



Cumbria Bee Times

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(Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the editor and do not necessarily represent those of the CBKA)

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It has been a cold winter and the weather for the second week in March is for more freezing conditions and the possibility of snow. As discussed before, in the Bee Times, this can be a difficult period for the bees as their winter stores dwindle. With the lengthening days the Queen will have started to lay again and with extra mouths to feed there is the danger of starvation. During the last few weeks the bees have been foraging on the Snowdrops and, from my observations, have been working them more than in previous years. The cover picture shows a honey bee on Spurge Laurel which, on warmer days during February, they were collecting a red coloured pollen and appeared to be sipping the nectar. Keep an eye on those stores!

Saturday the 4th March was the Cumbria Beekeepers AGM at the Embleton Village Hall and was very well attended with representatives from all of the Cumbria Branches. It has been a difficult time, during the last few months for the Cumbria Executive Committee, as they have been operating without a Chairperson and Secretary. However, Karen Heskin, from Carlisle Beekeepers, put her name forward for the post of Secretary and was unanimously accepted to this position by the meeting. Many thanks to Karen for volunteering for this important position. The position of Chair will hopefully be decided at the next meeting of the Executive on Saturday 18th March.

Nick Mills of Carlisle Beekeepers had decided, prior to the AGM, to retire from the Executive Committee after many years of hard work in

various important roles on the Committee. Nick started beekeeping when working as an Agricultural Officer for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in Botswana as part of the Overseas Aid Scheme. He and a colleague obtained a colony of bees by putting out sugar water and following the bees back to a nest in a hollow tree and then put the bees in a hive. With the Colonial Service coming to an end Nick took early retirement and returned to the UK where he subsequently joined the Carlisle Branch of the Cumbria Beekeepers Association. Long standing members of Cumbria Beekeepers will remember Nick as the Regional Bee Inspector which he did from the year 1995 to 2000 and more recently as Examiner for the Basic Beekeeping Course, a role he held for 10 years. He has sat and passed all the Beekeeping Examination Modules and has been awarded the Advance Theory Series. To become a Master Beekeeper there is one module left which involves the use of computers which, he said himself, may be beyond his reach. However, after mastering the use of an iPad he is thinking of having a go. On the Cumbria Executive Committee Nick has been Treasurer and President. In all of these roles Nick has carried them out in a quiet and diligent way. He will be sadly missed on the Committee and I am sure that everyone would like to thank him for giving his time and expertise to beekeeping and wish him all the very best for the future. No doubt we will see him at future events.

The elected officers and executive committee members are :

President:	Walter McPhee
Vice:	Stephen Barnes
Sec:	Karen Heskin
Treas:	Melanie Vincent

Executive Committee

Peter Weatherill	Cockermouth
Ian Gregory	Cockermouth
Andy Smith	Whitehaven
Charles Payne	Keswick
Mike Harper	Keswick
Pat Norris	Penrith
Dominic Rhodes	Penrith
Margaret Riches	Penrith

Following the AGM Dominic Rhodes gave a presentation on a meeting held at Sandhutton near York about the future threat from the Asian Hornet and how beekeepers should be preparing. It is considered that the Asian Hornet is quite capable of living in Cumbria and even in the North of Scotland. It has been reported as being naturalised on a Japanese Island Tsushima, since 2010, which has similar climatic conditions to our part of the world. Cumbria is thought to be at risk from the hornet because of container lorries from the continent landing at the port of Hull, their next stop could be the Lorry Park in Penrith. The BBKA wishes to have trained local beekeepers who, when an Asian hornet has been identified, to have the necessary skills to trace where the nest is. The nest will be destroyed by specialists with the equipment and skills to deal with the situation. Sentinel apiaries will have to be placed in strategic places such as the lorry park in Penrith and ports to provide an early warning system. These apiaries will be useful for the detection of other imported pests which are of concern; such as the Small hive beetle and Tropilaelaps mite both of which are notifiable pests.

British Beekeepers Association (BBKA)

The British Beekeepers Association, based at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, is the national umbrella organisation for all member beekeepers in the UK.

The main remit of the BBKA is education, and regular informative and training events for beekeepers or those interested in beekeeping, together with national events such as the Honey Show, are organised.

The BBKA also manages examinations and associated syllabi; organises insurance for members; provides a list of potential apiary locations; raises awareness of Asian hornets; and provides advice for the general public, including information on swarms.

The monthly BBKA News is produced by the BBKA and distributed to all current members.

Cumbria Beekeepers Association (CBKA)

Area (or regional) associations are generally organised at county level, are the canopy establishments for the branches, and act as a conduit for communication between members, branches and the BBKA.

The aims of CBKA are based on those of the BBKA:

- a) The promotion and improvement of beekeeping in Cumbria and the surrounding area
- (b) The control and where possible the eradication of diseases and disorders of honeybees within Cumbria
- (c) The raising of public awareness in Cumbria to the importance of bees and beekeeping to the environment.

The CBKA provides financial assistance to the branches for e.g. purchase of equipment and grants for events. Area associations also manage the local BBKA examination for their members.

One of the elected CBKA officer represents our area at the BBKA Annual Delegate Meeting with voting rights on behalf of our area members.

Dates for your Diary.

Cumbria Honey Show

Venue to be decided

28th October 2023