

the Petersfield Beekeeper

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

EVENT	DATE/VENUE	FURTHER INFORMATION
OPENING DAY AND SOCIAL AT THE APIARY	10 April 2pm	It may or may not be too chilly to open the hives but there will be plenty to do and to talk about and lots of tea and cake.
Pollinator Day	7 May Petersfield Physic Garden 10-3:30	elizabeth.eve-leigh31@gmail.com
BBKA Spring Convention	8-10 April	BBKA Spring Convention 2022 British Beekeepers Association
West Sussex Beekeepers Auction	23 April Brinsbury Campus, Pulborough	Auction (westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)
Meon Valley Beekeepers Auction	7 May Greatham Village Hall	Meon Valley Beekeepers' Association – Auction 2022 Hampshire Beekeepers Association Meon Valley Beekeepers' Association – Auction 2022

Below are the dates of the summer shows that PDBKA are attending this year. Help from members is always needed at these events. Sharing your enthusiasm for bees and beekeeping with the public is very enjoyable. If you would like to volunteer, contact petersfieldapiary@gmail.com or the contact listed below.

SHOW	DATE	CONTACT
Fernhurst Revels	15 May	Brad, Hilary
Harting Festivities	3 June	Pippa
Bordon Fun Day	6 August	Martin
Hambledon Village Show	27 August	Hilary
Hampshire Country Sports Day	11 September 2022	Mel
Blackmoor Apple Day	22 October	Mel

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I would like to start my report by thanking three wonderful and long serving members of the Committee: Graham Rowden, Pippa Barker and Elizabeth Eveleigh who stepped down at the last AGM.

Graham, as many of our older members know, has been around for a long time, whilst recently serving as Chairman for the last 2 years, he was in this position before several years ago. He has always been very helpful, kind and supportive to members, new members taking up beekeeping and to the Petersfield Association. In fact, I remember Graham running various workshops and the one I recall was on honey extraction when he co-hosted a hilarious evening with Trevor Stubbs who sadly is no longer with us. Since the death of his wife a few years ago, Graham has been pursuing his skills away from beekeeping and become involved in charitable work in Africa, helping villages in Kenya with construction projects. However, when in the UK, Graham will help with teaching at the Apiary during the Summer.

Pippa was not a beekeeper when she joined the PDBKA. Morag Crawley, a former long serving Committee member, persuaded Pippa to be Minutes Secretary in return for collecting a swarm from Pippa's garden. It wasn't long before Pippa embraced beekeeping and became a keen student of the craft. Attending many courses and joining an advanced beekeeping course at Blackhorse Apiaries where I got to know Pippa and discovered that we were both members of Petersfield beekeeping association. While on the Committee, Pippa was also Secretary of HBA (Hampshire Beekeeping Association) along with other Petersfield Committee members serving on the HBA Committee, Brian Herbert and Greg Cummings. Pippa will still be helping the Association by providing flasks of hot water for the Apiary teas and updating the display boards used at the various summer events attended by the Association.

Elizabeth was a very active beekeeper until she developed a severe anaphylactic reaction to honey bees. However, Elizabeth was keen to remain involved in the Association and developed her skills in wax making and moulding. She contributed to the organisation of the annual honey shows where she showed off her wonderful wax candles and models including making honey-based cosmetics. Taking over from Pippa the role of Minute Secretary, Elizabeth served on the Committee for a good many years. Elizabeth is a great and amusing communicator which she put to good effect on her many teaching courses on wax and honey extraction for new and improver beekeepers. More recently Elizabeth's interests have broadened to studying all pollinating insects and she is a member of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. The Pollinator Day (details on page 6) at the Petersfield Physic Garden, 7th May 2022, will see Elizabeth explaining the very important role of our solitary bees, bumblebees and of course the honeybees.

Plans for 2022 season: Neil Mariner was appointed Apiary Coordinator (see his profile on page 5). Neil will oversee the management and running of the Apiary, preparing the apiary for the various training courses and for members' Apiary Sundays.

New Committee member Brad Davis is coordinating the training for the Bee Basic Assessment. This will run up to 31st August so there is plenty of time for members to undertake the course and take the assessment at the Apiary. Contact Brad for details on the Basic Assessment.

Anne Chantal has been very busy organising the new beekeepers' winter training programme and the practical apiary sessions starting on 3rd April.

Peter Reader, a new Committee member, will provide the link between the Committee and the Apiary Custodians. Peter Reader has written a profile about himself (page 5).

Neil and the Custodians are preparing to expand the apiary to cope with the large numbers of members interested in the various exam sessions, Bee Health Certificate, small scale queen rearing for the start of the Honeybee Breeding Certificate and the preliminaries for the General Husbandry Certificate. If any members wish to participate or just want to learn without taking the exams, please come to the apiary on Sundays. We will consider opening the apiary for some sessions on Wednesdays if the demand is there.



