



North London  
Beekeepers

# North London Beekeepers Annual Report 2019



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Membership at the end 2019: 168

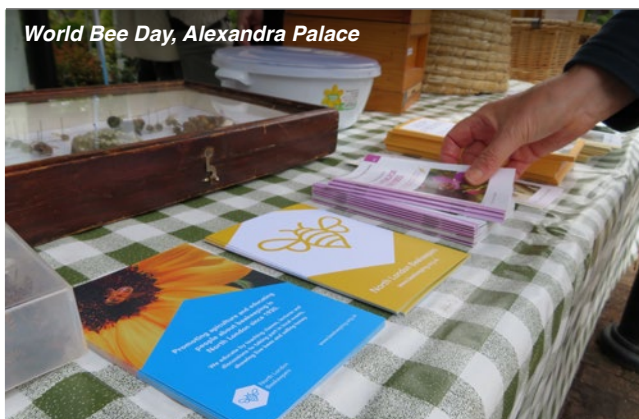
Full Beekeeping 142

Partner 16

Associate 9

Junior 1

Honorary 2



*World Bee Day, Alexandra Palace*



*The Fair in the Square, Highgate*



*Queen Marking, Kenwood*



*Apiary Meeting, Kenwood*

## Chair's Report

2019 was a mixed year for beekeepers. The honey season did not really get going until the beginning of June due to cold and wet weather. Queen rearing was unreliable as queens could not get out to mate during the endless cold, spring rain. Swarming was difficult to control as poor weather dissuaded beekeepers from opening hives, but the bees still took advantage of any rare, bright moment to swarm. For some beekeepers the honey crop was excellent while for others it was mediocre. Varroa for many became a big problem and caused viruses to proliferate leaving hives with low numbers of bees to carry the colony through the winter. Wax moth was also a problem.

This has been a successful year for introducing beekeeping to new members and improving existing members' beekeeping knowledge. Quite a few members have studied for BBKA exams and the extra knowledge gained and shared helps us all improve our beekeeping.

Thanks to Kelly Moore, our bright, new website went live at the beginning of the year and we are gradually filling it with NLB information and activities.

We had a talk by John Hendrie on, 'The Importance of Bee Pheromones,' and a demonstration by Jereme Zimmerman on Making Mead. Dr. Paul Hurd gave a fascinating talk entitled, 'Honey Bees Are What They Eat.' Caroline Washington kindly ran practical sessions on disease recognition and we enjoyed a BBKA film on Swarm Control. John Hauxwell ran useful discussion groups on, 'Laying workers and Drone Laying Queens', 'The Basics of Queen Rearing' and 'Pheromones.'

We brought our observation hive and manned stalls at World Bee Day at Alexandra Palace Garden Centre; Highgate Fair in the Square; Highgate Wood Community Day and Fenton House Apple Weekend. This was an opportunity to sell our honey, talk to the public and answer their bee questions.

The season started with our Shed Party at Kenwood Apiary and we closed the season in September with our Honey Show at a new venue organized by Helen Rogers, which worked out very well. The last event of the year was the Christmas Party to which, despite wet and windy weather, there was an excellent turnout of members bringing a wonderful range of supper dishes that made for a lovely evening enjoyed by all.

My thanks go to everyone who has helped run our apiaries, the shows, courses and teaching and especially to the Committee who give up so much of their time to make it all happen and run smoothly.

I joined NLB in 1996 and the Committee a year later. Keeping bees as a member of NLB has been a life-enriching experience and I've had a wonderful time! I've been Honey Show Manager, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Education Secretary and Chairman. I've seen NLB go through many changes and chapters and I feel it is time to kick off the new decade with some fresh input, younger energy and new ideas. I will therefore not be standing for re-election for the Chair or the Committee.

I'd like to wish all our members a very Happy New Year and a really successful beekeeping season in 2020.

*Nicky Faith  
January 2020*

## Kenwood Apiary Report

At the beginning of 2019 bees at the Kenwood Apiary were off to a slow start, building up very slowly during the spring. They had virtually no stored honey and a season without honey seemed to be on the agenda BUT In early July, matters took a turn for the better and the honey flow started in earnest. The bees filled our supers to the brim in no time, and thus a hectic battle began to assemble more frames. Our total honey harvest came to nearly 500 lbs and far exceeded our early expectations – so much that we in fact had a surplus of honey jars to sell (and still have) after the various spring and summer fairs NLB attended.

