

KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Orpington Branch Newsletter May 2008

At last, the weather was good enough last Saturday to allow a full inspection of the bees at the Apiary. In fact the sun shone, it was warm and there was a good turnout including four potential new members. Unfortunately, the bees in the hive nearest the entrance had become very aggressive and Jim and Peter decided to move them to another site before a visitor got stung. One of the colonies in the Dartington hive had died out but the other bees had come through the winter satisfactorily.

The bees in the Apiary had been inspected officially the previous week and had been given a clean bill of health, as had all the members' bees, apart from one site where EFB had been found. If I remember correctly, this is the first time that the branch has had a case of disease in the past twenty years. If I'm wrong maybe someone will correct me.

Peter Burden was good enough to let me have a report on his trip to Stoneleigh with Chris and Carol, Mandy and Kit. There were lots of people there and more trade stands than there had been at the National, including one by Godfrey Munro. Peter did not see anything that was new, but the drawer hive and the one with sliding supers were both on show. Peter thought that build up of propolis could be a problem for both. It will be interesting to see whether the number of trade stands at the National increases again when the show moves to Surrey this year.

I wrote to John Horam, my MP, about our concern about the lack of funding for research on bee diseases and received a response from Jeff Rooker, Minister for Sustainable Farming and Food, and Animal Welfare. He says they haven't got enough money to do any more but "we are developing a bee health strategy which will set out the objectives and priorities for the bee health programme over the next ten years". If there aren't any bees left in ten years' time the decision will have been a disaster.

Our next event is the May Fayre at Petts Wood on Bank Holiday Monday May 5th. Please bring honey so that we have some to sell. Following that, on Saturday May 17th we will be demonstrating beekeeping at the Coolings site in Main Road. We will need additional bee suits for any visitors who want to have a go.

As you will know from Jim's email, Alison is leaving. This is very sad since she has been such a help to us. For those of you without emails, there is a party for her at a pub in Farnborough at lunchtime on Thursday May 1st, and one at the Beeche Centre on Saturday evening 7.30-10.00. Bring a bottle and glass. If you feel like contributing to a leaving present from us contact Jim as soon as possible.

Finally, courtesy of Peter Burden, here are some photographs he took at the Beeche Open Day.

Frank

