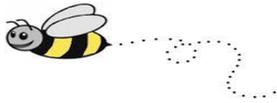


# The Tivvy Buzzette

Newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers – June 2013

## OUR NEXT BRANCH MEETINGS



### **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2pm for 2.30pm**

Apiary visit with Brahim Meraga.

Directions: From Tiverton towards Bickleigh, about half a mile before Bickleigh on the right hand side is a Bed & Breakfast called East Barton. Go in the drive, bear to the left going up and left again to park. East Barton, EX16 8HD.

### **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June, pm**

Cullompton Town Fayre (Cullompton Rugby Football Club) – show stand

### **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July**

Mid Devon Show

### **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August**

Honiton Show

### **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September**

Ian Homer – The Queen-less colony and its remedies

### **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October**

Dr Richard Lee – Bee Sting Allergy

### **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November**

AGM & Bob Ogden – Bee Folklore

### **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

Christmas meal

### **My life with bees, and how it all started –**

Tracy and I were always interested in bees and honey, visiting the Bee Marquee whenever we went to the Devon County or other local agricultural shows. We never did talk about keeping bees ourselves so I was quite surprised about 5 years ago to get a brand new bee hive( without bees ) for my birthday. We both enrolled onto the Keith and Bob beginners course and haven't looked back since. We are hooked on bee keeping and like a lot of others we are still learning. We often fail to agree what we should do when inspecting a hive but usually manage to agree a solution by the end!

Starting with a single hive we soon realised we needed two. Unfortunately when we first started the bees didn't really want to stay with us. We lost our first colony over the winter and the first swarm we were given didn't stay for longer than 24 hours. Until this winter things improved and many bees stayed. At the start of the last winter we had grown to 8 active hives some which we kept in our garden and some in a friend's orchard. Unfortunately the recent hard winter has reduced that number back to 4.

We both want to help others keep bees and got involved with the Branch by joining the committee. I am the current Secretary and Tracy is the Librarian. She also has helped to produce our Show display for the last three years with some success. If you haven't seen this year's at The Devon County Show be sure you don't miss it at the Mid Devon or Honiton Shows.

Tony Lindsell

## Meetings for Beginners

### **Beginners apiary:**

Saturday	1 <sup>st</sup>	June
	6 <sup>th</sup>	July
	3 <sup>rd</sup> or 17 <sup>th</sup>	August (tbc)
	14 <sup>th</sup>	September

*Editors note – thank you Tracy for your guidance and art work leading to our Branch success at the County Show*

## **National Honey Show 2013 News**

Are you new to beekeeping? Would you like to see what honey, combs, wax and mead should really look like? The National Honey Show is the 'gold standard' honey show, the equivalent of Wimbledon for tennis players, this year the 82<sup>nd</sup> National Honey Show. There are almost 250 classes and beekeepers come from all over the world to enter. Walking around the displays is an education in itself. A full programme of workshops and lectures will run during the show and there will be a wide selection of trade stands with lots of equipment and books to buy. Guest speakers this year will include, once again, a great cast from the world of beekeeping: Norman Carreck, Celia Davis, Ricarda Kather, Mike Palmer and Dr Robert Paxton will all be on the main lecture stage, BeeCraft have a great lecture theatre in the recital room on Friday and there will be a full day of lectures in the recital room on Saturday for those relatively new to beekeeping or those waiting to refresh on some common themes. For the first time this year there will be lectures on Thursday morning starting at 9.30am, with the official opening at 1.45pm. On top of that is another great line up of very popular workshops and The Honey Show. If that isn't enough then you can get some bargains, advice and socialise in the trade hall.

Also new for 2013: on the Saturday we have a New to Beekeeping day with a lecture programme for new beekeepers but all are welcome, in the Recital Room. There will be lectures on Swarms and Swarm Control; Common Bee Diseases; Products of the Hive; Tasks Throughout the Year.

If you have already had success at your local or county show, why not enter some of the classes? Many counties have their own classes within the show – or you can put yourself up against the experts in the open classes to see how you measure up. As you do your extracting, why not keep that perfect frame aside? A little planning now will give you lots of potential show entries.

The 2013 schedule of classes will be published in August 2013 but in the meantime, you can get a good idea of what is needed by looking at the 2012 schedule. You can find this and lots of interesting information about the show on the N.H.S. website - [www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk)

The show is at St Georges College, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2QS on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> (1.45pm to 6pm) Friday 25<sup>th</sup> (9am to 6pm) and Saturday 26<sup>st</sup> October (9am to 4.30pm). Admission for non-members is £15 but you can become a member of the National Honey Show for £12 and then entry is free. Accompanied children of 16 years and under are also free. You can join at the door or visit the website - [www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk).

## **Angst in the apiary**

Am I the only one to find myself in a constant state of worry about the state of my bees? I don't think so judging from those to whom I have spoken. Some seem to take every thing in their stride and not worry at all. Some do as little as possible to disturb the colony and leave the bees to make their own way. BUT others, like me, find that they are constantly fretting about the colony. I try not to disturb more than necessary, try to do as taught in the beginner's course, follow Ted Hooper to iron out problems, try to understand the reason for certain behaviour, try to explain to myself that really there is nothing to worry about. AND, then, when all seems perfectly understandable and logical, the bees from one colony or another behave in a completely bizarre manner. Will they swarm? Will they die out? Don't they like it here anymore? Am I not sufficiently prepared? Have I missed something on my regular inspections? Am I really a beekeeper at heart? I think so and I do, amongst all this angst, have huge pride in, and enjoyment from my bees. What is the answer?..... Go to an apiary meeting like the one held on Saturday, 25th May at Kentisbeare, held at Keith's apiary,? Don't have the grandchildren to stay? Keep Ted Hooper at your side always? Or should I just wave good bye to the little dears as they take off over the garden hedge? All suggestions and ideas will be gratefully received and treated in the strictest of confidence?.....Help! Dodie Huxter

## **Branch Meeting, Saturday 25th May, Kentisbeare**

The advantage of meeting at members apiaries is that you never know what to expect. Just like when you go to look at your own bees at this time of year.

