

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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The International Meeting of Young Beekeepers (IMYB)

took place during the first week of July. Each year a different country has hosted the event and in this it's eighth year it came to the UK. Fifty seven young beekeepers from nineteen countries descended upon Marlborough, keen to learn, share experiences and, most importantly build friendships through beekeeping. Ruth and Ian Homer did a great job in organising the meeting.

Unfortunately the BBKA was unable to raise the £30,000 sponsorship needed for the event and monies from BBKA members which were requested after the ADM adopted a proposition to place a levy on them to fund the IMBY have still not all been forthcoming. The accounts are available for scrutiny from the BBKA. Reports on the IMYB will be broadcast on Country file on 23rd July and there was coverage on Radio 4's Farming Today on 10th July

Update on Vespa velutina

Asian hornets have been identified in Jersey this summer, which is not too surprising as they are now well established in Brittany. Following the sporadic sightings last autumn in the South of England we should be vigilante even up here in the cold, wet North.

The Asian hornet is slightly smaller than European hornet with a dark brown to black thorax and a yellow fourth abdominal segment plus yellow legs. Hornet traps can be purchased or easily and cheaply made. There are plenty of instructions to follow on the internet. Remember that this species (unlike our own *Vespa crabro*) will completely destroy whole colonies of honey bees. Look out for the enormous nests- high up in trees from which the adults will descend to Apiaries causing devastation to the inhabitants, and therefore to the beekeeper!

Dates for your Diary

CBKA Committee meetings

Dates to be announced

Gosforth Agricultural Show and Whitehaven Annual Honey Show

Saturday August 19th (Entries by 1st August)

National Honey Show Sandown Park
Surrey 26th-28th October

Cumbria Honey Show Newbiggin Village
Hall Saturday November 4th

The Neonicotinoid Debate

A major £2.7m study into a controversial type of nicotine-based pesticide has found it can indeed cause harm to bees, prompting environmentalists and some scientists to call for an outright ban. Funded by two major agrochemical companies, the researchers discovered neonicotinoids were associated with negative effects on bees at sites in the UK and Hungary. However, they also found it had some "positive" effects on bees in Germany. Nevertheless, writing in the leading journal *Science*, they concluded that the chemicals reduced the ability of bees to establish new populations the following year with a 24 per cent reduction in the Hungarian populations. The Soil Association said the findings were the "final, fatal blow" to the idea that neonics were safe for bees. One leading bee researcher, Professor Nigel Raine, of Guelph University, said that the overall message from the study was that the pesticides had "appreciable negative impacts. In wild bees, reproduction was negatively correlated with neonicotinoid residues. These findings point to neonicotinoids causing a reduced capacity of bee species to establish new populations in the year following exposure. Two leading bee scientists, who were not involved in the study, agreed that it showed neonics were damaging bees. Professor David Goulson of Sussex University, said: "This is by far the largest field trial ever conducted on the impacts of neonicotinoids on bees."

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Full details of CBKA events and Officers contacts can be found on the Cumbria Beekeepers website Cumbriabeekeepers.co.uk

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

Autumn treatment for the Varroa mite.

Once honey supers have been removed it will be time to treat colonies for Varroa before the winter. Try to treat all the colonies in each Apiary at the same time and monitor the mite population before and after treatment. Use registered Voacides and follow the instructions carefully for maximum effect.

Of the many choices Apiguard is probably the easiest to use but requires a temperature of 15c + and takes 4-6 weeks to complete. Api-bioxal can only be used on broodless colonies (so deep winter). Apistan or Bayvarol need a resistance test to be performed before use (details in NBU booklet on Varroa). MAQS strips are easy to use but expensive.

Let-alone or natural beekeeping will result in dead colonies.

Read the NBU booklet, then order your choice of treatment.

Bankhead Bee Supplies

For all your Beekeeping Requirements

Bankhead Farm, Newby East, Carlisle, CA4 8RA
Telephone:01228 573289

Your local agent for Thorne and Sherriff

John Harris is retiring from beekeeping and also has some second hand bee equipment for sale

More bees and equipment

David Walmsley, a founder member and Secretary of the independent Furness Beekeepers is downsizing over the next few months and has several colonies of bees, housed in Commercial hives in the Furness area which he would like to see go to good homes. If you are interested please ring David on 01539721501 to negotiate prices and re-location.

Whilst our bees live in hives, some bees live in snail shells

Osmia bicolor a bi-coloured solitary Mason bee lives throughout England, South Wales, and Central Europe on chalk or limestone grasslands. Their season starts early with males emerging from late February through March. They seek out the first spring flowers on the downs including dandelions and shelter in snail shells at night and during cold weather. The females emerge a few weeks later and are quickly mated by the patrolling males. The males remain in their loose grassland fraternities for a few weeks until all the females have emerged. The species is polylectic (meaning that it doesn't have a preference for any one type of flower) and has been noted on flowering plants in the families [Primulaceae](#), [Rosaceae](#), [Lamiaceae](#), [Asteraceae](#), and [Liliaceae](#). The mated females set about engaging in a truly delightful behaviour. Female *Osmia bicolor* seek-out the vacant shells of terrestrial snails (apparently favouring those of the [Banded Snail Cepaea](#)) Once a suitable shell has been selected and she has manoeuvred it into a proper position, she enters and begins partitioning the interior into a maximum of 4-5 cells. Each cell is stocked with an egg and pollen before being sealed with a layer of leaf mastic (the product of masticated green-leaf matter), soil, and other debris. Once the shell is fully stocked and sealed, the female manoeuvres the shell so that the opening is facing the substrate and then her real work begins. Over the next hour or so, the female collects dead grass and bramble stems from the surrounding area and returns with this to thatch together a camouflaged shelter over the shell. She will construct 5 or 6 of these nests over a season. The young larvae then remain in the shell eating the stores she has provided, until they metamorphose and emerge the following spring.



Osmia bicolor preparing a nest in a snail shell.

Source: urbanbees.eu