I have sent off a couple of our honey jars for pollen analysis by a local scientist and fellow beekeeper, and we are now awaiting the result with anticipation, despite having a general idea of what the bees had been foraging on.

This year we will try to extract honey during the season in smaller batches to make it easier to bottle and display different types of honey, which will be good for educational purposes. On the subject of honey, we still have some honey in a settling tank at the Apiary and any members who were not successful in getting any honey last year, are welcome to contact me. First come first served! In addition to this the Apiary produces a noticeable amount of wax cappings, and it would be nice to see some of this being put to good use for our next year's Honey Show.

The varroa count was high during the entire year and a constant nuisance. Due to the extreme summer heat of 2019, we encountered problems in administering the MAQs strips, and hence treatment of the colonies had to be delayed until later in the season. Despite this, the treatment still had a knock on effect on our Queens, and as a result, some of them stopped laying for a while. Tom Bickerdike, Seasonal Bee Inspector gave our bees a clean bill of health at the yearly inspection (phew), which is a credit to the hard work of our members in ensuring strict hygiene procedures are adhered to at all times.

The usual beekeeping activities included amongst others last year, the very popular taster sessions, weekly Thursday afternoon meetings and club days on Sundays. Again, this year a number of our members passed their Basic Bee exams - an important step in their development as Beekeepers and of great benefit to the Club and its bees. We applaud them!

We also had an unexpected visit by a Canadian Beekeeper by the name of Tony van Oostrom. During his visit, Tony volunteered to help at the Apiary a couple of afternoons with the final winter preparations. It was interesting to learn about Canadian beekeeping practices – and in particular about their continuous combat against the Hive Beetle. Tony is an extremely knowledgeable Beekeeper, and hopefully he will visit us again on his next visit to the UK.

The Thursday group is still going strong, and they are taking on 3-4 new helpers in the forthcoming season, which we welcome. These additional hands learning further about beekeeping and carrying out other necessary tasks like grass cutting, cleaning, and assembling of new equipment, make a huge difference in maintaining our Apiary to a high standard

The current situation at the Apiary is that we have 8 colonies of which 4 are not very strong - but with proper management they should see it through the next season. Only a few dead bees were found lying on the floor boards in contrast to previous years following my regular New Year's inspection so fingers crossed we should be off to a flying season.

Happy beekeeping to you all

*Johan Kjaer  
Kenwood Apiary Manager  
January 2020*

## Alexandra Palace Apiary Report

### Colonies

We started the year with four colonies and have ended the year with four colonies plus two nucs each with new queens. Overall the colonies are well behaved and calm apart from hive two which has always been on the feisty side even after an artificial swarm and a new queen. This year has been challenging partly due to the season and less people to help especially during peak season. The early Spring start led us into a potential bumper honey crop only to be eaten up as the rain came down in early Summer. Thankfully the weather did pick back up again which resulted in a good amount of honey extracted.

### Pests

Varroa is forever present and infestations appear a little higher this year than previous with the effect from associated viruses more visible. Even with regular mite counts and treatment throughout the season it remains a constant.

### Swarms

More swarms than usual this year in possibly due to the early start to Spring followed by a sudden cold patch may have meant the Queens did not complete their mating flights in time. Luckily the swarms at AP didn't venture to far as they visited various plots on the allotment and were easily retrieved again.

### Honey harvest

Honey extraction took place at Capital Gardens Alexandra Palace Garden Centre, who kindly donated the use of their kitchen for free. We extracted ten supers of honey or around 143lbs / 65kg in late August. A small group of mainly first-time honey extractors soon got a sticky production line of uncapping, extracting and decanting going. Most of the honey was sold through the Garden Centre Café and at various events and festivals. Many thanks to everyone who came to help with the extraction.

**We are very grateful for the ongoing support of the Alexandra Palace Garden Centre. In 2019 it sold more than £1,000 of NLB honey and contributed a considerable amount to 'Bees For Development'.**

### Looking ahead

A busy year ahead with all colonies to be shocked swarmed in early Spring. The nucs will hopefully make it through the winter either to establish as new colonies or provide replacement queens to some of the existing colonies. We also have a new rota of volunteers most of whom are from the 2019 beginner's course. Their help will provide the extra support needed at the apiary and also continue to develop their knowledge and practical experience.

*Kelly Moore  
January 2020*



## Highgate Wood Apiary Report

### Colonies

There was one colony at the beginning of the season and now we have two after completing an artificial swarm.