We are planning on starting a new venture called the Bee Shed to encourage members to learn how to build hive equipment, some from kit forms and some from recycled wood. The Bee Shed will also look at making solar wax extractors. This venture will operate during normal Apiary openings for members who want to learn these other aspects of the beekeeping craft. If the weather is inclement and the hives cannot be opened for inspection, the Apiary will open for the Bee Shed to offer members a practical alternative session over tea and cake provided it isn't raining too heavily. Please bring any appropriate tools to these sessions, including cordless power tools, if you have them.

Our first Apiary opening for members is Sunday 10th April at 2pm.

Hilary Hayward
Chairman

Members Facebook Group

There is a hidden private Facebook Group for members of PDBKA recently set up to assist communication and provide a place for Petersfield & District Beekeeping Association members to share information and opinions on all things related to their beekeeping experience. Open to all current PDBKA members. If you would like to join, please email PDBKA@BeeDavis.co.uk for an invite link.

BASIC ASSESSMENTS 2022....

The series of Study Group sessions arranged for those members who expressed an interest in taking the BBKA Basic Assessment have now completed.

With the Apiary opening we will now move on to the practical sessions. These will take the form of 'Mock' Assessments, with the Assessors role taken by members who have recently passed the Assessment themselves. A number of groups will be formed based on either Sunday or Wednesday attendance with a fortnightly frequency. Each 'mock' will have a nominated candidate with other members of the group observing and finishing with a discussion involving the 'Assessor'

It's not too late! If anyone would like to join the Basic Assessment practical groups, please contact me.
Brad Davis (PDBKA@BeeDavis.co.uk)

From the BBKA website (bbka.org.uk) :

To take the Basic Assessment you should have managed at least one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months

The Basic Assessment syllabus can appear daunting at first glance but closer inspection will show that it merely lists the basic things which all beekeepers should know.

... AND OTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

We have made it to the Equinox and it feels as though 'real' beekeeping is about to start! 19 new beekeepers had the last of their 5 theory sessions on the 27th March. Three were by zoom, hosted very efficiently by Percy and the last two, at the Petersfield Community Centre. All have been very well received and huge thanks are due to the speakers, Tom, Hilary, Brian, Rowan, Elizabeth and Richard.

The training enters the practical phase on the 3rd April for 6 weeks ending on the 11th May. There will be 4 groups led by demonstrators, three groups will be trained on Sundays at 2pm and one on Wednesdays starting at 12pm. It will be the first time most of them have handled bees, so let's hope the weather is on our side and warm enough to go through the hives on 3 of the 6 occasions.

We do have the possibility of forming one group led by a demonstrator on Wednesdays at the apiary and I have had a request for training from some that did the beginners' training last year and would welcome a bit of help/reassurance as they acquire their own bees. Please let me know if you are interested.

At about the same level but on zoom, Percy is going to give a series of talks on Wednesdays about his experiences and tips relevant to the time of year. There will be plenty of opportunity for you to ask lots of questions about what is happening to your bees and what to do about it. The first one will be at 7 pm on Wednesday 6th April and the following ones will be advertised on the website.

Additionally, Jo Wade has kindly agreed to lead a bee shop to make various hive parts or help construct new hives. (See Chair's report, P2) I'm looking forward to the one when he makes the solar extractor. Look out for the date on the website.

Furthermore, we have four members studying bee diseases. Sessions include tea and cake, following PDBKA tradition, and we do wander off the subject rather a lot (still about bees though!), but it will get more serious when we inspect the hives and check that they are all healthy. The assessment is in the summer.

Finally, there will be demonstrations of shook swarms, Bailey comb change and how to do artificial swarms as the season progresses and the colonies develop. We will try and post our plans on the website but no guarantee that the weather or the bees will fall in with those plans!

Anne Ballard, Ed sec (01420 538315)

My name is Neil Mariner,

I've been drafted in as apiary manager to help organise and strengthen the apiary to cope with the fantastic training programme that is planned this year.

I spent most of my working life in the construction industry and took up beekeeping before I retired. Like everyone I initially had the one, then two, then four colonies – you know where this is going! I ended up last year with about 40 of my own and over 30 that I managed for wealthy owners or corporate bodies. To enable me to help at Petersfield I have reduced my management commitment to 20 and have downsized to 20 of my own hives.

I would call myself a practical beekeeper who enjoys designing and making kit if I think the commercially available equipment is expensive or not exactly what I need. I'm always looking for easier and more efficient ways of beekeeping whether that means buying/making tools or reorganising the way I inspect hives.

Hopefully, with the help of the apiary custodians, we can make visits to the apiary interesting and fun for all attendees.



Custodian profile: Peter Reader

A recruitment consultant by trade, Peter started beekeeping in 2009 with a homemade top bar hive. He also has 3 National colonies in his garden and enjoys sitting close to the hives with a G&T in the summer evenings and watching the bee traffic, occasionally referring to H.Storch's book "At the Hive Entrance". Loves fishing, golf, photography and his BMW bike.



