

Est.1923



Medway  
Beekeepers  
Association

## Medway Beekeepers Association

Celebrating over 95 years of support for beekeeping  
and beekeepers in and around the Medway Towns



---

## Newsletter December 2020

**Please note that it is subscription renewal time!** Renewal reminders will be sent out during December and the form will be available soon on the Member's Area.

---



### A message from your Chairman:

This year has been challenging for all of us, what with the restrictions on "normal" life due to the pandemic and the usual vagaries of the British weather. But we, as beekeepers, have always risen to meet new challenges, and I feel sure that you will continue to do so in 2021.

Your committee has been trying hard to keep in touch with you and to offer a different range of on-line lectures. I hope that you have been enjoying them as much as Sue and I have. If you have not taken the opportunity of joining us, why not try joining for the December lecture and think about continuing with them into the New Year.

Finally, I want to wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year and a better season in 2021. I hope that you can get together with friends and family (if that is possible under the new set of rules) during the festive season. I look forward to getting back to meeting as many of you as possible during 2021 and hearing of your beekeeping activities.

Best wishes to you all for 2021 and keep safe.

**John Chapman.**

---



### A Past Zoom Presentation:

**8.00pm Wednesday 9 November  
2020**

**Norman Carreck**

**Global pandemics, bee imports and  
native bees**



There is only one pandemic on our mind just now and that is Covid-19. However, recent research confirms that global movement of bees has led to the spread of bee viruses. This is not a problem that we can solve with a lockdown – but there is growing evidence that imports of bees are hampering efforts to conserve native and local queens.

Norman is an extremely knowledgeable and well-connected bee research scientist. He is

moderator for the NDB exam and is also UK coordinator for a number of International projects, an editor of the IBRA Journal of Apicultural Research and hugely involved with the COLOSS BeeBook.

In this talk, Norman spent quite a lot of time explaining the methodology researchers have used over the years to establish how bees communicate with each other and so help their colony to efficiently collect nectar, pollen and propolis and even find a new home when required. He also explained how complex the dance is and how they even use it to explain the type of terrain that they must follow.

He spoke of Tom Seeley's work on how the "Super Organism" arrives at a consensus as to the best sources of food and particularly how they choose where to establish a new site during a swarm.

He spoke of the need that bees have for a well-balanced diet throughout the year and how important August is. Much of this work is used to inform local councils, farmers and environmental groups in the work and planning.

He also looked at the spread of bee viruses around the world and related this to human activity. Where beekeepers move bees to unfamiliar environments then viruses spread. He looked at the effects of buying in and importing queens. However, he has over time, concluded, that these imports are not necessarily better than our own queens, simply because they are often much better suited to the local conditions. His conclusion was that our own bees are probably best but with careful selection they could be even better!

This was a technical and interesting talk, delivered by someone who is an obvious expert in his field. Thanks to all those involved in bringing this to us.

**Paul Lawrence**

---

**The Next Zoom Presentations: More information is available on the websites.**

Members will receive personal invites and registration details for the following event soon:

---



**8.00pm Monday 14 December 2020**  
**Nicola Bradbear**

The work and philosophy of Bees for Development – values for a sustainable future

---

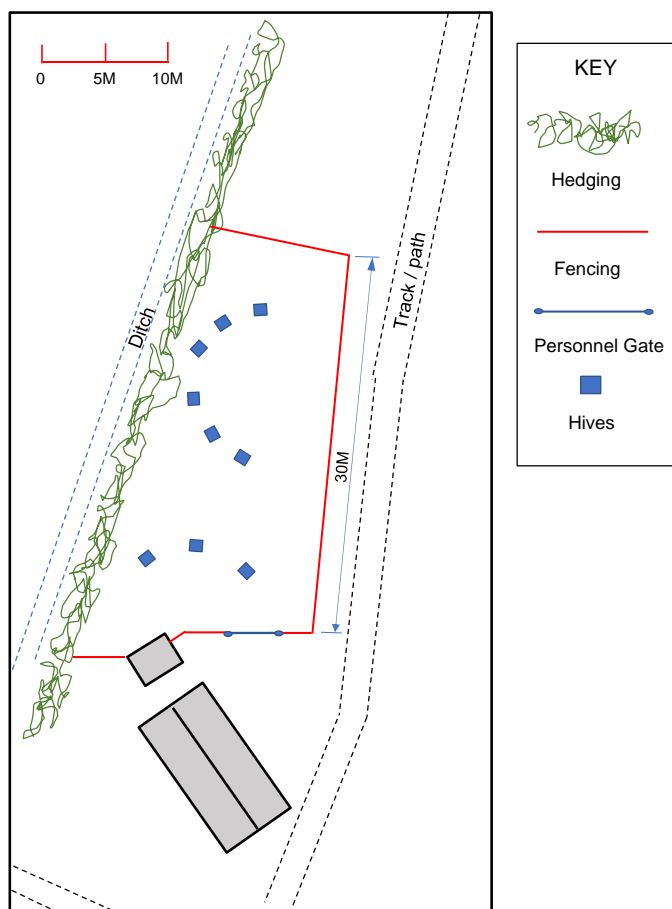
**Funding for the new Pavilion Apiary:**

The Committee is attempting to secure help in the funding for our new apiary from a number of sources. One such is the Ford Motor Company

However, in order to get any funding from Ford it is very helpful if an association member has been employed by Ford, past or present? If you could help support a funding application in this way please contact Tony Edwards email: [tony.ed@me.com](mailto:tony.ed@me.com)

---

## The new Pavilion Apiary:



Layout of Pavilion Apiary  
November 2020  
PGL



This is an update on the progress being made in moving our Association Apiary to the new site near Cliffe Woods. So far Mark Ballard has secured the main building with new locks and has boarded up the windows. He has also undertaken some exterior repairs as well.

