

The Tivvy Buzzette



The newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers ~ May 2017

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

Branch Meetings.

Apiary inspections will take place at Knightshayes on Sundays 7th 14th 21st 28th throughout May. All members welcome bring clean bee suits start time 10:00 hrs.

We still have a vacancy on the committee for a Branch Secretary, to replace Tony. Interested? Then please contact the Chairman Malcolm Jenkins.

Nosema Testing Evening

April 19th was the TBK annual Nosema testing evening where members are invited to bring along a sample of around 20 bees from each of their hives. Nosema is potentially a deadly disease of the gut which can seriously affect the performance of the colony and ultimately will lead to its collapse. However it is a disease that can be managed and reversed with simple precautions such as regular brood comb changing along with other good hygienic husbandry management precautions.

The event this year was not well attended, however 11 samples were tested by our microscopist Barbara & Malcolm, out of which 8 samples had no sign of the disease and 3 had light infections.

Many thanks to Barbara & Malcolm for their expertise with the microscopes, Malcolm Jenkins for providing support along with tea and lovely cakes and to all those who supported the event with samples of bees for testing.

Best wishes
Tony

Devon County Show 18th 19th 20th May 2017 Volunteer offer!!

This year as in past years we will be having a stand in the Devon Beekeepers Marquee at the County Show, we are indebted to members who make this possible year after year, this year carrying the organising mantle is Malcolm Crook who along with his team of volunteers will be setting up their stall on the Wednesday before the show.

Malcolm would like to hear from other members to volunteer to help set up and man the stand on the show days, volunteers would be expected to do at least a half day in exchange for a free entry into the show, so half a day on the stand and then take a look around the show or vice versa!

For further details and to volunteer please contact Malcolm Crook on 01884 821927 or email him;-

mcrook505@yahoo.co.uk

In the Branch Apiary – April 2017-04-26

We went into winter with twelve colonies and came out with seven, a loss of over 40% - not a total disaster, but certainly not something to shout from the rooftops about (last year we went in with three and came out with three – rooftops job). In January we moved four of the colonies to a separate teaching area, thinking that in the middle of winter this could be done without first removing them to a location over three miles away. This proved to be a mistake, and only one of the four survived; I think this accounts in large part for the poor overall survival rate. Another factor was Varroa.

Last autumn, we decided to take a risk and experiment with withholding chemical treatment for the varroa mite. We treated just two hives (no. 1 and 3). It is interesting to compare the survival rate and initial strength of treated colonies with that of untreated ones, (considering just those that weren't moved.)

There are two particularly strong colonies at present, both with over a dozen frames of brood and full of bees (no. 1 and 10). One of these two was treated with apiguard last September, the other one was not. The other colony that was treated (no. 3) has come through and should do well. From this there is nothing obvious to suggest that the apiguard treatment caused damage to these two treated hives. I have not treated any this spring.

Two of the eight colonies that were not moved failed (6 and 8). Both were not treated. (No. 6 was a swarm collected from town in June, while no. 8 was derived from an Isle of Man stock – bees that have never known varroa). Last October both had a Varroa daily drop of about 10, considered high. This couldn't have helped them cope with the cold season. If we breed queens from a colony like no. 10, a strong untreated one, can we expect a better survival rate next winter?

The jury is out on the practice of non-treatment, I think, but if the argument is valid, then the results should gradually improve as we breed from bees that show resistance. A number of us in this branch have stopped treating, and it would be interesting to find out how such colonies have fared. In fact we ought to do a survey of the whole branch, both treaters and non-treaters, and see what we can learn from a bigger sample.

Another issue is that of feeding in autumn. The syrup granulated and clogged some of the hives, and after a mild winter it now seems that some of the hives have been overfed. The instruction to supplement up to 40lb of supplies per hive should perhaps be modified as the climate warms up and the bees go foraging in mid winter. It would be good to try to leave enough honey to the bees and certainly avoid feeding those hives that have yielded surplus honey. Let's make it one of our aims this season to minimise feeding syrup to the bees.

Baruch.

Bee-ing Inspired!

In October, a small group of us met for a drink at the Halfway Inn. This was the first of many drinks at the Halfway Inn!

The topic was what on earth are we going to do this year at the Devon County Show in May, the Mid Devon Show in July and Honiton Show in August?

First task was to get a brilliant original idea!

Wacky ideas were needed, more drinks needed – bee space, outer space, inner space, brood box, bee box, job centre, bee-xit, they're just a few!

Next task was to try and nobble the judges. We will have to wait and see how successful this tactic has been!! (joke)

Monthly visits to the pub changed to fortnightly to weekly as the panic increased. *Continued on next page.*

Next task, to put a brilliant moment of inspiration into practice, and we are still bee-ing inspired.

It is still not the 18th May – and so looking for more inspiration, means another visit to the pub next week!

The designing, making and painting continues behind the scenes.

Come and see us at the shows and find out what we finally decided.

Look for us on:

Twitter @tivertonbeekeepers

Instagram @tivvybeekeepers

Tiverton Beekeepers have emerged! We are now in the 21st century!

Jen and Derek Evans.

DEVON COUNTY SHOW HONEY SALES



How about sending your hive products to join the wonderful display of members' products to be sold at the County Show this year?

We sell anything and everything from the hive: for example honey, candles, cosmetics, marmalade, chutney, bee decorated mugs and greetings cards, you name it the sales team will do their best to sell it!

Devon beekeepers takes 20% commission on the selling price. For selling prices please see DBKA website.

Anything to sell that is not in the list, you set the price.

Please let me know as soon as possible what you can offer and don't forget the donation of a jar or two of honey to the taste of honey stall really helps to sell yours.

Jack Mummery

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If you have any interesting articles 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.