



North London
Beekeepers

North London Beekeepers Annual Report 2020

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Chair's Report

What a time to start my new role as Chair of NLB! A year full of surprising events and turns, some expected and others not so. The bees kept themselves busy and were unaware of the hands, face, space measures we adapted to. This year our apiaries were supported by a small team of people through the season. There weren't as many swarms which may have been because we were able to keep a better eye on our bees during lockdown. Some beekeepers reported good honey crops this year but at NLB's apiaries we had very little due partly to having shook swarmed all of the colonies at Alexandra Palace and Highgate Wood.

The year still offered its highlights even though we were not able to attend our usual meetings and events. There was no beginners course this year, a decision that was made before Covid which in hindsight turned out to be a small blessing. In February we hosted the Middlesex Federation Day at Heartlands High School in Wood Green which was a great success despite the dramatic weather. The season started with a workshop on how to prepare for the Spring. We hosted a monthly 'Hive Hour' session with a regular attendance of over 20 members. The hour was part social and Q&A and was particularly enjoyable for me as I got to meet some of you for the first time. Our 'Ask a Beekeeper' team were also on hand throughout the season for those who needed advice and guidance, including a video call to talk through a live artificial swarm. The Honey Show went ahead even though other Associations had decided not to do theirs. We took advantage of Zoom and invited all our members to watch the judging process which we filmed in advance, followed by announcing all the awards. Entrants were also treated to a live honey tasting session of various European honeys all kindly organised by Helen Rogers.

We said goodbye to Johan Kjaer, our Apiary Manager for many years who, with Lisbeth, returned to Denmark for a new retirement adventure. Julie Parker stepped down as Education Officer in September after dedicating a huge amount of time and energy to the committee and in her role as Education Officer. She reshaped the beginners' course and transformed an empty plot at Alexandra Palace into a successful and thriving apiary. Hamish Johnson Stewart is stepping down this month after a decade as Treasurer. He has taken extremely good care of NLB's finances over the years and always on hand to offer advice and support to everyone. I would also like to thank Alison Kahane, during her role as Secretary she has kept the association and the committee included; running in tip top shape with her excellent due diligence and attention to detail along with the organisation of numerous talks and events. I would like to thank Johan, Julie, Hamish and Alison for all the time, energy, commitment and dedication they have given to the Committee and NLB over the years.

There will be some new faces on the Committee, all of whom have volunteered to help run the Association, support our members and maintain our three apiaries over the coming year. The NLB currently has a membership of approx 150 people and the Committee comprises five volunteers which equates to just 3% of the membership. In the future it would be nice to have some members step forward to volunteer their help. It's an opportunity to have fun, to learn and share information between fellow beekeepers and doesn't necessarily involve being part of the Committee. Keep a look-out in the newsletters about up-and-coming events and opportunities or get in touch direct at any time.

Thank you again to the Committee and everyone who has helped support the apiaries, our beekeepers and taken part in our events, shows and talks. Here's hoping for an exciting year of beekeeping ahead.

*Kelly Moore
Chair NLB
January 2020*

Apiary Report

Kenwood

We started the year with four hives as the other four colonies did not make it through the previous winter. There was no major reason for this loss but they were not the strongest of the colonies and it was rather fortunate due to COVID and no planned teaching commitments.

The bees kept themselves busy produce enough stores for themselves but not enough to extract. The two smaller colonies were united to create a stronger one with a new blue queen which is looking in good shape. We lost the smallest colony last month to some very persistent wasps. Even after being moved into a nuc and the addition of a ready made wasp defender they still struggled to defend the hive. The two remaining colonies are in a good shape following their winter treatments and fondant to keep them going.

Looking ahead there are plans to introduce a new team at Kenwood along with new colonies, replacing the current bench area and converting it into a new cleaning station and sink the Spring.

Alexandra Palace

There were five colonies and one nuc at Alexandra Palace following an artificial swarm. We did lose a nuc over winter and following an annual visit from the Regional Bee Inspector, Tom Bickerdike we disposed of a very small colony that was no longer developing. The fence was replaced just before lockdown following the earlier storms thanks to those that offered their help.

Six colonies are all doing well following the shook swarms in April. Four of the hives each filled the first super really quickly in June but the second ones didn't materialise so no honey was extracted this year. Hive 1 become very defensive over the summer making it difficult to inspect. The queen was replaced but the colony rejected her and built several new queen cells for themselves. One of which was retained so will wait and see how she goes.

Highgate Wood

There are two colonies at Highgate Wood following the artificial swarm back in May. The mixed weather of June meant both colonies were fed syrup to help with their stores. No supers were filled this season although Hive 1 have some lovely drawn comb which has been stored ready for next year. September was busy with both colonies treated with Apilife Var. Hive 2 had a red queen which we were hoping would make it through the winter and supercedure to follow in the Spring but the bees had other ideas. An inspection later revealed a single open queen cell and the red queen still busy laying. Both colonies have been treated and supplied with fondant early this year due to the mild November keeping the busy laying and the brood and varroa boards added for another mite count.

Membership Report

By the end of 2020 NLB had 148 members. Those were:

121 Full members
20 Partner members
6 Associate members
1 Junior member

148 is slightly down from 168, which was the number of members in 2019.

For the last few years we have noticed that between 20 to 30 people do not renew their membership, but this is usually compensated by the new members that sign-up to the Beginner's course. The decision to not have a beginners course in 2020 is thus the cause for the drop in members.

A reminder of the different membership classes offered by NLB:

- A Full Member is an active beekeeper. As part of this membership the person is insured via the BBKA for Public Liability and Bee Diseases.
- A partner Member is a partner of a Full Member, who shares the same postal address.
- An Associate Member is someone who is a member of another Beekeeping Association who chose to also be a member of NLB (for example of people have a second place of residence).
- A Junior Member is a member of under 18 years of age.

Martin Stiksel
Membership Officer
January 2020



Digital Report

Website

We have had over 6,000 visits to the website this year, an increase of 13% from the previous year. That equates to 17,000 page views in total. The most popular content is: Honey For Sale, Courses, Who we are, Swarms and Events.

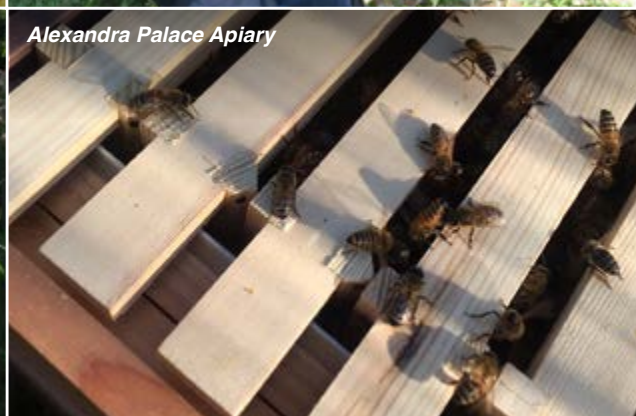
Social Media

This year we set up a private Facebook group for our members as another way to stay in touch. The sign-up for this has been slow with only a small number of people joining to date. We currently have no other social media presence set up.

Newsletters

The newsletters have proved more popular following the new design and content updates. With an overall performance of 70% for the non-profit sector. The average number of recipients is currently 124 with around 100 members opening it each month. The most read items over the past 12 months include: Apiary updates, Matthew Price and his article on setting up bees at school, The Hive Hour, Events and the AGM Report

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



The Honey Show Report

Date: Tuesday 15th September 2020

Venue: Holly Lodge Community Centre

Judge: Sue Lang - Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association

We welcomed back Sue Lang to judge this year and we all appreciated her expertise in judging and her feedback on how honey and beeswax should be prepared for showing.

This year was rather different from previous shows because of COVID-19 restrictions. Instead of the usual Bring and Share supper in the evening, we met via Zoom for the results to be revealed and to watch the judging process, which was filmed by Kelly Moore. After the results, entrants enjoyed a honey tasting session of various European honeys, organised by Helen Rogers.

We would like to thank everyone for making an extra effort to enter this year - we are delighted to have more entries than in the last couple of years. We were one of the few groups to hold a honey show in this difficult year.

