



THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – May 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

I hope by now that the weather has improved and those of you who have bees have been able to make your first inspection & hive assessment. This is always an exciting time in the beekeepers' calendar, when you're never quite sure what you are going to find. I have to tell you that I'm not the best at spotting the queen so I'm feeling especially pleased with myself this year.

In the middle of April I got the chance weather-wise to go into some of my bees in a protected location which had two hives where I knew there should be new queens from last year. Imagine my surprise that not only did I spot both of them, I successfully marked them as well. I only had yellow marker to hand which I used but according to the international code it should be red this year. It was yellow last year!

Our last meeting of the winter programme was very well attended with over 30 members in attendance when Alan Barrow kept us entertained with a talk about how he goes about rendering his beeswax and the work involved in producing items fit for not only for showing but for winning classes. We were left in no doubt as to the commitment and work involved in winning although not surprisingly, some elements are closely guarded secrets. Shhhh

It was great to see so many new & not so new faces getting together and talking about their bee keeping experiences.

The autumn /winter club meetings begin on 20th September, put it in your diary now.

Don't forget the Bees & Honey Marquee at the Devon County Show from the 18th - 20th May. Hope to see you there.



Alan Barrow making a shine!

On a less positive note, you will probably be aware that there has been 3 separate sightings of an Asian Hornet in England already this year. The first was found in an imported cauliflower during early April in Northumberland - this was found to be a single hornet incursion with the cauliflowers. The second, a few days later, was found in Folkestone, Kent and monitoring traps are being used in the area to try to identify if there is a nest locally.

At the same time reports came in of a sighting on the ferry that travels between Cherbourg & Poole. Again monitoring traps are being set up in the area, many of them by local beekeepers from East Dorset Beekeepers. The effect of allowing Asian Hornets to get established in the U.K. would be devastating for bees & beekeepers - just look at what's happening in Jersey & France. We are grateful to Louise & Tracy, two of our new beekeepers this year, who have taken over the role of our AHAT (Asian Hornet Action Team) coordinator - there is an article from them later in this edition. As a beekeeper you need to be able to recognise an Asian Hornet and be vigilant for them at all times but in particular spring & late summer. If Asian Hornets are spotted locally it would be very helpful if you were prepared to set up a monitoring station.

Happy beekeeping
Tony Lindsell

Note from The Editor

Due to family commitments I will be unable to put together a copy of The Buzzette for June next month. If you have anything that you wish to have circulated please send these items to Tony via tony.lindsell@btinternet.com

Many thanks
Hilary

The Club Apiary

Our thanks must go to Malcolm Crook & Alan Barrow as our Branch Apiary at Knightshayes is looking very organised and in great shape. Our first 2 Apiary sessions at Knightshayes have proved very successful although on the first one the weather was not suitable for opening the hives but we found plenty of preparation work to do. Our next visits to the Apiary are on Saturday 6th (yes, that is correct) and Sunday 21st May between 2 - 4 pm.

Land available for an “out apiary” in Thorverton

One of our members in Thorverton has been contacted by a local farmer offering a site for an out apiary. Our member is not in a position to take up his offer but said that she would share the details in case any members in the area who might be interested. The postcode for the apiary site is EX5 4LT, but it seems you would probably need a 4x4 to access it. If anyone is interested please contact me and we can start the ball rolling.

Jon Davies (secretary) via daviesj773@gmail.com

Great Somerford Bee Auction on Monday 1st May 2023

Have you got a shed full of old kit? downsizing your operation? or looking for some bargains to help you expand or buy your first hive? On Monday 1st May 2023, our 1st Annual auction will take place at The Showground, Great Somerford, nr Chippenham, WILTSHIRE SN15 5JA Viewing from 11.30am with the Auction commencing at 1pm

Entries are invited for the auction : please email : somerfordbeeauction@gmail.com or contact via our Facebook page 'Somerford Bee Auction' or call 07767 838317 / 07841 291449 Lots to include Beekeeping accessories, Beehives, Extracting Equipment, Beeswax, Honey, Beekeeping Books, Antique Beekeeping Equipment and a Live bee (nucs and complete hive) auction at the end. A full catalogue of lots entered will be available from 24th April

The Showground, Great Somerford , Nr Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 5JA



Next Committee meeting

Thursday May 11th Uplozman Village Hall 7.30pm

Apiary Teaching sessions for all member s at Knightshayes

This includes beginners as part of their practical element of the beginners course.

