



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

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December 2007
Number 616

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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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Normally there is no newsletter for January

Future Events

Sunday February 10 th	Associations Day 2008, Stockcross	Apply to your own Secretary
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THE APIARY in DECEMBER

The 2007 season for most in our area started with spring honey flow reminiscent of 2004 but without the flow from hawthorn. For most of us the spring crop was good and honey was removed; disaster for some, colonies that had been denuded of their honey in spring were found to be almost starving in June and required feeding, the non-indigenous strains suffered most. The latter part of May saw mainly wet weather, which continued through most of the season. Queen failure was rife consequently some colonies were lost, it is hoped that the remaining colonies will survive.

There was a late flow of ivy nectar which should see our bees through the winter, nevertheless check for adequate stores, nuclei in particular and if necessary apply candy (bakers fondant).

There should be very little work to do with the bees this month, other than the usual checks to see that all is well in the apiary - no roofs blown off, mouse-guards missing, woodpecker guards in place, hives knocked over or fallen branches.

Triad

Collapsing Colonies:

Instances of suspected CCD have been reported, varroa and/or Nosema may well be responsible in some cases, but when the remaining honey is not robbed and other insects (wasps, moth etc) do not enter, introduced swarms will not stay, then you have a phenomenon that has not been proved to exist in Great Britain, I have seen it! Melt everything down, sterilize everything; heat will kill most nasties. Keep up to date at: http://www.ent.uga.edu/bees/Newsletter/07_09_GBL.pdf The DEFRA website is: - <http://beebase.csl.gov.uk/> look under public pages 'news and vacancies'

Meeting with Boris Johnson MP

Three members of South Chilterns Association (Linda Clarke, Reg Hook and Tim Selwyn) met Boris Johnson MP who listened very intently to our concerns regarding pyrethroid resistance of the varroa mite, the potential threats of small hive beetle, CCD and other related viruses etc.

We stressed the lack of funding for research in the U.K compared with other countries, i.e. America's 40 million compared to our measly £200,000, also the fact that there are no feral stocks and we beekeepers are now the custodians of honeybees in these Islands.

Boris Johnson undertook to write to DEFRA regarding the concerns of all beekeepers forthwith.

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

Our winter programme got off to a good start on 10th October with an illustrated talk by Pete Kennedy who is a seasonal bee inspector for a large area including our part of the world. We were pleased to welcome our friends from Reading & District BKA and they swelled the attendance to the point where we nearly ran out of chairs! Pete gave a most interesting talk on diseases, which everyone found most useful. I am sure he will be in great demand as a speaker in the future.

On a personal note, I was proud to be chosen as a judge for the honey show held by Slough and District BKA on 9th October. Hazel Blackburn had originally been booked but was unable to attend following an operation on one of her knees. It was rather nerve-racking to do the judging in public but I trust that the entrants picked up a few points as to what the judges at a honey show are looking for in the various classes. If you did not win a prize or a placement, the best advice is to try a bit harder next time and be more critical of your efforts before you select the best for the entries in the show. Above all, follow the schedule!

The membership cards will have been distributed to members who attended the AGM and you will receive yours when you renew your membership if you did not attend. Please make an effort to attend the meetings which have been arranged for your enjoyment and hopefully enlightenment.

Secretary: Derek Porter Tel: 0118 979 0326

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Incorporating Windsor, Maidenhead and adjoining communities.

Our apiary has now been put to bed for the winter, the woodpecker cages are in place and all have been reduced to one brood box, with plenty of stores. Some weeks earlier, they had been fed where necessary and one weak hive had a couple of frames of brood added to give it more young bees. Over the winter period we shall be hefting the hives, inspecting for any damage by mice, the weather etc., and checking the entrances are not blocked. Now it just remains for a working party to be arranged in the coming weeks to clear out the shed, inspect the equipment for repairs and clean it up ready for the season next year.

The scheduled winter meetings are well under way. Another successful Honey Show in October saw 63 entries from 16 different competitors. Your committee want to thank everyone for all their hard work involved in the preparation and I would like to add my heartfelt thanks too; without those efforts, it could never be such a success.

We would also like to extend our grateful thanks to Derek Porter of Wokingham, for helping to save the show when he agreed to stand in for our judge who, almost at the eleventh hour, was unable to attend for health reasons.

