The Centenary booklet produced by the Federation of Middlesex Beekeepers' Associations in 1983.

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DW 2015

CENTENARY

1883 - 1983

Federation of Middlesex

Beekeepers Associations
The Forager is proud to be asked to produce the commemorative edition to celebrate a hundred years of beekeeping in Middlesex.

The editors would like to acknowledge with thanks -

A Hundred Years of Beekeeping in Middlesex and District
   Mr H Corbell

A History of Ealing BKA
   Mr T Draper

A History of Harrow BKA
   Mr M Davey

A History of North West BKA
   Mr A Judd

A History of Pinner and Ruislip BKA
   Mrs J Smith & Mr H Corbell

A History of Wembley and District BKA
   Mr G Smith

Mr and Mrs H Corbell kindly read and retyped the proofs. Mr H Marsh and Miss Maria Silmon organised and set up the 'word processed' transcript, and Mr T Brand of 'Copy Write' printed the publication. We also acknowledge the help provided by a number of unnamed beekeepers who assisted with information.

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A HUNDRED YEARS OF BEEKEEPING IN MIDDLESEX
1883 - 1983

Probably the earliest indication of beekeeping in Middlesex is that our pagan forefathers were wont to place honey cakes among the offerings on the shrines of their gods, shrines of which many became the sites of Christian churches such as St Martin's Ruislip, but that is hearsay. The earliest formal record that our distinguished past President, the late Dr H M Fraser, could find was dated 1487 when Sion college recorded the purchase of 12 hives at 3d each, 3d is 1 1/4p so it would seem hardly likely that they included bees. Our story of the Middlesex County Bee Keepers' Association ("MCBKA") really began with the formation of the British Bee Keepers' Association ("BBKA") in 1874. It soon became clear that one "Central" (as it was called) association could not serve the whole country efficiently and it was proposed that every county should form its own BKA and affiliate to the "Central". Some progress was made but it was not until after the 'civil war' in the BBKA came to an end in 1881 that it really got going. In a very long-winded lecture to the BBKA in October of that year the Honorary secretary, the Reverend H R Peel, reported that about a dozen counties had affiliated and more were coming along. Middlesex was dragging its feet, but, as Dr Fraser has suggested, the BBKA had been brought into being by Middlesex men, and they rested on their laurels until 1883. Then a group of Ealing residents met at "the
Feathers” on Monday, 25th June and formed the Middlesex County BKA. The report of that meeting appeared in the 'British Bee Journal' (BBJ) for 1883 and was reproduced in 'Forager' for December, 1980.

It is interesting to note here the frequency with which famous names in British beekeeping originated in Ealing. They include Abbott, Cheshire, Hunter and many others—commenting on the report of that inaugural meeting the editor of BBJ remarked that the idea of the BBKA itself was born in Ealing which supplied the promoter. the first Honorary secretary and many committee members. our first officers included as Honorary secretary, Mr H G Wilson, a name which is still to the fore in Ealing beekeeping circles, although the Ealing BKA itself dates only from 1943. The first President of MCBKA was Lord George Hamilton, MP.

No minute books prior to 1915 have survived. There are but few references to MCBKA in the pages of 'BBJ' and the 'Beekeepers' Record' and we have a few 'Year Books' dating from 1926 to 1946. These, together with Dr Fraser's 'Story', in the Association's 'Special Jubilee Report for 1942', have provided the sources of the following 'Scrapbook'.

Membership in 1885 was 89 and the accounts showed a small profit which was not always the case in later years. In 1890 the balance in hand, £12, disappeared with the death of the Honorary Treasurer and had to be written off. In 1946 "no balance sheet had been prepared for several
years". Membership rose rapidly and a year later it stood at 200. It has since fluctuated from below 100 at the 'worst of the “Isle of Wight” epidemic to over 1,560 in 1949 when the 'sugar hunters were active during the last war and after. Today it is only a little above 200.

Incidentally, many amusing tales are told of the ruses adopted by those sugar hunters and their efforts to keep the Government Inspectors away from their “hives” - which actually served a multitude of purposes - from storing sand and cement to housing rabbits. The hives were prominently sited at the far end of gardens and much guile was exercised to prevent the Inspector from taking a closer look. One such tale involved a wife of a senior Government official who successfully pleaded that he should not be informed. She claimed no more sugar!

For many years the Association was organised from the centre' The County being divided into 'Provinces', later 'Branches' or 'Districts', to which members were allocated according to the areas in which they lived. The boundaries between these areas gave concern at times and attempts were made to define them. For instance, in 1910. it would seem that there were 'Affiliated Associations' 'Branches', and 'Direct Members" the latter having Local or District secretaries. A draft scheme to divide Harrow and Pinner had to be modified as the proposed line put Northolt into Pinner's area and it was found that Harrow had two members in Northolt! Sadly those boundaries have never been respected. Now the
local associations are autonomous and this was recognised in 1965 when the title 'Federation of Middlesex BKAs' was adopted and local associations were affiliated. There are no direct members and the Federation acts mainly as the channel of communication between the Associations and the National bodies, the BBKA and 'The National Honey Show'. It also is charged with organising talks by lecturers which individual associations could not afford.

