



National Bee Unit – Southern Region Update

January 2016

Moving on

It is with some sadness that I announce my leaving Southern region. It has been a very enjoyable six years as your regional bee inspector (RBI) and I am very sure I will miss the contact with beekeepers and seasonal bee inspectors (SBIs).

Julian Parker has taken over as RBI in Southern region from the start of 2016. He will be familiar to some as he was an SBI in Southern region, for five years, before taking up the role of RBI in South Eastern region in 2014. As Julian lives in Buckinghamshire this county will move back into Southern region, returning the region boundaries to how they were prior to 2014. Julian's contact details can be found on the back of this report along with all the SBIs.



Julian Parker

The move of Buckinghamshire back into Southern region will also bring SBI Karen Smith with it and we welcome her to Southern region.

My new role of Contingency Planning and Science Officer for the National Bee Unit (NBU) mainly involves working closely with the Defra policy team on our contingency plans for exotic species as well as being the liaison between APHA and Fera for science projects. I also have responsibility for the news articles that the NBU publishes, as well as line managing Jason learner. Jason provides technical support for Beekeeping questions, and is based in the NBU office at York. He also writes many of the articles and support literature, and maintains the content of BeeBase.

I will be still based in Hampshire and although my inspection load will drop considerably I will still be doing the occasional inspection locally and helping out the team when necessary. This will keep my skills as a bee inspector up to date, which helps me keep in contact with the role, and will also allow me to support the inspectors in the event of a large outbreak.

I was appointed to my new role back at the start of August 2014 and have been doing both jobs up to now so it is with some relief that I hand the reins of Southern region to Julian.



The Season

2015 was not the best season for bees or beekeepers as is best witnessed by the decreased honey yields as set out in the BBKA honey survey.

http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/pressreleases/bbka_honey_survey_2015_30_oct_2015_1446_192509.pdf

It was a busy season for the bee inspectors of southern region with the usual inspections and the extra workload of having to learn the systems of a new organisation. We ran bee health days in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire, and did training for Bee Health Advisors in Berkshire, and Northamptonshire. Due to a damaged hamstring Kevin Pope was out of work for a month and I covered call outs by beekeepers in Dorset during that time.

Southern region was looking for a replacement SBI to cover Northamptonshire in 2015, however the recruitment process was held up and it wasn't until the start of August that the new SBI, Gordon Bull joined us. He had barely finished most of his training before the season had finished and I am sure he is very much looking forward to having a full season of inspections to get to grips with this year.

Southern region inspectors also helped out on two exotic pest contingency exercises, in Wales and the South West regions. There was also a very large outbreak of European foulbrood (EFB) in a large beekeeping outfit in Western region and Southern region bee inspectors volunteered and helped with the inspections.

With what looks like another mild winter so far, those using Oxalic acid should be aware of the risk that, because of the possibility of laying continuing through the winter, it may not be as effective as usual, as the *Varroa* within sealed brood is protected from the action of oxalic acid. With a cold spell having reached us in Southern region many will be taking advantage of this and treating their colonies with oxalic acid before the end of January.

Another consequence of the relatively warm winter is that active colonies, especially those rearing brood, use more stores and are therefore at risk of starvation if there isn't adequate provisions in the colony. Monitoring the situation by hefting and if necessary providing fondant directly above the cluster should prevent any risk of starvation.