### Pests

Both hives were treated throughout the year as part of an integrated pest management programme. Although the effects were not as present as the colonies at Alexandra Palace this maybe in part due to the colonies being smaller in size overall.

### Honey harvest

Honey extraction took place at Capital Gardens Alexandra Palace Garden Centre at the same time as the Alexandra Palace extraction. We extracted one super of honey with most of the honey sold throughout the various events and festivals, in particular the Highgate Wood Community Day. Several jars were also donated to the Highgate Wood Rangers as a thank you for their continued help and support.

### Looking ahead

The site at Highgate Wood is challenging due to its position and overhanging trees which has since been cut back by the Highgate Wood Rangers and their regular group of volunteers, will wait to see how the colonies fair this winter.

*Kelly Moore*

*January 2020*



## Education Report

### Beginners Course 2019

The 2019 Beginners Course was attended by 27 would be beekeepers. The course was presented by Nicky Faith, John Hauxwell, Amanda Hayes, Alison Kahane, Johan Kjaer, Julie Parker, Martin Stieksel and Helen Rogers. The course began in March with five consecutive Monday evening theory sessions followed by a practical session at Kenwood specifically for our Beginners followed by the monthly apiary sessions. A final end of season 'round up' Q&A and course report was held in September followed by a visit to the Alexandra Palace Apiary. Several of the 2019 Beginners Course will be joining the Ally Pally Apiary team and Kenwood Apiary 'Thursday Group' in 2020.

### Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Presentation & Workshop

In February a well attended session on IPM at the Highgate Society gave members the opportunity to discuss and plan an IPM strategy for the forthcoming season. The evening consisted of an informative slide presentation on current IPM practice followed by members working in groups to put together an IPM plan for the year for a colony with specific issues. Feedback was excellent and the evening concluded with a very entertaining discussion on different IPM plans that can be adopted. Presented by Julie Parker and Alison Kahane.

### Swarm Control Film Show & Workshop

In early March, in preparation for the start of the season we screened the new BBKA film on: Why do bees swarm? How to prevent a colony swarming; Swarm prevention manipulations and how to spot swarms. It was followed by practical demonstrations of artificial swarm methods and an opportunity to practice the techniques demonstrated. Another well attended workshop that was very informative and helpful to both new and experienced members. Presented by Julie Parker, John Hauxwell and Amanda Hayes.

### Bee Disease Recognition Workshops

In early May Caroline Washington ran two practical Disease Recognition workshops. For many years Caroline was the Seasonal Bee Inspector for North London. In the workshop, she demonstrated how to look for disease including European Foul Brood (EFB) and American Foul Brood (AFB) She discussed and answered questions on disease, virus' and other brood conditions. Beekeepers then had an opportunity to show what they have learnt. These sessions were very helpful for members keen to improve their husbandry skills and knowledge as well as for members taking the BBKA Basic Assessment, Honey Bee Health and Husbandry exams.

### Basic Assessment

Several members took the practical BBKA Basic Assessment Exam. They worked in study groups over several months, took a 'mock' Assessment and then went on to do the real assessment in early July. Well done to everyone that passed: Kelly Moore, John Kelleher, Jessica Neil, Mathew Price, William Leefe and Christopher Benkert. They were very ably guided through this process by Amanda Hayes.

### Bee Basics

In September we ran two new workshops for the public. These 90 minute sessions provided a short overview of bees and beekeeping in London. Our aim was to explain how to support bees in the Capital, planting and forage for bees in an urban setting and to give some general information about beekeeping. They were aimed at people who didn't necessarily want to become beekeepers. They proved to be very popular and attracted our target audience. Everyone went home with a jar of Kenwood honey and a wealth of information about bees and how to support them. They were great fun to run. Presented by Nicky Faith, Kelly Moore, Martin Stieksel, Julie Parker and Alison Kahane.

### Kitchen Table Discussions

John Hauxwell ran and led three excellent discussion sessions in February and March. These were on: Laying workers/Drone laying queens, Basics of Queen Rearing and Pheromones.

### BBKA Modules & General Husbandry

Congratulations to Amanda Hayes and Alison Kahane who both passed Module 3 and to Nicky Faith who passed the General Husbandry exam.

### **Fortismere School Apiary**

Over the last twelve months, one of our members Mathew Price has spent considerable time and energy persuading his school that it would be an excellent idea to set up a Beekeeping club. He drew up Health and Safety Plans, Apiary design plans and costings. He spoke to the BBKA, the Middlesex Federation Committee secretary, and myself to get advice and support to ensure the success of the project. He enthused staff, fellow students and school governors and finally won the support he needed to start the club. He organised fundraising events for equipment, materials and the all important beekeeper suits. Mathew has shown extraordinary tenacity and determination. In November the apiary construction was completed. In December two colonies and hives were moved onto the site.

