

The Tivvy Buzzette

Tiverton Beekeepers Newsletter

June 2026



Chairman's Broodbox

Welcome back to June's issue of the Buzzette, we hope your season is going well. The weather has gone from wet to very dry and hot and now back to wet. The nectar flow appears to have dried up making the June drop early and bees a bit grumpy. Be vigilant for signs of starvation until the flow returns as well as keeping an eye open for swarming.

Malcolm has stoically kept the Apiary sessions going and I'm sure you all will agree with me he is doing a sterling job.

Show season has started with the Devon County show with a number of members Stewarding on the day. We will open our account with the Mid Devon show in July. Enjoy your summer and hope we get a good summer flow.
Ian Sorensen



Sampford Peverell children getting bee keeping experience

Recently we welcomed eight year 6 children from Sampford Peverell Primary school into our local churchyard (St John the Baptist) to have a peek into the hive of bees I keep there.

It has been an ambition of mine to offer beekeeping experiences for children and having undertaken the appropriate risk assessments, the school adding beekeeping to their insurance policy and ensuring we have an epi pen available should it be needed, myself and Mark Astley finally were able to welcome the children to look in an actual hive. We set up a few activities inside the church so half the group could be doing other things so we only had four children around the hive at

once. The other half of the group were looking at bees, a wax moth, a varroa mite and pollen under microscopes and collecting pollen samples of their own from spring flowers in the churchyard.

I want to thank Tiverton Beekeepers for the loan of the educational hive and for your support. We are doing bee club after school every Thursday for the first half of the summer term and we have a multitude of practical activities such as frame building, making a mini beehive, making a bee lifecycle, honey tasting and honey extraction for the children to have a go. The educational hive is a wonderful extra, interactive adjunct. **Katy Danby**



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

Meet the Committee

Tracy Frankpitt Education Officer



We have a cob barn and a colony of honey bees moved into its wall. One spring I saw the bees swarm and gather in a tree in our yard. I knew the chap on a neighbouring farm had just taken up beekeeping. I called him and he came round in all his beekeeping gear. He held a cardboard box under the branch and told me to cut it off. I asked if the bees would stay in the box and he said, "that's the theory, but I did only complete the beginners course last week." I was only wearing a T shirt and shorts but decided to trust him. Collecting the swam was a fascinating experience and I thought I'd look into taking up beekeeping.

I saw the Tiverton beekeepers at mid Devon show and signed up for the 'Meet the Bee's day at the National Trust property, Knightshayes. I think what struck me was the friendliness and enthusiasm for beekeeping of the club members running the day. I immediately signed up on the beginners' course.

During our course with Keith Owers we were invited to go along to the club AGM. Louise and I thought we'd go along. We felt we wouldn't be expected to join the committee as beginners but during the AGM we got caught up in the enthusiasm and positivity. We found ourselves volunteering to jointly fill the Asian Hornet Action Team Co-ordinator role. We picked that as it sounded kind of exciting. Neither of us has any regrets. Tiverton Beekeepers has a very large committee so none of us has too much to do and our meetings are efficient and often hilarious.

After a few weeks on the beginners' course I decided to get a national hive as they are the most practical. I told my husband and he said "If they are going to be in the garden we really should get the pretty ones." So my hives are WBC. After a couple of years (of collecting wall bee swarms) I had three hives and a nuc. I gave away the nuc as I wanted to stick with a maximum of three hives. The next summer I had none. My bees did not survive the winter.

If I hadn't been a member of the club I may have given up but knowing others had losses and also having wise words from the more experienced members I've continued. I have a colony that made it through this winter and I've never been so excited to see bees flying in and out of a hive.



Staying Calm!

So I got back from shopping, and had some lunch. It had warmed up so decided it was time to plant my aubergines in the polytunnel and to have a look at the girls - my bees

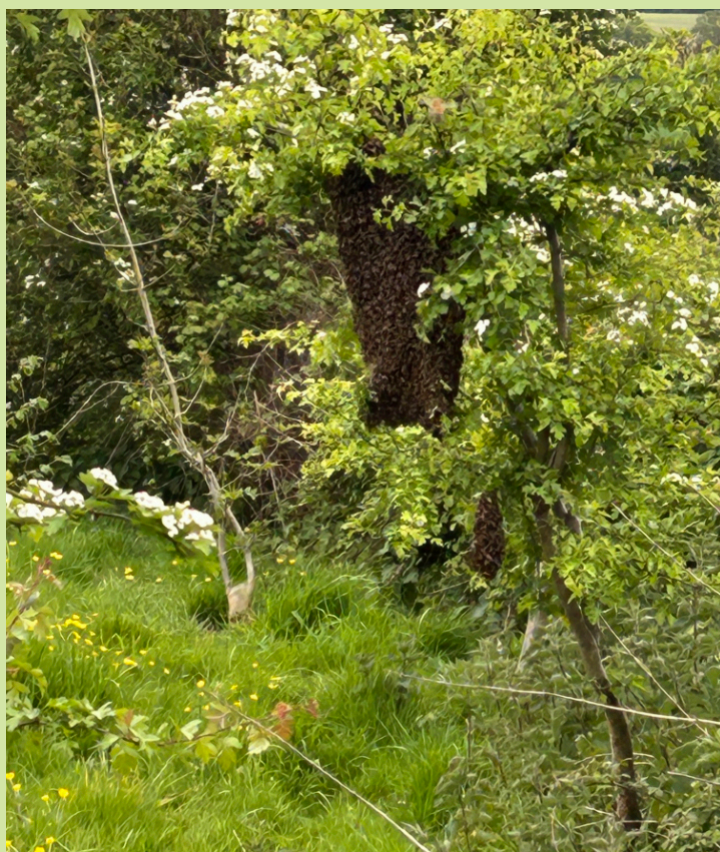
Walked across the lawn .. and ... a cloud of bees from hive to bush ..oh xxxx! I thought to myself .. aubergines down bee suit on and with phone in hand I headed down to see what was happening. I thought my bees were swarming, although it was 3ish in the afternoon. What to do? Phone a friend. Mr Brice suggested to wait a bit to see where they grouped. Grabbed bucket, secateurs and sackcloth then stood and watched. Instead of the bees getting thicker on the branch they in fact returned to the hive. Mmmm .. swarmed already me thinks.

This is a doubled brooded, double supered hive, so a bit grumpy am I. Due to weather conditions not inspected for 3 weeks. I know.... so rightly or wrongly decide to take a look. Five frames in I see them. Multiple queen cells along the top bar, next frame the same and the next, and on the next, there it was - an empty queen cell. Damn!

My 'phone a friend' called back and after a short conversation came over. An hour later I had a Damaree Split with 8 cut out queen cells, all looking close to emerging. Two emerged in front of our eyes, which left me scurrying for queen cages. Six of them emerged and are currently in at his house. Fingers crossed.

Thank you Mike for your support.

Lesley Ayre



May is swarm month



Photographs of the Sustainable Tiverton Bees Swarm by Frances Salisbury



2026 Calendar

Club Apiary Visits NT Knightshayes

Have started - they are on the afternoon of the first Saturday and third Sunday monthly.
2-4pm

June 21st
July 4th
July 19th
August 1st



Photographs by Tracy Frankpitt

Branch Committee Meetings

Branch Committee Meeting are held at Uplowman Village Hall
7.30-9pm

July 2nd
September 3rd
November 5th

The Buzzette

Last date for submission for the next issue is

10th July

Send your news, views, comments, stories and photographs to
buzzette@tivertonbeekeepers.uk