

1923 - 2020



Medway
Beekeepers
Association

Medway Beekeepers Association

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



Newsletter September 2020

Many members have now taken off the honey. 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. The NBU has issued a starvation alert see below for details.

Zoom Events for 2020:



I am pleased to announce, on behalf of the committee, that Medway Beekeepers will be holding an exciting programme of virtual winter meetings using the online platform Zoom. These will be starting on 23rd September 2020 with the renowned **Celia Davis**, author of *The Honey Bee Inside Out* and *The Honey Bee Around and About*, Celia is an engaging speaker and easy to listen to. Her talk will be '**Beekeeper v Bees**: how our activities as beekeepers, impact on the natural life of the honey bee colony'.

Using online meetings allows us to bring you a long list of high-quality speakers, who can talk to us from the comfort of their own homes, and you can listen and join in from the comfort of yours! Archie McLellan has secured for us a selection of nationally known beekeeping celebrities, who will talk on a wide range of topics. These speakers include **Nicola Bradbear** on the charity she founded *Bees for Development*, **Stephen Martin** on the evolution of natural varroa-tolerance, **David Evans** (The Apiarist blog) on queen rearing basics for the relative novice – and lots more. The full programme will be available very shortly.

Taking the chair for us for the first of these new look meetings is **Bob Smith**. He has considerable experience in using Zoom as a platform for talks. His online MBKA 'Introduction to Beekeeping' course was held earlier this summer and he hosts the Central Association of Beekeepers talks; he is more familiar with this technology than most of us.

Archie has had such a good response from speakers that we will be able to hold these new virtual meetings twice a month throughout the winter. **Meetings will be on the second Monday and fourth Wednesday of every month, at 8pm starting Wednesday 23rd September 2020.** This therefore replaces both the winter meetings and BeeChat for the foreseeable future. This style of beekeeping meeting is already popular elsewhere in the country.

The 'Meetings' format of Zoom limits us to 100 people per event, so we will run a bookings system. Initially bookings will be open only to MBKA members. One week later, if there is any availability remaining, members from neighbouring associations will also be invited to join. The talks will be 45-60 minutes duration. Questions and comments will follow. We think it important that the speaker get some feedback from the audience, and the audience will have some contact with each other.

If you are not familiar with Zoom, it is free and very easy to use. The talks can be viewed on a computer, a tablet or a phone. Type 'Zoom' into a search engine to download the app. **I will email you all a link with a password for each talk** – so watch out for this. Perhaps we can have a practice Zoom meeting without a speaker a week before the first talk to familiarise us with the technology. We are looking at ways in which the talks may be recorded for future viewing – but please try to be at the main event so you can contribute with questions and comments after the talk.

Please contact me with any queries regarding this new programme.

I look forward to you joining us on this new venture.

Jen Ferry

jen.ferry@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk



A sustainable future for our beekeepers, our honey bees and our environment.

A National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP) is being launched.

BIBBA aims to support associations, groups and beekeepers of all levels to sustainably select and produce hardy, docile and productive bees that are best suited to their local environment.



The National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP)

BIBBA is launching NatBIP to encourage all beekeepers to produce hardy, docile and productive bees suited to their local environment.

For over 100 years there have been significant importations of honey bees and queens into the U.K. The reasons have varied from the "Isle of Wight Disease" and hard winters, such as 1962/63, to management reasons to suit beekeepers.

There is increasing concern by beekeepers, both new and experienced, to continual importations, which is

backed by scientific evidence. These concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Bee health. Possible introduction of pests, diseases and pathogens.
- Unsuitability to the locality. Possibly contributing to increased colony losses.
- Drones interbreeding with existing queens. Weakening the quality of local stock.

A series of webinars have been planned in a logical progression to explain NatBIP, experience of importations, scientific evidence, teaching beekeepers and how beekeeping associations can help improve our population of bees for the benefit of everyone.

