



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – February 2023

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

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The Chairman's Brood Box

"What's In Store?"

Well, it's been a busy but a very encouraging start to the new year for our branch. Our beginners are back in the classroom learning all about swarming (I've never really got my head around how best to control them) 😊. The following evening our committee met for the first time with several new & younger faces in attendance. We had fun sorting out a plan and programme for the coming year so keep reading! Then, on the following evening we had our first social event of the year which was well supported with many members meeting up again after all the restrictions of Covid19. Again many new members turned up & there was plenty of chit chat about bees, beekeeping and the environment. A lovely buffet was provided by everyone who attended and I think a good time was held by all.

We are hoping that we can hold more social events with a bee theme over the coming year. It has been suggested we could organise trips to other branch apiaries or commercial beekeeping businesses such as Blackberry Farm, Southleigh (owned by Dan & Ken Basterfield), Buckfast Bees or Quince Honey Farm at South Molton. Other suggestions were a summer barbecue and a dinner towards the end of the year. If you like any of these ideas or have other suggestions please let us know.

We are also looking at our education programme for the year. As last year's beginners come to the end of their theory sessions they are looking forward to getting "hands on at the Apiary." Then there is the Improvers Course which Covid 19 prevented us from delivering in the past few years but we hope to start that again in March.

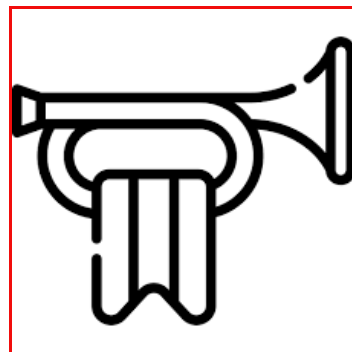
As a Branch we would encourage all our Beekeepers who have kept bees for a year or two to enrol for this course at some stage and then go on to take the BBKA Basic Assessment. The format for the Improvers Course is more of a discussion group led by more experienced beekeepers - sometimes in the local pub!

Our guest speaker in February is Leila Goss, a friend of the branch and a regular guest. She is a very experienced beekeeper who is also a Seasonal Bee Inspector. Her talk will be about 'Bees & Plants' which is very timely as spring approaches. As always I'm sure Leila will be happy to answer questions about any aspect of beekeeping during the question & answer session that follows all our talks, so please join us on Wednesday 15th February at 7.30 pm, Uplowman Village Hall. There will, as usual, be plenty of tea, coffee, biscuits and cake.

Another dairy date is Wednesday 15th March in your diary, Dan Basterfield who is a Master Beekeeper and will be talking to us about Simple Queen Rearing.

With days getting longer and, hopefully, the weather getting warmer it won't be long before we can start watching our bees flying from their hives.
Happy Beekeeping.

And re-introducing, by popular demand....is The Improvers Course.



As mentioned by Tony, the club is re-starting the popular Improvers Course which was curtailed during the Covid 19 pandemic. The course will be of particular interest to beekeepers who have attended the introductory course and are looking to advance their beekeeping skills and knowledge. The course will be run on an informal basis at Uplowman Village Hall on the dates shown below over a total of six sessions, and with a total cost of £25.

Anyone interested should, in the first instance, email cliverowe.home@gmail.com and I will reply with further details and how to pay. The course dates are as follows;

8th, 22nd & 29th March

5th, 12th and 26th April.

Clive Rowe

Education Coordinator

TBKA.



Beginners Course dates

Wednesday February 8th 7.30pm "Bee products and plants for bees."

Wednesday February 22th 7.30pm "Getting started - setting up an apiary."

Club members general meetings. All 7.30pm at Uplozman 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.

Committee members only meetings

March 2nd Uplozman Village Hall 7.30pm

Bees in Art

Collecting honey pots

My interest in this began last year. I enjoy scouring antique and junk shops for ceramics but then I saw an article about collecting honey pots . This has now grown into more of a hobby and is even more appealing with the occasional high I get when finding something that I can afford.

I was interested to see an antique honeycomb dish in a local museum – a squared lidded box that was highly decorated where honeycomb from the hive would be served at the breakfast table, if you had a stately home.

This set me off on a search and lots of browsing– antique shops as well as Google – and my honeypot collection started.

Many honey pots were manufactured in the early 20th century but they started being made in numbers in Victorian times. They are mostly decorated with bees or honeycomb and are sometimes in the shape of a skep.

Early and rare pots can fetch a lot of money. One from the 1700's made £3,800 and some have fetched even more. Apparently, if you find an early 17th century silver pot you will be looking at £5,000 to £10,000

James Hamill runs The Hive Honey Shop and has his own collection of 700 pots and he also runs an online shop.

