



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.



December 2015

Number 707

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

E-mail: berksbees@btinternet.com

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

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

Editor's Corner



As Christmas approaches December is perhaps the quietest time of year for the beekeeper. The bees are settled down for winter, equipment has been cleaned and carefully stored for next season and all that is left is to remember the oxalic acid treatment towards the end of the month. For me December is also a time for reflection on what worked and did not work last year and to remind myself what I learnt from my mistakes so as to try, at least, not to repeat them next year.

As part of this process, whilst organising the shelf on which I keep my bee reference material I found a number of articles in both Beecraft and BBKA news that I had not had time to properly digest when they were originally published. This started me on my personal 'tips list' – a random selection of little bites of information picked up from these magazines that I will pin up in the bee shed and hope to make use of in the future.

In addition to the Association write-ups this month there is some important information from the Federation. Firstly, most of the current officers have completed their terms of office and there is an invitation for any of you interested in becoming involved to put your names forward. Secondly, the BBKA Annual Delegates meeting is held in early January and our Federation delegate, Caroline Bushell, will be representing us. Caroline has put together a summary of proposals and given guidance to anyone who would like to put forward a view on these.

Finally, as I did last year, I have put together a few festive recipes that include honey for you to incorporate into your culinary efforts for the festive season.

Wishing you and your bees a very happy festive period.

Sue Remenyi

C WYNNE JONES

Ty Brith Pentrecelyn Ruthin Denbighshire LL 15 2SR

Tel. 01978 790279. Fax. 01978 790265

wynnejones@btconnect.com

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

Federation News

Federation Officer Elections at the next AGM

Positions to be elected are: Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, Exam Coordinator, ADM delegate (this is the Federation's voting delegate at BBKA's annual delegate meeting). Currently there are only two positions where the current incumbents are able to stand again; Ian Duddle as Treasurer, Sue Remenyi as Editor of the newsletter.

Stepping down: Caroline Bushell as Chairman and ADM delegate, Martin Moore as Secretary, Katie Rennie as Membership Secretary, John White as BBKA Exam Coordinator.

If you are interested in supporting your local association and its three sister associations by becoming a Federation officer, please contact either myself on membership@scbka.org or Martin on mmoore52@gmail.com or your local association. If you need any information on what the duties entail please do not hesitate to ask.

Annual Delegates Meeting Proposals

I will be representing all Association members of the Berkshire Federation at the BBKA 2016 Annual Delegates' Meeting (ADM) on 9th January. Below are the proposals that I will be asked to consider. If you have any views on these issues please do let me know via membership@scbka.org.

The text in blue provides a brief explanation. For full supporting details see the ADM briefing pack available on the BBKA website in the members' area (or contact your committee for a copy).

Proposals

The proposed budget (highlighted in yellow) for the financial year 1st October 2015 – 30th September 2016 (already 3.5 months into operation). Do you approve it?

Item	Year ending September 2013 Actual	Year ending September 2014 Budget	Year ending September 2014 Actual	Year ending September 2015 Budget	Year ending September 2015 Actual	Year ending Sept 2016 Budget
Capitation Fee	£ 15	£ 17	£ 17	£ 18	£ 18	£19
Total Income	726,791	903,610	756,251	907,573	800,297	809,341
Total Expenditure	757,174	901,071	775,263	907,573	838,515	809,341
Overspend	-30,383	2,539	-19,013	0	-38,218	0

NB even though the budget is currently in operation, it is possible not to approve it which will require the trustees to work up a new budget.

1/2016

BBKA's Executive Committee proposes that your fees (capitation rates) should increase for the year 2017 (payable in April and September 2017) as follows:

Members up £2 and a pro-rata increase for all other membership categories.

The table below shows the increases year on year to try to help balance the accounts – so far unsuccessfully since 2013

2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
£21 = 10.5% up	£19 = 5.5% up	£18 = 5.9% up	£17 = 13.3% up	£ 15

Are you happy for your fees to increase?

