



Chairman's Broodbox



Picture: A little sneak preview of our plan for the Stephenson's Trophy.

few days full of opportunities to meet other beekeepers, to attend particular workshops, listen to lectures from very experienced local and international beekeepers and a trade show with all the top bee equipment suppliers in attendance. I can thoroughly recommend it and you should try to attend it once in your beekeeping career. If not there's always Devon's President's Day which is the same thing on a much smaller scale. More details in the next Buzzette.

I hope that you find a summary of our Branch Committee meetings useful and I expect you will have noted that we are preparing for the Show season. We had a meeting recently to discuss our entry

As the weather improves, the days get longer, plants start to flower, bees become more and more active coming back to the hives with legs laden with brightly coloured pollen, beekeepers get excited! The disappointments of last year all forgotten, we can all start afresh and enjoy the craft of beekeeping. There's not a lot we can do in the hive at the

moment but why not just stand close to your hive on a sunny day and enjoy that wonderful sight of bees busily coming and going but don't stand in their flight path or you might get an early reminder from them!

I am heading to the BBKA
Spring Convention at Harper
Adams College in early April, a



Tiverton Beekeepers are a branch of the Devon Beekeepers' Association
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Masthead photo by Kat Smith: <https://www.pexels.com>

into the Stephenson's Trophy in the Bee and Honey tent at Devon County Show. We have entered this competition every year since 2004 so I am very pleased we can keep up our tradition, hopefully we can win it again as we have done on several occasions in the past. Big thank you to those who came to the meeting, for your ideas and positive encouragement and, of course, all those lovely cakes.

Talking of the Devon County Show there is always the opportunity to volunteer as a steward in the Bees and Honey tent. You may be selling honey and products from the hive,

helping the judges, having fun rolling candles, talking to the public about bees in the observation hives or making scones with honey and cream. I think everyone who does volunteer finds it very enjoyable and learn a lot from other beekeepers there. You get a free ticket to the show as well. If you'd like to volunteer please contact dcsvolunteers@yahoo.com

I am very pleased that this year we have fourteen members of the Branch who are taking part in an Improvers Course with us. The format of the course is completely different from the Beginners' Course, no lectures:

there are four sessions based on the BBKA Basic Assessment criteria and our trainers lead conversations about the different aspects of beekeeping. It is receiving a very encouraging response from those attending, plus there are not just cakes to enjoy but savoury goodies as well. We are hoping some of the trainees will go on to take the Basic Assessment, we haven't had any member do that for quite a while. I hope by my next Broodbox, our bees will be flying, the queen will be laying and the sun will be shining.

Happy beekeeping
Tony



Making a Steam Extractor

In one of my idle moments I was looking at how to make it easier to clean up old frames and saw our old wallpaper stripper in the back of the shed, having not seen the light of day for many years. I have seen some very smart looking steam wax extractors online and thought, *how hard can it be to make one?*

Finding a spare hive roof to attach the steam stripper pipe to and some galvanised sheet steel to make a collecting floor, I set to it. Making the hole in the roof was okay and I was lucky to find that the screw thread on the steam pipe was the same as a plumbing fitting I had lying around. Always sensible to find the fitting first before making a hole!

I cut out the collecting floor slightly bigger than a national and left a spout to pass over the landing board. I folded the ends up a little at the spout to channel waste to the centre and bent the whole floor slightly to create a channel down the middle.

Pleased with my creation, I set it going on an old set of frames in a brood box. After ten minutes or so a flow of water and wax came pouring of the front of the hive, the wax setting as it cooled. After fifteen minutes I could feel the wood on the brood box getting hot, so I thought that was enough and turned it off. A quick look under the lid revealed a pile of steamed cocoon in the bottom of the box, fallen away from the frames.

Leaving it overnight to cool down, I opened it up to find

that the cocoon had 'welded' my frames into the box, but after reheating it again for fifteen minutes I got the frames out. Next time I would put an old super below the frames to allow the cocoon to fall away easier and remove the frames when hot.

So, is it a success? Well, there was a bit of cleaning down of the frames to do, but it has recovered a lot of wax and will have sterilised things. I'd be careful about steaming plywood boxes or wood ones that are made of joined planks as they might delaminate.

Plastic frame runners might melt as well, so you need to remove them beforehand. It's certainly given the steam stripper a reprieve and it can go back on the shelf again!

I may use the floor I've made for a solar wax extractor when the summer sun comes. Just need to find an old double glazed unit to fit.... It's certainly given the steam stripper a reprieve and it can go back on the shelf again!

Rex
Tiverton Beekeepers

We need your help

Education Coordinator Role

Clare, our Education Coordinator has had to step down which means we are looking for someone to replace her. The role is crucial to the Introduction to Beekeeping course that we put on for Beginners each year and is very successful. It is an administrative and coordinating role, that can be done from home, to support the team of presenters. If you are interested and think you can help then please contact Tony for more details.

Branch Secretary Role

Jon, our Branch Secretary, will be leaving us in November and we are looking for someone to replace him. This is an essential role to the working of the Branch that can be done mainly from home. Please contact Jon for more details.



February Committee Meeting Report

Ten members attended the meeting plus two guests, and nine members sent their apologies.

Finance - Our financial situation remains stable. Bampton WI had made a £50 donation after Malcom Crook had given them a bee talk. It was reported that the BBKA are to increase the cost of their membership by £2 in 2026.

Membership - We currently have 124 registered members, 20 partner and 3 local. A total of 147 members which is the most members the Branch has ever had.

Apiary - Malcolm told us that there would be additional meetings at Knightshayes Apiary on the 15th and 23rd March. Malcolm and Steve have agreed to come up with detailed drawings for a new cabin at the Apiary.

