

The Tivvy Buzzette

Tiverton Beekeepers Newsletter

May 2025



Chairman's Broodbox

What glorious weather we have been having which our bees seem to be thriving on, it also brought out the crowds to the Devon County Show where the Bees and Honey marquee sold out of honey! It was encouraging to see the smiling faces of many of our members taking part as stewards, several of them entering the competition and winning prizes and some of you just turning up to enjoy the buzz of the tent.

It was disappointing to see that only one of the 11 branches in Devon put an entry into the Stevenson Trophy - you already know that was our own Branch at Tiverton. Here is a picture of our entry. A big thank you to our team of Sue H, Tracy, Frances, Steve, Rex, Brahim, Sue F, Louise, Vicky, Sylvia and Libby.

Now just because we were the only entry, it doesn't mean the judges have to give us first prize! If they don't think the standard is good enough they could award it second or even third prize - of course our entry was good enough, we got first prize. In fact our entry was so good that the judges awarded it The Blue Ribbon which means it was considered the best entry of any of the 200 plus entries into the show. The judges said it was informative, simple, attractive, colourful, reflected a lot of



skilful work and great team work. The award means we can take our Stevenson Trophy entry to the National Honey Show in October.

It was also good to see that many of our members had entered the competition and, even though Brahim didn't make as many entries this year, it was good to see that he achieved many first prizes. We don't know who won the trophies yet as this year they will be presented at President's Day on the 12th July at Crediton. Don't forget there won't be an Apiary session on the 2nd August, we will be going to Buckfast Bees instead.

Happy Beekeeping. Tony



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Masthead photo by Kat Smith: <https://www.pexels.com>

Queen Spotting

I thought our members may be interested to hear about this unusual sighting of a queen.

On the Sunday morning following Devon County Show I was taking down the netting around the hives used for live bee handling. There were one or two bees on the netting but one caught my eye, she was longer and more slender than the rest. Imagine my surprise when I saw a green dot on her thorax, my suspicions were confirmed, it was the queen. She was on her own and not looking too active but definitely alive. I gently picked her up and moved her to the landing board of one of the two hives present. Some bees came out of the hive and paid her some attention but I moved her to the edge of the board where she fell off to the ground. She was still alive so I picked her up and moved her to the other hive's landing board.

Many bees came out of the hive and surrounded her cleaning her and generally making a fuss of her. I took a video of the activity which I hope can be circulated with this article. Unfortunately the bees started to pay attention to me and, as I didn't have any protective kit on, I beat a quick retreat. When I returned later all the bees from the landing board including the queen were gone, I'm assuming she'd gone into the hive as she wasn't on the ground. I've never seen anything like that before.

Tony

Here is the queen on the landing board before the bees had come out to find her. Note the bees and hives were supplied by the Exeter Branch.



Can you help?

New beekeepers from Bickleigh, Paul and Peggy, have asked for help with their bees. They are going to be using flow hives so firstly would appreciate guidance from anyone already using that type of hive.

Secondly they would appreciate anyone who is living in the Bickleigh area who could be an occasional mentor.

And finally, if anyone has any Langstroth equipment they are looking to sell, again please make contact.

Paul and Peggy
Pjwowen@gmail.com
07506 911905

May Committee Meeting Report

Nine members attended the meeting, and ten members sent their apologies.

Our branch Committee met on the 7th May at 7.30 in Upplowman Village Hall. Those present included: Tracy Frankpitt, Steve Willis, Malcolm Crook, Clive Rowe, Jon Davies, Ian Sorensen, Vicky Morrish, William Lines and Tony Lindsell. The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

Finance Steve reported that the branch had paid our Spring Capitation for membership to the DBKA and BBKA, our insurance premiums to BDI have also been paid. The branch accounts were still looking healthy.

Membership Tony confirmed we now had 152 members of which 129 were registered members, 20 were partner members and 3 local members. As far as anyone knows this is the most members we have ever had.

Apiary Malcolm told us that he was not 100% happy with the hives at our Knightshayes Apiary and more time needs to be spent improving them. However it does allow us to demonstrate to Beginners how to manage their bees. We would like to for a team to look after the Apiary so if anyone is interested please contact Malcolm.

Education Tracy has taken over as Education Coordinator from Clare and reported that nine people had signed up for the next Beginners' Course, two have paid.

- A primary school in Tiverton has requested a bee talk so Vicky will ask Derek if he can accommodate them.
- This year's improvers course has been a success and will be repeated next year. One of our members from the course has indicated they would like to undertake the Basic Assessment.

Branch Trip It was confirmed that on Saturday the 2nd August we will be going to visit the Buckfast Apiary run by Martin Hann and Clare Densley. Please note the Apiary Session that day at Knightshayes is cancelled.

WhatsApiary Adam Burnell has setup a Whatsapiary chat section which seems to be working well.

At this point we took a well earned break for tea and to sample Cherry Cake from Steve and home made biscuits from Sylvia.

Secretary Jon Davies confirmed that Louise will takeover from him as Branch Secretary at the AGM in November. He'd like to stay as an active committee member and, if no-one else comes forward, he'd takeover Louise's role as minute taker.

Mid Devon Bees Tony reported that he had invited Mid Devon Bees to the recent talk by Clare Densley and Martin Hann but there didn't seem to be any takers. It was decided we'd invite them to our Nosema Evening on 21st May.

Shows Tracy told us that the Stevenson's Trophy entry for this year's Devon County Show was nearly complete and would be put together the next evening.

Social Media Vicky asked for more photos and video footage especially from swarm collections that she could use on our SocialMedia.

Vicky also reported that the branch emblem for our new polo shirts was nearly ready and then the shirts could be embroidered. Cost was likely to be in the region of £12 plus vat. We already have 16 orders. They will be ready for the Mid Devon Show.

Next Committee Meeting Thursday 3rd July.

2025 Calendar

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**

November

Wed 19th **Branch AGM**

Meetings - 7.30pm Upplowman Village Hall.
 Apiary Meetings - Knightshayes.

The Buzzette

Last date for submission for the next issue is **20th June**.

Send your news and views to
buzzette@tivertonbeekeepers.uk

Apiary News



Some famous person called Heraclitus once stated "The only constant in life is change." I don't know if he was a beekeeper, but that did come up our last meeting at the apiary.

It began with me making the decision to start the session with tea and cakes!! as the bees had made such a welcome party the session before, we thought that we would have tea and cake first without being bothered by followers. The robin was surprised as well.

I admitted to accidentally maiming one of my queens whilst marking her with a marking pen, and she was instantly balled when I replaced her. Another member also related the same circumstances with their queen. After quite a discussion we decided that the marking pens used were slightly too stiff to release the fluid and that had damaged both queens.

We then began to suit up only to find that Natasha had forgotten her wellies, but surprised us all in a new style of footwear. A set of beautiful carrier bags nicely secured by Steve's gaffer tape. What a cat walk!

We intended to preform a Demeree stack on one colony, but they had beaten us too it and produced queen cells all over the place. Adam and Adrian took the lead in going through the colonies, which was brilliant to watch, thank you guys. Lots of laughs, tea and cake. Thank you all.

Malcolm