

Wimbledon Beekeepers' Association

Annual General Meeting 6th November 2017

Chairman's Report 2016/17

Apart from EFB diagnosed in Morden Hall Park apiary, it has been another good year. I stood down as apiary manager in MHP due to my duties as a BBKA Trustee and Stephan and Mario took up the challenge. Unfortunately, it was rather a shock for them as we had an outbreak of EFB (see MHP apiary report).

It has been decided not to run another beginners' course next year and concentrate on our current membership. This will, of course, have an effect on our income, however, this is quite buoyant at the moment.

We have provided a variety of events for members at our Monday evening meetings, which have been coordinated by Gabriel Toyos, including an open invitation to hear Celia Davis. Many thanks Gabriel.

Apiaries Report

Morden Hall Park Apiary – Mario Lopez & Stephan Leclair

The association hives at the MHP Apiary have been used to teach 17 newcomers this year, the majority of them coming from the Winter course. We have extracted 95 pounds of honey through the summer.

An EFB outbreak has been confirmed by Mark Patterson, the Seasonal Bee Inspector, on Wednesday 6th September. This resulted in 8 colonies having to be culled, the frames destroyed by fire and the rest of the equipment scraped and cleaned by the inspectors and some members of the association. 7 of the hives affected belonged to private members, and 1 to the association. As a precautionary measure, 2 additional association colonies are to be culled in the coming days as they are showing potential early signs of the disease and are located right next to where an affected hive used to be. To leave them could result in the infection of further hives in the Spring.

The number of hives to go through winter will therefore be: 8 association and 3 members' hives.

The apiary is under a standstill order, to be reviewed in May 2018, when another full inspection will have to be carried out by the bee inspectors to see if the remaining hives are clear of EFB. This means that no equipment can be taken out of the apiary without a written Movement Licence being issued by the bee inspector, and no new colonies can be introduced. In the meantime, the wardens and some association members are thoroughly cleaning and rearranging the sheds in order to have a clean environment in which to practice in the future.

Cannizaro Apiary – Max Gladwyn

The hives in the apiary have recently been inspected by the Seasonal Bee Inspector and were found to be free of foul brood. He provided a number of helpful suggestions which will be implemented."

Martin Way – Alison Pelikan

Martin Way. We continued to run with 10 hives plus the occasional nuc throughout the year. We did lose a couple of swarms this summer, one of which Peppei and I managed to catch successfully as it settled within the allotment site. Largely thanks to Max catching other swarms that seemed this year to aim for the nearby David Lloyd centre, we hope to have averted tensions between us and the leisure centre. Always a tricky one given no one may know where the swarm originated from! I continue to work with the beekeepers on site to try to improve swarm management, which is generally good.

Several hives experienced very high varroa counts this summer, leading to the various associated problems this brings. We were inspected by the Seasonal Bee Inspector on 7th September and with much relief were found to be clear of EFB. As with all WBKA Wardens I will be inspecting all hives with their owners twice during next year.

Talks/education: A record year! Must have done at least 12 talks and 2 honey stalls, from the annual Abundance Wimbledon stall to new talks at Wimbledon Common BioBlitz, Wimbledon Guild and The Urban Rangers Fun Palace within MHP itself.

Holne Chase – Steve Derry

After the resignation of the previous apiary warden I took over the management of the apiary at the end of the year in 2016. The apiary then had 4 active hives held by one member and 1 empty hive by another member. Other hive parts were left around the apiary in a poor state with old comb infested with wax moth.

The first task was to try establish the ownership of the hives and parts and to remove and destroy all the old comb and frame and to scorch all hive parts until the owner could remove them. They have since been removed.

The owner of the active hives had suspect brood and the bee inspector was called in to check each hive. The 4 hives all had sac brood probably due to the stress put on them and the inspector provided advice for the beekeeper going forward.

The apiary had been overgrown with brambles and a working party of WBKA members joined me in clearing the site which is now able to site 12 hives up to the maximum our licence permits.

During the season 2 new members have placed 2 further nucleus hives which have since grown into full colonies. I and another experienced bee keeper have added 2 colonies each. The member having 4 colonies has decided to remove his colonies as he did not feel able to submit to the WBKA apiary rules. This has resulted in the site now having 6 full colonies currently to be overwintered.

Fred Howard kindly agreed to build a base for an equipment shed which is now complete and we have purchased a shed which will be erected in mid- November. I have donated an incinerator and wheelbarrow which can be used by members to burn old frames and carry equipment in and out of the site.

We have accepted 2 further new members into the apiary who will bring in an overwintered nucleus into the apiary next year. This leaves at least one further space to be filled. I will establish if our current beekeepers wish to use their full allocation of 2 hives per full member so we can open the apiary to the maximum number of members.

Going forward into the New Year we hope to add a queen-rearing apiary to our facilities. 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 will be needed to maximise the space we are renting. Also we will continue to clear the entrance into the apiary to allow vehicles to enter when needed to bring in major equipment

This has been a busy but interesting year at Holne Chase and I am pleased with the progress we have made in improving the site for members many of whom might not be able to have hives without this facility.

Stag Lodge – Steve Derry

3 full colonies were over wintered including the allotment societies hive. All over wintered successfully and all the colonies built up well in spring.

One of the hives showed signs of swarming and I carried out an immediate artificial swarm procedure. One of the split colonies was donated to a new beekeeper and both this and the other split have developed satisfactorily.

