

1923 - 2019



Medway
Beekeepers
Association

Medway Beekeepers Association

Celebrating over 95 years of support for beekeeping
and beekeepers in and around the Medway Towns



Newsletter March 2019

Important Security Message:

One of our members had a complete WBC hive (painted white) stolen from his allotment in Rochester, on the night of 4th February 2019. Please be aware if you are offered such a hive for sale and check on its past. Please also check the security of your own hives.

The new season is arriving fast and we have much planned for the year ahead so don't miss out and come and join us!

Past Event:



Sunday 3rd February 2019

BIBBA Sustainable Bees & Queens

Speaker: Roger Patterson

Venue: Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way, Lenham, Kent ME17 2QT

“There is growing concern amongst beekeepers of all abilities and experience about the ever-increasing importation of bees and queens. This is on several grounds, including the possibilities of introducing pests, diseases and pathogens, aggression in subsequent generations and the unsuitability to our fickle climate.”

In view of these sentiments held by many beekeepers the MBKA hosted this all-day course run by BIBBA about sustainable Bees and Queens. Roger Patterson has been a practical bee keeper since 1963 and he now concentrates on teaching the practical aspect of beekeeping at his local BKA where he is apiary Manager. He lectures and demonstrates widely and is a regular contributor to the bee press. Roger is the author of "Beekeeping. A Practical Guide".

The day started at 10.00 am with 156 beekeepers and bee farmers from Kent and Sussex with some coming from as far afield as Hampshire. The talk was very informative with projected graphics showing his ideas and procedures. Bob Smith kept a close eye on the clock, ensuring everyone had time to recover from each session with tea, biscuits and cake, all served from 3 tea stations by the MBKA and their family members.

Queen rearing was covered in the afternoon session and we rounded off the day with question and answers.

Roger encouraged us all to have a go at queen rearing and to make the process both viable and productive. The day was well worth the £11 fee and excellent value. As the event is to be held at nine venues around the country and is being recorded, a video will be posted at some stage on the BIBBA web site, but this has still to be confirmed.

Peter Kimber

Saturday 16th February 2019

MBKA AGM

Time: 2 to 5pm

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



There were 26 members attending this years AGM with only 8 apologies for absence. The Chairman John Chapman welcomed everyone and set out the structure of the meeting. Apologies were noted and the minutes of last year's AGM were reviewed and accepted unanimously with no matters arising.

The next item was the Annual Report containing the various areas of activity. The Chairman's, Education, Website and Swarm Control Reports were accepted unanimously and without questions. The Apiary Report was accepted but Mark Ballard our Apiary Manger did make a plea for more apiary inspectors as we cannot keep relying on just 4 or 5 people. "Remember you are always in a team of two!" interjected Eliane Laight, the Apiary Co-Ordinator.

Next up was the treasurer's Report and John Hendrie, our Treasurer gave an up-beat report and explained how our accounts have seen a remarkable improvement over the last year. Completely due to two new situations.

The first was the change in format of the dinner, organised and delivered by Jen and a very small number of helpers and family members. They turned around a profit of £500. This is unheard of as our usual profit is around £20. But what was more satisfying was the turn out of 47 members as opposed to the more usual 20 or so, who found the new format highly satisfactory. So be warned that you may have to book early next year to ensure a place!

The second change has been entirely due to Bob Smith and his team, who have delivered a brand-new Beginner's Course and as a result has pushed up our membership (through Associate Members mostly) to over 120. This course and others, have earned £750 in profit and next year this should go towards not only improving this very popular course still more, but also in providing some reimbursement of expenses for all of those who organise and deliver them.

The current membership, including new members and those who have renewed stands at 102. This is also a record for this time of year. The number of members who pay by BACs has increased substantially and the number paying by cheque is now less than 10. All good news!

John recommended that the current level of subscriptions should be held for a further year, understandably this was passed unanimously.

We then moved onto the Election of Officers. John Chapman, John Hendrie and Sheila Stunell were all re-elected with unanimous backing, as was the new committee of Mark Ballard, Tony Edwards, Elaine Laight, Bob Smith and Paul Lawrence. Sonia Belsey was

welcomed onto the committee, she is in charge of and was responsible for setting up our Facebook presence.

Jen Ferry has sadly stepped down from the committee, but the Chairman thanked her for her substantial contribution and commitment to MBKA over these past few years. Jen will still be around however, so watch out!

The final piece of business was to confirm that the annual expenses of the Treasurer, Secretary and Newsletter Editor were to remain at £150. However, it was proposed and accepted that due to the increased work in auditing our accounts that the auditor, Maggie Halls, receives £40 for her work.

The Chairman then rounded off the meeting by highlighting and thanking all of those members who helped run and support 3 highly successful events, namely the Dinner, Autumn Fair and the Top Bar Competition. He also thank them for helping to raise interest in not only bees but also the environment.

The date of the next AGM is Saturday 15th February 2020 at 2pm, we hope to see you there.

