



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

February 2007
Number 606

Hon. Secretary:
Vacant

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

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Future Events

Saturday 21 st April 2007	BBKA Spring Lecture & Exhibition	Stoneleigh Park
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BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS NEED YOUR SUPPORT.

Your Berkshire Beekeepers Federation is in need of a volunteer to act as General Secretary.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS. 13th February 2007.

Dear fellow Berkshire Beekeepers, in particular Associations members who are officers of and delegates to 'the Federation'.

Please enter now in your diaries: Tuesday 13th February 7.30 P.M. Location Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall Reading. This is the AGM of our Federation and will have vital information for Berkshire beekeepers as the Annual Delegates Meeting (The ADM) of The British Beekeepers Association (The BBKA) will have been held in January with new and important factors affecting the BBKA and all British beekeepers and beekeeping associations who are members of; or are affiliated with, the BBKA will be vitally effected. This means how your membership is structured and how our 'capitation fees' we pay to BBKA; part of your 'subs' is to be paid-over.

Also we will as usual be electing federation delegates and officers to serve on the federation committee. Please note we have reduced the number of meetings from 4 to 2 per year. We do need new people for this, as you will read on the heading of our newsletter we urgently need someone to serve as General Secretary. Two meetings a year! This doesn't seem too much to ask of a beekeeping person to dedicate their time to, given the importance of our ongoing relationship with our nation's beekeeping body the BBKA!

THE APIARY in FEBRUARY

On consulting our trusty 'Beekeeper's Year' display (circa 1970's) before putting pen to paper I see that January and February are together and shown as months for study and preparation of equipment. The excellent illustration shows a beekeeping book and a frame in construction. Good advice of course, however more regularly now we read and hear of hefting hives during the winter and measures to give sugar to colonies at risk of shortages of stores. We are told of milder winters with flying bees, presumably earlier population build-ups are in prospect these days, 30 years after 'The Beekeeper's Year' display board was produced.

Reading Andrew Gibb in his article in the January edition of Bee craft in his "For beginners: January" we see he suggests lifting the crown board above a light colony and tearing along the side of a 1 kilo bag of granulated sugar, pouring-in a "small cup" of water and placing it above the cluster.

An empty super is suggested to provide any necessary clearance. This seems to be an unnecessarily crude and precipitate act; our beekeeping books would recommend fondant, often called "candy" in older articles at this time of year. Perhaps there is a problem with fondant nowadays. You certainly can't be sure without a lot of delving into specs. and formulae that modern baker's fondant doesn't contain something other than sugar and water. There doesn't seem to be description legislation on fondants and icings, i.e. Mrs Beaton's recipe for royal icing is icing sugar, lemon juice and water. A tube of royal icing purchased under a well known brand contains several other ingredients the biggest additive in proportion being glycerol, used to help prevent the product from drying out (humectant). Maybe baker's fondant contains this. Glycerol and sorbitol are widely used in foodstuffs for this purpose and as sugar replacements. What about the bees? Should we chance it? It's an additive and many non-sugar sweeteners are associated with 'looseness' with some people's digestive systems.

Often in these modern times rather negative remarks are made about making your own fondant: "messy" is most regularly heard. Personally I don't find it at all messy. It's advisable to make up fairly small batches in my experience. Enough to treat one or two hives will take 20 minutes and can be applied in the type of plastic containers available free when you treat yourself to a Chinese or Indian 'takeaway' empty pie-dish foils are OK also. You can place it under the crown board as per A. Gibb's suggestion if you like but one applicator above the ports in the crown-board should be fine, you can check progress quickly and easily.

Below is a recipe for fondant for use with bees, there are many published. This one comes from the excellent 'A Manual of Beekeeping' by E.B. Wedmore and does not include the usual half teaspoon of cream of tartar*.

4 lb (1800 grammes) granulated sugar.

1 pint. (570 ml) water.

Place sugar in a heavy bottomed saucepan, add water and stir and heat gently until crystals are dissolved.

Boil with medium heat for 14-15 minutes, use a jam thermometer to check temperature is between 114-118 C., otherwise continue heating and stirring.

Place in a water bath in cold water (modern sinks often have a suitable 'half-sink for this though. Placing the bottom of the pan over the plug-hole of a regular sink and running cold-water well –away from the pan is the best-way in my experience)

Stir increasingly (transferring colder material from sides to centre) as the fondant cools until you have a smooth opaque product.

