



# THE FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

The Federation, its Council, and its Officers cannot be held responsible for the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors.

October 2012

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## In The Apiary

Starting on a positive note, on suitable days, bees have been, and are continuing to work the ivy heavily. Unfortunately, honey produced from some varieties of ivy will set too hard for the bees to use. Normally, feeding would have been completed by the end of September, but the majority of colonies are still light. As poor weather continues through September, close the book and feed syrup until the middle of October. Feeding later than this will risk fermentation of the stores. Subsequent feeding should be by the application of fondant, the easiest and most economical method being the use of a proprietary product such as Ambrosia™.

Bees that are short of stores, or cannot access their stores because they are set hard, can be bad tempered as has happened this year due to bees being unable to forage. One lady described her bees as being "bees from Trebizond" (look it up, very interesting). S

Thomas Moore wrote in his poem The Fire-Worshippers:

*Ev'n as those bees of Trebizond,  
Which, from the sunniest flowers that glad,  
With their pure smile the gardens round,  
Draw venom forth that drives men mad - - -*

I do know about rhododendron and ragwort honey making bees spiteful!

Many colonies and swarms required feeding throughout the 2012 season and as a result, some breeding continues. Indeed, even at this late period, comb building has been reported. Some colonies are still raising drones, but the question is, are they retaining them? A colony retaining its drones is usually indicative of a failing queen. We hope that raising drones this late is down to the weather conditions this year, but we can only wait and see!

A question often asked is can Apiguard™ be left on all winter? This is not recommended as it can cause the queen to go off-lay and it requires a temperature of 12-14 degrees to sublime, meaning only a strong colony will provide sufficient heat. Use a reduced space i.e. an eke (2–3 inches), and do not put it above the crown board as the winter temperature is too low! When using an eke, in order to give the bees access to candy or fondant, apply it under the crown board.

Triad



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## ***Around the Associations***

### **Wokingham and District Beekeepers' Association**

Summer is winding down and our weekly meetings at the apiary have now finished, although the bees are being fed and treated for varroa. The venue for our winter meetings is the Wokingham Bowls Club, Reading Road, Wokingham, starting at 7.30 pm on the second Wednesday of every month. The following programme has been arranged:

*Wednesday 10th October 2012*

Extraordinary General Meeting followed by Annual General Meeting  
Q&A Open Forum (if time allows)

*Wednesday 14th November 2012*

Annual Honey Show – additional classes to be announced at the AGM  
Talk on pollen (TBC)

*Wednesday 12th December 2012*

Bumblebee Conservation

Guest speaker: Dr Nikki Gammans, Bumblebee Project Officer, Bumblebee Conservation Trust

*Wednesday 9th January 2013*

How we make mead

Guest speaker: John Gamble

*Wednesday 13th February 2013*

Bee Wing Morphometry

Guest speaker: Dave Moss

*Wednesday 13th March 2013*

Purifying and maximising your wax crop

Guest speaker: Andy Willis

We look forward to seeing you all at the Bowls Club.

***Lynn Janes***

***Hon. Sec. Mobile: 07721 338833***

### **C WYNNE JONES**

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## Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society

We would like to announce the Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society Honey Show 2012. This will be held at Parish Hall, All Saints Church, Alexandra Rd, Windsor, SL4 1HZ on Tuesday, 9th October, at 7.30 pm. (Staging from 7pm.)

The Judge will be Mrs Vivienne Brown of High Wycombe BKA and we have the following classes:

1. 1 x 454gm jar of LIGHT HONEY.
2. 1 x 454gm jar of MEDIUM HONEY.
3. 1 x 454gm jar of DARK HONEY.
4. 1 x 454gm jar of CREAMED HONEY.
5. 1 x 454gm jar of GRANULATED HONEY.
6. 1 x jar of HONEY of any type, to be judged for flavour only (See note 1).
7. 1 x portion of COMB HONEY OR SECTION, packed for sale (See note 5).
8. 1 x FRAME OF HONEY SUITABLE FOR EXTRACTION.
9. NOVICE CLASS - 1 jar of RUNNY HONEY (See note 6).
10. 2 x Beeswax CANDLES in holder(s), one to be burnt by judge.
11. 1 x Cake of BEESWAX as close to 8oz as practicable.
12. PHOTOGRAPH on a beekeeping subject, titled, no larger than 7"x 5" (See note 7).
13. SOMETHING MADE WITH HONEY as a major ingredient (See notes 8 and 10).
14. HONEY CAKE. Recipe (See note 9)

See also note 10.

