

The Tivvy Buzzette



The newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers ~ March 2016

Tiverton Beekeepers are a branch of The Devon Beekeepers Association. Registered Charity No 270675.



Branch Meetings.

Wed 16th March 19:30. Nuc boxes with David Charles. Venue – Uplowman Village Hall.

Wednesday 20th April 18:30. Bees under the microscope, including Nosema testing. Venue – Uplowman Village Hall.

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

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

9th March – Getting started.

15th March – Improver's Class.

29th March – Improver's Class

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 for testing see: <http://tivertonbeekeepers.org.uk/upcoming-meetings-and-reports>

February Meeting Summary

Thirty Five members & guests of the Tiverton Beekeepers gathered for the monthly meeting at Uplowman Village hall on Wednesday 17th of February.

The meeting opened at 7:30 and after club business and announcements had been dealt with our Chairman Malcolm Jenkins welcomed the speaker for the evening Jonathan Powell.

Jonathan promotes natural beekeeping and keeps his bees in artificially carved hives in living trees or logs, he is also a member of the International Tree Beekeeping Trust. Members were treated to a slide show on this unusual, but very interesting subject. Interestingly he spoke about the fact that in 30 million years of bee evolution it was only in the last 150 years that man had actually interfered with this natural evolution, this coincides with many of the modern problems that bees face. These problems can be largely attributed to the interference in nature's natural selection by hybrid breeding. Tree beekeeping promotes natural selection and minimal interference as the way forward. After the presentation there was a lively Q&A session.

Jonathan was thanked by the Chairman on behalf of the members who then broke for refreshments, the meeting closed at around 10pm.

For full program of meetings or to find out more about Tiverton Beekeepers then please go to our website <http://tivertonbeekeepers.org.uk/>

Many thanks to member Lesley Passey who has written the following interesting article of her visit whilst on holiday to a Beekeeper in Oman.

During a recent holiday to Oman, I was very excited to be invited, with my husband, to visit an old man who kept bees in a traditional way in a mountain village.

Our driver knew the gentleman and wanted to visit, as he did from time to time.

He invited us for lunch, but we decided to take sandwiches for ourselves and some fruit, from the market, for the family.

When we arrived Hasim was praying and his great grandchildren were playing outside the house along with goats and chickens. Our driver pointed out the bees, which were in the hollow trunks of palm trees stacked inside a fenced off area.

We were shown into the "Majlis", a large room with cushions around the outside. We took our shoes off before we went in and were allowed to sit on two cushions, as a concession to old western bones! Hasim came in and sat cross legged on the floor. We shared our sandwiches with him, food he was not at all used to. After this Hasim went out and returned with a large bowl of dark honey and an equal sized dish of small pancakes. They were absolutely delicious and between us we polished off the lot.

Although Hasim spoke no English and we no Arabic, the driver was able to translate. I found out that there are three

crops of honey a year and the nectar is from date flowers, various herbs and other flowers, including fruit trees. He inspected the bees without veil or gloves and we all stood very close, with no protection, although he did light a palm stalk for smoke. The bees were very good tempered, I wondered whether that was because it was so warm.

The bees come naturally and Hasim puts a flat stone in front, which the bees seal with a substance they derive from the thyme plants which grow around (presumably similar to propolis, but it dries white). There was water flowing down a wall nearby, where the bees drank.

We met two of Hasim's sons, who were very proud to have had a good education, one is a teacher and the other an engineer in the army (he had done part of his training on Salisbury Plain!). Sadly though, no one wanted to take on the bees.

We were charmed by these kind people, but even though Hasim's wife made the pancakes we didn't meet any of the women.

It was fascinating to be given a glimpse of a way of life which is, no doubt, dying out.

Below is a picture of Hasim inspecting the bees, he said that honey will be ready in another two months.



If you have any interesting stories to tell relating to Bees & Beekeeping, please do not hesitate to forward them to me by email to jon.gubb@voddens.co.uk by the 27th of the month for inclusion in the next months edition of the Buzzette.

The Bulk Buying Scheme – Foundation and Frames

Thank you to everyone who ordered their materials on time. This year the up take was even better. The foundation arrived within the week and David supplied the frames as efficiently as you would expect. All the orders were collected within two weeks.

The order for foundation came to almost £1,500 with a saving of 25% on last year's prices. Since the beginning of March the new foundation prices have increased by almost 20%, so well done in placing the orders early!

The order for frames came to over £400 and David supplied the frames at the most competitive price, so I think everyone has won.

I, for one have benefited by the early ordering, as it has made me more organised. I have sorted my beekeeping equipment, begun cleaning frames, etc. and it is only just the end of February! I hope it has had the same effect on other people.

Our next planned saving, through the bulk buying scheme, will be the honey jars in July/August. Unless someone has another idea which can save us money by joining together and negotiating discounts.

All the discounts and savings go straight to our members.

Derek Evans

Bulk Buying Coordinator

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HELP WANTED

IN THE FORM OF ENTHUSIASTIC HUMANS WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HELPING IN ANY WAY WITH THE IDEAS, FORMATION AND EXHIBITION OF THIS YEARS CLUB ENTRY AT THE DEVON COUNTY SHOW.

NO EXPERTISE OR PHYSICAL EXERTION WILL BE REQUIRED, JUST AN ABILITY TO ATTEND NUMEROUS PLANNING MEETINGS AT LOCAL HOSTELRIES BEFOREHAND.

THE THEME OF THIS YEARS ENTRY IS "BEE OLYMPICS", SO IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE, THEN PLEASE EMAIL MALCOLM CROOK FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

mcrook505@yahoo.co.uk

Crediton Seed Swap Day February 20th

Chairman Malcolm Jenkins and Program Secretary Malcolm Crook recently represented the Tiverton Beekeepers at the Crediton Seed Swap event.

This well supported popular annual event aims to bring together gardeners to swap between them seeds which they have saved from the previous season.

To find out more about this great money saving scheme, check out their website. www.sustainablecrediton.org.uk



News from the Branch Apiary

Our three colonies have so far come through the winter, two of them strong and one less so but active (No. 4). Once we open them up for inspection, possibly in mid March, weather permitting, we'll be able to tell their condition.

The Thorne order (nearly £800 worth) had come in, and this morning (Sunday 27th) a ten-strong work party (Tanya, Angela and David, Dave North, Jon Gubb, John Knowles, Malcolm Crook, Malcolm Jenkins, Tony, Baruch) put together some spacious shelving salvaged by Jon, which has made it possible to organise the cabin more efficiently. We also put together some of the brood boxes and supers that had arrived flat-packed, as well as three additional hive stands from timber brought in by Malcolm J; we now have a total of 7 stands - enough for at least 14 hives.

We are planning to build a basic workbench inside the cabin, which will facilitate work on hives and frames; floors, roofs and hives remain to be put together.

The question of ordering a few more colonies and/or queens, sooner or later this season, remains to be discussed and agreed on this Tuesday.

Baruch.