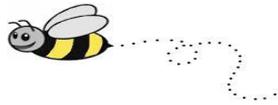


The Tivvy Buzzette

Newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers – March 2015



OUR NEXT BRANCH MEETINGS

Wednesday 18th March, 7.30pm, Uplowman Village Hall

Chris Park and his Skep Apiary.

Chris runs a skep apiary using traditional methods and equipment, along with modern measures such as mesh floors. He is Chairman of the British Beekeeping Heritage Society and a member of the Beekeeping History Trust

Wednesday 15th April, 6:00pm, Uplowman Village Hall

Nosema Testing evening. Bring along 25-30 dead bees from each hive in separate clearly marked containers. For tips on capturing and dispatching a sample amount for testing see: <http://tivertonbeekeepers.org.uk/upcoming-meetings-and-reports>

Sunday 29th March, 11am, Knightshayes

Branch Apiary working party see notice

Saturday 25th April

Spring Apiary Inspection - venue to be decided, may be at the Branch Apiary

Saturday 16th May

Apiary Inspection

Thursday 21 – Saturday 23 May

Devon County Show

Saturday 20th June

Apiary Inspection

Saturday 25th July

Mid Devon Show at Knightshayes/Chettiscombe

Thursday 6th August

125th Honiton Show

Sunday 6th September, 2:00pm, Uplowman Village Hall

End of season Branch BBQ & Honey Fest

Please support your branch at our meetings. We look forward to seeing you.

Beginners' meetings

11th Mar.

Getting started

Branch Apiary

All members are invited to come and join us for a working party on Sunday 29th March at 11am to put together a few hive stands at the new site at Knightshayes. We'll be meeting at 10.50 in front of the shop complex at Knightshayes House, and walking from there to the apiary site. We'll find good use for a couple of hammers, a saw or two, set square and tape measure. Timber and nails will be provided, enough for four stands. Friends and family most welcome; we should be done by mid-day.

Baruch

2015 Branch Committee members and roles

Chairman	Malcolm Jenkins
Secretary	Tony Lindsell
Treasurer & Membership Secretary	William Lines
Programme Secretary	Malcolm Crook
Education Secretary	Colin Wellard
Press Officer & Webmaster	Jon Gubb
Buzzette Editor	Sarah Lines
Librarian	Janet Franklin
Bulk Buying Coordinator	Derek Evans
Committee members	Keith Owers
	Bob Ogden
	Jackie Crook
	David Stone
	Janie Cook

Are you ready for the off?

March can be a funny old month, cold and wet the most likely or it could be warm 10 – 15C by day and frosty at night, not too bad for our bees. Very cold weather with sharp frosts at the end of the month is not what we want as this can really set our bees back. With an increasing brood area for the winter bees to look after and keep warm low temperatures can cause real problems. We can help by making sure the bees are ok for stores, mouse guards removed, entrance blocks in place and crown boards fitting snug on top of the brood box. Some people try to make the hive cosy by putting a piece of old carpet on top of the crown board. It is not something I do but I do have a sheet of polystyrene built into the roof. Bees living in a hollow in a tree are not provided with an extra blanket.

Try not to be too enthusiastic to look inside your hives, watching from outside will tell you if the queen is laying. Pollen going in on a warm day is a good indication but do keep checking the weight of the hive; if in doubt put some Ambrosia paste or similar on top of the crown board over the feed hole. You will do more harm than good if you go moving frames around when the temperature is below 15c or a cold wind is blowing. Chilled brood will only result in dead larvae. Chilled brood can also be the result of starving bees, insufficient bees to keep the brood warm.

With your equipment already cleaned and frames scrubbed. Empty frames are better left without the foundation in them until you are about to use them. With your soda washing bucket at the ready (1kg: 4.5lt water) you will be prepared for the first inspection when the weather is right towards the end of the month or early April.

Back in December I mentioned wasps were a nuisance around my site at Craze Lowman, with an active colony of wasps in the thatch of the nearby farm house. In early November I thought it would be safe to remove the reduced entrance on a small colony and replace it with a mouse guard which is my standard practice once the weather has started to turn cold. On the 23rd December I was doing the rounds of my apiaries and visiting the farmers with a Christmas greeting and distributing honey in appreciation for allowing me to keep bees on their farm. At Craze Lowman I found that two hives had been robbed out by wasps with a few still flying, hunting for a free meal. On visiting the farm house I was astonished to find the wasp nest in the thatch was as active as you would expect in August.

I have seen the odd worker wasp in November in the past and of course queen wasps in odd places during the winter when disturbed but never an active nest in late December.

Keith Owers

Crediton Seed Share

On Saturday 21st February the Branch was represented at the Seed Share held by Sustainable Crediton. It was the second year that the Branch had been invited and this year Tony and the two Malcolm's took a range of bee related products and posters for members of the public to see. The event was very well attended with people coming and going throughout the morning. Many were interested in our stand and stopped to talk about bees. A number are already intending to join our Beginners Course if we run another one later this year.

The Seed Share is part of a programme of events concerned about a sustainable environment and more information can be found at <https://sustainablecrediton.org.uk/>

Tony and Malcolm



Tiverton Beekeepers Meeting Report February 2015

Over 30 of our members and a few from other branches met to listen to our speaker for the evening Clare Densley, who works in the Buckfast Abbey apiary.

Clare has been at Buckfast for some nine years during which she has seen many changes such as the change from being a commercial honey producing enterprise with 400 hives to a teaching, learning and community apiary of around 30 hives.

Clare's talk and presentation centered on Brother Adams selective breeding programme at the Abbey and his successes and failures in his attempts to produce the "perfect" Buckfast Bee. The talk was an interesting insight into his work "warts and all" and concluded with the view that you can with the best of intentions try to engineer nature but in the end nature will prevail and the more diverse the gene pool of the species the healthier that species will become.

After the talk, long time members, Fred & Elsie Rice were introduced to the audience and Fred informed us that due to their increasing years they would be cutting back on their hobby and very kindly presented the club with their collection of Beekeeping reference books for the branch library. The Chairman thanked Fred & Elsie for their kind gesture and wished them all the best for the future.

Since the meeting the two colonies that Fred and Elsie were offering for sale have been bought. One by a member, and one to start our Branch Apiary.

Jon Gubb

Library Book Amnesty

An audit of the Library books has been carried out.

Thank you to the members who have recently returned borrowed books, however there are some books still missing.

May I ask that ALL members search their books shelves, coffee tables, garage, even under the mattress to search out those books still missing?

The following books are missing:

The Encyclopaedia of Wild Flowers by John Ackroyd

Honey for Health

The Hive by Wilson Bee

Honey & Heather by Laurie Croft

Plants for bees by W.D.J.Kirk - as this book was only published in 2012 we would very much like to find it. It was handed to an unknown person, possibly March last year! Was it you? Do you still have it on your bookshelf? Please look.

Thank you for your help in tracking down these books.

Janet Franklin

Bulk Buying – Foundation

Orders for foundation for 2015 have now closed and the bulk order placed. The 2015 scheme was very well supported with an order for foundation of over £1400.00 (list price) less discount, has resulted in a £350.00 saving being passed directly to the members who joined the bulk buy scheme!

The Tiverton Beekeepers Bulk Buying scheme is a service that the club offers to all members, who would like to benefit from the savings that can be gained by being part of a group of members whose individual orders are collated, then placed with a single supplier as one bulk order.

Protect your bees for less from the Varroa mite. Get ready for our next bulk order which will be for the Apiguard treatment at the beginning of June. Watch the Website and Buzzette for more information.

Derek Evans

Bulk Buying Coordinator

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/>