

The Tivvy Buzzette

Tiverton Beekeepers Newsletter

April 2025



Chairman's Broodbox

As the weather improves the bees are out flying more often, bringing back a variety of different coloured pollens, I find myself spending more and more time close to my hives just watching them coming and going - what a lovely hobby we have looking after honey bees.

Our Beginners, having now completed their theory sessions, are joining us at Knightshayes Apiary and our remaining members meetings at Uplowman. The revival of Improvers' Course has proved popular with fourteen of our members enjoying the discussion evenings and, those who could make it, had a special one-off session at the Apiary. Thanks to everyone involved in presenting the courses but in particular to Derek Evans, Malcolm Crook, Leila Goss and Alan Barrow.



At our April Branch meeting we were joined by Clare Densley and Martin Hann, for those of you

who couldn't get there you missed a brilliant, informative and entertaining evening. Who would have thought that you could introduce a new queen to a queen less hive by using plenty of smoke and walking her up a slope to enter through the front door.

Clare and Martin operate from Buckfast Bees, close to the Abbey on the southern slopes of Dartmoor National Park, surrounded by gardens, orchards, ancient woodland, wildflower meadows and heather moorland. They offer tours of their Apiary and grounds, free of charge (they do take donations) and not surprisingly they are already booked most weekends. At our meeting there was overwhelming agreement that our Branch should visit them so we are booked in on the 3rd August (our planned Apiary session will be cancelled). Mike Brice has access to a community Minibus and has offered to drive us; the bus hold 16 people including him as driver so that leaves another 15 seats but as I'm going it's down to 14 already, if you'd like to go please contact me. Should the minibus be fully booked then we can organise cars as well. You will probably need a packed lunch and make a contribution to the travel cost but more details will be available closer to the day.



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



Two bee nests in the ceiling of an old milking parlour.

I can't believe it but Devon County Show is just a few weeks away and a team of our members have been working hard on our Stevenson Trophy entry. Good luck, a big thank you to you all. It would be great to be recognised with a prize but Tiverton Branch has been entering the competition every year for as long as I've been a member and I suspect that we are the only Branch that consistently enters every year - well done to everyone involved over the years. I'm also very glad to see that many of our members have volunteered to act as Stewards, not only do you get a free ticket to the show, you can learn an awful lot about beekeeping from experienced beekeepers.

We are now in swarming season but recently Malcolm and I were asked by one of our new members to remove two bee nests from the ceiling of their old milking parlour before improvements works can be started. Malcolm has a bee vacuum that he put together which helped us remove the bees. It's never easy to remove nests in roof spaces without some loss of bees and damage to the brood. We managed to remove both nests and very nearly all the bees. Now it's just a matter of waiting to see if we've managed to keep the queens alive and active and for the bees to recover. Fingers crossed.

Happy Beekeeping. Tony

Bulk Buying Scheme

The Bulk Buying team are currently busy trying to get a good price for jars and ambrosia syrup from suppliers. They plan to send out the order forms in early June so that jars and syrup will be available in July and in time for your honey harvest!

To give you an idea of last year's purchases:

Total Order was **£3812.25** made up of:

£2691 - 1,462.5kg of Syrup @£23 per 1x 12.5kg container

£1033.25 - various different size of jars with the most popular being the 1lb standard jar

£88 - honey jar lids

We are always on the look out to bulk purchase for Tiverton BeeKeepers so if you know of suppliers who might be interested in our



Image by PollyDot from Pixabay

purchasing power then please email us and we can make contact. The profit goes back into the Association. Looking forward, we also plan to bulk purchase frames and fondant and will send out order forms in September.

Please do support this scheme, more orders means a better price and generates a small profit for us all.

Get in touch at:

bulkbuying@tivertonbeekeepers.uk



Hive

By Carol Ann Duffy

All day we leave and arrive at the hive,
concelebrants. The hive is love,
what we serve, preserve, avowed in Latin
murmurs
as we come and go, skydive, freighted
with light, to where we thrive, us, in time's hum,
on history's breath,

industrious, identical.....