ASIAN HORNET ACTION TEAM - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Like all Beekeeper Associations, Petersfield has an Asian Hornet Action Team to help members and residents with potential sightings of the Asian Hornet. The team will also support the Bee Inspectors with practical actions should a confirmed sighting occur in our area.

A couple of vacancies exist on the Asian Hornet Action Team and if you would like more information on this please email Ali Hollingbery on alihbery@googlemail.com

UNsung HERO AWARD - AWARDED TO ROWAN ROBERTS

Rowan first met Pippa Barker in a remote layby. There is nothing unusual about this, as Pippa has a penchant for meeting people in laybys..... before leading them to the apiary for their first visit. But what sticks in Pippa's mind is that Rowan went to great lengths to detail to Pippa his life history, car make and colour... conscious that she was a lone female meeting a stranger in an isolated spot. These values of integrity and honesty and thoughtfulness have been seen time and again in Rowan by all at the Association.

Rowan joined the Apiary in 2016 and became a stalwart member of the Association - becoming 'hands-on' very quickly. Indeed, Rowan thrust a full frame of bees at me at my first visit to the apiary in 2017 – saying, “do you want to hold this?” – and then not giving me much choice in the matter!

Rowan became a custodian in 2017 and Apiary Manager in 2020 and steered the apiary through incredibly difficult times during Covid and through the EFB outbreak in 2021. During this time, he spent many days a week at the apiary to allow beginner training to happen over several days and in small groups to comply with Covid restrictions; he had the horrid task of destroying colonies infected with EFB; and led on the subsequent burning of hives and bees and the shook-swarming of the rest of the colonies.

Throughout this time, Rowan was always kind, helpful and nothing was ever too much trouble. Mentoring and supporting people comes naturally to him and he also kept many of us at the Apiary well-stocked with eggs and goats milk. Along with everything else he was doing, Rowan also took on the running of the swarm line during 2021, a role he is continuing with during the 2022 season. Rowan likes to keep bees in all sorts of unusual places including compost-bins and, it is rumoured, can often be found bee-keeping naked just off the A325.

It is with delight and on behalf of the Committee and the Association that the Unsung Hero award this year goes to Rowan Roberts.

Ali Hollingbery

Pollinator Day

Physic Garden, Petersfield, 7th May 10-3:30

We are running a Pollinator Day in Petersfield this year to highlight the wonder and diversity of pollinators and what you can do to help them. We know about honey bees and how and where they live, and the public has been told repeatedly about the plight of the bee. But often the honey producing bee is shown as big, fluffy and fat, and we are called out to swarms living under a shed. We will be talking about bumblebees, solitary and honey bees, butterflies and moths, wasps and hornets

Come along to the Petersfield Physic Garden, just off the High Street, and join us for a day dedicated to “yellow and black stripey” insects in all their diversity. We are planning talks and safaris, information boards and chatterers.

The theme is what you can do to help, and the main idea is the more you know the more you will appreciate and understand the wonder of the world around you.

On the day we need helpers, to chat, to explain or just be welcoming :) We also need an audience, so if you don't feel confident, please come along and listen. Please bring your friends and family, and anyone else you know!

We will not be serving teas, so will not need cake or tea servers. It seems Petersfield has a few of those already!

Committee News

At the start of the new season, the Committee has been busy planning a training schedule for the apiary and a series of events for the Association. Hilary Hayward has joined as our new Chairman, together with two new Committee trustees: Brad Davis and Peter Reader. Together they bring a huge amount of knowledge and enthusiasm!

The Association’s events will kick off on 2 April with Greatham’s Help the Environment Day. We will be using this event to trial a new contactless card reader for honey sales. We will also be hosting a pollinator day at Petersfield Physic Garden on 7 May.

The new beekeepers training is progressing well, with the first practical session on 3 April at the Association Apiary. The Apiary will be fully open to all members on Sunday 10 April (weather permitting!). The plan is to source five locally bred nucs to add to the existing colonies. This will allow us to support education towards Bee Basic and Bee Health qualifications, and provide general training for members of all levels of experience.

A new ‘Bee Shed’ will be introduced, where practical demonstrations on aspects such as hive construction will be given.

We look forward to seeing you all at the Apiary very soon. Volunteers to help at events are also very welcome! If you would like to get involved, please get in touch with any Committee member or Apiary custodian.

YOUR PDBKA COMMITTEE	
Hilary Hayward	Chair
Ian Neilson	Treasurer
Mel Espin	Secretary
Anne Ballard	Education Officer
Ali Holingbery	Publicity Officer
Martin Smyth	Events Coordinator/Librarian/Safeguarding
Peter Reader	Custodian Coordinator
Brad Davis	Training/Basic Assessment
David Parkinson	Honey Show Manager/Constitution

APIARY CUSTODIANS	
Neil Mariner	Head Custodian
Ali Holingbery	
Dean Gregory	
Peter Reader	
Derek Beesley	
Phil Gurney	
James Crawford	

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