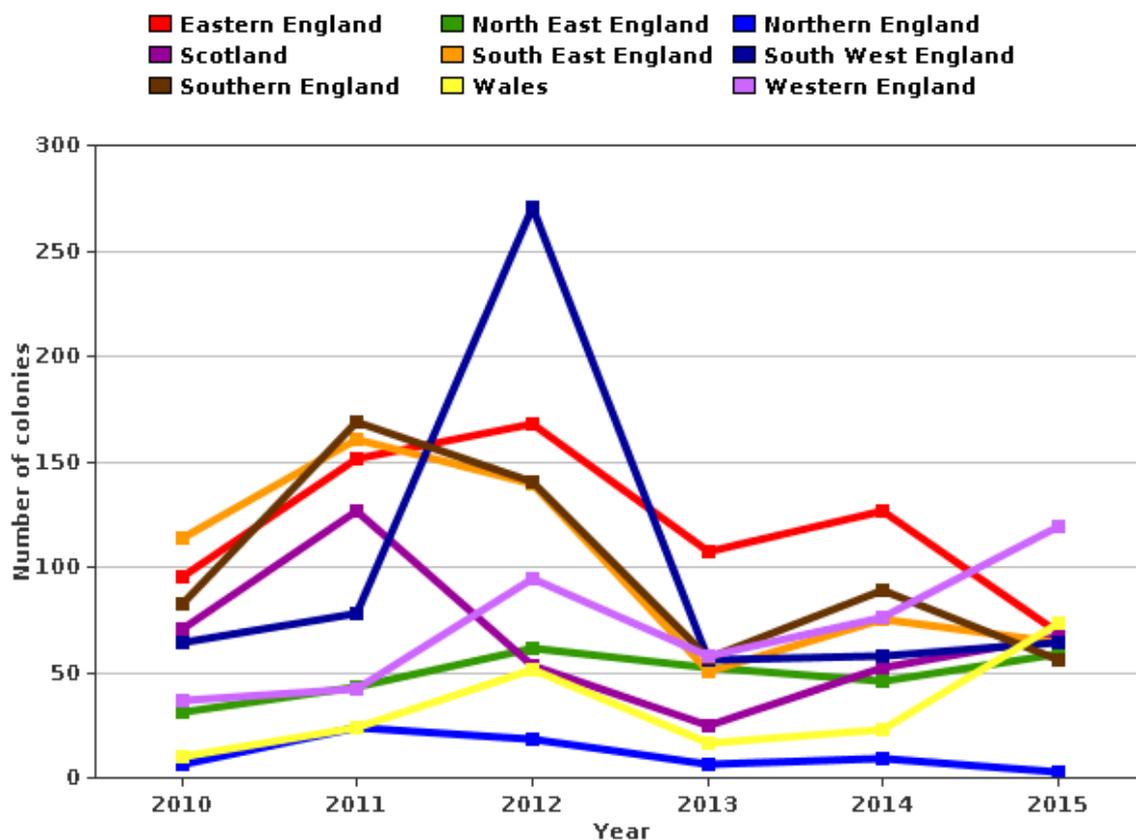
Inspection Programme

In 2015 in England, Scotland and Wales a total of 31,416 colonies were inspected across 5,423 apiaries. 578 colonies were diagnosed with EFB and 40 with AFB. Currently in England, Scotland and Wales there are 35,852 current beekeepers, with 166,224 colonies in 47,067 apiaries, registered on BeeBase.

Because the changes of region for 2016 have been implemented on BeeBase the data for Southern region for 2015 also includes Buckinghamshire which was actually part of SE region in 2015.

Figure 1. Below is a graph showing the number of colonies with EFB in each of the regions of the inspectorate over the last 6 years.

