



**April 2019**

## **Last Month**

### ***Branch Apiary Clear-up Days***

These were scheduled for Saturday 2 March and Sunday 3 March.

Saturday was not nice weather - blustery and wet - but a bunch of stalwarts turned up armed and ready with gardening tools as well as equipment for cleaning the hive boxes. We quickly divided into two groups: one in the Apiary cleaning out the Shed under the direction of Kevin and Graham, and one in the Store sorting through its contents.

The weather held off long enough for the "wet" honey supers we had stored over the winter to be put back on the bees, hopefully giving them plenty of room to build up for the spring.

Hilary and Annie went through the bee suits - many of which had been nibbled by rodents over the winter, some beyond repair - and took the useable ones home to wash. The suits have now been returned spick and span. Thank you ladies. Thank you too to Malcolm who as well as turning up on the Saturday to help, even travelled to the apiary during the following week to trim back the ivy.

So much work got done on the Saturday, that on Sunday morning when even worse weather came in, the clean-up was abandoned after an hour. My apologies to those who turned up after that to find I had gone home! It only remains for some minor gardening tasks to be completed (cutting the grass, etc) and the Apiary will be ready for operation. We currently have five hives working at the Apiary, and hopefully they will be all going strong ready for the ***Apiary Opening on Sunday 28 April.***

If you don't know where the Branch Apiary is at Dartington please let me know. I am happy to email you directions.

*Lilah Killock*

### ***Improvers Course***

This ran over four evenings in March. Ten of our members plus two from Newton Abbot signed up and came along to refresh their beekeeping knowledge. Thank you Kathy Lovegrove for organising four great sessions - everyone attending enjoyed themselves and really appreciated the chance to refresh their beekeeping knowledge.

## Coming up

Our Branch is hosting a social evening on **Sunday 7 April** at 7.30 pm at the Community Centre, Meadowbrook, Dartington when our special guest will be Bob Hogge who will share his experiences of the Asian hornet in Jersey.

Bob is a former President of the Jersey Beekeepers' Association and while he has done many things in his life is happy to admit to having few talents. Bob is, he says, like a duck; always dabbling with his bum in the air!

He is a retired gardener, a storyteller and an observer of the natural world who has accidentally become an expert on the Asian hornet.

Bob's first pet was a wasp. Which he describes as a short-term relationship which ended painfully for both parties, yet he is still fascinated by those things that others avoid.

He has 20 years' experience as a beekeeper and is developing an old rubbish dump as a haven for pollinators and as an education and training resource for beekeepers and the people of Jersey. Bob sometimes complains he has a ringing in his ears and then remembers he's a Morris dancer!

He is a very interesting character and a real raconteur - you can hear him being interviewed on Radio Jersey talking about, amongst other things, the Asian Hornet at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p070mkmt>

(Bob is talking to Connor Burgher on 8 March at the 3 hour 10 minute mark.)

We are meeting at 7.30 pm at the Meadowbrook Social Club at Dartington, TQ9 6JD (next to Bidwell Brook School, opposite the Shops at Dartington - signposted Community Centre). Meadowbrook has a large bar with comfortable seating. (Tea and coffee are available from the bar.) There's no charge for entry, but all drinks will have to be paid for.)

Come along, chat to your fellow beekeepers, and hear about Bob's adventures with the Asian Hornet. It will also be an opportunity to pick up a laminated Asian Hornet ID poster for displaying locally as well as some *Suterra* bait (see below). See you there.

### **Apiary Opening Sunday 28 April at 2 pm**

Put this date in your diary now. We will ask one of our most experienced beekeepers to go through the colonies to comment on what they see, and offer advice for the coming season. A chance for us all to pick up some tips!

There will be tea available, and hopefully lots of cakes. It has become traditional to run a **cake competition** at the Apiary Opening in recent years. We all get to taste the cakes brought along by members who want to enter the competition, and vote for our favourite cake. The one with the most votes wins a prize. Get those recipes out now! (Doesn't have to include honey.)

**Buckfast Workshops for 2019:** To find out more go on the Buckfast website [www.buckfast.org.uk](http://www.buckfast.org.uk) and click on events on the top bar menu. Then follow the links to bee events. There is a booking engine which is easy to use!

## ***Trip to National Botanic Garden of Wales: May 2020***

Jeremy is organising a two-day trip to the National Botanic Garden of Wales to take place in May 2020. You can read more about the Garden [here](#).

The resident researcher/beekeeper, Lynda Christie, has offered to show us the apiaries and labs on the estate where they analyse the pollen content of honeys and carry out DNA testing.

The estimated cost for the trip is £100 per person. This includes travel by luxury coach, evening meal, overnight accommodation, and bed and breakfast, most probably at *The Ivy Bush Royal Hotel*, Carmarthen. [Hotel Details here](#).