2/2016

That the future funding to the Examinations Board by the BBKA from capitation is maintained and is sufficient to cover the deficit between the income generated from the assessment fees and the costs associated with conducting all assessments. This is to ensure the current examination fees do not increase and the number of exams conducted each year remains unlimited.

NB Around 5% of the total membership of about 25,000 members take exams every year. Which means that 95% of the non-exam taking membership are subsidising the examinations board shortfall every year.

In 2014 this subsidy was 3.2% of your capitation fee. The prediction for the future is that this level of subsidy would be between 2 – 4% of your fee.

Are you happy to continue to subsidise this or do you think that BBKA exams should be self-financing?

The next 4 are very similar and relate to the meeting rules (standing orders) for ADMs and SDMs

3/2016

That the Standing Orders used for ADM 2016 be adopted for future Delegate Meetings. Should any changes become necessary, they will be clearly indicated by a vertical line in the margin, alongside the changes which have been made, in order that they may be identified.

4/2016

By January 2017, BBKA will have formulated a standard set of “Standing Orders” for use at Annual and Special Delegate Meetings.

5/2016

That Standing Orders for Delegate Meetings shall ‘stand’ from one meeting to the next. Any alterations shall be by overt propositions for changes, stating whether they are to stand or to apply only for one specific meeting. Change propositions may come from either the Standing Orders Committee or an AAM with a seconder. Normal Delegate Meeting deadlines shall apply, so that propositions for changes can be circulated with the meeting papers.

6/2016

That BBKA uses the standing orders from the 2015 Annual delegates meeting as the basis for standing orders for future delegates meetings (Annual and Special). Amendment(s) to, or revision of these standing orders should be listed as propositions in the delegates packs alongside the established standing orders with an explanation of the amendment(s) or revision at the ADM or SDM. The amendments or revisions can only be voted upon at an ADM or SDM meeting.

7/2016

That the BBKA should have a Standing Orders Committee whose members are elected by the Delegates at the ADM; and that no more than half of the seats on the SOC should be occupied by any members who are concurrently serving on the BBKA Executive Committee or the Examinations Board. The EC is asked to form a working party, including representatives from AAMs to recommend the size, election procedure, and duration of appointments for the SOC; also to revise the Standing Orders for the ADMs and SDMs. Enabling amendments to the BBKA Constitution will be presented for adoption at the 2017 ADM.

8/2016

That for every vote at a Delegate Meeting using the electronic voting system, an account shall be published, and not least included with the minutes, identifying those AAMs voting For, voting Against and Abstaining.

NB currently the vote is secret and many delegates do not consult within their associations/branches regarding how to vote, do not feedback how they voted or what happened at the ADM

9/2016

It shall be the policy of the BBKA that any external entity under the control of the charity's trustees shall be subject to the same financial scrutiny as the charity itself. This shall apply not least to entities established with the expectation of raising funds for the charity, by means of trading activities. All Trustees, the BBKA Treasurer and potentially the Auditors shall be permitted the same access to the papers and data of all bodies that are under the ultimate legal control of the Trustees, as if those were papers and data of the BBKA. Accordingly, if any of these persons are refused access to any such information, they are under an obligation to report this, without delay, to the Member Associations.

NB currently BBKA Enterprises, controlled by BBKA, provides basic accounts to delegates for information only. Historically BBKA has had to underwrite any losses made by Enterprises, hence the desire for closer scrutiny

10/2016

It is proposed that alongside the current General Husbandry Examination the BBKA should offer a two part alternative that allows for those with less spare time to take the same assessment in two halves at their own time of choosing. This will make the General Husbandry exam much less daunting to prospective candidates who see it as a large syllabus to learn and very time consuming to undertake. This proposition would enable the qualification to maintain its reputation as a premium award in beekeeping, while enabling a greater number of candidates to undertake the examinations and possibly progress towards more advanced qualifications.

