

1923 - 2017



# MBKA

Medway  
Beekeepers  
Association

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



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## Newsletter April 2017

The new season is now in full swing, keep checking for early signs of congestion and don't forget to put on those supers when necessary.

### **Past Event:**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

### **Alien Invaders – Small Hive Beetle and The Asian Hornet**

Around 20 members turn out to listen to Kay Wreford talk about, first, the Small Hive Beetle and secondly the Asian Hornet. Surprisingly she thought that the beetle posed the greater threat. Having described the main features of the little critter and its life cycle she put up some slides of the absolute devastation that this pest can create in a honeybee hive. They will eat or destroy anything on the comb and leave a stinking mess that smells like rotting oranges.

She then spoke of the problems in Italy and how the authorities have responded. They worked hard to contain the initial outbreak only to find another the following spring. The saddest fact was that following a period without a second appearance when it did reoccur it was discovered that the situation had been created by a non-licensed beekeeper, illegally moving bees out of the exclusion zone! In Italy it is the law that all beekeepers are registered.

The control measures for Small Hive Beetle in Italy are draconian and involve burning every hive in the affected apiary, spraying insecticide on the ground surrounding the hives and ploughing it up. A 13K radius exclusion zone is set up within which no bees or hive products may be moved.

Kay then went on to talk about The Asian Hornet. She described its characteristics, life cycle and feeding habits and how the hawking habit of this hornet when stalking honeybees affects the colony. You need very strong healthy colonies to resist a determined attack by this pest. The one positive issue raised was the fact that all of the hornets found across Europe have the same parentage. This means that their gene pool must be very limited and this gives cause for hope that in the future they may succumb to the many problems associated with inbreeding.

Finally Kay talked about how we should all monitor for each of these pests using our own observations, using traps and by making sure that all of our colonies are registered on 'BeeBase' with up to date information.

This is a subject that I am sure will be visited time and again in the future and we thank Kay for her time and presentation on this occasion.

Paul Lawrence

## Next Indoor-Meeting:

29th April 2017

### Preparing for The Winter and More

2 – 5pm Wainscott Community Hall

16-18 Holly Road, Wainscott, ME2 4LG

## Other Events:

# The BBKA On-Show



Friday 7 and Saturday 8 April  
In the Regional Food Academy (RFA) Foyer

- ◆ Come and meet your Trustees
- ◆ Talk with the BBKA office staff
- ◆ Membership Enquiries
- ◆ Insurance Queries
- ◆ Exam Board Questions

**Learn about the new BBKA assessments:  
Honey Bee Health and Hygiene  
and Bee Breeding**

*Special Show Offers and New Publications*

### BBKA News Special Editions

<b><i>In the apiary</i></b>	Suitable for new beekeepers - £3 (shop £4)
<b><i>Honey Bee Anatomy</i></b>	For bee 'anatomists' and those taking Module 5 - £3 (shop £4)
<b><i>General Husbandry</i></b>	76 pages covers all aspects of beekeeping and for those taking the General Husbandry assessment £5 (shop £7)
<b><i>Course in a Case</i></b>	White, yellow, red & blue – on a USB stick £6 (shop £8)
<b><i>Liquid Gold DVD</i></b>	The story of bees and honey also suitable for non-beekeepers £6 (shop £7)
<b><i>The BBKA Guide to Beekeeping</i></b>	2nd edition £12 (shop £15) or 10 for £100 collected
<b><i>The BBKA Year Book</i></b>	– and other offers only from the BBKA stand

*Late Trade Show booking – Flow Hive – giving a lecture in the RFA  
at 5.00PM Saturday 8 April*

**Make your visit to Harper Adams complete – don't miss  
the BBKA Stand in the RFA Foyer**

## 22nd 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 22nd 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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### Kimber's Corner:



Now spring seems to have finally arrived its just great to watch my bees flying every day. They are collecting pollen like crazy and this is a good sign that all is well. It has just amazed me how well they have survived, through the cold winter and having an open mesh floor as well! Having checked my hive weight constantly I noticed it's getting lighter by the week and at my last weekly weighing the hive was 6Kg lighter than when I started in September.

I have been feeding fondant for a couple of months now, March, so I have been informed, is supposed to be the problem month when bees can easily run out of food and starve, even though there appears to be an abundance of available food. Although the bees are still taking the fondant I am increasingly thinking that they need something more syrupy to encourage the queen to lay more brood. But I worry that if the weather changes for the worst over the next few weeks then the bees will not be able to get out and vent.

I couldn't resist a little peek under the crown board to see if everything is OK, however, I could only see some stores and some empty frames at the edges. On the positive side they did look very healthy and were very quiet and didn't mind my intrusion at all.

So I replaced the crown board and added some syrup in a feeder and what do you know, they loved it! I will need to keep monitoring both the feed and the weather and try not to worry too much! Hopefully I will be able to do a full inspection soon, now that the warmer days seem to be here at last.

Good luck with your first inspection if you haven't done one already and hope every things is all good, speak to you all next month.

Peter

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## Some things never seem to change:

### Some thoughts from an experienced Beekeeper:

The sun is shining and the temperature is up! The bees are flying the temptation is there. Did you succumb? Opening the hive for the first time in the spring is very special. Your bees have managed to survive the winter and are doing what bees do best – getting on with growing the colony and probably it won't be long before they are thinking of swarming and here we go again.

I opened my colonies today. I went out to check the food stores, this is March and the bees are still at risk of starvation. I couldn't resist – just a quick peek and then I found myself going through very quickly to see what they had been doing!

They were looking good. Some are more vigorous than others but all surviving and flying for forage. The excitement of a new season of beekeeping never fades.

Sheila Stunell

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### Bee Chat:

The Bee Chat session for April will be Wednesday 26th at 7.30pm at The Pier, Lower Upnor, ME2 4XA. All welcome. Exams will be over, the season will be starting and there will be lots to chat about. Please call Jen Ferry for further details. 07990 581858.

See you there.  
Jen Ferry

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### Swarm Collection in the Medway Area

Collaboration between MBKA and Medway Council concerning honeybee swarm collections has unfortunately come to an end due to cost cutting. We are therefore in the process of devising our own Swarm Collection Service.

In order to do this the Committee would like to know of any members who would be prepared:

- To collect swarms.
- To man a mobile phone and take calls for a short time.
- To accept swarms and give them a home.

We are trying to provide cover in Medway postal areas and wish to place members in their own areas to avoid travelling and over use of personnel.

Please contact John Chapman if you are willing to help us in one or more of these regards. The more we have the less each member has to do.

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## And Finally a notice from the BBKA General Manager:

Dear Area Association Secretary

Following the resignation of our Treasurer Chris Lake announced at the January ADM due to pressure of his commercial work, the BBKA wishes to appoint a replacement Honorary Treasurer. We are looking for a suitably qualified and experienced finance person who is willing to support the development of the financial function of the BBKA

We would be extremely grateful if you could sound out your members to establish whether there are suitable applicants within your Association who might be persuaded to join the team. (If you wish to view the Job Description go to [www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/latest-news](http://www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/latest-news))

If suitable candidates are available, we will organise an interview with members of the Executive Committee to make the initial appointment: such appointment will be ratified at the next ADM as required by the BBKA constitution in a totally transparent and open process.

Applications of interest with a short CV should be e-mailed in the first instance please to Leigh Sidaway at [leighs@britishbeekeepers.com](mailto:leighs@britishbeekeepers.com).

There is no remuneration for this honorary role, but reasonable expenses incurred in fulfillment of the job function will be reimbursed by the BBKA.

For further information on what might be involved please contact me on:  
[howard.pool@bbka.org.uk](mailto:howard.pool@bbka.org.uk).

Many thanks  
Howard Pool,  
Chair of Finance

Regards  
Leigh Sidaway  
General Manager, BBKA

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The 2017 spring meetings program is on the website:

[www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/events](http://www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/events)

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Many thanks, to all of those who have contributed to this newsletter.  
Looking forward to seeing you at the winter and spring meetings, more will be posted soon.

If you have any news, ideas or comments about the website or for future newsletters, please get in touch with me, Paul Lawrence at the address shown below, we really do appreciate your input.

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## Contact Details:

### Chairman

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### Newsletter and Website Enquiries

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