

1923 - 2018



Medway  
Beekeepers  
Association

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



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## Newsletter March 2018

Wow! The weather has suddenly changed back to winter! March is the worst month for losing bees through starvation so keep checking their stores for a little longer and if snow is heavy don't forget to clear the hive entrances.

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!

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### Past Events:

#### **Saturday 17th February 2018 MBKA Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting was held on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 22 members attended and there were just 9 apologies for absence. Last year's minutes were unanimously accepted although a number of inaccuracies were highlighted which the Secretary agreed to correct before publication.

The business of the day began with a discussion of the Annual Report. The meeting reviewed the written reports and Terry Claire submitted his final report as Education Officer, which was both eloquent and heart felt. The meeting thanked him for his many years of service and presented him with a tribute for both himself and his wife Pat. The Chairman then gave his report and all were accepted unanimously.

In the absence of the Treasurer the Chairman took the meeting through the accounts. We have 102 members. We gained more money from honey sales this year including honey from the Association Apiary. We also sold 2 Nuclear Hives, which were the result of swarm prevention activities at the Apiary Site. However, the biggest disappointment of the year was the Annual Dinner, which had the lowest attendance ever. The date, venue and maybe the format are all under review by the Committee and several members offered advice and possible reasons for the dinner's demise. If anyone would like to join in this debate please send your comments to the Secretary they will be gratefully received.

Jen Ferry responded to a written question regarding the taking of swarms. The questioner asked why only 2 nucs had been sold when it was the worst year for taking swarms and why these were not being offered to new beekeepers.

The nucs were the result of work at our apiary but swarms, are taken by individuals and absorbed by those who are able to accept them. The meeting agreed that swarms are not the best source of bees for new beekeepers due to their unknown history. However, swarms, which have been isolated and then re-queened from colonies with known quality, are of course suitable.

Jen then made an impassioned plea for changes to be made this coming year. We only had a limited number of swarm collectors last year and these few were soon overwhelmed by the sheer numbers which needed collecting. There was also a major problem in moving collected swarms on to the few members who were willing to accept them.

The Chairman stated that we were going to return to the use of a swarm phone this year and ask members who could take and / or accept swarms to put their names down on a list.

Finally the subscriptions were set to remain at: £30 for a Full Member, £10 for an Associate Member and £1 for a Junior Member.

The President then took the Chair for the election of the Officers: John Chapman – Chairman, Sheila Stunell – Secretary and John Hendrie – Treasurer. All were elected unanimously.

Then the elections of: Website Manager – Paul Lawrence and Education Officer - Bob Smith. Both were elected unanimously. The committee members: Jen Ferry, Elaine Laight, Mark Ballard and Tony Edwards were also unanimously elected.

Madeleine Halls was proposed as The Independent Examiner for our annual accounts and appointed unanimously.

The Honoraria for Secretary, Treasurer and Website Manager were set at £150. A discussion then ensued with regard to the level of Honoraria and who else maybe should receive it. The new committee will discuss this and make recommendations for next year's AGM.

Next we turned to changes to our constitution brought about by the discussions of last year's AGM. The Secretary read out the proposed changes and they were all accepted unanimously.

The Chairman then summarised the meeting and thanked all of last year's committee and all of those who helped out at our meetings and events throughout last year.

There being on other business to discuss the date of next year's AGM was set at 16<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

Please note that this is only a short report of the proceedings based on my own recollections, draft minutes of the AGM will be posted on the website soon and you can read a full account there.

Paul Lawrence

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## **March's Events and Meetings:**

### **Saturday 3rd March 2018**

#### **Apiary Site Clear-Up**

Time: 10am to Noon

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

We have a new Apiary Manager in Mark Ballard. He needs your help and support so why not come along for an hour or two. Many hands and all that!

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## **Saturday 17th March 2018**

### **Sale of Second Hand Equipment plus a Workshop on making an Asian Hornet Trap**

Time: 2pm to 5pm

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

Come along and make yourselves an Asian Hornet Trap (we will ask for a small donation to cover the materials used) and at the same time pick up a bargain at the second hand equipment sale.

Please note that the following rules will apply at this event:

1. Equipment for sale to have been cleaned and scorched prior to the sale.
2. No used frames will be sold, any that arrive will not be allowed into the hall.
3. Any surplus equipment in the flat should state if the fixing nails and instructions are included.
4. You must book-in the things you have for sale with the committee member on duty.
5. If you are selling the items, fix a price prior to the sale. The price will be then marked on the goods.
6. Any items, which you are willing to donate, will be shown without a price mark on them and we will just ask for a donation towards the Association funds.
7. Any goods sold will have 10% of the sale price deducted towards the Association funds.
8. At the end of the sale any booked-in items, that have not been sold, will be booked-out and returned to you.
9. At the end of the sale, please take any of your items of equipment that remain. The committee will not want to be making trips to the tip with uncollected items.