11/2016

REPEAL PROPOSITION 9/2014

Proposition 9/2014, passed at the 54th BBKA ADM does not warrant the time and financial expenditure of BBKA to achieve its goal. As such it should be repealed. The consequences of HM Treasury agreeing to a VAT reduction or waiver on beekeeping equipment would set a dangerous precedent, which would undoubtedly lead to similar organisations in the UK demanding a VAT reduction or waiver on their equipment. HM Government will already understand the likely outcome of setting such a precedent for beekeepers and as such are highly unlikely to consider a bill or amendment to the law which would allow for such demands.

NB Devon who proposed this said they would manage it on behalf of BBKA thereby costing the BBKA no time or effort and the EC see this new proposal as unconstitutional because it seeks to reverse a previous ADM decision.

12/2016

That the BBKA should record all its Executive Council meetings and make the minutes available to BBKA members through its website

13/2016

Delegates are asked to confirm their agreement to England hosting the International Meeting of Young Beekeepers in 2017.

NB If yes then this will require a levy of £1 per member in order to pay for hosting this event.

14/2016

Delegates are asked to agree to a one off levy of £1 per member being paid by associations to specifically contribute to the cost of hosting the 2017 International Meeting of Young Beekeepers.

Trustee elections

Just because there are vacancies does not mean that they have to be filled if candidates are possibly unsuitable.

1. President: Doug Brown or John Hendrie

I only know Doug Brown as I have been working with him because of the Annual Cycle Working Party. He is practical and pragmatic and is taking steps to try to improve the BBKA, e.g. the survey on what you think the BBKA should be doing and how.

2. Executive Committee: 4 or 5 vacancies depending on whether Doug Brown becomes President. What the BBKA need are sound business skills to manage it going forward. I only know two of these candidates. I have met Simon Cavin, he would be a breath of fresh air and is a skilled business man. Stephen Adkins joined the Annual Cycle working party late, contributed little and then resigned because he had did not agree with the agreed project scope.

James Laughton, John Morison, Margaret Wilson all seem to have a good business backgrounds and one would expect good political awareness and understanding.

3. Examination Board(EB) : 6 vacancies

Marin Anastasov, Gordon Cutting, Robert Smith, Celia Perry have not held BBKA positions before, have a good understanding of training and education so would seem to be prime candidates to be able to bring new ideas into the mix. Celia comes highly recommended by a member of the Annual Cycle working party whose judgement I trust.

Given the issue last year between Ken Basterfield and the EC regarding training which culminated in an SDM which changed nothing, one wonders if a completely fresh set of people with no historical baggage would not be a good idea.

David Blower, Roger Patterson, have either been trustees or been closely involved with the EB.

Lea Bayley, Alistair Welch and Ken Basterfield are currently serving on the EB and hoping to be re-elected

Caroline Bushell



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



Did you know



Neolithic people were harvesting from honeybee nests at least 8,500 years ago, researchers have discovered.

The scientists, partly funded by NERC (Natural Environment Research Council), analysed the residues on more than 6,000 samples of prehistoric pottery from more than 150 archaeological sites spread across Europe and the Near East. The distinctive chemical signature of beeswax appears in around 83 of them; only 33 of these were known before this paper. This is the first unequivocal evidence of a close and long-lived relationship between early farmers and honeybees.

We don't know if the wax came from wild or domesticated bees. But the findings, published in *Nature*, nevertheless provide a remarkable insight into how

people lived in early farming communities thousands of years ago - during the seventh millennium BC at the oldest site examined, Çatalhöyük in modern-day Turkey, through to the fourth millennium BC at sites in France and southern England. The most abundant beeswax traces came from the Balkans.

Dr Mélanie Roffet-Salque of the University of Bristol, the paper's lead author, said:

"The most obvious reason for exploiting the honeybee would be for honey, which would have been a rare sweetener for prehistoric people. However, beeswax could have been used in its own right, for various technological, ritual, cosmetic and medicinal purposes - for example, to waterproof porous ceramic vessels."

This isn't the first use of chemical analysis to find traces of early honeybee exploitation by farmers, but these results push back the earliest date at which we know this was happening by at least a millennium. Evidence on early people's relationship with bees is sparse. Cave art from the Palaeolithic has been interpreted as depicting people hunting for honey, but this isn't certain. The first conclusive evidence of beekeeping comes from Egyptian murals that were made around 2400BC.