Early next year several members of NLB will run some theory sessions for the school's new beekeeping club and as the season starts we will support practical sessions. The School has joined North London Beekeepers. Well done Mathew.

It has been a good year.

*Julie Parker  
Education Officer  
December 2019*



*Shed Opening Party, Kenwood*



*Fenton House, Hampstead*



*Apiary Meeting, Kenwood*



*National Honey Show, Sandown*



## Digital Report

### Website

Over the past 12 months we have launched the new NLB website which has been a great success and received positive feedback from members.

A quick round up of traffic figures from the past 12 months show: 4,780 unique visitors and 19,000-page views. With the most popular pages viewed are: News and Events, Courses, Membership and For Sale.

### Newsletters

In the summer we also relaunched our monthly newsletters providing members with a general round up on all bee news, updates and events. The new format has allowed us to publish content in an engaging and interesting way that also links to our main website.

### Members Survey

We completed an NLB members survey this summer, many thanks to everyone who took the time to complete it. This was the first time we have conducted a survey and it helped us to find out a bit more about members in general.

Of the 153 members we shared it with, 53 responded with the overall feedback fairly pleased with the new website and happy to receive a new look newsletter. Quite a few people asked for a forum to share knowledge and ask questions of other local beekeepers with some social media presence. The later points we are still looking into and hope to share something early in the new year.

As always, we are continuously looking at ways to improve our website and how we communicate with members. If you have any feedback or suggestions, please get in touch: [digital@beekeeping.org.uk](mailto:digital@beekeeping.org.uk)

*Kelly Moore  
Digital Manager  
January 2020*



## The Honey Show Report by Helen Rogers NLB Honey Show Secretary

Date: Tuesday September 24th 2019

Venue: Holly Lodge Community Centre

Judge: Sue Lang - Bedfordshire Beekeepers' Association

The results are as follows:

The Challenge Cup	Best Honey in Show Nicky Faith (Medium Honey)
The Riley Cup	Best Frame for Extraction Nicky Faith
The Marsh Cup	Best Beeswax Helen Rogers
The Mrs Assheton Clegg Cup	Honey Tasting Simon Hewitt

Class	1st	2nd	3rd	Highly Commended
<b>A Light Honey</b>	Nicky Faith	Hamish Johnston Stewart	John Hauxwell	Peter Williams
<b>B Medium Honey</b>	Nicky Faith	Helen Rogers		Peter Williams Nicky Faith
<b>D Set Honey</b>	Helen Rogers	John Hauxwell		
<b>F Honey Cake</b>	Nicky Faith			
<b>G Beeswax Block</b>	Helen Rogers		John Hauxwell	
<b>H 3 Beeswax Blocks</b>	Helen Rogers	Hamish Johnston Stewart	John Hauxwell	
<b>I Cut Comb</b>	Helen Rogers	John Hauxwell	Peter Williams	
<b>J Frame for Extraction</b>	Nicky Faith	Helen Rogers	John Hauxwell	
<b>K Mead</b>		Helen Rogers		
<b>L Exhibit</b>	Amanda Hayes			
<b>M Candles</b>	John Hauxwell	Nicky Faith		
<b>N Photograph</b>	Connie Smith	Nikola Sutherland	John Hauxwell	
<b>O Confectionery</b>	Nikola Sutherland			





Honey Show, Hampstead



Apiary Meeting, Kenwood



World Bee Day, Ally Pally



Honey Stall, Fenton House



Honey Stall, Alexandra Palace



Apiary Meeting, Kenwood



Honey Stall, Alexandra Palace



Honey Show, Hampstead



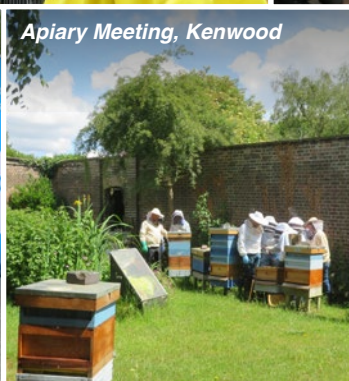
Fair in the Square, Highgate



Honey Show, Hampstead



Fair in the Square, Highgate



Apiary Meeting, Kenwood



Fair in the Square, Highgate



