

The Next Meeting : 3rd January

The first meeting of the New Year! Time to really think about the coming season - are you hoping for increase or perhaps you are aiming to reduce the number of hives after a bumper year in 2003. Another summer like that one would be just fine for the bees, though I suspect Southern Water would have different opinion! In any case, it's useful to have a plan so that, as opportunities arise, one can take advantage.

One thing is certain, all of us need to give some thought to the ways in which we will tackle varroa in the next few years - resistant mites are likely to be with us soon and Apistan or Bayvarol will no longer be useful treatments.

Our speaker this coming Saturday is Alan Byham, SE Regional Bee Inspector; we will be in the Presentation Suite at the Civic Centre, starting at 3pm. Alan will be talking about several aspects of bee health, including EFB, AFB, resistant varroa and the likely ways we may be able to keep it in check. Alan will be returning later in the year as part of the IPM Workshop planned for 17th April.

This will make an ideal primer for a theme that seems likely to dominate our thinking over the coming months - just what will we do when resistant varroa arrives in Kent?

If anyone needs directions, please give me a call.

Bob Smith

☎ 01634 721063

✉ robert_787@hotmail.com

... looking forward The A.G.M.

The Medway and County Kent Beekeepers Association has its **Annual General Meeting**, in accordance with the Constitution, on Saturday 7th February at 3pm. All members are invited and indeed encouraged to attend.

Also starting on 7th February and running for 10 weeks until 1st May, is the 2004 **"Introductory Beekeeping"** course for anyone interested in beekeeping, including absolute beginners! The course will be run by Terry Clare and will follow the British Beekeepers Assn (BBKA) syllabus. The venue will be The Sunlight Centre, Gillingham and the cost for each session will be £2 which includes refreshments. There is no better way to get started; please give Terry a call for more details and to obtain a registration form - 01634 233748

2nd Annual Medway Beekeepers Meeting - 6th March. The Medway Association is again inviting beekeepers from all over Kent to our showcase lecture, this year given by Dr Juliet Osborne of Rothamsted Research. Juliet will be talking about her fascinating research into the ways bumble bees and honey bees make use of the forage they find within flying distance of their nests. Apart from the excellence of the lecture, we also aim to provide our visitors with a slap-up tea! Nearer the time, offers to make a few sandwiches or to bake a cake would be gratefully received - advance notice!!

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Workshop

I mentioned in the last flier that this event was being planned; Terry, John and I are the co-conspirators and it is our earnest wish that as many as possible of our members with bees, or intending to get bees, are able to take advantage of this full-day event. We aim to show methods of keeping bees that will allow them to co-exist with varroa, even the pyrethroid-resistant ones!

PLEASE - make a note in your 2004 diary - 17th April

Medway Beekeepers Association



The last meeting

The November meeting was an opportunity for all of those who, at some time or other have thought about making a living from beekeeping, an opportunity for them to hear at first hand the hard work involved.

Jean Mozley gave us the benefit of her hard-won experience, talking about several ways to make money from a range of bee-products, not just honey. She also talked about pollination contracts, marketing honey and shared several ways to save money with inexpensive alternatives to Thorne's kit.

I think the two dozen members who braved the "Dickens Christmas" parking mayhem took away ideas and inspiration.

Medway Beekeepers Association - Programme 2004

| Date | Type | Location | Event |
|---|---|-------------------------|---|
| Sat 3 rd January | Indoor | Civic Centre | S.E. Regional Bee Inspector Alan Byham will speak on the continuing fight against varroa |
| Sat 7 th February | AGM | Civic Centre | Annual General Meeting and election of Officers for 2004 |
| Sat 7 th February | Educational | Gillingham | Start of the "Introductory Beekeeping" course, until 1 st May; contact Terry Clare for details * |
| Sat 6 th March | 2 nd Annual Medway BKA Meeting | | Dr. Juliet Osborne of Rothamsted Research will be our Guest Speaker this year - don't miss it! |
| Sat 3 rd April | Assocn. Apiary | Rochester | Spring cleaning at the apiary site, get the bees ready for the season |
| Sat 17th April | Workshop | Cliffe | Full day Workshop on IPM, theory and practice - PLEASE keep this day free |
| Sat 24 th April | External event | Stoneleigh, Nr Coventry | BBKA Spring Convention : beekeeping bargains, lectures - well worth the trip |
| Sat 8 th May | Member's Apiary | Cliffe | Beekeeping Bring & Buy (1:30), followed (3:00) by Buckland Farm bees (Bob Smith) |
| 12 th - 14 th May | Bee Health | All over! | Bee Inspector visits, checking the health of our bees |
| Sat 22 nd May | Visit | Coldred, Nr Dover | Dover & District BKA invite us to their Association Apiary - a very pleasant site |
| Sat 5 th June | Member's Apiary | Istead Rise | A new venue - Richard Odell's apiary with both National and WBC hives |
| Sat 19 th June | Assocn. Apiary | Rochester | Mid-summer Apiary meeting, Dover BKA invited |
| Sun 27 th June | Public Event | Lower Rainham | Riverside Country Park - meet the local public and sell them beekeeping (and a pot of honey) |
| Sat 3 rd July | Member's Apiary | Rochester | A visit to Chairman Pip Blaxland's garden apiary |
| Fri-Sun 16-18 th July | Public Event | Detling Showground | Kent County Show <i>(note these confirmed dates are one week later than my original, draft dates)</i> |
| Sat 24 th July | Member's Apiary | Boughton Monchelsea | Another new venue - Mark Ballard will be our host |
| Sat 7 th August | Member's Apiary | Stockbury | Jane & Dave Morris invite us to their home apiary in rural Kent |
| <i>Sat 28th August</i> | Public Event | Venue tbc | Our Annual Honey Show |
| Sunday 5 th September | Public Event | Bromhey Farm, Cooling | RSPB Wildlife & Countryside Fair - an excellent affair in 2003, due to become a regular fixture |
| September | Assocn. Apiary | Rochester | Apiary (final date tbc) |
| <i>Sat 25th Sept</i> | Public Event | Venue tbc | Ploughing Match (tbc) |
| <i>Sat 2nd October</i> | Indoor | Civic Centre | Review of the 2004 season. |
| 21-23 rd October | External event | RAF Museum, Hendon | National Honey Show 2004 |
| Sat 6 th November | Indoor | Civic Centre | John Hendrie - the BBKA qualifications and examinations |
| <i>Sat 13th November</i> | Annual Dinner | Civic Centre | The Association's 81 st Annual Dinner and prize-giving ceremony |
| <i>Sat 4th December</i> | Indoor | Civic Centre | Topic tbc |

Dates in blue, italics - unconfirmed

* Terry Clare ☎ 01634 233748