### Notes:

1. STAGING of exhibits will start at 7pm. Entries may be registered on the night, but if entering multiple classes, advance entry by e-mail (tba) in order to prepare your labels beforehand would be helpful. You may enter more than one jar in each class if they are different honeys, but you can only be awarded one prize. Grading glasses will be available. A paper sleeve will be provided for class 6; any size jar is acceptable in this class.
2. Classes 1 to 9 are only open to beekeepers and must be the produce of their own bees. Classes 10 to 14 are open to anyone, but must be of their own making. Cups are awarded for: Most points in 1-8; Winners 9-14; Best in Show; Most points in Show; Most points in Slough and Federation Shows. All are held for one year.
3. Labels should be stuck onto the entry with the lower edge half an inch above the bottom of all jars or bottles; on the plate or board of classes 13 and 14; and in a clear place on all other exhibits.
4. Although the show is intended to be a light-hearted affair and polite conversation with the judge is encouraged, BBKA rules will apply where there is any need for close decisions. Each entrant will be given a receipt showing their numbers for all classes entered. Whilst at work, the judge might comment on some aspect of an entry, mentioning the number, so the relevant exhibitor will then know that it is their entry and, hopefully, benefit from the comment. Anonymity is not necessary – don't be shy in identifying yourself if you wish to.
5. Class 7. The weight should be closely appropriate to the pack, normally 227gm for cut comb and 454gm for a section. If sufficient entries warrant it, they may be judged as separate classes.
6. Class 9 - Novice Class is open to members who have not won a prize previously in any show. In addition, the best first time exhibitor will be presented with a Goblet. You may also enter any other Honey class in accordance with the schedule, if you wish.
7. Class 12. Either digital or analogue - all entries to be judged on merit of the subject matter. Your committee may like to use an entry for display purposes, with your permission.
8. Class 13. Honey should be the major flavour in this class.

9. Class 14. Honey cake recipe. Ingredients. 4oz soft dark brown sugar, 6oz clear honey, 5oz butter or margarine, 2 eggs, 1 tablespoon water, 7oz self-raising flour. Method. Put sugar, butter or margarine, and honey in a large saucepan and melt over a low heat. Cool, add eggs and water. Blend in the flour. Grease or line an 11" x 7" tin. Add mixture, run into corners and bake in the centre of a heated oven at 180C/350F or gas mark 4 for 30-35 minutes, or until firm to the touch.
10. Items exposed to the air, such as cakes or biscuits, should be covered in a transparent polythene bag.

Contact: Joy Dodson, 01628 664091 ([jddodson.three@virgin.net](mailto:jddodson.three@virgin.net)). Please ensure that any cups held at present are cleaned and returned prior to or on the night.

<http://www.bbka.org.uk/local/slough-windsor-maidenhead>

**Neil Coxhead**  
**Secretary SWM BKS**

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## Reading and District Beekeepers' Association

Sunday 9th of September was the final meeting of our Summer Programme and we were the guests of Tim and Diane Sheldon at Goring Heath. We looked forward to our much anticipated ride to Tim's hives located in the vicinity of The Hardwick Estate on his '*beater's trailer*'.

We began at Pond Apiary where Tim now has two hives. He uses Dadent hives and the large 14-inch deep frames make a quick and convenient inspection possible compared with the frequently used brood and a half. Tim has not had much yield from this apiary this season, which is unfortunately all too common amongst Reading Beekeepers given the poor summer. Bees were plentiful in both hives with brood, eggs and larvae to be seen. Tim marks his queens and a good-looking queen was spotted in one hive.

