend from down the lane, Tony Lindsell. "You know you said you'd be interested in hosting some bees in your paddock Jon? Well, one of the members from Tiverton Beekeepers is giving up keeping bees and we need to re-home them and I wondered if you'd be interested in having them in your paddock?" And so it began.....!

We had moved to Devon with the aim of living a more rural life style with a vague idea that keeping bees would be part of the picture but it wasn't until Tony called on us that day that a vague idea became a reality. Tony offered to get me involved with inspecting and managing the bees and what capped it off was that the day he called was my birthday and later that day I received a present from my brother and sister-in-law that turned out to be a book on beekeeping! So, it all seemed to be written in the stars that I was going to get involved with beekeeping. It started off with two orphan colonies which were happily settled into a nice south facing spot under some oak trees in our paddock where they seemed pretty happy. Tony introduced me to the inspection routines, how to identify and mark the queen (very tricky!!), spot drones, workers, queen cells, brood, drone brood, eggs and larvae. We did some colony splits and most exciting of all, harvested the honey then prepared the hives for winter and monitored them to ensure they had enough food before the new season started. To support the excellent hands-on tuition and experience Tony provided, I completed my beginners' course in 2020 and hope to do an improvers' course in 2023.

It hasn't all been plain sailing:- one colony swarmed, despite splitting it a few days earlier, a queen went missing and a laying worker appeared, one queen went off lay then suddenly re-appeared just as we'd concluded she was dead and were about to merge two colonies; and we've been stung. Occasionally. Well, my wife Cath more than me to be honest – I avoided getting stung for about 18 months then reality caught up with me!

I have had some great afternoons with Tony checking his own hives around the area, collecting swarms and helping beekeepers, who were temporarily out of action, manage their bees. It has given me a great insight to the collegiate nature of beekeepers – kind and generous almost to a fault and good fun with it.

Two years ago, I was asked to consider taking the role of Branch Secretary and Cath, having done her beginners' course, has taken over the running of the bulk ordering scheme so it's pretty much a family affair now.

After three years we now have five colonies but will look to reduce that to three next year, once we've seen what the spring brings. We've learned a lot but don't claim to be expert beekeepers – just about basic adequate is how we'd describe ourselves – we often hear beekeepers discussing their bees and we think to ourselves either, what were they talking about? Or, oh dear, we don't do that, perhaps we should be? It just shows what an enormous subject beekeeping is and what scope it offers for learning and discussion all done, of course, over a cup of tea and a piece of cake with some lovely, friendly, helpful, generous people.

Our thanks to Tony for starting the ball rolling and sharing his love of beekeeping with us and also all the other Committee members for helping me get up to speed with the Branch Secretary's role. Here's to the spring and another season of beekeeping!



Around the apiary in January

By Keith Owers

Winter Honeysuckle taken 30/12/2022 see below

It is nice to say that there is not much to do this month. More time to sit around the fire and think of warm summer days looking at our bees.

In writing these notes each month I was thinking what can I write for this January edition that I have not done before? What about snow?

What do we know about snow and our bees? What effect does it have on the bees. Very little, they stay indoors in the warm and wait for a warm bright day.

Providing the bees have been well fed all with a full store cupboard and a good roof, all should be well. A good hive stand will keep them out of harms way, note raised up, on four house bricks. Should the snow build up to cover the hive entrance, not to worry. The bees will get enough air through the snow providing it has not partly thawed and re frozen. A frozen block of ice on the alighting board could be a problem. An interesting scenario can arise in January when the sun is very low in the mornings and the suns rays reflect off the snow and shine on the hive entrance. Bees have three simple eyes on the top of their head, (Ocelli.) We do not know a lot about these eyes but the bees fly with the light shining on top of their head, without them they might fly upside down. With the reflected light shining in the hive entrance, the bees fly with the light on top of there head, and fly straight into the snow and are lost.

I have not seen this myself with snow but the same can happen with light reflecting off water. One year in January a farmer friend phoned to tell me he had seen a lot of my bees swimming in his pond. I went to investigate and observed all the dead bees in the pond from one hive. I had read of this problem, so I turned the hive 90 degrees, problem solved.

May you and your bees have a good and happy new year.

Keith

No Apis Melifera on this today as a little too chilly but I would recommend this winter flowering, highly scented shrub for AM and bumblebees.

Hilary Sanders.