Certain local associations have never been affiliated to the County Association' notably Twickenham and Thames Valley which was formed in 1918. Many approaches were made to them to join us and their representatives, including Mrs R E Clark, attended meetings of our Executive Council but they remain independent albeit on the friendliest terms. The strength of the County Association was weakened by the defection of a part of North West to form what is known as the 'Inner London' Association and by the demise in 1959 of the South West Division whose remaining members transferred to Twickenham and Thames Valley'. In 1971 Enfield decided that they were too remote to play an active part in the affairs of the Federation and became independent. Today the Federation comprises Pinner & Ruislip BKA (Pinner was founded in 1928 and Ruislip amalgamated in 1954) Harrow (Ca. 1925), North West (1935), Uxbridge (1941) Ealing (1943) and Wembley (1946).

The main purpose of a BKA must be to advance the
cause of beekeeping and to this end it used to be customary to give public lectures, one of which was given in 1914 on Nower Hill, Pinner, at the apiary of Captain Bluck, the then Secretary, and others in the "field adjoining Nash's Estate Office in Field End Road, Eastcote" by Mr E W Jones, but the practice has died out. However, lectures and demonstrations have been given every year for the benefit of members and among them one must mention in particular the series of "annual Bee-Keeping week-end Schools" held at Battle of Britain House (now 'Ruislip College') in Ducks Hill Road, Northwood. The idea first mooted in 1946, came to fruition in 1950 and took place every year until 1975 when increasing financial stringency, mainly the withdrawal of the Middlesex County Education Grant, made it impossible to continue. In those twenty-six years there can have been scarcely a single national beekeeping authority who did not come here and lecture. To quote just a few names:- Butler, Ribbands, Free, Bailey, Snelgrove, Frankland, Padmore, Dixon, Gooding, Creighton, Wedmore, Dade, Wadey, Dines, Bradford, Weightman, A.S.C. Deans and Mrs R E Clark, since honoured with the MBE for her services to beekeeping ..... the list is endless. Their audiences came from many miles beyond our county borders and overseas. Their attitude was well summarised by E F Woods, of 'Apidictor' fame when he could not attend the 1954 Week-End and wrote that if he could after 48 hours of continuous work on inter-European television, he
“would crawl over to Ruislip and enjoy the peace and refreshment of the school" Alas, in these penurious times, we have !o make the most of a one-day together in the far less pastoral surroundings of Norwood Hall in Southall.

1974 saw the Centenary of the British Bee Keepers' Association and Middlesex marked the occasion by holding a dinner and by planting a tree at Battle of Britain House in Ruislip, thereby commemorating our many years of happy weekends there. The tree is a Catalpa Bignonioides (or “Indian Bean”) and is marked with a suitable plaque. The grant from the Education Department of the Middlesex County Council appears to have started in 1901 with £100, to be used exclusively for educational purposes. Branches had to submit proof of expenditure on lectures and the like and the grant was shared among them. Gradually the constituent Associations became more and more lax in submitting their claims and the amount received became less until the 'county' disappeared. Local Authorities continued to give small amounts directly to claimants in their Boroughs but the Federation is no longer subsidised and our present small membership precept provides little for 'luxuries'.

In the earlier years most county BKAs and their constituent branches appointed own 'experts' whose job it was to visit members and generally to spread a knowledge of the craft. This system seems to have been
superseded during the last war by the appointment of full time 'instructors' or 'Advisers' by county councils. Middlesex County Education Committee suggested that we should have such an officer and on the 1st April, 1944 Mr Carey was appointed. He lectured and demonstrated locally and at our summer schools until he retired in 1953. Since then we had no full-time Instructor although beekeeping in Middlesex was for a time placed under the care of the Horticulturist at Norwood Hall. He was not a beekeeper and was not able to contribute significantly to our activities.

until the war we had a small library for the use of members but the bombing of London led in 1941 to the books being sold, mainly to the member associations, for a total of £3. 0s. 3d. One unexplained mystery of this dispersal is that Harrow Association holds Part 2 of Herrod-Hempsall's. classic "Bee Keeping New and Old" while Part 1 is with Pinner.

In earlier years the MCBKA had apiaries in outlying areas. In 1918 there was a BBKA apiary at L.C.C. Park, Golders Hill, NW while Herrod Hempsall lectured and in June, 1925, we find that ubiquitous gentleman examining candidates at the MCBKA Apiary at the Green Dragon Hotel in South Mimms. the story tells that one candidate's car broke down so he continued by bus which also broke down. He managed to complete the journey on foot, long after the examination was over, but the good natured Mr Hempsall examined the candidate and a very happy
meeting resulted. There were also apiaries in 1945 at Cannon Croft, Eastcote, and two other sites.

Honey shows have been a feature of the annual cycle of bee-keeping in Middlesex as in most counties, but the enthusiasm seems to have waned rather more than it has waxed' In 1886, at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition at South Kensington 24 of our members mounted an exhibition of 9cwt. of honey, including a single exhibit of 6cwt. In of 1889 one member staged 1cwt. at a show in Harefield and had there been room the total available for exhibition could have been 4cwt. County shows have been held all over the county, sometimes with the local Association shows, sometimes independently, until after the last war when Middlesex joined with the National Honey Show which was recognised as our 'county show' in 1951. Although Middlesex "retained the smallholder shield," for the county scoring most points at the “National" our support has generally been poor and today few of our members seem prepared to demonstrate to the rest of the country the beekeeping potential of suburbia.

