

The Tivvy Buzzette

Tiverton Beekeepers Newsletter

July 2025



Chairman's Broodbox



First of all this month I have a challenge for you. You will see from the photo above that my bees won first prize at Uplowman Flower and Produce Show for the quality of their honey. Now the criteria on which it is judged is solely on flavour and colour, you only need to enter one jar and I think it only cost 20p. One of the reasons that my bees' honey won first prize may have been that this was the only entry in this class. So why not enter the completion

next year and best my entry, it would be great to support the village that has become a bit of a base to Tiverton Beekeepers. I'll let you know when you need to enter next year.

I had the pleasure of attending Devon Beekeepers' President's Day on the 12th July where I also met Alison, William, Sarah and Brahim from our branch. It was a very well organised, informative day and those of

you who didn't get there missed some really useful beekeeping tips.

The main speaker was Professor Robert Pickard an Emeritus Professor of Neurobiology at the University of Cardiff and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology, the Royal Society of Medicine, and the Learned Society of Wales. His achievements and interest go on and on. His first talk was titled 'Brains in humans and



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

honey bees' and his second talk was 'The wonderful things about Honey Bees'. He is probably the best speaker I've heard and it was a real treat to listen to him.

In between Robert's two talks we had Steve Riley talking about 'Monitoring for Varroa-Resistant Traits in your bees' - a bit of a controversial subject but it certainly got everyone thinking and talking. I invested in his book 'The honey bee solution to Varroa' so if anyone would like to borrow it please let me know.

To end the day we enjoyed Alex Paine on 'Gardening for Wildlife'. Alex is one of the

senior gardeners at the Royal Horticultural Society gardens at Rosemoor. A really interesting and enjoyable talk. I think Lesley may try to ask him to give us a talk.

This year the Day included the presentation of trophies from the Honey Competition at Devon County Show. We should all be very proud of Brahim who, despite entering fewer classes this year, came away with three trophies, *apologies for the poor photo.*

It was a real shame that none of our Stevenson Trophy team were able to get to the event as the Branch were not only



presented with that Trophy but also the Blackmore Trophy for the exhibit judged to be the Highest Grade in the Show.

Once again massive congratulations to our brilliant Stevenson's Trophy team and to Brahim.

Happy Beekeeping. Tony



In early 2011 members of the Bradninch Climate Action Group, concerned about the status of pollinators in the UK, became aware of grant funding from HOGco (Home Grown Community Owned). HOGco, a project run by Devon Communities Together, were offering local community groups tools, resources and funds to enable and encourage local food growing projects.

We applied for funding to set up a community bee group in Bradninch and were delighted to be awarded £250, two bee colonies with hives and a day's training with Mick Street, an experienced Devon beekeeper, and then a Defra Bee Inspector.

To launch the Bee Group, we held a tea party at the Guildhall, inviting the local community to

come and hear about the new venture. Unsure if anyone would come, we were amazed when over 100 Bradninch residents attended; from that a core group of 15 beekeeping enthusiasts emerged, with many more people wishing to be kept informed and promising to plant bee-friendly plants in their gardens.

We were lucky to be offered the garden at the back of the White Lion Pub as the site for the community apiary. We stayed there until 2019, when we moved the apiary to a newly established orchard on the edge of Bradninch at Weeks Cross. How does the group operate? Each year in early spring we meet, usually in someone's house with lots of tea and cake, to plan the year's activities. This includes setting up an inspection rota for the season, colony management, including disease and swarm collection, organising dates for training, frame making, equipment cleaning and honey extraction, plus fund raising and communication with the community. We do the latter mainly by running one or two Saturday coffee mornings each year in Bradninch, writing articles for the Parish Magazine and doing talks to raise awareness of bees and beekeeping, for example on topical issues such as the Asian Hornet threat.

Within the group, currently made up of 19 signed up members, we have a core team who have undergone training and who lead the inspections during the main season. Sue and I joined the Tiverton Beekeepers in 2012 and have completed the beginners and improvers courses. Others are members of Exeter Beekeepers. Most years we organise at least one training day for all members and have been fortunate to have had Mick Street and David Packham deliver these.