Click on the link below before 30 April. You are not committing yourself to anything at this stage. We are just gauging interest and you will have an opportunity to express your preference as to dates in May 2020.

### [Trip to NBG of W: Express Interest](#)

If sufficient numbers are interested, the dates will be confirmed, and you will be asked to pay a £10 deposit per person before 31 May 2019 to secure your place. This deposit is non-refundable (unless we can fill your place with a latecomer). You will be asked to pay a further payment of £70 per person before 31 December 2019. A final payment of the balance due (not more than £20 per person) is payable 1 April 2020.

Any queries, please contact Jeremy Wells 0136472180, [jeremy.ena@gmail.com](mailto:jeremy.ena@gmail.com)

## **Get Ready**

***Devon County Show*** is coming up in May and if you enter 7 or more classes in the Honey Show there, you get a ticket giving free entry to the Show when you bring your entries along to the marquee. It costs very little to enter the classes and there is prize money if you are successful. *Closing Date for entries: 20 April.*

The Branch has purchased some show frame cases (for displaying combs of honey) that can be borrowed by members. So if you find the “perfect” frame of sealed honey in your hive, put it aside, borrow one of the cases, and enter that class at Devon County Show. We have cases in both National and Langstroth Super sizes.

## **Bees and Swarms**

If you would like to go on the list of the Branch’s swarm collectors, please let Lilah know. We do ask that you have, as a minimum, the Basic Beekeeping Assessment as we tell members of the public that we will send an experienced *qualified* beekeeper to collect a swarm. Lilah can also add you to the BBKA list if you want, which is searchable by postcode on the BBKA’s website.

Swarms need dealing with straightaway and anyone collecting a swarm will need to have spare equipment ready or be able to pass the bees quickly over to someone wanting bees. We keep a list of members (including new members) who are wanting bees.

### **Bees Wanted List**

If you would like to go on the list of members wanting bees, let Lilah know. (If you would like to go out with a swarm collector to collect bees, sometimes that is possible too, but you need to be available at very short notice and have your equipment ready.)

Also, if you have spare colonies of bees you would like to sell, please let Lilah know.

### **Basic Assessment**

If you are thinking about taking your Basic Assessment this summer and want some advice as to how to go about it, please contact Kevin.

### **Apiary Site Offered**

Neville Owen in Harberton has a large organic garden and orchard where he would love to site a beehive - he is wondering if we have anyone who is looking for a site to place a hive in the area? Interested? Ring 07765 482324.

### **Monitoring for Asian hornets: can you help?**

Our Branch some wasp attractant - *Suterra* - for distribution to members. This bait was used very successfully in Jersey last year. European and Asian hornets are quickly drawn to it.

Members can collect 150-200ml of *Suterra* to use to see what insects are in their area. The idea is not to trap or harm any insect but simply to see what visitors come to the bait. The bait should be put somewhere that is easy to view regularly. It need not be near your apiary, but could be close to your kitchen window or back door, ideally somewhere you pass by or look out of often.

If you would like some *Suterra* bait, please contact Lilah.

#### **Hembury Bee Supplies**

Agents for the main manufacturers and can supply all your beekeeping needs.

Contact John Harler, Outer Finches, Hembury Cock Hill, Buckfast, TQ11 0HN.

Please phone or email before you visit.

Tel: 01364 642517 Email: fire221@btinternet.com

### **2019 Branch Committee**

President: Rod Saffery, 01803 472656, rodsaffery@gmail.com

Chairman: Graham Brown, 01364 642787, graham.brown@gmx.us

Vice-Chairman: Jeremy Wells, 01364 72180, jeremy.ena@gmail.com

Acting Secretary: Lilah Killock, 01803 866028, lilahkillock@btinternet.com

Treasurer: John Harler, 01364 642517, fire221@btinternet.com

Education: Kevin Gillard, 01548 810148, fonso@tiscali.co.uk

Apiary Team Organiser: Lilah Killock, 01803 866028, lillahkillock@btinternet.com

Other members: Grant Elliott, Annie Hill, Tammy Skinner

*We are always looking for new Committee members. If you would like to get involved in the running of the Branch, please let one of us know.*

### **Branch Website**

<http://www.totnesandkingsbridgebeekeepers.com/>

### **Need help?**

Ken Basterfield holds the highest UK bee-keeping qualification, the National Diploma in Beekeeping, and if you feel in need of some instant advice, you can telephone him on 01404 815885.

Two of our most experienced beekeepers, John Harler in Buckfast (01364 642517) and Jeremy Wells in South Brent (01364 72180), are happy to be contacted at short notice by any member needing practical help and/or advice.

*Could you help mentor a new beekeeper in your area? We are always looking for beekeepers with some experience to be the "first port of call" for someone new to the craft. Just to be on the end of the phone, prepared to go out and take a look, and ask for more help if needed.*