

NLB

North London Beekeepers
association
2008 annual report



Chairman's letter

Dear Member

Our AGM is due on Sunday 1st February (see **Notice** enclosed together with the 2009 **Membership Form**) Please note that BeeCraft is now **not** included in your subscription and it is up to you to subscribe to which bee publication you choose as an individual. Information about how to do this is on the back of the Membership form. (This follows on from the proposal at last year's AGM when the Committee was instructed to decide what would be in the best interests of the association). I do hope to see you at the AGM when Celia Davis will give us a talk on "Mr Bee".

This year has been memorable, both nationally & locally. Twelve of us walked to Downing Street and on to Parliament in support of the national campaign to persuade the Government to substantially increase bee research funding. We carried our banner which attracted much attention. The event was rather over-shadowed by the USA elections and the recession, but the BBKA hopes to continue the campaign and asks us to keep up the pressure on our MP's. (see December's BBKA News)

The bees last year seemed to have behaved out of character, with queens disappearing, failing to mate and generally catching the beekeeper out! Swarms too, allowed little time for the catcher to collect, and even then, were





not always happy with their new home. Maybe the weather did not help either! With a poor honey crop generally, the colonies have needed more feeding this Autumn.

The centre of our Association is very much at our apiary in the Kenwood grounds. The fortnightly visits on Sundays were dominated by the 36 adopt-a-hivers (a record number). We had to staff these with 5 experienced beekeepers to ensure smooth running of the process. Johan and Angela ran Thursday afternoon apiary maintenance sessions with the help of regular volunteers.

They have the responsibility to ensure that the colonies are healthy and thriving so that the adopt-a-hive

scheme works. This responsibility is also for all beekeepers who rely on the apiary for their experience. This was recognised when Mary Ogle presented them each with a citation and a bottle of mead at the Pot Luck Supper after our Honey Show.

I thank them on behalf of you and all our members for their hard work.

I wish you an enjoyable 2009 and hope to see you at the apiary and the other events.

John Hauxwell
Chairman

Honey Show Report

The Honey Show held on 10th September 2008 was followed, as usual, by a Pot Luck Supper, at the Highgate Society. The show attracted 37 entries from 14 exhibitors. This was well up on previous years and the high standards were applauded by Moyra Davidson, our show judge for the sixth year in succession. Well done all entrants, you deserved great credit and all were accredited with at least one award.

But beware, she now aims to judge our show to national standards, making concessions only to a novice class. 1st and 2nd prizes are awarded only when merited by the standard of exhibits. Some very good exhibits failed to meet the requirements of the schedule & therefore did not win prizes. The lesson is, *always read the schedule carefully* before you prepare exhibits. There is room for more show entries and we hope that in 2009, many more members will take part and enjoy the spice of competition and benefit from the helpful notes left by our show judge beside every exhibit.

The **“Challenge”** cup, for the best entry in the honey classes was won by **Liz Jack**. The **“Riley”** cup for the frame for extraction was won by **Stanley Rom & Mary Ogle**.

1st Prizes were won as follows:

Huw Saunders/Martha Leigh

Light honey

Liz Jack

Medium honey

Philip Goff

Novice honey

Mary Ogle

Honey cake

Stanley Rom/Mary Ogle

Frame for Extraction

John Hauxwell

Beeswax candles

Alex Schajer

Photograph

In addition to the awards for show entries, this year the Association gave two special awards. The citation for each of these read:

“For much hard work to promote the craft of beekeeping amongst North London Beekeepers.”

To general acclamation the recipients were Apiary Manager **Johan Kjaer** and Assistant Apiary Manager **Angela Dougall** (pictured below).

Mary Ogle



Top Bar beekeeping on London rooftops

I had done the theory and practice at the Apiary, we were ready to go. Our small roof has just enough room for one hive + deck chair, or just two hives, but no room for equipment. Simplicity was called for, a skep perhaps, could be blown away, next might be a top bar hive. No frames, supers, foundation, just a box with top bars with hanging natural comb. Honey would be harvested from the edges of this and the bees would remake the comb, always fresh. Lots of advantages?



A Dartington hive was put together, its weight should combat the wind. Also if it did not work with top bars, we could revert to standard frames. You can buy top bars on their own and pour beeswax along the foundation groove and the bees soon got the message.

A 4 frame Nuc came and soon started building their wild comb, but followed

the depth of the frames producing large deep combs relying on anchorage to side of the hive. Everyone was impressed and we split the hive using the Dartington method.

Then disaster struck. A hot summers day on a roof, after an inspection left the anchorage severed lead to colony collapse! Several combs fell off, heavy with brood & honey and the bees absconded, leaving us with the small supersedure colony. Lesson learnt.

Colony now on frames and bee clutter littering the stairs.

Some do's & don'ts:

Do

- Try top bars, start a trend, not yet popular in the UK.
- * Use newspaper strips to tie back fallen or broken comb.
- * Use the wide & shallow hives that are designed for top bar, easy to make your own.
- * Learn from experts, mostly from Africa, Visit "Njiro Bee Research Centre", Arusha, Tanzania on a "Bees for Development" Safari.

Or stay in your armchair & visit <http://bwrangler.com/index.html> or <http://topbarbees.wordpress.com>

Don't

- * Use a Dartington for top bar beekeeping.

Will Clayton

Apiary Report

The beekeeping season began with the annual shed party and much optimism, as we anticipated a repeat of the previous year's early spring. It soon became obvious that this was definitely not to be the case as we desperately tried to create enough nuclei in cold and wet conditions for the overwhelming numbers of adopt-a-hivers.

Because of the adverse weather, queens ordered for the apiary, and for our members, arrived late and had to be introduced to their colonies under cover of umbrellas.

The weather affected the nectar flow for many plants, although the lime was good this year after several poor seasons and the bank of cotoneaster in the kitchen garden in Kenwood attracted the apiary bees for several days during the third week of May - always an amazing sight, and unexpected as the flowers look so much like berries that we humans tend to walk past.

Luckily, most of the Sunday apiary sessions were dry, although the ground was constantly wet and the skies overcast. The poor weather began to affect the amount of stores the bees were able to bring back to the hives and much to Johan's dismay, we had to start feeding.

This sad state of affairs continued throughout the 'summer' until all the

willing Thursday helpers were fed up dissolving the huge bags of sugar, fortunately we were ably assisted by a syrup fairy in the form of Alex's daughter - many thanks Ilana. Obviously, the honey harvest was poor overall, although the ecofield colony surprised us with several supers, but amazingly we had no problems with disease.

Varroa mite levels were surprisingly low in the middle of the season but increased dramatically in the autumn and Johan adopted a 'belt and braces' approach which meant that no colonies were lost.

The Thursday group excelled themselves this year and managed to keep all systems going, as well as repairing equipment and making new hive stands, so grateful thanks to Claire, the assistant's assistant, Daniel, Farokh, Lidia, Rikke, Sean and Vic, our regulars, and to all of you who have put so much effort into keeping the apiary neat, tidy, efficient and full of good humour.

Perversely, the apiary myrtle tree bloomed well this year.

Johan and I wish you a honey (and bee) rich 2009 season.

Angela Dougall



Beekeeping Exams

What happens after our classes + adopt-a-hive? Keeping you own colony?

Why not take The Basic Assesment in Beekeeping?

I took mine last year after a gentle push from Mary Ogle. My enthusiasm found me going round the group at the Apiary for fellow beekeepers to join me. Six of us met regularly, sharing the syllabus with each of us presenting a topic with plenty of discussions. We pooled our knowledge making it great fun. At regular apiary visits, we criticised and commented on handling colonies, whilst bombarding each other with questions.

This is a practical Assesment.

The Assesment consisted of going through a colony and answering questions during and after the procedure. The Bee Assessor spent the day with hourly assessments and welcomed a "nice cup of tea" in the break.

Thanks to Johan for opening the apiary for our use. I hope this inspires you all.

I would be happy to arrange a meeting to help set up groups for self study.

To find out more, go to the BBKA website, click on Members-Examination and Assessments to find full details of the basic course and subsequent modules.

Our group is fixing dates to do Modules 1 and 2 as we found learning about bees fascinating.

e.mail:Janealto@blueyonder.co.uk

Jane Kember

The Federation of Middlesex Beekeepers' Associations

Bee Keepers' Day **Saturday 14th February 2009**

Harrow Arts Centre , Uxbridge Road Hatch End. HA5 4EA

10.00 am a Welcome with coffee/tea on arrival.

10.30 am **Norman Carreck** Charles Darwin - cats, mice, bumble bees, old maids and clover'

12.00 **Margaret Thomas** 'What motivates the bee to act like it does'

1.15 pm *Lunch:*

Refreshments will be available at a modest price. Sandwiches, cake, fruit.

You will also have chance to look around the Harrow Bee Keeper's apiary.

2.15 pm **Andrew Gibb** 'The history of beekeeping equipment'

3.30 pm **The Annual General meeting will follow.**

Admission: £6 at the door

The nearest over-ground station is Hatch End about 7-8 minutes walk away. From Stanmore underground take H12 to Hatch End (every 10 minutes). Journey 26 mins. OR from Harrow tube (Metropolitan line) take H14. There is plenty of parking at the rear of the Art Centre and extra space in Morrison Supermarket. Further info may be obtained from Mrs J Telfer. Tel 020 8868 3494.

North London Beekeepers
PROJECTED Statement of Account for 2008

<u>2007</u>	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2008</u>
£5,850.25	Subscriptions & BDI	£6,011
2,040.00	Profit from activities and donations	0
1,018.80	Sale of Association honey	1,493
177.89	Bank interest (net of tax)	396
138.00	Apiary sales and rent	234
2,150.00	Beginner's Courses	1,230
535.00	Jar Sales	26
135.00	Misc (Beekeepers Quarterly subs now under subs)	0
£12,044.94		£9,390
	EXPENDITURE	
£380.97	Hire of halls, meetings and speakers	£640
636.63	Secretarial, Publicity, Mailings	504
958.25	Classes, Presentation, Teaching	265
484.31	Projector	0
1,700.95	Apiary	1,500
334.85	Bee Disease Insurance (BDI)	491
919.00	Capitation BBKA and Middx. Fed	1,819
2,148.75	Bee Craft & Beekeepers' Quarterly	2,114
326.85	Honey Jars	0
0.00	Web Site	71
£7,890.56		£7,405
£4,154.38	Excess of Operating Income over Expenditure	£1,985
	ASSETS	
at 31.12 2007		at 31.12 2008
2,996.90	Abbey Current Account	£4,507
10,630.46	Abbey Reserve Account	11,007
3.39	Cash	0
0.00	Debtors	0
-101.40	Less other creditors	0
£13,529.35		£15,514
	Financed by	
£9,374.97	Members funds (from previous year's total)	£13,529
4,154.38	Operating Surplus for year	1,985
£13,529.35		£15,514

The Association owns certain sheds, teaching aids, trophies, books, observation & other hives, apiary equipment, honey, bee medicaments & other items. These are listed separately.

Maja Herman, Honorary Treasurer

I have audited the above accounts which are in accordance with the Association's books and records as at 4 Dec 08 and assuming no more transactions.

4 Dec 09

Bob Jack, Honorary Auditor

TREASURER'S REPORT

The operating surplus for 2008 was just under £2,000 which is £200 more than in 2007 after allowing for the following in 2007:

1. There was a bequest for £2,000 out of which we bought a projector for £500
2. There was a change in paying BBKA capitation, with a one-off saving of £900.

The members funds (all in the Abbey National) are £15,500 which is 2 years' expenditure but which must cover the cost of replacing the (self insured) shed in case of loss.