



# 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 2016

Number 711

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## Editor's Corner

How many of you took the opportunity of looking at your bees on Good Friday? What a delightful day it was for bees and beekeepers alike. That is not to say of course that we were equally delighted with what we found during this early inspection. I was pleased to see that both my hives have made it safely through the winter, albeit that one is much stronger than the other. Sadly, reports from a number of beekeeper friends are not so good with multiple hives being lost. We can often attribute harsh winters and cold springs to such losses, but we are left seeking other explanations this year after the mild winter.



On another topic, whilst looking at my hives I was dive-bombed by a queen wasp seeking out a nesting site! I read that it is a good idea to put out wasp traps now in an attempt to catch the queens and thus reduce the number of nests that supply the endless bombardment of these predators in late summer. I found a clever device to insert into plastic drinks bottles and now have 4 traps in strategic locations around the garden. I am experimenting with beer, lemonade, apple juice and a Raspberry alchie-pop as bait. In addition to the sweetness, following online recommendations I have added some little bits of bacon. I'll let you know if I have any success and do please share any other techniques

that you might be using! (<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Drinks-Bottle-Converter-Hornet-Chemicals/dp/B0081ZPQTG> )

*Sue Remenyi*

## C. Wynne Jones

Ty Brith Pentrecelyn, Ruthin, LL15 2SR



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## Federation News

As you probably know, a survey of the membership of the BBKA was conducted during the months of October to December 2015 by a Working Party set up by Doug Brown during his period as Chairman of the BBKA. The intention of the Survey was to obtain the reaction of the membership of the BBKA to a number of questions and suggestions for the way the BBKA should develop in the future. Doug promised to give the results as wide a circulation as possible and he says they will be circulated to the 8,000+ emails registered with the BBKA and will also be placed in the Members Only content on the website. If you are interested in seeing the 54 page report and have not received it by other means, let me know and I will forward it to you.

*Caroline Bushell, Caretaker Chairman*

### **Beekeeping equipment and supplies**

All types of hives and accessories kept in stock.

Second quality cedar items seasonally available.

Varroa treatments include Bee-Bay hive clean and Vita Apiguard from stock.

Giordan main supplier for extracting and honey processing equipment.

Honey packaging jars and containers always available.

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Mobile 07929586037

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## Did you know ....

Researchers at the University of Cologne claim to have successfully trained honey bees to tell the difference between heroin and cocaine. They say that the insects could eventually replace sniffer-dogs at airports! Read the full article here

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0128528>

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## In My Apiary

I don't think I can call myself just a beekeeper, more of an evolving beekeeper as my apiary and manipulation have slowly changed over the last sixteen years. The more I work my hives the more I see my system is not as efficient and as slick as it could be. I started with the standard National, solid floor and 12 B.S. frames. Then brood and a half, then double brood box. At this point I disliked pulling the brood nest in half and also going through 24 frames. The time to change to National 14x12 brood box plus only 11 frames and a dummy board. Then came the open mesh floor which I leave open all year round.

My hive stands have had many changes over the years and at the moment my design is at a height so I don't have to bend when manipulating the brood box. It has mesh around the stand to stop wind going under the floor and to keep wasps and bees from scavenging under the mesh floor. It has built in varroa board about 150mm below the mesh floor so I can check varroa drop any time without changing the air movement through the mesh floor.

The next change was to reduce the brood box down to 10 brood frames and two dummy boards. This opened the way for a wider range of manipulations which would help in my queen rearing system. Nucleus boxes have so many uses and are under used by many beekeepers. One use is to

stack them on top of each other like a chimney and the bees build lovely new combs and then they can be broken down for raising queens.

My queen rearing is evolving to suit my beekeeping system. When I make a change I only do it to one hive in the first year. If the change has improved my beekeeping, the following year I make the change to one hive in every apiary and at the end of the second year and if the changes still stand out, then all hives will have the change made to them by year four.

So don't just be beekeepers, be evolving beekeepers and learn loads. Most of all have fun with your bees.

*Nigel Perkins, W&DBKA Chairman*

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| <p style="text-align: center;">The Bee Shop<br/>Top Quality Beekeeper Clothing at Affordable Prices<br/><b>See our website <a href="http://www.thebeeshop.co.uk">www.thebeeshop.co.uk</a></b><br/>Full Suits (Round Hat &amp; Fencing Veil Styles) in White, Camel, Olive &amp; Camo<br/>Smocks (Round Hat &amp; Fencing Veil Styles)<br/>Sizes from Infant to XXXL<br/><b>Full adult suits under £50 - delivered free</b></p> |
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## Reading and District Beekeepers Association

On Tuesday 16th February Reading Beekeepers assembled at our usual venue for a unique presentation, which proved to be both instructive and absorbing, by Mr Peter Higgs the chief executive and operative of a commercial company 'BeeGone', specializing in the "extraction of honeybees alive from structures & re-homing them".

Peter makes no apologies for the fact that he also has a business dealing with wasps etc. 'PBH Pest Control' founded in 2008. However we are most of us aware from frequent calls we get about honeybee colonies in roofs and chimneys etc., that pest control companies, who are often the first recipient of calls by unhappy hosts to bees, respond with 'sorry we can't deal with. This is because if a company is to be registered by 'icosh', 'BPCA', 'Trading Standards Approved' and be listed as 'checked by DBS' there is legislation that applies to the removal of honey bee colonies from buildings & structures. Viz.

These three procedures to be adhered-to.

1. Non lethal removal of all comb and safe retrieval and re housing of the colony.
2. Lethal insecticide use and break-in to structure to remove all comb and occupants to be disposed of in approved non-accessible (to insects and others) site.
3. Lethal insecticide the site completely sealed-off to prevent insects & others entering.

The maximum fine for non compliance by professional operatives is £25,000.

Note that the term 'comb' rather than 'bees' is used. As beekeepers we will recognise this is because of our bees love of robbing from unattended colonies and also occupation of same by swarms. It's gratifying that there is legislation to protect us, our bees and the environment from the spread of insecticides from treated colonies, honey being desirable and sought after by many life forms as well as bees.

Peter himself has hives of bees and will be happy to pass extracted colonies onto beekeeping groups that require the help of Messer's BeeGone . We rarely hear of 'steeple-jack' swarm collectors these days amongst our bee keeping community, this bee keeper understands we're not covered for it in our BBKA policies. There used to be some great characters combining 'flueology' (chimney sweeping) with going-up high and lowering-down chimney pots full of comb and bees; no

doubt the passing of time has stiffened the joints. Although there are a couple of roofers in the Reading Association who'll look at it. No doubt they have their 'roofer's insurance'.

Pete's team has numerous hazards to check for, structure safety, height; they will only operate with scaffolding or 'cherry pickers', strictly no ladders'. Asbestos, old pesticides, anaphylactic shock etc.

Most of the customers are aware of the importance of bees and request procedure 1 as above. The BeeGone team then resembles typical beekeepers, removing comb, tying onto frames, setting-up a box and waiting for the bees to join with the queen and colony. Being a beekeeper himself Pete has successfully found and reserved queens on a number of occasions. Illustrations were provided of bee boxes secured high on chimneys, great depth of chimneys with traces of where the comb was attached a long-way down!

Peter Higgs is a splendid fellow, more power to him and his business, often warehouse and commercial businesses use his services> His surveys are free, look on BeeGone's web-site for his rates! [www.beegone.co.uk](http://www.beegone.co.uk).

A really good session germane to all beekeepers in our opinion with thanks' to Peter and all who attended.

April meeting. For our first outdoor 'summer session' we are the guests of Annette and Martin Jukes in Warwick Road Reading stating at 11-30AM on Sunday 17th. Annette and Martin are highly proactive beekeepers having dealt with many procedures, shaking-out drone layers, re-queening etc. Last seen their colonies were burgeoning! See you there.



