

FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

September 2005 Number 591

Hon. Secretary: William Napper Flat 27A School Road Tilehurst, Reading. Berkshire. RG31 5AR. Tel: 0790 6903413

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

E-mail: berksbees@btinternet.com

Hon. Editor R.F.Crocker 25 Shiplake Bottom Peppard Common, Oxon RG9 5HH (0118 972 2315)

Future Events

21 st – 26 th August 2005	Apimondia Dublin	
29 th September	Federation Autumn Show & Talk	Dr Keith Lucas-Pollination & alpine flora
21 st –23 rd October	National Honey Show	

The Federation Autumn Event and Open Honey Show

Will be held on Thursday 29th September at 7.30 pm

Staging of exhibits from 6.30 to 7.15 pm

at: -

CHARVIL VILLAGE HALL, CHARVIL (Map on page 7)

Dr. Keith Lucas of Reading University

Will be speaking on pollination and alpine flora

Honey Judge: -

Mr. Nick Grey from Buckinghamshire

Put it in your diary now!

Show schedules and entry forms, which include special classes for children under 14, From Hazel Blackburn Tel: 0118 9475451

In the Apiary - September

We now come to a crucial month in the beekeeping year, It's often been said that up to mid-month September is still summer and then autumnal, this is dependant on the first frost of course but in the south we may expect to find our bees foraging any source of nectar and pollen that is available in sufficient quantity. Micklemas daisy obviously and in this writers apiary they have been seen active on prolific nasturtium blossom, various mints, crocosmia and rockrose, prospects for ivy stretch ahead into the other autumn months. We need to gauge this because of course we will as mainly hobbyist beekeepers having to wrestle with the techniques of harvesting and extracting our honey, later in the month thinking about feeding and preparing our colonies for the winter and now of all months: anti varroa measures!

In 5 years this beekeeper has only seen an actual varroa mite twice, once in a colony of his own in the autumn after using Apiguard the previous September, the other occasion is another story. It was on attempting to rescue a sole remaining colony of what had been quite a big garden apiary that had been abandoned for 5 years. They were not viable.

My own affected colony had a low population, containing a number of cruelly deformed bees, incapable of flight and died-out over winter. That year my honey crop was well down. I don't intend to disparage Apiguard but since I have been back on Apistan things have been better.

Seb. Owen of Vita (Europe) Ltd the licensee for both of these products writes in the August edition of BeeCraft that Apiguard works by denaturing the tissues of the mites, i.e. differently from the pyrethrum based Apistan and Bayvarol. These act specifically on the nervous systems of these creatures, which like many micro and macro life forms, are capable of evolving quite quick adjustments to their physiology to develop resistance in succeeding generations of mites.

Apistan in the average colony will require two strips, best to place them between the most active brood frames in your brood boxes in my opinion and they should be left-in place for not less than 6 weeks and not more than 8. When you remove them say last week in October, have a pair of pliers with you, you will probably need them to seize the end of the strip and pull it carefully away from the frames, propolised at the top and probably waxed-up further down. Don't let any fragments stay on frames or fall to the hive floor without retrieval. It's exposing varroa to non-lethal amounts of pyrethrum that typically started the resistant strains evolving. For this same reason don't leave-in longer than the recommended 8 weeks.

Seb. Owen also writes that you could use both Apiguard and Apistan at the same-time, but suggests it would be a waste of money hobbyist beekeepers will already know that it would be cheaper to buy our honey in Sainsbury's. Apiguard was originally developed as a specific for nosema and as a general health improver for bee hives (some financially acute apiarist uses a tea-bag style pouch of thymol which is the active ingredient of Apiguard) or even a couple of flakes of naphtha on the floor of hives after giving them a good scrape as early as possible in spring. Perhaps we should not rule this out! After all our beloved charges need to be in top condition with all the threats they confront in the autumn-early spring period. There are wasps to fight-off, many losses last season may have been influenced by the health and vigour of the defending bees, likewise the insidious infiltration of wax moth, and bad weather in prospect.

Just a word on the subject of wasps to finish on. This has been a season with late plant growth and late population development of insects we will have seen this in our hives: because of the poor spring, in my humble opinion the wasps have not been able to build-up to the high levels they had by this time last year. So it may be too late for them to become the serious menace to our bees that they were last year, I'm sure we all hope so!

