

## WEYBRIDGE DIVISION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020

**Financial** The Weybridge division remains in a healthy financial situation.

**Membership** The Weybridge division has 144 members during 2020. This is an increase of 11 on the previous year.

**Committee** The full committee met on 6 occasions during the year, with meetings from April onwards being on Skype due to the covid-19 situation.

**Bee health** European foul brood was detected on the border of the Weybridge division in the Guildford/Woking area in June 2020. Our Nosema clinic, due to be held on 7 April, was cancelled due to the covid-19 lockdown.

**Bee swarms** The BBKA swarm website page is being used as the first point of contact. This directs callers to one of several local swarm collectors. A recruitment drive in 2020 has added more swarm collectors to the Weybridge list. Householders with swarms are being invited to make a no-obligation donation to the Weybridge division. In 2020 this raised over £800, plus gift aid still to be received. Swarms are passed on to new members and those who have had winter losses. Members being given swarms are asked to make a donation that goes to the division, along with covering the expenses of swarm collectors.

**Apiaries** The Weybridge division has its longstanding apiary site for members at Row Town. Paul Bunclark has generously allowed his own apiary near Row Town to be used as the division's teaching apiary, although covid-19 meant that practical classes for new beekeepers on the 2020 course could not be held. Two socially distanced taster days were held at the apiary in August.

**New Teaching Apiary and Education Centre/Clubhouse Project** Following the disappointment of not being able to proceed with the Hershams property that had looked so promising in 2018, Weybridge division has continued to look at other possibilities. Some have not been viable, but there are currently four potential opportunities being explored that we hope to take forward in 2021.

**Honey Yields** 2020 honey yields have been variable, but most members seem to have had yields that were average or above average with a particularly strong spring flow. The long hot summer helped bee foraging, despite the drought.

**Honey Shows** The Surrey County Show in May and the National in October were both casualties of covid-19, so no Weybridge prize winners this year.

### **Asian Hornet Action Team**

Information on Asian hornet was given out at a street market event in Weybridge in August. Talks given to garden clubs, wildlife groups etc have also provided opportunities to promote Asian hornet awareness. In late summer Weybridge division Asian hornet posters were put up within the division's area. These posters give local contact phone numbers to try and relieve the pressure on the NNS caused by thousands of well-meaning but false reports of Asian hornet sightings being made by the public. No sightings of Asian hornet were made in the Weybridge division area but a number of reports of European hornet and other insects were made to the Weybridge AHAT team. The Weybridge AHAT leader attended the BBKA Asian Hornet conference held in Warwick on 8th February.

**Education** Twenty five people attended the winter theory course for new beekeepers. Most of the theory course was completed before covid-19 made village hall sessions impossible. The final theory

session was given on-line. When it became clear that the virus situation would not allow group practical sessions to be held, a mentoring system was established to give students with bees or intending to start in 2021 some experience of handling bees. The principal lecturer for the theory course for new beekeepers is Andrew Halstead.

**Web Site** The Weybridge division's website has been revamped and the address is now [www.weybridgebeekeepers.org](http://www.weybridgebeekeepers.org) At the WBK AGM members approved plans for phase 2 of the development with a full password-protected members' area to be developed in 2021. Currently the site is targeted mainly at non-members, with information on swarms and honey sales; this is reflected in the fact that 70 – 80% of users are first time visitors to the site. WBK is conscious of the digitalization of communication and thus keen to offer its members more through the website. Previous research has shown that around 50% of people attending our training course have come to us through finding details on the website.

The Surrey BKA website was the second largest referral of in-bound traffic after organic search and thus is an important traffic source.

**Equipment** A vacuum swarm collection device has been added to the Weybridge division's equipment. This enables swarms in high or other awkward places to be collected safely.

#### **Events**

Most events planned for 2020 had to be cancelled due to covid-19 restrictions on people gathering together.

14 January Members' short talks evening: Robert Crossley "Bees with no baggage", Andrew Halstead "Solitary bees", Kate Abat and Mark Wood "One and a half year's beekeeping", David Parker "Honeybees of Laos"

21 February Joint meeting with Guildford division on "Varroa tolerant bees", hosted by Weybridge – principal speakers Marion Cooper and Jonathon Brookhouse

16 March Bee disease evening – David Rudland (East Surrey Bees)

15 and 18 August Taster days for new beekeepers

16 August Weybridge street market honey stall and Asian hornet display

24 November Weybridge division AGM – held on Zoom

**Andrew Halstead**

**Chairman Weybridge Division 2020**