There was stiff competition in most classes and congratulations go to Harry Peace for being overall winner, to Jim Cooper for the Best in Show and to recent newcomer Rachel Prior for her successes in her first show. The results sheet should have been distributed to everyone by now.

This month's meeting, on Tuesday, the 11th December will be a 'Seasonal Bee Quiz'. There will be teams of 3 or 4, depending on numbers attending, with prizes for the winners. If time permits, we hope to show one or two short videos from Harry Peace to conclude the evening. It will start at 8pm at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor, SL4 1HZ, so we hope you will all come along to test your knowledge and help your team win.

Our library is normally available at these meetings and there are still a few surplus books for sale, plus various information leaflets. We look forward to seeing you all there.

In January, we shall be having our usual Annual Dinner on Friday, the 25th which replaces the Tuesday meeting. This year will be the last at the Aurora Garden Hotel in Bolton Road, Windsor, which is scheduled to close down in February. We hope that you will all be able to join us there to say farewell, as we have always enjoyed their good food and service. We meet at 7 for 7.30pm and the menu is being distributed with this newsletter. Please return your requirements to book your place as soon as possible, but no later than 19th January, to the address stated. Don't forget, there is no January newsletter to remind you!

Finally, your committee would like to wish everyone a Very Happy Christmas and New Year, and hope that the coming beekeeping season will be successful for us all.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Secretary: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

On 10th October Reading beekeepers at the kind invitation of Wokingham beekeeping association joined with their meeting at St Paul's Church hall to meet and hear a talk from our DEFRA regional seasonal bee Inspector Peter Kennedy (and we apologize for getting his surname wrong in last newsletter).

Peter gave an outline of the structure of the beekeeping inspectorate and CS Labs at York where there are 25 staff and there are 45 inspectors home-based during the season. Peter also introduced us to the 'Bee Base' on line site where beekeepers can register their apiaries which helps in monitoring the population and health of honeybees in Britain. Some regional statistics on health were outlined, differences in EFB and AFB, for example Wales has 4 times the number of AFB instances compared to their nearest region the West Midlands, this must mean something! Obviously it's not likely that AFB truly drops off at Offa's Dyke!

This was a well worthwhile meeting. We had illustrations of diseases and pests screened for us, and a 'Disease Recognition Quiz'. It was gratifying to see that several beekeepers obtained 'full marks, this writer got 2 questions wrong by trying to be too clever and decreed EFVB and chilled-brood where healthy comb was displayed!

With very many thanks to Mr. Peter Kennedy, Wokingham Beekeepers and all who attended from Reading.

The December meeting is at Caversham Heights Methodist Hall at 7-30 Pm on 13th December. Rob Nickless from Didcot will be talking to us and demonstrating his home crafted beekeeping equipment. Rob would like us to bring-in any efforts of our own for discussion so if anyone has some innovations self-made please bring them along! This is the meeting where we enjoy a little Christmas cheer; mice pies etc. so come and join us!

Ideal activities for winter days. (Or what are these people doing?)

Nil point if you say “hillbillies with an illegal still”!

Most of us had had ‘the call’ viz. “I’m cleaning out granddads shed and there’s some beekeeping stuff, would you like it?”

In this case it was in the overgrown garden of a cottage in Sonning owned by a well-advanced beekeeper who had been unable to look after his apiary for five years due to ill health and now permanently hospitalized, his daughters were preparing to let the place out. The former coal shed was stuffed with boxes, roof & frames and in the garden a number of WBC hives. One colony with a good population was still under a roof, healthy looking bees that we re-housed, tying comb onto frames. We wish them the best, apparently another daughter keeps bees in the midlands and would be coming for them: “daddies docile bees”



It took several trips with hatchbacks and 4x4's to transfer all to Caroline and Jeremy Gilmore's property also in Sonning and what you see is boiling of frames in washing soda, charring boxes and lifts. A senior beekeeper who I invited to this 'soiree' responded with “best place for them is a ***** bonfire” and indeed there's nothing like rodent gnawed frames well laced with propolis and bees wax to start and maintain a fire. Well we –all had a good time and the inventory of WBC components, and one of our number is an expert carpenter and has replaced rotted legs on some floors, is pretty impressive! A good way to spend a winter's day!

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

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

SCBKA AGM, 17th October 2007

Only a few issues were discussed at the AGM this year, but the new membership categories took some time to explain and discuss. The principal topics of discussion were as follows.