Regional trends of EFB



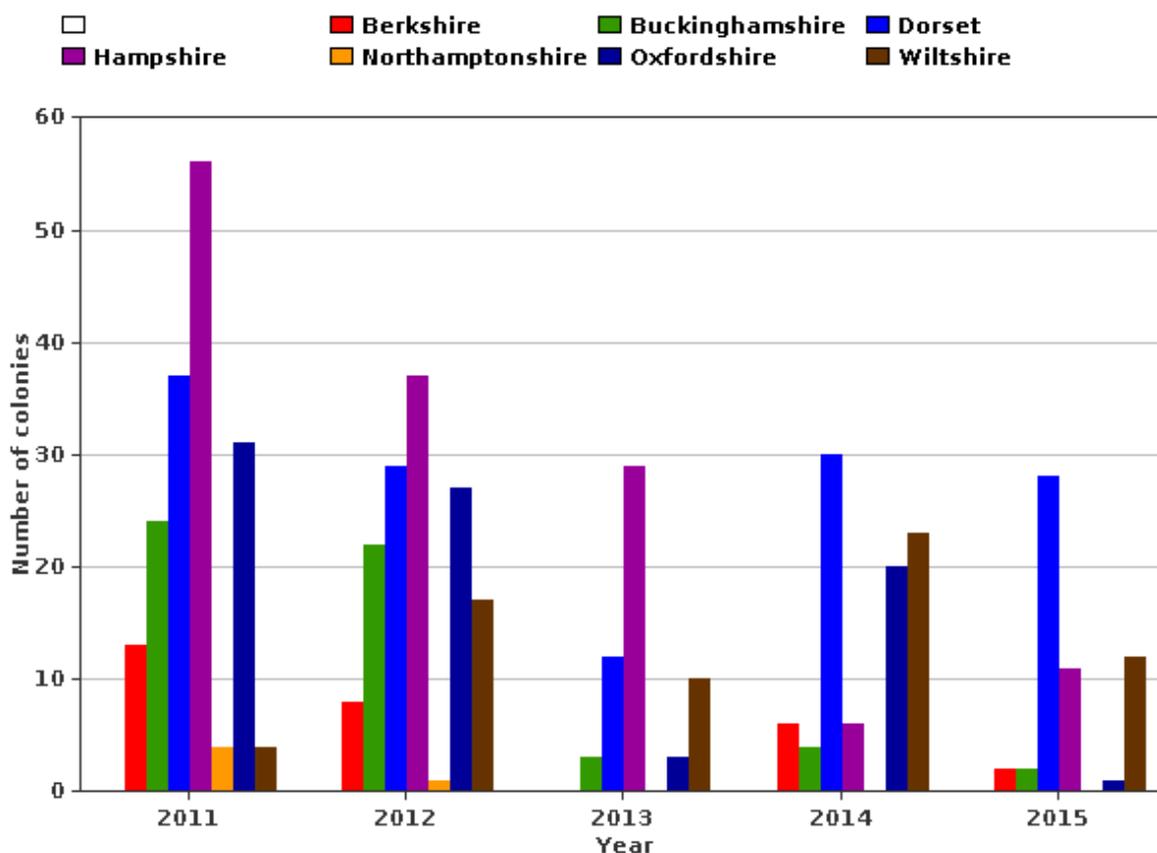


Regional Inspection and Foulbrood Summary

This year 4127 colonies were inspected in 860 apiaries in Southern region; 56 colonies were found with EFB and 2 with AFB. Southern region currently has 5668 current beekeepers with 25448 colonies in 7415 apiaries, registered on BeeBase.

Figure 2. The distribution of EFB amongst the counties of Southern region is displayed on the graph below.

Regional trends of EFB - by county in Southern England



More information on the location of disease can be accessed by visiting the disease incidence page on BeeBase:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/public/BeeDiseases/diseaseIncidenceMaps.cfm>



Figure 3. The following table shows the 10km squares in Southern region that had foulbrood in 2015.

County	10 km square	Area name	Colonies with EFB	Colonies with AFB
Berkshire	SU86	Crowthorne	2	
Buckinghamshire	SU89	Wycombe		2
	SU98	North Slough	1	
	TQ08	Uxbridge	1	
Dorset	ST50	Evershot	2	
	ST60	Minterne Magna	2	
	ST81	Iwerne Minster	2	
	SU01	Cranborne	1	
	SY67	Weymouth	2	
	SY88	Wool	2	
	SY98	Wareham	1	
	SY99	Lytchett Matravers	2	
	SZ08	Brownsea Island	10	
	SZ09	West Bournemouth	4	
Hampshire	SU10	Ringwood	1	
	SU40	Hythe	4	
	SU72	Petersfield	2	
	SZ85	Farnborough	4	
Oxfordshire	SUP41	Woodstock	1	
Wiltshire	ST85	Trowbridge	1	
	ST97	Chippenham	8	
	SU04	Shrewton	3	
Totals			56	2

Association Forums.

Julian plans to run a forum in Southern region this year and invites will come out to association representatives in due course. The overarching goal is to develop the relationship between the inspectorate and beekeeping associations to aid in the combating of bee diseases and pests.



BeeBase Registration of Beekeepers.

Voluntary registration is very important and can be done online at www.nationalbeeunit.com or by calling our office on 0300 3030094. This should be followed by periodic updating of your personal and apiary details. To do so you will need a username and password and this can be obtained when registering or by calling the office. Once into your records click on “my apiaries” where new apiaries can be added by clicking on the green plus sign and entering a name for the apiary and a map reference.

Your association can send us their list of members if they wish but can only do this if they satisfy the requirements of the Data Protection Act and they can seek advice on how to do that from their RBI.

In 2016 there will be the first annual census of colony numbers. This has been requested by the EU and will come in the form of an email in January which will invite you to update your details on BeeBase. The numbers of colonies generated from this census will be used to proportion the EU apiculture fund amongst the member states and this money is used by the NBU to contribute to the funding of the inspectors. Details of the reasons behind the census and instructions on how to update your records can be found at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=362>

Obviously if we do not have your current e mail address you will not receive the email, if you wish to contribute to the census in future years then please ensure that you have a BeeBase record and that your email address is up to date on it.

Streamlining Training Events

Training events are a key part of the education remit of the NBU; however, we are under a lot of pressure to ensure these are delivered in an efficient and professional manner. We will only deliver education events that cover pests and diseases and associated husbandry. The RBI's are focussing on county level talks with large attendances (>50), bee health days and comb workshops. SBI's will focus on bee safaris and apiary demos and will help the RBI at bee health days. We will no longer give talks for beginner's courses on diseases or “health and hygiene” as this can be handled by the local association trainers. Julian will be running about four bee health days across the region this year and if your county is interested please contact him to discuss the details.

