

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 August 2020

Many members have at last started to take off some honey. But remember to keep checking for signs of congestion, be aware of wasps and continue to set traps where necessary

Updates on Covid-19 situation:

Latest News:

5th – 6th September 2020 MBKA Honey Show
Elmcourt Garden Centre

This event has now been cancelled.

The City Way Apiary Site is closed to all visitors until further notice. However, the bees are still being checked and managed by the Apiary Team on a weekly basis.

All Events and Meetings for 2020 are now cancelled:

Please visit the websites for further updates.



Notes from the Association's Apiary:

In spite of the good weather at the moment the weather earlier in the year was very variable and played a part in the low honey yield. From memory we started out with six colonies but over the past couple of months we have lost three of them.

We currently have:

Hive 1:

14 x 12 National, Q/E and 1 super.

Hive 2:

Standard National, Q/E and 2 supers
We have taken off about 25lbs of honey

Hive 5:

WBC with 14 x 12 brood, Q/E and 2 supers.
Again, we have taken off about 25lbs of honey

Hive 5 went queen-less a couple of weeks ago but has been re-queened and is now a fairly strong colony

The latest hive to be lost was hive 4. This hive has been struggling for some weeks. There was suspected EFB in the hive and the Regional Bee Inspector was called to inspect. No EFB was found, but sac brood and chronic bee paralysis virus was found. The colony never increased in size and eventually became queen-less. More sac brood was found and there were also laying workers. There was only a small quantity of drone brood. A decision was made to cull the colony. The hive was moved some distance away. All the bees were emptied out onto the grass, and all the affected frames and comb were destroyed.



Although we are still under Covid-19 rules several beginners have been given “hive inspection experience” at the Apiary paying care full attention to social distancing.

Because of the problems caused by Covid-19 we are still no nearer to moving into the new apiary (Higham and Mockbegger Cricket Club Pavilion) at Cliff Woods. The building has now been made secure and the vandalism that happened in the earlier part of this year has now appeared to have stopped. This may well be in part due to Covid-19 and lockdown. However, the school summer break is now with us and we hope that the children do not get too bored. Most of the occupants of the bungalows are looking forward to us moving in and are keeping an eye on the building. Also, the tenants of the reservoir who are now running an angling club are keeping an eye on it.

It is now anticipated that some of the work that needs doing to the Pavilion can be carried out during late Summer and Autumn (social distancing practiced) and a possible move in early Spring 2021.

Mark

Education:



The MBKA Education Team completed a 5-session “Introduction to Beekeeping” course in June, using the Zoom virtual meetings format. Back in January, with an oversubscribed course limited to 18 participants, we had intended to repeat the 2019 format of 3 introductory sessions to precede the summer months where they would be encouraged to visit the club apiary and to follow experienced beekeepers before returning to the classroom in the Autumn for further teaching sessions. Clearly, Covid-19 put an end to that plan but we were concerned that some on the course actually had bees already and were desperate for some guidance. Some experience with the Zoom videoconferencing platform led to a course being offered via that technology. So, with a reduced class size of 13, five two-hour sessions were delivered during June and it has been possible since the completion of that to provide “at the bees” experience to all involved. This activity demanded a considerable effort and thanks must go to Mark and Sheila particularly for their contributions.

With all non-essential activities on hold, no March Module papers, no Basic or General Husbandry Assessments during the summer, the club apiary closed other than to the inspections team and no obvious re-start date, the Education Team have been considering what might be offered to members. Other beekeeping associations have also been using Zoom and one idea we intend to copy is to arrange an evening session for 1- and 2-year beekeepers, graduates of the 2018 and 2019 Introductory courses. This will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 26th August and will provide an opportunity for early years beekeepers to share their successes and disasters! An invitation will be sent to those groups but any other

members in that experience category can also be included, please ask Sheila for the joining details.

We look forward to the time when the new Pavilion Apiary can be brought in to use and the educational opportunities that facility will offer. Having both classrooms and bees on site will form the basis of a really great resource for new and existing MBKA Members.

Bob Smith

Latest update concerning BBKA Exams and Modules:

The Exam Board has issued the following statement regarding the exams and assessments due to take place this Autumn. The notice will also appear on the website and social media and in the BBKA News.

'The global outbreak of COVID-19 has meant that we have had to limit socialising and gatherings, to help prevent the spread of this disease. Inevitably, this has had a huge impact on the BBKA exam system, that relies on candidates, assessors, and invigilators to meet in close proximity or travel some distance away from home.

Following the feedback from many associations and individuals on the matter, we have taken the difficult decision to cancel the BBKA assessments for the remaining part of 2020. These include Show Judge certificate in October as well as Module exams and Microscopy assessments in November.

The main concern of the Exam Board is the safety of all candidates, assessors and invigilators. While some associations have indicated that they may be able to facilitate the Module exams, others have advised against it. We want to offer equal opportunities to all members who wish to take the BBKA exams. With the current situation however, we do not feel this is achievable for all involved.

