

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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The 2nd Northern Bee Auction

The bidding was brisk at the second Annual Bee Auction, held at Houghton Village Hall on Saturday 14th April particularly for the nucs of bees.

The Organiser Peter Harris comments:

"I would like to thank all Beekeepers who came to bid for equipment and the bees for sale on the day; we would have liked more equipment for the auction although I should have advertised sooner perhaps.

The quality of the nucs for sale was I think reflected in the prices they made at auction and I would hope to have the same suppliers back for the 2013 auction. (Date to be confirmed)

The honey for sale was a welcome addition and hopefully will feature in future auctions.

Thanks to John and Mary Harris, Loraine Priestley, Ian Maxwell for looking after the trade stands and Ian Molyneux, Stewart Beattie and John Zamorsky from the National Bee Unit for their presence.

I must also thank Rachel, Rebecca and Joshua for the marvellous job they did in the kitchen and Stewart and Charlie for cataloguing the colonies for sale.

A special thank you to Peter Matthews, Christine Matthews (whose efforts made it happen) and Nicky for organising registration etc.

All in all I would say the day was a success, thanks again everyone hope to see you all at the next auction,"

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Annual Spring Convention Harper Adams Shropshire

20th—22nd April

The new venue for the British BKA Spring Convention made travel easier for Cumbrian beekeepers but the problems that had beset the convention when held at Stoneleigh were still



evident, and a few new ones arose. Lecture halls were overcrowded and people were turned away. Many cars had to be parked a long way from the campus which meant having to carry heavy purchases some distance. The trade hall was bigger but lacked the atmosphere of Stoneleigh. There were many bargains to be had on Saturday, with Thorne and Maisemore offering equipment at very attractive prices. Accommodation and food facilities were a great improvement on previous years.

Lectures included two by Jochen Pflugfelder on Queen fights and on Bee mating behaviour. A DCA can contain Drones from 200 colonies and the Queen bee will fly to the farthest DCA possible from her hive to reduce the risk of sibling matings. Celia Davis, who is as easy to follow as are her books, gave talks on "Keeping bees healthy" and "The world of the Queen Bee".

The weather on Sunday was cold and wet hampering practical sessions for both the General Husbandry and the Queen rearing workshops. Portable gazebos and multiple umbrellas protected the bees but the human participants suffered!

If you have not been to the BBKA Spring Convention, put it on the list for 2013.

Richard & Anne Kenyon

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Events for your Diary

Scottish Beekeepers Centenary celebrations

Scottish Beekeepers Association celebrates its centenary in 2012
The main celebration will take place on 15th & 16th September
at the Stirling Management Centre, University of Stirling.

Lecturers include D. Basterfield NDB, Prof R. Paxton and Prof R. Pickard. There is a full Social programme and many workshops and demonstrations. On Mon 17th there are visits to Apiaries and a Honey production and packing plant.. For more information including booking forms go to:

www.scottishbeekeepers.org.uk, telephone The Management Centre on 01786 451712 quoting event no59140 or telephone Peter Matthews on 01461 205525.

Whitehaven and District Honey Show

Saturday 18th August At the Gosforth Agricultural Show

Cockermouth Autumn Conference

October 6th. New venue– Embleton Village Hall. More details nearer the date but the speakers are booked: Gerry Collins, MSc NDB and Ian Molyneux our R B Inspector.

Annual Cumbria Beekeepers Conference

November 10th Newbiggin Village Hall(nr Penrith)

New Varroa Treatment

A completely new approach to control the varroa mite, the parasitic scourge of the western honeybee, is being part-funded by Vita (Europe) Ltd. Researchers at the University of Aberdeen and the National Bee Unit are looking at ways to “knock-down” genes in varroa to make it more susceptible to treatments or even to kill it outright.

Led by Dr Alan Bowman, the research team has already tested the technique successfully in the laboratory. Now the challenge is to find the most relevant and susceptible genes to be targeted and in the longer term to develop a suitable affordable treatment for use by beekeepers.

The first stage of the work is to use “Next Generation Sequencing” to identify and describe all the genes of *Varroa destructor*. From hundreds of millions of pieces of gene sequencing information, the team will search for the Achilles’ heel of the varroa mite, but ensuring that targeting it will not affect the bees or indeed any other animal species.

Once vulnerable genes of the varroa mite have been identified, the search will then focus on producing a treatment to target that gene. Laboratory and field trials will then thoroughly test the efficacy and safety of potential treatments.

Dr Bowman spoke at the Spring Convention explaining the techniques and progress so far in “gene knock-down”. The research looks promising but has a way to go before becoming available for use. The research team have been injecting Varroa mites with altered RNA between the abdominal segments of the exoskeleton, a method he accepted was not a practical one for the ordinary beekeeper!

To help accomplish the work, Dr Bowman needs varroa mites - lots of them, from across the UK. He is setting up a database of beekeepers who are willing to participate in the research by sending brood frames from Varroa infested colonies. For more information e mail your name and address to: varroa-project@abdn.ac.uk.

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Cumbria Beekeepers AGM 31st March 2012

Christine Matthews gave a fascinating talk on Pollen and Bee health, prior to the Business of the afternoon.

The accounts were accepted (copies are available from the Treasurer if required)

Propositions passed included: No change to capitation fees, That each Branch provides the Secretary with details of two Branch contacts, That refunds for both the Basic and Module 3 exams continue and That the Association encourages members to gain food hygiene certificates, the cost of this being part funded by CBKA.

Next AGM 2nd March 2013