

# 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

18 beekeepers attended the 2015 Cumbria Beekeepers AGM on Saturday 21st. March.

The afternoon began with an interesting presentation from Peter Matthews on the Small Hive Beetle and the imminent threat it poses to British bee colonies.

There followed a Special General Meeting at which John Harris presented corrections to the constitution, these being, as he pointed out, a tidying up exercise to iron out minor discrepancies in paragraph numbering with no changes to the provisions of the constitution.

The AGM then accepted the minutes and the Accounts from 2014. Officers were elected and the 3 propositions were presented and were accepted by the members. These were:

1/ That capitation fees to CBKA remain unchanged.

2/ That capitation fees to BBKA go up by £1.00 in line with the increase approved by the BBKA in January to take effect in 2016.

3/ That the CBKA continues to refund the examination fees for the Basic and Module 3 (Bee Pests and Diseases) to successful candidates.

The next Annual General Meeting of the Cumbria Beekeepers Association will be on Saturday 26th March 2016.

## 2015 Northern Bee Auction

Sat 25th of April at Houghton Village Hall

If you have Bee equipment you no longer need and wish to sell please contact :

Peter Harris

Cumbria Bee Supplies

Port Road Joinery Carlisle 078304 32014,

01228 810515

For more information go to the auction page at [Cumbriabeesupplies.co.uk](http://Cumbriabeesupplies.co.uk)

## BritishBKA- CumbriaBKA- BranchBKA - structure

Old hands in the beekeeping family take the structure of the organisation we belong to for granted, but it has become clear talking to new and not so new beekeepers that the BBKA organisation is not well understood; so below is an explanation I hope most members will agree with.

Firstly the British Bee Keepers Association (BBKA) is not an organisation down in Warwickshire, the BBKA is an association of Local Area Associations (LAAs) about 66 of them, Cumbria BKA being one. Cumbria, like most LAAs has divisions or branches, in our case Carlisle, Cockermouth, Keswick, Penrith and Whitehaven. Formerly Sedburgh, Furness and Kendal were also branches but in the past, at various times for varied reasons, decided to break away and go it alone.

The Governance of the BBKA is done through an Annual Delegates Meeting in January, one delegate attending and representing the views of each LAA. They vote on propositions put forward by LAAs and the BBKA Executive Committee. The meeting is organised and run by the BBKA Executive following the BBKA Constitution.

At the Annual Delegates Meeting there is an election of members, (trustees) to sit on the BBKA Executive Committee, then from this pool of volunteer Executive Committee Members the officers of the BBKA and its various boards are chosen. The General Secretary has a paid staff at Stoneleigh to run the day to day business of the organisation.

Like the BBKA Cumbria BKA has an Executive Council of up to 10 council members and four executive officers, voted in place at the AGM in March by members of the branches who attend. Also 2 Branch members per Branch, nominated by the branches can attend and vote at Council meetings to represent their branches.

Each branch should also have its' own Executive Council to run the business of the branch the form of which is written down in the Cumbria Beekeepers Constitution. It should abide by the rules, available on the Cumbria Beekeepers web site.

I know this is a bit of a big bone to chew and I have simplified it a little to make it more palatable. Beekeeping organisation takes a bit of work, structure and volunteers to survive.

Walter Mc Phee

## Flow Hives

The flow hive is an Australian invention which sounds too good to be true! The funding for manufacturing this invention has come from Crowd funding .

**(Crowdfunding** is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people, typically via the internet.)

Before any Flow hives had been sent out the funding by this method had reached over \$3.000.000 in the USA.

So what is the Flow hive and why the excitement?

The “hive” is actually a special super of either National or Langstroth size containing plastic frames in pairs which fit snugly together forming cells. The bees then fill these with honey and seal them as normal to make full supers of honey. The beekeeper has a special key to insert into the top of the super which draws up one half of each frame separating the central “spine” and allowing honey, free of wax, bee bits and debris to flow down and out through tubes into the collecting vessel. No angry bees as you carry off heavy supers, no messy de-capping nor spinning. Just honey out of the super frames and into jars ready for use!

There may be a few things to consider before you rush to buy this new equipment. For example; what happens to honey which has granulated in the cells, and what about the generally perceived antipathy of bees to plastic foundation? Costs may be high for the new equipment and there are many orders yet to be fulfilled ( and investors to satisfy)

Finally is the honey flow ever good enough for bees in the wet and cool North of England to make this an option for honey gathering? What are Readers’ thoughts?



**Crocus in March**

## Dates for your Diary

### **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** Sunday May 17th

Now fully subscribed. It is hoped to run another course on Skep making later in the year..

## **Aethena tumida (again!)**

### **Small Hive Beetle**

Aethena tumida is a nasty little beetle which we may have to deal with in the UK very soon. There was a short article in the September CBT about this pest; however the threat is now very real with importing of Queens and colonies from Italy continuing, as well as other possible routes of entry for the beetle. Did you know that the adults can survive for two weeks without food or water, seven weeks on used comb and many months on fruit(particular favourite fruit is melon)

As you know by now (especially those of you who came to the AGM and heard P. Matthews presentation) it is a native of South Africa where it lives in a steady state with the honey bees Although it can destroy colonies the bees tend to isolate and enclose the groups of adult beetles in propolis which prevents them from laying eggs throughout the hive. The South African Bees are also much more likely to abandon their hives and move on if SHB numbers increase

The small hive beetle is a member of the family of scavengers or sap beetles. The adult beetle is dark brown to black and about one-half centimeter in length. The adults may live up to 6 months and can be observed almost anywhere in a hive, although they are most often found on the rear portion of the bottom board of a hive hiding away from light. Although they can be confused with other types of beetle they have very distinctive club shaped antennae. Female beetles lay irregular masses of eggs in cracks or crevices in a hive. The eggs hatch in 2–3 days into white-colored larvae that will grow to 10–11 mm in length. The larvae are quite easily identified by their dorsal spines which distinguish them from that other larval pest– the wax moth larvae. SHB larvae gather into large groups feeding on honey and pollen stores and causing immense damage to combs. As they destroy the stores the residual honey ferments and oozes out in an evil smelling sticky mess. Larvae take about 10–16 days to mature and once ready to pupate leave the hive and burrow into nearby soil. The pupation period will last from 3–4 weeks but is dependent upon the air and soil temperature. Originally it was suggested that our UK winters would be sufficiently chilly to kill the pupae, but experience in Canada and the United States has shown that they can survive the cold. SHB has been found in many States of the USA and in Alberta and Ontario in Canada where winters can be severe. Newly emerged adults seek out hives and females generally mate and begin egg laying about a week after emergence. Hive beetles may have 4–5 generations a year during the warmer seasons. Because this pest is such a serious threat to honey bees the beekeeper has a statutory obligation to report any sighting to the National Bee Unit (through your local Bee Inspector).