Saturday May 6thst 2-4pm

Sunday May 21st 2-4pm

Saturday June 3rd 2-4pm

Sunday June 11th 2-4pm



Come and see the Club's entry for the Stevensons' Trophy

Autumn Programme of evening club meetings begins September 20th at 7.30
Uplozman Village Hall

I have been inviting one or two people on the committee member to write a little piece about how they were inspired to take up the craft of beekeeping. This month it is Sue and Nick Francombe's

Hilary (Editor)

Bees and Me

Forty years ago I lived opposite an eighty year old man who lived alone with a beehive in his ancient orchard. I helped him spin out honey in an old galvanised 2 frame spinner on a wooden draining board. He made onion and honey syrup for coughs and was proud of using honey on trees where they had been pruned to heal the scars. The orchard with a white hive seemed a magical place.

When Nick and I moved to Devon seven years ago I said I would like to keep bees and found the Tiverton Beekeepers website to sign up to a beginners' course and Nick came along too.

We went along to well attended theory lessons and wondered how we would ever remember anything and how could we possibly take care of so many bees? It was a lively group – there was always someone to ask the “silly” questions that we all wanted to know the answer to. So much information and passion was handed on to us all from experienced TBKA members. Going to have some hands-on practice at Knightshayes made all the difference. It was a special place and I loved being surrounded by thousands of bees.

We put our name down to have a nuc of bees if one became available and on our wedding anniversary, we brought our bees home.

And so the next year we really started to learn all about the fascinating life cycle and behaviour of bees. A steep learning curve. We did emergency swarm controls, were called to collect swarms – my first ever swarm collection being watched by a group of people – luckily it went very smoothly, unlike the time Nick and I were asked to collect a swarm up a tree and Nick fell off the ladder gently into the landowners' prize flower bed. Not learning from our mistakes the following year we were called to a swarm in a tree. We were on a ladder each – Nick telling me where to hold the skep – and the swarm was duly deposited on my head.

After a year of beekeeping, on our wedding anniversary, we spun our first honey – 30 pots of liquid gold (and probably cost more than gold per ounce!).

We have met many interesting people, seen parts of hidden Devon and it has made us appreciate other wildlife up close.

Our apiary grew as fast as our grandchildren, so we now have hives in 2 out apiaries. We appreciated the fact that during lockdown we could drive out to check the bees in isolated fields of calm.

I went on the improver's course with Keith and took the Basic Assessment which was very interesting – like a one-to-one lesson.

It is lovely to work with bees, even better to do so with Nick when frantic lifestyles and work often means we are in different places from each other. We are always learning and hope that we can continue to do so.

Lesson number 1 learnt – I am never going up a ladder to collect a swarm again!

Asian Hornet Update

As you know, the Asian Hornet poses a huge threat to honey bees and all pollinators.

We have replaced Gavin Nuttall-Owen to become your new Tiverton Beekeepers Asian Hornet (AHAT) Co-ordinators.

We are both currently on the beginners' course and neither of us has bees yet. Crooky encouraged the members of the beginners' course to attend the AGM and, impressed by the positive energy and enthusiasm of the committee we decided to jointly volunteer for the AHAT Co-ordinator job.

Gavin is so well informed and has such excellent communication skills that he's rather a hard act to follow. We have read his articles in the Buzzette and attended an on line Asian Hornet Seminar.

You may already be aware that one tool we can all have access to in our war against the Asian Hornet

incursion is the **Asian Hornet Watch App**. This phone app was released by the Non Native Species Secretariat in March 2017 and is incredibly easy to install and use.

