

This is the third in the series of 'Read the comb' that appeared in the Devon Beekeepers Association journal - 'Beekeeping'.

Examining a brood chamber comb and deducing the recent and present condition of the colony is a vital skill. We invite you to examine the comb below, make an assessment and consider the implications for the colony.



photo 'Pollinator'

Read the analysis below to see if you agree with our contributor 'Pollinator':

At first sight this frame looks quite satisfactory. Plenty of sealed honey, a good strong crescent of pollen and bees storing fresh nectar in any empty cells available. There is a good nectar flow. Bottom left is a patch of sealed drone cells but the rest of the brood is very broken up and needs investigating. Even more worrying are the scattered, capped drone cells apparently distributed at random. This could be a very delinquent queen. She could be old and failing or maybe very young and still developing her laying skills. This queen must be put on a short list for early replacement. A check in a week or so must be made and if there is no change in this brood pattern the Queen must go. There will not be a crop from the colony and it is unlikely to survive the winter. Feeding would be pointless waste of money.