



Reigate Division Chairman's Report for the SBKA 2025 AGM

Changing Guard

The 2024/25 year commenced with a committee enhanced by new recruits **Sue Scates** and **Gerry James**. Our then President **Mike Hill** had asked to step down and was succeeded by **Bob Maurer**, with **Andrew Buchanan** becoming Vice President. Both played key roles in establishing Henfold Apiary 15 years ago, and their advice and guidance is appreciated by the committee.

The full committee met on 5 occasions, either in person (4) or via zoom (1).

At our 2024 AGM, I had announced my intention to step down from Chairing our committee at our 2025 AGM, to give way to new and fresh leadership after 7 years in the role. I am delighted that **Sue Scates** accepted nomination and was duly elected as Chair during this year's AGM. I remain a Committee member to assist Sue, if needed, and to focus upon other operational roles within the Division.

We were saddened by the passing of **Neil Holden** and pleased to welcome his widow as a member and new beekeeper, active in the Bletchingley Apiary project that Neil had been instrumental in initiating.

Gerry, has transformed our honey sales; doubling annual income to £20,000. With thanks also to willing volunteers to regularly fill and label jars with the Division's honey, much of which has been being produced out of our Brockham and Buckland apiaries.

Sue has coordinated closely with our six apiary managers, representing their needs in Committee, attending Surrey Council meetings as Reigate's representative and has been encouraging a program of in-house craft workshops.

Gill Simpson, having previously worked in Safeguarding in a school setting, took up the newly role of Reigate's Safeguarding Officer (reporting into the Committee via the Chair), to comply with Charities Commission's requirements. A training course has been attended and, working with Surrey Lead, Debbie Burney, SBKA's Safeguarding Policies are being finalised.

Membership

Member numbers: end of October 2025	<i>updated 24th November 2025</i>
BBKA Registered	145
BBKA Partner	13
BBKA Junior	1
Local Associate*	2
Local Social	21
Local Honorary	1
All classes	183
	194

* *BBKA Registered Members of another Division/Association*

Financial Status

⁹ Income from the sale of historical stocks of honey favourably distorted this year's surplus from an otherwise underlying figure between £8k to £10k.

2025 Income:	£64,408	[2024 £44,384]
2025 Expenditure:	£41,500	[2024 £34,654]
2025 Surplus:	£22,908	[2024 £9,730]
2025 Assets (All):	£233,053	[2024 £207,058]

A portfolio of potential projects to further develop or invest in our facilities and offerings to members, is now being identified and costed.

Allocations of accumulated surplus funds will be made to named approved and scheduled projects.

YLH Awareness

Under the new stewardship of Kevin Selfe, the team have been supporting the SBKA Lead in promoting awareness of the YLH issues throughout Surrey. One of our members has, we believe, the dubious honor of being the first beekeeper in Surrey to have made and reported a confirmed sighting in their own apiary. Nests subsequently found and destroyed by the NBU.

Swarm Collection

A swamy season with over 160 calls from the public requiring some 94 attendances by the 15 members of the Swarm Team. 71 swarms became available for members.

Tasks included over 10 nest removals from walls, roofs and trees. It was noted that this year, more swarms than usual were absconding soon after being homed.

Donations were received from the public, schools, and notably, Gatwick Airport.

Local Shows & Markets

RBKA were invited to **25 local events** in 2025 and accepted 18 of these invitations, declining 7 typically due to being unable to resource with volunteers.

Our venture back into attending **Market Stall** only events is proving to be very lucrative.

Our objectives in attending **Fairs and Fetes** are to promote: bees, beekeeping; our training opportunities; our swarm collection service; awareness of the YLH threat; the value of honey and through the sales of honey, help to fund RBKA. Anecdotal evidence from members attending such events suggests that we have had some success in achieving these objectives – and also evidenced by the increase in invitations and of honey sales then achieved.

This year combined sales of £4461 represent a 60% increase on 2024.

Improvements made in the management of our honey stocks, jarring, labeling and sales reconciliation, and ongoing improvements to the organisation and operation of attending such events, are contributing to making the running of events less of an onerous task for volunteering members.

Education Programs

Our **Winter Beekeeping for Beginners** theory course, led by David Rudland was attended by 18, with many after the included four weekly sessions on hives, enrolling and remaining with us in **Beginner's Groups**.