A show report of 1887 says ',the unfortunate crop of bricks and mortar is fast circumscribing the available honey area ....,. Year by year the chances of obtaining a good surplus of honey must decrease as the builder advances” a sentiment which needs modification today. That report also notes that "the honey was very dark". This phenomenon persisted. until recently when the
Clean Air Act began to take effect.

The weather is mentioned from time to time and one wonders how we came to give the traditional characteristic to each month of the year. One amusing reference tells that Mr Burdett, who lived off Eastcote Lane, South Harrow was billed to lecture at Ashford at 2.30pm one Saturday in July 1931. He cycled over in company with Mr R R Babbage of Brentford but they were “caught in a blizzard and arrived too late to give his lecture”

Bee disease was recorded from the earliest days when the 'Expert' toured the County twice yearly. At first only A.F.B. seemed worth recording and insufficient top packing was held to be a contributory factor. Bad cases were destroyed but slight or moderate infection was 'treated'. Even as late as 1941 'shaking' was the approved method of treatment, but by then we had advanced from the time when diseased combs were put under the quilt of a strong colony to be cleaned up! The Brood Diseases of Bees Order of 1942 has helped greatly to reduce the incidence of Foul Brood but we can never be completely free. "Isle of Wight disease" caused heavy losses in Middlesex so that few stocks had survived at the end of 1914-1918 war. The cause was attributed to the acarine mite and the first really successful antidote was the now well known Frow's mixture which Mr Frow gave to the world in 1928. In 1942 over one third of samples of bees from Middlesex
showed acarine mites and Dr Butler of Rothamsted suggested that all colonies in the County should be treated for three years in succession. This suggestion was vigorously pursued by Mr C B Dennis who collected all the available materials he could find, mixed them and devised a simple technique for dispensing and applying the treatment. With the aid of fellow members he treated all but one of the stocks of his own Association, Harrow, in 1943. In 1945 he organised the treatment of all known stocks in the County including Wood Green and Twickenham and Thames Valley Associations. In 1946 3,500 stocks were "frowed" and the annual treatment was continued for several years. As a result acarine is now very rarely seen in Middlesex and we are deeply in Mr Dennis's debt for all he did to bring about this happy state of affairs.

Most Associations in the county used to issue a monthly news letter, but in 1945 Mr Dennis elaborated that of his Association into a small duplicated magazine entitled "Forager'. In 1970 other Associations began to subscribe, contributing their own 'Notes' until the journal has become, in effect, a County news letter keeping all subscribers informed of the activities of other subscribers. Although the response is not as good as one might have hoped there has been some interchange of visitors between Associations at lectures and the like, but a corporate spirit has not yet developed as was hoped.

A Year Book used to be published, giving reports from all
"Branches" with the names and addresses of members, but this was discontinued in 1946 as insufficient funds were available for its production.

One unusual activity of MCBKA occurred in 1962-1964, A request from Wormwood Scrubs Prison for help for a prisoner who was keeping bees led to a visit by Ealing and North West members who found that the man had nine hives of unorthodox construction. He was supplied with books and constructional details for standard hives and was made a member of North West Branch.

Co-operation continued successfully until a new warder reported that a new inmate had taken over the hives and did not require assistance. The gates were closed to us!

There has been occasional contact with the Middlesex County Beekeepers' Association of Massachusetts, USA and in 1955 one of their members visited London. She saw Ealing’s apiary and attended a meeting of the Central Association. She met several British beekeeping luminaries, including Dr Barnes, Dr Fraser and Dr Gooding. It is hoped that the contact may be re-established for we could learn much from each other.

In 1930 and again in 1954 it was suggested that county BKA,s might assist schools in apicultural studies. This was followed up and in 1954 there is a reference to the supply of bees to schools in Middlesex. changes in personnel, both teachers and beekeepers, have, however, led to the demise of this praiseworthy activity.
Meetings of the Executive council have been held in many different places over the years. For decades the offices of BBJ were made available to us by courtesy of Mr Herrod-Hempsall, our Honorary secretary, until he retired in 1941: The YWCA in Great Russell Street seems to have been popular - there is a receipt for £2. 2s for the use of a room and £3 for 30 teas when the AGM was held there in 1956. An unusual venue was used for some years - the General Anthroposophical Society's upstairs room at 38 Museum Street, WC1. Of late years meetings have been held in the homes of Presidents and Secretaries to avoid the cost of hiring rooms.

In the last years of the century enthusiasm for beekeeping seems to have declined. Few outstanding personalities have emerged and the old "bee fever" has yielded to the antibiotics of the recession and television. But there are still one or two unassuming keen types who do much in their local Associations and it is to be hoped that before long we shall see a great revival. We need to re-awaken that burning desire to discover more about those marvellous insects which have held some of us enthralled for so long. The agricultural depression resulting from the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century helped to trigger the founding of the BBKA, one of whose objectives was to encourage "cottagers" to augment their own incomes by beekeeping on humane lines. perhaps the industrial depression of today and the
growing interest in "Nature" will initiate another resurgence of enthusiasm for our hobby, a hobby which provides us physical and mental food. recreation and such good friends.
HISTORY OF HARROW BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

By way of introduction it is believed that the Harrow Beekeepers Association was founded in 1924. Unfortunately all minute books of the early years were lost on a train in the early 1940's. Perhaps we should remind ourselves what things were like in 1924. Income tax at 25p in the pound. Every 2 in 5 families had at least one resident servant. The average wage of a London bus driver was £3.70, a farmworker £1.56 with an average 50 hour week. Robert Lee advertised in the BBJ a complete WBC hive for £2.20 while a crate containing six skeps with comb, honey and pollen could be purchased direct from Holland for £1.15 each. So bees were not cheap even in those days. The BBC was not founded until two years after the setting up of Harrow Beekeepers. There was 200,000 cars and 233,000 horse drawn vehicles on the roads. 1924 saw the arrival of the Morris Minor and the Austin Seven. In the same year the British Empire Exhibition was staged at Wembley. The BBJ of the day complained about the lack of English honey at the Exhibition - the reason given was the heavy cost (a familiar cry). Over 50,000 packages of honey were sold in the Food Hall.