The study also provides the first insights into where honeybees were found in the period. Professor Richard Evershed of the University of Bristol, one of the paper's authors and head of the lab that analysed the samples, commented:

"The chemical analysis lets us look at an animal with no fossil record and understand where it was living at different times. You don't find bits of bees lying around Neolithic campsites, but it turns out that if you look at a hundred potsherds there's a good chance you'll find that some have traces of beeswax. For the first time we can get an idea of how these bees were distributed across the region."

The researchers examined pottery finds from Scotland and Scandinavia, but there were no traces of beeswax from further north than modern-day Denmark. This suggests conditions beyond that point were too cold for honeybees to survive during the Neolithic. The ice sheets were still retreating at the end of the last ice age, and presumably bees were expanding northwards to colonise the newly-available habitats.

The research provides the first hard evidence that people in Neolithic North Africa were exploiting bees. It also settles the long-standing debate over whether honeybees came to Britain in prehistory or more recently, showing that they were almost certainly here several thousand years ago.

Reproduced from <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/latest/news/nerc/honeybees/>

The Bee Shop
Top Quality Beekeeper Clothing at Affordable Prices
See our website 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

Reading and District Beekeepers Association

On 13th October Reading Beekeepers welcomed John Howerson who is based in Andover and is an expert and enthusiast on The Warré beehive. Developed by French Abbe Emil Warré the design is intended to emulate the best natural wild habitat for a honey bee colony. In northern Europe this would be inside a hollow tree, where the bees build long combs at the top of the cavity, allowing debris to fall below, developing its own micro and larger fauna. Much of this is beneficial to the bees and they do not walk-on it when entering and moving around the colony, unlike the commonly used beehives. Warré Boxes are of equal size and can become a tall assembly. No foundation is

used, although a small strip of beeswax can be added under the bars which are similar to the better known top-bar lay-outs.



Many of us are aware of the problems with aracnicide and other chemical build-up in our beeswax which is the basis of the beeswax foundation we buy. The natural beeswax comb produced by bees in a Warré hive radically reduce this. The boxes have a one inch aperture which can be left open or closed depending on the season or ther factors such as wasps. Boxes can be obtained with a window side, with blanking piece so development of comb and bees can be observed. John demonstrated using a Warré with illustrations of all aspects of this hive and gave many items of sound advice on bee health and husbandry. For example in

the Warré the bees determine their own cell sizes and spacings which leads to far better results than using pressed foundation and frame spacers, pest control etc. The naturally developed floor (the Warré has a solid floor) can contain specimens of the 'false scorpion' which can predate on varroa as well as small scavengers such as psocids etc. The Warré hive is crowned with a hessian sheet and a 4 inch quilt comprising a sealed eke containing wood shavings. The roof is ventilated with louvres. John quilts the sides of his taller Warrés in winter.

John is proud to be 'bee centric' rather than 'honey centric', having kept many colonies of bees in 'Nationals' etc over the years and given the short life of many colonies in these difficult years enjoys his long lasting and healthy Warré housed colonies. John does have honey harvest after allowing at least one box of good sealed liquid honey for the bees (they naturally produce brood lower and stores above), he uses a suitable blade and wire to free the frames, rather as a block-like group, and the honey is released by cutting, draining and wringing. John assures us it's very special honey indeed!

This was a very interesting talk and demonstration and generated a lively question and answer session; it's possible that there are plenty of 'bee-centric' beekeepers who would be interested in longevity and more 'naturally' housed colonies. Photos illustrated the top-bar type frames from below, the one-inch ports in the boxes and boxes with removable blanks sides which have viewing glass beneath. With very many thanks to John and all who attended.

Our December meeting is at 7.30 sharp on Tuesday 8th December, at our usual venue of Caversham Heights Methodist Hall where we will welcome master Beekeeper Andrew Gibb to talk about 'Beekeeping and a Full Time Job'. Also we get a little festive at break so if you'd like the first mince-pie and warmed cordial of the season as well as learning something which is pertinent to many beekeepers don't miss it!