Preparations for those taking their **Basic Assessments** continued with our combination of a weekly on-line course, practical reinforcement during the apiary sessions, and a nerve settling Mock Basic session. This year, all 18 students who took the assessment passed, obtaining 8 distinctions, 9 credits and a pass between them. Comments from the assessors included: "the depth of knowledge of the students was exceptional".

An enjoyable, if frustrating season was had in the **Improvers Group** working on two colonies, dealing with Nosema, a 'swarmy' Queen, and yet still providing a respectable honey yield...

Meanwhile, our **Advanced Group** benefited from the invaluable mentoring provided by one of our very knowledgeable and experienced members.

A very successful **Taster Day** was enjoyed by 25 guests and subsequently quite a few participants promptly joined us in the Beginners group.

The **Honey Bee Health** course was run for the second year, with members from Croydon as well as other associations also participating. A very impressive 10 passes were achieved, representing 8% of the national passes.

During the winter months. **Module Study Groups**, in collaboration with Croydon Division continue. Not everyone who attended the Zoom and practical meetings for **Module 6** last winter intended to take the exam, but of those who did, a 100% pass rate was achieved. Study groups have already started for the 2026 exams in March for **Module 2 & Module 7**,

Diseases

In May, the NBU notified us of EFB cases within 3 km of Henfold. We imposed a precautionary standstill, lifted in early June after the SBI's inspection All-Clear.

We successfully hosted the **Surrey Bee Health Day** at Henfold, presented by the NBU, and attended by 58 members from Surrey Divisions.

Another EFB alert followed in July, but inspections by two of our Master Beekeepers confirmed an all-clear once again. A number of our members were similarly notified of their apiaries close proximity to both reported cases, none were directly affected (or infected).

Activities

A reinstated annual **Auction**, again proved successful.

Summer Season training began in April on Saturday afternoons, to avoid wet & gloomy evenings, but the warm and dry spring enabled an early return to Wednesday evenings.

The **Taster Day**, again attracted enthusiastic public participation.

Output from in-house **Workshops for the making of Candles, Skeps & Mead**, were evident amongst entries into Reigate, Surrey and The National honey shows.

Bee Health Clinics were held in the Spring and Autumn.

Honey Extraction at Henfold provided valuable hands-on training and stock for sales.

The season ended with another popular **Après Bee Pizza Party**..

Supporting Others

During our 2024 AGM, members agreed to support a specific Bees Abroad project rather than general fundraising. This year we funded the first phase of a three year undertaking to support a '**Gutunda Youth Project**'. The project is training and equipping youths in Gatunda, Rwanda as beekeepers, utilizing facilities at the Umatra Deaf School, that is itself a beekeeping training facility established and supported by Bees Abroad.

Communications

Making contact with our public has been improved with our public website's content now proactively supported by our public **Facebook** account being managed to promote the retail outlets for our honey, our attendance at local shows and markets, as well as membership and our training and Taster Day courses and Beekeeping Auction.

The immediacy and increasing use of WhatsApp chat groups for sharing new news and information with and between members, has challenged the relevance of, and work entailed in producing a newsletter.

Our monthly BeeNews has been discontinued. Its role is replaced by an '**RBKA BeeNews LIVE**' section within our Members Website that hosts news and information items published much more promptly, with members able to be automatically alerted to new posts.

The challenge remains to find volunteers to provide and refresh reference content on the **Members Website**, and the updating and potential combining of the public and member sites will be an important task for the coming year.

Showing Off

Reigate members excelled during the autumn Honey Show season.

At the **Surrey Honey Show**, our strong participation earned Reigate the Vincent Challenge Cup for most points — for the fifth year running.

The **South of England Show** saw entries from seven of our members and three apiaries, contributing to a fine display.

Our own **Reigate Beekeepers Honey Show** returned to Henfold, as an in-house event, with 129 entries and 10 different members achieving first places across 22 classes.

Our presence at the **National Honey Show** was again significant on the ground, on the show benches and at the awarding of Trophies.

And we congratulate **Bob Maurer** on 'The National' rightfully receiving the **Kings Award for Voluntary Service**.

Signing Off

After seven rewarding years I step down, grateful for the enthusiasm, dedication, and goodwill that sustains Reigate Beekeepers, and I confidently hand over to **Sue Scates**.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Chair of Reigate Beekeepers and to witness the continued growth and strength of our Division.

Richard Bradfield
Chair 2018 - 2025
5th November 2025