

They qualified at Hill House and Syke House for both the Novice and Elementary Championships taking them to Stoneleigh Warwickshire for three days. They came 2nd in the Novice and 3rd in the Elementary. The winner of the Novice scored 192 to Theresa's 190 and the winner of the Elementary scored 177 to Theresa's 173 so she was just pipped at post but a brilliant performance in very good company. They are competing at the Regional Championships next week so hopefully a good result for next edition. Her family supported her and she is extremely grateful for the help of her coach, Tracey Woodhead from Weelsby.

A new service being set up is an "Elite" trailer valeting service. This entails a deep pressure clean inside and outside and all the points which should be greased would be greased. For more information contact **Julian Nugus 07850857988**.

The tip of this issue - If like me you are on a water meter and keep leaving taps on put a wide bright strap on your wrist. While the trough is filling and this should remind you it is on. When the tap is turned off leave the strap with the tap. It is then there ready for next time.

Wow! That's about it for this edition.

Keep your news and tips coming in.

Take care - Ride safely.

**Aileen 01469 530643**

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# One, two, tree bumblebees

**A FRIEND** commented to me the other day that since I decided to take a break from owning bee hives I seemed to be spending almost as much time helping other people with their bees. I am pleased to have been able to help new apiarists get started in Barrow and Barton this year in addition to my role as swarm advisor for the North Lincolnshire District of Lincolnshire Beekeepers Association (LBKA). Swarm advisor has always been a debatable description since a call is almost as likely to be about wasps, bumblebees or solitary bees as about a swarm of honey bees. 2011 certainly seems to have been the year of the bumblebee, at least in our part of the country, with a couple of theories about why that might be. Whilst bird boxes have been taken over by bumblebees in previous years, there seem to have been many more this year. Possibly this was because the favourable spring weather encouraged the bird population to breed a little earlier - leaving the boxes vacant at just the right time for a passing queen bumblebee to move in. But it might also be because a relatively recent arrival in Britain - the Tree Bumblebee - has been gradually moving northwards and is now establishing itself in larger numbers in our area. The Tree Bumblebee was first recorded in Britain in 2001 in Hampshire having presumably made its way across from mainland Europe. As the name suggests its native habitat is on the edges of woodland, nesting in trees and nearly always well above ground level. In the man-made environment that often translates into bird boxes, house eaves, soffits and under roof tiles. According to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) there have been several cases of nests in the fluff within tumble drier vents - but fortunately none of those calls were to me! Bumblebees are identified mainly by their colour patterns and the Tree species has a red/brown thorax (its top half) and a grey/black

abdomen (its bottom half) with a white tail. But what makes it particularly different to other bumblebees - and can worry people if they do not realize what is happening - is the behaviour that has been termed 'nest surveillance'. Unlike other bumblebees, the drones (males) tend to fly in a small cloud around the nest entrance waiting for the emergence of virgin queens. It can look a bit like a honey bee swarm, especially if you are not sure what you are seeing, and create the impression that a colony of perhaps a couple of hundred bees is a lot larger. This activity tends to peak in May and June but could be later depending on weather. If you find bumblebees of any type moving in, rest assured that they are unlikely to cause damage - though you may need to clean a nest box out if you want the birds to use it next year. The bumblebee nest will only be a short term arrangement and the colony should be gone by the end of the summer. Make the most of your opportunity to watch nature close at hand - it beats the second-hand experience of a television programme. There is usually no need to interfere with a bumblebee colony unless the bees' flight path puts small children at risk or if the surface that the nest is on is subject to vibration, which can upset the bees and make them a bit defensive. Out of ten calls about bumblebees this year I have only had to move a couple of bird boxes and put them at the bottom of my garden where the bees could fly in and out in peace.

To find out more about bees or pick up links to the LBKA, its North Lincolnshire District or the BBCT just visit the website

**<http://goxhill.moonfruit.com/#/bees-beekeeping/4545761348>**. If you need advice

about bees then my telephone number is **530363** but if I am unavailable then **John Hankinson** on **531029** would also be happy to help.

**John Guggiari**