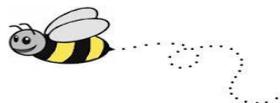


# The Tivvy Buzzette

Newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers – October 2015



## **BRANCH MEETINGS**

at Uplowman Village Hall

**Sunday 11th October, 10:00 am at the Branch Apiary, Knightshayes**

Branch Apiary Social Event/equipment cleaning session!

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 7.30pm**

*Modern Beekeeping - polystyrene hives*

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30pm**

*AGM & film 'Tales from the Hive'*

"Using special lenses to get closer than ever before to these fascinating insects, this video plunges viewers into the secret, unexplored world of the beehive. Within its swarming matrix, this documentary captures with astounding clarity events few human eyes have witnessed, including: a fevered battle between two competing queens, a colony's defence of its beehive, and a scout bee's intricate, and uncanny, 'nectar dance'."

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 7pm for 7.30pm**

*Christmas meal at Tiverton Hotel – please return attached booking form and deposit ASAP.*

**2016** meetings continue on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday evening of the month and will include Nuc Box hives - David Charles, Honey showing and judging - Jack Mummery, Drone mating zones - Dan Basterfield, and Cosmetic making.

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

## **Beginners' meetings 2015/16 7.30-9.30pm on Wednesdays in Uplowman Village Hall**

7<sup>th</sup> October – A general introduction to honey bees  
28<sup>th</sup> October – The colony; queens, workers & drones

11<sup>th</sup> November – The hive & its components

25<sup>th</sup> November – The bee keeping year

9<sup>th</sup> December – The history & origins of bees & hives

Meetings after Christmas on the 13 & 27 Jan, 10 & 24 Feb & 9 Mar

**Apiary Tidy Up** - there are a number of jobs that need doing at the Branch Knightshayes Apiary before winter. Please come along if you are able to help.

**Branch AGM & film**- If you would like to be involved in helping with the many different events, and support the committee organising them, please come along to this meeting. The Branch membership is well over 100 now so new 'blood' would be welcome.

Tony Lindsell, Branch Secretary

## **Are you a buzzing Buzzette editor?**

Due to other commitments this November's issue will be my last Buzzette. I will step down at the AGM.

Please let one of the committee know if you are interested in taking on this role. I am very happy to provide some support to get you started and provide you with 'standing operating procedures' to help avoid any pitfalls.

All the best Sarah

## **Christmas Dinner 2015 – Wednesday 16 December – The Tiverton Hotel, Blundells Road, Tiverton EX16 4DB**

We return to the Tiverton Hotel again for the Christmas Dinner this year. Please see the attached menu and booking form. We must pay a deposit of £5 per person to reserve the booking, so please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to come. The total cost is £18.50 per person, and it is easier for us all if you can pay in full before the event, rather than paying the balance on the night, but please may I have at least the £5 deposit with your menu choices.

William and Sarah Lines

## **September Branch meeting**

The September 2015 branch monthly meeting saw 24 members. Many thanks to our speaker this month, fellow member David Pearce, who spoke to us about honey extraction, aided by various bits of equipment. David passed on many tips that he has learned in 40 years of being a Beekeeper. There were many questions asked by the audience, all of which were answered ably by David.

Jon Gubb

### **How has the season been for you?**

No two seasons are ever the same. This year started for me with the bees having wintered well, the odd small colony had a small lump of Ambrosia paste for good measure and that was all. The spring weather was not too bad and when it improved the hives really started to buzz. I like early swarms: they are normally able to manage to persuade the new queens to make the most of the lengthening days and in good weather go out and meet the boys, then back to the hive or nuc box and start egg laying in earnest. Most of my replacement stocks come from early swarms (queen cells), from my best colonies. Keep up with your inspections and find the queen cells before they try to swarm. By early May some of my colonies had two supers on and it was all looking good. By late June the main swarming season should be over and my hive inspections are reduced to checking for space in the supers. In early July I am looking for minimal interference to enable the bees to concentrate on gathering the honey harvest.

What went wrong with our weather? Not much global warming this year – July turned out to be dull, wet or cold. Many of our summer flowers like Blackberry had a very short flowering season. White Clover flowered but the temperatures were too low for the nectar to flow or the conditions were not right for the bees to fly. The net result has been a very indifferent honey yield; any colony that was not up to strength only produced a modest crop. My bees spread over three sites produced a reasonable 55lbs per hive, not quite up to my 10 year average.

Whether you have two hives or thirty hives fitting in extracting, treating for Varroa, going on holiday for a fortnight, and feeding for the winter takes some fitting in. Having just returned from holiday in the sun (sorry bees, too far for you to fly), I have just 10 days to try and complete feeding with sugar syrup by the end of September. Feeding for winter is best done after any Varroa treatment and if possible by the end of September; any later and the bees may not be able to store it properly. The sugar syrup needs to have the water content reduced and the sugar inverted to simple sugars for storage and capping. It is for this reason that, if I am running behind with feeding, I change to Ambrosia. Ambrosia syrup is already inverted and concentrated so the bees have less work to do, and if the weather turns cold before they have capped it, it does not readily ferment.

All in all not a bad season for me, my only regret was losing some of my nucs to late swarming. Weak colonies I except may be robbed out by wasps, even if you do restrict the entrances. Could I have done better with my late swarming nucs? Yes I could. If you plan to take some good strong nucs through the winter, so you can replace any winter losses, then you have to watch closely. If by early July the nucs are good and strong you must watch out. Overcrowding can quickly turn to preparation to swarming, and you have two options: remove some of the brood, shake off the bees and put it into a weaker hive to boost the number of workers in that colony for the anticipated honey flow, or you must put the nuc into a full size hive.

The thing I like about beekeeping is that there is always something new to learn and the challenge is to look forward to the next season. Remember next season starts from when you have finished your winter feeding.

Keith Owers