Due to our ongoing difficulties with the Alliance and Leicester, the Independent Auditor recommended that the accounts not be presented at this meeting, but be postponed until we have finally disentangled ourselves from them.

Our Chairman, Guy Simpson, stood down from the role due to work commitments, and was thanked for his contribution, as was John Westcar, who also stood down from the committee at this AGM. The following new committee was elected.

Chairman: Steve Moll; Deputy Chairman: Guy Simpson; Treasurer: Bill Sievwright
General Secretary: Phil Westwood; Programme Secretary: Linda Clarke
Social Secretary: Lynn Penfold; Librarian: Tim Selwyn
Other Committee Members: Ron Crocker, Reg Hook, Kate Malenczuk.

The AGM was followed by a talk by Phil Westwood on Your Back and Beekeeping. Unfortunately, due to time constraint, the talk was curtailed, However, the most important points were covered and together with the visual aids, the talk held the interest of the audience consequently there were requests for the complete talk at a future date. There is a good guide at: - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>

Our January meeting on the 16th will be Questions and answers for new and not so new members.

The meeting on February 20th will be by Norman Carreck who will talk about problems in the hive and updates on research.

Secretary: Phil Westwood – Tel: 07771 874284

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

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, The Studio, 1 Grove Hill, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8PN. Telephone: - (0118) 947 9450/5451



NATIONAL BEE UNIT - SOUTHERN REGION

Around and about the region *Autumn 2007*

Perhaps the most difficult year I have known in 30 years! A rather sweeping statement you may think but if you consider some of the experiences in 2007, they certainly make it an interesting year.

Firstly there was the exceptional start to the spring which (if I am to believe the reports from equipment suppliers) caught many beekeepers unprepared with supers not yet cleaned up let alone re-waxed. Then accompanying the excellent weather and early crop, we had early swarming. This too, apparently caught many beekeepers unaware as not only were the supers not prepared but nor were the spare brood boxes. Of course, if you live in one of those places where there is little spring crop (I do) then much of this may have passed you by.

Then came the summer – nearly two months of perpetual chill weather with frequent rain which kept ground temperatures low and limited the nectar flow. In consequence, many beekeepers who had taken an early crop found that they were having to feed their bees within weeks of extracting the spring crop. But some salvation was around the corner and colonies that were able to work borage and heather made good the losses in some cases. However following some further swarming in late August and early September, the chill nights in the first half of September have caused very rapid contraction of brood nests and, as far as the bees are concerned, most are now preparing for winter.

So, another year over, another year done. Reports suggest that crops are only about a third to a half that of normal so honey prices will be rising. As beekeepers, we are eternal optimists so let's look forward to next seasons bumper crops – at the new higher prices which honey will command.

Ian Homer

Current Topics

Different People

Some of you will know that we have had an influx of fresh blood into the region this year.

Following the retirement of Maurice Roll and David Purchase, two new seasonal inspectors joined the team. David Packham has been covering large parts of Dorset whilst Pete Kennedy has been covering Berkshire, South Bucks and North East Hampshire. Robert Carpenter-Turner, who joined late last season has been covering Wiltshire and North West Hampshire.

Margaret Holland added Northamptonshire and North Bucks to her Oxfordshire territory and I covered the parts that were left over! It's meant a lot of unfamiliar faces in unfamiliar places but we seem to have got through without too many hiccups. Maybe 2008 will be the season when we settle down to a little bit of stability.

Varroa Control

All of the Southern Region Team have reported significant amounts of varroa damage in colonies and clearly we can expect to hear of colony losses during this winter. We keep preaching the need to monitor and understand the varroa situation within colonies and, to be fair, many beekeepers are well on top of varroa. But equally, many are not.

Many associations have found our workshops on Integrated Varroa Management useful and we are

still offering them. But help is often to be found close to hand as well. If you feel that you need help in managing varroa, why not contact your association officers and see if they can help – they can always contact me to arrange a workshop if there is demand locally.

Pyrethroid resistance is now present to some extent more or less right throughout Southern Region. Pyrethroid based products are therefore going to have only a limited effect in the way of varroa control. Several associations have asked if we can demonstrate safe and effective use of organic acid, and in particular, oxalic acid, and a number of field sessions are scheduled for this autumn. Contact me if you would like to know more about dates and locations.

