

Chair's Report – BBA – 2023 AGM – January 18th, 2023

Let me start by wishing everyone a very Happy New Year and, along with all the Committee, wishing all BBA beekeepers a very successful 2023 season.

2022 brought its challenges. The very warm March sent the bees into high activity, upsetting the usual slow colony growth and prompting early swarms. Our dry summer slowed the nectar flow, followed by an exceptionally wet autumn and winter. Many of you harvested good honey throughout the year so there was an upside. I hope you all managed to watch your bees flying during the mild days recently.

We were pleased to get back to face-to-face meetings with a great range of speakers in 2022, from the fascinating Expert BeeMaster Matthew Richardson, early in the year, to Lorraine Johnstone our new SRUC Bee advisor. The “Question Time” was a notable success with our experienced beekeepers fielding your questions from the floor.

As BBA covers a wide area, we varied venues east and west, as well as relying on Zoom in mid-winter to avoid travel difficulties. Our first Apiary visits in 2 years were very popular, with thanks going to Kate Atchley, John Wilkinson, Justin Lanyon-Olver, and Alec Martin for hosting wonderful and very educational afternoons. Also many attended and appreciated the “pop-up” apiary opening, hosted by ex-Chair Finlay Mitchell. These days are special for the sharing of knowledge, learning hands-on beekeeping and building friendships among us.

We finished the season with a very successful Honey Show in November, which was expertly judged by Alan Riach, Education Officer at SBA.

We cannot exist without the hard work of volunteers, and I want to thank ALL the Committee for their hard work. Also, we are grateful for the amazing training courses delivered by John Wilkinson and Kate Atchley for several years now. A very special thank you goes to our Association Secretary, Fiona Hawke, for her timely handling of meetings and for making sure everything runs smoothly.

Two of our long-standing Committee members are standing down – Joanna Payne and Kate Atchley. Joanna, who has been an energetic and excellent Committee member for 5 years, creating the Newsletter with Kate and helping at Honey Shows. She also administers the Loan Equipment – and tracking it's location and circulation is no mean feat. I hope to announce her successor in that role at the AGM.

Kate Atchley has also served on the Committee for 5 years and contributed a great deal, from the beginners' courses, to hosting Apiary visits, and candle-making workshops, as well as mentoring and bringing her considerable beekeeping expertise to BBA events.

Finally, I would like to make a call for volunteers, both to serve on the Committee and to help with ongoing tasks. We are keen for roles to be shared. Our website editor, ex-Chair John Wilkinson who has devoted so much time to the Association, wishes to pass on his role as website editor, ideally by June 2023. Help is also needed with: event organising, beginners course bookings and teaching, communications, apiary visits, and ideas to keep

members' meetings interesting and vibrant. There is so much talent amongst us: do please share yours.