

Wimbledon Beekeepers' Association

Annual General Meeting 5th November 2018

Chairman's Report 2017/18

With the teaching apiary in Morden Hall Park being clear of EFB, the apiary wardens Stephan Leclair and Mario Lopez have put an immense amount of work in to build up more colonies and clean equipment, repair and re-tar the shed. A huge amount of thanks must go to them and the willing volunteers who gave up their time each Sunday. Unfortunately, they will be standing down as wardens at the end of this year. I will take on the apiary's responsibility with help from others.

With the arrival of the Asian Hornet on our shores, all associations and divisions need to be aware and observant of this insect. Not only do they predate honey bees but also most other pollinators. We, along with the rest of Surrey and its surrounding areas are setting up an Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT) and I will give out more information after we have our first meeting next week on the 13th November. In the meantime, I would encourage all our members to make themselves aware of what the AH looks like and its life cycle.

It has been decided to run another beginners' course next year, with 17 attendees so far booked at the time of writing this report.

We have provided a variety of events for members at our Monday evening meetings, which have been coordinated by Gabriel Toyos, who will also be standing down at the end of this year. Many thanks to Gabriel for making our meetings enjoyable and interesting.

Apiaries Report

Morden Hall Park Apiary – Mario Lopez & Stephan Leclair

The quiet Winter months were used to make some improvements to the old shed. The roof has been waterproofed, the floor painted white and shelving introduced. The tough Winter resulted in only 4 out of the 8 association hives, and none out of the 3 members' hives to survive into Spring.

After another full inspection was carried out by the Seasonal Bee Inspector, no trace of EFB was found and the standstill order was removed on 17th April. The hives were shook swarmed after the inspection as part of the disease control procedures. The association purchased 4 nucs in Spring to bring up the numbers. They have since grown into full size colonies.

Approximately 80 pounds of honey were extracted through the summer.

Mario Lopez and Stephan Leclair confirmed on 16th July that they are stepping down from the role of MHP Apiary wardens. They committed to complete the beekeeping season, prepare the association colonies for Winter, and will be on hand to pass over their responsibilities to the new warden(s) until early Spring next year.

The number of hives to go through winter will be: 9 association and 1 member's hives.

Cannizaro Apiary – Max Gladwyn

Cannizaro apiary has had a year of good co-operation amongst apiary members.

Martin Way – Alison Pelikan

After a long cold and wet winter and Spring at least 3 hives had died out, mainly from having a high varroa load and/or isolation starvation. As a response, a few of us with strong colonies did a complete shook swarm as soon as the weather warmed up, which together with the hot summer has led to a greatly reduced varroa count this season. Honey harvest has been very varied amongst the beekeepers within the Apiary, some getting more than last year but most getting considerably less. Part of the reason for the drop relates to the introduction of nucs to replace lost colonies. I was very pleased this year to get just a few frames of very dark honeydew honey from a colony bought as a nuc in Spring, totally delicious and it sold before any of my other honeys.

As ever, there has been a high level of interest in the welfare of the bees from the allotment holders, and myself and other beekeepers often show newcomers where the Apiary is and tell them about growing bee friendly plants. I also write about the seasonal progress of the hives in the allotment newsletter.

Holne Chase – Steve Derry

This apiary had 6 full colonies successfully overwintered. The equipment shed was added allowing members to store equipment as well as some association equipment.

We have accepted 3 further new members into the apiary who will brought in overwintered nucs into the apiary. All hives were wither checked by a bee inspector or came from reliable suppliers.

Currently there are 6 members with a total of 11 hives leaving room for the newest member to expand to 2 hives if required. The apiary as a 12 hive agreement.

We also added a queen rearing facilities which we hope to get into full operation next year. Also to add guttering and rainwater butt to our new shed so we can have some water supply on site. Further clearing of the undergrowth in the apiary was made and the area is now regularly mown to keep it in good order. The council cleared the area outside the apiary making better access to the site. It is now possible to bring vehicles on site which will ease the burden of carrying heavy equipment.

Hives were treated with MAQS or other varroacides as agreed and Varroa counts have been low. Wasp traps were also added and area for wildflowers has been prepared for planting in the spring.

The bees have been fed with sugar syrup and mouse guards added. Chicken wire will be added soon to prevent green woodpecker attack.

