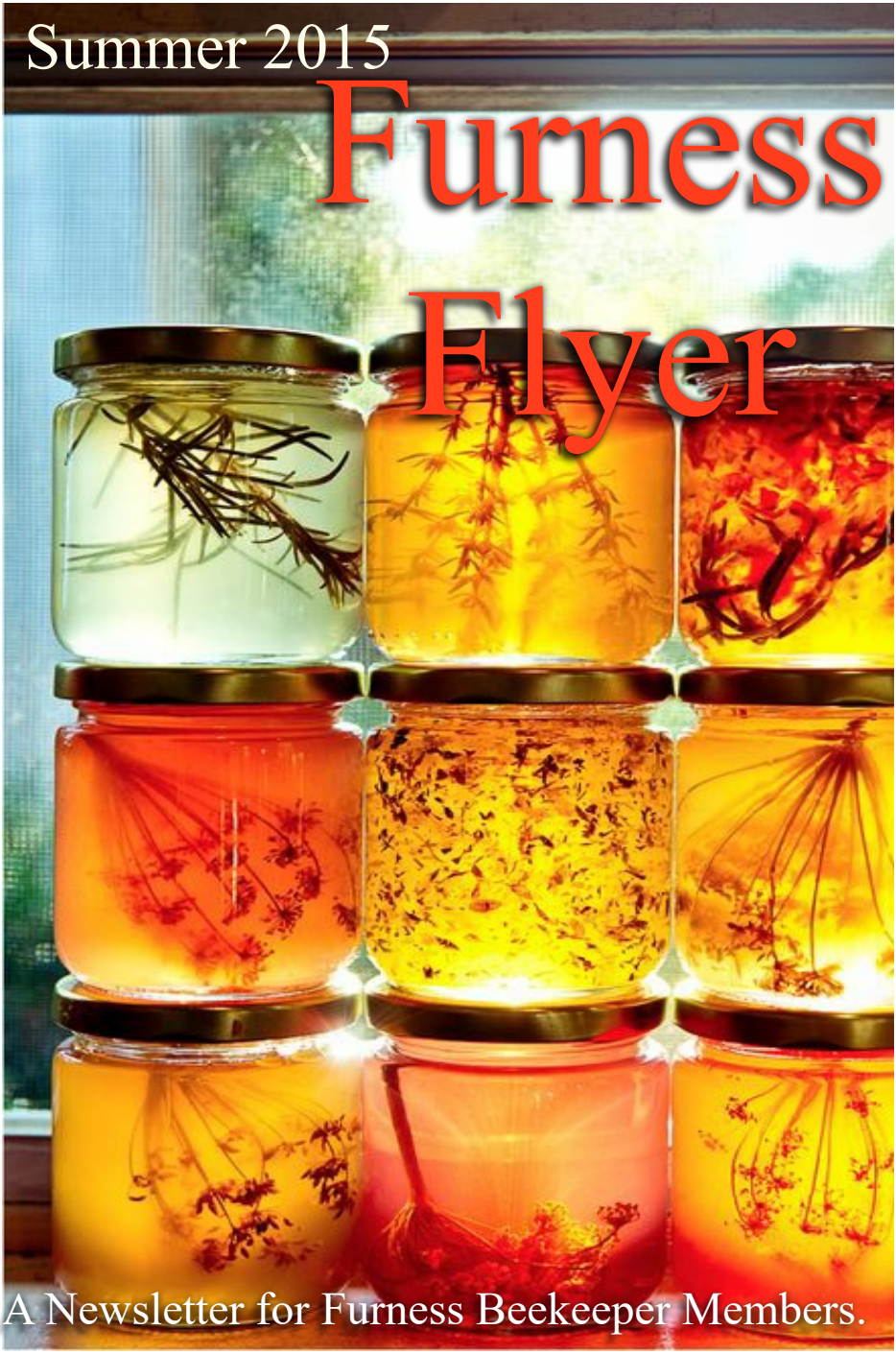
Summer 2015

Furness Flyer



A Newsletter for Furness Beekeeper Members.