Education - The theory sessions of the 2024-25 Beginners' Course are coming to an end and we will be transferring to the Apiary. 14 members were signed up for the Improvers Course. Sadly our Education Coordinator, Clare, is standing down and we are looking for a replacement.

WhatsApiary - concerned was raised about some of the comments on the Branch WhatsApp group, Jon will send out a message asking members to be polite and respectful

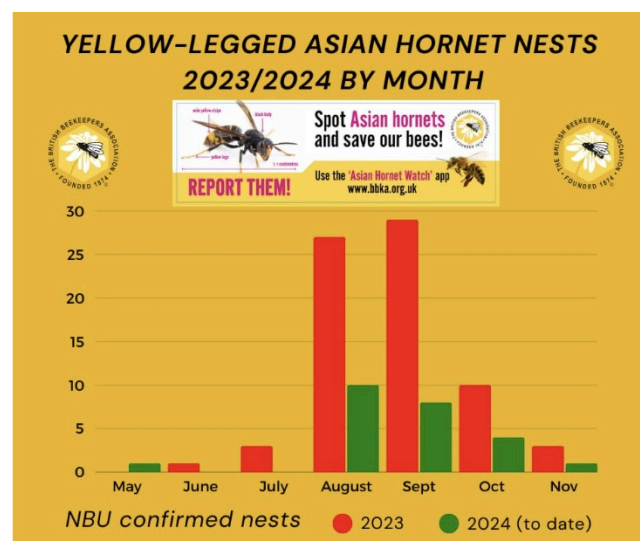
Shows - confirmation that we will attend Devon County Show, Mid Devon Show and Plymtree country Fair. Sue Herring attended the meeting and our entry into the Stephenson Trophy was discussed - we will hold a meeting about this on the 24th March to which all members are invited. We are buying new polo shirts for volunteers to wear on our show stands. Vicky brought along some samples from Devon Shirts and will now place an order with them

Buzzette - Deadline for articles is the 20th of each month.

Social Media - Vicky would like members to send her their bee photos and videos to make reels on Facebook.



Asian Hornet (Yellow Legged) - Tracy told us that she was working with Devon AHATs to improve the stand at the Devon Show. Andy Herring is also helping. Recent local research shows that AH consume about fifty honey bees a day. *Below a chart to compare YLH numbers over the last two years.*



Mid Devon Bees - Tony is going to meet with their Chair, Simon, to discuss their interest in joining DBKA

Bulk Buying - Jars and syrup orders will be sent out in June.

Note - we had one of Steve's best cherry cakes and a magnificent chocolate chip cake from Sylvia with our tea.

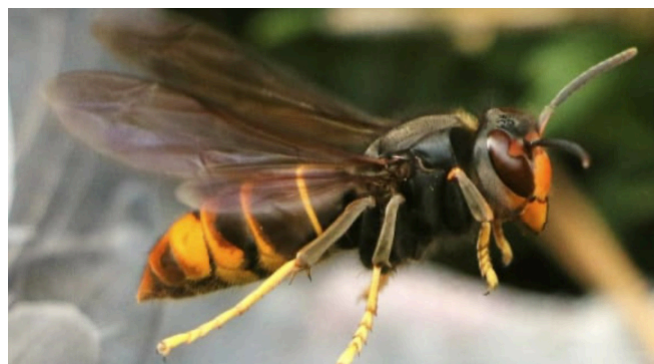
Next Committee Meeting - 1st May

Yellow Legged Hornet Report

Although the Yellow Legged Hornet (Asian Hornet) hasn't been in the news lately, the BBKA and the National Bee Unit are very active, preparing for the next invasion.

I attended the National YLH meeting this month and Nigel Semmence from the NBU gave an update on yellow-legged Asian hornets (YLH)

- In 2024, 24 nests were destroyed in South East England.
- We had the first evidence of overwintering/ breeding in the UK. This spring the NBU will be placing a trap in every square km within 5km of the locations of last year's nests in Kent, East Sussex and Southampton. These will trap any hibernating queens before they establish their own nests.
- The Asian Hornet Watch app has been well used. Last year there were 29,611 reports of yellow legged hornets and only 71 were confirmed as being the real thing. That is only 0.2%. So the public is aware of the YHL but we really need to educate people on what an YHL looks like.
- The eradication phase continues.
- This January a single hornet sighting was confirmed in Oswestry in Shropshire



- We need to continue vigilance, awareness, identification and reporting
- Bait station monitoring is encouraged in the South East and areas with ports but here in Mid Devon we can just remain vigilant.

The BBKA has created an app for when the YHLs have a hold on the UK. It divides the UK up into square km plots of land which co-ordinators, verifiers and monitors can claim and monitor for the Yellow Legged Hornets.

Last year was an improvement on 2023 but we must continue to educate the public on the threat this non native species is to all insects and, even more importantly we must show people how to identify it. We can't have people destroying the wrong insects. Maybe we should have a 'hug a European hornet' day.

Tracy Frankpitt

Tiverton Beekeepers YLH Coordinator

Diary Dates

Meetings start at 7.30pm at Uplowman Village Hall.
Apiary Meetings are at Knightshayes.

Wednesday 26 March
Beginners' Course: Derek Evans - Getting Started

Monday 31 March
Improvers' Course: Pests and Diseases

Saturday 5th April 2-4pm
Branch Apiary Meeting

Wednesday 16 April
Martin Hann and Clare Densley
How to keep calm and carry on when things don't go as planned (with your bees)!

Saturday 20th April 2-4pm
Branch Apiary Meeting

Wednesday 21 May
Nosema testing
Bring 30 bees along(recently humanely killed) for testing.

The Buzzette - last date for submission for the next issue is 20th March.

Send your news and views to buzzette@tivertonbeekeepers.uk