There suck we,
alchemical, nectar-slurred, pollen-furred,
the world's mantra us, our blurry sound
along the thousand scented miles to the hive,
haven, where we unpack our foragers;
or heaven-stare, drone-eyed, for a queen's star;
or nurse or build in milky, waxy caves,
the hive, alive, us - how we behave.

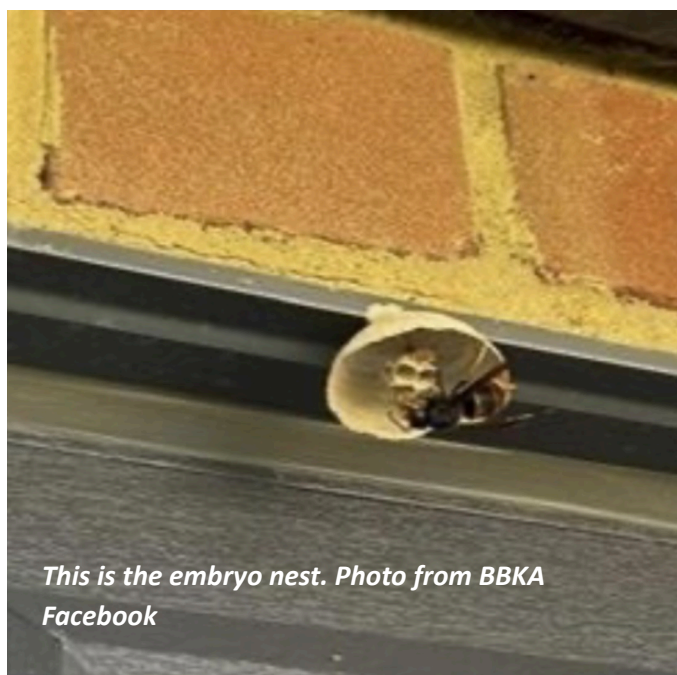
Yellow Legged Hornet report

Recently I heard that the NBU has decided not to use verifiers - apparently they won't respond to reports that don't have a clear photo, so bypassing any beekeeper involvement in verifying. You can understand this development when 99.08% of all alerts they receive are not Yellow Legged Hornets.

So it's even more important that we all make people in our area aware that they can ask beekeepers to help get a photo. We have access to attractant to entice Yellow Legged Hornets to return to gardens.

On Saturday 12th April, the NBU received a credible report of a YLH spotted by a homeowner in Deal, Kent in their conservatory. On Sunday 13th April, a further credible report of a YLH was spotted by another homeowner in Appledore, East Sussex in their greenhouse. A bee inspector from the NBU collected both of these hornets on Monday 14th April and sent them to Fera Science.

On Monday 14th April, a householder in Ramsgate, Kent submitted a credible report of a YLH. The sample was collected by the local bee inspector on 15th April and sent to Fera Science.



This is the embryo nest. Photo from BBKA Facebook



On Wednesday 16th April, the NBU received a report of a YLH building an embryo nest on a window frame on a house in Langley, Kent. A bee inspector visited on the same day and collected both the embryo nest and queen hornet which have been sent to Fera Science.

In all cases, the local Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet Teams have been contacted and asked to responsibly monitor in these areas. In the Devon Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet Team, we are still working on awareness and helping the public identify YLH and their nests.



I've made a model the size and shape of a secondary YLH nest which we use at the Devon County show and the shows Tiverton Beekeepers attend.

Tracy Frankpitt

Tiverton Beekeepers YHL Coordinator

Stephenson Trophy Entry

Every year at Devon County Show there is a competition where Devon Beekeeping groups create a display relating to beekeeping.

Tiverton Beekeepers led by Sue Herring are creating a display entitled "What bees need."



It's a real team effort with so many members contributing:

- Sue has crocheted dozens of flowers and a couple of mice
- Steve has made a sturdy box to contain the display
- Louise is painting the background
- Rex is making a beehive
- Sylvia is making a resin water dish and glass bee wings
- Libby is making felt bees
- Sue is crocheting a foxglove
- Tracy is crocheting a green woodpecker and primary hornet nest
- Frances is embroidering Yellow Legged Hornets onto the nest
- Vicky is creating all the textual information
- Brahim has been acting as consultant as he really knows how to win competitions.

We gathered what we'd done so far together at the last meeting so here is a half made preview. We hope we will be in with a chance of winning this year.