Cover image from http://mmariamula.tumblr.com/post/56264049255

Letter from the Secretary

Well – hot enough for you? We had a warm start and then a cold spell and now back to very hot weather.
It certainly brought on a great deal of swarming and I am sure we have not seen so much swarming for a long time.

There have been reports about swarms being claimed by Beekeepers, despite having been discovered by other members. Two things really – firstly if you find a swarm and don't know what to do, ring someone who you can help you. secondly if your bees have swarmed they are NO LONGER yours. Personally I feel it is very poor show indeed to suggest those bees have come from particular hives, there can be no proof and no valid claim anyway.

The warm weather has enabled the bees to produce good crop of early honey. I have not taken early honey off my hives for a long time, usually it's been eaten during a rainy spell in July. I hope that you all have taken some well deserved honey too

We were invited to attend Holker Garden Festival and we took our bee display and sold some honey. The Saturday was brilliant and very busy, but the weekend was marred by very inclement weather on the Friday and Sunday
.
We are still very busy on the Saturday morning lessons at the Apiary. .
We had a serious blip when a passer by was stung, when walking in the roadway adjacent to the apiary.. This was reported to the Environment Agency by an unknown person.
We were totally unaware that anything had happened and I feel we should have been given the opportunity to have some dialogue with the offended person's before they went ahead and reported us

.In response we closed the apiary for four weeks and re-queened the hives.
We are now open again and hope very much that we do not have a reoccurrence because if we did it would probably mean us relocating the apiary

I struggled to fill the Observation hive – but have now managed to get it stocked
I have used the observation hive for many years but this year is the first time it has swarmed.!
It's been very interesting watching the bees care for the queen cells and then wait in vast numbers on the wall of the shed, with their bottoms in the air scenting with their nosmos glands to guide back the virgin on her flight .
Just now they are pulling down the surplus queen cells but only after one swarm and two casts. We hope that the new queen will soon start laying.

We are very sorry to lose the services of Richard and Anne Kenyon who are retiring from supplying us with beekeeping equipment.
They were always very obliging and were a very handy source for our beekeeping needs.
We wish them luck for the future and hope they keep contact with us.
We will miss them very much.

I hope that this season does actually prove to be a good one and that honey will once again flow into those jars bought with high expectations.
If the current climate continues we will go into the winter in strong form!
I hope to be able to catch up with you all sometime
David

THIS MONTH IN YOUR APIARY: July

Currently your colonies should be at maximum strength to take full advantage of the summer flowers and we beekeepers need to keep pace with them to ensure that they have enough room to store nectar and pollen and that the queens have room to lay. There is less urgency to remove and extract honey as the oilseed rape is over and we can afford to wait until the frames are sealed before removing them. It's a good idea to move uncapped or partially capped frames to the middle of the super for the bees to complete as they work in a chimney fashion so will go straight up the centre of the hive, ignoring the outer frames unless they need them. We need to maintain our vigilance where colony health is concerned and to be alert to signs of robbing by
stronger colonies and by wasps - yes, it's time to make some wasp traps……

Jobs for July

~ continue to add supers ahead of the bees' requirements when the lower box is full of bees not honey
~ carry out detailed inspections on colonies that have not been split and take action if you find queen cells
~ remove and extract sealed frames of honey and put the empties back on in the evening for the bees to clean
out
~ reduce entrances to avoid the risk of robbing by bees and wasps
~ make wasp traps - guidance online from BBKA, NBU, FERA, the late Dave Cushman site, etc
~ continue to monitor the daily
Varroa drop and take action if the count is above 10
~ make sure you have equipment, jars and labels organised for your honey harvest
~ leave your bait hive out a bit longer, there may still be swarms about
~ keep watching, learning and asking questions

Penny Forsyth
Notts BKA

Legends and Lore of Bees

In addition to providing us with honey and wax, bees are known to have magical properties, and they feature extensively in folklore from many different cultures. These are just a few of the legends about bees:

In some areas of New England and Appalachia, it was believed that once someone died, it was important for the family to "go tell the bees" of the death. Whoever kept the bees for the family would make sure the bees got the news, so that they could spread it around.

Ancient Egyptian pharaohs used the honeybee as the royal symbol, during the period between 3000 b.c.e. and 350 b.c.e.