Stag Lodge – Steve Derry

4 full colonies were over wintered including the allotment societies hive. All over wintered successfully and despite the poor spring built up well and with a further split we now have 5 hives one of which will return to Manor Fields in the new year.

In May through to the end of June the fine weather meant the bees could forage well and I have now extracted all the surplus honey and have prepared runny honey and set honey. I have donated jars of honey to allotment members from the association hive. The honey crop for 3 of the hives has been very good with 2 being moderate.

After extracting the honey I have carried out a microscopic disease inspection and Varroa counts. Both hives had a clean bill of health for acarine and nosema. Varroa counts are low for all hives and I have treated them with MAQS treatment.

Late in the season the bees were once more under threat first from a wasps and European hornets and traps were set up capturing high numbers of both.

The bees have been fed with sugar syrup and mouse guards added. Chicken wire will be added soon to prevent green woodpecker attack.

A second member of the association now has 1 hive in the apiary and is looking to add a second hive. He took and passed the basic assessment with credit.

We also provided honey for the Southfields Harvest event including information about the WBKA and the bumblebee conservation trust. This event attracted many local visitors.

We now have 5 good colonies to overwinter which should help continue to pollinate flowers in and around the allotments and provide some surplus honey for allotment members!

Dorset Triangle, Merton Park – Peter Bowbrick

The Triangle is a privately owned allotment off of Dorset Rd not far from Merton Park tram stop.

Currently five Wimbledon members and the allotment owner keep bees on the site.

The apiary is up to capacity with no vacancies.

The harvest this year has been quite good.

There was very little nosema found after the Bee Health Day.

Watermeads – Dave Charnley

We commenced 2017 with 6 members located at Watermeads and currently have 11 hives situated on site, with the continued breeding program going well (12 grafted queens resulting in 9 mated queens being used at Watermeads, and one to another Apiary Warden). I am pleased to report that we have not had any issues this year with flooding on site, and with the assistance of other members at the start of the year had a good clean-up. The honey production at Watermeads has been good for all beekeepers on site. With the outbreak of EFB reported in MHP all members hives at Watermeads have undergone checks by the SBI and as a result the Apiary is

currently clear. All hives were given MAQS treatment for varroa this year (on the advice of the SBI). All colonies look very good for getting through the winter.

Membership – Brett Colley

We ended the last membership year with 119 members (3 Life, 81 Full, 14 Partner, 21 Associate, 0 Junior) which was pretty much the same as the previous year (120).

Membership fees were increased very slightly for this coming year, just £1 across each membership category.

Renewals have gone quite slowly this year, currently only 90 members have renewed. Currently we have 99 members. (9 new, 90 renewals, 3 not renewing, 26 undecided).

Again, we must emphasise that a lot of work goes into sorting the membership and has been appreciated that the majority of members have paid the membership fees on time with minimal 'chasing'.

SBKA: Trustee (TBA) & Gareth Morgan (Representative)

Max Gladwyn has held the post of Trustee within SBKA for many years and will greatly missed after he stands down at the end of this year. A lot goes on behind the scenes as a trustee and it's not always noticed. Max's working career has given him great insight into how a charity like SBKA is run and has been a key participant in it. I would like to thank him on behalf of everyone for the sterling work he has done. However, this won't exclude him from mowing the grass in MHP!

SBKA is now looking at the possibility of becoming an incorporated body and has a Privacy Policy which meets public requirements and the needs of the divisions and the members. It is responsible for the Beekeeping event at Surrey County Show.

BBKA – Gareth Morgan

The BBKA has again been really active this year and are going through a lot of changes, none the least is changing to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Improvement in its apiary at BBKA HQ has begun. There is a new swarming video just been produced with other educational resources in the pipeline. They have also produced a memory stick with some important old films on it which is available through their website. I would encourage members to look at the BBKA website as there is a lot of information on it.

Bee Health

There was good turnout for these two, free disease check days. Members were encouraged to dissect their own samples and then have them checked for the adult diseases of Nosema and Acarine. Small amounts of Nosema were found and no acarine. All cases were recorded and suitable treatments advised to the member.

Swarm Coordinator – Mark Brooman

The year started off quietly. This was later to be found that people were contacting both the Chairman and Secretary and not using the Swarm Telephone number. This was

rectified but only much later in the year. Only then were people contacting me regarding swarms.

