



March Newsletter

Hello Members,

It felt almost like Spring had sprung last weekend before a soggy few days have set in (again). The Daffodils are out in our garden and the bees are very active on the warmer, brighter days which certainly makes me feel lighter knowing the days are getting longer and the better weather is around the corner. I hope that everyone's losses and damage from the recent storms wasn't terrible and that nobody lost any hives or equipment. Just a few fence panels for us but my hives remained upright thankfully.

Thank you to everyone involved in organising the Club lunch last Saturday. We had some 21 attendees and several apologies, a fantastic turnout and a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. It was lovely to see everyone together and for me as a relative newcomer to the club, meet some members I hadn't met before.

Club Talk:

Lesley is still putting the final schedule together for the upcoming season but wanted to make everyone aware that Bob Smith from Medway Branch will be giving a talk on **Swarm Control and Prevention** on the 19th of March at 2pm. This will take place at the NT Visitors Centre, Lodge Lane, Cobham DA12 3BS. It's sure to be an interesting talk and I'm sure members old and new will take something away from it.

Taster Day:

GBKA's taster day for budding beekeepers is scheduled for April the 24th at the branch apiary, 10am - 5pm and will be hosted by Lesley and Mike. If you know anybody that's shown an interest in becoming a beekeeper do let them know about it or have them contact Lesley. More information is also available on our club's website at <https://www.gravesendbeekeepers.org.uk>

About the Membership:

Lesley has compiled the following information about the club history and current membership which you should find interesting especially having perhaps all been a little more disconnected than we would have otherwise have liked during that last couple of seasons.

Gravesend Branch Beekeepers was started in 1961 by Margaret Calder who taught the girls beekeeping at the school where she worked in Swanscombe, which is no longer there. Old postage books suggest this was the date. At that time the membership numbered 20. By 1981/82 this had risen to 42 and by 1997/98 reduced to 18 when beekeeping seemed to be "out of fashion". Things improved by 2009/10 and we had crept up to 38 and as the branch had no apiary, meetings were always held in individual's apiaries for inspection meetings and talks and occasionally a hall for a social event. Once the Branch had established an out apiary at Cobham Hall in 2011/12 and were able to use facilities on site for courses, talks and demonstrations, membership increased and now stands at 75 and breaks down as follows:- Fully registered (beekeepers) 49, Friend + insurance (beekeepers active beekeeping partners) 5, Friends (beekeepers partners who help with honey extraction etc. and turn up to social events but don't get up close and personal with the bees!)14, and junior members 7 which is great as they are the beekeepers of the future.