The Greeks believed that a baby whose lips were touched by a bee would become a great poet or speaker.

If a bee flies into your house, it means that someone is coming to visit. If you kill the bee, the visitor will bring you bad news.

Several deities are associated with bees and honey - Aphrodite, Vishnu, Pan, Cybele, and Ra, just to name a few.

Ever hear the phrase "busy as a bee"? Bees in a hive work repetitively a the same task all day long. A bee who goes out foraging may fly as many as ten miles a day, gathering pollen and nectar to bring back to the hive, over and over again. According to the National Honey Board, a bee may visit more than two million flowers to gather enough nectar to make just one pound of honey. Thus, bees are associated with hard work and diligence.

If a bee lands on your hand, it means money is coming your way.

Bees are, in some cultures, associated with purity. This is because the worker bees that produce honey never mate.

Author J.K. Rowling named Professor Albus Dumbledore for an archaic English word related to bees. She says that when writing, she imagined the headmaster of Hogwarts "wandering around the castle humming to himself," and so chose to associate his name with bees.

In Celtic mythology, the bee is a messenger between our world and the spirit realm. Bees are also associated with wisdom.

Bees and honey appear in the Norse eddas, often connected with Yggdrasil, the World Tree.

Patti Wigington

Mad Honey

IN 401 BC, 10,000 Greek mercenaries were marching home from war against the king of Persia. Passing through Colchis, on the eastern side of the Black Sea, they feasted on honey stolen from beehives dotted around the countryside. Soon thousands had fallen into a stupor. The historian and soldier Xenophon describes them acting like intoxicated madmen, as if under a spell. As strangers to the region, they knew nothing of the effects of the "mad honey" made by local bees.

The men recovered within a few days, but others were not so lucky. In 65 BC, troops led by the great Roman general Pompey against King Mithridates VI of Pontus, also on the Black Sea coast, lay weak and dazed after eating honeycombs strategically placed along their route by the enemy – and were slaughtered. Mad honey had become a chemical weapon,

This amber-hued mutant's effects range from a pleasant tingling to dizziness, blurred vision and impaired speech. Worse, it was once used as a weapon of war. In 67BC, King Mithridates' army left chunks of "mad honeycomb" in the path of the Roman enemy, who gobbled it up, lost their minds and were promptly slain. The honey is also said to have medicinal qualities – from treating hypertension and diabetes to improving sexual performance – when consumed in small amounts. It is more or less confined to the Black Sea region. There, in humid conditions, apiarists herd bees to fields of special rhododendron flowers containing grayanotoxin, and the toxin spikes the resulting honey (incidentally, it is the same poison used by the chief antagonist Lord Blackwood to feign his death in the 2009 film Sherlock Holmes).

If you do find yourself in the area and want a taste, you'll have to dig a bit deeper than supermarket shelves. Ask nicely, and chances are most local shopkeepers will hand over a jar from a stash tucked behind the counter, adding to the old-world mystery of it all. But be very careful: do not spread it on toast, drizzle it over yoghurt or generally treat it like normal honey. A tiny spoonful on the tongue is more than enough; any more and you're at risk of "mad honey poisoning", which afflicts a handful of unwitting travellers each year. It is no laughing matter – it causes low blood pressure and heartbeat irregularities, and in extreme – and thankfully rare – cases, can be fatal. This is honey at its most hardcore.

www.adoptahive.me.uk

Flybe Plane Grounded by Bee

A flybe airline flight from Southampton to Dublin was grounded after a bee became lodged in one of its flight instruments.
Flight BE384 was barely ten minutes into its journey from Southampton UK to Dublin in Eire when the pilot became concerned about the functionality of part of the flight instrumentation system and turned back to Southampton for safety reasons.

Engineers subsequently discovered the remains of a bumble bee lodged in one of the external pieces of instrumentation. The bee did not survive the experience.

It would appear that the bee was lodged in one of the pitot sensors used to measure the airspeed of a plane. There are normally three of these sensors which are forward facing open tubes fitted with a small sprung piston or diaphragm. Ram pressure forces air into the tube, and the backward displacement of the piston is measured electronically to derive an airspeed value that is fed to the autopilot.

Problems can arise if a pitot sensor becomes blocked for any reason because the autopilot computer cannot function corrrectly without valid airspeed data inputs. Autopilot systems are designed to disconnect and return flight to human control if airspeed data becomes corrupt.

It was an incident of this type which led to the loss of Air France flight 447 from Rio de Janeiro to Paris in 2009, when pilots lost control after all three pitot sensors became blocked by ice while flying though a thunderstorm over the Atlantic.

Toucana
Sciencechatforum.com

Bee collapse is the result of their enslavement in industrial monocultures

Bee 'colony collapse disorder' cannot be ended by easy technofixes, writes Allan Stromfeldt Christensen. The real problem is the systematic abuse of bees in vast industrial monocultures, as they are trucked or flown thousands of miles from one farm to the next, treated with insecticides and antibiotics, and fed on 'junk food'.

Over the past several years there's been a steadily growing awareness that a problem exists with our honeybee populations.

Although not quite a household term, what has been called 'colony collapse disorder' (CCD) has evoked enough concern that a chorus of observers have suggested in various ways that if honeybees go the way of the dodo bird, so do us humans.

These warnings stem from what I'd say are two main understandings of the situation.

First off is the fact that honeybees are used to pollinate about one-third of the food we eat, be it directly by pollinating vegetables, fruit, and nut trees, or by pollinating plants such as clover which get eaten by herbivores and so indirectly supply us with meat, milk and other animal products.

Secondly, there is the more general 'canary in the coalmine' interpretation that posits that if we can't manage to live in this world in a manner conducive to the existence of our honeybees, what does that ultimately say about our chances? That is, if our honeybees can't live in the toxic milieu we force them into, will we ultimately be able to?

The real problem - industrial agriculture

However, while CCD poses a significant problem, the sensationalist reactions that such occurrences evoke have effectively clouded over the much greater issue of industrial beekeeping - or in other words, that honeybees are generally confined to living out their lives amongst fields of monocultures.

With the creation of monocultures encompassing hundreds and sometimes thousands of acres, farms are no longer able to provide the living environment necessary to maintain wild honeybee colonies.

Although, say, a large blueberry 'farm' may provide an immense supply of flowers for nectar and pollen, being a monoculture means that there is only one plant, and this sole plant may only flower for a few weeks or even a few days of the year.

This doesn't provide enough time for the honeybees to collect their needed supplies for the remainder of the year while the monoculture fields are essentially floral deserts. It also eliminates the various 'wild pollinators' from bumblebees to beetles, who are likewise unable to survive amongst the dearth of flowers.

In fact, there are now parts of China where bees have already gone extinct, requiring apple orchards to employ between 20 and 25 people to pollinate a hundred trees - something wild pollinators or a couple of hives worth of bees would normally do.

But rather than being generally seen as an example of bad farming and something to rectify, these circumstances have resulted in a whole new industry of their own, for honeybee pollination has become big business indeed.

Can pollinate, will travel ...

Owing to its status of quasi domestication (I say 'quasi' since honeybees aren't really domesticated but rather retain their wildness while inhabiting artificial domains we provide for them), the honeybee has become an ideal pollinator to be shifted around in order to cater to the whims of monocultures.

In fact, large beekeepers now make most of their money from 'pollination services' rather than from sales of honey or other bee products.

In an area encompassing roughly 17,000 acres in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, approximately one-fifth of the world's blueberries are grown requiring almost 70,000 hives for pollination, coming from all over BC and Alberta.

That however pales in comparison to the massive mono-forest of roughly 600,000 acres in the central valley of California that grows about 82% of the world's almonds.

In three weeks of February every year, more than 1 million hives (of 2.5 million in the US, down from a peak of 6 million in the 1950s) make their way from as far away as New England and 38 other states in order to pollinate the crop. They are even added to by hives flown in from Australia on 747 jumbo jets to supplement declining hive numbers.

What results is a massive bee slum where all sorts of microbes and parasites from around the country get passed around, the bees none the better for it all due to their already compromised immune systems. Why might they be compromised?

