

SBA General Secretary's Report for 2011

The SBA Executive Committee met for five busy meetings during the year. Three all day meetings, in January, May and September, were held at Scone Palace, thanks to the continuing generosity of The Right Honourable the Earl of Mansfield, SBA Honorary President; two short meetings were held at Dewars Conference Centre, Perth, one before the AGM and the other before the Council Meeting and Local Association Secretaries' meeting.

At the AGM on March 26, there were several changes to the President's Committee. Phil McAnespie became President, Alan Teale Immediate Past President, and Bron Wright, Vice- President. As Alan Teale anticipates not being able to complete the normal three year term of office, Ian Craig will retain his position as a Past President, and the two positions will run concurrently.

Nigel Southworth became Editor, replacing Nigel Hurst who retired after eight productive years in post.

Other Executive Committee changes were as follows; Phil Moss took over as Bee Diseases Convener from Gavin Ramsay.

Andrew Smeaton was confirmed as Promotion of Beekeeping Officer having taken over from Willie Taylor during the year.

Les Webster retired as Spray Liaison Officer after having spent numerous years and held many posts on the Executive, including President.

The Spray Liaison Officer post has now been discontinued as it is felt that establishing a Local Association based system of dealing with spraying issues would better serve current needs.

The position of Audio Visual Aids Officer, which had been held by Willie Taylor until his retirement, has also been discontinued since it is considered that modern technology has over taken the need for a lending library of slides, 35mm films, videos etc some of which now will be retained as archival material.

Sheila Barnard, Mull BKA, was confirmed as North Area Representative succeeding Stella Forth, Inverness BKA.

Three SBA Awards were presented at the AGM. Charlie Irwin, Glasgow BKA, received the Local Association Award and Phil Moss, Oban BKA, the Harry Brown Award. The new Moir Library Prize, awarded for the first time, was presented to Robert Hawker, Northumberland, for his article on 'Thomas William Cowan – a Son of Scotland' which was printed in the January 2010 Magazine.

Topics brought from the 2010 Council Meeting were: Introduction of Direct Debit and Increase in Annual Subscriptions from £25 to £30, both of which were approved; and from the LA Secretaries' Meeting: A Suggestion for two LA Secretaries' Meetings a Year.

On 26 November, the Local Association Secretaries' Open Forum, held before the Council Meeting, was attended by 48 members representing 24 Local Associations (LAs) with 13 apologies received, representing a further 5 LAs. 29 responses out of a total of 39 LAs was better than last year but it would be good to hear back from all LAs when notices are sent out. Of course it is not possible for all LAs to be able to send representatives to Perth but there is little excuse these days for no response.

Discussion among participants was lively, interesting and thought provoking and covered the following topics:

'Coping with Large Numbers of Beginner Beekeepers' and 'How do we Teach Beekeeping?' both led by John Coyle, Dunblane and Stirling BKA: 'Spray Liaison and Local Associations' led by Fiona Fernie, also DSBKA.

'Varroa and Nosema – update on the National situation': 'Bayvarol-Apistan Resistance': 'Nosema ceranae' were topics covered by Phil Moss and Fiona Highet, SASA.

'Reading Floor Inserts; a mirror on hive activity' was explained by John Durkacz. 'SBA - the Next 5 Years' led by Alasdair Joyce prompted discussion on 'Websites' and 'How to encourage more beekeepers to become SBA Members'.

In the afternoon 52 members, representing 24 LAs, were welcomed to the Council Meeting, with 18 members sending apologies. The formation of four newly formed LAs was announced: Bute BKA, Lamancha BKA, Western Isles BKA and Perth DBKA, which has replaced Perthshire BKA.

At the Meeting it was agreed that in future SBA accounts will be posted on the Website and no longer printed in the Magazine. Also agreed was that the displaying of AGM and Council Minutes and Executive Annual Reports should also be on the Website, thus dispensing with the need to print them between January and March in the Magazine. In addition the delay in moving to the Direct Debit method of paying subscriptions was explained by Phil McAnespie; John Durkacz spoke on 'Implications of GM Crops for Scottish Beekeeping' and progress on preparations for the SBA Centenary Celebrations in 2012 was discussed. Lastly a proposal put before Council by Eric McArthur, Glasgow DBKA, was debated and defeated.

Examination certificates were presented to successful candidates by Ian Craig.

The afternoon concluded with a stimulating talk from Dr Huw Evans, Arnia, on 'Remote Hive Monitoring'.

The Education Committee successfully organised the annual Autumn Convention held at Dewars Convention Centre, Perth, on 10 September, with Dr Giles Budge, NBU, Mr Terry Clare, BIBBA, and Mr Willie Robson, Chainbridge Honey Farm, all presenting illuminating, entertaining talks. Trade Stands were present.

Ian and Ruth Homer were the 2011 Tour speakers, giving six lectures between 26 September and 7 October, for which 14 LAs applied. They visited Lochaber BKA, Dingwall BKA, Combined Fife BKAs, Dunblane and Stirling DBKA, Combined Clyde Area (CABA) and Caddonfoot BKA. The Tour went very well for Ruth, Ian, and their two dogs and feedback from all the LAs was very good.

During the 2011 beekeeping season the SBA has continued to assist Dr Chris Connolly, Dundee University, with his research which forms part of the Insect Pollinators' Initiative. Reports on the progress of the work can be seen in the Magazine and on the Website.

Executive members have represented the SBA at a variety of meetings during the year including: The Honey Bee Health Strategy (Scotland) Meeting, in Edinburgh, with which both the Bee Diseases Stakeholders' Group and the Education, Training and Knowledge Transfer Group are linked; the Food Standards Agency; the Veterinary Residues Committee Annual Meeting, in London; the International Workshop on the Consequences of the Ruling by the European Courts of Justice on the Possible Presence of GM Pollen in Honey, held in Berlin; the Bee Improvers and Bee Breeders' Association (BIBBA); two meetings of *CONBA held at Stoneleigh and Weybridge; The National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB), in Weybridge; the National Honey Show, in Weybridge.

Reports from the above may be read in the Magazine or viewed through the Website. SBA input through attendance at these meetings is seen as vital in order to contribute towards positive developments in beekeeping nationally and internationally.

*CONBA- The Council of National Beekeeping Associations of the United Kingdom and Ireland provides representation of its membership at the European Union (EU) through the COPA-COGECA Working Party on Honey. (COPA - Comité des organisations professionnelles agricoles); (COGECA Confédération générale de la coopération agricole) COPA-COGECA are the recognised EU farming lobby supported by the National Farmers Union.