Harrow would appear to be the oldest surviving Association in Middlesex and Mr C D Bear was the Secretary from its inception and for 27 years.
Mr C B Dennis has kindly provided much of the information of the early days. His first contact with Harrow was in 1932 when he went with a new 16mm cine camera to film the late Mr W J Genna demonstrating "Spring Cleaning". It was not until July 1938 that Mr Dennis acquired some bees. Within a month he was involved with Mr Barber examining bees for acarine. The mite was found in both apiaries. Against all advice he made up some Frow mixture and dosed the bees. His colony survived the winter.

In 1938 a Mr Rogers acted as Association storekeeper for Harrow as he had a shop in the High Street. His bees were kept in Marlborough Hill. He was the first Harrow member to use National hives (developed in 1933) and try out the Snelgrove method of swarm control. At that time membership was around 40 with subscriptions at 25p. Outside lecturers cost about one to three guineas and therefore subscriptions had to be supplemented by social events such as whist drives which did, in fact, help to knit the Association together. The annual Honey Show also ran at a loss - the prizes were modest but so were the entry fees.

1939-1945, the War years, brought an increase in membership to 180. This was due to the exhortation that we should produce more food at home, plus the fact that a sugar allowance was given to beekeepers, but the keeping of bees was difficult with the shortage of timber and other materials.
Wembley Association was formed by the transfer to it of 60 of Harrow's 180 members and Harrow also donated to the new Association a third of its cash reserves and other assets. Mr Dennis was a founder member and later an honorary life member.

During the war and afterwards Mr Genna provided Harrow with many fine demonstrations such as transferring skep bees to WBC hives which was recorded on film by Mr Dennis. The latter also accompanied Mr Genna on a visit to Ickenham apiary where a colony with Foul Brood was treated with saltpetre, a control which demanded very careful preparation and attention to detail. The operation was a success. This may have been the last time in Middlesex such treatment was used because in 1942 the Foul Brood Order came into force and this required the destruction of infected hives.

Among Mr Genna's talents was his technique for dealing with calls regarding swarms. He offered profuse advice but no visit (Oh! how did he do it!).

In 1941-42 Dr Butler investigated the extent of Acarine disease in Middlesex. It may be of interest to mention that at the same time Von Frisch was carrying out similar work in Germany. Dr Butler's report indicated that at least 36% of the colonies were infected with acarine. Mr Dennis took control of Harrow's efforts to treat the disease and organised the acquisition of materials to
make “Frow”, then in very short supply, and made glass measures for the dosage. The colonies treated showed marked improvement and other associations, not only in Middlesex and Surrey but even as far afield as Kings Lynn, joined the campaign. Eventually many gallons of the mixture were being dispensed.

During this period careful records were kept of the state of bees in Harrow. It was assumed from beekeepers' tales that stocks in the borough were giving a surplus of between 20-401b of honey a year. However, statistics showed that over a seven year period the highest yield was only 16lb and the lowest 3-4lb. (Present-day beekeepers can take heart!)

After the war a Mr Schofield of Wembley designed an ampoule-filling machine capable of producing the required dosage of “Frow” mixture but an initial order of 10,000 was needed: this was obviously beyond Harrow's resources. So Mr Dennis, Secretary of Bee Diseases (Insurance) Ltd., and Mr Abbott, its Treasurer, were able to persuade that organisation to take over the whole project and offer the treatment to the beekeepers of Great Britain at cost or below. Thanks to Mr Dennis Harrow can claim to have initiated something useful nationally.

In 1945 our President, Mr Roberts, was bitten by the “bee bug”. A year later he obtained his hive from Lee's and he still holds the receipted account for £4.73. From the time when the bees were installed in his garden in Kenton in
1947 his proud claim is that they have swarmed only twice!

At this time Harrows meetings were held at Kodak's in Wealdstone, with whose Horticultural Society were held our Honey Shows. It is now 27 years since we became founder members of the Borough of Harrow's Annual Show, with whom we have continued to hold our Honey Shows, and throughout this period have maintained a close and active relationship with the organisers. We are particularly indebted to Mr and Mrs Turmaine for their many years of service to the Show.

As a result of much effort we were able, in 1970, to obtain a site for our Association apiary at the Hatch End College of Further Education. Harrow Council were good enough to let us have a hut which serves as a meeting place in inclement weather as well as a store for unused equipment, Over the years this venue has become the focal point for the Association's activities, including summer tea parties, practical beekeeping and the like.

It will be noted that one name occurs most frequently in the history of the Harrow Association but there are many others who have done sterling work over the years. The Bee Tent remains as a testimonial to our friend Mr Gallimore of Kenton and the Rose Bowl presented at the Harrow Show for "Bees in any Hive', is a reminder of the work of Mrs Painter. The period of Mr David Robinson's secretaryship is marked by our fine apiary, and members holding the Preliminary Beekeeping Certificates are
grateful for the knowledge and experience which has been so willingly imparted to them by their senior colleagues.

All present-day Harrow beekeepers will salute those in the history of Harrow Beekeeping Association who gave it such firm foundations.
HISTORY OF “FORAGER”

"Forager" arose from a suggestion by Mr R G Martyr in 1945. He agreed to undertake production and Mr Dennis proposed that “Forager" would be an appropriate name as it aimed to collect and present information. A bottle of Mr Bear's mead was used to launch the new enterprise.

Mr Dennis produced the magazine almost entirely single-handed from 1945 until 1962 when Mr Gifford took over the editorship. He was followed two years later by Mr and Mrs Ward, who did the editing and duplicating until 1955, when it was handed over to Mr Robinson and Mr Davey. In 1974 Mrs Painter took charge, then followed by Mr Marsh and Mr Broadribb, Today Dr Timmins does all the work of typing and publication including much of the writing. The column now headed

"Beelines", originally entitled "Playflight", has been written for 17 years by Mr Davey, who wonders how often he has repeated himself!

Until 1958 it served only Harrow BKA, although Mr Martyr had suggested unsuccessfully in 1947 that it should become the County Journal. In 1958 the circulation was enlarged to include Wembley and the Beekeeping section at Kodak's. Ten years later Pinner and Ruislip became subscribers, to be followed in 1970 by Ealing and, finally, in 1978 North-West joined in. If Uxbridge could be persuaded to subscribe "Forager" would cover all the member associations of the Federation.
The magazine circulates well beyond the County boundaries - even into Europe, when Mr Dennis wrote an article on finding acarine at the base of bees' wings. Dr Morgenthaler published similar observations in the "Journal de la Suisse Romande" and Mr Dennis sent him a copy of "Foraquer" with his own story. Mr Morgenthaler was very impressed as he thought his own observations had been unique and asked for a further copy of "Foraquer" for another research station.

Although the magazine now covers most of the County, it is still essentially the Harrow Association's journal, and is financed and published by them, to the great benefit of members of the Federation.

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HISTORY OF EALING AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

During the last war the Dig for Victory Campaign, the drive for the people of this country to produce food from their gardens and allotments, brought newcomers to the craft of bee-keeping. There were some beekeepers in Ealing, mainly working in isolation and sometimes, it must be admitted' in ignorance, who went to a meeting in May 1943, held at the YMCA Hall in Bond Street Ealing in answer to an advertisement in the local paper. This meeting was called by Mr C P Abbott and one or two others to set up an Ealing Association if there should be a call for one. The idea was received very favourably and about a month later another meeting was held at which the Ealing and District Bee-Keeping Association was officially formed.

Mr Abbott was elected Chairman and held that position for some years while Mrs Abbott took on the office of secretary until we found a beekeeper to take her place. Mr Abbott was an expert and lecturer and was the grandson of Neal Abbott who founded the B.B.K.A. in 1874. Thus we have very good connections. Our founder organised our first show in his garden apiary at Southall and later' with others, he was instrumental in setting up B.D.I. Some members were keen enough to take the elementary examination and the pride of the middle-aged beekeepers who could call themselves junior craftsmen was greater than that of any holder of the V.C.!
During and after the war when food was rationed our membership grew to something like 110 to 120 but later, when food became plentiful in the shops' the public lost interest in gardening and beekeeping and our members dwindled to 40 to 50, and for some years now our membership has fluctuated between those two figures.

Our first apiary site was opposite the Iron Bridge Service Depot at Southall then owned by Mr Abbott. When he severed his connection with the business we moved to a site in Hayes. When the local authorities wanted the land for allotments we had to move again. After a while we found a site adjacent to some allotments in Stockgrove Way near Perivale Lane which was council property and we were granted permission to occupy the site rent free. We cleared the plot, moved in our hut and have been there for about ten years. We are hoping it will be permanent.

We have been fortunate in always having had an apiary where we have had very good meetings in the summer. Between the seasons we have had a winter programme of indoor meetings with lectures, demonstrations, informal talks' film shows and so on, Most of these meetings, including our AGM in March, have been held at Norwood Hall, Norwood Green. Formerly the Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Education, the reference to agriculture was dropped from the title a few years ago in recognition of the decline in agriculture in the area. Prior to the abolition of the County of Middlesex the Institute
was operated by the County Council, but is now financed by a consortium of London Boroughs.

We have had a good relationship with the Hall for something like 20-25 years and on their Open Days we organise a display to educate the public in the Craft of beekeeping. Also, for some years the annual Open Day of the Federation of Middlesex Beekeeping associations has been held at the Hall.

We have held a Honey Show in conjunction with the Borough of Ealing Show for several years and our tent has been very popular with the public. Our observation hive is a very attractive feature for everybody wants to see the queen and ask the usual 1001 questions. Another attraction is a display of equipment to show "how it's done" and the part bees play in agriculture, horticulture and so on. We also have a stall where we sell honey and as far as we can remember we have never been been without honey for sale even in a bad year. At the same time we have always had some good showmen with plenty of friendly rivalry between the veterans and the up-and-coming challengers. Ealing is a good district for honey,

Over the years older members have passed on and younger ones have taken their places. Some of the names remain in the memory though their owners image is blurred. Garbett was one of our first secretaries, other old timers were Swan Robson, Giles, Arnold Streigler. Rapsey, George Thomas or Tommy as he was always
known, Ball, Lamb and Neal, one of our Presidents. Another loss was Mr Daw, a President for several years, who entertained us every summer in the grounds of "The Grange", The old house has gone and the ten acres covered with flats and houses. However, new members have taken the places of the original ones and the Association carries on as part of the life of the borough.

Our aims for the future are to increase our membership and educate them in the Craft so that in 1993, when we are 50 years old, we shall have a strong and flourishing Ealing and District Bee-Keeping Association.
HISTORY OF PINNER AND RUISLIP BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Pinner BKA seems to have owed its inception to Capt. H L Bluck who operated a small commercial beekeeping enterprise of some 170 stocks at Newlands Bee Farm on Pinner Hill Road and at out apiaries. Following correspondence in the local press meetings were held in February and March of 1928, culminating in the first "Annual General Meeting" of twelve founding members on March 16th when Mr Bluck became Honorary Secretary and Mr Acason Honorary Treasurer. A minimum subscription was fixed at 5/-.

The Association flourished, the membership rising at one time to nearly 150. It covered a large area, so large that in 1935 members in the North West area were organised into a separate Association. A second "swarm" in 1941 resulted in the formation of the Uxbridge Association. An independent association, Ruislip BKA, was formed during the war years when the Craft was booming but by 1954 it had dwindled to such an extent that it united with Pinner BKA which generously changed its name to its present form in recognition of the union. Membership is now fairly static at around 50.

At the Ruislip-Northwood Smallholding and Allotment Society Flower Show on 1/8/28 there were Open Competitive Honey Classes arranged and we were allowed to demonstrate with live bees in a bee tent. In the following year the County Association arranged a Honey
Show at the Grocers Exhibition and we took part, winning several prizes in the open classes. In 1930 we held our first Show in conjunction with Pinner Horticultural Society with whom we have since maintained a continuous close relationship. We have even shared our Past President Mr H L Jaquier with them and our Honey Show is an established part of their November Flower Show.

It has been the aim of the Association to fulfil its purpose by regular demonstrations during the summer months and by lectures in the winter. In the early days the demonstrations were advertised and the public were invited to come and learn about bees' but latterly the publicity has been confined to answering questions at Shows and exhibitions such as the Hillingdon Show and local fêtes. We also provide lecturers for meetings of local societies, ranging from retired Business men to young wives, thereby "spreading the word" about bees' beekeeping and the value of honey as a food.

Pinner has always believed that social activities do much to unite an association. In its very first year a successful whist drive brought members together and provided funds. Such functions as garden meetings, the annual supper, the "members' evening" at the beginning of December, and private parties all contribute to the friendly atmosphere of which we are proud. The supper after the AGM was started by Mrs Gossling (wife of our then Treasurer who was also Treasurer of the National Honey Show) as a "sausage and mash" affair but has
now become a gastronomic exercise for the distaff side, encouraging a good attendance at the AGM with no protracted discussion as the aroma from the kitchen pervades the Hall.

Summer "outings" used to be very popular, and one in 1930 to see Mr Herrod Hempsall's apiary at Luton and to hear his queen raising techniques was recorded in the Minutes as a "great event". Today we seem to be too blasé to enthuse about a "charabanc outing".

Our most famous "name" is that of Dr H M Fraser. A great classical scholar he wrote two books on ancient beekeeping which are esteemed throughout the world as the most authoritative works on the subject. He contributed regularly to BBJ under the rather unattractive title "Regurgitations".

Late in 1928 a new member joined. He was Mr N Ellement who passed his "craftsman" examination and served us for very many years before and after the was as "Expert". He also became the fore-runner of a Foul Brood Officer and wrote a pamphlet "Practical Notes on Beekeeping in the Pinner District" which still gives sound advice to beginners. Eventually he joined the staff of Rothamsted and we lost his valuable services.

Looking back it is noteworthy that beekeeping seems to flourish in periods of economic depression when we are forced to think about food production. The twenties were such a time and our Association was formed in 1928. The
plight of the mining industry came to the fore in 1930 and we responded to a call to support "distressed miners" by organising a film show which raised £12, 6s, 6d. Today we support local worthy causes but no cause has since stirred us to such an effort as did the miners,

Like most BKA's we have had difficulties in finding a site for a communal apiary where instruction can be given and for members who cannot keep bees at home. We have been "moved on" from Nower Hill, Pinner, and West House, Pinner. Now our site at Ruislip is to be developed and we are negotiating for a new place which promises !o be on a more stable basis and provide a permanent home for us. Let us hope so for our Sunday morning meetings at the apiary are both instructive and entertaining.

Today we are encouraged by the presence of the younger element for whom the produce of the hive is but one of the joys of beekeeping. They have a genuine desire to learn about bees, their fascinating life story, the wonders of their anatomy, their ability to communicate and incredible feats of navigation. we face the future with confidence.
HISTORY OF WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Towards the end of the 1919-45 war when beekeeping was booming it was decided that Harrow BKA was becoming unwieldy and there were enough members living in the North Wembley area, bordering Harrow, to provide an off-shoot.