The next stop was Tim's hives near the Thames (he has five at Hardwick Organic Nursery and five more on a riverside farm). Tim has had a bit more honey to extract from these hives. Some of the supers had been placed above the crown board on the second hive to allow the bees to clear-out residual honey from the extracted frames and these were removed to go into store. There was some discussion about signs of K wing seen in both hives. Again, this seems to be a feature in several apiaries we have visited, possibly due to the cold early spring followed by wet and cold spring and summer.

We moved on to Home Wood Apiary where there were three hives to open, including one colony that Tim has brought-in from the field. Earlier in the season he had moved some hives that had a bit of a reputation due to oilseed rape! Hive 1 all looked OK in terms of bee population, larvae and eggs. During this apiary meeting, under the supervision of our demonstrator Mike Blackburn, most of the opening and frame examination was carried out by newer beekeepers and they were able to find a nice looking queen in this hive. Hive 2 was again satisfactory for the season. A varroa mite was seen attached to the head of one worker, near the eye. Tim is trialling 'Varroa-Gard' (that's how it's spelt on the label). This is a powder that is sprinkled liberally onto the top bars of the frames, and before closing-up Tim applied the treatment to show us how to use it. The bees in Hive 3, the one with the reputation, were reasonably calm today. The hive was no worse than hive 2, which was quite an 'aerial' colony. It was a good-looking colony, with eggs, larvae and again a sight of the queen.

There were no bees seen with visible signs of deformed wings in any of Tim's hives and apart from the mite seen on the worker in Hive no 2 of Home Wood there was nothing to suggest any varroa infestation. Although a number of drones were seen, very few drone brood cells were spotted so we stayed our hand and did-not 'rake-out.' Four of the five hives had an adequate pattern of stores at the top of the brood frames. Tim is planning his autumn feeding schedule.

Some further 'cleaned-out' extracted supers were removed and then we headed back to Tim and Diane's garden where the mighty oil-drum barbecue was waiting for us, burning cherry logs cut

from the forest. The rest of the afternoon was spent in pleasant relaxation with food, drink, pet dogs and the enjoyment of our own good company and the hospitality of Diane, Tim and family. With very many thanks to them and all who attended and contributed.

**October Meetings:** The first is on Tuesday October 9th at Caversham Heights Methodist Hall. 7:30pm start. Our speaker is Rob Nicklas and the subjects are 'Varroa Treatments' (discussion) and over wintering of bees and spring preparation for the new season. I think you'll agree this is an ideal timing for these topics so don't miss it!

The second is an extra meeting to be held at Tidmarsh Village hall on Monday 29th October, starting at 7:30pm. Mrs Hazel Blackburn will be the speaker on 'Preparation of Honey and Wax for Showing' and 'Production of Beeswax Candles for Christmas'. We will also be holding our 'Novice Beekeepers Honey Show\*' Hazel will judge entries for flavour, cleanliness and preparation. Please bring along your honeys, any colour, any jar size, clear or set, for a chance to win 'The Hazel Blackburn Trophy'.

\*Novice beekeepers are those who are in not more than their second season of beekeeping, or not more than their third season who have not previously been placed 'first' in any of Reading Beekeepers honey shows.

