

Surrey Beekeepers' Association AGM on Saturday 5 December 2020

Bee Craft report

2019/20 was a year of change at BeeCraft.

Directors. Andrew Gibb retired after 33 years as the CEO and director of the company. Alex Ellis took over the role of CEO in his place. David Cockburn was appointed as the Kent representative to the board in January. Mike Forster also resigned from the board.

Consultants. Claire Waring retired as editor after 22 years, and was replaced by Co-editors Stephen Fleming and Richard Reckitt. The new team together with Amanda Berry, designer, and Sophie Butcher, Proof reader launched a new design for the magazine at the start of 2020, which has been well received. Other personnel changes were the departure of Erica Osborn, Liz Townsend, Rhodri Powell and Carys Edwards. Samantha Norridge was appointed as Product sales manager responsible for the Shop and Shows.

The Magazine. The magazine changed to being delivered in biodegradable wrappers to reflect BeeCraft's environmentally responsible ethos. Subsequently these were replaced by paper wrappers as an even more sustainable solution.

The digital magazine version is now available in a Phone View version to complement other digital versions of the magazine.

The BeeCraft website won Silver medal at Apimondia in Montreal following a redesign.

Looking forward the company's focus will be on increasing its magazine subscriber base following the rebranding of the communications and show presence to reflect BeeCraft's position as the independent voice of British Beekeeping.

The Finances.

The accounts to 31st December 2019 showed a small loss of £1.2k, a reduction from the previous year of £1.6k.

Following the revised pricing structure and the introduction of direct debit renewals subscriptions increased by 5.5% despite a fall in hard copy subscriptions of 4%. Digital subscriptions continued to increase in line with previous trends.

Advertising revenue fell by 10% as suppliers moved towards digital channels.

Although Shop sales volume declined the margin was well above budget owing to a favourable product mix and lower royalty payments.

Overhead costs were £6.5k below budget at £111k as all areas concentrated on tight cost control.

With a focus on future growth, the company has invested heavily in a new database system and the design of the new website.

Additionally, regarding the centenary, David Charles, a former BBKA president, paid for and Christa Lewis baked a special cake for the National Honey show held at Sandown Park Racecourse in Esher. Bee Craft also sponsored Songhive, a musical group, that played in the trade hall during the Saturday of the show.

Bee Craft sponsored the George Knights memorial lecture at the BBKA Spring convention where Professor Robert Pickard spoke on the subject 'Wonderful things about bees'.

In addition, the company arranged and sponsored the Bee Craft research lectures for young mainly PhD students at the National Honey show. A wide range of topics included new pesticides, flowers and pollinating insects, varroa, bumble bee dynamics and getting young people into the bee business. It is hoped to publish some of these lectures in forthcoming issues.

At Apimondia, the biannual international beekeeping congress held this time in Montreal, Bee Craft won a silver medal for its new website.

Finally, after 23 years as editor, Claire Waring decided to retire. During this period Claire has taken to magazine forward in several ways and always kept pace with the changes to the technology of publishing. For example, magazines are now delivered directly to subscribers letterbox, the format and style was altered dramatically when the size of the magazine was changed from A5 to A4 and then later the number of pages per issue increased to 48 pages. The magazine is also available online on Apple, Android and Kinder devices together with there being an app. In everything, nothing, not even the smallest detail, misses Claire's scrutiny as editor.

Andrew Gibb, December 2019