

WEYBRIDGE DIVISION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017

Financial The Weybridge division remains in a healthy financial situation.

Membership The Weybridge division has 140 members during 2017. This is a decrease of 10 on the previous year.

Committee The full committee met on four occasions during the year, and the New Apiary subcommittee also met on four occasions.

Bee Health No foul brood problems are known to have occurred in the Weybridge area in 2017. A Nosema clinic held on 2 May was attended by 20 members from the division and some from Kingston. Samples from 35 hives were examined. A high level of infection was found in some samples from hives with old combs. Those from hives with new brood combs gave much lower spore counts. The division's microscope, which can be linked to a computer screen, made viewing the samples simple.

Bee Swarms The division's contact person for swarm calls, Michael Main, dealt with calls during April - August. The BBKA swarm website page is being used as the first point of contact. This helped to reduce the number of 'false alarm' calls concerning wasp and bumblebee nests.

Apiaries The Weybridge division has its longstanding apiary site for members at Rowtown but has given up the site on Burhill Allotments in Hersham, which has been in use since 2010. During the summer, one or more of the colonies there belonging to five beekeepers became aggressive. After several other plotters on the site had been stung or harassed by bees, the owners of the site (Walton Charity) required all of the hives to be removed from the site. This was done with some difficulty in June. Although Walton Charity is willing to have bees back on the site, the Weybridge committee decided that the risk of similar problems arising again has made the allotment site unviable.

The division's teaching apiary is currently located in the grounds of St Georges Junior School in Weybridge. In August the apiary was vandalised on three occasions, with hives being turned over and objects thrown at the hives. The hives have been removed to a member's garden for the winter period and will be returned to the teaching apiary in the spring. The teaching apiary is managed by Tim and Sally Hutchinson.

New Teaching Apiary and Education Centre/Clubhouse Weybridge division has the prospect of leasing a property with a garden in Hersham that is owned by Elmbridge Borough Council. Progress in establishing the heads of terms for the lease has been slower than expected, not helped by changes of staff in the estate department at Elmbridge BC. We are now getting close to the point where we have agreed heads of terms. We can then get detailed costings for adapting and running the building. Once approval for the project has been given by SBKA trustees and the Weybridge division members, we can move forward with fund raising and obtaining planning permission.

Honey Yields 2017 honey yields have been variable, some members having good yields while others have reported below average amounts. Good weather in April brought an early nectar flow for some. Dry weather in early summer may have contributed to a disappointing season for some beekeepers.

Honey Shows Two Weybridge members were among the prize winners at the 2017 Surrey County Show in May. Jane Hunter won the Ken Reed Trophy again for her wax entries. Four Weybridge members had some success in the National Honey Show in October, with a variety of firsts, seconds

and thirds in the Open and Surrey classes. At both shows, Weybridge members helped man the information stands and other stalls.

Education Nineteen people attended the winter theory course for new beekeepers and the summer practical course. By the end of the year a majority of the beginners had acquired their own bees. The principal lecturer for the theory course for new beekeepers is Andrew Halstead.

One Weybridge members took and passed the Basic Assessment Certificate. Edwina Wardle passed Module 5, Honeybee Biology, with distinction and the Proficiency in Apiculture Intermediate Theory Certificate with credit.

Web Site The Weybridge division's website [www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com] continues to be developed.

Equipment Some additional equipment for the teaching apiary has been purchased. A second extractor for use by Weybridge members has been donated to the division.

Events The following events took place in 2017 –

19 Jan Members' short talks evening

16 Feb Talk by David Kemp on his experience with Asian hornet in France

6 Mar Talk by David Rudland on bee diseases, recognition and management

8 Apr Garden meeting with Michael Main - Bailey comb change

2 May Nosema clinic for Weybridge and Kingston members

21 May Apiary meeting at Fair Oaks Airfield. Queen rearing, mating nucs, queen marking with David Parker

29 May Surrey County Show – honey show

17 Jun Apiary meeting at Garsons Farm, Esher. Peter Bowbrick demonstrated how to do a disease inspection, and how to find, mark and clip a queen.

23 July Apiary meeting. Paul and Helen Bunclark demonstrated queen-finding methods and reviewed Varroa monitoring and control measures.

12 August Apiary meeting. Arran Taylor demonstrated how to set up mini-mating nuclei and showed us his state of the art extraction shed.

16 and 19 August Taster sessions at our teaching apiary for prospective new beekeepers

9 September Social event. BBQ at Paul and Helen Bunyard's apiary.

26-28 October National Honey Show, Sandown Park, Esher

11 November Weybridge division AGM

Andrew Halstead

Chairman Weybridge Division 2017