Transfer into 4 plastic or foil trays and apply to hives.

Wedmore maintains that the use of cream of tartar, vinegar, lemon juice to partially 'invert' the sugar is of doubtful benefit to the bees and may indeed be harmful.

Good luck with 'winter feeding' spring feeding with light syrup can commence usually in March.

Triad

Beekeeping Classes:

Good news for beginners and not such beginners: a new introductory course on Beekeeping will commence on 12th February from 7 to 9pm at Burchetts Green Agricultural College. Hurry and apply to get on this very valuable course. **Anyone interested should contact Yvonne Arnold on 01628 827482.**

The Basic.

I wish the BBKA didn't call the Basic an "Exam". It gives a very useful opportunity a bad name. Not many of us enjoyed the series of exams we had to go through to finish school and get into a career.

The Basic is not like this. The idea is to help beekeepers to reach a competent level of fundamental knowledge and understanding of the craft. This is good for you and good for the bees you care for.

You get a syllabus (from me), you go on a course, you read the books, you get some bees and set up your apiary of one or two hives, you go to meetings where you meet experienced beekeepers who will give you help and advice (beekeepers are a friendly lot) and when you feel you're ready you can arrange for an assessor to come and talk to you and see what you know and how you handle a colony of bees. Pass it and you not only get a certificate to hang on your wall to say you're a competent beekeeper - you get the assurance and the confidence of knowing that what you're doing is right.

Getting focused in this way is a great start to a new hobby.

Think about it. It will really improve your beekeeping.

Rosemary Bayliss – 01344 4217347

P.S. Last time four of our members did the Basic all four passed.

FSID (The Foundation for the Study of Sudden Infant Deaths) thanks Berkshire Beekeepers for a contribution of jars of honey. We have received thanks from FSID which we will direct to the three Reading members who actually donated some honey for FSID's annual Christmas Fair held at Kensington Town Hall, former home of The National honey Show.

Pollen in forensic science - Michael Keith-Lucas

Friday 16th March 2007 at 7.30 pm

The Sutton Hall, Stockcross, near Newbury, Berkshire

Newbury Beekeepers' Association warmly invites you to the 25th annual Leaver Memorial Lecture, to be given by Dr Michael Keith-Lucas who is a micro-biologist lecturing in the Plant Sciences Department of Reading University. His research interests include allergy, plant taxonomy, and the ecology and history of woodlands. He is an expert on forensic biology and pollen and is currently working with research projects on pollen analysis of archaeological sites in the Thames Valley.

The lecture is free and all beekeepers in the region are most welcome. We should therefore be very grateful if you would publicise the lecture amongst local beekeepers

Directions:-

- Stockcross is on the A4000 just off the A4 on the western edge of Newbury.
- If you are coming from the north or south, use the A34 and take the A4 exit towards Hungerford. However do not enter the A4 but, on the western roundabout, take the exit for the A4000 signposted to Wickham, Stockcross and RAF Welford.
- If you are coming from the east of Newbury, drive through Newbury on the A4 until you cross the A34 and then turn onto the A4000 signposted to Wickham, Stockcross and RAF Welford.

When in the middle of Stockcross village, turn south onto Church Road. The Hall is on the right after about 100 yards. The Hall has some parking space but cars may be parked (considerately, please) along Church Road and Glebe Lane.

From High Wycombe Association.

The 2007 Bucks Seminar will once again be on the first Saturday in March i.e. *March 3rd 2007 10.0am to 4.0pm* at Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Wendover (map available from FBBKA).

There will be three speakers covering a wide range of beekeeping topics. Something for everyone we hope.

Ivor Davis President of the BBKA will deal with probably the most vital topic in the current beekeeping scene 'Training for disease management.'

Mick Street the Chairman of Devon Beekeepers will help us understand the problems of bees in this country during the winter providing practical advice to reduce winter losses.

Adam Hart lecturer in evolutionary ecology and Animal behaviour at the University of Gloucester is giving two talks. The first will reveal new understanding on conflict in the beehive. Later in the day on a lighter note he will widen our beekeeping horizons as he tells us about Mexican beekeeping.

Ivor Davis will present BBKA awards to Bucks beekeepers with more than 50years experience.

At the start and during the lunch break there will be time to chat and various sideshows for your interest.