The provisional programme of webinars for NatBIP, all Tuesdays at 7.30pm is:

1. 22nd Sept "The National Bee Improvement Programme Outline" - Jo Widdicombe
2. 29th Sept "More details of the National Bee Improvement Programme and Participation" - Jo Widdicombe
3. 6th Oct "Global pandemics, bee imports and native bees" - Norman Carreck
4. 13th Oct "My 50 years experiences of imported bees affecting local stock" - Peter Jenkins

5. 20th Oct "Resilient Honeybees" - Grace McCormack
6. 27th Oct "Where we are, how we got here and how we can move on " - Roger Patterson
7. 3rd Nov "Some Fresh Ideas for Teaching and Learning" - Roger Patterson
8. 10th Nov "Bees and queens for everyone" - Roger Patterson
9. 17th Nov "Answering Your Questions" - All Speakers

NatBIP provides us with the first ever chance to choose to be self-sufficient with our beekeeping, reducing the need for increasing importations that many beekeepers feel are harming our own honey bees. It is hoped that as many beekeepers, groups and associations as possible will attend these webinars. Please publicise widely, as this important programme is appropriate to beekeepers, teachers and BKA officials.



Professor Robert Pickard will be talking about "Viruses of Honey Bees and Humans" - he is a really engaging speaker and the topic is topical!!

CABK members will be free, non-members may join the fun for £3


NEXT EVENT ...

Viruses of Honey Bees and Humans

- Wednesday 16th September
- Prof. Robert Pickard

- Members free
- Non-members welcome
 - See www.cabk.org.uk



The Central Association of Bee-Keepers
Bringing Science to the Bee-Keeper

Starvation Alert:



Bee Inspectors across the UK are reporting that many colonies are in need of food where honey has been harvested and nectar availability is reduced. Where starvation is a risk, replacement food needs to be provided.

Please monitor your colonies throughout the coming months and feed as required to ensure your bees do not starve. A standard full size British

National colony needs between 20-25 kg of stores to successfully overwinter. Sugar syrup should be made with 1kg of sugar to 650ml of warm water or a commercially ready-made bee syrup can be given.

For further information, please see the [Best Practice Guidance No. 7 - Feeding Bees Sugar](#)

Members will be or are in the process administering Varroa treatments:



The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) authorises and regulates UK veterinary medicines and enforces the UK Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 (VMR).

The VMD would like to remind beekeepers of their responsibilities and duty to comply with the VMR and VMD guidance. A veterinary medicine must be administered in accordance with its marketing authorisation, which in practice means you must follow the instructions in the package leaflet unless directed otherwise by your vet.

Amitraz-based products

We have received a number of specific enquiries about the use of amitraz-based products for the treatment of varroosis in the UK.

There are **2 authorised amitraz-based products** in the UK - **Apitraz and Apivar**. Neither of these should be used during a honey flow or when honey supers are on the hive.

Use authorised medicines

You should only use UK-authorized veterinary medicinal products to treat varroosis in honey bees, unless an appropriate authorised medicine is not available and a veterinary surgeon has prescribed a different product under the prescribing cascade.

All authorised products for bees have undergone a rigorous and thorough scientific assessment to assure their quality, efficacy and safety for bees, the user, consumers of bee products and the environment. A list of all UK-authorized products is available on the [VMD's product information database](#).

Use medicines correctly

You must follow the instructions in the product information unless otherwise advised by the vet who has clinical responsibility for your bees.

Misuse of veterinary medicines can harm bees, make varroa mites resistant to the medicine, contaminate the environment and harm public health.

Keep records of when you have administered medicines

You must keep a record of any medicines that have been administered to your bees for a minimum period of 5 years to comply with the legal requirements for food-producing animals.

Dispose of medicines correctly

You must dispose of medicines and any associated waste such as packaging or unused product in the correct way. Always follow the instructions in the product information about disposal. If in doubt, contact your Regional Bee Inspector (in Scotland, the Lead Bee Inspector through bees_mailbox@gov.scot) or the manufacturer.

Residues surveillance and inspections

The National Bee Unit and Scottish Bee Inspectors, on behalf of the VMD, carry out a statutory programme of honey sampling to check for residues of medicines in this foodstuff. They also have a duty to report any non-compliant use of medicines they find during their inspections to the VMD.

