

The Tivvy Buzzette

Newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers – December 2014

OUR NEXT BRANCH MEETINGS



Wednesday 10th December, 7 for 7.30pm
Branch Christmas Dinner

Wednesday 21st January, 2015
Branch Meeting

Wednesday 18th February
Clare Densley from Buckfast Abbey

Wednesday 18th March
Chris Park and his Skep Apiary

Please come out and support your branch at our meetings.

*Wishing you all a Merry
Christmas and a Happy New
Year.*

From your branch committee

Beginners meetings

10th Dec.	The history and origins of bees and hives.
14th Jan.2015	Swarms, their causes and prevention.
28th Jan.	Queen rearing.
11th Feb.	Pests and diseases.
25th Feb.	Bee plants and hive products.
11th Mar.	Getting started.

Membership renewal for 2015

Membership renewal for 2015 is due before the end of 2014, and the DBKA Subscription/Renewal Form 2015 is attached/enclosed with this Buzzette. Thanks to the many who have renewed. I shall be very grateful if the remaining members will complete and return the form to me as soon as practicable. I'm happy to accept cheques as usual, but if anyone prefers to pay by online banking then **please include** as the reference your BBKA membership number (e.g. 21-19-987) so that I can identify the payment, and I still need the form to be returned to me, indicating that you have paid online. If you are a taxpayer, the value of your subscription is greatly enhanced if you complete the Gift Aid box (we reclaimed £598 in 2014...!).

Beginners Course members please note: Keith will invite you to complete this form during a meeting at the beginning of 2015, so please wait until then.

Many thanks

William Lines
Membership Secretary and Treasurer

A Bee Keeping report from 1917

Whilst researching WW1 records in order to find what had happened to a Great Uncle I came across a newspaper report on a talk given to the Taunton Field Club about 'Bee-keeping among the Allies.' 'An account was given of bee-keeping in France, Belgium, Italy, Serbia, Rumania, Russia & Japan as well as describing the variety of hives & frames used. France undertook bee-keeping on a much larger scale than in England & during WW1 hundreds of apiaries had been unfortunately destroyed. In Belgium the war had doubtless caused bee-keeping to be almost exterminated. Both in France & Belgium for 25 years prior to the war rapid progress had been made in the bee-keeping industry & the Belgium Government gave bee-keeping many encouraging facilities. Most of the religious orders & the clergy in Belgium, France, Serbia & Rumania took great interest in bee-keeping. Before the war there were 300,000 hives in Rumania & 180,000 in Serbia, both of which were over-run by the enemy. In all the countries of the Allies bee-keeping had been extensively carried on, & Russia was the most famous for the industry.'

Janet Franklin

Please keep an eye on our web site as regular updates and notices for members from the County and BBKA are placed there.

It is lovely to have some articles from members of our branch. Please keep sending them.

Over half our members are going to the Christmas meal. I hope you have a lovely time and I will be sorry not to be there, due to work, as it was great fun last year. Please send William back with a balloon, and a smile having paid the bill, and I shall look forward to hearing all about it.



Feedback from 'What are they finding?' in last months Buzzette, on Lapsana communis or Nipplewort

Thank you to Lesley Passey for your research: I looked up Nipplewort and it has calming and antiseptic properties. It can also help staunch the flow of milk when breast feeding finishes. However, these uses never seem to have spread from Finland. Because the flower buds resemble nipples, under the doctrine of signatures it was once used to treat breast ulcers.

According to Wikipedia (not a reliable source):

The doctrine of signatures, dating from the time of Dioscurides and Galen, states that herbs that resemble various parts of the body can be used by herbalists to treat ailments of those parts of the body. A theological justification for this, as stated by botanists like William Coles, was that God would have wanted to show men what plants would be useful for.

Sarah

Don't forget your bees

It might be nearly Christmas but there are still things to be done and considered before we start on next year. Assuming you have cleaned up around your hives, mouse guards in place if required and the crown boards raised on matchsticks if you are not on ventilated floors. Roofs may need a brick on them or tie them down so you do not have to worry if we have some bad gales, deep roofs 6" deep do not normally need to be tied down. Check if your hive feels heavy, ok for food, if not it may need feeding. It is best to use candy or a sugar paste such as Ambrosia paste. This can be placed in a polythene bag with a slit in it over the hole in the crown board.