Beckys Beezzz Ltd

FOR ALL YOUR BEEKEEPING NEEDS...

At Beckys Bees we sell top quality mated queens and nucs as well as stocking a wide range of beekeeping products from cedar hives and varroa treatments to smokers and fuel and bee feed.

All our nucs comply to the standards set by Defra and NBU.
Manufacturers of Correx boxes that take both national & commercial frames, ventilated for optimum air flow when transporting bees. Light, strong and secure.

Stockists of Top quality cedar hives • Polystyrene & Ply Nuc Boxes • Frames & Foundation • Rauchbox Smokers & Smoker Fuel
 Varroa Treatments & Medicines • Vita Gold & Vita Green • Ambrosia Fondant & Syrup • Pollen Substitute • Disposable & Leather Gloves • Bee Suits & Gauntlets • Feeders • Extractors • Jars and lots lots more...

Distributors of Aulumgaards Ambrosia Beefeel & Enolapi Candipolline Gold, Competitive quotes for pallets orders.

Visit our online shop for our full range at www.beckysbeesonline.co.uk

Discounts given where i can. Please email me at beckysbeeszzz@gmail.com or Contact us on 01264 351104 • 07973 423628

Members of

BEE FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Slough Windsor and Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society

The Annual General Meeting

Members gathered on Tuesday 10th November for our AGM. This annual necessity is never going to be the most popular meeting of the year, but it is still an important opportunity for the members to contribute to the structure, running and direction of the organisation.

The Society is headed up by a committee of dedicated members, but sadly our president, Dennis Way, was unable to attend this year so our Chairman, Glynis Morse, efficiently directed the proceedings.

The agenda covered all the usual requirements including the President's address, delivered on his behalf by Don Church, in which he commented on the good honey crop in the South East compared to other regions which had been adversely affected by the summer's variable weather conditions. He also expressed surprise at the ever-increasing price of local honey and observed that he had not seen much evidence of winter planting of oil seed rape crops yet which may be good or bad news.

The treasurer reported that the membership numbers have remained stable over the current and previous years and it would be proposed that the annual subscription would remain unchanged for next year in spite of a £1 increase in the BBKA capitation amount.

The 'Any other business' section of the agenda generated lively debate about a proposal to introduce a 'late payment fee' for member's subscription which are not renewed by the end of September deadline, the administration of the society's honey extractors and the merits or otherwise of contributing to supporting a request for research funding.

The National Honey Show

Some of our members went to the National Honey Show held at St George's College in Weybridge at the end of October. This was the 83rd show and it seems to get bigger with every successive year.

It was a rewarding experience with the multitude of opportunities to attend lectures by international speakers on a range of topics, listen to talks about the latest bee related scientific research, review the hundreds of entries in the competition classes and indulge in a little (or a lot) of retail therapy.

The only problem in having so much choice was that it was impossible to do everything that looked interesting however there is good news in that it will be possible to view the main lectures using YouTube. The following two lectures are available now and others will be uploaded soon:

Debbie Delaney talking about Honey Marketing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3QA5zj3jb8&feature=youtu.be>

Juliana Rangel talking about The Biology of Mating

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLHcle6CKcg>

Winter Meetings 2015

Our next winter meeting will be our annual Christmas supper meeting, which will be held on Tuesday 8th December with a start time of 8.00pm.

This year, as well as lots of chat whilst enjoying snacks (plate of something sweet or savoury kindly provided by you) and drinks (wine, soft drinks, tea and coffee provided by the society), we will also have a beekeeping quiz. The questions will cover general beekeeping, bee anatomy, honey and wax.

Winter meetings are held at:

All Saints Parish Hall, Alexandra Road, Windsor SL4 1HZ.

The meetings are usually scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month beginning at 8 pm and refreshments are available.

