

Cumbria Bee Times

Editor: Val Sullivan, Brackenwray Farm, Kinniside, Cleator, Cumbria, CA23 3AG

Telephone: 01946 862604, e-mail:brackenwray@aol.com

(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 Association What is it for and what does it do?

J.Harris

The purpose of the Cumbria Beekeepers Association is well set out in the opening paragraphs of the constitution (which all members should have access to within their Branch)

CBKA is organised through branches, which is where, quite properly, most activity takes place. The Executive Committee is there to co-ordinate the activities of the branches and to act as an over-arching administrative body which can communicate with the outside world, instead of the individual branches having each to do this. The BBKA, in recent years has been less than keen to see County bodies split into smaller breakaway units because this complicates their communications, and drives up their costs. In short, the CBKA **IS** the branches, and has no separate existence. The Executive Committee is there to serve the branches, not to do their job for them.

Ed: So, instead of grumbling about the CBKA, give up a little of your time - come and join the committee, and help it to represent your Branch more fully.

Margaret Riches has recently completed a design project with a class at Stainton Primary School – Class 5 children have been designing a logo and honey jar labels for Penrith Beekeepers Association. The logo has now been developed from these designs so that it can be used in their promotional literature in future.

Geordie Breeze's design



Adult varroa mites on a honey bee drone pupa
photo:MAA Research and Extension Consortium

Varroa Threat

Bee Inspectors have reported a high population of *Varroa* mites in colonies across England and Wales. It is believed these high levels are largely due to many colonies continually rearing brood throughout the mild winter. Continuous brood rearing dramatically reduces the efficacy of winter *Varroa* treatments such as oxalic acid, which do not kill mites sealed in brood cells.

Monitor colonies and check either the natural mite drop from a sticky insert/ open mesh floor or by uncapping drone brood. From May to August, a natural mite drop should be monitored over a week. The number of mites then counted over this week should be multiplied by 30 to give you a rough population of *Varroa* in your colonies. A figure of 1000 mites or more is considered to be a high infestation. If uncapping drone brood, then only 5 *Varroa* mites out of 100 uncapped pupae need to be found to be considered a damagingly high infestation.

Should you discover that your colonies have a high amount of *Varroa* then a range of options are available from biotechnical methods such as drone brood removal, to authorised Varroacides. NB. Varroacides used will be weather and temperature dependant. If you have supers on your colonies then thymol treatments should not be used due to tainting of the honey. MAQS strips can be used at any time of year and have the advantage of killing *Varroa* within brood cells. More information is available in the Fera leaflet '*Managing Varroa*', from their website:

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The National Bee Unit's Northern Inspection team are running four 'Good Bee Husbandry Days' in 2014. Dates, contacts and venues are as follows:-

- 1. Saturday May 17th at Woodford War Memorial Hall, Chester Road, Woodford, Stockport, Greater Manchester. SK7 1PS. Please contact Mr Roy Brocklehurst on 0161 480 2637(no e mail).**
- 2. Saturday June 14th at Finchale College, Off Chester Low Road, Durham, County Durham. DH1 5RX. Please contact Lynn Ramsay on e mail lynnramsay@hotmail.co.uk**
- 3. Saturday June 28th at Truckhaven Conference Centre, Carnforth, Lancashire. LA5 9RQ. Please contact Alayne Robin on e mail alaynerobin@gmail.com**
- 4. Saturday 12th July at Newbiggin Village Hall, Newbiggin, Penrith, Cumbria. CA11 0HT. Please contact Dr Margaret Riches on e mail mr4cnr@gmail.com**

GOSFORTH SHOW. WHITEHAVEN AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ANNUAL HONEY SHOW

Gosforth Show Ground August 16th

Schedules and entry forms will be available from the Whitehaven Secretary from early July.

COCKERMOUTH CONVENTION

Embleton Village Hall Sept 13th

More details will be posted soon on the CBKA website or from the Cocker mouth Secretary.

CUMBRIA BEEKEEPERS ANNUAL HONEY SHOW AND CONFERENCE

Newbiggin Village Hall November 15th

Details of Speakers in the next issue of CBT.

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Peter Harris

Unit 8A Port Road Business Park

Carlisle

CA2 7AF

Mobile no: 07830432014

CONTACTS FOR BRANCHES

Carlisle

Fiona Roebuck
Old Town House
High Hesket
CA4 0JE
01697 473741
froebuck@btinternet.com

Cockermouth

Bill Mackereth
6 Whiteside Avenue
Cockermouth
CA13 9AR
01900 825188
linda_fitzgerald@btinternet.com

OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

Furness
David Walmsley
36 Oxenholme Road
Kendal
djwalmsley@hotmail.co.uk

Keswick

Stephen Barnes
Albemarle St, Cockermouth,
CA13 0BG
01900 824972
braithwaitebees@sky.com

Penrith

Sue Hannon
penrithbka@gmail.com

Whitehaven

Val Sullivan
Brackenwray Farm
Kinniside
Cleator
CA23 3AG
01946 862604
brackenwray@aol.com

Kendal and Westmorland

Judith Bayne
Helm End Farm
Barrows Green
Kendal Cumbria LA8 0AA
judith.kswba@yahoo.co.uk

Jack Murray

Many of you will remember John Hudson (Jack) Murray who passed away on April 13th after a long illness. He served on the CBKA Committee for many years, and also devoted much time to the Scouting Association.

An Amateur's efforts at Queen Rearing. The story so far!

Last year, I decided that this season I would try my hand at Queen Rearing. So I studied my Snelgrove 'Queen Rearing' to see how best to tackle the problem. L.E. Snelgrove describes 24 ways to start Queen Cells. That is enough to confuse anyone. I chose method 17. More later.

The first problem I came across was advice that I should raise queens from one type of bee. My problem was that I have 2 hives with Buckfast queens and 2 hives with Carnolian queens. Solution; I posted my two Buckfast hives to out aparies, and made the decision to breed from my Carnolian hives.

Next: the importance of the drones in this process. The Queen hatches out after 16 days and the drones hatch out after 24 days. The queen needs a further 7 days before she goes on her mating flight while the drone takes a further 14 days to reach maturity. Therefore, there is a need to encourage the production of drones well ahead of queen production. So I placed a drawn out drone comb in Hive no 2 in late March and have plenty of drones wandering about that hive. However, I also have plenty of drones wandering about hive no 1, my queen rearing hive.

Now, onto my Queen rearing. I was impressed by one of the lecturers last year. He described putting a drawn brood frame into a box that has a queen excluder mesh on either side to allow worker bees access in and out but confines the queen. The box replaces 2 frames within the hive. After 24 hours, the box is removed, queen is released and you now have a frame of freshly laid eggs. You now cut the comb out of the bottom of the frame in a zig-zag fashion and queen cells will be drawn here.. Well I have done this and the eggs are laid.

On to Snelgrove's Method 17 to start Queen Cells. I bet you thought we would never get back to this!

Snelgrove states that when young brood is raised from the brood nest to a super above an excluder, the bees may or may not construct queen-cells under the supersedure impulse. If however there are 3 more well occupied supers and young brood is inserted in the topmost one, queen cells of good quality will be made and completed. A second queen excluder placed under the topmost box also helps. He notes also that the construction of such Queen cells in queen right stock does not in itself lead to swarming.

I have applied this method and I am now waiting for 7 days before I look in to see the result. I will keep you posted.

Mike Fitzgerald Cocker mouth BKA