

The Tivvy Buzzette



The newsletter of the Tiverton Beekeepers ~ November 2017

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

Branch Meetings.

Next Meeting

Uplowman Village Hall on Wednesday 15th
November AGM.
See below for more info on AGM.

2018 Membership Form

2018 Subscription and Membership form is attached to this edition of the Buzzette. Please can you complete & return to Kim asap.

A Message from the Chairman

Hello to all members,

As you are aware, this year's A.G.M. is scheduled for 15th. November. Whilst the club, has achieved some notable successes, this year, we find ourselves, with a continuing decrease, in committee members and officers.

At present, we have a group of committee members, who have put a tremendous amount of time and effort, in leading the club forward. However, this year we have a number of people, who are standing, down from their posts.

With this in mind, I would ask you, to consider either putting yourself forward, in one of the vacant posts or offering to take up a place, on the committee.

We, as a club, like many others, are approaching a time when, it may not be possible, for the club, to continue in its present format, it is unfair, to expect the small number of committee members, to continue, carrying out multiple roles, in order for us to survive.

If anyone would like to express, an interest, please contact Tony or myself, for further information.

Many thanks, Malcolm.

Baruch's Notes from the Branch apiary – Nov. 2017

Inspecting the apiary in late August we identified four nuclei that were not viable, some of them the result of swarms collected, others nuclei formed with queens we had reared. They were either queen-less, or with a failing queen. We shook all four into one nuc-box, fed it some syrup and said a prayer. Later, in September we found that our plea had not been granted - the nuc was weak, the queen laying very little and whatever brood there was looked patchy and dotted with chalk brood – this lot were not going to make it through the winter.

Seeing that there was nothing to lose, we decided to experiment by taking drastic action: we removed and disposed of all the frames that had any brood, thus losing that brood, but also much diseased comb. We substituted fresh white-clean drawn comb, as well as a healthy frame with sealed brood from another hive. We closed up and fed the colony some syrup. *Continued on next page.*

Fast forward to late September, the queen was laying nicely and the box was filling up with bees. By now, (in spite of an accident involving a feeder with lid removed and dozens of bees drowning in the syrup – please don't tell), the hive was thriving. At present, late October, this colony is bringing in pollen in great quantities taking advantage of the blooming ivy in the warm autumn sun. They now certainly look as though they mean business.

This nuc will shortly be placed right against another nuc in the apiary, with a shared roof and some insulation and water proofing. Let's pray again and see what we find next March...



Styles of beekeeping 3:-

One size fits all – rationalised beekeeping

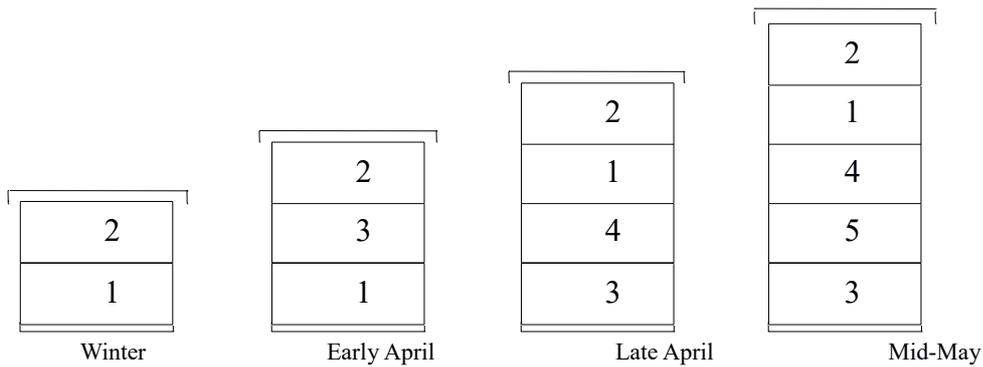
Some three years ago our seasonal bee inspector David Packham gave the Association a talk about beekeeping in Denmark. One striking feature of the system he described was the fact those Danes he visited used no supers but only brood boxes, Langstroth in this case. A full Langstroth b/box may be too heavy for some of us to lift, but the idea of using a single size box throughout has great attractions and can be adapted and applied with smaller boxes.