Bee Health Advisors

The bee health advisor scheme has been withdrawn this winter. This is mainly because we have been advised that volunteers could not be used to assist bee inspectors in the event of an exotic pest incursion. I was a strong backer of this scheme as I felt it contributed positively to the support local beekeepers received from their association. It is unfortunate that it has been withdrawn, and after encouraging many associations to join it, I do apologise.



Small Hive Beetle in South West Italy.

On September 11 2014, the Italian Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie, (IZSV) confirmed the first detection of the presence of Small hive beetle (SHB) in South West Italy, in the port city of Gioia Tauro. Following the initial discovery of the SHB the Italian authorities established a 20km radius protection zone and a 100km surveillance zone around this site. Surveillance and control activities were focused on the 20km zone and movement restrictions placed in the 100km zone preventing any export or movement of bees, bee products and equipment from the zone. In 2014 there were 61 positive apiaries found and in 2015 there were 29. Details and further information on the outbreak can be found at;

http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/pressreleases/bbka_honey_survey_2015_30_oct_2015_1446_192509.pdf

At present the Italian authorities are still attempting to eradicate the pest with all apiaries affected being destroyed and the surrounding soil treated with insecticide. The area is a popular one for migratory beekeeping and queen rearing and naturally there is concern that SHB may have spread into other provinces through the movement of bees or equipment before the first detection.

Since 2011, there has been a substantial level of imports of package bees and queens from Italy into the UK. The National Bee Unit has completed all the tracing of imports of packages imported from Italy in 2014 and 2015, and all results have been negative. Fortunately none of the imports were from the region affected. However, now that the SHB is present in Europe the risk of introduction into the UK is far greater and all beekeepers should be both aware of the appearance of all life stages of the SHB and be examining their colonies on a regular basis. Please refer to the NBU leaflet, 'The Small Hive Beetle – a serious threat to European apiculture' available as a download from BeeBase at www.nationalbeeunit.com or as a hard copy.

It is also essential that all apiaries are registered on BeeBase (as well as beekeeper contact details) so that we can identify apiaries at risk in the event of an incursion of SHB into the UK and target control measures effectively.

It is not known at present how the SHB was introduced into Southern Italy, though it is possible that it arrived on produce imported into the region through the port of Gioia Tauro. Since 2003 the NBU and its Inspectors have increased statutory surveillance programmes to monitor for exotic pests including SHB at apiaries designated as 'at risk' due to their location



near airports, freight depots and ports of entry for fruit and other foodstuffs as well as risks associated with the movement of honey bees and bumble bees for trade. The most serious threat of the introduction of SHB into the UK remains the trade in bees and hive products. Import regulations are our main defence and it is essential that all beekeepers abide by them. If in any doubt, please contact Julian or the NBU office.

Asian Hornet in Europe

The Asian hornet has established itself in France and is spreading throughout Europe. The following map shows the current distribution and is based on confirmed sightings in some areas and citizen science in others.



Details on the Asian hornet, including identification sheets can be found on BeeBase at; <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208> and suspected sightings should be reported to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk preferably including a photograph.

And finally

My thanks go to the bee inspectors of Southern region who as always have worked exceptionally hard and have made my time as an RBI both rewarding and enjoyable.

Thank you and best wishes to all beekeepers for 2016.

Nigel Semmence



Southern region contact details

Seasonal Bee Inspectors;

Robert Carpenter Turner	Wiltshire	07775 119464
	robert.carpenter-turner@apha.gsi.gov.uk	
Phil Spillane	Oxfordshire	07775 119470
	philip.spillane@apha.gsi.gov.uk	
Kevin Pope	Dorset	07775 119466
	kevin.pope@apha.gsi.gov.uk	
Debbie Burton	East Hampshire and Isle of Wight	07775 119468
	deborah.burton@apha.gsi.gov.uk	
Adrian Kelly	South West Hampshire	07901 517983
	adrian.kelly@apha.gsi.gov.uk	
Gordon Bull	Northamptonshire	07867 351626
	gordon.bull@apha.gsi.gov.uk	
Dan Etheridge	Berkshire	07979 119376
	daniel.etheridge@apha.gsi.gov.uk	
Karen Smith	Buckinghamshire	07979 119374
	karen.smith@apha.gsi.gov.uk	

Regional Bee Inspector;

Julian Parker	01494 488393	
	julian.parker@apha.gsi.gov.uk	07775 119469

Head Office;

National Bee Unit
The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)
National Agri-Food Innovation Campus
Sand Hutton
York
YO41 1LZ

Tel 0300 3030094
Email nbu@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Website; BeeBase www.nationalbeeunit.com