Bring and buy sale - new and second hand equipment. (10% to county funds)

Raffle with valuable prizes in aid of Bees for development.

Information on increasing your beekeeping knowledge.

Teaching aids for school visiting

Display about the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust.

The cost is still only £10 and includes refreshments at the start and a ploughman's lunch.

Delegates (that means anyone who wants to come) may pay in advance or on the door but please *inform Sylvia Chamberlin* if you intend to come giving your name, association or address, and phone number.

sylvia.chamberlin@zen.co.uk Tel:01494 522082

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

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

For our November meeting Robert Field, son of Oliver Field (well known author of 'Honey by the Ton' and 'Honey Days') and a commercial beekeeper in his own right, gave a very interesting talk about his life and business.

Oliver Field began keeping bees commercially in 1969 not far from where we were meeting, and Bob described the growth of his father's business, the setbacks and the hard work needed to overcome them and the eventual transfer of the business from Woodcote to Dorset. Bob himself initially tried to move into other areas of work when he left school, but found that he enjoyed helping out in his father's business so much that in 1984 he became a full time bee farmer. He now has 450 Modified Dadant hives in Dorset and on Salisbury Plain and produced 18½ tons of honey this year, taking on paid help for the first time.

As well as describing his history in beekeeping, Bob discussed the practical business of keeping bees on this scale and offered numerous tips, which were of interest to smaller scale beekeepers. His descriptions of the frustrations and difficulties of gathering the much sought after heather honey didn't prevent me, at least, being inspired to think about whether I could move some hives to the New Forrest in the future. Bob was kind enough to bring along some frames of his ling heather and borage comb for us to sample and compare, (both were delicious) and also some of his heather comb and extracted honey for sale.

Finally we heard about his thoughts on commercial beekeeping and bee breeding in this country (he doesn't think that we approach it as seriously as they do in other countries), his travels to New Zealand and Denmark, and his co-operation with a Danish breeder to find the best bee for his requirements, including the search for a varroa resistant bee.

This was a fascinating insight into the larger scale keeping of bees by a single-handed bee farmer, and judging by the chatter afterwards everyone found it very informative and inspiring. The hard work required to succeed in this business was obvious, but the biggest lesson for me was that, despite two generations of experience behind him, Bob still constantly reflected on his practice, experimented with new ideas and strives to improve his bees and his beekeeping.

The Christmas Gathering Wednesday December 13th

This year the SCBKA made a donation to "Send a Cow", a Christian farming charity working mainly in Africa. One of their Ambassadors, Neil Rowe, who has been working for them for 17 years, came to give us a talk about what they are doing.

Send a Cow was formed by six Christian farmers when the 1984 Common Market Milk Quota reduced the permitted British milk production to 80% of domestic requirements, thereby making many cows redundant. They sent their first cow to Uganda in 1988, and today are a major donor, growing at a rate of £1 million per year, although the cattle they donate now come from South Africa. They also donate other livestock these days, including goats, edible cane rats and, of course, bees - ten hives apparently being the economic equivalent of one cow. In addition they run veterinary and AI schemes. Their staff in Africa is all locally recruited.

The charity has strong church links and, to receive a donation of a cow or other stock, the recipient must have a recommendation from their church. They then receive training, practical experience with a previous recipient and ongoing support from the charity. The cattle are kept enclosed to minimise environmental damage and keep them safe, and the farmer brings elephant grass to the pen. Production of milk can be 20 l/day, and the surplus is sold in plastic bags. The ownership of a cow or other livestock can make a major difference in the life and prospects of the farmer.

In addition to the charity's work, Neil told us about his own farm near Oxford as a comparison. It is almost fully automated to follow the 'Voluntary Milking System', which means that the cows are free to move over the farm, and decide for themselves when to come in and be milked by a robot. Meanwhile, a computer oversees, monitors and controls the whole system. Neil can check what is happening from anywhere in the world over an Internet link. The completeness of the system and the details of its functioning were news to all present, and amazed and impressed us all.

After a very interesting talk and a raffle in aid of club funds, seasonal food and mulled wine rounded off the evening in the proper festive spirit.

February Meeting

Our February meeting will be a Quiz Night when we hope to learn from our more experienced members as well as from a general knowledge quiz.

