

1923 - 2018



# M KA

## Medway Beekeepers Association

Medway  
Beekeepers  
Association



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

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## Newsletter July 2018

Phew! The weather has finally picked up and some have even started to take off some honey. Keep checking for signs of congestion and be aware of wasps and continue to set traps where necessary.

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### Past Events:

**Thursday 24th May 2018**

**Outdoor Meeting – Bob Smith's apiary**



This was our first attempt at a mid-week evening meeting. We met at 5pm and it was a worthwhile experience as 14 members turned out on a fine spring evening.

The apiary is situated in a glade on the edge of Berry Court Wood in Chattenden. Michel Ryan owns the land and Bob Smith has 2 colonies there, both housed in WBCs. They are both on 14" X 12" deep frames and he is running them as a double brood. This is not a method for the less tall as there

could be some very high colonies by the end of the season! The bees were very well tempered as Bob did his demonstration. Michel is also keeping bees here with Anthony Makowski. They have 2 new colonies, which had been on site for a week, however the bees seemed to like their new surroundings and were building up nicely. Michel opened his bees and with Bob described what was going on in each colony. We all had a slightly different but thoroughly enjoyable time. Our thanks go to Bob and Michel for allowing us to visit this lovely site.

John Chapman

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**Saturday 16th June 2018**

**Outdoor Meeting**

**John and Roma Potter's Apiary**



Spectacular views of the Kent Weald and a big sky greeted the small group of members who attended John's apiary 'Wayside', at the top of Hunton Hill, Coxheath. The elevated site always brings breezes and the first challenge of the day was to find somewhere that the kettle could be boiled!

Iron Age earthworks are recorded at Wayside; our history starts about 40 years ago with construction beginning on what would become Wayside Light Railway. The beautifully established gardens show the results of a practised hand over many years.

The site straddles Amesbury Road; the tracks are on one side and on the other are woodland and a wildflower meadow, which was created between 2015-17. These habitats undergo maintenance level management to encourage wildlife and flora that include badgers, bats, solitary bees and bluebells. In its' first year, the meadow hosted a stunning array of wildflowers and many varieties of birds utilised the boxes provided in the woodland.

The apiary comprises three hives, which are now in their second season. They occupy a site at the edge of the woodland, fronted by a bank of brambles and backed by trees to mitigate those breezes.

They are mounted on pole stands to defeat predation by wildlife and to prevent a build up of drifting autumn leaves in the entrances. The adjacent meadow, surrounding orchards and hedgerows, as well as the gardens of Coxheath offer a wide range of forage over a long period of time. Incoming pollen has been seen to span the colour range.

All three hives were opened during the inspection. The smaller, weaker colony; a swarm collected from a nearby owl box, only contained a handful of bees. Plenty of eggs, larvae and brood were found on 3-4 frames. 2 sealed brood frames were introduced from a stronger hive to give them a leg up. However the queen remained elusive.

One of the larger hives contained 2 supers well on the way to being filled. They were on brood and a half, only the top half was inspected. All was found to be well with only a few drone cells and no queen cells seen.

The third hive had supers, which were ready for extraction. The same healthy picture was detected here with, as in the last hive, no queen making her appearance in the brood and a half. Varroa also seemed to be at bay in all hives.

The experience level of the members present spanned keen, proficient beginners, to those with decades of beekeeping experience. We had an enjoyable few hours in a beautiful spot with copious tea and homemade cake to follow.

Our thanks must be given, to Mr and Mrs Martin for kindly allowing the visit and extending their hospitality to those members who attended and assisted with the inspections.

Roma Potter

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## July's Events and Meetings:



**6th-8th July 2018**  
**Kent County Show**

**6th July 2018**  
**Kent Bees and Honey Show**

6, 7, 8 JULY 2018

Venue: The Kent Agricultural Showground, Detling

If you wish to exhibit please remember that entry forms with **S.A.E.** must reach the Show Secretary by the **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018.** (See June's newsletter for an entry form)

Can you help steward at the show? Contact Bob Smith: phone **07714213738** or email [bsmith12@ntlworld.com](mailto:bsmith12@ntlworld.com)

John Chapman

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## Saturday 7th July 2018 MBKA Apiary Open Day

Time: 2 – 4pm Association Apiary Site

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

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## Saturday 14th July 2018 Outdoor Meeting

Time: 2 – 4pm Association Apiary Site

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

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## Sunday 22nd July 2018, at 11.00am A Visit to Chapel Down Winery

Time: 11am onwards.

Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 7NG

**Please note:** You need to have pre-booked this event.

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## Wednesday 25th July 2018 Bee Chat

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

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

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## Welcome to New Members:

**Since the last newsletter the following have joined the Association:**

Jennifer Warnette, Karl Bates, Stuart Bates, Jay Kent, Charlene Malone, Kevin Purves and Christopher Hayes.

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

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## An Education Update:

Our 2018 beginner's course – “**An Introduction to Beekeeping**” finished on 5<sup>th</sup> June with 24 beekeepers and potential beekeepers completing the course. Further support in the form of mentors and email/telephone advice are being provided; this is an invaluable resource for new beekeepers and we hope further members may come forward to help in future years. Those first years are crucial – please help if you can.

I need to thank the whole of the education team – particularly Jen and Mark for teaching support, Tony for arranging the on-going mentoring and to Sheila for managing the essential admin. We need to review the course materials but essentially we have a framework for 2019 and several members who are able to deliver it – future-proofing!

During May and June we also ran preparatory sessions for the **BBKA Basic Assessment** and 8 members undertook the assessment; we await their results.

Preliminary work is being done on the 2018-19 Winter Studies, which will cover all aspects of the BBKA Module 2 syllabus – Honey Bee Products and Forage. Anyone who might be interested to join this study group should let one of the education team know; provisionally

the 10 sessions will be on alternate Monday evenings starting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, with a break over Christmas and the New Year. We will tackle the whole of the Module 2 Syllabus (available to view from the BBKA website). There is however no requirement to sit the examination, just a desire to know more about honey, pollen and foraging; for those who would like to take the exam, we will be finished in time for the examination date of 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

Bob Smith

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## Future Events:

### 6th-9th September 2018

#### The Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) Conference

Venue: The Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

BIBBA will be holding it's conference on the date shown above, all beekeepers are welcome. The programme contains a wide variety of topics, with three simultaneous lectures, together with seminars and workshops. There is something for everyone, whatever their interest or experience. The three lecture streams are themed as follows:

- **"Bee Improvement"**: Queen rearing, bee breeding, genetics, queen mating, mini-nucs and their management, overwintering queens, etc.
- **"General beekeeping"**: Management techniques, treatment free beekeeping, overwintering nucs, comb honey, marketing, bee communication, etc.
- **"Beginner and beyond"**: Forage and feeding, wintering, swarming, bee space, nutrition, mystery of mating, colony cycle, simple management techniques, colony health, etc.

There are over 50 presentations from more than 30 top presenters, many having over 30 years beekeeping experience, some well over 50, so they are telling participants what the bees have told them, not something straight out of books. Of particular interest to the newer beekeeper is stream 3, above. The whole three days in this stream will be at a level that can help you understand and care for your bees.

There are a variety of scientific and practical topics and this conference is about as good as you will get. You can attend on whichever days you wish and choose the presentation you want. There is also accommodation onsite as well as plenty in the locality. Check the programme, tell your local beekeeping friends and why not fill a car for an enjoyable break? Booking opens soon, with early bird discounts:

<https://bibba.com/event/bibba-conference-2018/>

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### 8th-9th September 2018

#### MBKA Honey Show

Time: 2-Day Event

Venue: Elm Court Garden Centre Gillingham ME7 3JQ

Please click on the link below to find the schedule for this year's honey show:

<http://www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/honey-show-schedule-2018.pdf>

Or go to [www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/latest-news](http://www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/latest-news) and look under '2018 Honey Show'.

So as you are harvesting your honey please think about entering. Its good fun and a great way of showing off the excellence of our honey and hive products.

There are twenty-one classes to choose from, including, cookery, craft and photography. So even if you haven't got any honey from your own bees yet you can still have a go.

Tex Garbutt from Hampshire is our judge this year. He is the deputy show steward at the National Honey Show and has a successful record of exhibiting both at the National Honey Show and Hampshire BKA's own show.

Nearer the time we will need offers of help to set up, from 3pm on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> for about an hour and to 'man' the sales table and to talk to visitors on the Saturday and Sunday. The show is open during garden centre opening hours, which are Saturday 9am – 5.30pm and Sunday from 10.30am until we start to clear up at about 4pm.

There will be the chance to sell honey and hive products the usual 10% to association funds will apply.

Any queries please get in touch especially if you need to buy a few 1lb jars or borrow a frame case. The association owns three frame cases that are available for loan on a first come first served basis.

Sue Chapman

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### **Association Apiary Hygiene:**

In line with good hygiene practice members are requested not to bring their own hive tools or smokers into the Apiary. They should ensure that their bee suites are regularly laundered and clean and wellington boots are clean. Clean gloves should also be worn.

There will be a boot wash container in the apiary to clean wellingtons.

The following equipment, for use only in the Apiary, is in the large shed in the Apiary:  
A Smoker / fuel / a gas torch / 2 hive tools in soda solution.

Please clean hive tools and gloves between inspections.

**No bee equipment is to be taken into the Apiary without my authority**

Mark Ballard  
Apiary Manager

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### **GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation**

Due to this new data protection legislation we have had to produce a new Privacy Policy, this is viewable on the website along with our new Website Terms and Conditions and Cookie Policy. We urge you to please read these at: [www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/latest-news](http://www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk/latest-news) or visit the home page: [www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk) and find them on the footer.

For those of you who do not have Internet access I have included a hard copy of the Privacy Policy with this newsletter.

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### **Summer Meetings:**

We look forward to seeing you at this summer'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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## **And Finally:**

If anyone has any news, ideas, amusing stories or comments or 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

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### Newsletter and Website Enquiries

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