Stuck on a diet of almond nectar, or blueberry nectar, or whatever the next crop may be, while the individual nectar and pollen from these crops may be healthy forms of food, honeybees are forced to feed on a homogeneous diet - resembling one where humans eat only bananas for three weeks, then broccoli for one week, carrots for two weeks, and so on.

The result is a kind of rotational mono diet that lacks the nutrition provided by a well-rounded diet, exacerbating the malnourished and weakened state that leaves honeybees more prone to disease.

As reported in the journal Bee Culture, a decline in plant diversity could very well be causing a decline in bee populations. Honeybees that pollinate on a wider variety of plants have a more robust immune system than bees which pollinate on monocrops, even when the monocrops had higher protein content.

Result - 'industrial bees' are routinely treated with antibiotics to combat bacterial infections, to the extent that many bees carry antibiotic resistant bacteria in their guts.

The cornbee, the soybee, the sugarybee

As if that weren't all enough, the honeybees' two sources of food, nectar (which they transform into honey for storage purposes, and which provides them with minerals, vitamins and enzymes) and pollen (which is their excellent source of protein and other nutrients), are just as much a victim of the monoculture mindset.

Because honey and pollen can command a pretty penny on the market, many beekeepers - particularly the larger ones - actually remove all the honeybees' stores of honey and pollen. Since this leaves the bees with nothing to survive on over the winter, their pollen is then replaced with soy patties, while their honey is swapped for a sugar syrup if not high-fructose corn syrup.

Having had their wholesome and nutrient-rich honey (albeit monoculture-sourced) and pollen supplemented or even taken away from them, the modern honeybee is often forced to live off a diet that not only puts stress on their digestive systems and compromises their immune systems, but whose equivalent for us humans would be called junk food.

On top of all that, not only then must honeybees cope and live amongst the insecticides necessary for monoculture 'farms' and golf courses and suburban lawns and such, but because of their poor health, strips of insecticides are also commonly placed inside hives to kill off Varroa mites and other plagues, which honeybees are now too unhealthy to ward off.

In case you need me to spell it out, insecticides kill insects, and yes, honeybees are in fact insects themselves.

Techno-fixes are doomed to fail

So while there is no doubt that CCD has created the awareness that 'like, gee whiz, bees are dying', it would certainly be fair to ponder whether it has done all that much to inform us of the greater problem honeybees - and wild pollinators - must attempt to live amongst.

But truth be told, it largely hasn't, and what has instead resulted is an audience that has deferred to a phalanx of 'experts', who in true superhero style are expected to save the day with an array of techno fixes that will vanquish CCD to the dustbin of history.

But in reality, CCD is actually a symptom of a much greater problem, the problem of industrial agriculture. As author Rowan Jacobsen put it in his excellent book Fruitless Fall: The Collapse of the Honeybee and the Coming Agricultural Crisis,

"Until local agriculture replaces global agriculture, there will always be another parasite, another virus, another mysterious collapse."

Allan Stromfeldt Christensent
Theecologist.org

This Photographer Covers His Models In Honey. And here's why

Have you ever wondered what it would feel like to have your entire body covered in honey.. No? Well, award winning, Los Angeles-based photographer, Blake Little, did. But rather than experiencing it first hand, he brought in a very diverse group of models to help create this series called "preservation".

Not only does the honey give the photos an incredible aesthetic look, but the idea behind the series is equally beautiful. As he describes 'the honey has a way of diffusing the personal qualities of the subject often making them unrecognizable and democratizing the individual with universal iconic qualities.'

He intentionally used individuals of varying ages, backgrounds and body types to explore the idea of 'Preservation, while the honey coating emphasizes the image that everyone is equal.

Slightly claustrophobic, a little dirty but above all.. totally stunning!

Weburgr.com

Oslo creates world's first 'highway' to protect endangered bees

Norway's capital is creating a route filled with flowers and 'green roofs' to protect endangered pollinators essential to food production

From flower-emblazoned cemeteries to rooftop gardens and balconies, Norway's capital Oslo is creating a "bee highway" to protect endangered pollinators essential to food production.