### **Report on The Reading Beekeepers Honey Show Held at The Swallowfield Show 26th & 27th August.**

There were 55 entries in all. This was well down on last year, but given the poor season the Honey Show secretary and Reading Beekeepers Association Committee were by no means disappointed and are grateful to those members who did show. The results are as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Second</b>	<b>Third</b>
<b>Light Honey</b>	Mrs H. Blackburn	Mr. M. Dabbs	Mr. I Duddle
<b>Dark/Medium</b>		Mr. J. Davey	
<b>Set Honey</b>	Mrs H. Blackburn	Mr. R. Challis	Mr. J. Davey
<b>Honey for Sale</b>	Mr. J. Davey	Mrs H. Blackburn	
<b>Novice Class</b>	Mr. I Duddle		
<b>Beeswax Blocks</b>	Mrs H. Blackburn	Mr. J. Davey	
<b>Beeswax Candles</b>	Mrs. H. Blackburn	Mr. J. Davey	
<b>Chunk Honey</b>		Mr. N. Matenga	Mr. J. Davey
<b>Cut Comb</b>	Mr. N. Matenga	Mr. J. Davey	
<b>Honey Cake</b>	Mrs. H. Blackburn	Mr. Mike Dabbs	Mr. J. Davey
<b>Honey Biscuits</b>	Mrs. A. Roberts	Mrs.M. Dean	Mrs E. Crow
<b>Honey Preserve</b>	Mr. J. Davey	Mrs. H. Blackburn	
<b>Bee Fodder</b>	Mrs A. Roberts	Mr. J. Davey	Mr. N. Matenga

Congratulations to Hazel Blackburn for a magnificent result and to Ian Duddle, our novice class winner whose light honey also came third in our most numerous class. Trophies will be awarded at the end of our AGM in November.

**Jon Davey**  
[www.rbka.org.uk](http://www.rbka.org.uk)

**For beekeeping equipment and supplies** contact Joan or John Belcher any-time on

01189 842321 or 07292 586 073, or mail [john.r.belcher@talktalk.net](mailto:john.r.belcher@talktalk.net).

Beeswax exchanged hives, frames and foundation always in stock, treatment for varroa and brood disease detection in stock. A new range of stainless steel extracting equipment that is well designed and economically priced; ambrosia syrup and fondant are stock items.

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## South Chilterns Beekeepers' Association

The last meeting of the summer was once again held in the apiary at Greys Court. It was a beautiful day and more than 30 people came to see Reg Hook inspect the hives and give advice about preparing for winter. We looked at three hives that were donated to Greys Court by Mr Wimbury and we were delighted that he was able to join the group for the inspection. The three hives are WBC, each with a brood and half. The top box of the first hive was full of stores. There was evidence of ivy setting on the comb – but plenty of liquid honey too. There was a small amount of brood left and Reg could spot evidence of Varroa due to some brood not being capped. The bottom box had healthy looking frames with a lot of pollen and nectar. The brood was towards the front of the hive, which Reg said was good as it meant the bees were better able to protect it. Although there were some eggs, larvae and brood the queen was not laying much due to lack of room. It was agreed that feeding was not necessary and Reg trickled Hive Clean™ across the gaps between the frames to demonstrate to the group how oxalic acid should be applied. The recommended time to use oxalic acid is late December or early January. It was noted that care should be taken not to 'overdose' the bees with this treatment and to take care to follow the instructions on the product. An empty super was placed on top of the brood and a half to act as an eke and a tray of Apiguard™ was placed in the centre. We were told that the queen may be put off laying during the varroa treatment, but she will return when the treatment is finished.



We moved on to the second hive, which was smaller in terms of the number of bees, but with good-looking young stock. The queen in this hive was only mated in July, due to a couple of earlier failed attempts. The top box was again full of lovely combs of stores. Reg noted that the queen had been laying in the top box, but that she was now being pushed down. He said that the bees would use around 10lbs of honey between the end of October and the end of February and when they started to breed again they will work their way

back up to use the top stores. The first few combs in the brood box were not yet drawn out. The queen was still breeding nicely and there was evidence of larvae and eggs. As holes became vacant they were being filled with stores. As with the first hive the brood was towards the front of the hive. Although there was no sign of disease in this hive Reg said it was still important to treat as varroa was most likely to be present.

The third hive, in addition to the brood and a half, also had an additional super. This was hefted and not thought to be very heavy. There were good stores in the top box and some drones were

seen – it was noted that this is a bit late. In the brood box there was plenty of brood and evidence of the queen who Reg's said was "laying out a treat".

