

WDBKA Newsletter, October 2018

Teaching Apiary News:

After a long winter and cold spring, the apiary bees did very well in the hot, sunny weather in June and July. The number of hives increased to a maximum of 7, and 2 full supers of honey were taken off at the end of August. The number of hives has decreased since then to four, following combining of smaller stocks.

The first apiary visit of the year took place at the end of April as part of the Beginner's weekend. Then visits continued on a weekly basis through the busiest part of the beekeeping season in May and June, and subsequently every fortnight. This format has worked well and the visits have generally been well attended.

The apiary honey was successfully extracted at an evening event on 13th September at Lamplugh Village Hall. It is now available for sale at £6.00 for a pound jar.



Three jars of apiary honey have been donated to Lamplugh Village Hall for their Promise Auction to raise funds for a new building with better parking.

The apiary garden needs serious attention this autumn and winter to get the weeds under control. Val Sullivan usually gardens on a Wednesday morning from

10.00 - 12.00 but she can't keep up with it on her own. **If anyone is able to help, please get in touch. If you can't manage weekdays, other dates could be arranged.**

A bench has been installed at the apiary, in memory of Mike Cottier.

Storm Ali did some damage to the roof of the shed, but this was repaired at the end of September at the last apiary meeting of the season.



Current Membership of W&DBKA:

At the last Committee meeting on 7th October, Piers Manson reported that we have 33 full members and 13 Friends of the Apiary, which is very similar to the same time last year.

W&DBKA events this summer:

Beginners Weekend.

The Beginner's weekend took place on the 28th & 29th of April, at Lamplugh Village Hall and then the teaching apiary. This was a successful course, attended by 9 people, 2 of whom have already started keeping their own bees.

Skep-making.

Our skep-making day was held on 11th August at Eddie & Maggie Sewell's house.

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9 people from Cockermouth and Penrith Beekeepers attended. Richard Robinson is our expert skep-maker, with support from Sarah Richards, while Maggie provided us with hot drinks and cake. We were very lucky to have a dry, sunny day and be able to work outside.



These are the part-made skeps at the end of the day. Everyone took home enough materials to finish their skep at home.

WDBKA Annual Honey Show.

As usual our Honey Show took place as part of the Gosforth Show on Saturday 18th of August.

Although the number of entries was down from last year, with no entries at all for the novice cup, our stand outside the marquee was busy with visitors. The observation hive, the skep-making demonstration and the chance to sample different local honeys proved very popular, and Peter Broadbent provided a spectacular frame for the display from his top-bar hive.



On the same day as Gosforth Show, Grahame Pinches manned a stand outside ASDA at Dunmail Park, as part of the publicity for the release of the new film, "Christopher Robin" –with lots of interest from families on their way to see the film.



Afternoon tea, booksale and update on Asian Hornets.

On 7th October Val and Steve hosted an afternoon meeting with tea and cake at Brackenwray. This was an opportunity for members to look through the remaining books in our library and buy any they wanted.

Following the recent increase in Asian Hornet sightings & finding of nests in Cornwall & Hampshire, it was a good opportunity for an update about the hornets & the damage they can do to honeybees. The BBKA are urging all associations to be vigilant and monitor for Asian Hornets, and to routinely use hornet traps at apiaries, so Richard demonstrated how to make a hornet trap, and how to

bait it. For anyone who missed Richard's demo, here is a link to a video on YouTube;

www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR6MUekAjMo

Asian Hornets - Coming to an Apiary near you?

Computer modelling of its potential distribution in Europe based on the climate within its home range and within the areas it has already occupied predicts that **large parts of Europe, including the UK, would provide suitable conditions for the Asian hornet to become established.** Already spread across most of France, into northern Spain and Portugal, into northern Italy, and into Belgium and SW Germany, the invasion front of hornet nests is spreading at an average of 60km per year. **N.B. 52 Asian Hornet nests have been found and destroyed in Jersey this year!**

Devon Beekeepers have a lot of information and useful links on their website, www.devonbeekeepers.org.uk and they are very happy for other associations to share this, and learn from their experience with finding Asian Hornets at Woolacombe last autumn.

Dates for your diary.

Saturday 10th November. Cumbria Beekeepers Autumn Conference and Annual Honey Show This year, the Cumbria Honey Show is being held at Braithwaite Institute, just outside Keswick, much closer to home than usual. There are a range of honey classes, including a Beginners class, and classes for beeswax, baking and confectionary.

There is no need to enter in advance, just take your exhibits along to Braithwaite at 10.00 on the morning of the show.

In addition the Speaker is Clive de Bruyn, who is one of the best-known and respected beekeeping authorities in the UK, and author of "Practical Beekeeping".

He will be giving two talks, "Maintaining Healthy Colonies in spite of Varroa", and "The Joy of Raising Queens". This is a real opportunity to hear a nationally recognised speaker.

The day costs £10.00. Refreshments and a light lunch are included. Please come, enter some exhibits and support our local association.

Friday November 16th, WDBKA AGM at Lamplugh Village Hall.

Our AGM will be at Lamplugh Village Hall as usual, starting at 7.00 pm. The format will be the same as previous years, with a short meeting, followed by a Pie and Peas supper and puddings. There will an EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) at the start of the AGM to ratify a change in our Membership Form in line with the new Data Protection Regulations.

Demo of trickle method for oxalic acid.

There will be a demonstration of winter treatment for Varroa using the oxalic acid trickle method at the teaching apiary in late December or early January. The date will be circulated nearer the time.

Fondant for Sale

The association has fondant for sale for winter feeding. One slab of fondant costs £3.50, or a box of 5 slabs of fondant costs £15.00. Please contact Val Sullivan at

brackenwray@aol.com, tel 01946 862604
if you would like to buy some.

Finally, a DIY project from the internet

“Another Blue Peter Moment”

Do you have some honey to spare this year? Many of us do, after a proper summer, with happy industrious bees gathering nectar day by day from sunlit flowers.

Jars of honey always make good Christmas presents, but how to package them?

One of the “pod” washing detergent containers will hold 3 jars very neatly and show them off well.

Use “sticky stuff remover” to clean off the labels, then ease the lid and hinged surround off before washing the container to remove odours and smudges leaving a plain container to be decorated with Christmas stickers/stencils/wrapping paper and of course a festive gift label.

Add 3 jars of delicious honey. One gift sorted!