"We are constantly reshaping our environment to meet our needs, forgetting that other species also live in it," Agnes Lyche Melvaer, head of the Bybi, an environmental group supporting urban bees, which is leading the project.

"To correct that we need to return places to them to live and feed," she explained, sitting on a bench in a lush city centre square bursting with early Nordic summer growth.

With its sunflowers, marigolds and other nectar-bearing flowers planted by bee-loving locals and school children, Abel's Garden was until recently covered only in grass but is now a floral "feeding station" for bees.

Oslo's "bee highway" aims to give the insects a safe passage through the city, lined with relays providing food and shelter – the first such system in the world, according to the organisers.

Participants in the project – state bodies, companies, associations and private individuals – are invited to post their contribution on a website (polli.no), which maps out the bees' route across the city.

On the 12th floor of an ultra-modern office block in the capital's chic business district on the edge of Oslo fjord, a major accountancy firm has covered parts of its terrace in brightly-flowering Sedum plants and two bee hives.

It houses some 45,000 worker bees, busily unaware of their smart-suited office counterparts enjoying their lunch just metres away.

"One should see it as a sign that companies are also taking responsibility for preserving biodiversity," said accountant and bee-keeping enthusiast Marie Skjelbred.

She convinced her employer to co-finance the project to the tune of 400,000 kroner ($51,348, or €46,000) along with the owners of the building.

"The workers live about 60 days," she explained with a glint in her eye.

"During their lives, they don't produce more than a spoon of honey," she added, before turning to her accountancy skills to do the maths.

Bees entering the beehive of accounting expert and amateur beekeeper Marie Skjelbred on the 12th floor of a modern building in Oslo.

"If we did their job, paid at the minimum wage, a pot of honey would cost $182,000."

Although Norwegian bees may not be as seriously threatened by intensive agriculture and pesticides as bees in the US or other European countries, a third of the country's 200 wild bee species are nonetheless considered endangered.

Nearly one in 10 of Europe's wild bee species face extinction, says study

Read more

And that is cause for concern for humans since 30 to 40% of food production requires pollination, a service provided for free by the insects which according to a 2005 Franco-German study is worth an estimated €153bn.

Christian Steel at the Norwegian Biodiversity Network, which brings together the country's professional and amateur biologists, supports the initiative but condemns the "short-term policies" of Norwegian authorities.

"The government seems to hide behind these kinds of private initiatives, while pursuing in parallel a policy of promoting intensive agriculture which leads to the death of many bees," he lamented.

"

Agriculture is completely dependent on pollinators to maintain food production just as insects are dependent on diverse agriculture to survive. It's a mutual dependence," he added.

The mass destruction of bee populations around the world has already forced farmers in the Chinese province of Sichuan to pollinate plants by hand, and in the US some farmers are left with no choice but to rent hives transported cross-country by truck to pollinate crops.

But in Abel's Garden in Oslo, Agnes Lyche Melvaer says she has faith in the "butterfly effect".

"If we manage to solve a global problem locally it's conceivable that this local solution will work elsewhere too."

Agence France-Presse
The Guardian

Surplus Bee Keeping Equipment for Sale.

It is old and been used, but is in very good condition

6 Roofs 3 deep & 2 Shallow	£10.00 each
4 Crown Boards	£2.00 each
7 Ashworth type feeders	£7.00 each
7 Supers	£7.00 each
5 x 8" National Brood Boxes	£10.00 each
8 x Varroa Floors (converted)	£2.00 each
A number of queen ex/ders	£5.00 each.
Wire wooden framed	

Please contact **Middleton Dobson** on **07717382190** if you are interested and would like to view.

Caddon Hives

WBC & National Hives
made from Cedar

Includes:
1 Apex Roof (Flat available)
2 Super box
1 Brood box (14x12 available)
1 OM Floor (WBC with feet)
3 Lifts and porch (WBC only)
1 Crown Board
Bee escapes, mesh & inspection tray, entrance blocks all included!

£128

Call: 01896 850755 / 249 or visit
www.caddon-hives.co.uk

Richard & Anne Kenyon
Burnsmead Farm
Little Urswick, Ulverston
Tel 01229 869363

A Hive for all your Apiary equipment
Agents for Thorne