Beebase On line

If you have an internet connection (if not they are freely available at most Public Libraries) you can log onto the National Bee Unit database called Beebase. Not only does it include current bee health statistics and a whole host of other information but it also allows you to register and look at the data relating to inspections of your own bees. Whilst there is sometimes a delay in getting data into beebase during the summer period (due to the sheer volume of inspections carried out – over 700 apiaries and over 3300 colonies in Southern region this year), once the winter comes the data gives a complete reflection of the year's statistics.

The internet address for Beebase is beebase.csl.gov.uk

Pete Kennedy muses on the season past

A new season, a new start.

Opting for redundancy after 8 ½ years with my previous employer, what better opportunity to follow a passion for bees that I had already developed than to take up the offer to work as a Seasonal Bee Inspector in the Southern Region. Working off my notice, I unfortunately missed the start of the season but quickly got the opportunity to catch up, working 5-days a week covering Berkshire, south Buckinghamshire, south-east Oxfordshire and north-east Hampshire.

Everybody had mentioned the steep learning curve - it certainly is that! After attending workshops and working alongside Ian, training was essentially on the job. Having worked in both academic and industry research may have helped tune the eye to detail, but it is surprising how quickly all of one's senses become attuned to disease given the chance to look for it every day. It certainly also did wonders to further develop my beekeeping as I had plenty of opportunity to glean valuable snippets and handy tips from the many beekeepers I had the pleasure of working with during the season. A big thank you for both the support and welcome I received.

Exotic Pests – in Wiltshire???

If you had been browsing the National Bee Unit's on-line database (beebase.csl.gov.uk) on a certain Wednesday afternoon in August this year you may have noticed reports that small hive beetle had been identified at a site just south of Devizes. Mike Brown, Head of The National Bee Unit, very quickly got the data updated to avoid panic and pandemonium as the reports were part of an exercise in which we simulated the discovery of small hive beetle and then put our emergency plan into effect. All of the southern region team took part and we also had invaluable input from members of the Melksham branch of Wiltshire Beekeepers and both Richard Ball, National Bee Inspector and Mike Brown, Head of the National Bee Unit joined us as working observers.

With the agreement of the beekeepers involved, several colonies were "spiked" in advance with photographs of small hive beetle adults or larvae; the inspection teams found these and took samples of floor scrapings to send to the lab for analysis. Whilst the lab could have expected that I would "tamper" with some of the floor samples, they did not know what to expect. So it is very pleasing to know that three of the four samples to which I had added ground up parts of dead small hive beetles were identified as positive straight away and the fourth was identified as suspect with a request to resample. Colonies in 16 apiaries were inspected over a two-day period; each was subjected to a very detailed scrutiny to ensure that no exotic pests were present. This demonstrated the extent of the resource requirements to examine the colonies thoroughly – there is no doubt that in a real emergency, there would be a need for many extra staff.

The exercise indicated that even though we work hard to maintain accurate records of beekeeper and apiary locations, around one quarter of the apiary sites we had listed were no longer in use whilst a further eight new apiary sites were identified. In addition, four beekeepers who were not previously recorded in Beebase were identified. The exercise also highlighted several aspects of our procedures which could usefully be improved and these will be built into our defined procedures during this winter.

There is little doubt that all involved found the exercise beneficial. The contribution which the local beekeepers were able to make cannot be overrated and I and the NBU team are most grateful to them for their crucial role during the exercise.

Disease Report

2007 has seen a slight improvement over 2006 with a total of around 100 cases of European Foul Brood in the region this year. A couple of late cases of AFB, following self-identification by a beekeeper has resulted in the highest AFB figures for the region since 2002. The preliminary figures are shown below.

Dorset and Hampshire continue to be the problem areas but we are by no means top of the list this year – 104 cases of EFB have been dealt with in Norfolk this year with Suffolk recording 47 and Devon 85 cases – more than half of the England total being recorded in just 5 counties.

Whilst a good number of the cases of disease discovered can clearly be attributed to the use of previously diseased equipment, once again, many of the EFB cases leave us wondering just exactly where the disease has come from. Our standard practice, on discovery of disease, is to carry out priority inspections on all known colonies within a 3 or 5 km radius (depending on colony density). This will often identify other cases but this year there have been several instances where the trail has gone cold. Is it because there are other colonies in the area that we are not aware of? Every beekeeper could help us in this respect by advising your local inspector of any colonies of which you are aware.