Triad

Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

Southern Region: - Mr. Ian Homer. Fax/Telephone number: 01308 482 161
South Eastern Region: - Mr. Alan Byham Fax/Telephone number: 020 8571 6450

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Five members joined Nigel Perkins on Sunday 10th July to inspect some of his hives at Hurst. We looked at three colonies all of which seemed to be prospering although like most of us Nigel reported that honey production had been very poor this year. Nigel's site is an old nursery containing a large pond and is well populated with grass snakes although they were well hidden during our visit.



Examination results

Congratulations to four of our members, Adrian Kyte, Bob Loades, Nigel Perkins and Peter Seagrave who successfully passed the practical BBKA Basic Assessment. Beulah Cullen was the examiner and was pleased with the standard of knowledge displayed by the candidates.

Evening meetings

Our first evening meeting is on Wednesday 12th October at the usual venue of St Paul's Parish Rooms. We are expecting a speaker from 'Friends of the Emmbrook', a newly formed environmental group aiming to protect and preserve the Emmbrook.

Secretary John Edwards 0118 934 0238

SOUTH CHILTERNS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Our first indoor meeting will be the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 19th October. Nominations for Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Committee are required.

Nominations should preferably be in writing, to the Secretary please. Do not forget to get the nominee's permission.

Eleven of our members met at Bill Sievwright's out apiary on the slopes of Lollingdon Hill near Cholsey in extremely hot weather.

Bill runs a small apiary of three modified Nationals with a difference - all are single broad chamber 14 x 12, top bee space with open mesh floors and plain crown boards, the latter two items made by Bill himself. Bill prefers all the brood to be in one box. We were fortunate in having Reg Hook as our demonstrator for the afternoon.

The first colony, a very goad tempered stock, revealed a laying queen but a low covering of bees. It had not built up all year and Bill was worried that it had disease, none was found. A nice young queen had emerged and was laying a good brood pattern indicating that the original queen had been superceded. However, it was felt that the colony was ready to start building up rapidly in preparation for the winter.

The second colony also revealed another well-tempered stock, brood in all stages. One comb of sealed brood attracted much attention so much so that a photographic record was made.

The third and last hive, which had been found on the side of the road in a nuc box, was a complete contrast despite the gentle and expert manipulations of our demonstrator. The most noticeable trait was the excessive following after closing down during the walk back down the hill - a case for re-queening if at all possible. No disease was found despite Bill's worries.

After the meeting we all reconvened at Bill's home for a most enjoyable tea kindly provided by Bill's wife Joyce. The main topic of discussion naturally was in



connection with the proposed DEFRA cuts and what we could all do individually and nationally in order to appose these cuts. Some of us had heard Michael Badger on the radio and all looked forward to looking at Country File on BBC 1 the following morning. BBKA have circulated a petition which all who were present signed.

Our thanks go to Bill, Joyce, and Reg for an enjoyable and instructive afternoon.

Tim Selwyn

Kiwi leads learning curve

BEGINNINGS of chalk brood, capped brood with varroa damage, nosema, wax moth infestation and even possible European foul brood were all found during South Chilterns' annual apiary tour. Consequently, the day, led by seasonal bee inspector Charles Fryer, provided an excellent learning curve for the 10 new or relatively new beekeepers attending.

New Zealander Charles, in many cases younger than those learning from him, has a wide background both at home and in the UK, including commercial beekeeping. He was standing in for our regional bee inspector Ian Homer, who has been banned by the National Bee Unit from handling bees until he get the results of tests after he went into anaphylactic shock on an evening walk. He thinks the cause was a horse fly or similar.

We were impressed by Charles's calm approach and use of very little smoke even when dealing with 'Satan's bees' in our secretary Annette Cleaver's two hives. She has now been given the all-clear as far as EFB is concerned (there have been incidents locally), but will have to requeen to solve their bad temper. Mind you, her 'gels' were producing plenty of honey.

Comparisons between the four apiaries (three near Maidenhead and Annette's north of Henley) taught us a great deal. For example, my 'gels' were living up to Miss Brodie's crème de la crème. Brood boxes had been left severely alone from May 10 to June 5, on the advice of my expert teacher George Butler, when they were found to be queenless. In fact, I had lazily not gone into the brood boxes, having seen that pollen was going in, until the apiary tour. Luckily, both hives were very strong and I bottled 155lbs of honey a few days later!