With fine sunny weather, the cider apples just coming in to bloom, in fact just the weather for looking at bees. I have 12 hives on site, having all survived the winter. The first hive we looked at was OK but not as strong as I would like but all was well. The second hive was about the same strength as the first with 5 frames with brood. On inspecting the brood frames it was clear that all was not well. The frames had a pepper pot appearance with a lot of unsealed brood in all stages up to bees just emerging. On closer inspection it did not appear to be EFB. or AFB. but more like a severe case of Bald Brood. If in doubt speak to your seasonal bee inspector.

While this last hive was being investigated a swarm had just arrived in a nearby apple tree. Feverish activity on the front of another hive told us which one they had come from.

Not a problem give them a quick squirt of water to encourage them to cluster and let's press on. After cleaning my hive tool and gloves in soda, the next hive to be inspected had two supers on and was strong. I normally only look at half the brood frames when carrying out an inspection but on working through this hive I soon found queen cells with eggs so it was necessary to look at every frame, more advanced queen cells found but not capped. Action required; no equipment to hand to make a false swarm. Find the queen and clip her so my bees would not fly away before my return with more equipment another day. Time for a tea break and discussion on what we had seen so far.

The next task was to collect the swarm. Swarms generally come in two forms, large rugby ball shapes hanging on the end of a branch or on the underside of a horizontal branch, or difficult, the sort you would rather someone else collected. This swarm was the latter being spread over half a meter of trunk above head height and wrapped around the trunk and several smaller branches. Using one of my four frame nuc boxes I had with me, this was set up on a spare hive stand with four frames of new foundation ready to put in. Next collect the swarm, another squirt of water to reduce flying bees then swiftly brush them into my plastic bucket with a nylon brush. The bees were then tipped smartly into the nuc box and the frames gently lowered in. Bees were soon observed scenting and exposing their Nasanov gland; a good sign, and no bees returning to the tree. Time for us to go home after a good afternoon's beekeeping.

## **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May**

Returning to Kentisbeare on Sunday morning with Malcolm Crook to inspect the rest of the bees. The weather was again fine so we were able to make good progress in inspecting the remaining hives. No more surprises, the hive that we thought the swarm had come from did indeed have sealed queen cells which I reduced to two. The hive which we found on Saturday with queen cells was dealt with. All the queens were clipped as we went. It is better to clip queens in the spring than in the autumn. Should you injure a queen in the autumn it would be unlikely to requeen. This year I am late clipping queens, I would normally do this job in April when there are fewer bees and it is easier to spot the queens. The swarm we had collected was taking in pollen and busy drawing comb, they were given a quick feed and left in peace.

The colony with suspected Bald brood we had a good look at. Shaking the bees from the brood frame made it easier to examine, first I considered EFB, this was ruled out as all the larva were pearly white and neatly curled C shape in their cells. AFB the next consideration, no sunken capping or oily appearance, no dried scales in cells. There was something in one or two cells that I did not recognise but a match stick test revealed only old pollen. Turning to the open brood I then removed, with forceps several workers at various stages all quite healthy and wiggling; conclusion, a bad case of Bald brood. This was the first time I had seen a bad case of Bald Brood so I did later confer with one of our bee inspectors who agreed with my diagnosis. He confirmed it is normally only seen as a few open cells in a line and generally considered to be as a result of Greater Wax moth activity. Severe cases being the result of a genetic fault in the queen and the only treatment is to requeen. The larva that has not been capped do emerge as healthy bees.

Keith Owers



Nasonov glands exposed at apiary meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> May

### **Nosema Testing Report, 2013**

On the 13th April the Branch offered members the opportunity to test their bees for the presence of Nosema. Similar to last year, the weather was very cold and wet resulting in only 15 samples being brought to Rolliphants Farm for testing. Of those samples 11 were found to contain Nosema spores. It's though that the prolonged winter keeping the bees in their hives may have caused this high percentage of Nosema presence.

The Chairman of the Devon Beekeepers Association recently encouraged branches to keep testing bees for Nosema and the importance for members to deal with infected hives. At next year's event, the branch hopes it may be possible to include a demonstration of comb change alongside the testing.

If you have a view on the importance or otherwise of Nosema testing, we would be glad to hear from you.

TBKA Committee

Several of you have expressed an interest in the notes I took of the talk, several members went to, at Tiverton Natural History Society about Pollen in Forensic Science by Dr Michael Keith-Lucas. They will be included in a future edition of the news letter.

Sarah

### **Committee News**

Committee meetings:

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July

### **Note from your Buzzette Editor**

Many thanks for your contributions. Please keep sending them in to:

Post Galleons Lap,  
Plymtree,  
Cullompton,  
EX15 2LQ

Or pass on a note at the meetings. Happy beekeeping.  
Sarah Lines

<http://www.bbka.org.uk/local/tiverton/>