European Foul Brood											American Foul Brood
	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	2007
Berks	7	8	5	0	6	19	30	31	17	25	0
Buckinghamshire	0	4	2	1	3	1	11	31	29	11	0
Dorset	36	44	25	38	58	70	35	34	18	20	0
Hampshire	35	26	31	44	65	53	83	98	41	56	0
Isle of Wight	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	4
Oxfordshire	17	28	11	10	5	12	21	3	9	13	6
Wiltshire	0	8	0	3	3	3	1	30	38	0	0
Regional Total	96	118	74	96	141	158	181	230	152	125	10
England Total	608	547	658	666	616	632	761	973	836	826	46

Extension Work

An integral part of the work of the Bee Health inspection team is to provide talks and lectures which will help beekeepers deal with bee health and husbandry issues. I realise that many association members do not wish to go to meetings and be berated about the health and temperament of their bees so my colleagues and I try to be constructive and entertaining when speaking to associations. If your association is planning its winter program just now, you may find the following list of talks of interest. Several of the Seasonal Bee Inspectors are also offering talks to local associations but please recognise that they are not paid by the National Bee Unit during the winter and some help with their expenses may be appreciated.

Please contact me to arrange suitable dates or if you would like a talk on a beekeeping topic which is not included. There is a separate list of topics suitable for apiary meetings which could be useful for next season.

- 1. Apiary and Hive Hygiene** - this can be given as a talk but is also a good subject for an apiary workshop.
- 2. No bees, No honey - No honey, No money** - basically about swarming and other reasons for colony depletion with a good measure of swarm control procedures thrown in.
- 3. Eureka Moments in Beekeeping** - a collection of good ideas that suddenly dawn on you and, once discovered, make beekeeping more enjoyable and profitable.
- 4. Integrated Pest Management** - the only sensible way we can go forward now that resistant varroa mites are well established. (This is offered either as a one day workshop or a short evening overview)
- 5. Sunshine in a Bottle** - a look at honey, what it is and what we can do to improve quality and quantity.
- 6. Re-queening - Choice or Chance?** - which looks at the significance to the colony and the beekeeper of requeening colonies.
- 7. Bee Behaviour** – roles, rituals and responsibilities within the colony.
- 8. Balancing Bees** – a look at some of the delicate balances which are established within a bee colony, including the one that we can't get right, the work/life balance!
- 9. Does size really matter?** – A review of hive types, bee space and the eternal question of single, double or brood and a half management.
- 10. Best Management Practice? – Discuss!** – This talk reviews colony management practices and assesses their impact on the bees. It is intended as a discussion and can sometimes unearth some unconventional approaches to beekeeping.

11. **A Lexicon of Beekeeping.** On the night associations can define a few letters of the alphabet and we will talk about whatever comes up against those letters .
12. **The Work of the National Bee Unit** – the role and responsibilities of the NBU including a brief look at some of the current research activity.
13. **Small Hive Beetle** – video and discussion of this new threat to beekeeping in Europe.
14. **A day in the life** – this is a light hearted (but there are some serious messages) look at the work of a bee inspector – the joys, the pitfalls and the problems.

FUL DAY WORKSHOPS

1. **Integrated Pest Management** – looks at all aspects of varroa management with practical workshops dealing with specific techniques.
2. **Disease recognition** – discusses disease recognition and identification methods and offers an opportunity for “hands-on” inspection of EFB and AFB diseased combs.

Colony Collapse Disorder

Early in the 2007 season, a number of UK beekeepers believed that they had experienced the same sort of problems experienced in the USA and this received significant coverage in the National and Local press. I was asked to visit a number of apiaries where the beekeeper believed that this had happened - each of the colonies that I looked at when asked to do so showed clear evidence of serious, unmanaged, varroa problems. Throughout the year there have been numerous press reports on “the cause” of this problem and, whilst the media are keen to have something to blame for this condition, there are as yet no definite conclusions on whether there is a single cause for colonies collapsing.

The most plausible evidence I have heard has come from two visiting American bee scientists this year. Both Professor Tom Seeley from Cornell University and Dr. Marian Ellis from The University of Nebraska pointed to a long list of extreme stresses which bees worked in a commercial environment in the US can be put under. Migratory beekeeping over thousands of miles to give an active season of 10 months or more, the presence of bee health issues such as European foul brood, acarine, nosema, small hive beetle, varroa and attendant viruses, short season monofloral crops such as almond blossom where, once the almonds have finished flowering there is nothing else for the bees to forage and removal of all honey and the use of high fructose corn syrup to feed the bees are all readily identifiable stress factors. Recent reports suggest that a common factor in all of these colony collapses is a hitherto unidentified virus called Israeli Bee Paralysis Virus but even here, reports are contradictory as, apparently not all colonies concerned showed evidence of it.