Wokingham and District Beekeepers' Association

The saga of a new home for W&DBKA's apiary continues. Nigel and John have been to see the site in Finchampstead Road, but there is a problem with both access to it and car parking. At the moment, we are putting it on hold. We had a speculative email from a company in Bracknell stating that they had a large land space and were interested in hosting bees on their site, would we be interested in exploring this possibility further? Of course we would! Neil attended a meeting with them and following further discussions and site visits, decided it would be suitable. Both Nigel and John went to have a look, a few questions were raised which were put to the company but unfortunately they have 'gone quiet' on us at the moment, so we are still waiting to find out if we are able to have the site.

Our annual Honey Show took place on 11th November. As usual we had seven categories, runny honey, set honey, mead, a frame of honey for extraction, a bee related photograph, a bake containing honey and a wax item. The doors opened early and eager participants brought in their produce. Once it had been established that we were not going to receive any more entries, judging began.

Our judging is carried out on an informal basis, with each attending member receiving a slip of paper with five of the categories listed and each category judged in order of preference. The other three categories were judged differently. Six volunteers were asked if they would judge the mead and baking entries, needless to say, there were plenty of offers, and Neil Marshall judged the photographs. Neil did however have to disqualify one photo as it had been shown the previous year! What vigilance!

We then set about sampling every jar of honey and giving our subjective opinion of preference. It can be quite difficult to remember what you tasted after a few, so notes were helpful.

Once all categories had been judged, the slips of paper were handed to Lorna Rivett and Bob Loades, who entered the results into the computer and a specially written programme calculated the winners.

The winners of each category were:

Runny honey

1st Chris Bingham 2nd Katie Holmes 3rd Robin Roberts

Set honey

1st Jane Boyall 2nd Denise Grimson 3rd Wally Smallbone

Mead

1st Robin Roberts 2nd Lorna Rivett We only had two entries for this category

A frame of honey for extraction

1st Robin Roberts 2nd Mary Gillan 3rd Karen Roberts

Bee related photograph



1st Karen Roberts with this picture of a bee on a hydrangea

2nd Nigel Perkins

3rd Robin Roberts

Bake containing honey



- 1st Robin Roberts with his baklava
- 2nd Mary Gillan with her profiteroles
- 3rd Niall Riddell with his honey flap-jack

Wax item



- 1st Mary Gillan with her reindeer and sleigh
- 2nd Robin Roberts with his poppy (very appropriate as it was Remembrance Day)
- 3rd Garth Matthews with three wax blocks

We would like to thank all those who took part and congratulate all the winners who received either a trophy or a rosette. Nigel stated that next year there would be some different categories, so hopefully we will have even more entries.

Our final meeting of 2015 takes place at 7:30pm on 9 December at Wokingham Bowls Club where we will be having a light-hearted quiz and nibbles.

South Chiltern's Beekeepers' Association

The fourth South Chilterns Beekeepers' Association Honey Show was held in the Woodcote Community Hall on the evening of the 18th November and was well attended with some 40 members present.

Sue Remenyi opened the show and introduced the judges:

Reg Hook and Dave Moss were in charge of the honey judging. Reg said he would be looking at the colour, texture and taste. Dave had also brought his Refractor along to check the water content.

Nicola Swan, judging cakes and biscuits, said the criteria were appearance, texture, and in particular she would be looking for the Wow factor!

Caroline Maclascan judging the artwork, said the criteria were relevance to bees or beekeeping, skill and originality and she also said the Wow factor was important.

John and Jill Davey, judging mead and wax. Sadly we ended up without any mead entries but John gave a most informative short talk about mead and how to go about producing it so we hope that will inspire more members to enter this class next year.



There were a total of 42 entries and whilst the judges were at work the rest of us enjoyed tea and cake whilst tackling a series of bee related puzzles pinned around the room.

Before the winners were announced our Chair, Margaret Moore presented gifts to the outgoing Chair – Max Vine; to the outgoing Librarian of many years – Tim Selwyn and to our long standing Webmaster – Dave Moss. In recognition of 30 years service to South Chilterns, Tim was also awarded Lifetime membership.

John White then awarded certificates to the members who took the BBKA Basic Assessment in the Summer – all of whom passed with credit. Congratulations go to Chris Bergman, Duncan Brown, Sue Remenyi, Meryl Toomey, Helen Walkington and Max Vine.

The winners were then announced.

Class 1 Clear Light Honey

First	Max Vine
Second	Duncan Heather
Third	Sue Remenyi
Highly commended	Jo Burns

Class 2 Medium Clear Honey

First	John White
Second	Bob Busby
Third	Chris Bergman
Highly commended	Jemima Hume-Humphries

Class 3 Naturally Granulated Honey

First	Steve Radford
Second	John White
Third	Sue Remenyi
Highly commended	Jemima Hume-Humphries
Commended	Colin Davies (Greys Court)

There was no creamed honey or cut comb this year.

Class 6 Cake of Moulded Beeswax

First	Jemima Hume-Humphries
-------	-----------------------

Class 7 Moulded Beeswax Candle

First	Jemima Hume-Humphries
-------	-----------------------

There were no freestyle beeswax candles or beeswax craft products this year.

There was also no mead this year.

Class 11 Honey Cake

First	Liz Robinson
Second	Sue Sandford
Joint Third	Bev Woodward and Dave Moss

Class 12 Honey Biscuits

First	Dave Moss
Second	Chris Bergman
Third	Sue Remenyi

Class 13 Photography

First	Nicky Philips
Second	Linda Clarke
Third	Duncan Brown

Class 14 Artwork

First	Linda Clarke
Second	Rowena Redhead

Class 15 Junior Artwork

First	Julian Burns
-------	--------------



Overall Best in Show and holder of the Silver Platter for a year is Jemima Hume Humphries. John White and holder of the wooden Max Stone.

All winners of a best in class or category were rewarded with a copy of our limited edition South Chilterns 2016 calendar.

Thanks goes to everyone who participated with entries and to the judges. A fun evening was had by all.

Bee Improvement Day

South Chilterns and BIBBA have joined forces to offer a one day course on “Raising your own Queens” on Saturday 13 February 2016 at the Berkshire College of Agriculture. It is hoped that by attending this course beekeepers will learn how improve their bees and those of the surrounding area by raising local queens from their best colonies and culling the poor ones.

Honeybee improvement should be of interest to all beekeepers for a number of reasons including temper, hygiene, quietness on the combs and suitability to the locality.

The course will be presented by Roger Patterson and is organised to help and encourage beekeepers of all abilities to improve their bees, using simple techniques and without the need for specialist equipment.

Topics covered include:

- Setting the criteria you want in your bees;
- How to assess your own and other people's colonies;
- Recording your assessments using simple methods;
- Rearing queens from local bees to avoid relying on buying them;
- Deciding which colonies to use queen cells from and which queens to cull;
- Using natural queen cells the bees build;
- Producing “Artificial” queen cells for those who want more queens;
- Changing queens in colonies;
- Making up mating nuclei;
- Getting queens mated
- Working with other beekeepers and local BKAs.

There will be plenty of information on colony management, with an emphasis on understanding what is happening inside colonies and keeping things simple.

Many beekeepers believe some of the current bee problems have been caused by the continued importation of bees and queens. This course will help beekeepers to rear their own queens from local stock and not rely on imports.

Bee Improvement courses are organised by BIBBA on a nationwide basis, in conjunction with local BKAs or bee breeding groups.

The cost to attend is £12 for South Chiltern members and £20 for anyone else. Bookings can be made from <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/raising-your-own-queens-honey-bee-improvement-day-tickets-20033388404> (South Chiltern members will receive a separate link).

Christmas recipes

Quinoa, Pistachio and Honeyed Carrot Salad

Serves 4

200g quinoa, rinses and drained

2 large carrots, peeled and thinly sliced diagonally

2tbs honey

2tsp ground cumin

35g shelled pistachios

2tbs olive oil

1tsp paprika

Juice and zest of 1 lemon

Handful of mint leaves

Handful of coriander leaves

100g feta, crumbled

Place quinoa in a medium saucepan and cover with 275ml water. Bring to boil and cook on low heat for about 15 minutes until quinoa is tender and water absorbed. Set aside to cool.

