

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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Goodbye to 2017
and this Editor



Cumbria 2017 Honey Show and Conference

On Sat 4th November, the annual CBKA Honey Show drew in local beekeepers to exhibit their Apiary products and to hear talks on a wide range of bee related topics. Peter Matthews, fresh from the National honey Show kindly judged the benched classes and awarded the trophies. Alan Tett was awarded several cups including that for the Best Exhibit in show (with his dark honey). The W.Barton cup for the best Beginner's exhibit went to Penrith's I. Robertson

George Clouston gave the first talk of the day about Remote Hive Monitoring and then Brian Durk told us about the work he has done with the charity Bees Abroad over many years and in many countries facilitating beekeeping.

George Brown, the BBKA trustee in charge of fundraising, enlightened the audience on the recent IMYB in Marlborough.

The afternoon Branch reports all mentioned difficult seasonal challenges. Following this the "Ask the experts" panel dealt with questions about Queen rearing, Asian Hornets and the general decline in all species of Insects. Climate change was on the minds of many in the audience.

Following tea trophies and certificates were presented before the CBKA Chairman closed the event.

If you missed this year's conference, make sure you come along in 2018. and support your County Honey Show Day.



Arnia Hive Monitoring

George Clouston, the Director of Arnia Remote Hive Monitoring system gave a fascinating talk to the recent Cumbria Conference.

He presented the concept of monitoring every aspect of a bee colony's life and well being without the need to keep opening the hive "to see what is going on inside"

He told us that the equipment is simple to install and the user interface is accessible in any web browser with no additional software or apps required. The hive monitoring capability includes colony acoustics (flight, fanning, colony strength) hive weight, brood temperature, hive humidity and prevailing weather conditions.

For example, with this equipment it is possible to identify that the queen has ceased to lay, that the colony has become broodless and even when a new queen begins to lay. It will assess colony strength, foraging activities of different hives with the ability to identify weaker colonies.

Nectar flow can be tracked, indicating when to add supers or remove honey and it can identify forage shortage with the need to feed supplements.

Winter stores can be monitored to assess the need for adding feed. Robbing of a colony can be identified and corrected rapidly.

Weather conditions including rainfall and apiary temperature can be used to assess the impact on the hives

—And, last but not least,-if your hive is knocked over, moved or stolen you receive an instant alert!

What does it cost? Quite a lot- but the system can be installed in a Teaching Apiary for example, with the ability to gain insight and fascinate (a group of North East schools are already reaping the rewards of remote beekeeping)) without the need to pull colonies apart.

For more information:

<http://www.arnia.co.uk/product-beekeepers>

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NEONICOTINOID NEWS

A total ban on bee-harming pesticides being used across Europe will be supported by the UK, the Environment Secretary has said. In a reversal of the Government's previous position on neonicotinoid pesticides, Michael Gove said new evidence indicated the risk to bees and other insects was "greater than previously understood". In 2013, the European Commission proposed a ban on three neonicotinoids for use on flowering crops such as oil seed rape, which are attractive to bees, after authorities identified risks to honey bees BUT the UK Government opposed the ban, claiming there was not enough evidence that bees were harmed by the pesticides. Other member states disagreed and the ban was implemented across the EU.

Mr Gove now says he believes the evidence base has "grown", and the UK will back a new proposal by the European Commission to extend the ban to the nonflowering-crops.

He said: "While there is still uncertainty in the science, it is increasingly pointing in one direction. Not to act would be to risk continuing down a course which could have extensive and permanent effects on bee populations. That is not a risk I am prepared to take, so the UK will be supporting further restrictions on neonicotinoids. Unless the evidence base changes again, the Government will keep these restrictions in place after we have left the EU." Mr Gove says he is "deeply concerned" by a recent study into the health of some insect populations, which revealed 75% of flying insects in Germany had disappeared. He added that bees and other pollinators were "absolutely critical" to the natural world, and that a deteriorating environment is also bad for the economy. Last month, a study found that three quarters of the honey produced around the world contains nerve agent pesticides that can harm bees.

Scientists who tested 198 honey samples from every continent except Antarctica discovered that 75 % contained at least one of the neonicotinoid chemicals.

Environmental campaigners responded by demanding a "complete and permanent" ban preventing any further use of neonicotinoids on farm crops in Europe.

Hello to 2018 and to the
next editor of the CBT
Nathan Woodhead

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Full details of CBKA events and Officers contacts can be found on the Cumbria Beekeepers website
Cumbriabeekeepers.co.uk

There are several other non-affiliated Associations in the North West

Asian Hornet update

Researchers at the **University of Warwick** sat down to try and work out how quickly the Asian hornet could spread over the country. They took the single sighting of a hornet nest high in a tree in south **Gloucestershire** and extrapolated from that. As you can see from these maps taken directly from their research it takes just two decades for the hornet to pretty much take over the whole of the country.

It's unfortunate that the behaviour of the hornet makes it perfectly suited to both invading and surviving here when it arrives. The queens hibernate through winter in Asia and the rest of the colony dies off. Those hibernating queens can easily end up in this country stowed away in imported crates of Chinese pottery for example. Once here the queens can easily sleep through our winters before emerging.

But there is good news. If we stay vigilant we can control and hopefully repel this invasion. Beekeepers can stay alert for hornets attacking hives and can build simple traps that will stop them in their tracks. For more information go to Beebase, or several video clips on You-tube