Whilst the viruses are beyond the control of most beekeepers (good hygienic practice can minimise the risks), it is fortunate that most of the man-made stresses are not present in UK beekeeping – long may it continue that way.

The Thin Blue Line

David Packham – one of this year’s new Seasonal bee Inspectors has contributed this item on his experiences in the field.

Note: Lateral flow devices are used to provide field confirmation of disease identified visually. A little like home pregnancy test kits they give one blue line if the kit is working and the sample is negative and two blue lines if the sample is positive.

I had, of course, seen European Foul Brood before, albeit, mostly in a classroom environment on disgustingly smelly, decomposing black frames. However, I was once fortunate enough to observe

it during an apiary meeting with Richard Ball. Nonetheless, nothing could prepare me for the first time I detected EFB.

It was a typical summer's day, typical that is for 2007, it was unseasonably cold and the constant drizzle was only interrupted by intermittent bursts of heavy rain. As I entered the apiary, I could see the bees flying and soon realised how incredibly friendly they were, as they greeted me with such enthusiasm. I approached undaunted and even when the wind gusted and distributed the paperwork the length and breadth of the apiary, I was undeterred, Bee Inspectors are made of sterner stuff.

As I removed the super and Queen Excluder I was confronted by 11 frames which the Bees had decided should, under no circumstances be removed, they were visibly cemented by many years of propolis. Nor had the passage of time done anything to improve the condition of the frames, the top bars looked precariously fragile and a number of the lugs had been replaced by nails. Eventually, I managed to persuade a frame to relinquish its hold on the brood box and having shaken it to remove the bees, commenced inspecting each cell in accordance with the recently memorised Operational Procedures.

It was on the second frame that I noticed the decidedly patchy brood pattern. There nestling amongst the healthy brood was a single larva looking distinctly unhappy with life, it was

twisted spirally around the walls of the cell. This was one larva that would not develop to enjoy the excitement of the season's swarm. Ian's training had reaped its reward; it was exactly as he said it would be. This was my first incidence of EFB. I forgot the rain and the Bees bouncing of my veil, I had found EFB and was overjoyed. This after all was the principal purpose of my employment, to hunt down and destroy disease. My elated emotion quickly changed as I imagined the impact this would have on this delightful lady whose only crime was to persist with the use of old brood combs.

As I transferred the offending larva to the buffer bottle and placed two drops of the resulting fluid on the Lateral Flow Device, I hoped and prayed for a negative result. It was time to act as Bereavement Counsellor as I consoled the distressed Beekeeper offering the possibility that it was Varroa damage but even as we spoke, it appeared, that conclusive *second Thin Blue Line*.....

PS. Grateful thanks to all those hard working and enthusiastic Dorset beekeepers who contributed to this years work as a bee inspector, in particular, I wish to thank them for their kind hospitality and support which has made my work such a pleasure.

Associations Day 2008

Plans are afoot for this, now, annual event which has received some very complimentary comments over the years. One reviewer said of this year's event "a most worthwhile day" whilst another reported that "this is an event not to be missed in the future".

I'm sure that the 2008 day on **Sunday February 10th 2008** will live up to expectations. Already we have Giles Budge, Research Coordinator at the National Bee Unit and Dr. David Aston, author of the book "Plants and Honey Bees – their relationships" booked to give us talks and I am confident that the day will be as interesting and social as usual.

Once again, the day is open to all beekeepers and will be held, as before, at Stockcross Village Hall, about 2 miles west of Newbury. It will run from 1030 to around 4pm. Tea and coffee will be provided but delegates are asked to bring their own packed lunch. It is essential that we know, in advance, the likely numbers of attendees so please contact your association secretary or advise me of names of attendees by post, fax, 'phone or e-mail.

I would like to attend Southern Region Associations Day on Sunday February 10th 2008

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No: _____

e-mail address (if applicable): _____

No of delegates:

**Ian R. Homer, CSL Regional Bee Inspector – Southern Region,
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