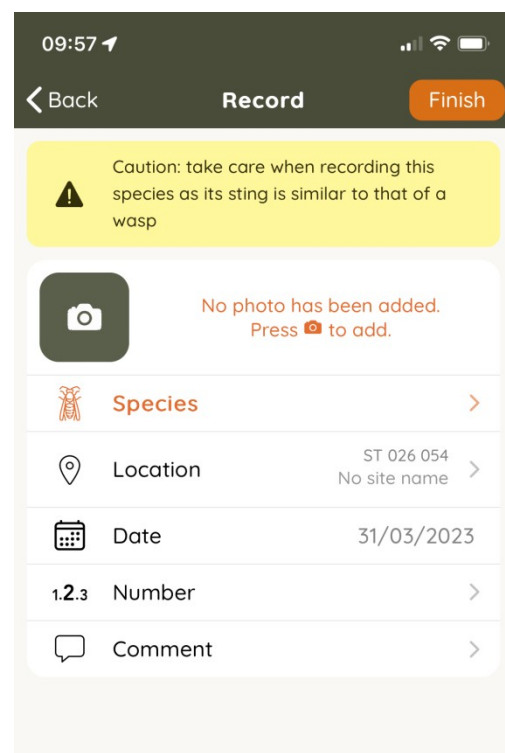
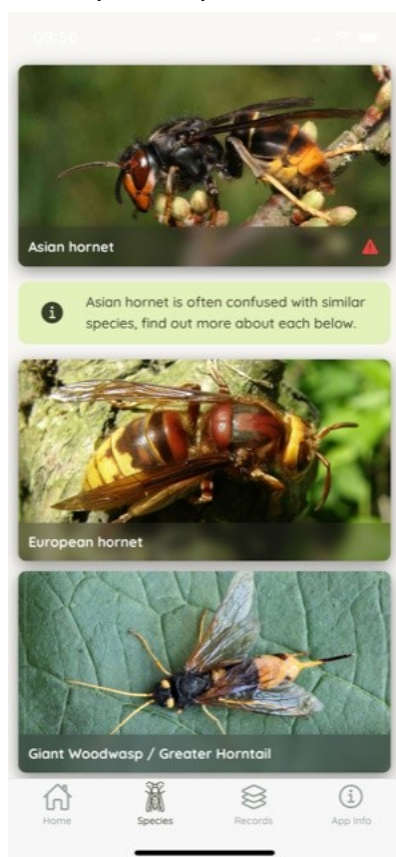
As you can see from this screen shot, the app has large clear pictures of the Asian Hornet and similar species that can be easily confused with it.

It also has a page where you can report a possible sighting. You can take a photo and type in any extra information about what you have seen. The app uses your phone GPS to record your exact location and adds the current date.

This means that the instant you have a possible sighting of an Asian Hornet, you can easily inform the Non Native Species Secretariat with much needed precise details of time and location (As long as you have your

phone with you and you've already installed the app).

We've both found it really easy to install. Just typing 'Asian Hornet' into the search on your app store finds it and it's free!



**Don't delay. Install the
Asian Hornet Watch App today**

You never know when you are going to need it.

If you don't have a smart phone you can report sightings online at www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet or by email at alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

During Dan Basterfield's talk, he told us that he has been catching European Hornets and practicing holding and handling them ready for when he needs to mark or track Asian Hornets. We now realise quite how dedicated we have to be to our new role.

Louise Scott & Tracy Frankpitt.

AHAT Co-ordinators

Gardening for Bees and Wildlife.

I was trying to take a photograph of a honey bee on my forget-me not this afternoon, 29th April. It was not easy as the bees did not stay on a flower for more than a milli second at best, presumably because of the ease with which they can extract the nectar.



It struck me, especially after hearing Leila Goss talk about this, as being one of her favourite flowers, at how right she is and how understated a plant it is.

We all know, I am sure that they spread with great ease via their little black seeds which are produced shortly after they flower and which cling to your clothes and gardening gloves in an attempt to hitch a ride and spread themselves, which they do with ease but I have a new respect for them as they are really brightening up my garden today and the bees are loving them as well as this other little insect on the

photograph above.



The plant uses yellow on the centre of the corolla to attract pollinators and then turns to white to signal "No more nectar" which you can hopefully see in the photo to the left.

Isn't nature clever!

Hilary Sanders (Editor)



Apis Mellifera on Forget-me-not

29/04/2023

Hilary Sanders

What a strange month, two warm spring days then back to cold and wet . Not the weather our bees have been waiting for.

I have had a quick look at my bees but not a thorough check of the brood box. All my hives have come through the winter but some much better than others. The not quite so good are the ones that need a good check first when the weather improves.

What could be wrong? A poor queen, shortage of food, or a disease problem. Nosema could be a problem. The tell tail signs are voided faeces on the frames and on the front of the hive and there is not much you can do about it, and there is no approved treatment although clean frames may help.

Chalk brood. This disease turns up in the spring and may disappear on its own as the season progresses. It is a fungus that affects the brood, killing the larvae., the fungus grows and produces a white mould, which later turns black. The bees do try to remove it and little white lumps can then be found on the floor board. If you only see a little I would do nothing, and hope it goes away. In a few cases it may effect 80% of the brood in which case you will lose the colony. Most of our bees are resistant to the disease.

In severe cases the only answer is to replace the queen and hope the new one is resistant to the disease.

Do make sure you are ready for swarming. A super in good time may well save the day.
Good luck - we all have swarms at times - It can be fun.

Keith Owers