The response, thanks to Amanda's piece in the Newsletter, for swarm collectors was good. Unfortunately due to the above reason I was unable to call on the services of many of them. I am hoping to use the close season to draw up a list of people able to help and shall be contacting those already on my list for next year.

The longstanding problem of where to put swarms, especially after the EFB outbreak at MHP, is still unresolved. After speaking to the Dave Charnley, there may be a possibility in the future, but this is something that we as an association need to take more seriously.

Financial – Eszter Colley-Korondi

(see Treasurer's end of year financial breakdown and explanation - on separate sheet).

Honey Yield

Honey yield within the Divisional apiary has been low, with about 80lbs to be bottled. Whereas, some members' harvests has been excellent. We will probably need to buy in more for next year's activities.

Extractors:

After a slow start 15 members have made use of the associations extractors and uncapping trays. Mainly the electric extractor and the cold uncapping tray but not exclusively so. A third smaller uncapping tray was added to the equipment available but to date this has yet to be used. Most members bring back equipment in good order and cleaned with Milton ready for the next use.

Both extractor managers, Steve Derry and Paul Gardiner would remind users to book in good time giving specific dates to avoid disappointment. New users are also reminded they will need to have their own filtering equipment and honey tanks.

Public Events:

We attended the three-day Craft Fair at Morden Hall Park and have been invited to attend the Wimbledon Park Fair next year. Again, we gave many beekeeping talks to local community groups and schools. Special thanks must go to Matt Woods, Alison Pelikan and Dave Charnley. All the feedback has been positive and has raised our profile within the community.

Notable Events:

Some of our members have again attended the NDB Short Courses they also used our MHP apiary for some of the lessons, which are an invaluable tool to pass on the knowledge to other beekeepers. The BBKA also ran a General Husbandry course in the apiary for prospective applicants. Again, this year saw the 'WBKA BBQ' take place in August in the stable yard at MHP, which proved as popular as ever and the Christmas meeting will again take place in the NT's café.

WBKA Honey Show 2018:

The change in venue into the exhibition room, was a good one. It also gave us a chance to interact with the public who were walking in the park (it was a sunny day).

There were 14 entrants with 81 exhibits being submitted. This was much better than last year. Peter Bashford was our judge and was impressed by the standard and quality entered. 1st prize went to Amanda Berry, 2nd Steve Derry and 3rd to John Clarke. Best in Show went to Dave Charnley for his light honey.

Website:

In the past year we have had around 11000 'hits' from 104 different countries. The webmaster is always looking for new and interesting items to add to it. All people attending our course found it through our website where they can sign up using online electronic forms and pay via our online bank account, which keeps administration down to a minimum.

Newsletter – Amanda Berry

I think WBKA has the best newsletter in Surrey! Amanda's hard work and dedication has paid off and I know we all are extremely grateful for this excellent production. It is very difficult to keep something like this fresh and 'alive' so please feel free to send her articles, photos and anecdotes for it.

Education: Steve Derry

Steve Derry has kindly taken on the responsibility for co-ordinating education. We had 9 members take and pass their Basic Assessment with 7 of them obtaining credits this year along with a couple of module passes.

If any member is interested in taking further qualifications in beekeeping then please speak to Steve. If there are enough wanting to take a specific module then a study group could be organised.

Library: – Steve Derry

With Charlotte having stood down as librarian, Steve Derry has also taken on this responsibility as it goes 'hand-in-hand' with education. He has identified books to update and purchase and, if enough members are interested, will buy more for specific modules to help with studying.

Finally:

Huge congratulations to Dave C and Steve D for their entries in the National Honey Show this year. We have taken back the Douglas Cup from Croydon. Dave won the Silver Jubilee Bowl for his 16 wax blocks and Steve, the Coronation Cup for the most number of points in Surrey.

As always, many thanks to those who do a lot of 'background' work in order to keep the Division running smoothly, e.g. dealing with new memberships, money matters, cutting the grass, washing bee suits, administering the courses, ensuring we have tea

and coffee, cleaning equipment and helping out with new members in the apiary, etc. without whom, there would be no Wimbledon Beekeepers' Association.

On a more personal note, I would also like to thank 'my right-hand man' Dave Charnley, the rest of the Committee, and all the divisional members for their help, encouragement and support this year and hope it continues into us having a successful, pleasurable and rewarding one next. Thank you!

Gareth Morgan

Chairman WBKA

November 2018