The above sketch shows the direction that the committee's initial thoughts are going. We need a site which is secure, accessible and safe. The main building is the old Cricket Pavilion and has water and electricity already laid on. This building has a kitchen area, a meeting area, a fully tiled area which could be used for extraction etc., plus we have the bonus of toilets! The smaller building is a concrete garage which is large enough to provide storage for hive parts and equipment plus the lawn mower.

There is a track adjacent to the site which is used by walkers and farm vehicles and to the left is a drainage ditch. We need to plant hedging along the ditch line to increase security and provide a wind break for the apiary. We are presently attempting to find a supplier of free hedging plants for this area. The red lines indicate probable lines of fencing which needs to be erected along with suitable screening. There will need to be an access gate into the apiary area. We intend to use as much of the fencing etc from the City Way site.

The Committee is trying to access lottery funding and also funding from local businesses.

There is still much to do but at the moment, Covid19 and the weather are both conspiring against us. When we are better able in the spring, working parties will be set up to help with the various tasks. If you wish to make comment or add any suggestions to the above please feel free to comment to Paul or John at the addresses at the end of this newsletter or to Mark Ballard, email: [apiary@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:apiary@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk)

## Education:



### A message from the BBKA Education Team:

Hi Everyone

Finally, I know you have been wondering what is going to happen with the Module Exams next year. We are currently in the second wave of Covid and another National lockdown. The experts are not able to say when things might improve but the main body of opinion is that this may not be until a vaccine is available. The Exam Board took the hard decision to cancel all exams and assessments in 2019.

Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing what the situation will be next March so the Exam Board has been looking at an alternative solution. Even before Covid-19 the board had been considering the use of online facilities to aid with the delivery of exams. For various reasons, not least suitability and cost this was not a priority but events as well as the rapid development of the on-line invigilation as service have opened opportunities for us to consider an invigilation system which will allow candidates to sit the exam in their own home.

The education sector as a whole has had to embrace this technology and it particularly suits our geographically spread cohort. We recognise that we will have candidates who do not have the confidence or computer skills for online exams and we will continue, when possible, to offer the handwritten option albeit at a reduced number of venues.

The Board has investigated a number of companies and found the one to offer a suitable service for our needs is called **Inspira**. Extensive research and trials by the Board resulted in the decision to offer the Module exams online in the Spring. This decision and the financial support needed has been approved by the Trustees.

In order to do this successfully, a number of changes will be needed in this first year. I will summarise the main factors and hopefully answer your most immediate questions

- The exam papers will not change, they will have the same layout and type of questions
- **Only** online module exams will be available in the Spring 2021. We hope to offer some hand-written opportunities in the Autumn but this will depend on the Covid situation.
- We will be sending you the list of transferred module exam entries for your Area and asking you to contact your candidates to find out if they wish to take online modules. If they do not feel able to cope online, their entry will be transferred to November 2021.
- Candidates will be allowed to sit a maximum of **2** modules.
- **The closing dates for new entries will be January 31<sup>st</sup> 2021.** To allow more time for setting up and training.
- **The date for the exams will move to 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> April 2021** - probably 24<sup>th</sup> April but at this stage we are not ruling out two days. Again, this is to allow more time for the preparation.
- Candidates and invigilators will receive training on the system and computer access will be checked beforehand.
- Invigilators for the online modules will be arranged centrally. Please let us know if you are interested in being considered.

We will be keeping you up to date on developments.

Regards

Val and Nicky

## **Beekeeper's Bazaar:**

### **Association Honey for Sale:**

We have one lot of 18 lbs in a 30lb honey bucket @ £3 per lb (£54). Exchange the honey bucket if possible on pick up. Please contact Mark Ballard  
email: [apiary@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:apiary@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk)

### **Instructions for making a 'Varroa Floor':**

Pat Clare is undertaking the mammoth task of clearing out years of beekeeping paraphernalia from Terry's long life of beekeeping. She has come across everything from books to queen bee insemination kits!!

She has asked me to put in the newsletter instructions for making varroa floors for Langstroth, Smith and National Hives. Maybe a beginner might be interested?

If you are interested in these documents please contact Pat phone: **01634 233748**

She will keep them until the new year before disposing of them.

---

## **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 and

I hope that you all are able to spend a happy Christmas with friends and family and let us hope that 2021 will be a much easier year for us all.

## **Contact Details:**

### **Chairman**

John Chapman  
[john.chapman@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:john.chapman@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk)

### **Newsletter and Website Enquiries**

Paul Lawrence  
[paul.lawrence@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:paul.lawrence@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk)