

1923 - 2018



Medway
Beekeepers
Association

Medway Beekeepers Association

Celebrating over 90 years of support for beekeeping
And beekeepers in and around the Medway Towns



Newsletter September 2018

Many members have now taken off some honey. Please don't forget to keep a little back for the **Honey Show**, the time is fast approaching, details below. Now we need to get our bees ready for the long winter ahead so make sure they are healthy and have sufficient stores to get them through.

Past Events:



6th-8th July 2018
Kent County Show

6th July 2018
Kent Bees and Honey Show

6, 7, 8 JULY 2018

Venue: The Kent Agricultural Showground, Detling

Kent Beekeepers Associations Tent 2018

The beekeepers from the four associations in Kent (Dover, Kent, Medway and Thanet) came together to provide an exhibition showing how we keep bees and the range of the activities that covers. We aim to introduce the general public to bees and beekeeping and to explain some of the importance of bees to the economy and our diet.

The stands inside the tent for the general public covered the products of pollination, examples of bee friendly plants, hive to jar covering where honey comes from and how the honey is extracted, candle making, Sheppey Honey Producers Ltd. (a group that involves prisoners in beekeeping activities) and opportunities to purchase honey and wax products. Our two observation hives were, as ever, very busy. The Bumble Bee, Wasps and Hornets display always draws a lot of interest and we were again pleased to have the assistance of the Bumble Bee Trust volunteers.

We aim to provide activities for all groups so include candle-rolling, badge-making and solitary bee house building primarily for young people, but we found that people of all ages had a go. The beekeepers and potential beekeepers are not left out as our Education and Information stand was very busy. Outside, next to the entrance to the tent was our skep-making demonstration.

The committee that puts the exhibition together includes – David Wood, John Hendrie, Terry Clare, Lesley Fancote, Ronnie Eagle, Jacki Tonks, Brian Wood, Roger Thompson, Bob Smith and John Chapman and we are supported by Jennifer Spon-Smith, James Cash and David Bragg. An especial thanks must also go to Paul Endacott, for helping throughout the show and for transporting honey from the pavilion to the Garden Life Marque. We rely on

volunteers to set-up the exhibition and to man the stands during the 3 days of the show so if you are interested in helping next year, look for information about stewarding at the show in your newsletters.

Kent Honey Show 2018

The Kent Honey Show was held, as part of the Kent Agricultural Show, in the Kent Beekeepers Tent. The show attracted 65 exhibits from 14 exhibitors, which considering the cold and wet start to the year provided a good looking show. This year, the show was judged by Bill Fisher and Sue Carter.

The Winners of the cups are shown on the list below: -

The Agricultural Society's Trophy (highest points in classes 1 to 15) – John F Chapman (Medway).

Clive Watson Memorial Trophy (winner of Class for Medium Honey) – Mark Woollard (Whitstable and Herne Bay).

Mead Cup (Overall winner in the Mead Classes) – John F Chapman (Medway).

Reginald Tower Rose Bowl (best exhibit in candles) – Mark Woollard (Whitstable and Herne Bay).

Subscribers Cup (winner of the Exhibition Class) - John F Chapman (Medway).

The Novice Cup (best exhibit in the novice classes) – Alan English (Dartford).

Best Exhibit in Honey (Certificate of Merit) – Kay Wreford (Medway).

Central Division Cup (Branch or Association Winning the most points in the open classes) – Medway Association.

The Margaret Calder Plate (Best Exhibit in Cookery Classes) and Geoffrey Dixon Trophy (Branch or Association Apiary) were not awarded this Year.

John Chapman

A visit by The Carpenters and Docklands Centres in East London, to the Mockbeggar Farm supported by MBKA members:



How do bees make strawberries? How long does it take to pick a punnet of strawberries? How do you pick plums? Just how big is this plum orchard? How do you harvest rhubarb? These were just a few of the questions asked by a group of forty-three, 4 to 11 year olds from the east of London, when they visited John and Kim Myatt at Mockbeggar Farm.

The farm visit, which was at the beginning of August, was organised by the charity LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming). The children and the adults with them, were given the opportunity to learn more about where their food comes from.

The youngsters picked and tasted strawberries, saw plums being harvested and found that there was a definite knack to pulling rhubarb. For many of the children it was their first visit to Kent and for all of them it was the first time they had been on a farm of any sort.



Roma Potter, Bob Smith and myself set up our equipment in the Mockbeggar Farm staff lunchroom and we gave the youngsters the chance to try on a bee suit and see how a smoker works. They also looked at an observation hive, which was very popular, took a demonstration hive apart and felt how heavy a full comb of honey is.