The advertisement features the Bee Basic Ltd logo in the top left corner, consisting of the words 'BEE BASIC LTD' in yellow letters arranged in a hexagonal pattern. To the right of the logo is the website address 'www.beebasic.co.uk' and the tagline 'All the protection you need, and more'. The central image shows five people wearing different styles of beekeeping protective gear: a tan jacket, a tan suit, a tan suit with a hood, a yellow jacket, and a tan suit with a hood. Below the images, the text reads 'Jackets from £36' and 'Suits from £46'. At the bottom, there is contact information: 'Call us for friendly advice, a free brochure, or visit our web site', '5 Hillcrest Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 1AJ', 'E-mail: sales@beebasic.co.uk', '020 8866 3864', 'Free Delivery on UK orders', and 'Prices subject to VAT'. A small note at the bottom right says 'Open to 9 pm except Sundays'.

## BIBBA

The Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) would like to inform you about a free newsletter that they are making available to anyone interested in improving their bees. You can read a copy – which is called BIBBA Humm from the link below. There is a link from this page to subscribe to future issues.

<http://us8.campaign-archive2.com/?u=539749ff0ecfb725b841f2421&id=0169c1dfc9&e=680a88ff6c>

## Slough Windsor and Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society

On Tuesday 8th March we learnt about first aid for beekeepers from Andrea Woolley. A basic knowledge of First Aid is essential for everyone, not just beekeepers and Andrea gave an introductory talk on the subject with reference to the dangers of allergies and particularly anaphylactic shock.

Andrea Woolley, RSC, BSc, introduced herself as a registered nurse with many years' experience of working in hospital Accident & Emergency. She holds a degree in occupational health and safety and has extensive experience in teaching cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and anaphylaxis management to GPs and childminders. She has also suffered a severe allergic reaction herself and so has very personal experience.

Andrea started by asking the question "Why would beekeepers need to know about First Aid?" but the answer is that everyone needs to have the knowledge and skills to cope in a medical emergency. If more people were able to recognize anaphylaxis, a heart attack or stroke, then they would be able to take appropriate action when needed.

What is anaphylaxis? To break the word down: ana means against, whilst phylaxis is protection. It is a life threatening allergic reaction that can affect the airways and/or breathing and/or circulation. As the reaction develops a range of symptoms may appear including swelling, breathlessness, dizziness and a drop in blood pressure which can lead to unconsciousness. Other possible symptoms include a rash, hives, nausea, abdominal pain and anxiety. All or any of these symptoms may occur in any order.

There are on average 4 sting related deaths per annum of which 3 out of the 4 are likely to be wasp stings. 30% of the population have allergies and some may be allergic to either or both bee and wasp venom - the venoms are not the same and it is rare for someone to be allergic to both. A show of hands in the audience revealed that there were at least two people present who have had significant reactions to bee stings. There is evidently a need to conduct risk assessments, be that in the Society apiary or in our own apiaries.

Andrea raised important issues to be considered when trying to manage the risks; the primary one being to avoid being stung at all: the use of protective clothing is essential unless you are very confident that you will not have a severe reaction.

Other practical considerations relate to the location of the apiary, whether emergency services would be able to get access to the casualty and work safely, away from or protected from the bees. There may be difficulties in operating a mobile phone whilst wearing gloves and possible problems when assessing the condition, trying to examine or resuscitate a casualty whilst they are wearing a bee suit and veil. These difficulties can be anticipated and a plan of action formulated.

Extra care should be taken by the lone beekeeper who should inform someone else about their timescales for return and have an emergency plan for backup.

A severe allergic reaction can occur very rapidly and there may be as little as two minutes from the onset of the reaction to a loss of consciousness. Andrea warned that if the casualty has stopped breathing no-one should attempt mouth to mouth resuscitation unless they have been fully trained in CPR but can try compression CPR.