For any questions or further guidance please contact:

Veterinary Medicines Directorate – postmaster@vmd.gov.uk

England and Wales – [the National Bee Unit](#)

Kind regards,
National Bee Unit.



Reading Around:



A monthly glance at a topic or two in the media with Archie McLellan.

This month: A winter feeding ding-dong on Beekeeping Forum (nothing unusual about that), something special from Robert Pickard (nothing unusual about that), and a new study which says that honey is good for colds and coughs (nothing unusual about that). Plus, a distillation of the best advice available on the use of smoke. (You've never seen that before!)

To view this month's edition please: [Click here](#)

Beekeepers Bazaar:

Bob Smith has 6 boxes (of 72) one-pound honey jars with white plastic lids. They are available at £20 per box.

If any member is interested please contact Bob on: 07922 631106

Asian Hornet Update:

BBKA have planned a press and social media campaign for Asian Hornet Week 7th–13th September 2020. One of our aims is to engage the public to download the '**Asian Hornet Watch**' app onto their phones so they have the information ready to hand to identify and report sightings of Asian Hornets and particularly nests, as we move into autumn. Our PR Officer, Diane Roberts, has written the attached press release: [Click here for details](#)

There is a page on the BBKA website on the link below that has more information:
<https://www.bbka.org.uk/Event/asian-hornet-week-2020>

Follow us on social media and share our posts during Asian Hornet week to help reach more people:

<https://twitter.com/britishbee>

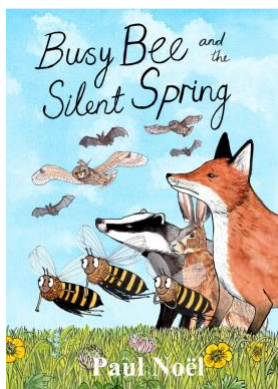
<https://www.facebook.com/TheBritishBeekeepersAssociation/>

<https://www.instagram.com/britishbeekeepers/>

Now for something lighter:

Sonia found this charming children's book which is available online:

Bea Bee is the most resourceful, hardest working and happiest bee living in a hive located in a beautiful meadow. One day she notices a new sign on the gate and goes back



to the hive to get wise old bee to come to the gate with her and read the notice as she doesn't understand all the words. The news is bad; the sign is for a planning application to build houses all over the meadow. Wise Old Bee suggests that only if a rare or endangered species is found in the meadow is there a chance that the meadow can be saved. Bea suggests a wild idea on how to save the meadow from this happening. If they don't then they are going to have to move the hive. Her plan is fairly simple. There are some red flowers down near the stream that produce some fairly sticky pollen on them and she thinks that if she disguises herself as a red bee people will believe that there is a new species of bee. At least it will give the bees time to find

out if there is a rare or endangered species in the meadow. Time to tell the Queen about the problem and also a possible solution. Bea tries out the deception on two young people camping in the meadow and they take several photographs that they load onto social media. Bea has started a series of events that she is unaware of. Two teams are set up, some normal bees to keep a lookout on when visitors are coming and a "red" team to sow the story and keep each other from being caught. **Will Bea and her friends from the meadow find a way to save it?**

This is a story that is meant to be read by a parent to a younger child or with a younger child and to be read by children themselves as they get older. Suitable for 7 to 11 years of age. Available as an ebook version as well as the normal sized paperback. There is also an ebook associated with the large format and colouring book version of the story.

Website Update:

Please let me know of any difficulties you may have when using the Member's Area and I will reset your password for you.

Information will be posted on both websites so please check both.

Paul Lawrence (Website Manager)

Facebook also carries up to date information.

Join our Facebook page for information, updates and events:

<https://www.facebook.com/medwaybka/>

And Finally:

As usual, many thanks to all who have contributed to the newsletter at this difficult time. Please remember if anyone has any questions, queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either Paul Lawrence or John Chapman at the addresses shown below. But equally you can contact most members of the committee by going to the 'contact us' tab in the members area.

Contact Details:

Chairman

John Chapman

john.chapman@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

Newsletter and Website Enquiries

Paul Lawrence

paul.lawrence@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk