



# THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – March 2023

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

*Opinions expressed in articles in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect either the opinions or the policies of The Devon Beekeepers' Association*

## The Chairman's Brood Box



One of the great joys of beekeeping is watching your bees flying in & out of their hives in early spring. A few warmer days have recently given us that chance and there is now a little bit of pollen on some plants for them to bring back to the hive which surely must be a sign all is well with the colony inside. What is slightly frustrating is that it is far from suitable weather to look inside the hive as we'd do far more harm than good so just enjoy watching your bees for the time being.

Our Beginners have now finished their theory sessions and are looking forward to getting 'hands-on' in the Apiary. We are looking for Mentors/ Bee Buddies to support them during their first year of beekeeping. If you are able to be on the end of a phone or have time to pop round to help with their bees please let Clive or me know so we can link you up.

If you are considering raising your own queens this year but not quite sure which method to use, then the answer lies with Dan Basterfield. Dan is a Master Beekeeper and with his father Ken, another Master Beekeeper, runs Blackbury Honey Farm at Southleigh. They have created a lovely family run apiary in beautiful surroundings including a tea room & wildflower gardens where they run beekeeping courses. Well worth a visit. We will have the pleasure of Dan's company at our next member's meeting on the 15th March when he will share with us his knowledge on Simple Queen Rearing and, no doubt, answer any other beekeeping questions you may have. Our February meeting was a great success & very informative and this one promises to be equally as enjoyable. Do come & join us.

Advanced notice is that at our April meeting, Alan Barrow, one of our own experienced beekeepers, will be showing us how to prepare clean wax from all the debris wax in our hives. Plans are already being made for the Branch entry into this year's Devon County Show Bees & Honey competition and for our own Bees & Honey Marquee at the Mid Devon Show. If you are interested & would like to help please contact any of our committee members and they'll point you in the right direction.

I am hoping that this month's Buzzette will include our calendar of events for the year. You will note in April, subject to the weather, we begin having regular sessions planned at our Teaching Apiary at Knightshayes. It is for all our members to enjoy, use & support so please come along regularly and help make it a very special place for bees & beekeepers. I've included a photo from a

previous session when it was not at its best- come along and see the changes that have been made by our Apiary Team.

Happy Beekeeping Tony

*Note from editor, unfortunately it was not possible for me to copy the spreadsheet with the yearly calender into this word document, as mentioned above.*

## Spaces are still available for The Improvers Course.

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.

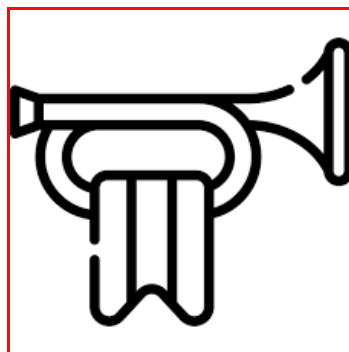
Anyone interested should, in the first instance, email [cliverowe.home@gmail.com](mailto:cliverowe.home@gmail.com) and I will reply with further details and how to pay. The course dates are as follows;

8th, 22nd & 29th March

5th, 12th and 26th April.

Clive Rowe

Education CoordinatorTBKA.



## Skittles evening and social event

A social evening with our beekeeping friends from The Taunton Beekeepers Branch has been arranged for Friday 17th March at the White Horse Inn, Bradford on Tone. There will be food provided and a skittle competition. This event had to be postponed during the Covid19 pandemic so it is a great opportunity to meet other beekeepers and compare notes, as well as having a little friendly competition. Kick off is at 7.30. **If you are interested in coming please let Jon Davies know – [daviesj773@gmail.com](mailto:daviesj773@gmail.com)** advising of any dietary requirements so we can arrange suitable catering etc. **NB please only email if you are interested.**





**Improvers Course dates are on the following Wednesdays 7.30pm Uplozman Village Hall**

March 8th, 22nd & 29th  
April 5th, 12th and 26th

**Club members general meetings. All 7.30pm at Uplozman Village Hall**

Wednesday 15th March Dan Basterfield with a talk on simple Queen rearing.  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April Alan Barrow, who will be showing us how to prepare clean wax from all the debris wax in our hives.

