

Apiary news

The last apiary visit, on August 7th, showed that most of the hives were doing well, though the changeable weather this summer has contributed to a relative shortage of honey in the supers. One of the hives provided the bees to populate our observation hive for Gosforth Show.

The garden is looking very colourful in late summer, and is starting to look more mature as the shrubs and trees develop. The gardening team is managing to keep on top of the weeds, but we are facing some problems from rabbits and deer, which seem to like some of the plants as much as the bees.

There have been visits to the apiary this summer by several different groups, and only one had to be cancelled due to heavy rain.

Whitehaven Beekeepers Honey Show at Gosforth on August 20th

Gosforth Show seems to attract more than its fair share of bad weather, and this year was no exception.



We optimistically put up the framework of our gazebo in the rain on Friday afternoon, but by Saturday morning it was clear that the wind and rain were set in for the day, so we relocated our display next to the exhibits for the honey show inside the marquee.



There was a good display of honey, beeswax, cakes and confectionary, but again, the majority of entries in the honey classes came from outside Whitehaven Beekeepers.



Ian Gregory from Carlisle very kindly judged the exhibits, and I learned a lot about the do's and don'ts of showing honey while stewarding with him. Simple things such as having clean, matching jars, and clean lids all count. Also, clear honey must be clear, with no bits, or air-bubbles, or scum on the top of the jar.



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Results The Heckles Cup, awarded to the member of WDBKA with the most points in the Honey classes was won by Tony Calvin, who also won the Ashburner Shield.

The Challenge Cup for the most points overall was won by Alan Tett, and Peter Broadbent won the Novice Cup.

The Waddington Memorial Cup for the best exhibit in the show was awarded to Paul Connor, for his frame of honey ready for extraction, while Val Sullivan won both the classes of beeswax.

There were lots of entries in the children's classes, but keeping the pictures on the display boards was quite a challenge in the very damp conditions.

The observation hive proved to be very popular with the visitors, who also enjoyed tasting some of the honey from our apiary.



Thanks to Sandra Manson, and Maggie and Eddy Sewell, who helped manage our stand and display of exhibits.

Harvesting Honey

This is the time of year when beekeepers are hoping to harvest some honey from their hives. Supers or frames which are fully capped are straightforward, but after the unsettled weather we have had this summer, it is all too common to find stores that are still uncapped at the end of the season.

I have certainly been wondering to do in this situation, and was very interested to read Wally Shaw's article, Extracting and Bottling Honey, in this month's (August) edition of the BBKA News.

His solution for drying uncapped honey that has a high water content, (as measured using a refractometer) is to use a dehumidifier while it is still in the combs. He gives full details of how he does this in the article, which I found very useful. N.B. Inexpensive honey refractometers are readily available to buy on-line.

Outlets for Selling Honey

Both Egremont Farmers Market and The Gather at Ennerdale Bridge are keen to sell local honey. These are both community based groups, who sell local products from local producers.

The contact for Egremont Market is Carole Woodman, at sandcwoodman@outlook.com

For The Gather in Ennerdale, please contact Nina Ludgate on 01946 748144.

Buying and selling beekeeping equipment locally

John Forster, one of our members, has created a Facebook group to buy/ sell beekeeping equipment in Cumbria. If anyone is on Facebook and would like to join it, look for "Cumbrian bees & equipment to buy/sell"

If you ask to be added to the group John will add you to it.

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Alternatively, if you don't use Facebook, then I am happy to circulate messages about buying and selling bees and equipment.

Dates for your diary:

- 1. The last apiary visit for this season will be on Sunday 11th September at 13.00.** The main focus of this meeting will be Autumn feeding, and preparing the bees for winter
- 2. Cumbria Beekeepers Cockermonth Branch** are holding their Autumn conference on Saturday 3rd September, at Embleton Village Hall, from 9.00 -5.30. This will include an informal honey show, and talks from two good speakers, Willie Robson, a commercial beekeeper from Chainbridge Honey Farm near Berwick-on-Tweed, and Ian Molyneaux, our Regional Bee Inspector. The cost is £10.00, payable at the door.
- 3. Our AGM will be held on Monday 14th November,** and will include a demonstration of Honey Spinning.