Questioning from the audience prompted a discussion about the pros and cons of carrying and administering an adrenaline pen i.e EpiPen (the brand name of one of several adrenaline auto-injectors which may be prescribed to those who have already had a severe allergic reaction). Andrea advised that these are prescription medicines and should only be with the person to whom it has been prescribed. However, she suggested that it may be beneficial to take anti-histamines, either as a preventative or to reduce the symptoms of bee stings after the event.

An hour is certainly not enough time to learn even the basics of CPR but everyone could benefit from attending a longer focussed training course.

Andrea has written three excellent articles on these subjects; they were published in Beecraft magazine between April and June last year. Andrea is able to provide more comprehensive training and can be contacted on [andrea.woolley@live.co.uk](mailto:andrea.woolley@live.co.uk).

### **Apiary Meetings**

Our summer meetings are held at the society's apiary where members can learn and gain hands-on experience of all aspects of beekeeping. Meetings are held at 2.30pm on alternate Sundays. The April meetings will be held on the 3rd and 17th subject to weather permitting.

## Winter Meetings 2016

Our next winter meeting will be on Tuesday 12th April.

The speaker is David Rudland who will give a talk about the use of nucleus boxes, a subject which is nicely timed as we approach the season when we can put into practice what we learn.

This is the last evening meeting until we recommence on Tuesday 13th September 2016.

Our 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.

General information and details of all our meetings and can be found on our website:

<http://swmbks.weebly.com/meetings.html> .

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## Advert submitted by a Reading Member



For sale: Dartington Long Hive (used for one season), complete with all accessories, see photograph - price £200.

50 BS Manley frames, Thorne's seconds - price £32.

10 x 10 sheet packs of Thorne's BS shallow wired worker base foundation - price £5 per pack of 10.

**Contact:** [alisonbrindley67@btinternet.com](mailto:alisonbrindley67@btinternet.com) – tel 0118 9835403 for further information.

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## South Chiltern's Beekeepers' Association

Wednesday 16th March: Talk by Peter Higgs from BeeGone

Peter previously worked as a pest control officer and has a special interest in honey bee extraction. He realised that there was a serious need for the safe removal of bees from difficult places and started BeeGone in 2009 with the aid of a grant from the Princes Trust.

BeeGone specialises in removing bees from chimneys, internal walls and buildings. They aim not only to remove feral honey bees from structures, relocating and preventing them from returning, but to educate people and businesses alike making a difference to the way honey bees are dealt with and thus reducing the need for pesticides.

Peter talked about insecticides, why bees have to be removed from buildings, how they are removed and how to prevent them returning.

Many insecticides are capable of killing bees, their biology is not too dissimilar to that of pest species, so there is a risk of 'non-target' poisoning. You can be fined up to £25,000 in the UK for treating bees with insecticides, such as Ficam D, if you are not licensed to do so.

Ficam D is a Bendiocarb insecticide, it also contains talcum powder which penetrates voids very easily. It is used against all flying or crawling insects, especially wasps and people don't always know the difference between wasps and honey bees. Bendiocarb has a 5 year life and white patches are a tell-tale sign of treatment when left in walls and voids from the blow out.

The insecticide may kill off the colony, but it will also leave long lasting damage to the environment and successive colonies. The smell of the residue the treated colony leaves is attractive to other honeybees. Eventually more swarming bees will re-colonise the same place and spread the insecticide to other foraging bees. It not only contaminates the honey, but kills the bees. If insecticide is to be used, then the combs and the colony have to be removed immediately on a cool morning or when the foraging is low. The contaminated honey has to be disposed of through a registered disposal team and all entrances have to be sealed to prevent bees returning.



Removing bees and relocating them is a far more effective and environmentally friendly solution than using insecticide.

Honey bees will colonise any cavity in a structure whether it's built by man or is naturally occurring. When they do this in occupied buildings or near people they can become a public health risk or potentially damage buildings.