The enthusiasm of everyone, the looks on their faces and the many questions they asked made our short session hectic but very enjoyable.

Thank you to Roma and Bob for helping out at very short notice and to Jen Ferry for the loan of some extra child –sized bee suits.

Sue Chapman

(Photos courtesy of **Jo Hatton** from LEAF)

September's Events and Meetings:

Saturday 1st September 2018

MBKA Apiary Clean Up

12 – 2pm Association Apiary Site

Please come along and lend a hand if you can.

Saturday 1st September 2018

MBKA Apiary Open Day

2 – 4pm Association Apiary Site

You can find the apiary at 215a City Way, Rochester, Kent ME1 2TL

8th-9th September 2018

MBKA Honey Show

Time: 2-Day Event

Venue: Elm Court Garden Centre Gillingham ME7 3JQ

For the schedule go to www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/latest-news and look for 'The Honey Show 2018'.

Saturday 22nd September 2018

Ploughing Match

Time: All day event

Venue: Tudor Farm, Upper Stoke

We need some help to set up and run our stall. Please contact **John Chapman** if you can give some time.

Wednesday 26th September 2018

Bee Chat

Come and share your stories and hear everyone else's!

4th Wednesday of the month at The Pier, Lower Upnor, ME2 4XA, at 7.30pm.

Future Events:

Save this date!

Saturday 13th October 2018

MBKA Annual Supper and Prizegiving Evening

Time: 6 – 11pm

Venue: Wainscott Community Hall, 16 – 18 Holly Road, Wainscott, ME2 4LG

This year, the Association is enjoying a rapid growth in its membership numbers, in part due to our new, stronger education programme. We are taking the opportunity, offered by this

increase in numbers, to change the format and move the date of the Annual Dinner to make the evening inclusive to all and less formal.

We are planning an evening supper with a quiz at Wainscott Memorial Hall on Saturday 13th October. In addition to the social element, during the evening we will also recognise the achievements of the Introductory group, the Improvers study group and those achieving BBKA awards such as the Basic, as well as presenting the prizes from the various Honey Shows.

Previous successful social events this year have seen members old and new happily joining in, many for the first time, and it is hoped that this evening supper will also prove to be a hit. Bring your partners and friends along for an enjoyable, fun evening with good food and good company, where we can all relax and celebrate the success of our colleagues who have worked hard to improve their beekeeping knowledge & skills.

I will be in touch shortly with more information.

Jen Ferry

Saturday 20th October 2018

MBKA Autumn Bee Fair

Time: 2pm onwards

Venue: Wainscott Community Hall, 16 – 18 Holly Road, Wainscott, ME2 4L

Don't forget to bring your 'signed super frame' for judging.

Following on from the success last year of our first Autumn Bee Fair – it was so much fun that we are going to do it again!!!!

We will once again have a variety of activities, an education information stand and some demonstrations, along with our excellent refreshment bar and shop. These will showcase some of the many and varied spin off hobbies associated with beekeeping.

We will be doing waxed wrap making, honey tasting, there will be bee loving plants for both sale and identification and honey extracting to participate in, to name a few of the many interesting things on offer.

Come along and bring your friends and family. If you would like to be more involved than just pitching up, why not make a cake for the refreshments or bring a plant for the sales or come and help for an hour on one of the tables during the afternoon? Just let me know if you want to get involved.

Jen Ferry
07990 581858

Monday 22nd October 2018

Winter Study Group 1

Time: 7.00pm (7.30pm start)

Venue: Wainscott Community Hall, 16 – 18 Holly Road, Wainscott, ME2 4L

Education Report:

In Clapham the other day I saw a sign for “Social Netball” – apparently this is netball for the sheer enjoyment, with no pressure, no league, no testing. The MBKA Winter Studies may have to be re-named “Social Beekeeping”?

It also is intended to be enjoyable, stress-free and with no pressure to take the Module 2 exam, unless that is what you want.

10 fortnightly sessions starting Monday 22nd October (with a break for Christmas and New Year) will see us cover all of the syllabus of BBKA Module 2 – Honey Bee Products & Forage.

Come along simply to be more aware of these important aspects of beekeeping or of course if you are intent on climbing the BBKA academic ladder by ticking off the 7 Modular examinations. Whatever your incentive, register now with Jen Ferry to reserve a place on the course – just £20 for 10 sessions; can't be bad?