Just a few miles across the fields, it was a different story. My colleague, a very keen new beekeeper, had paid too much attention to her bees and the virgin queens had been disturbed. A useful lesson, but both of us could have been in trouble, me particularly from disease.

Still, we all cheered up during lunch at the appropriately named Beehive pub.

Lynn Penfold

Secretary: Annette Cleaver (01491) 642021

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

On Sunday 10th July Reading and District Beekeepers had the very great pleasure to assemble at Tim and Hilary Whitaker's garden apiary in Mapledurham, we had a splendid day as we usually do for this meeting with weather as a precursor for the fortnight's heat to follow.

Tim now has some colonies from Jean Kirton after his losses over winter; the bees seem to have relocated in the Thames meadows at Mapledurham from Caversham Heights very successfully. Jean was present and was glad to see her former charges looking so well. One colony was somewhat down on population that morning,

Tim thought there may have been a very recent unseen swarm, There were some queen cups and cells present but none appeared to be recent, and the cells appeared to have been broken into by the colony, eggs were seen as well as brood so they should quickly build-up. The other colony was going 'great-guns' and were rapidly filling two supers, our demonstrator on this occasion re-organised the full and nearly full frames into the top super, so Tim can lift them-off in 1-2 days with minimum disturbance to the bees.

With family and offspring we then enjoyed what has become a highlight of our summer beekeeping, the barbecue that Hilary and Tim organise for us. A very pleasant afternoon with promenading to enjoy the garden and couples ducking out through the secret gate to find the river; (you know who you are!) while the less energetic basked and talked about bees and honey.

The September programme for Reading and District Beekeepers and all others who are interested is: -

In place of a September meeting, on Sunday 4th, Reading Beekeepers participate in the produce section of the Wokingham and Reading show at Spencers Wood. This is our honey show with classes for judging, cash prizes, and a trophy to award. Reading members will have received a schedule for exhibits and they are freely available for all who would like to participate. Exhibits can be staged Saturday Afternoon and between 7.00 and 8-45 AM on the morning of the show. It won't cost you anything to enter to stage your exhibit providing you are offsite by 9.00 AM and exhibitors who enter 8 or more classes both honey and produce will be entitled to a fifty percent reduction on an entry ticket for this excellent traditional country show. We always have a lot of interest from the public at the show in our craft; please support the show with your entries in the various classes and in person for a visit.

Anyone who would like a schedule, please contact Jon. Davey 0118 975 0734.

The Caversham Festival:-

This takes place on the following Saturday, 10th September at Westfield Park off Gosbrook Road. Reading Beekeepers will have a stand and will display Cyril McCombe's beekeeping artefacts plus honey sales, as this is free entry to the public we are bound to get plenty of visitors. Proceeds are for charity and any Reading member who would like to sell some honey, with a modest contribution from the proceeds for the charities supported by the show please contact Jon.

Attention all Reading Members. The evening of Thursday 29th September is The Federation of Berkshire Beekeepers Autumn Honey Event to be held at Charvil Village Hall. You will have received a schedule and the details of the guest speaker have been published on page one of the newsletter. Please give this event your support with Entries for judging and with your person in attendance, we are sure you will want Reading Beekeepers to give a good showing along side our friends from Wokingham, Slough and South Chilterns. Charvil Hall is very accessible off the A4 near the 'Wee Waif Hotel' lifts are available if required.

Secretary: Mr. R. Kiff, 114 Silverdale Road, Earley, Reading RG6 7LU Tel. 0118 966 5358

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Incorporating Windsor, Maidenhead and adjoining communities.

The apiary has been quite well attended this year by both beginners and more experienced members, so we have been able to emphasise the teaching aspect with encouraging results. Also, we have all benefited from the discussions on various methods used at our own hives.

Fortunes have been changing in each hive throughout the year and now two of the weaker ones are being strengthened by the successful introduction of their new Buckfast Queens.

There will most likely need to be some uniting done at the last scheduled meeting to bring all the hives up to strength for the winter. The stronger colonies now have quite a good surplus in spite of none available to take off in the spring, most coming from an over-wintered swarm that was split twice during the year, which proves the value of preventing swarming whenever possible.