Do not forget to book your places for our Annual Dinner on March 27th. To book contact Lynn Penfold on 01628 825718

Secretary: Phil Westwood – Tel: 07771 874284

E-mail: >southchilterns.bees@btinternet.com<

Obituary:

Marcella Skinner – a staunch supporter of South Chilterns Beekeepers Association and the local charity “Wyfold Riding for the disabled”, after a long illness, lost her battle with cancer on January 1st.

Marcella had a keen interest in bees as did her mother and father before her and she enjoyed some success at Honey Shows

For several years until her illness, Marcella hosted the Association President’s Day at her home in Wyfold but her main interest was with the Wyfold Riding For the Disabled.

Marcella leaves a gap in the Association and will be greatly missed.

Our thoughts are with her husband Michael, her son and daughter-in law, and her grandchildren.



READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

November meeting of Reading and District Beekeepers Association.

At our usual venue on Caversham Heights on Thursday 10th November the association’s AGM was held. Afterwards we had two talks from expert Reading members; firstly with photo illustrations Cyril McCombe described (as in his article in November’s newsletter) his discovery of a species of sexton beetle under a pile of dead bees. This highly useful insect disposes of unwanted corpses in a highly elegant manner using the meat to raise a brood and amongst its several sophisticated measures to eliminate the ‘competition’ i.e. bluebottles and the like, carries a host mite that predates on fly larvae. A very interesting insect! Secondly Mrs. Hazel Blackburn gave us a talk with artefacts including a very ‘artistic’ example about the methods and procedures used in beeswax candle making. All members and guests certainly appreciated these talks with many thanks to Hazel and Cyril.

December Meeting of Reading and District Beekeepers Association.

At Caversham Heights on 14th December our association held its Christmas meeting with mice pies etc. And a little libation as well as teas and coffees at break. Our speaker was John Hamer from Blackhorse Apiaries at Woking. Hazel and Michael Blackburn took the trouble to provide John with dinner at their home before we commenced, which I’m sure he enjoyed and is much appreciated by the association.

John illustrated his talk with slides of beekeeping in Switzerland and Austria where to protect the bees in the extreme winters bee houses are something of a tradition and also from Germany where queen breeding and bee improvement to provide sociable strains for domestic as well as commercial beekeepers is very advanced. John’s own apiary is a commercial business devoted to developing desirable beekeeping conditions for beekeeping at home in the UK based on his knowledge of what’s done in these countries.

As usual John gave us masses of valuable beekeeping information. Reading and district beekeepers will be making another visit to Blackhorse Apiaries in the summer. We would recommend other associations to get to know John.

February meeting of Reading and District Beekeepers Association. At 7-30PM sharp at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall on Thursday 8th February.

We would like to introduce you to Mr. John Burroughs a bee farmer from Woodstock (Blenheim) Oxon. John in his mid forties invested a generous voluntary redundancy payment ex his former job as a civil engineer and became a bee farmer. Join us and hear from John how it all worked –out!

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

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

We began our series of Winter Lectures with an illustrated talk by Tony Hayward of the RSPB. He went on a trip to the Galapagos Islands and has brought back an extensive collection of photographs illustrating the wide range of variations in the various species of birds and animals that have evolved on these isolated islands. They rest on a geological fault, which has given them two distinct habitats that has encouraged special adaptation to local environments. Perhaps the most interesting fact he told us was that there are fourteen local species of finch on this small group of islands. It was a pleasure to see his remarkable and beautiful set of photographs of the landscape and of the wildlife.

In December we will be continuing to focus on the natural world with a talk on our National Parks by the conservationist Adrian Thornton.

The AGM in November was quite well attended with 15 members present. We were able to fill the various posts which come up for renewal each year. Our thanks must go to John Edwards for his work over the last 5 or 6 years in the role of Secretary. He has kept us well informed and organised the programmes in his usual efficient manner. I put myself up for election as Secretary and, perhaps fearing that the Club would grind to halt if nobody took on the role, the members decided to vote me into office. Like John, I did a stint of 6 years before he took over so I will be getting all the boxes of the Club's archives back that I was glad to pass on to him at the time! Bert Spragg remains our President and was reported as being in good health. Peter Seagrave has become Chairman, a role in which he will be happy I am sure. William Napper has agreed to serve another year as Treasurer but he will not stand again so if there is anyone with a head for figures, please volunteer your services at the next AGM. David Geen was re-elected as Apiarist and we thanked him for his excellent work in producing honey to sell for the benefit of the Club's funds. Bob Loades carries on as Librarian and he would like people to make more use of the library. Rosemary Bayliss continues to act as mother by ensuring that tea, coffee and biscuits are available at our meetings but don't forget to drop a few pence into the kitty so that she is not out of pocket. The Committee will be organising the new programme soon so if there are topics you would like covered, please let me know. We also welcomed some new members who have recently taken up bee-keeping.

