



# 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.

April 2013  
Number 675

General Secretary:  
Martin Moore  
Tilehurst  
Reading  
0118 967 7386  
07729 620 286

E-mail: [berksbees@btinternet.com](mailto:berksbees@btinternet.com)

Web: <http://www.berkshirebeekeepers.btck.co.uk/>

Newsletter Editor:  
Sue Remenyi  
Curtis Farm  
Kidmore End  
RG4 9AY  
0118 972 3699

---

## The Federation Continues!

In the last couple of newsletters we have been keeping you informed about the uncertain direction of the Federation. Well, we are delighted to report that following a tricky AGM, the vote was to keep the Federation going and to work over the next year to see what more this representative group of the four associations can do for the membership. More details on this will be forthcoming next month, but below is a summary of the minutes from the AGM, prepared by the secretary, Martin Moore.

### ABBREVIATED MINUTES OF THE FBBKA MINUTES

The Federation of Berkshire Beekeepers Associations held its AGM on 26th March 2013 in Wokingham. The AGM was dominated, as expected, by deliberations over its future. The Federation Council meeting in December 2012 had raised concerns that it might not be possible to form a new committee due to the lack of new volunteers. The Newsletter publicised this in January and the individual association committees all took actions to decide how they might go forward. There was much to discuss in the intervening period which culminated in the following motion put forward by South Chilterns to drive the debate.

*"Should The Federation be wound up allowing member associations to petition at the BBKA ADM in 2014 to join in their own right?"*

The debate was most constructive with a very fair and frank exchange of views. Some felt that as there were no volunteers, it was a fait accompli and so there was no alternative but to seek direct membership of the BBKA, while others questioned the viability of the Federation in its current form. There was a balance of views ranging from the fact an association with a large membership could act quite independently and did not need the Federation, whilst others thought that the Federation in a different form could offer more than it did currently; which is little more than a conduit to provide membership of the BBKA and a Newsletter. There was however always common ground with the benefits of liaison across associations and a Newsletter being seen as important and viable even without The Federation.

The history as to how The Federation came to be in its current form was explained to the attendees (It had once been a thriving organisation) and there was a feeling that perhaps it had not kept pace with change as beekeeping became more popular and the numbers of members swelled. Neither had any initiative been taken to suggest a way forward.

However there was a suggestion that there was an opportunity to take The Federation forward. Volunteers for all the committee positions had come forward at a late stage, and it was felt there were some ideas which could be considered and that perhaps a first step could be a survey of its membership. This would provide an oppor-

tunity to better identify the needs of the member associations and offer an enhancement to what they already provide.

The choice facing the Associations was to decide whether they would wish to wind up The Federation and seek direct membership of the BBKA (to ensure continuity of its membership benefits) or decide to continue its membership of The Federation.

After a very well mannered, honest and sincere debate a vote on the motion was taken by a show of hands from each of the delegates. The result was that there were four votes for the motion and four votes against. This meant the Chairman used his casting vote which was against. So it was decided that the federation would not be wound up. It is also important to note that those who voted against respected the decision taken and wished to remain active members of The Federation.

The committee was then duly elected Chair: Clive Winslow, Secretary: Martin Moore, Treasurer: Ian Duddle, Membership Secretary: Katie Rennie, Training and Education officer: Tony Wolstenholme, Vice Chair: Jon Davey.

With the Federation firmly in their minds the new committee gave an undertaking to bring a proposal back to a full council meeting within two months for consideration.

A full copy of the minutes have been sent to the Association Secretaries.

## Editors Corner

I have moved my corner up in the order of play this month because I want to share with you some changes that we are planning with the newsletter. The first is a change in publication date. From now on I will be asked for copy by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month with a view to publishing on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the following month. To bring this into play we are publishing a shortened newsletter this month with the Federation news and In the Apiary and we will carry over the Associations contributions for the next newsletter to be published on 7 May.

The second change will be the format of the newsletter. In addition to the apiary section and contributions from the individual associations, we will have a regular Federation News section where details of projects that the Federation is working on will be reported on. We will also have a comprehensive Events section with a list of local and national events that may be of interest to you. Alongside this will be an expanded set of links to each association website as well as to other websites we feel are relevant and useful. We also welcome occasional articles from anyone, so if you feel like getting into print do feel free to send contributions to me at any time.

*Sue Remenyi*

### **C WYNNE JONES**

Ty Brith Pentrecelyn Ruthin Denbighshire LL 15 2SR

Tel. 01978 790279. Fax. 01978 790265

[wynnejones@btconnect.com](mailto:wynnejones@btconnect.com)

[www.bottlesandjars.co.uk](http://www.bottlesandjars.co.uk) <http://www.beesupplies.co.uk/>

**SPECIAL PRICES ON APIGUARD - 30 HIVE TUBS A SPECIALITY  
VARROA TREATMENT - WAX FOUNDATION - AND MUCH MORE  
OUR PRICES WILL BENEFIT YOUR POCKET!!**

*See Our Website for full Range of Products*

## In The Apiary

There seems to be even more 'unreliability' about the British weather these days. As the media has commented 'ad nuaseam' the last days of March in 2012 brought

drought and temperatures were in the 'high teens' Celsius, whilst this year we have endured sub-zero degrees with blizzards and a wind chill factor of -3. We are believed to be obsessed by 'weather' and certainly the media thinks we are. It is of course true that as gardeners we care for our planting and because horticulture and animal husbandry is still big business in our tight little islands, we need a good settled balmy spring to do well and prosper. That awful meeting of air streams high in the stratosphere above-us certainly left us with plenty to worry about, particularly if we keep young breeding live stock.

