

Croydon Division Chair's report 2017-18

It's been another year in which Croydon Beekeepers has moved forward.



**CROYDON
BEEKEEPERS**

Honey shows

Our Honey Show was particularly successful this year. We had over 80 entries from 20 members - a good proportion of our overall membership. Judge Peter Bashford was so encouraging of all our entrants and offered much invaluable advice.

We also had many visits from members of the public in search of local honey. The niece of the late John Collett made the first ever presentation of the Collett Memorial Cup, and she graciously stayed to help us clear up. Photos of the event were re-tweeted by the BBKA.

Training & Education

We continued our programme of training with our Beginner's course attracting 13 people. Plans are well under way to run the course in 2019, with half the available places already being booked. We are looking at running the course in parallel at a second venue. Our Basic candidates were very successful with all 5 of those who entered being awarded a credit. We also now have a trained Basic Assessor.

Our programme of winter events was well attended, and the policy of trying out various central Croydon venues in order to improve accessibility across the borough seems to be paying off. We also had a summer meeting in a member's garden and an extraction day at John Collett's farm.

Apiary

We have continued our initiative to improve facilities at our club apiary. Much work has been done by our regular Thursday apiary team to improve our hut and create bee-friendly planting.

The apiary composting toilet project has been completed. This has brought us not only an already well-used facility, but also closer dialogue with Croydon Council (our landlord) and local groups. We've strengthened our links with Hartley Downs allotments group as evidenced by their enthusiasm to join in with us for a working party to clear the site.

It's unfortunate that continuous role changes at the Council have undermined the strong links we built with them, and the agreement to fix the remaining section of the apiary fence has not yet been followed through.

Events

We held a spring apiary open afternoon. This was attended by Bob Maurer representing Surrey BKA, and Councillor Badshar Quadir who cut the ribbon to officially open the new toilet. Our reputation within Surrey has been enhanced this year. We hosted the Surrey AGM, and in 2017 retained the Douglas Trophy at the National Honey Show for the ninth year running.

Another highlight of the year was the Croydon Division Christmas dinner. This was a new event but it was very well supported with over half of our membership turning out for an evening of great food and company.

Honey yields

The yields reported by our members have varied considerably. Anecdotally it appears that beekeepers further into urban London fared better than those in the suburbs. Perhaps they suffered fewer winter losses.

Our club apiary produced a reasonable amount of honey, although not as much as our bumper crop last year.

Summary

I am pleased with the way the committee is working, everyone is pulling together and we are making a lot of progress. We still need new blood on the committee. Roles which are not being handled are: training coordinator, publicity, and a team to set up a new club apiary. We do now have a volunteer who is working on an overhaul of the website. Division membership is stable overall, as always we just need more members actively to participate.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Croydon committee and all of those who have contributed to the division's activities over the last year.

Bob Barnes, Chair