After the AGM we had a General Forum ably led by our Apiarist. This was most enjoyable and enabled a discussion of various topics to take place in an informal atmosphere. It is something we may well repeat in the future.

Our meeting on December 13th started badly as the hall was not open and there was nobody with a key to let us in. After a quick discussion of the options available, particularly as our guest speaker was keen to make a start on his talk, John Edwards said that a room in the village hall at Hurst was available. So we all dashed over there and settled into a pleasant room with direct access to the kitchen where our refreshments could be prepared.

The talk was given by Adrian Thornton on the subject of 'National Parks: Not Ours but Ours to Look After'. It was illustrated with many interesting slides and various brochures were also available at the end. Afterwards, we enjoyed mince pies with our tea or coffee together with a taste of Nigel Perkins' mead.

This put us in a good mood for the raffle (more prizes next time, please!) which raised a few pounds for the Club funds. So despite the bad start, the evening went very well and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Let's hope 2007 brings better weather than 2006 did and that our honey yields are a lot better.

Secretary: Derek Porter Tel: 0118 979 0326

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Firstly, a correction to the Honey Show statistics mentioned in the last newsletter: it should have read 52 entries not 40, my apologies for this – it only came to light when compiling the results sheet to be sent out. Though still a little down on the previous year's 66, it was not quite so bad as it seemed.....and our December meeting gave us even more tips to encourage entries in this year's show.

Those that attended the talk given by Jim Cooper, our former Apiary Supervisor, were treated to a very informative and interesting evening. His topic was about preparing for the new season and included many tips to make things easier for every one of us, from a suggested form to be completed on each hive during the season - which has been used at the apiary for some time and can help in deciding what course of action to take in the following year - to demonstrations on cleaning up equipment during the winter months, including a very ingenious one loaned by Bernhard which utilised a wallpaper stripper to clean and sterilise frames in their box. We had several handouts too, one of which gave many websites where further information could be obtained. To end the evening, we watched a video which gave an insight into methods used in a commercial apiary using polystyrene hives. This can also be seen in segments on one of the German websites. Jim has seen some similar hives at the Spring Convention at Stoneleigh and highly recommended a visit to this in April, not just for stocking up on equipment of all sorts, but to hear the lectures which are always extremely good. There may well be one or two cars with spare seats available for anyone interested.

On Tuesday the 13th February, we shall again be welcoming our BDI Ian Homer. We have always enjoyed Ian's previous visits and his topic for this talk is 'Bee Behaviour'. We are reliably informed that this is always a popular subject also, so we look forward to seeing you all at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor, SL4 1HZ for an 8pm start.

The following month will be a talk on the 'Buzz' and 'Operation Bumblebee' projects by representatives from the Syngenta Research Centre at Jealott's Hill. This will be on Tuesday, 13th March, again at 8pm as normal.

There will be hard copies of the full 2007 Programme at these meetings, for those who wish to have this information in the more traditional 'pocket' form to pin on their notice boards etc. Our library will also be available, along with any surplus library books left for sale.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Secretary: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

Newsletter "Deadline": - - Contributions, this includes **E-mails**, to arrive with the Editor by the **FIRSTPOST** (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.

ADVERTISEMENT ENTRIES: - 2 Lines for £1.00. Commercial, £1.00 per line together with your cheque made payable to FBBKA. To be sent to the Advertisement Manager: -

Mr. Michael Blackburn, M.B. Photography, 41 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JV. Telephone: - (0118) 947 9450/5451



NATIONAL BEE UNIT - SOUTHERN REGION

Around and about the region Autumn 2006

I cannot avoid, once again, dwelling on the topic of crop as this season has seen the most dramatic extremes that I can remember. Whilst there are many beekeepers, particularly those in the southern coastal area who are reporting their worst year ever, beekeepers further north in the region have reported bumper crops this year. One, in Oxfordshire has reported 800lbs of honey brought in by just 2 colonies!