The resulting crop weight will be announced at the Review of the Year meeting on Tuesday the 13th of September, which is the start of the Winter Programme. It will commence at the usual time of 8pm, at the All Saints Parish Hall on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor. We look forward to seeing you all there and to hearing your experiences during this season.

It is hoped that you will all be preparing your choicest jars, making candles and baking cakes in readiness for the Honey Show on October 11th. The schedules are included with this newsletter, one or two changes have been made this year, so do check it out first.

There is no need to notify your entry beforehand unless you are entering multiple classes, when it would be helpful to have the labels already prepared. Just bring along a jar on the night – **staging** will be from **7pm**, **judging** will as usual be done in front of the audience and will start at **7.30pm**. Our judge this year will be Nick Grey from Chalfont Beekeepers, who has entertained us once before and encourages friendly exchanges from the audience as well as imparting some very useful advice for showing. There are several cups to be won, including Best Novice, so serious competition is also encouraged.

As usual, our library will available at all winter meetings, there may also be some surplus books still for sale, and don't forget, any member who wishes to borrow our labelling machine for stamping the "Best Before End" dates and "Lot Numbers" onto a separate label for your honey jars, please call me on the first number below,

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Secretary: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

The Portal to the Beekeeping World HTTP://WWW.BEEDATA.COM/

The Federation Home Page: http://www.beedata.com/fbbka from which the archive of two years of past newsletters can be accessed

Beekeeping equipment and supplies from your Thornes agent in Berkshire Large stock of most requirements available ex. stock. All other in range available only a phone call away. Deliveries in season at regular intervals. Please phone John Belcher on 01189 842321 for a quotation. Beeswax exchanged.



Newsletter "Deadline": - - Contributions, this includes E-mails, to arrive with the Editor by the FIRST POST (Around 10.00am) on the First of the Month for the Following Month

To enable the Advertisement Manager to place adverts with the Editor for the 1st of the month deadline; adverts should be sent well before this time.

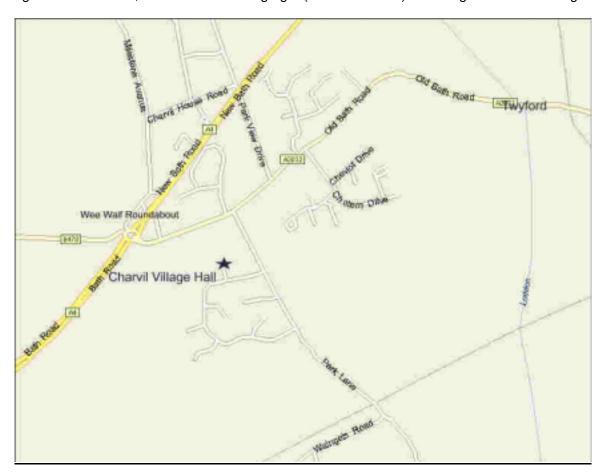
<u>ADVERTISEMENT ENTRIES</u>: - 2 Lines for £1.00. Commercial, £1.00 per line together with your

cheque made payable to FBBKA. <u>To be sent to the Advertisement Manager: -</u> Mr. Michael Blackburn, M.B. Photography, 41 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JV. Telephone: - (0118) 947 9450/5451

For sale: quantity of Langstroth hives and supers, some with bees. A number of new Langstroth roofs and supers in the flat. Crocker: 01189722315.

-----CHARVIL VILLAGE HALL-----

From the A4 at the Wee Waif Roundabout take the A3032 toward Twyford, at the mini- roundabout turn right into Park Lane, take the next turning right (The Hawthorns) the Village Hall is on the right



Ian Homers News Letter: Courtesy of Michael Sheasby

To save space, the areas not applicable to the Federation area have been omitted. Note:- Parts of the Federation area is covered by the South Eastern Region.

