

1923 - 2018



M BKA

Medway Beekeepers Association

Medway
Beekeepers
Association



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

Newsletter May 2018

Warmer weather is now here! Keep checking for space and any signs of problems. The swarm phone is now active so be warned!

Past Events:

Apiary Update:

Saturday 6th April Apiary clean up and Open Day:



This was the first Apiary clean up and Apiary Open Day of the New Year. Unfortunately only 3 members turned up for the “clean up”. Paul spent the morning cutting the grass - not quite Wimbledon. Sheila tidied up the Apiary, especially the area around the compost bin, and kept us going with refreshments and bacon rolls. Mark tidied up the pond surround by adding a wooden coping. It now looks very smart. We also had a bonfire and burnt all the dry vegetation cut down last year. All in all, a good mornings work.

Most of the pond plants are springing into life and the bees are enjoying landing on the plants to drink. Frogs have spawned in the pond and hundreds of tadpoles are hatching. These will provide plenty of food for the dragonfly nymphs and the newts.

The Open Apiary Day started at 2pm and initially only a couple of members arrived. However, by 3pm we had 10 members together with Bob, Sheila and Mark.

Bob and Mark examined the hives, members were encouraged to handle the frames and Bob explained what was happening on each frame. Unfortunately, we now only have 2 hives at the Apiary, hive number 3 died out earlier in the year.

Hive number 1 consists of a 14 x 12 national brood box with a super above. Some of the foundation in the brood box had not been drawn out. So the super was removed to encourage the bees to draw out the comb in the brood box.

Hive number 2 consists of a national deep brood with a super above. The queen and bees were all in the super. It was decided to reverse the boxes. The super was placed onto a new clean floor and the brood box restricted to 5 frames by the use of a dummy board over the super frames in which the queen was laying. This should encourage the queen to go up and lay in the brood box.

The excellent cake and tea rounded off a very useful and enjoyable afternoon.

Mark Ballard

21st April 2018 English Festival

Venue: Riverside Country Park, Rainham



Our thanks go to the 9 members who helped set up and run our stall at the very successful English Festival held at the Riverside Country Park. The weather was very kind to us. A lovely sunny day we had no problems rolling wax candles this year. The footfall was at least twice what it was last year. The sun really brought people out.



We were set up by 10.30am the event lasted from 11am to 5.30pm a long but enjoyable day.

Honey and wax sales were slow to start but picked up to a steady flow by midday, we took just over £450, which was up on last year. At the end of the day there were very few jars left to pack away.

Candle rolling was the usual steady stream and lasted all day. Such was the demand that we actually ran out of pre-waxed wick and had to call it a day at around 4pm. Candle rolling took just over £190 well up on last year.



We also gathered quite a few interested people for next year's Introductory Course and answered a large number of the usual questions about bees, beekeeping and our Association. People were genuinely interested in the plight of the bees, particularly following the weather events of the past month or so. In all a great day for us, and the bees!

Our thanks go to Medway Council and their staff for all of their efforts on this one-day event.



Paul Lawrence

Don't Forget:

Saturday 28th April 2018

A Talk by Celia Rudland – Spring Flowers for Colony Health

Celia is a member of East Surrey Bees and a very interesting speaker.

Time: 2pm to 5pm

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

May's Events and Meetings:

**Tuesday 1st May 2018 (starting date – 6 weeks plus practical sessions)
MBKA Introductory Beekeeping Course**

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

This course is now full. So good luck to all 24 of you! We hope that you enjoy it.

Saturday 5th May 2018

MBKA Apiary Open Day

2 – 4pm Association Apiary Site

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

Friday 11th May 2018

BBKA Basic Assessment Course (Starting Date – 2 week course)

Time: 7.30pm

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

If you would like to be included in this group, please let Jen know very soon, **applications** need to be in **by early May**.

Bob Smith

Education Officer

Wednesday 23rd May 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.

Thursday 24th May 2018

Outdoor Meeting – Bob Smith's apiary

Time: 5pm onwards, (evening meeting)

Venue: Berry Court Wood, Lodge Hill Lane, Chattenden. Rochester, Kent

(OS Grid Ref:TQ754738)

Directions to the Apiary Site:

This isolated site is on SSSI land, just to the North of the now disused Lodge Hill Camp site of the MoD. Access is off Four Elms Hill, into Chattenden Lane and through the housing estate (once barracks). Essentially, you need to just keep going until the road finishes; the last section is rough single track. The site is on the left, through a five-bar gate. Please park at the sides of the entrance drive. The site is also the home of Bridge Woods Field Archery Club (BWFAC); their clubhouse can be seen from the road and tells you that you are in the right place.

The Top Bar Competition:

For fun we are going to run a competition to see which of us can produce the best super frame but you don't get the luxury of choosing which of your frames look best for this competition.

You should receive very soon a **signed top bar** which you can make up into a super frame and put in one of your hives. At the end of the season, you present that frame at the **Autumn Fair** and whoever has managed to get their bees to produce the best frame will be declared the winner!!!

Let the contest begin!

Jen Ferry

Welcome to New Members:

Since the last newsletter the following have joined the Association:

Gary Wayte, Dipak Wadher, Trevor Awcock, Marilyn Reeves and Joseph Brechin.

From all at MBKA, a big welcome to you all!

Future Events:



A Visit to Chapel Down Winery

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

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 Ferry

jen.ferry@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

Education and Training Update:

The final **Winter Studies** group meeting was in early April; I feel sure that the "Improvers" who attended will derive benefit from the 10 sessions during the coming season. The secondary objective of the course was to provide opportunities for an enlarged team of tutors to practice on real beekeepers! This gives us extra flexibility and continuity in being able to provide education and training into the future.

The current plan is that the next Winter Studies course will work to the BBKA Module 2 syllabus, "Honey Bee Products & Forage", enabling those so inclined to sit that examination in March 2019. If this is of interest to you, please let me know.

Our 2018 beginner's course – "**An Introduction to Beekeeping**" will run for 6 weeks on Tuesday evenings, starting 1st May. This is now fully subscribed with 24 keen new entrants. We have started to take names for 2019.

The course runs until early June and we are very keen that graduates of the course continue to receive support from experienced beekeepers in the Association. They will of course be able to participate in City Way apiary sessions and other apiary visits during the summer but some of the 24 will have bees and will need advice on apiary siting and establishing their bees and their regular inspection. What we need are members who would be prepared to help one or two local newbies to get started – **we need mentors**. This shouldn't be an onerous job, simply being someone that the new beekeeper can call for advice, someone to look at their apiary and advise on layout, hedges, etc. You don't need to have kept bees for decades! In fact, those of you with 2-3 years of experience may well be best placed to remember the initial problems and solutions! Please, please – help our new members to get started, offer to be a mentor. Tony Edwards has agreed to co-ordinate this really important

aspect of our associations support; please contact him if you can indeed help or would like to talk it through.

Around half a dozen members have applied to take the BBKA **Basic Assessment**, we will be running a pair of sessions for those who meet the entry criteria on 11th & 18th May, there will also be an apiary session as weather permits. If you would like to be included in this group, please let Jen know very soon, applications need to be in by early May.

It has been a busy month for the small sub-group driving the educational agenda; they have been working hard to provide opportunities for you and for new recruits but we can't do it all – please help if you can by mentoring a graduate of the Introductory Course.

WANTED – use of an apiary for Basic Assessments

We need to identify an apiary or apiaries for the two assessment sessions, on Saturday 9th June and Saturday 23rd June. A suitable apiary would be one not known to the candidates but containing 3 or 4 queen-right colonies in single brood boxes, with preferably one super. There can be some flexibility around this. As the Assessor will be there for most of the day, there need to be suitable facilities, somewhere to park a car and somewhere bee-proof but close to the apiary where the oral part of the assessment can be conducted.

Please, if you think you might be able to offer your apiary for this important work, let me, or Jen know.

Bob Smith

Swarm Collection Service 2018: We still need your help!

The Swarm Phone is now live but we still need helpers.

If you are able to help with this vital task please contact John Chapman email:
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)

News ALERT from DEFRA:

An Asian Hornet has been identified in Lancashire. If you are not already aware of this worrying news use the link below to learn more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-identified-in-lancashire>



Would you like to purchase an MBKA Polo or Sweatshirt?

Both are available from Jen Ferry: email jen.ferry@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

Polo shirts: £14.40, Sweatshirts: £16.20, please quote size required (all common sizes available).

As you can see, the advertising budget is a little limited!

A report from Ashford Beekeepers:

Please be aware! There has been a recent increase in the number of thefts of beehives and colonies. One of our members has had two double-brood colonies and a nucleus stolen from the Hollingbourne area. They were sited in a field with no public access and could not be seen from the road. In addition the boxes and frames were marked and some had trackers fitted. These must have been interfered with.

The theft must have been planned, and carried out by someone with knowledge of how to move hives.

Please don't buy bees of dubious provenance or "**off the back of a lorry**".

If you keep bees at an out-apiary the general advice is to site your bees somewhere secure, out of view of the public and mark your equipment in case it is recovered. One suggestion is to mark your equipment with your BBKA number, which is unique to you.

Ashford Beekeepers

A message from Margaret Wilson, Vice Chair BBKA:

To view Margaret's letter: **Bee Positive – April 2018** Click on the link below:

<http://www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Bee-Positive---April-2018.pdf>

Or visit www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk and go to Latest News.

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

MBKA on Social Media:

If you would like to join us on Facebook please go to: www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk and click on the Facebook or Instagram Icon.

Sonia Belsey

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
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Newsletter and Website Enquiries

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