For practical reasons, it is often not possible for individuals to have hives in their own gardens. Being part of a community group allows people interested in bees and beekeeping to share responsibility, costs, equipment, knowledge, skills, confidence and muscle power. All contribute towards the key aims of the group to support and



protect honey bees and other pollinators.

We also benefit greatly from the support of the wider local community in Bradninch through buying honey, attending coffee mornings and creating pollinator-friendly gardens, and we have received funding from Bradninch Town Council, our Devon County Councillor, Tesco's and other community engagement schemes for which we are very grateful.

After 14 years the group continues to thrive, now sitting under the umbrella of Sustainable Bradninch. Currently we have four healthy colonies in the apiary. As a result of being part of the group several members have started keeping their own bees, expanding the practice of beekeeping in and around Bradninch.

Sue Southwell and Alison Tytherleigh

Clever Bees

Last year my bees swarmed and died out after the new queen failed. This happened shortly after I had done a Bailey comb exchange so I had some brood frames of new drawn comb. A couple of weeks ago I was given a nuc of bees by a very kind person. I decided to put them in my beehive with 5 frames of my drawn comb. By then it looked a bit messy. It was covered in mould and had some cells still with pollen in and a couple of dead bees attached but I thought it would save them the effort of drawing new comb.

The day after hiving my new bees, I went to check to see if they were flying. There was a large pile of old pollen, wax, and general detritus on the landing board.

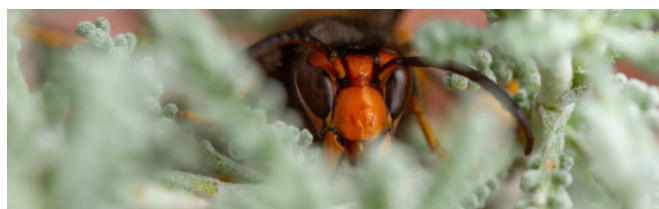
When I went into my hive a week later my messy old comb looked perfectly clean and two frames had honey beginning to be stored in them. I wondered if the bees had so much



cleaning to do that they didn't have time to shove the cleaned out mess off of the landing board or if it was just their passive aggressive way of letting me know that I'm a dirty beekeeper. I wouldn't put it past those clever industrious little animals.

Tracy Frankpitt

Yellow Legged Asian Hornet Report



There have been 68 sightings of Asian hornets this year and 24 nests have been found. Most sightings have been in Kent and East Sussex with a couple in Southampton and one in County Durham.

Most alarming is the nest found in a bird box in Verwood, Dorset which is only (110km as the hornet flies) from Tiverton. New queens can build nests up to 20km away from their original nests. We must be vigilant and report any possible sightings.

Hornet Photo is from BASC (British Association for Shooting and conservation) website.

Nest photo is of Southampton nest from BBC.



Tiverton Beekeepers at the Mid Devon Show

Friday afternoon - all hands on deck - unloading, assembling and setting up the stand and making sure everything was ready.

All photos by Charles Bradfield.





Saturday - it was buzzing! - A big thank you so much to everyone who worked so hard on the stand talking to the public and helping with the children's makes. 320 headbands were made and 328 candles rolled. A lot of happy children and grateful parents.

All photos by Charles Bradfield.



July Committee Meeting Report

Eleven members attended the meeting and six members sent their apologies.

Malcolm updated us on the health of our President, Keith and we all sent him our best wishes for a speedy recovery. The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as being accurate.

Finance - Steve reported on the Branch finances which were looking healthy but he said was looking for a new provider for branch insurance. Tony told us our membership now stood at 154 members.

Apiary - Malcolm reported that everything looked in order at the Apiary for the Basic Assessment to be taken by three of our members and we wished them good luck on the 21st July. Improvements at the Apiary are to be put on hold until the NT have decided what improvements they are likely to make at the 'saw mill buildings'. We are to invite the new ranger to our 'Meet the Bees' session.