NATIONAL BEE UNIT - SOUTHERN REGION



Around and about the region June 2005

Winter 2004/5 saw losses on a National basis at between 25 and 30% - probably the worst since the winter of 1982/3; in some areas, losses were reported to be as high as 70%. There are many reasons being put forward for this but I believe that the underlying cause was the period in late summer/early autumn 2004 when many queens stopped laying due to the poor weather and forage conditions. This resulted in a significant proportion of bees in the colonies, at the time they were needed to nurture brood in January and February, being elderly and physiologically incapable of nurturing brood. As a result, colonies were disadvantaged such that they were vulnerable to just about anything that came around, be it varroa, nosema or that very nasty cold snap at the end of February/beginning of March.

Most beekeepers will by now have put the traumas of winter behind them and will be looking forward. The spring was rather indeterminate with many days where bees were able to forage only for an hour or two and much of the early forage not yielding because ground or air temperatures were not high enough. Summer is looking a little more promising - there have been a few days just lately when the bees have taken advantage of the last of the winter sown rape and field beans.

Early indications are that disease is being found at a slightly higher level this season than in recent years so please do be vigilant. At least once between now and the end of the season, shake all of the bees off of the combs and give the brood a thorough inspection. If you are not happy with what you can see, call you local bee inspector (see below) to discuss what you have found. He or she will be able to advise you and will visit you if they feel it necessary.

I an Homer

Current Topics

Resistant mites are being found in many new areas this year; if you are not monitoring or checking for resistance you won't know what the status is in your hives. Some associations are testing for resistance as an association activity so why not encourage your association to do this if they are not already doing so. If your testing indicates resistance please advise the NBU and your local member of Southern Region team. Hundreds of test kits have been distributed (usually to the apiary manager or association secretary) but if nobody in your association has any kits, please contact your local member of the Southern team.

The new CSL/Defra publication on Tropilaelaps has just arrived and there will be sufficient copies for all beekeepers in the Region. In addition, we are expecting the revised publication on managing varroa within the next couple of weeks or so. Again there will be copies available for all beekeepers. These will be distributed through association secretaries or chairs and the team

will endeavour to have copies to pass to associations at apiary tours, meetings etc. At the moment, the risk of finding tropilaelaps is slight (as is the risk of finding small hive beetle) but we should all be alert to the dangers when inspecting colonies.

There is no further news on the requirement that all veterinary medicines must be dispensed and applied under veterinary supervision (this is to be applied to all food producing animals and not just bees). Several vets to whom I have spoken have indicated that they are not keen to see beekeepers arriving in their surgeries for consultations with a colony of bees – they feel it could have an adverse effect on some of their other clients! Efforts are still being made by Defra to obtain a derogation to the new legislation which would allow the present arrangements to continue beyond October but it could be October before we have any more positive news.

Disease Report

Within Southern Region, cases of EFB and AFB found to date (June 13th 2005) are as follows:

Area	OS Grid Ref	EFB Apiaries	EFB Colonies	AFB Apiaries	AFB colonies
Burford	SP21	2	3	2	2
North Witney	SP31	1	1	1	1
Evershot	ST50	1	2		
Castle Eaton	SU19	1	1		
Ringwood	SU10	3	6		
Brockenhurst	SU20	2	3		
Stockbridge	SU33	1	1		
Southampton	SU41	1	1		
North Winchester	SU43	1	2		
North Waltham	SU54	1	1		
Petersfield	SU72	2	2		
Wareham	SY98			1	2
West Bournemouth	SZ09	3	9		
Bembridge	SZ68			1	1
Totals		19	32	5	6

Extension Work

The role of the National Bee Unit team is increasingly encompassing extension work – apiary tours or safaris, apiary demonstrations, talks, workshops and training days. In the last couple of years this has included Integrated Varroa Management Workshops, Disease Recognition Training Days, demonstrations of the shook swarm technique, practical apiary demonstrations of varroa control techniques and talks on a range of topics from apiary and hive hygiene to swarm control and from requeening colonies to reflections on some ways to improve bee husbandry.

We don't know what the future will bring but whilst we do have a team of experienced beekeepers providing the bee health inspection service within Southern Region, they are able to undertake extension work as an integral part of the service. Any member of the team will be happy to discuss ways of helping your association but please remember that the seasonal inspectors are not under contract to CSL during the winter period.

Honey Survey

Each year the request for details of the honey crop seems to arrive earlier and earlier (with ever shorter deadlines to reply). Can you help by filling in the form below and returning it to me as soon as you have taken your last crop. Thank you .

