

# Cumbria Bee Times

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(Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the editor and do not necessarily represent those of the CBKA)  
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## Cumbria Beekeepers Association Annual General Meeting

Saturday March 18th 2.00pm  
Southey St Methodist Church Keswick

Tea and coffee will be available.

The AGM will be preceded by a talk from the Secretary on his experience with the use of Snelgrove boards in 2016.

Propositions for the AGM so far include "That the £3.00 yearly subscription paid by Branch members to CBKA remain unchanged", "That CBKA continue to pay the examination fee for all members who are successful in the BBKA Diseases, Pests and Poisoning module 3 and The Basic Examination

Any other propositions need to be sent to the CBKA Secretary by March 4th for inclusion

## Surplus Bee equipment

Peter Harris, the owner of Cumbria Bee Supplies and Northern Bee Auctions is suffering from a long term illness and is no longer able to carry out his business.

However Peter's family are planning to go ahead with a

Northern Bee Auction on Saturday 22nd April 17  
at Houghton near Carlisle.

The contact web page is currently being set up.

## Heather honey 2016

John Hoskins, Director of Beecraft reported a very good heather season for 2016, following a fairly poor summer with less than average blossom honey. The good autumn weather in the Northern counties of England and in Scotland led to an exceptional heather bloom. The finer weather meant that the bees had maximum flying time to take advantage of the nectar flow leading to some above average crops. A lot of the heather honey was marketed as cut-comb honey (sparing the beekeeper the difficulties of pressing the thixotropic crop from combs.

The majority of heather honey was quickly sold to local and specialist markets.

## Nosema A dwindling disease of Spring colonies

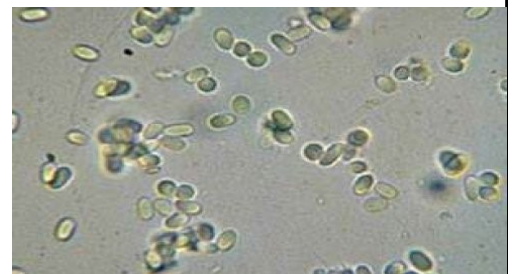
Nosema is a microsporidium-a one celled organism - which infects honey bees and weakens colonies. It is an important disease of adult bees but also indirectly affects the nutrition of the baby bees. Winter, when bees are confined to the hive by bad weather, causes the bees to defaecate on the comb (instead of taking "cleansing flights") and infected bees deposit millions of Nosema spores with the faecal material; these spores remain on the combs awaiting the big Spring clean up by the workers once the Queen starts laying again. The housekeepers, adult workers preparing for the expanding brood nest clean up the frames and cells ready for the eggs to be laid ingesting the spores as they clean. Each ingested spore germinates in the gut where it grows a long filament with which to inject the spore contents-the parasite -into one of the lining cells of the bees digestive system (the ventriculus) Here it grows and multiplies before bursting the gut cell to release many spores to continue the cycle. Infected bees cannot absorb food and therefore their hypo-pharyngeal glands are then unable to produce enough brood food for the young larvae. The infected bees are undernourished and have shortened life spans (as happens with human beings who have chronic parasitic infestations) The colony does not build up well and may dwindle and die out. Spores which are excreted are tough, resistant to drying, freezing, and many chemicals. These remain in the hive, and on frames drying out to a brownish yellow stain.

There are two species of Nosema which affect honey bees-Nosema apis and Nosema ceranae. For the amateur beekeeper the distinction is unimportant as both cause poor colony development. It is an easy and interesting microscopy task to look for Nosema spores in your colonies. Most Branches of CBKA will hold microscopy sessions to aid in diagnosis. There is no treatment for infected colonies since the withdrawal of the antibiotic fumagillin (FumidilB) several years ago.

However, as the most important method of spread is by comb exchange between colonies by the beekeeper, good housekeeping will control Nosema. Spores on comb can survive for years, so if comb is to be reused it should be treated for a week with acetic acid; better still throw away old comb and in Spring practice a comb change by either Shook swarm or Bailey comb change methods, for healthy Summer stocks.

## Nosema apis

magnified 400x



## **Next CBKA Committee meeting**

**Saturday 21st January 17**

All at Southey Street Methodist Rooms at 2.00pm  
Please make sure a Branch Representative comes to this meeting to guide the committee on propositions for CBKA AGM. There will also be a report from our BBKA delegate on the recent ADM meeting.