Preheat oven to 200 degrees and Line a baking tray with baking paper.

Combine carrot with 1½ tbs honey and 1/2tsp cumin. Cook in oven for 15 minutes, turning occasionally, until carrot starts to caramelise.

Spread pistachios over a second baking tray. Bake with the carrot for 5 minutes or until lightly toasted. Coarsely chop the pistachios.

Heat oil in a small saucepan over low heat. Add paprika and remaining cumin. Cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and whisk in the lemon juice and remaining honey.

Combine quinoa, carrot, pistachio, mint and coriander in a large bowl. Drizzle with the paprika mixture and toss to combine. Place on a serving dish and top with feta and lemon zest

Honey Glazed Duck

1 duck
1 tsp sunflower oil
2 tsp five spice powder
200g clear honey
2 tbsp dark soy sauce
2 tsp dry sherry
2 tsp Dijon mustard

Bring the duck to room temperature. Heat oven to 140C/ 120C fan/gas 1. Pull out and discard any large lumps of fat from inside the duck, then rub it all over with some salt, the oil and five-spice powder. Sit the duck in a roasting tin, and roast for 2 hrs.

For the glaze, mix the honey, soy, Sherry and mustard in a bowl. When the duck has had its time, remove it from the oven, pour off any fat from the tin and baste generously with the glaze. Turn the oven up to 190C/170C fan/gas 5 and roast the duck for a further 20 mins until sticky and bronzed. Remove the duck to a clean dish to catch any juices and allow it to rest for at least 20 mins before serving.

The juices work well as a gravy – pour into a bowl and leave to settle. Use a ladle to remove the fat from the juices, then tip the juices back into the saucepan and reheat to serve.

Baclava

250g melted butter
625g chopped nuts (walnuts, almonds or combination)
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 packet filo pastry
1 cup (220g) caster sugar
1 cup (250ml) water
6 tablespoons Greek honey
1 large piece of lemon peel

Preheat oven to 180 C. Grease base and sides of a 20-23cmx30cm baking dish.

Toss nuts with cinnamon and set aside.

Unroll filo pastry and then cut whole stack at once to fit the dimensions of the baking dish. Cover filo with a damp cloth to keep from drying out as you work.

Place two sheets of filo in the dish, buttering the top layer.

Sprinkle 2 to 3 tablespoons of nut mixture on top. Top with two more sheets of filo, butter and nuts, layering as you go. The top layer should be about 6 to 8 sheets deep.

Using a sharp knife, cut into diamond or square shapes all the way to the bottom of the dish.

Bake in preheated oven for about 50 minutes until baklava is golden and crisp.

Make syrup while baklava is baking. Boil sugar and water until sugar is dissolved. Add honey and lemon peel. Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, then remove from heat and allow to cool. Remove lemon peel and discard.

Remove baklava from oven and immediately pour cooled syrup over it.



Association websites

All four Federation member association websites have a lot of information – some of which may only be relevant to that association, but there is also quite a bit that is useful to us all. Here are the links for your reference:

Reading & District Beekeepers Association: <http://www.rbka.org.uk/>

South Chilterns Beekeepers' Association: <http://www.scbka.org>

Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society: <http://swmbks.weebly.com/>

Wokingham and District Beekeepers Association: www.wokinghambeekeepers.org.uk/

Useful Links, Advice and Information

<http://www.apinews.com/> This website is a mine of information from around the world. You can subscribe to their newsletter.

<http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/newhome.html> This website has a lot of really useful information for the beekeeper.

<http://www.beekeepingforum.co.uk/> This is a portal for all things beekeeping.

<http://www.bbka.org.uk/> The British Beekeepers Association.

<http://hymenopteragenome.org/beebase/> Beebase is a comprehensive data source for the bee research community.

<http://www.lapisonline.it/index.php/en/l-apis-excerpt> A long standing Italian publication which now has an English section.

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,

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

Contributions 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 7th of the following month. Contributions received after this may 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.