

Summary Chairman's Report WBKA, 2019/2020

Introduction 2019 - 2020

2020 might be called an eventful year, perversely characterised by a definite lack of events. I refer of course the havoc wreaked by Covid-19, which caused most of the activities of the WBKA which required face-to-face meetings to be suspended or radically changed. Notwithstanding the hindrance caused Covid-19, the WBKA and its members persevered mightily and all members and committee members are to be commended for their resilience and imagination in finding ways to carry-on their beekeeping and the activities of the association. The WBKA looks forward to the coming beekeeping year with the hope that it will be a better one for all than that past.

Apiaries Report

The WBKA continued with 7 apiaries under the charge of the following wardens:-

- Cannizaro Park - John Deacon
- Dorset Triangle - Peter Bowbrick
- Holne Chase - Steve Derry & Gareth Morgan (from April having swapped with Mr Derry)
- Martin Way - Alison Pelikan
- Morden Hall Park - Gareth Morgan & Steve Derry (from April, having swapped with Mr Morgan)
- Stag Lodge - Steve Derry
- Watermeads - Dave Charnley

Generally, apiary activities carried-on as usual, having made allowance and adjustments to deal with Covid-19 working modalities - especially at Morden Hall Park, which is on a National Trust property. Much improvement work was carried on there, to clear and reclaim space lost to undergrowth over the years, and plans are afoot to expand the WBKA's teaching apiary activities during 2021, Covid-19 allowing. At Watermeads, there were serious issues with vandalism and destruction of hives, circa. six incidents. The WBKA responded by investing in a CCTV camera on site, to record any future incidents and support reporting to and a response by the police. The WBKA also had a helpful exchange of correspondence with the Met. Police regarding the incidents.

Events

2020 proved especially challenging for the WBKA in running its regular calendar of events at Morden Hall Park, with both the 2020 summer barbecue and the 2020 Christmas party having to be cancelled and all meetings after March having to be run via Zoom. Notwithstanding this, a full programme of meetings was presented, as follows:-

- Darren Lerigo, on the Value of Gardens - February
- Steve Derry and Dave Charnley, on Swarms - March
- Chris Park, on Skeps - April
- Bob Smith, on Managing the Workers - May
- Jack Silberad on Manuka - June
- July Gareth, on his work with the BBKA - July
- Erica MacAlister from the Natural History Museum, on Flies - September
- Pam Hunter, on viruses – October

The WBKA's AGM was run successfully, via, Zoom on 2 November 2020.

Membership

The WBKA ended the membership year 2019/2020 with 130 members (3 Life, 100 Full, 16 Partner, 9 Associate, 2 Junior) which was similar to the previous year (124), with a boost members registered from the Beginners Course at the start of 2020. At the time of its AGM, the WBKA had

76 members signed up for the membership year 2020/2021 (1 new, 75 renewed, 7 not renewing, 8 renewing but not yet paid, 2 deceased, 38 undecided).

SBKA

Steve Derry was the WBKA's trustee to the SBKA and Gareth Morgan its representative.

Bee Health

Due to Covid-19, the twice yearly disease checking days, usually held at the Snuff Mill at Morden Hall Park to check for the adult bee diseases of Nosema and Acarine, were cancelled.

Swarms

John Clark took-over the role of Swarm Co-ordinator and created a central 'Swarm List' spreadsheet for the purpose of tracking swarm calls, members requesting swarms and members assisting with collection. 12 volunteers dealt with approximately 50 calls (25 for honeybees and the remainder split between, bumble bees, wasps, and ivy bees). Most members on the swarm receiving list secured one or more swarms, as requested, and most members of the public were happy with the collections. Lessons learned from the year's experience include:- the likely adverse impact of Covid19 on the ability of beekeepers to manage for (i.e. against) swarming, as much as they would have liked, and the difficulty of swarm collection at height - several calls were for swarms on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th floors of buildings or high in trees, which could not be removed.

Financial

The Treasurer's end-of-year financial breakdown and notes are provided separately. The WBKA's subscription income from members remained strong, showing a 17% increase compared to the previous year. Due to Covid-19, there were no country shows in 2020 and as a consequence the WBKA did not generate any income from honey and other sales. Also due to Covid-19, the WBKA generated 13% less education income as compared to the previous year, when it was able to run a summer course as well. All in all, income is 20% less at £10,187 this year while expenses are 13% less at £11,573. As a result, the WBKA finished the year with a £1,386 (11%) net funds decrease. Though the financial position is still satisfactory at £11,730 the WBKA will be monitoring its cash position closely.

Honey Yield & Extractors

Full data was not available this year.

Website & Newsletter

An update of the website was put on hold as Covid-19, however it continues to maintain a steady number of views and contacts. The WBKA's Newsletter continues its vital role of informing WBKA members.

Education and Library

All WBKA courses were severely curtailed due to Covid-19, with fact-to face sessions moving to Zoom and practical sessions being deferred into 2021. The WBKA plans to run 'Taster Days' during the active season in 2021, Covid-19 permitting. The WBKA continues to build up a library of resources to support members wishing to study for the module exams but also those wishing to expand their knowledge generally. The books available for loan have been listed as they apply to modules. WBKA resources include the latest special editions booklets, latest videos from BBKA as well as some rarer and less easily obtained standards. The library also has standard weights for members who are selling honey to ensure their weighing sales are accurate. Members can still request and collect books from Steve Derry.