



**CROYDON
BEEKEEPERS**

Croydon division Chair's report 2016-17

This year we have sought to increase the active participation of existing members with the division and reach out to potential new members by ensuring that the division appeals and is accessible to people across our catchment area.

As part of this initiative we:

- have moved meetings to central Croydon where possible to make them more easily accessible from both ends of our area and by public transport, and are still trialling various new venues.
- are exploring moving the days and times of meetings so they are more convenient for people
- seeking to provide better facilities at the apiary
- using a more modern approach to publicity.

Our membership is rising (79 currently), and participation by members in events is increasing. Committee meetings are being held bi-monthly in order to maintain more momentum.

On a sad note, we learned of the death of John Collett, a long standing member, winner of many show awards, and former chair of Croydon Beekeepers. He will be greatly missed.

Honey shows

Our own honey show in Selsdon attracted exactly 100 entries this year with several members showing for the first time. We had over 30 children participating in a colouring competition.

We had good success at the National Honey Show with awards for Tracey Carter, Meriel Spalding, Barbara Barnes and Bob Barnes.

Publicity

We now have a more modern leaflet giving information about Croydon Beekeepers for use at events. We have also created a Twitter feed which has contributed to increased awareness and engagement with the Croydon community. There was good coverage of our honey show in the local magazine.

We have set up a simple scheme to try and put members of the public seeking to buy honey in contact with beekeepers.

Training & Education

We were unable to run a beginners theory course in 2017 but have well-advanced plans for 2018. We did run a series of practical apiary sessions in the spring that brought in several new members. Our members' apiary sessions were well attended and supported. We ran a Basic course from which four people passed.

Exam passes included:

Module 2: Tracey Carter, Bob Barnes

Intermediate theory: Tracey Carter

Basic: Pam Brooker (credit), John Mayne (credit), Ed Parker, Anthony Carter-Clout



Apiary

Croydon Beekeepers has just a single apiary at the moment near Coulsdon which is almost at capacity in terms of number of hives, and requires quite a long travel time for members towards the north of our area. We have two major projects under way.

We are working with our landlords Croydon Council and the management committee of the allotments site to replace the fencing around the periphery of our apiary. This initiative has contributed to a generally stronger dialogue between Croydon Beekeepers and our local community. We had a joint working party to clear the boundary in preparation and the council has committed to replace the fence.

In order to improve the appeal of our apiary we have a project under way to install a composting toilet. We won a substantial grant from Croydon Council under their *Ambitious for Parks* scheme towards this, the remaining cost will be met from our reserves. Full planning permission has just been granted and we hope to have the new facility commissioned in time for spring 2018.

We have a fantastic apiary team who work every Thursday right through the year.

Honey yields

Members have reported a mixed year, with a range from “the biggest crop ever” to nothing at all. Bramble seems to have been a notable contributor this year. Our club apiary did well, with over 200 pounds of honey being harvested.

Summary

Overall, a good year of building for Croydon Beekeepers.

My thanks to the Croydon committee and apiary team, the many members who organise and do things, and to the Surrey committee for their support.

Bob Barnes, Chair