A cool spring led to a very late start to the season and, in the main, the crop was brought in during June and July. One beekeeper, identifying that the crop in the coastal area had virtually finished by the middle of July, moved colonies about 80 miles north and succeeded in gaining two full supers per colony by the end of August – perhaps this gives rise to a new definition of migratory beekeeping.

As I write this (October 17th) there is still a very strong ivy flow in this area – a small cast that has arrived in and taken residence in my bee shed has already brought in nearly a super of honey even though it is headed by an unmated virgin queen.

Ian Homer

Current Topics

Varroa Control

Reading the newsletters of various associations, I notice a common theme of beekeepers discovering at the end of the season that their mite populations are larger than they thought or expected. In some cases this follows careful monitoring, either through observation of natural mortality or through drone brood uncapping. Several contributors to these newsletters have also identified that their colonies are now hosts to pyrethroid tolerant (or resistant) mites and are now seeking to adopt alternative control measures.

A number of associations have played host to Integrated Varroa Management workshops during the last three years and many beekeepers are practising the techniques discussed at them. Some areas are still to succumb to resistance whilst others have suffered it for several years. Whether resistance has only just hit your area, or whether you are apparently still free from it, a further workshop may be useful to review the techniques. These workshops can be beneficial to any beekeeper, new or old, so Please **contact me if you would like a workshop for your association.**

Beebase On line

If you are one of the many beekeepers who has been accessing beebase on line (beebase.csl.gov.uk) then apologies if some of the data has looked a little confusing. I am assured that these teething problems have now been resolved and that a visit to the site will now provide satisfactory access to the Bee Health Inspection statistics and a whole host of other information

EFB Research

The Bee Health Inspection team has collected hundreds of adult bee and larva samples during the course of this season. These have all been sent to the lab at Sand Hutton and are currently being analysed, using Taqman molecular analysis, to identify where *Melissococcus plutonius* is present. Initial indications are that some of the samples taken from colonies which were not exhibiting clinical signs of EFB have, under analysis, proved to be carrying it. Sampling will continue at the beginning of next season to allow a more complete analysis of the situation.

Disease Report

Unfortunately, the disease picture in Southern Region during 2006 was the worst we have seen for several years with a three-year high in the number

of cases of EFB in Dorset, a four-year high in Berks, a five-year high in Bucks, a six-year high in Wiltshire and a nine-year high in Oxford county. Only in

Hampshire does the trend appear to be going in the right direction – downwards.

It is almost impossible to identify clearly why the numbers of cases of disease are so erratic – it is probably not an indication of the incidence of disease but more a measure of our success in finding it. There is little doubt that there are more cases than we find so this would suggest an even greater need for vigilance by us all when we are routinely inspecting our bees.

In most cases, the disease was identified by a member of the team as a result of a routine inspection, but in several cases identification was as a result of vigilance and careful work by the beekeeper themselves. As the resources of the inspection team become ever more stretched, such vigilance by beekeepers will be of increasing importance. A member of the team will always respond **if you have reason to believe that your bees are suffering from a notifiable condition – please don't hesitate to contact us** as the sooner the diagnosis, the less risk there is of the disease spreading to other colonies.

European Foul Brood											American Foul Brood
	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	2006
Berks	8	5	0	6	19	30	31	17	25	6	0
Buckinghamshire	4	2	1	3	1	11	31	29	11	6	0
Dorset	44	25	38	58	70	35	34	18	20	32	0
Hampshire	26	31	44	65	53	83	98	41	56	48	0
Isle of Wight	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	0
Oxfordshire	28	11	10	5	12	21	3	9	13	31	4
Wiltshire	8	0	3	3	3	1	30	38	0	8	0
Regional Total	118	74	96	141	158	181	230	152	125	135	4
England Total	547	658	666	616	632	761	973	836	826	713	29

Small Hive Beetle

One reason for the delay in publishing this issue of Around and About the Region was the reports, several weeks ago, that Small Hive Beetle had been discovered in Portugal and that, whilst it had yet to be confirmed, it was thought highly likely that a positive confirmation would only be a matter of time.

