

WSBKA AGM 2017 Chairman's Report

This is my third AGM and how time has flown by. West Sussex BKA are still going strong with our 4 divisions and numbers largely unchanged as new beekeepers balance those who have moved on. I think that is something of an achievement with a number of propositions at the 2017 BBKA ADM asking for divisions to leave their Associations and set up on their own. In my time as chairman, there has been no grand plan, no great vision of the future. What I have set out to do is carry on where the previous chairman left off and hopefully hand on to the next an association which functions well. That functioning is not down to me but to the people who organise our various events and also the members of the executive committee. The auction and the convention are the jewels in our crown the two main areas where we come together to put on top class events. The auction is a difficult one coming as it does in April and can thus be highly weather dependent. 2016 proved to be a cold day, which will have led to some people leaving earlier than usual and so fewer bidders. As a result the revenue was down while costs also went up. Hopefully 2017 will prove a better year weather wise.

The Convention I feel has continued to strengthen and 2017 proved to be one of the most successful yet. The attendance was also good. This does not happen by chance and reflects the hard work put in over the year by the planning team.

One area we could seek to improve on is the declining exam entries and that this took place on my watch makes me feel I should have somehow encouraged more people to enter. We have had excellent support from our examination officers, Roger and Marion Brooks, a pity we could not give them more to do. They are stepping down at this AGM and I would like to record my thanks for all their work over the years.

A new venture for us this year has been the ReViVe project to which we have pledged £3,600 over 3 years. The project is linked to BDI funding of Salford University looking at the distribution of Varroa and deformed wing virus strains. We were only able to submit samples from two of our divisions but there has been good coverage across the country, with a mix of treated and untreated colonies. We await detailed reports of their findings.

Congratulations to Eric Slade (WG) 70 years and Ted Hickford (Chi) 50 years, who received BBKA long service awards.