

The Tivvy Buzzette

Tiverton Beekeepers Newsletter

June 2025



Chairman's Broodbox



Photo: Thank you to Tracy, Ian, and Malcolm (plus Clive who dropped in to say hello) at The Old Well Garden Centre where we joined with the Uffculme Green Team to promote pollinators and the importance of pollination.

We had several sessions at the Knightshayes Apiary, one on a Saturday when it rained for quite a while then dried up. At another session Malcolm challenged us to start queen rearing by picking up eggs (grains of rice) and placing them safely in plastic queen cups. It was not easy as you can see from below!

I've just been looking back at last year's Buzzette for June and it reminded me of how our bees were struggling in the early summer with cold winds, rain and a lack of warm sunshine - how different is it this year with warm sunny weather mixed in with some rain and, as I write, a spell of hot sunny weather forecast.

Last year some of us needed to feed our bees, this year some are already taking honey off.

A big thank you to Tracy and Sylvia who took a Tiverton Beekeepers stand to Columbjohn Farm for Open Farm Sunday and had a very successful day.



**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

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

On the 12th July there is the President's Day at Crediton which you may already be aware of. Last year was a really informative and friendly event and I'm sure this year will be equally as good. On Saturday the 26th July we will be back at Mid Devon Show and on Monday 25th August at Plymtree Show trying to repeat our successes of last year - if you'd like to help at either event then please let me know.

On Saturday 30th August we host our annual 'Meet The Bees' session at Knightshayes Apiary which is the start of the year's 'Introduction to Beekeeping Course'. On Saturday 2nd August there will be no session at our Apiary as we've been invited to

Buckfast Bees at Buckfast Abbey run by Clare Densley and Martin Hann, two of the most experienced and knowledgeable beekeepers in the south west. This is the link to their Community Beekeeping page <https://www.buckfast.org.uk/events/community-beekeeping-5/>

Mike Brice will drive a community minibus which can seat another 15 people, other people will be driving and happy to offer lifts. At the moment we have eight seats left in the minibus and seven people going by car. Times are also yet to be agreed. The only costs will be for travel (and lunch) but I also think they take donations towards their work.

Clare says 'We are here from 9am. If you want to come earlier and have lunch here, either your own sandwiches in our barn or lunch in the Grange its up to you. We are very flexible.'

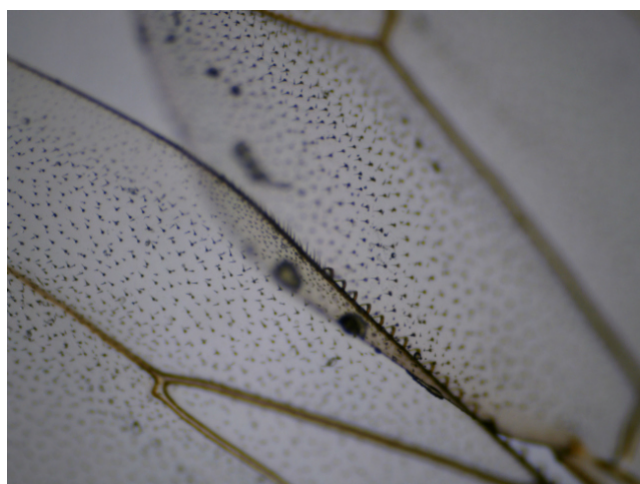
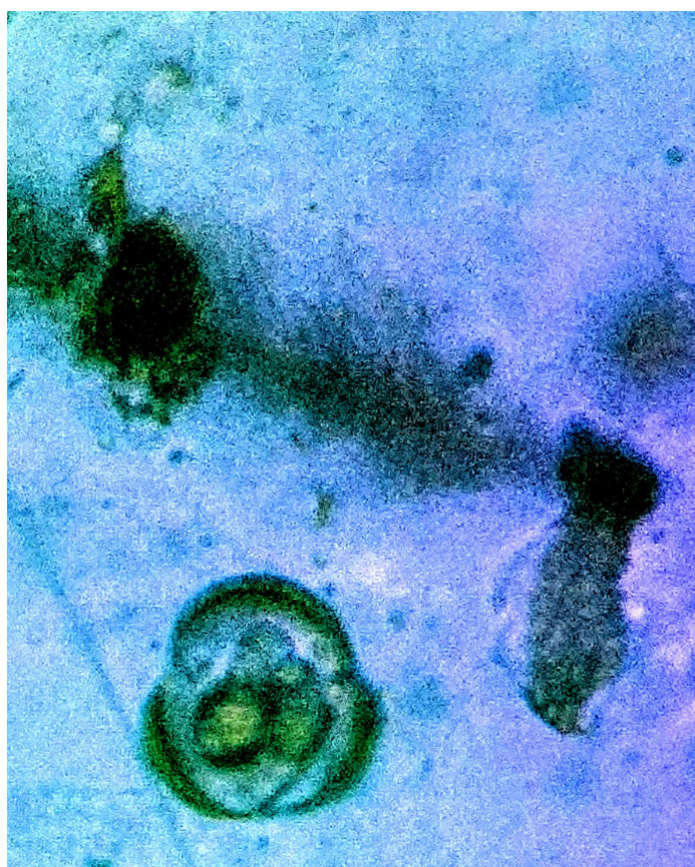
Please let me know if you'd like to join us and we can sort out the details closer to the day.