NATIONAL BEE UNIT - SOUTHERN REGION Survey of Honey Prices and Yields 2005			
Please indicate the current price <u>per pound</u> which each category is achieving in your area.			
If there is a significant variation in the price of any item, please indicate a price range ■			
Run, Set or Creamed Flower Honey Cut Comb Flower Honey	Wholesale	Direct Sales Bulk	
Average yield per colony Highest recorded yield per colony Name, Association, Location		{ Please indicate the yield <u>in pounds</u> which has { been experienced in your area.	

A Full Complement

The recruitment process for Seasonal Bee Inspectors has been very successful this year with two new recruits to the team, Margaret Holland and Charles Fryett.

Margaret, whom many of you will know as County Secretary for the Northamptonshire Association is working in Oxfordshire and South Bucks whilst Charles is covering Wiltshire and Berkshire. Charles is a New Zealander who has 10 years experience working for commercial beekeepers including 5 years working for one in the north of England.

Some slight territorial adjustments have been made for other members of the team with David

Purchase now covering all of Hampshire and the I sle of Wight whilst I am covering the whole of Dorset. Maurice Roll continues to inspect in Northants and North Bucks. The tables below give details of individual territories.

Contact telephone numbers are:

I an Homer (Dorset) 01308 482 161

David Purchase (Hants & IOW) 01256 781 288

Charles Fryett (Wilts & Berks) 01793 702 869

Margaret Holland (Oxon & South Bucks)

01327 857 328

Maurice Roll (Northants & North Bucks)

01327 830 114

CHARLES FRYETT

	OS Grid
Area Name	ref
Kingston Deverill	ST83
Warminster	ST84
Trowbridge	ST85
Bradford on Avon	ST86
Castle Combe	ST87
Sherston	ST88
Swallowcliffe	ST92
Chilmark	ST93
Heytesbury	ST94
Great Cheverell	ST95
Melksham	ST96
Chippenham	ST97
Malmesbury	ST98
Crudwell	ST99

Broad Chalke	SU02
Stapleford	SU03
Shrewton	SU04
Urchfont	SU05
East Devizes	SU06
East Calne	SU07
Wootton Bassett	SU08
Ashton Keynes	SU09
South Salisbury	SU12
North Salisbury	SU13
Amesbury	SU14
Upavon	SU15
Pewsey	SU16
Ogbourne St Andrew	SU17
Swindon	SU18
Castle Eaton	SU19
Ludgershall	SU25

Great Bedwyn	SU26
Aldbourne	SU27
Bishopstone	SU28
Inkpen	SU36
Lambourn	SU37
Newbury	SU46
Chieveley	SU47
Thatcham	SU56
Yattendon	SU57
Burghfield Common	SU66
Pangbourne	SU67
Shinfield	SU76
Reading	SU77
Crowthorne	SU86
White Waltham	SU87
Ascot	SU96
Windsor	SU97

MARGARET HOLLAND

	OS Grid
Area Name	ref
Broadwell	SP20
Burford	SP21
Kingham	SP22
Wolford	SP23
Bampton	SP30
North Witney	SP31
Enstone	SP32
Hook Norton	SP33
Tysoe	SP34
Cumnor	SP40
Woodstock	SP41

Middle Barton	SP42
Bloxham	SP43
Banbury	SP44
Ladbroke	SP45
Oxford	SP50
Islip	SP51
Bicester	SP52
Tiddington	SP60
Buscot	SU29
Letcombe Regis	SU38
Stanford in the Vale	SU39
East Wantage	SU48
West Abingdon	SU49
Blewbury	SU58

Dorchester (Oxon)	SU59
East Wallingford	SU68
Benson	SU69
Henley on Thames	SU78
Stokenchurch	SU79
Marlow	SU88
High Wycombe	SU89
North Slough	SU98
Amersham	SU99
Staines	TQ07
Uxbridge	TQ08
Rickmansworth	TQ09

lan R. Homer, CSL Regional Bee Inspector – Southern Region, 5, Malters Cottages, Litton Cheney, DORCHESTER, Dorset, DT2 9AE

Tel/Fax: 01308 482 161 Mobile 07778 846 335 e-mail: <u>i.homer@csl.gov.uk</u> www.nationalbeeunit.com