



# Essex Beekeepers' Association

## Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

April 2010

[www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)

### Beekeeping in an Urban Environment

Another busy meeting with over 40 members in attendance saw Orlando Clarke talk about 'Urban beekeeping'. An entertaining speaker, Orlando began by describing his introduction to bees via an elderly neighbour who simply showed him a hive, took the roof off, and then turned round to see if he was still there!

The positive aspects of urban beekeeping include higher than average temperatures and a wide range of trees and plants available for forage – lime trees and elderflower in particular. Together these give a longer season for the urban beekeeper, although Orlando was sceptical about some of the above-average honey yields that have been reported.

Orlando was candid about the occasional difficulties of keeping bees in a city environment, such as dealing with nervous neighbours and hives being mysteriously removed. He was lucky enough to receive help from Lambeth Council when looking for a site for his first apiary, which was in a community garden although he advises that 'beekeeping by committee' is best avoided!

He described various sites including one near a railway line, which has thrived despite the theory that bees don't like vibrations. He's also seen bees kept on lighters on the Thames, and on the banks of Deptford Creek. Another advantage for the urban beekeeper – perhaps surprisingly – is the ready availability of such 'waste' items as scaffold netting, and estate agents boards which can be recycled to make excellent hive stands. Orlando did however comment that perhaps there are now too many urban beekeepers and that they could be exceeding pollination density in some areas. His best tip - carrying a swarm on the Tube apparently guarantees you a seat – something worth remembering if you travel on the Central Line! ⚡

**A wonderful introduction to beekeeping!** As a recent graduand of Ken's Beginners Beekeeping course, I feel inspired and confident enough to venture into the world of beekeeping and aim to get a hive for my garden this year.

Packed into Chingford's Horticultural Hall, some thirty students were taught everything from bee reproduction, learning our way around the hive, disease control, honey extraction, hive inspection and management, equipment and an essential session on swarm control by Jenny Johns. The third week saw us making frames which was fun, despite my inability to bang the nails in straight... Overall, I found Ken's wonderful delivery and his wife's welcome refreshments would lead me to recommend it as: *A refreshing gimmick-free course taught by highly experienced beekeepers with a genuine passion and love of bees- which was catching!*  
**Helen Muggeridge** ⚡



**Our next meeting** is on **Thursday 15th April 2010** at 7.30 for an 8.00pm start. This is our last indoor meeting before the summer and will be held at the Horticultural Hall, Larkshall Road, Chingford, E4 6NH.

**Roy Cropley is coming to give us a talk on Beeswax.** Roy is a very experienced beekeeper and is very knowledgeable about most aspects of beekeeping including wax. This promises to be an entertaining evening. ⚡

### Topical Tips

After this long cold winter and early spring do not be too anxious to carry out a full inspection. If, when the bees are flying they are bringing in pollen, it is a good sign that the queen is laying and brood is being reared. It is not wise to do a full inspection until the temperature is 15 C or above. Below this, the uncapped brood can get chilled when lifting out the frames. ⚡

### Hive losses

Anecdotal evidence from the group suggests colony losses are as high as 30%, including one member who lost all four of their hives. Whilst some of these are known to be due to woodpecker damage at out apiaries, undoubtedly some of them are down to the long, hard winter we have just experienced. ⚡

### Bee Disease Books

Any members who have not yet collected their copies of this year's books, please speak to Ken Barker at the April meeting. ⚡

### Ted Hooper

You may have read of the recent death of Ted Hooper. Apiculture lecturer at Writtle College until his retirement in 1984, and a former Chair of the BBKA, Ted was a well-known and respected Essex beekeeper, and author of the popular book 'Guide to Bees and Honey'. ⚡

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### Chair's Corner

Unfortunately we are no longer able to hold our honey show at the Buckhurst Hill Horticultural Show. They have been trying to edge us out for years, but don't worry - we will have the show at the Chingford Horticultural Hall on the same day, Saturday 11th September 2010. All we need is lots of honey and loads of support from everyone in the Division.

We are now in possession of a large 'Epping Forest Beekeeper' banner which will come in very useful at the Forest Festival on 5th September.

**Helen Chadwick** ⚡