### **CONTACTS FOR BRANCHES**

#### **Carlisle**

Fiona Roebuck  
Old Town House  
High Hesket  
CA4 0JE  
01697 473741  
froebuck@btinternet.com

#### **Penrith**

Terry Phillips  
[pbkamail@twphillips.net](mailto:pbkamail@twphillips.net)

#### **Cockermouth**

Mike Fitzgerald  
Swallow Barn  
Gilcrux  
CA7 2QX  
016973 20204  
mobile:07821 565793  
linda\_fitzgerald@btinternet.com

#### **Whitehaven**

Grahame Pinches  
41 John Colligan Drive  
Cleator Moor  
CA25 5JX  
01946 812100  
grahame.pinches@gmail.com

Full details of CBKA events and Officers contacts can be found on the Cumbria Beekeepers website [Cumbriabeekeepers.co.uk](http://Cumbriabeekeepers.co.uk)

There are several other non-affiliated Associations in the North West

#### **Keswick**

Stephen Barnes  
Albemarle St,  
Cockermouth,  
CA13 0BG  
01900 824972  
braithwaitebees@sky.com

### **“Bee Improvement for All”.**

An all day event aimed at encouraging all beekeepers to improve their bees. There will be tuition on how to raise queens using queen cells that bees often present us with during the summer, as well as some simple “artificial” techniques that may be suitable for the more advanced beekeeper, or those working in groups.

#### **Tyneside BKA**

**Date:-** Saturday 4th March 2017   **Time:-** 9.00 for 9.30-4.30 approx.

**Venue:-** Marley Hill Community Centre, Church Street, Marley Hill, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE16 5DW

**Cost:-** £10 per head adult. £7 per head for under 18.

**Bookings/ Enquiries :** William Weaver [events.tynesidebees@gmail.com](mailto:events.tynesidebees@gmail.com)



### **Winter flowering shrubs and flowers for bees include**

Mahonia,  
Viburnums,  
Hellebores,  
Aconites,  
Snowdrops  
Winter  
honeysuckles

***Easy when you know  
how/what is the best  
way to light a  
smoker...?***



Always light your smoker before putting on your veil, and gloves (especially latex or rubber gloves), you don't want gloves melted onto your hands or a hole melted in your veil!

Bigger smokers are easier to keep alight than smaller ones, because you get a larger fire going in the chamber, and they burn longer. They are easier to clean out (you can get your hand down inside when it's cool!).

You can use any fuel you like, cardboard, egg boxes, sacking, rotten timber, grass nuts or straw pellets, cotton waste, fir cones, hay etc... Just test some of your chosen media to see it burns before you start! I had a colleague who converted all the packaging from a sofa into rolls to fit his smoker, had a whole seasons fuel... only to find it was laced with fire retardant and would not burn! Cotton waste is popular with novices doing their Basic Assessment where you have to demonstrate you can light and keep a smoker going. You have to fluff up the waste to get it to light. Once lit drop it lit end down into the smoker, it will burn well and last the duration of your assessment.

Keep your fuel somewhere dry, shed, greenhouse, conservatory the latter two are good for drying out foraged fuel. Once it is dry you don't want it attracting the damp, I keep some dry fuel and lighter in an airtight bucket.

You have to light the smoker from the bottom up. Too many people try to light the material in the top of the smoker. The air from the bellows comes into the chamber from the bottom, passing up through the fuel. By attempting to light the material on the top you are blowing the fire AWAY from the fuel. The trick is to empty out your smoker, light a small amount of card/paper (you can use a fire stick lighter) and drop it into the bottom, on the hearth. Add dry fuel (it can be previously partially burnt material, nothing like re-cycling). Operate the bellows – this blows the fire/flame towards the fuel.

Spend a couple of minutes pumping the bellows and occasionally shaking the chamber to get the material to settle down. Once the smoker is lit and settled, top up with fresh fuel. If you use small pellet like material (as I do) you may want to put a piece of mesh on top of the fuel to stop lit pellets from being blown out of the smoker chimney. Everything in the hive will burn! You do not want flames or burning matter issuing from the chimney. The smoke should be cool and be a pleasant smell (you are trying to mimic wood smoke). If the smoke is acrid or eye watering you probably need to change the material you are burning. Once lit the smoker should stay lit for hours with minimal attention. Some fuel like hay will burn more quickly than say timber or pellets. Try a range of fuel and find what works for you and your bees. If your smoker is burning too quickly, and generating too much smoke, kick it onto its side... this will reduce the air flow and calm down the fire. You can always right it to fire it up again. To put the smoker out you need to starve the fire of oxygen. Put a plug of green grass into the chimney, this should be enough to choke out the fire. Just for safety I carry my lit smoker from apiary to apiary in a small galvanised dustbin, yes I have nearly set light to my car in the past, and the smell of the smoke took forever to get rid of!

Thanks to Thorne Beekeeping supplies for this article.