The Irish Tim Rowe, a commercial beekeeper, saw the flexibility that a one-size box afforded, and designed and built his own hive, with a box half way in height between a National brood and super boxes. Thorne, the bee equipment suppliers, saw the point of this design and now stock his hive, frames and foundation. This piece is largely inspired by Tim Rowe's book 'The Rose Hive Method', a book I recommend very highly. Beginners considering what type of hive to invest in may find this option interesting.

Tim reasoned that since we frequently over-winter bees in a National 'brood-and-a-half', why not take the total height of such a hive, 38cm, and divide this by two. A colony would now spend the winter in the same size cavity but on two identical boxes, instead of two boxes of different sizes. He constructed boxes that were National size in all but height, 19cm, and proceeded to cut his National brood frames to fit this. This is how the Rose hive came about, sometimes referred to as the OSB (one size box) hive. All other hive parts are National.

This new rationalised design allows you to adopt the following regime: the colony spends the winter in two boxes; in April brood is likely to be found in both boxes. In early or mid April, as nectar starts coming in and with the bees occupying both boxes, introduce a new box of fresh comb or foundation between the two old ones, *Continued on next page*

thus splitting the brood nest – the bees will go to work bridging the gap by drawing the foundation in the new box and filling it with brood; the brood nest has now elongated vertically and expanded in size.



Some three weeks later, reverse the two bottom boxes, and introduce a fourth box above the new bottom one. If the two original boxes are numbered 1 and 2, with 1 originally at the bottom, then the new order is now, starting from the bottom: 3, 4, 1, 2. Continue to introduce new boxes every few weeks depending on the colony's rate of development, always above the bottom box (or the second box). Continue with this divide-and-rule policy until about the 10th or 15th of June, when the main honey flow is about to start. From then on any new boxes, if needed, go below the top boxes 1 and 2.

The advantages of this system are many:

1. **No queen excluder** is needed, giving the bees the freedom to arrange their kingdom in the shape they prefer, which may be a vertical configuration, as we often see in nature. Call it 'freedom of movement'.

2. **Why the initial reversal of boxes?** The old boxes 1 and 2 end up being pushed higher and higher as the season progresses; sooner or later emerged comb in those boxes will fill with honey as the queen slows down. These two old boxes can then be removed some time in June, July or August, the honey in them extracted, comb rendered and boxes disinfected. This allows a full change of brood comb every year – the bees never overwinter on the same comb twice. Such a regime should make disease much less likely. (According to David Packham, the Danes he visited likewise replaced all the old brood frames every year, and the visiting British team of keen-eyed inspectors could find no sign of any disease in any of the hives they opened.)

3. **It becomes possible not to feed syrup:** The fact that the frames are all the same size throughout enables you when harvesting to select frames with honey from any of the boxes, leaving behind frames with brood. Crucially, it enables you to stock the bottom two (or three) boxes that the bees will overwinter in with enough frames of stores to avoid having to feed. Where a beekeeper removes all the honey above a queen excluder, he or she often finds that the colony below is left with too little to survive the winter and feeding has to be resorted to. If you take the super-food that is honey and substitute nutrient-free calories, then your honey yield may be greater that year, but so will most likely be your winter losses; in the long run this may not pay off, even in terms of honey yield. Is the reliance on sugar feed good management? Tim Rowe states in his book that he never feeds syrup to his bees; you may think he's eccentric, but I'd say 'apicentric', and a fine beekeeper!

4. **Swarming postponed:** Sandwiching a new box between two brood boxes gets the bees to work on enlarging the brood nest and swarming is deferred, if not prevented.

5. **Easy to inspect for swarming:** Since the brood is in several smaller boxes, it is enough to tilt up the second or third brood box and peep underneath to see if any occupied queen cells are present. If none are found, the box is lowered after smoking nicely and the inspection is over in a flash. *Continued on next page.*

6. **Easy to deal with a swarming lot:** Once queen cells are detected, wait until they are about to be capped and then divide the hive. With several boxes containing brood, and with all the frames being the same size, it is easy to create three or four nuclei, using those same boxes, ensuring there is at least one queen cell in each. No special nuc boxes are required.