Honey bees are our livestock. In 2012 there were plenty of reports that the warm March gave an early build-up of brood. Bearing in mind that the typical graph for a population of flying bees and developing bees in the March/April period shows more numbers in the developing state (larvae capped and uncapped) than flying bees to forage; last years' spring season showed many colony failures as the weather rapidly deteriorated with much rain, wind and cold. Reduced flying from limited flyers and poor forage resulted in starvation, leaving beekeepers with little choice than to heft, feed, inspect and feed. So, what now in 2013? The advice would be the same! It's believed by some that in the cluster the use of stores is lower than if the bees are active in the hive in a mild February/ March. This may be so, but it's also widely observed that the 21st century garden beehive with its numbers reduced because of queens with a foreshortened laying life will starve if they don't have food immediately above the cluster. It is no good relying on a few frames of last year's honey to the sides or worse still, if you've got say 2 supers up there with a big space from where the bees are. Strong colonies may cope, but if they've got a lot of brood they'll also rapidly run-out of food if foraging is impossible due to the weather or retarded blossom time. So please do feed, by packing Ambrosia or fondant into the bars above the seams of bees. You will probably need to use an eke to make space, which is preferable to using a super box. This is better kept until you are feeding liquids. When temperatures improve and you see your bees returning with pollen loads, then change to feeding a 50/50 cane sugar to water syrup or Ambrosia liquid in a contact or 'quick feeder' (float some bubble-wrap to give the bees something to stand-on). Continue with this as long as they take the feed. When you find they've stopped taking the syrup and inspection shows new honey, stop feeding and add a super with clean drawn-out frames without delay.

It may be that the cold conditions will be reversed by mid April which should produce a flush of blossoms and intensive foraging. When the temperatures reach 16 C you can do a thorough inspection. Have a look at the 'Pepper Pot Brood' feature in the April edition of BBKA News which will give you guidance on what to look for. BBKA editorials are also advocating 'equalization' (uniting) of colonies in April; this should only be done with healthy stock. This may be a testing time for us so good luck, use your beekeeping mentors for help and advice.

*Triad*



## Beckys Beezzzs

Ambrosia Syrup & Fondant, Pollen Substitute, Cedar Hives, Varroa Treatments,  
Rauchboy Smokers, Beekeeping Suits, Foundation, Queens & Nucs.  
Visit our new on-line shop to view our full product range.

**[www.beckysbeesonlineshop.co.uk](http://www.beckysbeesonlineshop.co.uk)**  
**01264 351104 / 07973 423628**  
Collection by arrangement from Andover & Headley

## The Bee Shop

Top Quality Beekeeper Clothing At Affordable Prices

See our website [www.thebeeshop.co.uk](http://www.thebeeshop.co.uk)

Full Suits (Round Hat & Fencing Veil Styles) in White, Camel, Olive & Camo

Smocks (Round Hat & Fencing Veil Styles)

Sizes from Infant to XXXL

**Full adult suits under £50 - delivered free**

Jon Davey



*John Belcher*

*Beekeeping Equipment & Supplies*

Valhalla, 6 Kennedy Drive, Pangbourne, Reading, Berks RG8 7LB

Main stockist for Thorne in Berkshire, wax exchanged. Hives and all accessories in stock during season. Apiguard and all Vita products available, Varroa Gard, Bee-Bay products including Hive Clean in stock, Agri-Nova main supplier for extracting equipment, Sherriff protection and Ambrosia fondant and syrup always available.

*See before you buy and save carriage charges at the same time.*

Tel: 0118 984 2321

Mobile: 07929 586037

Email: [john.r.belcher@talktalk.net](mailto:john.r.belcher@talktalk.net)



Advert



**www.beebasic.co.uk**

*All the protection you need, and more*

Jackets from only **£32**

Bee suits from only **£42**

Leather gloves **£10.50**

Smokers **£16**

+ bee vests, smocks, hat & veils, tools and more ....

Free delivery on orders over £100

Call us for a free brochure, or visit our web site

5 Hillcrest Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 1AJ    E-mail: [sales@beebasic.co.uk](mailto:sales@beebasic.co.uk)    ☎ 020 8866 3864  
9am to 6 pm except Sundays

(Advert)

## Useful Links, Advice and Information

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

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RGSp3VEeAg>

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

---

**Job Vacancy:** The National Bee Unit has a vacancy for a Seasonal Bee Inspector (SBI) in the Southern Region. The post will cover the following area: Northamptonshire

If you are interested in applying, please see the Fera website for details.

<http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/careers/jobVacancies/index.cfm>

---

**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 20th of the month for publication by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Contributions received after this will be held over for a later month.

**Advertisement entries**, to be received by the Advertisement Manager in advance of the 20th of every month. Rates: 2 Lines for £1.00; Commercial rates: £1.00 per line. Please make cheques payable to FBBKA. To be sent to the Advertisement Manager: Mr Jon Davey, 107 Northcourt Avenue, Reading RG2 7HG. Tel: 0118 975 0734.