When pottery in Britain was at its heyday, makers such as Crown Derby, Poole Pottery and Clarice Cliff made beautiful honey pots, and each had its own style and patterns.

So keep your eyes open for any rare ones. Although for me, I am happy finding an unusual looking one tucked at the back of a junk shop.

For the moment I shall keep looking in the local flea markets and hope to find another bargain. I'm very happy with my £3 charity shop honey pot find to add to my small but growing collection. After all, the garage is full of beekeeping equipment, so now I am moving onto filling my shelves with honey pots.

The honeycomb dish below right is from the 1930s for sale from the Honey Hive Shop for £295. The photograph bottom right are some from my collection

Sue Francombe



BOOK NOW!



Friday 21 - Saturday 22 – Sunday 23 April 2023

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 22nd

Speakers and Tutors include: Randy Oliver (virtually), Samuel Ramsey (virtually), Marin Anastasov, Martin Bencsik, Shirley & Richard Bond, Giles Budge, Stephen Case-Green, Julie Coleman, Michael Collier, Lynfa Davies, Stephen Fleming, Mike Garratt, Fani Hatjina, John Hendrie, Luke & Suzie Hutchinson, Lynne Ingram, Angela Kirk, Stephen Martin, Jane Medwell, Jenny Morgan, Chris Park, Tom Pope, Sara Robb, Anne Rowberry, Debbie Smith, Victoria Soroker, Sean Stephenson, Oliver St.John, Jane Stout, Jim & Val Vivian-Griffiths, Alison Wakeman and more.....

For further information, **and to book** from 30th January

see the Spring Convention pages of www.bbka.org.uk

Last month I invited two of our committee member to write about how they were inspired to take up the craft of beekeeping and this month it falls to Keith Owers and ourselves.
(Hilary and Norman)

Here is Keith's story.

My interest in my uncle's bees started when I was about 6 or 7 years old just after the war. I had been staying with a who had two WBC hives in the garden. I spent a lot of time just watching the bees coming and going. I was hooked.

I have always been keen on insects, and would spend hours watching butterflies. I started my horticultural career in 1953 working on a local glasshouse nursery, and in 1954 started full time training at a horticultural college in Kent. Pests and diseases were an important part of my training. I had my two years national service and then went back to college before starting work in West Sussex.

From Sussex I moved to Suffolk before coming to work in Devon in 1970. On arriving In Cullompton I joined Round Table (A similar organisation to Rotary, but you had to leave at forty.) I informed my wife that I would start beekeeping when I was forty.

In 1957 I started a ten week beekeeping class at Bicton College with Ken Stevens followed by hands on sections in 1958 when I joined The DBKA. I joined Exeter branch as I was told that Tiverton did not do much. Between Ken Stevens and Arthur Curnac, a club member but also a retired county beekeeping lecturer, I learned a lot in a short space of time and soon had 3 or 4 hives in a mix of WBC National and Smith hives, the mix of hives were soon all replaced with Langstroth hives which I still use today.

I was invited to join the committee of The Exeter Branch and became chairman for 3 years and the treasurer for 5 years.

By 1990 with 8 or 10 hives I was too busy at work to be involved with DBKA and Exeter until I retired in 2002. When I moved to Tiverton and joined Tiverton branch. I then increased my hives to 30.

2001 joined the committee became vice Chairman in 2007 then Chairman in 2008 for 3 years. Instigated beginners classes, and a stand at The Mid Devon and Devon County Show.

I still enjoy helping with the shows and education but have decreased my stock of hives down to 10.

Keith Owers

Around the apiary in February

By Keith Owers



Hazel, catkins taken last year 2022 Hilary Sanders

So far January has not been too bad, wet and now cold, Checking your hives by hefting you may well notice a difference in weight.

I put feed on three of my 10 hives at the end of December but I expect most will need to be fed at the end of January.

My method at this time of year is to give them a small block of Ambrosia fondant. I cut a 2.5kg Ambrosia block into 6 and place each into a polythene bag or a empty plastic butter pot. I then place the container or polythene bag over the feed hole in the crown board. Make sure you have cut a hole in the lid or in the bag,so that the bees can feed. The advantage I find with the polythene bag is that you can see when the bees have eaten it as opposed to removing the plastic container to look underneath.

I think that many hives in early February will need a small feed this year. In feeding your bees you are not trying to replace all the feed you gave them back in September but making sure they have enough to start the new season in March.

Towards the end of February it should be safe to remove mouse guards and replace the entrance blocks, bees will not appreciate a big gaping hole.

Keith

Owing to a member of the family being taken ill this past week and my time being taken up I have not had time to complete our story into beekeeping and so this will be in the March edition.

My apologies, Hilary (Editor) and Norman