

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 March 2020

When will it ever stop raining! March, is the worst month for losing bees through starvation so keep checking their stores for a little longer.

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!

Past Event:



Saturday 15th February 2020
MBKA Annual General Meeting
Time: 2 – 5pm

23 members braved Storm Denis to attend the AGM. The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for venturing out on such a wet day. The Minutes of the 2019 meeting were agreed as correct and accepted unanimously.

The Annual report produced some interesting updates particularly with regard to the New Apiary Site (Mark Ballard had laid out a number of photographs for us to browse over) and the New Member's Area Website.

Mark informed us that the new site was currently very muddy due to ground disturbance by the farmers very large tractors. However, once the weather improves, we are looking for a number of members to help with renovation work on the Pavilion and grounds. Sonia Belsey will be acting as Project Manager and Mark asked members to get in touch with her to offer help. Email: Sonia.belsey@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

Mark also appealed for help with inspecting the colonies at the City Way Apiary. He explained that you don't have to have years of experience, as you will always work alongside other more experienced beekeepers. The more we have the less of a burden this essential task will be on those who do volunteer. The Apiary have a number of experienced people who will attend inspections each week and we are looking for others to help support and provide cover as we cannot inspect bees on our own for safety reasons. Email: elaine.laight@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

Paul Lawrence outlined the reasons for having a secure Member's Area and explained how some members are experiencing difficulties logging into the site. However, help is at hand if you ask Paul for new details. Email: paul.lawrence@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk Everybody who has asked for help has immediately been able to log in without any difficulty. Members will need to log into the new site to take advantage of up to date information.

Sonia Belsey reported that the swarm phone went well this year. Peter Kimber asked if there was support for those who perhaps did not have the confidence to go out on their own. It was suggested that if a member wished to learn how to collect swarms then they could be

'buddied up' with a more experienced person. Mark also suggested that this could be the topic of an Apiary Meeting later in the year. Sonia again asked for volunteers to collect and house swarms and to let her know if anyone was interested

The Annual Report was accepted unanimously.

We then moved to the Treasurers Report. John Hendrie commented that our accounts and balances are in good shape. However, the New Apiary is going to incur higher costs than at present. We continue to make healthy profits on The English Festival and the Annual Supper. The extra courses that we now offer, which include Associate Membership are also a good source of income. After thanking John for his sterling work, the Report was accepted unanimously.

The Membership Subscriptions for 2021 are to remain at £30 for a full member, £10 for an Associate and £1 for a Junior. This was unanimously accepted.

Pip Blaxland is retiring from the role as our President and the Chairman warmly thanked him for his unstinting support over many years not only to the Association but towards himself personally. Both Pip and Daphne were presented with some fine whisky. Pip then gave a charming little speech as he thanked everyone for the mutual support he had benefitted from since he started to keep bees in 1947 at the age of just 18 years old. The Association members have always been helpful and friendly and for him that was the very essence of good beekeeping. Thank you Pip you are a most charming and gracious man and we all wish you well.

We then moved onto the election of officers and committee members:

John Hendrie accepted the nomination to be President and John Chapman accepted the Chairman's role for another year. John Hendrie then accepted the positions of Treasurer and Membership Secretary, with the understanding that this would be his last year in these roles. Sheila Stunell accepted the role of Secretary. All were elected unanimously.

The committee members remain the same. Mark Ballard Apiary Manager, Elaine Laight Apiary Co-ordinator, Bob Smith Education Officer, Paul Lawrence Newsletter and Website Manager, Sonia Belsey Swarm Phone Co-ordinator Tony Edwards Mentoring Co-ordinator. All were again elected unanimously.

Jen Ferry agreed to take on the role of Meetings Secretary but she will not be a member of the committee.

The Chairman then summed up and thanked John Hendrie and Sheila Stunell for their continued hard work. He also thanked the rest of the committee for their efforts over the past year. He then appealed for help with running our stall at events such as The English Festival which is our next big outside commitment. Tony then appealed for anyone who could be a 'Bee Buddy' to a new beekeeper. It is vital that we help and support our new beekeepers in their first crucial year. He asked that anyone who is able to help to please contact him.

The next AGM will be on Saturday 20th February 2021. The meeting closed at 3.50pm.

Remember this is merely my recollections of what happened at the AGM the official minutes will be circulated in due course.

Paul Lawrence

March's Events and Meetings:

Monday 2nd March 2020

Winter Study Group 10

Time: 7.00pm (7.30pm start)

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

Saturday 21st March 2019

BBKA Examination Day

Time: 9.00am until 1.00pm

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

Saturday 21st March 2019

Indoor Meeting – Mark Ballard and Tony Edwards – Starting the Year

Time: 2pm until 5pm

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

Monday 23rd March 2020

Introductory Course – Session 1

Time: 7.00 for 7.30pm

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

Wednesday 25th March 2020

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

Monday 30th March 2020

Introductory Course – Session 2

Time: 7.00 for 7.30pm

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

Reading Around:



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

This month: Bees are the subject of more research than most other creatures on the planet: yet, uncertainty remains a way of life for beekeepers. Can Jacob Bronowski help? Thomas Seeley, Kim Flottum, and Stuart of NHC, help out where they can and if you still feel you're getting nowhere, G K Chesterton is there to provide some consolation.