Moving swarms from bushes and trees is a common activity during swarming season for beekeepers, both experienced and inexperienced. However, when a swarm colonises a cavity in a structure and they need

to be removed for safety, nuisance, structural damage or work prevention reasons, removal is not an easy job, even for experienced beekeepers let alone the inexperienced and uninsured.

It's not just the risk of being stung by the bees when breaking into their home to remove them, it's also the fabric of the building that can be dangerous, such as asbestos, wiring cables and blocked gas fires. There are also risks involved when working at height, using power tools, naked flames and the weather conditions.

BeeGone carry out a full site survey and risk assessment before anything is done. Once they remove the honeybees they proof the structure to prevent other honey bees getting back in.

BeeGone work closely with local and national beekeepers, relocating colonies into their hives or notifying them of illegally treated nests so they can take precautions. They will happily provide help over the phone and will donate colonies to local beekeepers, especially if they have recommended BeeGone.

*Jo Burns*

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## **Wokingham and District Beekeepers Association**

At our last winter meeting we had a great talk from our Regional Bee Inspector (RBI), Julian Parker, who has taken over the Southern Region from Nigel Semmence. Julian gave us an update on the Asian Hornet in Europe, The Small Hive Beetle in South West Italy and it was quite clear that it's not 'if they arrive' but 'when they arrive'. He also spoke about AFB and EFB and the levels of infection found in the last season. One disease the Bee Unit came across a lot in 2015 was Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus, which we were shown footage of. Last of all, he talked about the Varroa mite, but we sadly ran out of time. It's always good to have a refresher about bee disease before the season starts.

We are still having an up-hill struggle to get a new Association Apiary up and running, as we lost our old site half way through the last season. The Committee has been working hard to find a replacement site and how hard can that be! Well, as it turns out it is extremely hard to find a site which is secure, with adequate car parking, room to expand and a large storage shed we can dive into, so we can carry on talking beekeeping when the rain shower comes over and of course storage for spare equipment. The site which ticks most of the boxes was offered by Dell Computers in Bracknell, who are very keen for us to go there and all was going very well until the Dell Legal Department had to rubber stamp it. This started a large amount of "what ifs", but luckily for us we have Neil Marshall answering their questions and giving them suggestions on how to get around any concerns they may have. We are confident that these concerns can be resolved and Dell are very keen for us to take up residence. In the meantime, we will carry on looking for a standby site. Unfortunately it will hold up our plans for training events for new beekeepers and a queen rearing programme. Thanks to Neil Marshall we will be able to run a once a month open apiary session for new beekeepers at his apiary. The Association hives will be open for members who would like to help inspect them and gain more hive experience working the bees which are at a temporary site on a farm. To date all Association colonies have come through the winter and we hope to do a full inspection very soon, as day time temperature warms up.

## Apiary Open Sessions

The first open session at Neil Marshall's apiary site is 8th May. Subsequent dates and directions can be found on the W&DBKA website.

## Summer Meetings

First summer meeting at the Two Poplars is Wednesday 13th April at 7.30pm. Everyone welcome. More information can be found on the W&DBKA website.

## BeeBase

Don't forget to log into BeeBase and keep your information up-to-date.



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or Contact us on 01264 351164 • 07973 423628

Members of  
BEE FARMERS ASSOCIATION

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## Dates for your Diary

- 8-9 April BBKA Spring Convention, Harper Adams College, Shropshire  
[http://www.bbka.org.uk/news\\_and\\_events/spring\\_convention.php](http://www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/spring_convention.php)
- 7 May 37th Annual Auction of Beekeeping Equipment and Bees  
The Meon Valley Beekeepers Association  
The Greatham Village Hall, Hampshire GU33 6AD  
Further information: Margaret Pallant. 07784 773345  
[margaretpallant@btinternet.com](mailto:margaretpallant@btinternet.com)
- 27-29 October National Honey Show, Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ  
<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/>

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## 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/](http://www.wokinghambeekeepers.org.uk/)

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## **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.

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### **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 Inspector is:**

**Southern Region:** Julian Parker at: [julian.parker@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:julian.parker@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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**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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.