**Committee meetings**

Thursday March 2<sup>nd</sup> Uplozman Village Hall 7.30pm  
Thursday May 11th Uplozman Village Hall 7.30pm

**Apiary Teaching sessions at Knightshayes**

Saturday April 1<sup>st</sup> 2-4pm  
Sunday April 16<sup>th</sup> 2-4pm

**Upcoming social events**

March 17<sup>th</sup> 7.30 pm Skittles and Social Event, see above

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April Annual Spring Equipment Auction. Arranged by Taunton Branch**

Items to be brought in by 10am , auction starts at 2pm  
Refreshments, Raffle, Free car parking  
Ruishton Village Hall, Taunton TA3 5JD

# 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 22<sup>nd</sup>

**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 30<sup>th</sup> January

## Preparations for The Stevenson Trophy Club award



Our club won first prize at The Devon County Show last year for this award. Sue Francombe has offered to organise this again and has planned a meeting to trash out ideas on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at Redwoods Inn Upplowman for a smallish group of interested people. For more information and to register your attendance please email Sue on [suefrancombemusic@gmail.com](mailto:suefrancombemusic@gmail.com)



## Reporting back on our last members meeting

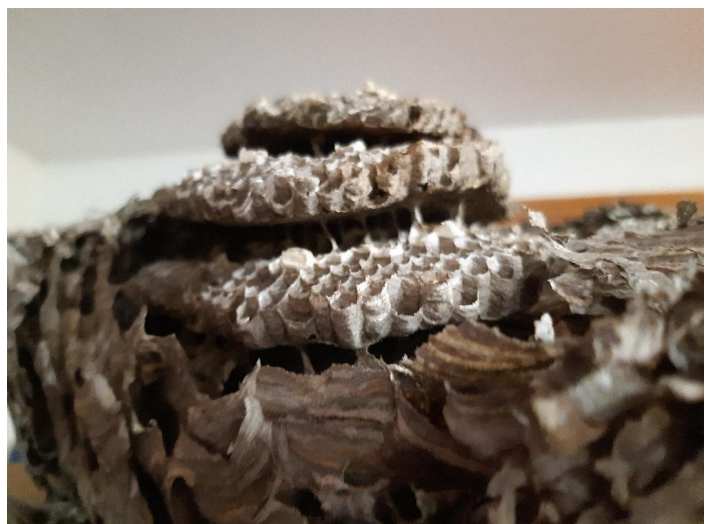
Last month, February 9<sup>th</sup> to be precise, 20 club members were treated to a truly inspiring and informative talk given by Leila Goss our seasonal bee inspector on plants and bees, pollens and flora. One could not help to be captivated by her wonderful photography, demonstrating an array of pollens produced by flowers and trees that our bees will collect as well as her passion for bees and the natural world. As well as helping our native honey bee by planting suitable plants she also stressed the importance of considering the benefit this will make to other pollinators and to remember that almost all flowers that are bred to produce double blooms, whilst looking pretty, are sterile which renders them useless to insects and indeed confuses them and can lead to them expending useless energy.

After a refreshment break she then invited us all to, as she put it, make use of her as our seasonal bee inspector and generously gave us another hour of questions and answers on any topic we wanted. Questions raised covered feeding our bees, swarm control, insulation to management of verroa when she implored us to treat our bees for verroa as well as using mechanical methods, comparing the importance of this with the fact that we would all use wormers on our pets and livestock as a matter of routine, so why is this principle not applied to the management of our bees?

Hilary Sanders



An enormous wasp nest from last year was kindly brought in to the meeting by Jackie Crook. It was about 18 inches x 12 x 10 in in depth and absolutely beautiful. These photos really don't really do it justice.





## **Around the apiary in March**

### **By Keith Owers**

*Apis mellifera on snowdrop taken 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 Hsanders*

It should all be starting to happen in our hives this month. The queen will be increasing her egg laying, and the last of the winter bees will be dying off. If your hive is short of food there will not be enough young bees to do the shopping and worse still TESCO may be out of pollen and nectar. I would recommend you feed with Ambrosia fondant, a liquid feed will be alright at the end of the month if needed.

Your first proper brood inspection is best left till the end of the month or April. The danger is chilling the brood and losing those all important new bees. providing the hive has food there is not much you can do.

Pollen patties are some time recommended by suppliers but they are expensive and are not very popular with the bees. It is very unusual to be short of pollen at any time of year in Devon.

First supers are not required until we have warmer weather 16c plus. Some beekeepers leave the queen excluder off until the bees are working the super. I always put the queen excluder on at the same time, with out any problems, if the space is needed they will use it. One important thing to remember, do no feed sugar when you have supers on. If you think the bees need feeding remove the supers first.