

Teaching Apiary News:

The hives at the apiary are overwintering, with fondant to provide them with sufficient food reserves while the weather is wet or very cold.

However, even in the winter months, the apiary garden and surrounding woods are providing a more varied diet for the bees on the days when they are able to fly.



The two photos of snowdrops and a winter-flowering cherry were taken by Val Sullivan on 10th February this year. Other plants that are very valuable for the bees at this time of year include mahonia and heathers.

The gardening team have taken advantage of the winter to clear out & replant the raised bed in front of the hives with a range of herbs.



While there is very little happening with the bees themselves, a working party met in January for the annual spring-cleaning of the shed, and all the equipment, ready for the next season.

Was it an inside job?

On Sun.15th Jan WDBKA Apiary shed was cleaned out by a small, daring gang in broad daylight.

Frames were sorted, any they didn't like simply thrown aside. Supers, both wood and polystyrene, were scraped and washed. The wooden ones were then subjected to the thermic lance! The gang obviously made a note of all the equipment, no doubt intending to return.

There was forensic evidence that cups of coffee and tea were consumed and even the remains of Christmas cake found!

Happily the perpetrators must have been disturbed as everything was put back in neat order.

So, all is hopefully ready for a successful apiary season.

My thanks to Steve Sullivan for this contribution



To complete our preparations for this year, amid the noise of much hammering and chatting, several boxes of new super frames for the apiary were made up in record time by a group of 14 volunteers at Lamplugh Village Hall, on 4th March.

In memory of Mike Cottier

(16th December 1965- 18th December 2016)

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Mike after a progressive and rare illness.

Mike took up Beekeeping after buying his first colony of bees at one of Peter Harris's earlier Bee Auctions. Accompanied by his wife Liz he showed great enthusiasm for the whole occasion and went away very excited with his successful bid for one of the colonies of bees. He acknowledged that he was a complete beginner and once

his first hive was set up he attended Apiary meetings enthusiastically, planted his garden with a great variety of "bee-friendly" plants and nursed his bees through their first difficult winter.

From then he went from strength to strength, increasing his stocks, setting up Out-apiaries and collecting his first crop of honey. He had the true Apiarist's attitude- next year, next Spring, next Summer will be a good one for the bees.

He was a great champion of the natural world, with a love of all creatures great and small; a love which he instilled in his two young sons Jack and Harry. All who attended his funeral went away with a handful of mixed flower seeds from Mike's collection, and some of these will be planted in a corner of the Whitehaven and District Apiary, as a tribute to a sadly missed Beekeeper.

Val Sullivan

W&DBKA events and other dates for your diary:

Cumbria Beekeepers AGM will be held on Saturday 18th March, starting 13.45 at Southey Street Methodist Church rooms, in Keswick. This meeting is open to anyone who is a member of Whitehaven beekeepers.

The agenda and minutes of last year's AGM have already been circulated, but I can re-send them to anyone who wants.

Microscopy for *Nosema* identification on Saturday March 25th

If you would like to find out whether your colonies are harbouring *Nosema*, come along to the Microscopy afternoon at Lamplugh Village Hall on 25th March between 2.00pm – 4.00pm.

Finding *Nosema* may help you with your Spring hive management. For details of how to collect a sample of bees, please see the end of this newsletter.

Furness Beekeepers Annual convention is taking place on Saturday 1st April at the Malt Kiln at Bardsea, near Ulverston. Full details of the programme and an application form are available on www.furnessbeekeepers.co.uk

The annual Bee Auction will be held on Saturday 22nd April at Houghton Village Hall (CA3 ONW). If anyone wants to buy or sell beekeeping equipment, please see full details on Beesauctions.co.uk

Whitehaven Beekeepers “Beekeeping for Beginners course, 29th & 30th April

If you know anyone who is interested in beekeeping, and would like to learn more about it, please let them know about our beginners course. Day 1 on Saturday at Lamplugh Village Hall will cover basic theory and the equipment & facilities needed to keep bees, while on Sunday there will be a practical session at the teaching apiary. Details have already been circulated, & are also available on www.whitehavenbeekeepers.co.uk

Fortnightly teaching sessions at the apiary will probably start in May, the dates will be circulated nearer the time.

Collecting a sample of bees for *Nosema* microscopy

The bees need to be older overwintered bees—that is flying bees if possible. Collect them by holding a jar in front of the entrance and tapping on the hive walls to make some bees fly out.

Please collect about 30 bees from each colony you wish to test (if you mix bees from more than one colony you will still find out whether you have the disease in your Apiary).

If that is difficult, fashion a catching trap by using a cardboard tube with a small poly bag taped to one end. Hold the open tube end at a restricted hive entrance (Foam rubber works well). The bees will fly up the tube towards the light and can be tied into the poly bag. Put the bees, bagged or in the jar into the freezer for 24hrs to kill them. If you collect a while before the 25th, keep the now dead bees in paper bags or envelopes to avoid them going mouldy.

You will also need to bring with your **bees; an egg-cup, a teaspoon, pen and paper,** and a **small pair of sharp scissors.** If you own a **compound microscope** please bring that with you too, though we will have several for your use.

Tea and coffee will be provided.

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For more information about this Bee disease, look in the January edition of the Cumbria Bee Times.