

## Teaching Apiary News:

The season of regular visits to the teaching apiary started with the Beginners weekend at the end of April, and ended at the beginning of September. The apiary bees have had a good summer, barring some cold, wet weather in June. The garden, though somewhat less tended this year, continues to provide forage for the bees.

Three supers of honey have been taken off and are awaiting extraction on Wed 25<sup>th</sup> September.

### April, the Beginners Weekend

The Beginners weekend at the end of April seems like a long time ago now, but with 20 people attending we had a very successful event. The first day of talks about Beekeeping was held at Lamplugh Village Hall and was followed by a visit to the teaching apiary, which was managed in two groups so as to accommodate everyone.

Leading on from this, several people have joined Whitehaven Beekeepers and attended the apiary visits this summer. At least 1 person has already started beekeeping, while others plan to begin next spring.



### New isolation apiary

Whitehaven Beekeepers have established a new Isolation Apiary near Wilton.



With the prior permission of the Apiary Manager, WDBKA members may use the Isolation Apiary to hold their own colonies of bees for periods of up to 4 weeks. The access is along a narrow track, so lone working at this site is prohibited for health and safety reasons.

N.B. Full details of the rules applying to the use of this apiary are available in the new Apiary Rules, which were circulated to members in August.

### July, the Basic Bee Assessment

On the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> July the apiary was the venue for 8 members of Whitehaven Beekeepers to be examined for the BBKA Basic Assessment. This involved making a frame, and going through a colony of bees while being asked questions on a range of topics by the examiner Nick Mills. Although this was somewhat daunting, during the hour of my test, Nick passed on useful tips drawn from his long beekeeping experience, so that it felt like a real two-way exchange of information.

Fortunately we all passed the assessment, and everyone agreed that we had learned a lot in our pre-assessment revision sessions, which were run by Val Sullivan. Many thanks to Val for giving her time and expertise.

# WDBKA Newsletter, September 2019

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## August, the Great Apiary Shed Makeover

*(With thanks to Steve Sullivan for this article)*



Our Apiary shed at Westlakes Science Park has given the Association great service.

With a grant from the Great Lottery Fund it was assembled by existing members soon after the Apiary site had been acquired, levelled and populated with bees. The shed has survived many climatic assaults including storm Desmond. Despite it suffering a “re-location” on one occasion and the wind assisted removal of roofing felt by two other weather related events, various members of W&DBK have contributed time and effort to keep it a useful and mostly waterproof storage shed.

However age takes its’ toll and following many Committee discussions a refurbishment was planned and executed. Richard Robinson and Peter Broadbent, self- confessed DIY nerds, planned the process and applied their Quantity Surveying skills. Richard transported several hefty loads of materials using his trusted “Beast” and somehow manhandled them into the existing shed for safekeeping to await the arrival of the work team.

An appalling weather forecast caused cancellation of the first date but the weekend of 24th/25th August saw a brilliant two days. Sadly the “Team” was a rather small one consisting of Richard, Peter, their totally unskilled labourer Steve S, and ably assisted for some of the time by Debbie K. Coffee, tea, cake and Health and Safety advice was provided by Val S

**Day 1** started destructively removing boarding, roofing felt and a thousand felt nails. Using a state of the art circular saw and other equipment, known only to Peter and Richard, boards were cut to perfect length, and nailed in place by an increasingly confident Debbie. Steve continued his unskilled destructive behaviour on the roof, removing the felt and another thousand or so nails. Meanwhile the whole front of the shed having been removed, Peter and Richard by magic fashioned a whole new one including perfectly fitting double doors.

**Day 2** -even hotter than the previous day saw new roof boards screwed into place and trimmed to await the new single sheet rubber covering. During this phase Peter performed an unintentional but superb exit from the roof landing balletically on his feet. Annoyingly this was not caught on camera. The no joking high temperature helped with the handling of the very heavy roof sheet, initially spreading it out to eliminate creases, and then in the actual rolling over the roof. The team of four was at full stretch to haul it onto the ridge. Applying the highly volatile adhesive was great fun and we all felt on a “high”. With hope and a prayer the covering was rolled out and smoothed, leaving amazingly few ridges and wrinkles and hopefully extending the life of the shed considerably.

**Day 3** After a week of recuperation work continued, with help this time from Sarah Richards and Grahame Pinches. Trim was added, window frames strengthened, door fittings added and rubbish removed. We now have a very smart “new” shed .Well done all!



PS Richard and Peter are obviously now at a loose end and taking commissions for new kitchens and built in wardrobes!

### Other Events:

#### Showing skills evening meeting 20<sup>th</sup> June

Ian Gregory, who is a member of Carlisle Beekeepers and a qualified Honey Judge, gave an excellent talk at Lamplugh Village Hall about what a judge is looking for when judging honey and wax exhibits. I have summarised the main points of his talk below.

Honey must be shown in 454g glass honey jars. The judge will look for a full jar of honey. If there is an airgap between the top of the honey and the lid, the entry will be dismissed as underweight. It pays to slightly overfill the jars. If the schedule asks for two jars of honey the jars and lids must be clean and should match in every respect. Jars should be unlabelled. It helps to take spare, clean lids to the show in case the honey has splashed onto the lid in transit.

Light and medium honey should be clear, with no wax flakes, pollen, debris or air bubbles. The judge will use a torch to check. The surface of the honey should be clean, and finally, the honey should have a good flavour.

Granulated honey should have fine granulation with no frosting against the glass and no liquid residue on top of the honey. You can show last year's honey in this class, but check that it hasn't started to ferment.

A shallow frame of honey suitable for extracting should be fully capped and have a flat surface and no pollen or brace comb. The frame should be displayed in a display case with clean glass.

### Annual Honey Show

Our Honey Show was held as usual, at the Gosforth Show on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August. It rained heavily the day before, but the day itself was sunny and breezy, which made a very welcome change to the usual rain and mud. The number of entries had increased from last year.

Val Sullivan won the Heckles and Challenge Cups, Sarah Richards won the Waddington Cup and Derek Roberts won the Novice Cup.



The observation hive, skep-making demonstration and honey tasting proved popular with visitors to the show. The next photo shows our stand with the new flags, complete with logo, and the bunting which Karen James made to brighten up the gazebo and attract interest.



## Sarah Dockeray's Flow Hive

In July, one of our members, Sarah Dockeray, demonstrated her flow hives to a small group of beekeepers.



Flow Hives were developed in Australia, and instead of conventional frames in the super, there are 6 wide plastic supers on which the bees build wax. The bees fill the honey cells and cap them off. To extract the honey, a key is inserted and turned. This splits the honey cells, then gravity allows the honey to flow into the trough at the bottom of the frame, and out through a tube into a jar. There is no need to remove and extract the frames.



This system does indeed work in Cumbria, and Sarah entered honey from her hives into the novice class at the Honey Show this year.

## Preview of Autumn Events

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| Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup><br>September   | Cockermouth Convention at Embleton Village Hall, details already circulated       |
| Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup><br>September | Honey extraction evening<br>Venue to be confirmed                                 |
| Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup><br>November      | Cumbria Honey show at Braithwaite Institute. Full details to follow               |
| Friday 15 <sup>th</sup><br>November     | WBKA AGM, 7.00pm at Lamplugh Village Hall with supper provided. Details to follow |
| Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup><br>November     | WBKA Pollen Microscopy Day, Lamplugh Village Hall, details already circulated     |

## Reminder of the new Facebook page for Whitehaven Beekeepers

If you want to join this Facebook group, please go to the following link.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/399744827264271/?ref=share>