A meeting in March 1945 at the Majestic Café, Wembley, attended by 58 members of Harrow, welcomed the idea and decided to elect their own Secretary (Mr Scholfield) and seven other Wembley residents as their first committee, the Secretary and three committee members to attend Harrow committee meetings, but annual subscriptions would continue to be paid to Harrow.

It was soon decided that Wembley should be a separate self-contained branch and a meeting on 10th January 1945 attended by 43 people confirmed this. Among those present were Messrs. C I Dennis, Pepperell, Silk and Bishop. Later in 1945 an already existing G.E.C. research group of beekeepers applied and were accepted en bloc as members of the new Association, the name of which was agreed as "Wembley and District Beekeepers' Association", thus providing a wider catchment area than the original North Wembley intention. The G.E.C. people were to pay 3/- each p.a., although all other members were required to pay 6/- p.a. Later in the same year a Honey Show was held at Wembley Town Hall and the records show that Mr Pedley
won the newly instituted Goddard Cup and subsequently donated a cup in his own name,

At the first A.G.M. in January 1947 Mr Pepperell became secretary, an office he held for eight years. The first Association apiary was established in the grounds of Wembley Hospital at which demonstrations were given to members, who had to pay 9p p.a. for the privilege in addition to the annual subscription which was then 7/- p.a. to include BeeCraft.

In 1948 it proved necessary to move the apiary, to Barham Park. In that year Mr Percy Carter started his long and still continuing link with WBKA when he was elected to the committee.

At the AGM in 1952 Mr C B Dennis became vice President and Mr F Forester joined the committee. The high spot of the year was an outing to Rothamsted.

In 1953 the membership fell to 32 due, it was thought, to the return to a semblance of normality following the shortages of wartime. Low attendances at lecture/discussions and demonstrations were also a source of concern. In that year our President, Dr Goddard, left the district.

During the mid-fifties “Forager” was distributed to members and Mr Forester became secretary, Records show that apathy among members increased and attendance at meetings was very poor. The committee attempted to revive interest by an intensive campaign
circularising all known beekeepers in the area. Membership continued to fall and further campaigns failed to generate sufficient momentum to combat the attraction of TELEVISION.

In 1960 Harrow joined forces with us at Wembley Town Hall for a joint Honey Show as they had then no venue of their own.

Our annual shows continued to flourish with Mr Carter as show secretary and in 1964 when Brent Council came into being, the date was switched from September to July and the Wembley Town Hall became known as Brent Town Hall. The Association apiary at Barham Park was overflowing by this time and a site was acquired in Oakington Avenue, where we remained until 1974.

The drive to increase membership continued during the sixties with loyal support from a few active members. In particular Messrs Carter, Hedgeley, Woolley, Green, Moffatt and Musgrove. Their efforts however, met with little success and the numbers never reached 30.

In the seventies membership dropped to around 20-25. There was greater pressure on apiary sites and in 1974 we moved our apiary from Oakington Avenue to Birchen Grove, where the Council was developing a new nursery for their parks Department. In 1977 the council redesigned a section of Barham park necessitating moving our apiary there to Roe-Green park. It must be emphasised has always had a very friendly relationship
with the local council.

Now membership is around 20 and it is a struggle to remain solvent. We need an infusion of younger blood but young people cannot easily be tempted into starting beekeeping when the initial outlay is so high and suitable hive sites seem to be ever-reducing in the face of more intensive building development. Mr Carter has recently stepped aside as our president after more than 15 years active work. He has been replaced by Mr Forester, who has an almost equally long record.

Beekeeping is an activity which seems to generate an unusually large number of long service characters. WBKA is no exception. There have been so many people who over many years have quietly but effectively got on with the job. Suffice to say that WBKA has its fair share of old-stagers who look back with memories of seasons of plenty - but tend to forget the hard work which they have put into their Association.
HISTORY OF THE NORTH WEST BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

On October 17th 1935, at the Mora Road School, Cricklewood, a general meeting was convened by Mr Acason of Pinner, for beekeepers to form an association which was to be called "The Middlesex County BKA North West District". A committee was formed, and at their first meeting on October 22nd, provisional rules were drafted, and on November 13th 1935, a general meeting was held, at which the provisional rules were adopted, and a committee officially elected the object of the Association being “to promote efficient beekeeping by means of advice and assistance to members”.

Hitherto within the boundaries of the Middlesex County BKA, formed in 1883, there had been affiliated associations in Harrow, Pinner (and I think Uxbridge) and non-affiliated associations in Twickenham and Thames Valley, Wood Green, and Enfield; but these were a long way from Willesden, Cricklewood, Golders Green, Muswell Hill, Highgate, Hampstead, Hendon and Kingsbury.

It was the enthusiasm of a small group of expert beekeepers, and the good will of the Pinner BKA that made possible the formation of the North West in 1935. Indeed, the first lecture, given at the first general meeting of N.W. was delivered by Mr E W Jones of Pinner. A few years later, in 1943, North West repaid their debt by supporting the formation of another association, including
Acton Chiswick, and Ealing, and subscribing £5 to their funds. This became known as the Ealing BKA.

At the 1937 A.G.M., it was decided that the committee, apart from the President and the Honorary Secretary, should be elected on a regional basis - 2 from Willesden Green and Cricklewood, 3 from Golders Green, 1 from Muswell Hill and 1 from Hendon and Kingsbury. The first President (Chairman) was Mr L F Wallis, who held that office, uninterruptedly, until he left London on his retirement in 1954. Committee members were appointed to look after all the bees in their various constituencies, like MPs.

