

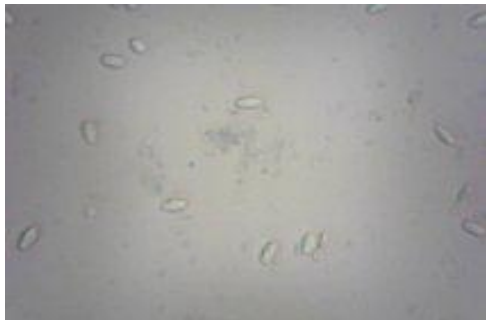
Whitehaven and District Beekeepers Newsletter

Spring 2012

Introduction

Over the last few days we are finally seeing some warmer spring weather. Hopefully, the bees are taking pollen and nectar into the hives to feed the developing brood. My bees seem to find the hellebore flowers in the garden very attractive at the moment, and there is plenty of gorse, hazel and pussy willow coming out.

However, Nosema infection has caused colony losses in several local apiaries this year. These include both long-established sites, and the Association apiary at Westlakes. Steps are being taken to treat the infection.



Microscopy of Nosema spores

If any members have lost any colonies, or have any very weak colonies, please contact Val Sullivan, to arrange samples for microscopy to check for possible Nosema.

Val has also written an article about Nosema which is available in the March edition of the Cumbria Bee Times.

Branch Apiary news

1. The Bee Shelter

Over the last month, the bee shelter has been built to protect the hives from wind and rain. As

well as protecting the bees, the shelter will make the planned teaching sessions much less weather dependent, so we should have far fewer cancellations & alterations to our timetable this year.



2. The Planting Day

This took place last Saturday, with members bringing plants and seeds to enhance the range of flowers available for the bees. It was warm and sunny at the apiary, and the bees were busy taking in pollen.

We planted several different herbs, including rosemary, thyme and majoram, along with *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, buddleias, ox-eye daisies, snowdrops and, courtesy of Val, a tea-tree bush from New Zealand which the bees use to make manuka honey. Thanks to Grahame Pinches, who sent wildflower seeds which have been sown, along with borage and poached-egg plants.



If anyone has plants or seeds, and couldn't come to the planting day, there will be opportunities to add plants during other apiary visits.

Talk by David Walmsley

On 25th February, David Walmsley from Furness Beekeepers gave an interesting talk at Brackenwray, about what to look for, and what to do during the first inspection of the bees after winter. This was followed by tea and cakes.

Training Courses

The training courses on 10th and 11th March were both excellent. 28 delegates attended the Introduction to Beekeeping on Saturday 10th. The talks covered a range of topics, from siting an apiary, the equipment needed to begin keeping bees, bee diseases and the role of bee inspectors, the beekeeping year and the natural history of the honeybee.

The next day was aimed at beekeepers who wished to improve their practice, and attracted an audience of 17. We learned about the history of bee-keeping, the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of a range of bee infections, and how to raise queens. The feedback from both days has been very positive, and some new members have joined Whitehaven Beekeepers. Many thanks to all the speakers, to Val Sullivan for organising the courses, and to Richard Robinson for all his work behind the scenes in the kitchen

Beeswax wanted

Artist from the Florence Mine group are keen to buy beeswax. If anyone would be able to supply some, please contact jenni_payne@hotmail.com

Thermal Imaging of Hives

Dominic Rhodes was able to borrow a thermal imaging camera in January, and took pictures at several different local apiaries. These show the heat generated by the cluster of bees inside the hive, which is significantly warmer than their surroundings. This is shown in the picture below, the bright dots at the entrance are individual flying bees.



Other Meetings and Events in 2012

Sat 31st March, Cumbria Beekeepers AGM

This is being held at 14.00hrs, at Southey St Methodist Church Keswick. This year Christine Matthews, the CBKA Treasurer, will be giving a talk on “Pollen for Health”

Please bring along recipe suggestions for the autumn honey show

April 20th, 21st and 22nd, The Annual British Beekeepers Convention

is being held on at Harper Adams. The programme is available at www.bbka.org.uk

The Penrith Branch will be hiring a bus, leaving Penrith at about 6.30 am on Sat 22nd April and starting the return journey at about 16.30. If you wish to book a seat, or ask for more information, please contact Joy Rich, the Secretary.

Penrith Branch will be running a two day Beginners' course in April. Further details are available from www.penrithbeekeepers.org.uk

Saturday 23rd June, Whitehaven & District Beekeepers Annual BBQ at Brackenwray

Saturday 6th October, The Cockermouth Beekeepers are holding a conference at Embleton Village Hall