I have mentioned this before but no apologies – if MBKA is to provide the support that we and students expect and deserve, we need to have a band of more experienced members who would be willing to mentor our beginners. It need not be onerous, it will be rewarding – please let Tony Edwards know if you are even slightly interested in the possibility? Thank you.

This year, a number of our members were successful in the BBKA Basic Assessment, the must-have qualification for any further BBKA examinations. Although we are some way off, newer members who will have kept bees for a year by mid-summer next year will be eligible to undertake this straightforward assessment and coaching will again be provided; if you might be interested, please let Jen know.

Finally, the 2019 “Introduction to beekeeping” course will be running over 6 Monday evenings starting from 11th March; we already have 17 names (11 confirmed) and the numbers will not exceed 24. Sheila is taking names.

Bob Smith

Have you a site that an MBKA Beekeeper could use to keep their bees?

We are now training more new beekeepers than ever and they often need a site for their new colonies as their own gardens are not always the right location for hives. If you are happy to host a beekeeper and can offer an area in a large garden or on a piece of land which has reasonable access and good forage then please let Jen Ferry know:

email jen.ferry@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

Jen will keep a list of potential sites that beekeepers can refer to in order to help find accommodation for their bees.

The fee to the landowner for such an arrangement is usually paid in a small amount of honey!!!



https://twitter.com/poshbee_eu

Call for Volunteers

BBKA are very fortunate in being part of a brand new, exciting project, involving many European countries and funded by the EU. The project, named 'PoshBee', is designed to determine the exposure of bees to a range of chemicals and assess the levels of pests and diseases and nutritional status, and the impacts these may have on the health of honey bees, bumble bees and solitary bees in a field realistic way rather than in laboratory studies. Prof. Simon Potts (Reading University) and Prof. Mark Brown (Royal Holloway College) have been the guiding lights in getting this application drawn up and finally approved.

This is going to be a wonderful opportunity for some of our members to take part in real scientific experiments and initially we are looking for volunteers in Kent and in Berkshire or Oxfordshire who would be interested in taking part next year. Details are not yet finalised but the beekeepers would be paid for the use of their hives which will be placed in orchards in Kent and in OSR fields in the Reading area. The sites will be chosen by Prof. Potts in collaboration with various farmers to represent differing levels of pesticide usage among other factors.

The aim is to take various samples from colonies throughout the season and these will be assayed by various experts in laboratories. More details will be available later on but those willing to take part will be expected have colonies ready for moving in the spring of 2019. We require 24 colonies for each of the two areas, so ideally 30 colonies to allow for losses over the winter. Please contact Pam Hunter if you are interested in taking part. For those interested and willing to take part, Prof. Potts will give a presentation at Stoneleigh of what is required later this year.

Please check the BBKA website regularly as the plans are still under development and contact Pam Hunter with any queries you may have.

Pam.hunter@bbka.org.uk

Some further information:

Requirements for colonies for 'PoshBee'

- There will be 8 sites in Kent (Fruit) and 8 in Oxfordshire/Berkshire (OSR).
- The sites will be selected by Professor Simon Potts.
- 3 colonies are required for each site (total of 24 X 2).
- We are looking at British National standard hives (not deeps) - single brood box.

- Beekeepers will be paid for the use of their hives (probably £50/hive) and also for any travel costs.
- The beekeepers will look after the hive and will be able to still take a crop of honey (if there is any of course!).
- They will not be expected to take any samples, that will be done by the Reading staff but if they are interested they can see that.
- They will be able to move the colonies back to where ever they want them about one month after flowering has finished.
- The colonies need ideally to have this year's queen.
- They will need to be arranged in the spring according to a standardised format, which has yet to be finalised.

Vacancies for Seasonal Bee Inspectors:

The National Bee Unit has several Seasonal Bee Inspector Posts advertised on the [Civil Service Jobs website](#). The areas we are recruiting in are:

London, London / Greater London.

Applications have to be made online via the Civil Service Jobs website and the Closing date for applications is the 13th September 2018. Any applications submitted after this date will not be considered. If you have any questions about any of the posts then please contact the Regional Bee Inspector, or in the event that the RBI is not available, contact the National Bee Inspector, Julian Parker. All contact details can be found on the [contact pages of BeeBase](#).

Autumn Meetings:

We look forward to seeing you at this autumn's meetings. A list of the meetings can be viewed by going to: www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/events

And Finally:

Thank you to all who have contributed to this month edition and remember if anyone has any news, ideas, amusing stories or comments or indeed suggestions about the website or for any future newsletter, please get in touch with me, Paul Lawrence at the address shown below, we really do appreciate your input.

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