I am very pleased to be able to report that, though the creature has been confirmed as a beetle, it is not the Small Hive Beetle. It has been confirmed that it is a member of the coleoptera family (of which the SHB is a member) but then so are several hundred thousand other creatures. The initial reports also indicated that there was some damage to the bees themselves consistent with that which has been experienced in areas where SHB has been found. Subsequent reports indicate that there were some dead pupae but the cause has not been discussed.

So, we breathe freely for a little while longer, safe in the knowledge that SHB has yet to be identified in Europe. There is much conjecture as to how (not if) it will reach our shores; some feel that it will get here in a consign-

ment of fruit, others feel it will arrive in a swarm on board a container ship, whilst yet others feel that it will probably be brought in by a beekeeper whilst bringing bees into the country following a holiday in an affected country. However it arrives, we are ready with procedures to find and identify it and to advise beekeepers on appropriate actions from the first identification. With this in mind, somewhere in the Region we will be carrying out a contingency exercise during 2007. This will enable us to test our readiness to respond should SHB be found in the near future.

Extension Work

Well, we have survived yet another year and the team have managed, during the last year, to carry out over 30 talks to associations, more than 2 dozen apiary tours, safaris and apiary meetings as well as carry out a further 6 Disease Recognitions training days. And it looks as though we will be able to continue to carry out this work, at least until the scheduled budget readjustments in 2008.

We offer this service in order to work with, and support, beekeepers in their quest to improve bee hus-

bandry and disease recognition skills. Perhaps not all associations realise that this service is offered at no cost whatsoever to associations.

In addition to the practical apiary sessions, the team can offer a wide range of talks on various aspects of bee husbandry – there will usually be a talk to meet most needs. Please contact me if you feel that we can make a contribution to your associations' programme.

C&A (changes and alterations)

As many of you will know, Charles Fryett, who covered Wiltshire and Berkshire, left us in the summer to be replaced, towards the end of the season, by Robert Carpenter-Turner. Robert is an experienced beekeeper who has recently moved to the Pewsey area of Wiltshire and will be covering Wiltshire and Berkshire in 2007.

To those of you in the more northerly parts of the region, Maurice Roll will be a familiar name as Maurice has been inspecting in Northamptonshire and adjacent counties for the last 11 seasons. Unfortunately, Maurice feels that the time has now come for him to (professionally) hang up his beesuits and lay down his hive tools, in order that he can spend more time at home with his own bees.

Maurice will be greatly missed by all who know him as his great sense of humour and calm efficiency have always allowed him to keep things in perspective. He will be much missed by his colleagues and I am sure that beekeepers wherever Maurice has inspected will want to join me in thanking him and wishing him a long and happy retirement. Fortunately, it appears that the budget will allow us to fill Maurice's post so **if you, or anyone you know, would be interested in working in the Bee Health inspection team in Southern Region, and especially if you live in the Bucks area or adjacent counties, please contact me.**

It is likely, subject to where any new recruits live that there will be some changes to inspectors territory's next year – hopefully these will be fully detailed in the next issue of Around and About the Region (scheduled for issue in February)

Associations Day 2007

Having had to miss holding an Associations Day in 2006, I have been asked a number of times whether there will be one in 2007. The answer is YES and currently it is being planned for **Sunday February 25th 2007.**

Associations Day is your opportunity to meet and talk with National Bee Unit staff and to hear first

hand about our research and our priorities and procedures.

It will be held, as before, at Stockcross Village Hall, about 2 miles west of Newbury. And will run from 1030 to around 4pm. Tea and coffee will be provided but delegates are asked to bring their own packed lunch. The programme is not yet complete but it will include more information on surveying for exotic pests, a talk on some unusual aspects of beekeeping from a commercial beekeeper and discussion on actions to minimise the risk of disease. Speakers will include Richard Ball, The NBU's Na-

tional Bee Inspector and Robin Dean, a commercial beekeeper from Hampshire.

Once again, Associations Day will be open to all beekeepers from within the Region who may wish to attend and, as the next issue of Around and About the Region will only be issued around that time, I will write to each Association Secretary with further details in the new year. It is always useful, for catering purposes, to know how many delegates will be attending so, if you are interested in attending please either contact your association secretary or contact me directly using the form below.

I would like to attend Southern Region Associations Day on Sunday February 25th 2007

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No: _____

e-mail address (if applicable): _____

No of delegates:

As this issue is rather later than usual, it is timely to wish all beekeepers in Southern Region a happy and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous new year

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