Apiary News

Well what a fantastic first apiary afternoon of the year!! Beautiful spring weather for April 5th, and a brilliant turn out of members, and it was especially heartening to see so many of our beginners taking their first step into bee craft. The Robin welcomed us with its usual request for cake, and even the bees welcomed us long before we got to the cabin! Time to suit up early.

Once at the colonies, it was good to see members helping the beginners get into the hives for their very first time, and even finding and marking a queen. Lots of tea, cake and chat to finish the day, (including following bees).

I apologise for having to cancel the planned meeting on Sunday 20th, but Alan and the improvers had done some major work there on Thursday night and with the weather being doubtful for a few days, I didn't want to stress the bees any further.

Malcolm



Tiverton Beekeepers Improvers Course



This year, fourteen of us embarked on the Improvers Course. The course was lead by Malcolm, Tony and Alan over four weeks. It was very informal. We sat in a circle, the three wise men asked us questions about beekeeping and we tried to answer correctly. It was a brilliant format. We learned so much from them and from each other. We were all surprised at

how much we actually already knew.

We also had a practical session with Alan. The club apiary had lost four colonies over winter and Alan and Malcolm had found a very strong colony and added an extra brood box to it.

During our practical session, Alan showed us how to create two nucs from the fames in

the extra brood box and add queens (arrived that day in the post) to them. If the nucs become strong, the apiary will be two colonies bigger over summer.

It was a fascinating session which we enjoyed as much as the theory evenings. Some of us hope to do the basic assessment qualification on the back of the improvers course.

Nosema Testing

Nosema is a parasitic microsporidian fungus. House bees clean up the mess in the hive by licking and biting, ingesting Nosema Spores accidentally. These multiply in the gut and can cause dysentery. Not all bees with nosema contract dysentery. Dysentery is indicated by brown faecal streaks on the inner cover, comb and other surfaces. This disease shortens the bees life, in turn making the colony build up slowly in spring. If the infection is severe the colony may dwindle and die.

Nosema can be identified under a microscope, so join us on Wednesday 21st May at 6.30 Uplowman Village Hall for Nosema testing. Just bring along 30 of your bees that you have humanely killed within 24 hours (please make sure they are dead). After a bit of cutting, grinding and pummeling with a little water, the liquid concoction can be put on a slide under the microscope and we can have a lookie. Don't forget there will be tea and cake. See you there. **Lesley**

2025 Calendar

March

Thur 6th	Committee Meeting
Mon 10th	Improvers Course
Wed 12th	Beginners Course
Sat 15th	Apiary meeting
Wed 19th	Branch Meeting
Sun 23rd	Apiary meeting
Mon 24th	Improvers Course
Wed 26th	Beginners Course
Mon 31st	Improvers Course

April

Sat 5th	Apiary meeting
Sun 6th 10-4pm	Taunton Auction Ruiston
Wed 16th	Branch Meeting
Sun 20th	Apiary meeting

May

Wed 7th	Committee Meeting
Sat 3rd	Apiary meeting
Thu/Sat 15th-17th	Devon County Show
Sun 18th	Apiary meeting
Wed 21st	Branch Meeting

June

Sat 7th	Apiary meeting
Sun 15th	Apiary meeting

July

Thur 3rd	Committee Meeting
Sat 5th	Apiary meeting
Sat 12th	DBKA Presidents Day@ Crediton
Sun 20th	Apiary meeting
Sat 26th	Mid Devon Show

August

Sat 2nd August	Apiary meeting
Sun 17th August	Apiary meeting
Mon 25th August	Plymtree Show

September

Thur 4th	Committee Meeting
Sat 6th	Apiary meeting
Wed 17th	Branch meeting
Sun 21st	Apiary meeting

October

Wed 15th	Branch meeting
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November

Wed 19th	Branch AGM
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Meetings - 7.30pm Upplowman Village Hall.
Apiary Meetings - Knightshayes.

Diary Dates

Wednesday 21st May

Nosema testing

Bring 30 bees along (recently humanely killed) for testing.

The Buzzette

last date for submission for the next issue is **20th May**.

Send your news and views to

buzzette@tivertonbeekeepers.uk

Just another day cleaning frames!!