John Chapman (Chairman)

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

## **Wednesday 28th March 2018**

### **Bee Chat**

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

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## **Future Events:**

### **13th to 15th April 2018**

#### **The 41<sup>st</sup> Spring Convention – 3-Day Event Organised by the BBKA**

Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire

With 20+ lectures and 50+ workshops, the programme offers topics for beginners through to experienced apiarists and something for non-beekeepers too.

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## **21st April 2017**

### **English Festival**

Venue: Riverside Country Park, Rainham

Why not come and help out at the English Festival run by Medway Council on Saturday 21st April. MBKA is going to be there interacting with the general public. If you have honey or wax products to sell, please let me know that you are coming and are bringing products to sell. The usual 10% rate for sales via the Association will apply. We will be rolling candles, so I am hoping for a nice sunny day to keep the foundation pliable – if not I shall be taking a hair drier to warm the wax! We need to be set up for 11am so helpers please arrive by 9am.

John Chapman

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## **Saturday 28th April**

### **All-Kent Bee Health Day**

Time: 10am – 4pm

Venue: East Malling Village Hall ME19 6DD, 10-4pm

(The nearby Mid-Kent Apiary will also be used for part of the course)

This is a rare opportunity to take part in a course run in conjunction with the NBU Inspectors Sandra Gray, Kay Wreford, Michael Cooper and Mark Patterson.

### **It is now open for bookings!**

The course will provide the following benefits:

- An opportunity to examine combs with EFB, AFB (protective and disinfectant materials will be provided).
- See these relatively rare Notifiable diseases at first hand.
- Combs will also be available with lesser conditions such as sacbrood, chalkbrood.
- In the apiary, learn the techniques employed by inspectors in looking for notifiable diseases.
- See also the techniques used to check colonies for exotic pests, such as Small Hive Beetle and Tropilaelaps.
- Learn the latest legal situation and current Best Practice in the control of varroa.
- See the various varroacides, which are available and discuss their pros and cons.
- Learn about biotechnical (husbandry, non-chemical) methods of varroa control.
- Hear about the current situation in respect of the Asian Hornet, how to detect it and how to report it.
- This is an opportunity to quiz the Bee Inspectors and to network with beekeepers from all over the County.

Further details and booking options may be found on the KSRC website: [www.ksrcbees.org.uk](http://www.ksrcbees.org.uk)

Bob Smith

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## In July we have an extra outing on offer:



### A Visit to Chapel Down Winery

Sunday 22nd July 2018, at 11.00am.  
Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 7NG

Are you a wine buff? Do you know your Chardonnay from your Shiraz? Join us for a tour of the vineyard and processing rooms at Chapel Down Winery. Here we will learn about the history of English wine and how they produce, amongst others, their award-winning sparkling wine. The tour will be followed by the opportunity to taste a selection of wines - so brush up on your slurping skills!!!



Following the tour, which will take about an hour and a half, we can relax outdoors in their Herb garden - why not bring a picnic? Alternatively, if you prefer, you can book into the Swan Restaurant on site for lunch (please note that a separate booking is required). Nearby Tenterden also boasts a host of eateries to suit most tastes.

Following feedback from several of you - the most popular day for us to visit is Sunday 22nd July 2018, and the time will be 11.00am. Apologies to those who responded for whom this was not a day or time when you were available, but we went with when most people could make it.

If you would like to join us on this visit, the cost is £10 per person (non-refundable), partners & friends welcome. To book places please contact John Hendrie to pay and copy me in so that I can add you to the list. For bank transfers please contact one of us if you need bank details but if paying by cheque, John's address is 26 Coldharbour Lane, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9JT. In this case will you also let me know you are coming so that I can keep an accurate list.

Chapel Down Winery is at Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 7NG and their website is <https://www.chapeldown.com/>

I'm looking forward to the tour and I hope you are too. If there is anywhere else you think would make a good location for us to visit, please do let me know.

Jen

[jen.ferry@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:jen.ferry@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk)

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## Now here is something different!

### An MBKA Logo Competition

How creative are you? Could you design us a new logo? We have an old one but it's not suitable to convert into an image that we can use for our current branding of the association as we seek to reach out to new members.

We would like something that is new, simple and identifiable. It could then be used on lots of different media, such as polo shirts, certificates, publications etc. It can be multi-coloured but not complicated or fussy. We are looking to order some Royal Blue polo shirts and sweatshirts with 'Medway Beekeepers' on as at the top of the Newsletter - possibly in white and would like a logo to go alongside/under it. These will be for sale to members and we would like to be seen in them at the English Festival, Kent Show, the Honey Show & the Ploughing Match so that we are easily identifiable to the public.

If you would like to try your hand at this competition, please email me or send me your entry in any format by 25th March and the winner will be announced in April's Newsletter. The prize will be a polo shirt with your new logo! Anyone can enter and multiple entries are welcome.

Go on - give it a go!!! We could also use a suitable logo for the association Honey Jar Labels.

Jen Ferry (phone: 07990 581858)

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## **Beekeeper's Bazaar:**

The following items are available for sale:

1) After nearly 60 years of beekeeping David Hopper is planning to downsize on the number of hives he looks after. Consequently over the next few months he will be looking to dispose of a variety of WBC and National Hives and other equipment.

If you need any equipment please have a word with him, either at one of our meetings or you can phone him for further information on: 01634 280622.

2) Dickie Andrews has the following equipment for sale. Any reasonable offer will be accepted.

20-frame extractor, 6ft long uncapping tray and equipment, Dadant lifts and supers.

If you are interested in any of the above equipment contact Dickie on: 01634 252892

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## **We have a New Apiary Manager!**

Mark Ballard has courageously taken over the task of managing and co-ordinating the work of the apiary. Here are his initial thoughts about the task for the coming year.

I am going to update the stock record and then draw up a list of items we will need.

We have some elderly WBC hives that need a bit of renovation - sanding and painting.

National brood boxes and supers that need scorching and cleaning. Any volunteers would be most welcome.

Currently we have nationals on site, but I think that there ought to be at least one active WBC. We are hoping to have at least three active Nationals and two active WBC's a total of five colonies in all.

There is an apiary clear up on Saturday 3rd. March and volunteers are needed with forks, rakes, loppers, shears etc. Hopefully we will be able to have a bonfire and get rid of the damaged fence panels and the debris in the compost bin.

I hope that we can have site clean ups and gardening days at least every 2 months.

The pond also needs a little attention - the existing liner looks a bit suspect. It would be a pity to lose it.

Hope to see some of you at the clear up day.

Mark Ballard

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## **MBKA Introductory Beekeeping Course Starting 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018**

This will be a 6-week course, plus practical sessions, for those interested in keeping bees. For more information contact The Secretary at: [sjane.stunell@gmail.com](mailto:sjane.stunell@gmail.com) for details.

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### **Swarm Collection Service 2018: We need your help!**

As you will know, last year the Council pulled out of our long standing co-operation regarding the collection of swarms within the Medway Area. So, we as an Association decided to go it alone, in a year, which proved to be challenging, to say the least.

Unfortunately due to the small number of personnel collecting honeybee swarms the workload was at times excessive. So this year we are changing back to our 'old system' model. Using a central "Swarm Phone". Only this number will be given out on our website and collectors will be allocated to individual 'Medway Postcode Areas'.

The model will work as follows:

The swarm phone holder will man the phone for a week, he or she collects the calls and passes them out to people willing to take swarms and to deal with other issues, e.g. Bumbles and Wasps. The Swarm Collectors will be allocated to Medway Postcode Areas in order to keep travelling to a minimum.

Collectors may claim expenses from the householder for making a visit and responding to a call. It is suggested that collectors base the cost on their mileage with a maximum charge of £20. A receipt must be given to the householder for any expenses paid. When taking swarms we will follow the BBKA guidelines, the details are on the MBKA website.

However, a system, which is going to prove a success, ultimately requires manpower. We need to greatly increase the number of people who are willing to collect swarms within their area and people willing to accept some of the swarms that have been collected.

The more we have the less of a burden it will be on everyone.

If you are able to help with this vital task please contact John Chapman email: [john.chapman@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:john.chapman@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk)

Please help us make this work for the benefit of both ourselves, and the residents of Medway.

Thanking you in anticipation  
John Chapman (Chairman)

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### **Spring Meetings:**

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

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## **MBKA on Social Media:**

If you would like to join us on Facebook please go to:  
[www.fb.com/medwaybka](http://www.fb.com/medwaybka) and click 'like'.

We also have an **instagram** page share your pictures and thoughts **@medwaybka**.

Sonia Belsey

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## **And Finally:**

Whether you are old or new members, if you have any news, ideas, amusing stories or comments 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  
[john.chapman@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:john.chapman@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk)

### **Newsletter and Website Enquiries**

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