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

BBKA Basic Beekeeping Assessment 2020:

Are you interested in gaining the BBKA Basic Certificate?

Help will be available this year as in 2019, we will be running revision and at-the-hive coaching sessions for this important first step on the BBKA Exams sequence. If you have kept bees for a full season and would like to join this group, please let Jen know.

Email; jen.ferry@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk Details available on the [Member's Area](#).

Dates to be arranged depending on availability and weather but probably in May/June.



Swarm Phone 2020:

Swarms may be a distant thought at the moment especially with the weather we've been having but it won't be long until swarm season is upon us and with that comes the swarm phone!

For those of you that might not know we run a voluntary swarm collection service between April and September and for it to be as successful as previous years I'm after volunteers. There are a couple of roles which need covering:

Swarm Phone Holders: each week a different volunteer will 'man' the phone, dealing with reports of swarms and passing the details on to swarm collectors local to the swarm. You're not expected to go out to all the swarms the week you have the phone just co-ordinate the swarm collectors. You will also have to arrange the passing on of the phone to the next swarm phone holder usually on a Sunday. If you have any preference for weeks you wish to cover, then let me know, and I certainly won't stop you volunteering for more than one!

Swarm Collectors: these are people who are willing to go and collect swarms in their local area, again you're not expected to be available 24/7. If you can only do weekends or are going on holiday just make a note in your email along with what areas you can collect swarms in. You're also not expected to keep all the swarms you collect for those we need...

Swarm Adopters: we need a list of beekeepers willing to adopt the swarms into their apiaries. There's no guarantee we can supply you with one but if you are in need / want a swarm let me know. We ask that you be flexible and understand that swarm collectors may not be able to keep them for extended periods of time for you to collect

If anyone is interested in any of the above please email me at:

Sonia.belsey@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk. Please let me know the following: what role/s you'd like to do, a contact number, what area you can cover and any dates you would like and any dates that you are not available.

Also, we're aware that some people may want a little more experience in collecting swarms. Some may have chased a few around their apiaries, but going out to others can be daunting! If anyone has some experience but would like to build their confidence, let me know and I can add your details to the rota and ask if any swarm collectors go out near you that they try and contact you so you can join in! We are also hoping to run a swarm session at the apiary in the coming weeks. Look forward to hearing from you!

Sonia Belsey (Swam Phone Co-ordinator)

Bee Buddies:

As you will all know, very year we train a number of new beekeepers through our excellent Introduction Course. As a result, we need help in supporting them through their first year with their own bees. I am sure you remember your first year and how helpful it was to have someone to give you some help when needed. We are looking for beekeepers who are willing to offer a little help to these new recruits as '**Bee Buddies**'. You do not need to be highly experienced yourself just willing to allow someone to share your experiences and allow them to watch how you open a hive and deal with your bees. They also often need help in the first instance with issues like how to purchase equipment etc. No need to worry, just remember, there is always help if you need it from a more experienced beekeeper. All you need to do is ask for it! If you feel able to help with this really quite enjoyable task please contact Tony Edwards (Mentoring Co-ordinator).

Email: tony.edwards@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk or phone him on: 01634 852614

Apimondia 2019:

You will probably all be aware that an unacceptably large percentage of the honey exhibits submitted to the 2019 Apimondia Honey Show were disqualified for a range of reasons including adulteration, fraudulent labelling and residue analysis.

Apimondia have just published their position on this area, recognising that fraudulent practices undermine the whole of the honey market and the trust that consumers place in the product. We should recognise that these practices go on, but emphasise the value of local production, traceability and integrity in justifying the price we ask for a jar of proper, local honey.

Bob Smith

To download the Report please go to 'Latest News' at:
www.members.medwaybeekeepers.co.uk

Kent Beekeepers - Gravesend Branch:

A talk by Sam Day (Kent County Co-ordinator) – an update update on the Asian Hornet.

Gravesend Branch is hosting this talk on Tuesday March 24th from 7 - 9pm.

Venue: The National Trust Visitors Centre, Lodge Lane Cobham.

Anyone Member who wishes to attend would be most welcome. Drinks and biscuits will be available and as space is not vast an idea of numbers would be useful.

Please contact Lesley Fancote email: lesleyfancote@msn.com for more information and to confirm your attendance.

Website Update:

Some Members have experienced difficulties when logging into the Member's Area and when resetting passwords. The system had a glitch but a recent upgrade of the software seems to have cured it. Your login details are sent via the "Wordpress" software not from me, so if necessary check your junk mail for the email. However, please let me know of any difficulties you may have when using the system and I will reset your password manually.

Now that we have established our Member's Area, the Public Website will be undergoing changes to make it both more pertinent to non-members and easier for members to navigate to other areas, such as the Member's Area. Watch out for the latest updates.

Paul Lawrence (Website Manager)

Facebook:

Join our Facebook page for information, updates and events:

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

This Year's Meetings:

A full list of this year's meetings can be viewed by going to the Member's Website: [click here](#)

And Finally:

Many thanks to all who have contributed to the newsletter. Please remember if anyone has any news, ideas, amusing stories or comments or indeed suggestions about the websites 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

Newsletter and Website Enquiries

Paul Lawrence

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