It sometimes happens that you may have collected a late swarm in August which may not have been able to cope with heavy syrup feeding. Having established the colony they may need feeding through the winter. I have two such colonies, one collected from a compost bin in Tiverton which may have moved in probably in late July or early August, and the other I found residing under the floor of one of my hives. This would have been the result of a late swarm coming out from the above hive, then finding that the queen could not fly because I had clipped her wing. The best she could do was to try and walk back home but settled for making a new home under the floor. Before winter starts it is always a good plan to be prepared for the unexpected and have some winter feed in hand. Ambrosia is well packed and will keep from one year to the next if it is not used.

In recent years we have experienced some very unseasonal weather patterns. We all expect a good honey harvest if we have a good summer but our ever changing weather could present more problems for our bees if mild autumns and wet winters are to become the norm. Wasps are becoming more of a problem, mid November and I found a small colony having a hard time from a colony of wasps living in the thatch of a nearby farmhouse. I hope the two frosts we have now had have finished the wasps off. Mild weather in November means active bees with not much for them to find so we may see a more frequent need to provide winter feed. Many of our early flowering plants do not advance just because the weather is warmer; day length is another trigger to flowering. Most of our early flowering plants are not great pollen or nectar plants for our bees because with day temperatures probably in the region of 10c it is too cold for the bees to go far, except for a quick call of nature.

Looking on the bright side, signs of spring are to be seen, hazel catkins are already nearly 2 centimetres long. More importantly spring lectures are now being advertised with some very good lectures, February 21st we have a choice of Holsworthy DBKA Spring Convention with Prof Robert Pickard speaking, he has to be one of the best speakers I have heard. Somerset also has their lecture day at Cheddar also with some good speakers. Later in April we have the BBKA convention at Harper Adams University Newport, Shropshire, well worth the effort if you have never been.

Keith Owers

The November meeting and AGM of the Tiverton Beekeepers

Chairman Malcolm Jenkins opened the meeting and invited both the Secretary, Tony Lindsell and Treasurer, William Lines to give their annual reports to the packed meeting, both officers reported that the club was in a healthy position in both the number of members it has and the finances it holds, after being proposed and seconded both reports were then duly signed off as being correct and in order.

The election of officers was next on the agenda. All of the officers who were willing to stand for re-election in their various posts were duly re-elected by members, however there are a few posts that have yet to be filled and the secretary Tony Lindsell urged members to put themselves forward to fill these posts.

The Chairman then welcomed Raef Johnson, who introduced himself as one of the estate and grounds managers for the National Trust at Knightshayes Estate. Raef gave us a progress report on the proposed site for the branch apiary and it is hoped that the club can sign a lease shortly to formally use the proposed site for its branch apiary next spring. It is hoped that the branch apiary will become a useful asset to the branch members, as a training apiary for novice, inexperienced bee keepers as well as being a meeting venue for all members at branch summer meetings.

After the AGM closed at around 08:15 we were then treated to a film titled "More Than Honey". This is a film that deals in depth with the plight of the Honey Bee around the world such as the USA where it has been exploited by its keepers purely for financial gain and little heed paid to the welfare of the bee, and China where in some provinces the bee and most other insects have been wiped out by the overuse of pesticides and herbicides along with other damaging chemicals, the result was that many crops had now to be hand pollinated by armies of people. The film is well made and informative, at the same time portraying an important but worrying message to the world in general, I would urge all people to watch it whether they are beekeepers or not, this film leaves the watcher in no doubt that the world's population need bees (and all other pollinators) to ensure their successful future.

There is no meeting as such next month instead our members will be letting their hair down at the annual Christmas Dinner at the Tiverton Hotel on the 10th December. Unfortunately this year member Malcolm Crook will not be able to boogey on down as usual, having recently broken his ankle badly – get well soon Malc from all the members! For more information please go to our website www.tivertonbeekeepers.org.uk

Jonathan Gubb

Note from your Buzzette Editor

Many thanks for your contributions. If you would like to send in an article please send it to arrive before the last Thursday of the preceding month as text and photos to:

Post Galleons Lap,
Plymtree,
Cullompton,
EX15 2LQ

Or pass on a note at the meetings.

Sarah Lines

<http://tivertonbeekeepers.org.uk/>

