



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

January 2012

www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

The Christmas Social

Our last meeting of 2011 was the Christmas Social, which was very well attended by members new and old. Many thanks to Paola Munns for her excellent organisation of this event, and to all those who helped to prepare the room and to wash up afterwards. This was a chance for Division members to relax

and have a chat, and some lucky members went away with a raffle prize as well. We hope you have all had a relaxing Christmas, and are looking forward to another year of beekeeping. Here is a reminder of some of the topics that the Division covered last year, and we look forward to many more interesting meetings and apiary visits in 2012.

January of course saw last year's AGM, with one or two new roles including the new post of Membership Secretary, now necessary because of the increased growth of the division. In **February** we had a talk by Peter Harvey of the Essex Field Club about bumblebees – the wide variety, their habits, and their importance in pollination. **March** was the time for Ted Grad to do the annual 'artificial swarm' demonstration, essential for new beekeepers and still useful for experienced ones. By **April** swarms were already being reported – the very warm spring and vigorous nectar flow had encouraged many colonies to increase at an early stage. The last indoor meeting of the spring was a microscopy session with Roy Cropley at which we learned how to prepare slides, and how to identify some problems including nosema. In **May** we held our first apiary meeting, and this was at Wanstead Apiary where beginners and less experienced beekeepers were shown how to open up their hives for spring and what to look for. **June** was time for one of the most popular meetings of the year – our annual visit to Willow Cottage, and this year the speaker was Clive Cohen, a beekeeper from North London, who entertained us with tales of swarming bees and some of his experiences over many years of beekeeping. As usual, the gardens at Willow Cottage were an absolute delight. In **July** honey extraction was the topic of the month, many division members had had good harvests after the warm spring although the colder and wetter summer was resulting in the bees starting to consume the stores. Ted and Jackie Gradosielski kindly hosted this meeting, demonstrating different ways to extract and process honey. **August** was the last outdoor meeting, again at Wanstead Apiary with advice on preparation for winter, and **September** of course saw the Divisional Honey Show. **October's** meeting was a question-and-answer session with Oonagh Gabriel, and **November** was the very entertaining talk by Stuart Baldwin with an exhibition of his collection of honey and bee related items. ☘

New Year's Resolutions

Well, it's not for me to tell you what to do, but here are a few suggestions other than the usual ones such as 'go on a diet' and 'drink less'!

Check your stocks of frames and foundation, and order early – Thorne's and other suppliers usually put their prices up in February, so it's worth getting an order in now. You could also spend a couple of winter evenings getting frames made up now, rather than waiting until you need them. Don't forget to check and order items like honey jars and labels which you'll need later in the year. Have you got enough equipment to carry out an artificial swarm? If you wait until you discover queen cells before ordering a spare brood body, you're likely to lose a swarm! This is also a good time to wash your bee suit, if you didn't do it at the end of summer, and check that it's in good condition. Does your smoker need any repairs?

A few more resolutions – start keeping hive records, if you don't already do so. Register with Bee Base, for early alerts to disease. And start planning some entries for the Divisional Honey Show – this is a great opportunity to get a professional judgment on the quality of your honey, and to win a prize, too! We wish you all a very happy New Year and successful beekeeping in 2012. ☘

Chair's Corner

Helen Chadwick, as you will know, is standing down as Chair after three years in the post and so at the moment – until the AGM – the seat is vacant! The Committee and Division members would like to thank Helen for her hard work and commitment during this time, when the Division's membership has almost doubled in numbers. Please come along to the AGM on Thursday 17th January to vote for your new Chair. It takes a lot of work to keep the Division running smoothly, so please speak to a Committee Member if you think you could help with any of the tasks. ☘



Next meeting – AGM

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 19th January. This will be the Annual General Meeting of the Epping Forest Division, and as with all our winter meetings, it will take place at the Chingford Horticultural Hall, Larkshall Road, Chingford E4 6NH. Please arrive promptly from 7.30 so that the meeting can begin at 8.00 pm. This is your chance to have a say in the running of the Division, and a chance to meet the Committee so please come along if you can. ☘

Membership renewal

A polite reminder that if you haven't already renewed your membership, it has now expired! Continued membership will not only entitle you to attend all this year's meetings and give you Bee Disease Insurance, it will also ensure that you go on receiving this newsletter! Please return completed forms to Membership Secretary Mary West as soon as possible, and no later than the AGM on 19th January. ☘

Library

Many thanks to Pete Andrews who has taken on the task of cataloguing the Division's library. Books can be collected from Pete, or he will bring them to the next Divisional meeting, they can be kept for 4 weeks or possibly longer if nobody else is requesting them. Contact Pete on 01992 572905 if you would like to arrange to borrow any books, or email him on peteandrews01@hotmail.com ☘

Tips from the Bee Man

Have your bees got enough food? Inexperienced beekeepers may find this hard to judge, but the best way is to 'heft' the hive and feel the weight – if it feels light, then place some fondant (also known as candy) on top of the frames for the bees to take down. In this exceptionally mild weather, bees may well be flying but there is a limited amount of forage for them at the moment, and we could still get some snow. Don't forget to be on guard against woodpeckers and mice. ☘

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