

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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Cumbria Beekeepers AGM 21st March

Southey St, Keswick.

Please make sure that there are representatives from your Branch at this meeting. This is your opportunity to elect committee members to take forward your ideas for the next year. Make democracy work!

Basic Assessment in Beekeeping

Do you fancy having a go?

At the Cockermouth BKA conference last year we had the speaker, Martin Smith, who encouraged us to take the Basis Assessment in Beekeeping. I have avoided being involved in any exams for beekeeping. However, I have changed my mind! So what does it involve?

You need to have been beekeeping with at least one colony for a minimum of 12 months. A local Examiner is appointed to conduct the Assessment at a designated Apiary and it takes about an hour per candidate. Each Candidate must demonstrate the ability to manipulate a colony, use a smoker, and make up a frame. There is an oral examination on basic equipment, the Honey bee, bee diseases, and poisoning. For candidates under the age of 18 there is an exam leading to a Junior certificate

Full details are available on the BBKA website

The cost is £15; some associations may pay for this on your behalf.

My idea is to identify willing candidates through this article. I would arrange the details and date of an examination. We can use my apiary at Gilcruix to carrying out the examination. Also, we would arrange a pre- visit to get used to my hives. Most importantly, I will arrange the Tea, Coffee and Scones. There is no reason not to have a bit fun on the occasion. So, if you are interested contact me by e-mail Linda_fitgerald@btinternet.com or phone me on 01697320204

This applies to anyone in Cumbria BKA.

Mike Fitzgerald.

Webinars (Hangouts)

Have you managed to watch any of Beecraft's webinars yet? Do you know what a webinar is? If the answer to either or both of these questions is "No" you are missing out on a great method of keeping in touch and up to date with Beekeeping news.

Webinar

Short for *Web-based seminar*, a webinar is a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the Web using video conferencing software. A key feature of a Webinar is its interactive elements -- the ability to give, receive and discuss information allowing conferencing events to be shared with remote locations. The service allows real-time point-to-point communications as well as multicast communications from one sender to many receivers. It offers data streams of text-based messages, voice and video chat to be shared simultaneously, across geographically dispersed locations.

This is a boon for areas such as Cumbria where we find it difficult to get to centres offering bee based conferences (such as at Stoneleigh, Harper-Adams and National Honey Show; all based in the South).

The last webinar from Beecraft included real time information from Professor of Entomology Jamie Ellis direct from his home in Florida. He answered questions on Small Hive Beetle and his views on the threat it may pose to British honey bees in direct response to viewers' questions. There have also been webinars on "Hive products other than Honey" and "Bee diseases-what to look out for", all still available to view.

It is easy to link in to these sessions either live or after the event. They take place once a month, at present on Wednesday evenings beginning at 8.00pm. The service is open to all, not just those who subscribe to Beecraft, so try out the link.

Next webinar is Wednesday 21st January at <http://www.bee-craft.com/beekeeping/hangouts>

If you do not yet subscribe to the Beecraft magazine, give that a try too (£16.00 for 12 months).

Beekeeping on Two Fronts

Stuart Ching, the editor of Nottingham BKA newsletter (Beemaster) from whom we occasionally pass on newsclips has written a most interesting book using material from the British Bee Journal published between 1914 and 1918, describing the conflict on the battlefields of the Great War and also the war being waged at home by beekeepers against the devastating Isle of Wight disease. The diary extracts from Sergeant A. Atwell, a beekeeper who was sent to the front on August 15th 1914, are particularly interesting. He describes the wanton destruction of numerous Apiaries in France, these mainly composed of skep housed bees, both by ordnance and by troops seeking honey. Don Wilson describes the devastating effect of the Isle of Wight Disease on his bees. Having left 24 stocks to go to war he found none viable on his return. There is information on treatments used including Dioxogen and Flavine, both used as antiseptics, and both with little beneficial effect on the disease. Published by Northern Bee Books, this book gives a unique insight into these disastrous events of the early 20th century. Ed.

Dates for your Diary

Webinar Wednesday 21st January 8.00pm

<http://www.bee-craft.com/beekeeping/hangouts>

Improvers Course Penrith for beekeepers of at least 1 year's experience.

Saturday and Sunday 14th and 15th February

Contact Sue Hannon Penrith Secretary for further details, or look on CBKA website

Pollen Microscopy Course Whitehaven

Sunday 22nd March

Contact Val Sullivan Whitehaven Secretary for further details, or look on the website.

Beekeeping Beginners Course Whitehaven

Theory and Practical Beekeeping .

Saturday and Sunday 18th and 19th April

Contact Val Sullivan Whitehaven Secretary for further details, or look on the website

Skep making course Now fully subscribed.

Applicants will be notified of date and venue (early summer)

Beekeeping - Naturally

We left Martin's bees in November, having absconded from a temporary home in a nucleus box and then returned:

"They had found an old national hive that I had bought from a deceased member of the Cockermonth Beekeepers Association, full of old comb and needing a good clean out. I bought one just to have one around, never thinking of needing to use it and had left it in a shed by the house. I made frantic phone calls and was reassured it would be ok if the bees liked it. So several scoopings later they were in and wheelbarrowed down the field that night. Settled in and on their way to making a new home.

The Warre hive arrived a few days later and there it sat empty - having missed the prime swarm. Then lo and behold a week later a cast swarm into the same tree. This time more confident and with my box, white sheet and brush - they were into the Warre and settled in well. I thought this was it - three different hives with three different swarms. Enough for now. But not for the bees - a week later another cast. This time I was even calmer and more confident - into a nucleus box and off to a fellow beekeeper with a WBC hive in Embleton who had lost her last colony.

So here I was after only one year with three different hives with three different swarms and a fourth in a WBC hive - how was all this going to work out?

I settled back and have had time to observe how things have worked with the different types of hives. After 6 months of observation - I have come to some conclusions about the pros and cons of different hives for the bees and the beekeeper. As a result I am now working on making a hybrid hive this winter that brings together hopefully the best of each - but that story is for another article!
Martin Gerrish

Winter snowdrops in the Editor's garden

overwintering bees are quick to find sources of pollen and nectar on a still sunny day even in winter's depths.

