



# 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)

New Issue No: 8

Date: June 2020

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I start this issue again talking about the weather! Following the rain and cold in March, suddenly April and May were hot and extremely dry which has confounded the Met. Office, never mind the bees. The British weather has always been unpredictable but having gone extreme with variations from cold to hot and then the beginning of June, very cold and mid June warming up again! June of course brings the June Gap, when the Spring flowers have gone and the Summer flowers have not quite made an appearance. Some beekeepers traditionally take an early crop of honey from their bee at this time of year. However, because of the June Gap and unfavourable weather, this can lead to starvation in the hive as there are many more bee mouths to feed. This issue's cover picture of the Honeybee on White Clover was taken on the 31st May, this year. This is early for the white clover as it usually the end of June and into July when it secretes nectar. However, the hot dry month of May seems to have brought the clover on early. It will be interesting to see how it and other summer flowers fare during the rest of the season.

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There has been a lot of media coverage, during the recent Lockdown, regarding the mental health benefits of being close to nature. As beekeepers I am sure we could have told them that! However, it has certainly made me realise how fortunate I am to have a garden and able to continue with my interest in bees during the Lockdown. The smallest bee I have seen in the garden is the Mini Miner bee, a solitary bee, shown on a Forget-me-not flower. Before pollination the centre of the flower is yellow and after pollination the centre turns white. The bees can recognise this so saving energy visiting flowers already pollinated.



Bees also have the ability to see colour much faster than humans. Their colour vision is the fastest in the animal world-five times faster than humans. So while we may have trouble distinguishing one flower in a group from another, bees don't. They see each individual flower. Some flower petals appear to change colour, depending upon the angle. This is known as iridescence. It's often in the UV spectrum, so we can't see it. But, bees can. They see these shiny petals and associate them with sugar. Thus, the flower becomes more attractive to the bee and gets pollinated.

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We are now in the midst of the swarming Season and a friend who studies Ancient Scandinavian Law recently gave me a copy of the following:-

From 'Medieval Danish Law - the Laws of Scania, Zealand and Jutland,' editors: Ditelev Tamm & Helle Vogt

He who found bees was allowed to mark the tree and take away the bees if the tree was cut down, or else make an agreement with the owner of the woods to share the bees. Bees were not regarded as domestic animals, but rather - as in Roman law - animals of a wild nature. Thus, the owner could lose the right to them if they flew to someone else's property, or the original owner lost track of them and they were found by another. In these cases, the laws encouraged the original owner and the finder or the owner of land where the bees had settled to agree on keeping the bees in a partnership.

If a man pursues his swarm of bees into another man's enclosed woods, he shall tell the one who owns the woods, and each of them shall have half. If he who owns the woods will not let his tree be cut down, the other man shall let his bees remain or take them away without causing damage to the one who owns the woods. If he cuts down the tree without permission from the one who owns the woods, he shall pay three marks to him or deny with an oath of twelve. If he who owns the woods and the tree takes

away the bees, he who owned the bees shall pursue him, and he shall have pledge for his bees and take them back as stolen goods or taken by rapine with an oath of six men, or the other must defend them as home-bred with the witness of two men and an oath of twelve. If a man looks for bees in another man's enclosed woods and find some, he shall tell the one who has the woods, and each of them shall have half. If he who owns the woods says that he found them first, he shall defend himself against the other man with an oath of three men. If a man finds bees in another man's enclosed woods on a branch or on the ground, he shall take them away without damage to the man who owns the woods and he shall not give an oath for that, that he took them away from there, and no compensation. If bees fly to another man's house and the owner pursues them, and he who owns the house claims that they are his bees, he shall prove it with an oath of three men. If he who owns the house does not say that they are his, he who pursues them shall also swear an oath of three men and he shall take his bees away without damage to the man who owns the house, or if he cannot, he shall not. If bees attack another man's bees and sting them to death, then the owners of the bees can have them together if they think that is a solution and they both wish it to be so. If they do not wish to be together and if he who is summoned denies that the other man's bees were damaged by his bees, he shall prove according to the value of the other's bees. If he admits to part of the damages and denies the rest, he shall pay for what he admits too, and for that which he denies he shall prove by oath as the one who received the damage estimates the value.

The following is from The Sacred Bee by Hilda Ransome:

Early English Law does not often mention bees and honey. However King Alfred made a law that every beekeeper must announce the issue of a swarm by ringing bells or clashing metals, so that it might be followed and captured. Known as "Tanging the Bees". As his code contains many laws earlier than his reign, this regulation may go back to the times when the English were still on the Continent.

The modern day attitude seems to be "Finders Keepers" and we neither have the time to sit and watch for a swarm emerging or afford for someone else to do it for us!

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### **Cumbria Beekeepers Executive Committee.**

The AGM of the Cumbria Beekeepers was held just before the start of the Corona Virus Lockdown. Consequently the next scheduled meeting had to be held via Zoom. A completely new experience for most of us on the Committee. The main reason for the meeting was to elect a Chairman for the next twelve months. Walter McPhee agreed to continue in this role and was unanimously re-elected. The Cumbria Treasurer, Melanie Vincent informed the meeting that the previous year's accounts had been verified by an

accountant who charged accountant rates for this task.

It is not necessary for the accounts to be audited, only verified, and this can be carried out by someone with Book-keeping skills. Is there anybody, not on the Committee, who is capable and willing to verify the accounts at the end of this financial year? Or do you know someone who would do it for nominal sum?

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### **Dates for your diary.**

Cockermouth Beekeepers are again hosting the **Cumbria Beekeepers Autumn Convention** at the Embleton Village Hall on **Saturday 12th September 2020**. If circumstances allow.

### **Cumbria Beekeepers Honey Show.**

To be held on **Sunday 1st November 2020** at the Braithwaite Village Hall. Further details of speakers and Show schedule will be issued at a further date.

**Please provide articles that you would like to share with other beekeepers before September to be included in the next issue of the Bee Times. The Editor appreciates this contribution from others and it makes the Bee Times more interesting.**

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