



Annual Review 2013



photo by Liz Jack at Highgate Wood Heritage Festival

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Chairman's Report 2013

The long hot summer of 2013 is now just a distant memory as we head into the beekeeping quiet time. Did your bees take advantage of the excellent weather? Or were your colonies still too small from the wet spring to make honey while the sun shone? Mine were, and although by the autumn they were all strong colonies, I left most of the little honey they had produced for themselves and had to supplement their feed with lots of Ambrosia Syrup. Oh well, there is always next year and hopefully they will emerge in the spring well rested and ready for action.

The Association has, as usual, had a busy year, starting off in February when we hosted the Federation day. This was a very successful event and many thanks to all those who helped on the day. Particular thanks go to Liz, whose brilliant organisation ensured its success.

It looks like the enormous media coverage of beekeeping, and public interest, is waning slightly. The course we ran in February / March looked like it was going to be under subscribed but after a last minute push by Nicky to publicise it, an enthusiastic group of 20 signed up for the six evening sessions and followed on with the practical sessions at the apiary.

Once again we had stalls at our regular venues – Highgate Fair in the Square, Highgate Woods Heritage Day, Fenton House and Hampstead Heath Heritage Day. These events are extremely popular with the public and the observation hive is a great education tool. Thanks to all the people who have helped at these events but particularly to those involved at Hampstead Heath Heritage Day where the weather was absolutely appalling.

The summer tea party this year was hosted by Hugh and Martha in their beautiful garden and our thanks go to them for their hospitality.

Education is extremely important, both for our own development into better beekeepers and to ensure the health of our own bees and therefore those of our neighbours. We organised a disease recognition day in May with Alan Byham and Caroline Washington. This was a very informative event although fresh samples of the nastier diseases would have been useful for identification. We can be thankful that this lack of available material shows the rareness of the diseases themselves.

John Hauxwell ran three discussion groups in February on queen rearing, pheromones and hygiene. He also ran workshops on colony management, avoidance and identification of disease, and uses of nucleus boxes and uniting colonies, which were well supported. In September he held an open session for members to bring samples of their bees for an acarine and nosema check using the Association microscopes. We really appreciate the work John does in improving the knowledge of our members and look forward to more workshops in the coming year. Do check out his updated information sheets on the website.

Continuing the education theme, Will Clayton gained the Advanced Theory Certificate by passing all the BBKA modules. He is the first of our members to achieve this and we send our congratulations to him. Well done also to the three members who took and passed their Basic Assessment.

We returned to the Danish YWCA for our honey show and pot luck supper. Once again we are extremely grateful to Palle Pederson and his team of helpers who make this event such a pleasure. Peter Bashford again judged the entries. He is so knowledgeable and has had considerable personal success at the National Honey Show so it seems a pity that there were so few entries for him to judge.



We ran a varied series of lectures covering academic, practical and educational topics. Ged Marshall gave us two talks and his easy going delivery and outwardly relaxed approach might persuade anyone that being a bee farmer is really easy. He has first-hand experience of living in an area with large amounts of oil seed rape all of which is grown from neonicotinoid coated seed. Perhaps we should get him to talk about that next.

Following on with the disease topic we organised an extremely interesting quiz hosted by Margaret Holland, a recently retired bee inspector, where one had to pair up items from her samples. This was a very clever quiz and it was so disappointing both for the organisers and presenter that only seven members turned up.

As usual the social events ended with the Christmas party hosted by John and Tessa. I was sorry to miss it this year but our thanks to them for once again kicking off the festive season.

At last year's AGM we got approval from the membership to raise the subscription rates in the light of higher BBKA capitation rates. We have decided that as our reserves and current account have not diminished we will not increase the rates for this coming year.

As you all know Liz, our secretary, will be retiring at the coming AGM after 13 years of amazing service to the Association. As Chairman I have hugely appreciated her invaluable support as did John during his ten years before me. I am sure I speak for all members in thanking her warmly for all her hard work over the years.

It may be the World Cup in Brazil next year but let us make our goals – Better Bees and Better Beekeeping for 2014.

I wish you all a Happy New Year

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Balston". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Malcolm Balston, Dec 2013

APIARY REPORT 2013

2013 was a much better year compared to the previous one when we barely managed to survive. We lost about 30% of our colonies which was slightly better than the previous year.

In one colony we found one queen with 10 workers – a very sorry sight, indeed. As recommended by Caroline Washington, we put the surviving bees and queen into the observation hive with new brood, together with bees from a strong colony. This proved a very successful solution, and the queen continued to lay throughout the summer. The observation hive was used for many different events during the season.



12 strong colonies were raised from 4 colonies. We used our own queens which were reared at the apiary. Ambrosia was fed to the bees to help them build up quickly.

We had a few swarms – one went into the surplus equipment stored at the Apiary, and the other settled just outside the Apiary on the pavement. Luckily for us Faroukh happened to pass by at the same time to return the swarm back to the apiary.

No serious diseases were encountered this year by Caroline Washington, our

Bee Inspector, although sac brood was found in one colony. As a precautionary measure a minimum of 50% of the foundation is replaced in every hive at the beginning of the season to minimise infection and wax moths. Furthermore flaming of used equipment and fumigation of frames and supers are carried out rigorously with acetic acid.

As mentioned previously, we used our own queens to build up colonies. The New Zealand Queens introduced the previous year at great expense were not very successful. Equalisation of colonies was not carried out as all colonies were thriving.

The honey harvest was reasonable, approx. 200 lbs. having left extraction to later in the season, although we ensured that plenty of stores were left for the bees themselves, i.e. 1 full super plus frames in the brood box. In previous year the bees were fed too much Ambrosia and lacked sufficient pollen stores to survive the winter.