The 2 remaining hives underwent supercedure and both have built up well.

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, set honey and cut-comb and I have donated 40 jars of honey to allotment members. The honey crop for 3 of the hives has been very good. One hive exceeding 120lbs and the others all having good crops.

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 very high for all hives and I have treated them with apiguard. This does not seem to have been very effective so we have followed this treatment with a MAQS treatment late in the season. All colonies were inspected by the bee inspector who found no EFB but some bald brood probably as a result of Varroosis.

Late in the season the bees were under threat first from a wasp nest and then a European hornets nest both in allotment holders sheds. Both nests were destroyed by the local pest control officer.

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

Throughout the year I have continued to mentor an allotment member who has since joined WBKA who will manage the allotment society's hive in to the future and his own

hive. I am indebted to him for checking the colonies in my absence from February to May.

We also provided honey for the Southfields Harvest event including information about the WBKA and the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. This event attracted 400+ visitors.

All in all, it has been quite a challenging year. Nevertheless we now have 4 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 a little below average but not too disappointing. Apart from one hive with a very low nosema infection the Apiary has been clear of disease

Following the outbreak of EFB at Morden Hall Park all the hives in the Apiary were checked by the Seasonal Bee Inspector, no disease was found. Subsequently EFB was found in an Apiary about 400 yds from The Triangle which means we will all have to be extra vigilant over winter and into spring next year.

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 120 members (3 Life, 79 Full, 15 Partner, 23 Associate, 0 Junior) which was healthy increase on the previous year (103).

Membership fees were frozen for this coming year.

The renewals this year have gone well so far, with currently 111 members (5 new, 106 renewals, 6 not renewing, 8 undecided).

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

SBKA: Max Gladwyn (Trustee) & Gareth Morgan (Representative)

There have been a number of meetings the Surrey held this year with attendance from our representatives. Surrey remains one of the most active of all the associations.

BBKA – Gareth Morgan

The BBKA has been really active this year and are going through a 'face-lift' within its offices at the moment. Money has been set aside to improve its apiary and they have introduced two new modules that will help members who have passed their Basic assessment to carry on learning. Five new 'special' editions of BBKA News have also been produced with two more in the pipeline. There has been an emphasis on school membership and a new schools package will be launched at the 2018 Spring Convention to help associations with this.

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

After purchasing the 'Swarm phone' and getting it working and putting the number up on website, the number of calls too it slowly increased. But unfortunately the majority were going to the Secretary. This proved a problem right throughout the season and made coordination difficult. We hope that as time goes by the matter will slowly correct itself.

Swarm collection and coordination, even with the new phone, proved challenging. We did not have enough people to collect swarms and so the majority of calls fell to just one or two persons. Clearly we need to go on a bit of a recruitment drive for the New Year, other issues not outstanding.

A number of swarms proved impossible either to locate, or recover from their locations once found. Some were not honey bee nests and others were swarms belonging to '*Feral Beekeepers*' who wanted someone to come and retrieve their bees.

I had collected a few swarms myself, including one to the entrance of the car park at Morden Hall Park that I spotted on my way to a meeting. What luck and what luck for the beekeeper on the swarm list who was also there.

With the season swarm slowing the number of calls rapidly dropped.

Many lessons were learnt and I shall be keeping a diary to help record and remember events better. We also need to determine what to do with swarms now that we have confirmed EFB in our area. This shall have to be brought up at the next committee meeting along with other swarm related issues.

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 90-95lbs to be extracted. Whereas, some members' harvests has been excellent. We will probably need to buy in more for next year's activities.

Extractors:

There have been many requests to use the extractors suggesting that most beekeepers have managed to gain a fair crop of honey over the season. The electric extractor is most frequently booked but the manual version is proving popular with those having only a few frames to extract or just wanting to involve family in the extracting process. Most users have been careful to return the extractors cleaned and on time and the current hire charge has been held for a number of years. We have had to replace the small hand driven extractor and bought a new table-top version.

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 usual 'shows' including the three-day Craft Fair at Morden Hall Park, and the Wimbledon Village Fair, which, unfortunately, will not be going ahead 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:

WBKA organised the Introduction to Beekeeping Course over the winter in the Snuff Mill, which proved as popular as ever and was attended by 20 people. 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. Again, this year saw the 'WBKA BBQ' take place in August in the stable yard at MHP.

WBKA Honey Show 2016:

This was well attended with a good number of entrants. It was particularly good to see more new members participating.

Website:

In the past year we have had around 9500 'hits' from 101 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.

Education:

We had seven members take and pass their Basic Assessment with 5 of them obtaining credits this year. Two members took modules and passed along with one other member passing their General Husbandry Certificate.

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

Library - Charlotte Bulman.

With the advent of online books and websites, the library doesn't get used much but we will still carry on with it and add as we go along. Charlotte will be standing down as the librarian this year.

Finally:

A huge debt of gratitude must go to Charlotte Bulman who is giving up her activities with helping at all the Divisional events. She has held this post for many years, which has been invaluable to the success of WBKA. On behalf of all the members I would like to wish her all the best in her pursuits.

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, 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, especially Stephan and Mario for their work concerning the EFB outbreak and all divisional members for their help, encouragement and support this year and hope it continues to us having a successful, pleasurable and rewarding one next. Thank you!

Gareth Morgan

Chairman WBKA

November 2017