7. **No foundation and no wiring of frames:** The Rose frames have a vertical comb height of about 15cm. This is small enough not to require wiring of frames or foundation. A strip of foundation, 4 – 5cm wide can be used in place of a whole sheet. Where the bees have just started building comb and until they've secured it to the bottom bar, care should be taken in holding a frame horizontally. An extractor would need to be rotated at lower RPM. The advantages of not introducing foreign wax into your hive are a subject for another day.

8. **Rationalisation of equipment:** Boxes and frames are all of the same size, interchangeable and less spare equipment is needed. Clean comb is available for the start of the next season.

9. **Lighter brood boxes:** (but heavier honey boxes)

A Final note on adapting other types of hive to this system:

A friend of mine uses an OSB system with National **supers** only; it works very well and has all the advantages enumerated above, plus the fact that the boxes are lighter to carry. He over-winters them on three supers. He usually doesn't bother with finding the queen, but when this becomes necessary it takes longer.

The Langstroth and Dadant hives can be adapted by using supers only. The super is 17cm deep, only 2cm less than the Rose box, and the frames are longer, so a Dadant or Langstroth shallow frame is actually about the same total area as the Rose frame. A Dadant hive is slightly wider (47cm) than a Rose/National (46cm); a Langstroth hive is quite a bit narrower (41.3cm). Both these hives are much longer (by about 2") than the National/Rose. Hoffman shallow frames would be more suitable than Manley.

Many thanks to Baruch for this series of very informative & interesting articles.

Bulk Purchasing Scheme – Up date

This year club members have made substantial savings on the cost of honey jars, syrup, frames and foundation.

A big thank you, to all of you, who have participated by promptly collecting the goods after their delivery. This has helped my garage breath again!

We hope to continue making these savings next year.

The next money saving offers will be for (i) frames and (ii) foundation in January. Look out for the January Buzzette with all the money saving offers!

Honey jars and Syrup offers will appear again in the Buzzette in August and September.

Derek Evans,

Bulk Purchasing Coordinator.

Can you help please Hit & Run incident Wednesday 18th October 2017 Uplowman Village Hall?

I attended the club meeting at the Uplowman Village Hall Wednesday 18th October. I arrived at about 19:20h. During the time I was on site extensive damage was caused by a vehicle reversing into the back of my car. The driver must have been aware that a collision had occurred due to the nature of the damage. However the driver was selfish enough to drive away without making any attempt to contact the owner of the vehicle involved. This is a criminal offence and one which has left me with a bill in excess of £500+ and I am expected to be without a car for a week whilst repair work is carried out. I would be interested in hearing from anyone who may have witnessed the incident or if you were the person concerned. The vehicle must have had a tow bar or something similar attached to the back / front. I can be contacted on: 01884 253693. Janet Franklin.

The B-Team to the rescue!

At the Mid Devon Show we had a request from a member of the public, “could we remove a colony of honey bees from his bedroom wall!” The bees had been there for two years so were quite at home. No rush then!

When we arrived we could see the bees flying and disappearing into the eaves. In the bedroom we could feel the heat and hear the buzz on the other side of the plasterboard. On removing a sheet of plasterboard we were confronted with about 40,000 honey bees looking at us and wondering what we were doing!

Over the years the bees filled the space between the roof joists with comb. Slowly, we took the honey comb from the roof space and put it into an empty hive on the floor. All the time we were hoping we had got the Queen.

Time for a cup of tea! Impatience takes over and we kept going back into the bedroom to see if the bees were walking into the hive on their own accord. It took two cups of tea and several visits back to the bedroom, until we were convinced the bees were all following their Queen into the hive, on the bedroom floor.

We then left the bees to sort themselves out. Unfortunately when Chris and I came back later in the evening, they were still wondering what had happened and were walking around the floor in a daze. So we went away again to return the following evening. This time, they were all tucked up in the hive, so we took them to a new location.

As the sun came up the next day, they were happily exploring their new surroundings.

The B-Team = Derek, Malcolm C, Tony and Chris

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.