By 1938 the Association was having four monthly summer meetings in members' apiaries or gardens (5 in 1939), with lectures and demonstrations, which was more or less kept up throughout the war.

During the war, beekeeping became very popular, and only began to decrease with the abolition of sugar rationing, and the scrapping of the special sugar allowance for beekeepers. The total membership is only occasionally mentioned in the minutes (my principal source of information) - but it was 140 in 1950, 120 – 1951, 97 - 1955 and 91 in 1965. Attendances at AGMs were 60 in 1945, 50 in 1945 and 40 in 1947. Apart from the numbers, there were so many beekeepers of distinction in those early days in North West, Perhaps the most distinguished was Dr A L Gregg, who was President of the Middlesex County BKA for some years - he was in
great demand as lecturer on all sorts of subjects, and author of a most engaging book called "The Philosophy and Practise of Beekeeping", and the donor of a National Honey Show Cup, awarded to the association winning the highest number of points in the Middlesex Classes at the N.H.S., on which the name of North West is engraved more often than any other association. Then there was Mr Wheeler, who held courses in Beekeeping for the Middlesex County Council, and finally went to Bucks. as County Bee Instructor, Mr Harper, who lectured and was Honorary Secretary of the BBKA Examinations Board, Messrs' Lovell and Porter who lectured, Mr Ernster lecturing on Queen Rearing; and great showmen, like Charles Svehla and Eddie Woodberry, who were perennial winners of wax prizes al the national. And, to show how times have changed, there is a minute of the AGM of 1944, which says, that there were 15 nominations for 9 vacancies on the committee. However, by May 1957 the monthly news letter was pointing out the "apparent apathy of members to the work of the committee", and asking for more positive support.

One unchanging feature of the Associations activities has been the annual invitation from Major Battcock, an ex-beekeeper, and now Honorary life-member, to visit some place of historical or artistic interest in London under his expert guidance. This he has done since 1955, and is planning another excursion this year. In the same category is Mrs Lyttelton's Garden Party, with which even
she has been delighting us since 1959.

A less distinguished, but nevertheless noteworthy member of North West was an inmate of Wormwood Scrubs, reputedly serving a life sentence, who joined in 1953, but after an unsuccessful attempt to win a prize at the Willesden show, was never, as far as I know, heard of again.

To return to beekeeping matters- our present revised rules state that the objects of the Association are not only "to promote efficient beekeeping” etc”, but also to "encourage participation in honey shows, both local and national". The founders took this latter aim for granted, and in 1937 the North West took part in the Middlesex County Show (not at the National) and in 1938 put on their first independent show, of honey and beekeeping equipment, in conjunction with the Gladstone Park Horticultural Society, This arrangement continued until 1952, when we transferred our patronage to the Willesden show in Roundwood park (which subsequently became the Brent show after the reshuffle of local authorities). The North West continued to show at Roundwood park for 25 years, until in 1977, we were invited to join up with the Highgate Horticultural society. This has been a very happy liaison for the last six years, the scale of the Highgate show being more suitable to our needs than the very large and commercialised affair at Brent.

The Association Apiary has been a recurring problem
from the beginning. As early as 1936, enquiries were started for a site where instruction and practical demonstrations could be given to new beekeepers. A site was found and quickly abandoned, and then in 1937, a member provided another site. But the following year the Association hive was sold (for 15 shillings!) and the problem shelved. After the war, numerous discussions took place, and approaches were made to the L.C.C. and the Water Board (inter alia) which proved fruitless, until at last, in 1963, a site was found in Burnt Oak, which belonged to the Church of St Alphege. But by this time, enthusiasm had waned and nobody wanted to look after the bees, or even keep the site clean - so that also was abandoned in 1966. It was not until 1973 that sites were found at Ken Wood and the Welsh Harp. Both of these are still in use, and Ken Wood Apiary is flourishing. The nettles also flourish but, there at last is our Apiary, and John Yates is there on Sunday mornings to give advice, and help the inexperienced.

Now the North west BKA is 47 years old. It has been through various stages, seen many changes and had its ups and downs. At all stages members have retired or moved away' and others have taken their places. This is such a time, when we have almost no experienced members who are experts in the craft and no successful showmen. Now is the time when younger members must replace the old hands. Tris last year or two has seen a good number of new beekeepers joining who could, if
they would, help the North West to climb back to the position of eminence where it once stood. If that were done, our 50th Anniversary would be something to celebrate.
Congratulations ……

MIDDLESEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

… on reaching such a ripe old age. We also know what it is like to celebrate a centenary, and are delighted to take this opportunity to thank Members for their loyal support in the years gone by. In these catchpenny days, it is surely reassuring to know that British craftsmen are making hives, frames, foundation, extractors and many other items with the same skill and care that has been our hallmark since we began, some three years before your Association was founded. As one of our customers said to us recently:

“\text{I have been a keen beekeeper for many years and a firm believer in the wisdom of using the best possible equipment. Although there are some cheaper products available I am sure that in beekeeping, as in most other pursuits, it pays to invest in the best, and if things go wrong at any time I can rely on Taylors to put matters right straightaway.}"

We like to think we shall continue to do business in this way with the continuing support of the Middlesex Beekeepers Association, to whom we are most grateful.

Our warmest thanks and sincere congratulations.

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