

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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Cancelled :Cockermouth Convention

Sadly, due to unforeseen circumstances the Cockermouth Convention scheduled for October 2nd at Braithwaite Hall will not take place this year. It is hoped that this most enjoyable of events will be staged next year.

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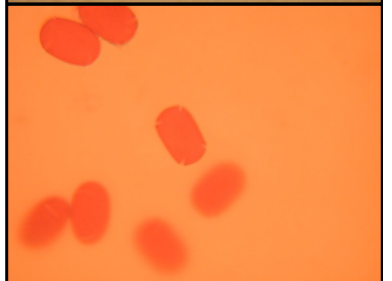
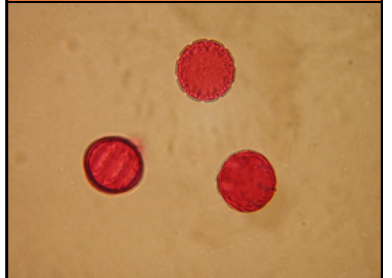
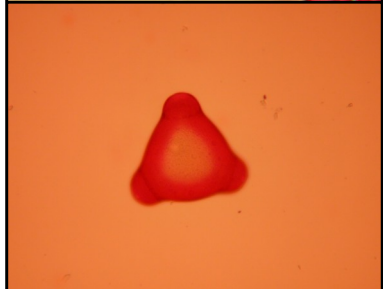
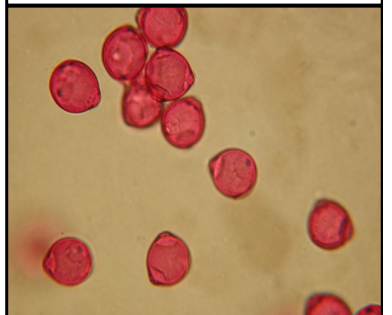
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A selection of slides of pollen from the W&D Pollen Day.

If you are interested in Palynology contact the Editor for details of a course in 2011.



And this edition's mystery picture:



Photo:D.Rhodes

Letter to the Editor:

I've been meaning to sit down & write this for a few weeks

In the May edition, you had a piece headed "Food for bees in May & June" and then a sub-category "Field Beans" in which you said "not found in Cumbria but an important crop North of the Border".

This year, I think for the first time, there were two fields of Field Bean just west of Penrith, adjacent to the Gillwilly Industrial Estate. Also, there was a field of OSR a matter of yards away. You are correct in highlighting OSR and FB as these are both important nectar sources BUT it does mean that beekeepers must have strong hives if they are to take full advantage of these crops.

Working on the premise that the bees have come through the winter months in a reasonable condition, in my humble opinion, beekeepers should feed a weak sugar syrup (see Hooper for recipe). Also, I feed a patty of pollen-substitute to each hive. With the hives full of bees, when the OSR and FB are in flower, beekeepers stand a reasonable chance of obtaining a good honey crop.

Doug Baird

I purchased FeedBee Pollen Substitute from Paynes Southdown Bee Farms Ltd. (email sales@paynesbeefarm.com).

Annual Cumbria Beekeepers Honey Show and Conference

Threlkeld Village Hall
Saturday November 13th

Speakers

Morning: John Crouch "Honey Cookery" with Demonstration and tasting.

Afternoon: Margaret Thomas "Queen rearing for the small scale beekeeper"

Doors will open at 10.00 Exhibits to be staged before the first speaker.

Full details will be circulated to Branches by Stephen Barnes Sec to CBKA

Pollen Microscopy Day
(or My, doesn't that sound scary science?)

Sunday 8 August 2010

My first apiary visit happened to be to Dominic Rhodes' garden at St Bees. No sooner had we arrived than we were summoned to his next door neighbour's to collect a swarm of his bees from their apple tree. "They always swarm there," Dominic said, as he led us through the neighbour's house, collected the swarm, and continued the visit! To a complete beginner, this was little short of a miraculous revelation of theory-into-practice.

So it was no surprise to me later to realize that Dominic's skills are indeed, amazing, and the Pollen Microscopy course he presented to 20 beekeepers from across Cumbria was wonderful.

Being an Arts graduate from the 60s, my scientific knowledge has been very rote learnt theory, though I was aware of what basic microscopy entailed and from observation of my bees, I was aware that pollen came in different colours. But, wow! From the minute we walked into Lamplugh Village Hall, it was all an astonishing revelation. As we had our pre-course coffee, a series of images of different pollen cells cycled through on the computer. Different sizes, crazy shapes, different colours (though I quickly learnt that the colour on the slides is from the gel which fixes the pollen on the slide).

Dominic began by explaining the basic pollen structure with the wonderfully-named parts of the pollen cells, which in the afternoon practical session, we would see for ourselves on the slides we made! We learnt that hazel (Corylus) is the standard for measuring the size of pollen. We learnt the 8 pollen grain features, as identified and classified by Rex Sawyer in his book.

After a break, Val explained, clearly, carefully and reassuringly, how to prepare slides – though later on I didn't find it as straightforward as it had looked when she did it! Another, more detailed session on pollen recognition by Dominic followed, with fascinating information on the applications of pollen microscopy in archaeology and forensics.

In the afternoon we worked in groups of 3 or 4 choosing different flowers from which to prepare our own slides and examine them under the microscopes. This was really exciting, and the Hall was full of eager students. Gosh, this must be what school Science lessons are like, I thought. Why did I spend all those years teaching English?

After re-visiting the pollen recognition standards, with our understanding now enhanced by our own experiences, Dominic took us through a whistle-stop tour of microscopes, computer-imaging, incredible levels of magnification, which was again fascinating. He also gave helpful advice on buying a microscope if we wished to continue our new-found studies.

On behalf of everyone on the course, I can only reiterate, at least x 400, my absolute admiration and thanks to Dominic for giving us such an amazing day. Thanks too, to Val, for the organization and smooth running of the day – and the cake! And to those of you who weren't there this time, don't miss the next one – it really isn't scary Science!

L.Walby.

Richard & Anne Kenyon

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Calendar for 2011

From April 9 to 15

May 14 to 20

July 9 to 15

August 13 to 19

September 3 to 9

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Ralph Campbell and Evelyne Pensa

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Llew Patch would like to thank all those friends whose greetings and good wishes ensured that his recent 100th birthday celebrations were both enjoyable and memorable.

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