Candidates who have applied for assessments in 2020 will get free transfer for 2021, or get their fees refunded if they prefer. Due to the cancellations of the exams, the condition that candidates need to have taken all Modules within 12 years of the first module taken has now been removed.

We know how much value beekeepers put on the BBKA exam system. To support those who continue on their learning journey, we are exploring alternative ways to hold the Module exams and hope to have solution in place for the early part of 2021.'



Reading Around:



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

This month: Colin Butler is remembered for so much more than a little wire mesh cage. We look (yet again) at treatment-free beekeeping in the company of the Hudsons, Densley, Seeley, and Pritchard. Finally, Robert Pickard makes an appearance on the CABK Beekeepers' Question Time on Zoom, as well as his 287-word report on the state of the world today.

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

Press Release from: The National Honey Show



National Honey Show 2020

Due to concerns about holding such a large show under the cloud of Covid 19, this year's National Honey Show will now be a virtual event to which everyone is invited both in the UK and worldwide.

Whilst we will greatly miss seeing you all in person, as part of the National Honey Show community we hope you will enjoy our series of virtual workshops and lectures, with the opportunity to ask questions afterwards in real time. If you've never physically attended the show before, this will offer a taster for what will be on offer in addition to our usual display of honey, hive products and craft entries, next year and at subsequent shows into the future. The show runs across three days. **For this year, Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th October 2020. We are planning pre-recorded demonstration workshops and lectures with live questions and answers during the day and on-line social events in the evenings.** More timetable and programme details will be available shortly. Please visit our website for the latest information.

Bob Maurer, National Honey Show Committee Chair said "This year's National Honey Show is rising to the challenge of providing something different, which will more than fill the void, as the show will be sorely missed by our team and visitors. We want to bring you a flavour of the upbeat zest and excitement which characterises the show and entice new visitors to come along to the bigger and better show planned for 2021."

For further information please contact:

Bob Maurer chair@honeyshow.co.uk 07740 707500 or visit the National Honey Show website www.honeyshow.co.uk

A message from Margret Wilson, President, British Beekeepers' Association:

The work on the apiary at Stoneleigh started at the beginning of June and I believe it is going well, I would love to go and see how the design is developing, but I do not think that we will be having our meetings there just yet, certainly the 25th July EC meeting will be by Zoom again.

The apiary is used for education and training, so the bees are having a holiday this year, it will give them a chance to build up ready for any future plans we may have. Our BBKA News editor has been investigating how we can make savings on the magazine. Where the main cost is the postage and this seems to increase each year. The weight of the paper matters quite a lot and Sharron has found an alternative paper; it comes from Sweden

and it is a virgin fibre paper from a sustainable forestry. Every tree which is harvested is replaced by a further two to three trees; younger trees are better at neutralising Co2 than the older trees so that is good. The climate benefit last year was the equivalent of neutralising 800,000 cars driving around the world. The paper Sharron has found is produced by an organisation called SCA which is the largest private forest owner in Europe. The paper is not glossy, I have asked if the front cover could be glossed slightly to enhance its appearance and it is believed that they can do that. This paper will reduce the weight of the magazine which means the postage will reduce, at the same time helping the new trees planted in reducing the Co2 in the world. It also means that we can use paper envelopes which will again reduce the impact on the world and also reduced costs again. We should thank Sharon Blake for all her work on this and I do hope that you will approve the change this will result in. Certainly, the budget will look considerable better and just at the moment that is quite important too.

To close, the new question is 'Have you downloaded the Asian hornet app?'

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/questions-for-beekeepers>

Stay safe and look after each other.

Margaret Wilson

Beekeepers Bazaar:

Bob Smith has 6 boxes (of 72) one-pound honey jars with white plastic lids. They are available at £20 per box.

If any member is interested please contact Bob on: 07922 631106

Asian Hornet Update:



The BBKA electronic membership system now has an option to register whether you are able to participate in Asian Hornet Action Team activities. Like the swarm collector information please let John Hendrie know if you want to be on the list and he will add your details, at the same time it would be very useful if you would also let John Chapman know that you have registered an interest and tell

him what area you are willing to cover, Chatham, Gillingham, etc. Email John Hendrie at: bibba26@talktalk.net

Visit: www.nationalbeeunit.com for the latest updates.

Website Update:

Please let me know of any difficulties you may have when using the Member's Area and I will reset your password for you.

Information will be posted on both websites so please check both.

Paul Lawrence (Website Manager)

Facebook also carries up to date information.

Join our Facebook page for information, updates and events:

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

And Finally:

As usual, many thanks to all who have contributed to the newsletter at this difficult time. Please remember if anyone has any questions, queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either Paul Lawrence or John Chapman at the addresses shown below. But equally you can contact most members of the committee by going to the 'contact us' tab in the members area.

Contact Details:

Chairman

John Chapman
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Newsletter and Website Enquiries

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