Paul Lawrence

Education:



I have been approached by a small number of members who are interested in taking the BBKA Basic Certificate and as in 2018, we will be running revision and at-the-hive coaching sessions for this important first step on the BBKA Exams sequence. If you have kept bees for a full season and would like to join this group, please let me know. Dates to be arranged depending on availability and weather but probably in May/June.

Those members who have already been successful in the Basic Assessment, perhaps you would be interested in the next step, which is 'The General Husbandry Certificate'. If you are interested in this course then also, please let me know.

As reported last month, the 2019 beginner's course – "An Introduction to Beekeeping" is scheduled to start on 11th March and is fully subscribed. The plan this year is to operate it as a "sandwich course" with 3 classroom sessions, a 3-month practical period and finally, 3 more sessions in the classroom. The practical aspect of the course will be for the beginners to follow the activities of local beekeepers as they manage their bees through the season – this depends upon enough current members offering to become "bee-buddies". The response so far has been good but a few more would be great.... "What would it entail?" – basically managing your bees exactly as you normally would but alerting your nominated beginner each time you plan to visit the bees. "How much experience do I need?" – not a lot! Probably just a couple of years would be fine, there will be a support system for awkward questions!

Bob Smith

Bee Buddies



Some of those taking part in this year's introductory course will become beekeepers straight away and some will put the decision to start on hold for perhaps a year. Others may decide that the craft is not for them once they find out the cost and time commitment.

I'm sure you can recall the first two years of beekeeping when most of us made the most mistakes, some of them quite costly. This Introductory Course will enable these newcomers to get kick started, they will benefit from ongoing help and guidance as they progress and we are looking for bee buddies. Can you help?

As you will have read in Bob's Education Report, although a number of members have put their names down, we are still looking for more beekeepers, with a couple of years' experience, to be bee buddies and help guide this cohort. You will need to be willing to be shadowed when performing routine and / or difficult manipulations and just to be there on the end of the phone to answer questions or offer some guidance.

If you are interested, please contact me at: tony.ed@me.com - and I will try and link you up with a 'buddy'.

Tony Edwards

The Apiary: 215a City Way, Rochester, Kent ME1 2T



Can you help for a few hours?

There will be an **Apiary Clean-up** afternoon on **Saturday 9th March** starting at noon - weather permitting (last year we had snow!)

Jobs to be done:

1. Cut grass
2. Clean out the pond
3. Weed flower beds
4. Trim shrubs
5. Cut off side shoots to two tree stumps
6. Clean (scorch) old brood boxes and supers
7. Move hive no 2 away from tree stump (within 3 feet)
8. Trim entrance hedge

Please bring gardening gloves and secateurs if possible.

I will have rakes, barrow, strimmer, scythe, forks, hedge trimmer, blow torch etc

Mark Ballard

March's Events and Meetings:

Monday 4th March 2019

Winter Study Group 10

Time: 7.00pm (7.30pm start)

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

Saturday 9th March 2019

Apiary Clean-Up Afternoon

Time: From noon

Venue: 215a City Way, Rochester, Kent ME1 2TL

See above for details.

Monday 11th March 2019

Introduction to Beekeeping 1

Time: 7.00pm (7.30pm start)

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

Saturday 16th March 2019

Pre-owned Equipment Sale plus a Practical Session making Asian Hornet Traps.

Time: 2 – 5pm

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

It's time for a spring-clean and shed clear out- come and join us at our first pre-owned equipment sale.

Bring your clean surplus equipment along on the day to sell but **please no used frames**. Sales will be in cash with a small percentage going to Association funds.

If you are looking to contract or expand your beekeeping operation this is the ideal opportunity to buy and sell kit! We will also be running a workshop to make Asian hornet traps and giving the opportunity for new beekeepers to practice their frame making skills.

Monday 18th March 2019

Introduction to Beekeeping 2

Time: 7.00pm (7.30pm start)

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

Monday 25th March 2019

Introduction to Beekeeping 3

Time: 7.00pm (7.30pm start)

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

Wednesday 27th March 2019

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

Don't forget to put these in your diary:



Spring 2019
Convention

12, 13, 14th April 2019

Harper Adams University
Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

Book in mid-January for the 42nd BBKA Spring Convention and enjoy the excellent facilities and catering available at Harper Adams University

- Lectures, Workshops and Seminars for all levels of beekeeping experience
- Trade Show on Saturday 13th April
- Beekeeping and Not-for-Profit Exhibition
- Excellent facilities and great value catering
- On-site, ensuite accommodation

For further Spring Convention information, FAQs, Tickets (wristbands) and Bookings visit:
www.bbka.org.uk

Asian Hornet Update:



Visit: www.nationalbeeunit.com for the latest updates.

Facebook

Facebook enables us to reach members and the public quickly and provides a platform for interaction. Social media is becoming more and more a part of everyday life and a way of communication. Help us reach 100 followers- join our Facebook page for information, updates and events <https://www.facebook.com/medwaybka/>

And Finally:

A list of the meetings can also be viewed by going to: www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/events

Thank you to all who have contributed to this month's 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.

Contact Details:

Chairman

John Chapman
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Newsletter and Website Enquiries

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