The results are as follows:

Class	1st	2nd	3rd	Highly Commended
A Light Honey		Geoffrye Hood		Nicky Faith
B Medium Honey	Richard Corrigan	Helen Rogers	Alison Kahane	Nikola Sutherland
C Dark Honey	Nicky Faith	Helen Rogers		
D Set Honey	Helen Rogers	John Hauxwell	Alison Kahane	
E Novice	Helen New + Matthew Price	Sara McLaughlin		
F Honey Cake	Nicky Faith	Alison Kahane	Kelly Moore	
G Beeswax Block	Helen Rogers	John Hauxwell	Richard Corrigan	
H 3 Beeswax Blocks	John Hauxwell	Helen Rogers	Geoffrye Hood	Richard Corrigan
I Cut Comb	Richard Corrigan	Helen Rogers		
J Frame for Extraction	Nikola Sutherland	Helen Rogers		
K Mead	Helen Rogers			
M Candles	Helen Rogers	John Hauxwell		
N Photograph	Helen New	John Hauxwell	Eugene McConville	Connie Smith
O Confectionery	Helen Rogers	Kelly Moore	Nicky Faith	
Q Super Challenge	Jonathan Lewis and Jill	Richard Corrigan		

The Challenge Cup
The Riley Cup
The Marsh Cup
The Mrs Assheton Clegg Cup

Best Honey in Show
Best Frame for Extraction
Best Beeswax
Honey Tasting

Nicky Faith (Dark Honey)
Nikola Sutherland
Helen Rogers
No tasting this year

*Helen Rogers
Honey Show Secretary
December 2020*

Treasurer's Report

These accounts are certainly different to any others I have produced in my ten years as treasurer. The absence of any income from courses and of any honey production in the year has led to a considerable fall in income and a subsequent loss of over £5,000.

Were this to continue, there would obviously be serious consequences for the association, but, assuming that this year is an anomaly, we will be well able to absorb this year's loss thanks to previous years' surpluses.

Other irregular items are entries of takings and expenses for the Middlesex Federation Day which appears to make a profit for us. In fact, the hire of the venue was paid last year and not put in as this year's expense - overall the committee agreed to subsidise the day at a cost of roughly £200.

We again made the annual donation to Bees for Development and Bees Abroad and a further donation to the new shed at the Alexander Palace allotment in recognition of their great help in setting up our apiary there.

It may also seem surprising that the expense of events has not reduced more but this is because some payments for the 2019 hall hire and honey show were not settled until this year and account for about a quarter of the figure.

I am very happy to welcome Christoph as our new treasurer and would also thank Bob Jack for his conscientious support as auditor for all my time in the role and quite a few before then.

*Hamish Johnston Stewart
Honorary Treasurer
January 2021*



Events 2021

We hope to bring you details of more events in our newsletters over the coming months and you can also visit our events calendar and add the dates in your 2021 'diaries'. Dates maybe subject to change in line with government guidance and the weather.

February

1st: NLB Beekeeping for Beginners Course

April

16th -18th: BBKA Spring Convention - An on-line armchair event

24th: BBKA Online Module Exams

25th: The Annual Kenwood Shed Party

June

12th: Highgate Fair in the Square

October

21st - 23rd: The National Honey Show



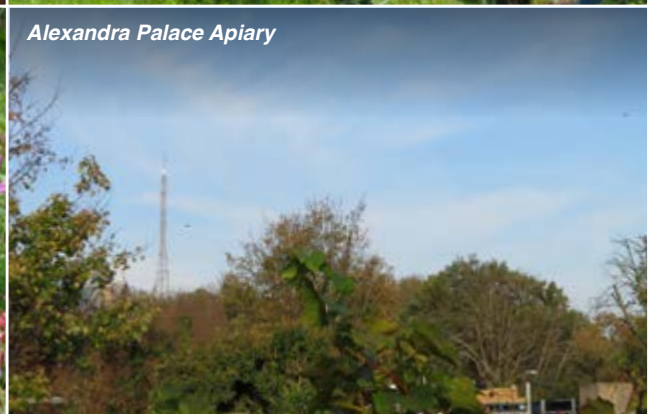
Alexandra Palace Apiary



Kenwood Apiary



Kenwood Apiary



Alexandra Palace Apiary