We didn't see the queen in any of the hives, but this was of no concern as there was plenty of evidence of her presence.

The meeting concluded with Reg reminding us of the jobs still to do:

1. Complete varroa treatment - remove remnants of treatment after 4 to 6 weeks.
2. Fix a mouse guard to the hive opening by the end of October.
3. Before very cold weather, protect against woodpeckers by wrapping chicken wire around the whole hive.
4. Consider inserting insulation under the roof during cold weather.

We wandered back up to the Barn where tea and cake was served, stories were told and further advice was sought and given among the gathered ensemble.

**Joanne Shanagher,**  
**Secretary. Tel: 01189 721067**  
<http://www.southchilternsbeekeepers.org.uk>



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## The Henley Show

SCBKA had a stand on 8th September at the Henley Show in the Food and Produce tent. What a great day we had. The weather was sunny and as I walked from the car park to the tent to help with setting up the stand, people were already polishing their pigs and combing their cows ready for judging.

We had an observation hive and most of the visitors wanted to see the queen. She proved to be quite elusive most of the day! The kids also loved being photographed sticking their heads through Buzz Bee.

I was surprised that most people were aware of the problems with bees in the UK. We had many questions about suitable plants for bees, and



what to do to encourage them into the garden. One guy was building an extension on his house with a "living" roof and wanted to know if the roof was suitable for a beehive. He was persuaded that two hives would be better!

It was also nice to chat to beekeepers from other associations so we could commiserate with each other about how awful 2012 has been.

If you didn't go this year make sure you go next year as it is a great event.

**Dave Moss**  
**SCBKA**

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## ***Neighbouring Associations News and Events***

### **Hampshire's beekeeping associations Honey Show and Autumn Convention**

Hampshire's beekeeping associations are holding their Honey Show on 13th October in the Education Centre at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens at the beginning of National Family Education Week. The Show will be open to the public for viewing. Exhibitors may sell honey and bee products.

The Autumn Convention is on Saturday 10th November. This year we are privileged to have three speakers eminent in their respective fields to speak on subjects in the forefront of the news. Dr. Gia Aradottir will address modern GM research; Dr. Henk Tennekes will talk on the effect of Neonicotinoids on our bees and Dr. Richard Petiffer will discuss on climate change and beekeeping.

We are also fortunate to have a number of respected Hampshire beekeepers holding practical 'workshops': Regional Bee Inspector Nigel Semmence, HBA President John Cossburn, HBA Education Secretary Simon Cavill, and Mead-making expert Melvin Asplet.

A full day ticket which includes lectures, workshops, morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea is a bargain at £15.

Tickets can be obtained from Convention Co-ordinator Jan Roper.

**Pippa Barker**  
**HBA Hon Sec.**

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## ***Useful Links, Advice and Information***

**Video on how to use Vita Apiguard (all pack sizes)**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RGS3VEeAg>

For added interest: What are the different types of hive demonstrated in the video?

**Interesting article on how Honey suffers after bad year for bees** by Hannah Briggs on the BBC Food website.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/0/19585638>

### **NBU Advice for Obtaining Bees:**

**Join Beebase** - By joining BeeBase you can access beekeeping information and ask for advice or help from the Bee Unit: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase>.

### **Your Regional Bee Inspectors are:**

**Southern Region:** Nigel Semmence at: [nigel.semmence@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.semmence@fera.gsi.gov.uk),

The main website is: <https://secure.csl.gov.uk/beebase/public/Contacts/contacts.cfm>

National Bee Unit, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York YO41 1 LZ, tel: 01 904 462 510, email: <mailto:nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk> .

**South Eastern Region:** Mr Alan Byham, fax/tel: 01306 611 016

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**Letters to the Editor** are always welcome as long as they are signed. Anonymous letters and letters not in English will not be published. The Editor reserves the right to withhold names.

**Contributions**, including emails, to arrive with the Editor by the last day of the month for the following month. Contributions received after this will be held over for a later month.

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