It was a pleasant year with great interest displayed by the new students who did a splendid job. One small, but extremely useful piece of advice that I picked up from one of our evening talks in Highgate was 'when counting varroa mites empty the contents of the varroa floor board into a jar of methylated spirits; all varroa mites will float on top'. This is an extremely accurate and quick way of knowing the true count.

Numbers of varroa were very low throughout the summer, although later in the season we found some colonies suddenly had large varroa mite drops. All colonies were treated twice with formic acid during the season, and oxalic acid will be administered in January 2014. The bees have been active until Mid-December and are using their stores rapidly. Supplementary feeding will most likely have to be administered.

Many thanks to Margaret Jarvie yet again for bottling the Association's honey, and to all the people who have been cutting the grass, making frames, delivering Ambrosia to the Apiary, general housekeeping and not to mention making of essential cups of tea.

HAPPY BEEKEEPING!

Johan Kjaer December 2013

NLB Honey Show 2013

The Honey Show was held on the 11th September at the Danish YWCA, Nutley Court, Maresfield Gardens, Hampstead NW3 5TF.

Judge - Peter Bashford from the Bromley Branch of Kent Beekeepers,

Fourteen NLB members entered the show with thirty one entries.

The **Challenge Cup** for the best Honey was won by John Hauxwell.

The **Riley Cup** for the best frame for extraction was won by Malcolm Balston

The **Marsh Cup** for the best beeswax was won by John Hauxwell.

We are very grateful to Palle Pederson for his help with all our arrangements. We also thank Peter Bashford for judging our show and for the very useful advice he gave us on preparing and presenting our entries. Many thanks also to Liz Jack who arranged the wonderful pot-luck-supper and to the team at Nutley Court who served and cleared up after supper. Thanks also to Harriet Copperman for assistance with taking in and recording show entries.

Finally, thanks to all those who put such effort into the presentation of their entries and to all who cooked and baked so that we could enjoy such a wonderful supper. Thank you all!

List of awards 2013

Class 1. Light Honey - No entries.

Class 2. Medium honey.

1st John Hauxwell – **Challenge Cup**

2nd Malcolm Balston

3rd Liz Jack

Class 3. Dark honey

Highly Commended: Nicky Faith

Class 4. Naturally granulated or soft set honey – no awards given.

Class 5. Novice class

2nd Gema Belmonte

3rd Andrew Bratt

Highly Commended: Harriet Copperman

Class 6. Honey cake

1st Dee Cullen

2nd Hamish Johnston Stewart

3rd Simon Hewitt

Highly Commended: Amanda Hayes

Class 7. Piece of beeswax

1st John Hauxwell – **Marsh Cup**

2nd Hamish Johnston Stewart

3rd Malcolm Balston



1st prize in Class 13 Photo by Dee Cullen

Class 8. Cut comb no entries

Class 9. Frame for extraction

1st Malcolm Balston – **Riley Cup**

2nd John Hauxwell

3rd Peter Buckoke

Highly Commended: Angela Dougal

Class 10. Bottle of mead

2nd Peter Buckoke

Class 11. Exhibit related to beekeeping

– no entries

Class 12. Pair of candles

1st Malcolm Balston

2nd John Hauxwell

Class 13. Photograph related to bees or beekeeping

1st Dee Cullen (*see photo above*)

2nd Richard Corrigan

3rd John Hauxwell

Highly Commended: Peter Buckoke

Nicky Faith December 2013

North London Beekeepers Statement of Account for 2013

2012	INCOME	2013
£4,977.25	Subscriptions & BDI	£4,753.35
257.91	Profit from activities and donations	142.84
0.00	Sale of Association honey (+ future sales)	351.50
10.08	Bank interest (net of tax and bank charges)	12.83
1,700.00	Beginner's Courses	2,100.00
740.05	Jar Sales & extractor rent	892.00
£7,685.29	Net income = £1,646.62	£8,252.52
	Net income = £182.31	

EXPENDITURE

£940.05	Hire of halls, meetings and speakers	£1,488.82
367.64	Secretarial, Publicity, Mailings	363.74
772.25	Classes, Presentation, Teaching	453.38
1,724.93	Apiary	725.23
444.75	Bee Disease Insurance (BDI)	363.85
2,248.65	Capitation BBKA and Middx. Fed	2,163.60
478.01	Honey Jars & labels	709.69
0.00	One-offs (BBKA handbooks)	105.00
119.00	Web Site	133.50
£7,095.28		£6,506.81
£590.01	Excess of Operating Income over Expenditure	£1,745.71

ASSETS

<u>at 31.12 2012</u>		<u>at 31.12 2013</u>
£3,716.62	Santander Current Account	£5,887.38
21,239.65	Santander Reserve Account	21,252.02
0.00	Unsold Honey	148.00
-222.58	Debtors less creditors (subs etc paid in advance)	-808.00
£24,733.69		£26,479.40

Financed by

£24,143.68	Members funds (from previous year's total)	£24,733.69
590.01	Operating Surplus for year	1,745.71
£24,733.69		£26,479.40

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



Hamish Johnston Stewart
Honorary Treasurer

I have audited the above accounts which are in accordance with the Association's books and records as at 7 Jan 2014.

R. L. Jack

7 Jan 2014

Bob Jack, Honorary Auditor

TREASURER'S REPORT

The operating surplus for 2013 was £1,746.

Members funds of £27,139 (held at Santander) are over 4 years' expenditure but this must cover the cost of replacing the (self insured) shed in case of loss.