



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers
January 2013
www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

Christmas Social

More than 40 Division members attended the Christmas Social – thanks to all those involved in setting this up, especially to Peter and Jackie Clarke for organising the food, and Pete Andrews, Don McHale and others. Food, drink and a raffle kept everyone entertained and it was a great opportunity to relax and chat to other members. ☘



Photos by Ted Grad

A quick look at 2012

It wasn't a great year for beekeeping, but a good year for the Division in many ways. In **January**, Ted Gradosielski took over as Chair with a commitment to improve educational opportunities in the Division, and we thanked Helen Chadwick for her three years as Chair during which the Division grew in size. **February** saw the start of the Beginners Beekeeping Course with 23 students and a revamped syllabus, and it's encouraging that many of these new members have attended meetings and set up their first colonies. In **March** a spell of exceptionally warm early weather raised beekeepers' hopes – incorrectly, as it turned out to be one of the wettest years on record! **April** was the start of the Queen Rearing Discussion Group, hosted and mentored by Ted which encouraged seven Division members to embark on this interesting adjunct to beekeeping. The BBKA Spring Convention also took place this month, at the new venue of Harper Adams College in Shropshire. In **May** there was a Hive Stand Building Workshop, also organised by Ted Grad, and the first apiary meeting of the season in Wanstead. **June** was the annual visit to Willow Cottage and an inspiring talk by Dr Tricia Moxey, in fact we had two meetings this month as Roger Patterson also delivered a talk on queen rearing. In **July** we had our first social event of the year with a 'BBQ' at the Wanstead Apiary and despite soggy conditions it was well attended. In **August** work began – thanks to willing volunteers – on repairs to the fence at the Wanstead Apiary site, and various work parties helped over the next month to clear vegetation, replace the fence and generally improve the site – thanks to all those involved, especially given the prevailing weather conditions throughout this time! As ever, we are very grateful to Mark Stephens for the continued use of this site. **September** saw us back indoors for the Divisional Honey Show, where some of our newest members succeeded in winning prizes. By **October** it was clear that this had been a very bad year for beekeeping, and for honey production so it was timely for Roy Cropley to present a talk on microscopy and disease identification. In **November** several Division members attended the Essex Conference in Harlow, mindful that we will be hosting this event in 2013! Another social event was held, a Firework party which – like most of the events this year – succeeded in spite of the wet weather. Division Membership remains high, and there has been a good turnout at both social and training events. There is a full programme of talks and training meetings planned for 2013, and plenty more to look forward to. ☘



Chair's Corner

We don't know what 2013 will hold, but it's hard to believe that conditions for beekeeping can be any worse than they were in 2012. Here's hoping for better weather and a better honey harvest for all our members. Please do continue to come to meetings, and to get involved in the work of the Division – like all such organisations, we depend on our members for continued success, and I'd like to thank all those who have helped to make things happen in the last year. ☘

Ted Gradosielski

Next meeting – Thursday 17th January

Our first meeting of 2013 will be the Division's Annual General Meeting at the Chingford Horticultural Hall Chingford E4 6NH on Thursday 17th January. Please come along and if you would like to get involved in helping with events this year, please speak to Ted Grad or one of the Committee. Please be there at 7.30 for the meeting to start promptly at 8.00 pm. ☘

Membership

Membership is due for renewal now – if you haven't already submitted your application, please don't delay. Membership carries many benefits including attendance at meetings, Bee Disease Insurance, the BBKA News and of course the right to receive this newsletter! Forms can be downloaded from the Division website and can be posted or delivered in person at the next meeting. ☘

Honey Survey

Alan Byham has produced his annual survey of honey harvests in the South East. The average yield was just 19lbs per colony, well below average and the worst Alan has seen since he began the survey in 2005. At least one lucky respondent claimed to have taken 226lbs from one hive, but 99 beekeepers reported a zero crop. Perhaps unsurprisingly, honey prices have increased to an average of £4.92/lb. The survey contains much other information, and is worth reading in full – it has been emailed to all Division Members. This is a timely reminder not to underprice your honey – it takes time and trouble to produce, and should be valued accordingly. ☘

Tips from the Bee Man

If you are planning an integrated pest management scheme, this month is the time to apply oxalic acid to your colonies. Contact Ken Barker if you would like help with this. This is also a good time to review your equipment and order anything you need for this year, as prices from major suppliers are likely to go up in February. ☘

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