Lastly, I'm sure you will want to wish three of our members, Rex, Tracy and William the very best of luck when they undertake the Basic Assessment at our Apiary. It's many years since anyone from Tiverton has had a go and we eagerly await to hear how they have done and what they have learned from the experience.

Happy Beekeeping. Tony



Photo: Ian Sorenson.



Top left: trimming the bees down. Bottom left: Pollen grain. Bottom right: Hooks and hairs on the bee wing.

Nosema testing

On the 21st May the Branch held a meeting at Uplowman village hall, the subject was a practical session of Nosema testing.

A small group of beekeepers turned up, some with bees for testing others to see how it was done, and all to be fascinated by the microscope

slides of pollen, and bee parts. Those with bees brought their humanely dispatched bees for processing. A somewhat gruesome exercise of trimming them down to just the abdomen which is then crushed down with pestle and mortar and the resulting liquid placed on the slide.

The shapes of various pollen can be identified giving an

insight into what was on offer to our bees. Thankfully there were no signs of Nosema. However a photo was put up on the screen to show what we were looking for. The remaining body parts were not wholly wasted and some parts were placed under the microscope for a close up view.

And we still had time for some obligatory tea and cake.

Devon Beekeepers' Association

The DBKA is 150 years old this year so I thought I'd give you some idea of what it does. As part of the 150 year celebration each member will receive an enamel lapel badge. Please ask me for one when you see me.

As members of Tiverton Beekeepers you are also a member of the Devon Beekeepers' Association which is our registered charity and legally responsible body. There are ten other branches in the Association; Exeter, East Devon, South Devon, Holsworthy, Plymouth, Tavistock, North Devon, Okehampton, Newton Abbot and Torbay. Although each branch looks after their own day to day organisation and running, there is also an Executive Council that oversee the management of the Association and act as trustees of the Charity. Each branch provides a representative, normally their Chair but not necessarily so, plus there is an elected Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer and President who altogether form the charity trustees. Additionally there are Education Secretary, Exams Officer, Show Chair, AHAT Coordinator and Website Manager.

The Council meet about five times a year, via Zoom, and are responsible for the finances, property and leases of all eleven branches. Just to give you a flavour, I attended their meeting on 14th June when the following matters were discussed.

- We had an update on **improvements to the DBKA website** - our current one is rather out of date so this will be a big improvement which will include new email addresses for officers (thanks to William, Tiverton already has this).
- **Finance report** which looks healthy and includes the finances of all the branches. - next year's draft budget didn't have anything unexpected in it although the BBKA membership is increasing by £2 so that will affect our membership.
- We had a report on the **Devon County Show** which was very successful for the Bee and Honey marquee, we even made a profit. Unfortunately the Show chair, Liz Westcott, is standing down this year so we are looking for someone to replace her.
- There were discussions on several technical matters including **safeguarding** and a **BBKA survey on centralising admin**.
- We had a request from Dr Clare Bethune of Derriford Hospital for more support, she is the national lead on Bee stings and de-sensitising. We have helped with her research over a number of years and she has been able to desensitise a number of beekeepers who have strong reaction to bee stings.
- We were updated on **Education** and the latest exam entries.
- Details of **President's Day** on the 12th July were agreed.
- Finally each branch has the opportunity to update the meeting about what's happening at their branch. I represent Tiverton Branch as your Chairman but after 15 years of being Associated with the DBKA committee I would like to step back from it at our AGM later this year. I know it's not everyone's cup of tea but the DBKA is an important and respected organisation in the bee community and worthy of our best support.



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 July**.

Send your news and views to
buzzette@tivertonbeekeepers.uk

Beefriendly Gifting



Photo: Tracy Frankpitt

June is a tricky month for me as I have four friends with birthdays this month, all of them are lucky ladies of a certain age who want for very little and are hard to buy gifts for. Although none of them are beekeepers they are always interested in my beekeeping tales and so this year I have given them all bee related gifts.

I gave two of my friends 'The Original Bee Revival Kit' which is a keyring with a vial of sugar water attached, beautifully handcrafted in the UK and designed to give an ailing bee an instant energy boost, what's not to love about that! My lucky friends can't wait to put their gifts to good use.

I gave my remaining two June birthday friends bee drinking cups, these are flower shaped cups on metal spikes that you can fill with water and deploy around your garden for thirsty bees to take advantage of. Particularly useful in this current heatwave and again gratefully received by my lucky chums! Maybe I'll make bee keepers of them one day!

Louise Scott