Education - Tracy reported that there eighteen applicants for this year's Introduction to Beekeeping' course, thirteen of whom had already paid. Vicky told us she had given a talk to children at a local school and Alan supplied the Observation Hive. Vicky requested that we purchase a training brood box for use at talks and shows which we all agreed. A working party will be formed to improve the way we respond to request for talks.

Nosema Testing - Lesley thought that the nosema testing evening could be improved and will work with others to provide a microscopy evening next year. It was agreed that we should buy a laptop that could be used solely for branch purposes and William will be asked to obtain this for us. Lesley confirmed speakers have been booked for our September and October meetings, November is the Branch AGM and we would be running the Branch Supper again in December.

Trips - The trip to Buckfast Bees at Buckfast Abbey on 2nd August was discussed and further details will be sent out to our members. We had a break for tea and cake, a very fine rhubarb cake from Sylvia and a super cherry cake from Steve, who confessed that it was his birthday - so we sang to him.

Shows - It is planned to have a stand at both Mid-Devon and Plymtree shows. Tracy demonstrated a flower-based idea which she had seen at the Cornwall show - the flower contained lollipops, the colours of which equated to pollen. It was agreed to purchase 400 lollipops at a cost of £102, Tracy has a total budget of £300. Lesley will source flowers from Cove Nursery and members/apiary honey will be sold on the stand this year. Setting up for Mid Devon Show will be from 3pm on Friday 25th. On the show day morning volunteer session will be from 8am-1pm and the afternoon session from 1pm onwards. Steve and Tracy will bring demonstration hives.

Trophies - For the official record it was confirmed that Tiverton Branch has won the Stevenson Trophy at Devon County Show as well as the blue ribbon for the best entry in the honey show across all entries!! Well done to our show team.

Asian Hornet - Tracy told us that there have been 45 sightings of the Yellow Legged Hornet to date, 2 in Southampton, 1 in Durham and the rest in the Southeast.

Buzzette - material for the Buzzette to be submitted by the 20th of each month please and all members are encouraged to submit articles about their beekeeping experiences. More articles please!!!

Promotion - Vicky brought along the new Tiverton Beekeeper polo shirts and she is holding the stock; they are £12.78 each.

Next committee meeting - 4th September 2025.

2025 Calendar

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 Uplowman Village Hall.
Apiary Meetings - Knightshayes.



The Buzzette

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

Send your news and views to
buzzette@tivertonbeekeepers.uk

BBKA- Zoom talk

'Foraging is my happy place' with Tom Radford on **Tuesday 19th August 2025 at 7pm**. A recording of this talk will be available on YouTube for those unable to watch live.

Tom is a Forager, Content Creator, and advocate of supporting local and sustainable food. He's recently started keeping bees and is, among other things, advocating for the plight of wild bees. Tom always had a deep love of the countryside and nature for his whole life but never so much as when circumstances took him to Asia and whilst that was a great adventure, he missed home and used to watch shows like River Cottage and old Keith Floyd episodes which is where the seeds of his next project were sown. Returning to the UK in 2019 after six very homesick years in Singapore Tom had become a freelance video content director with an interest in making films. He vowed to get back to nature and make some films about his passion. Somehow this escalated into @EatTheCountry on social media which (and he's still not really sure why) currently has around 340k followers.

The Zoom talk includes:

- An Introduction to Tom's story, how Eat the Country got started and how it operates
- The rules around foraging and good foraging practice
- Key identifiers for both plants and mushrooms
- Examples of things to forage in different environments; Meadows, Woodlands and Coastal
- Some ideas for food and drink to make with foraged wild foods
- Wildflowers and pollinators; the situation with wild bees and flying insects and steps gardeners, allotments holders and possibly beekeepers can take.

Zoom link: [https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?pwd=DYMZxTImJjpRCLJyJvblxgybQQdSZ.1)

Meeting ID: 812 3381 9992 **Passcode:** 527929