



# Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

March 2011

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

## Bumblebees

Last month's meeting was a very interesting talk by Peter Harvey of the Essex Field Club on bumblebees. Anyone who keeps honeybees will know how very different bumblebees are – and how often members of the public make the mistake of thinking they are one and the same! Peter explained that there are six main types of bumblebees, and then went on to describe the

habits of some – the 'carder' bees which build their nests from twigs, leaves and pollen, the 'true' bumblebees which collect pollen to feed their larvae, and even the cuckoo bumblebees, which as the name suggests lay their eggs in other bees' nests and leave them to rear their young.

At one time there were 40 or so common types of bumblebee but that number has declined to the six mainly found today, due to a combination of factors including insecticide, loss of habitat from modern farming methods, and pollution. They are important pollinators and having very long tongues they can only feed on certain flowers. Some bumblebees are restricted even to particular varieties of the same plant.

The chief method of identifying bumblebees is by their colour, not as easy as it sounds (especially when they are hovering above a flower). The Essex Field Club is collating information about local bees, and would be particularly interested to hear of any sightings of the *Bombus Hypnorum* bumblebee which has been colonising Essex since 2007. They are also working to digitise all their old records. This was a fascinating glimpse into the world of bumblebees, and if you would like to know more about the Essex Field Club you can find information on [www.essexfieldclub.org.uk](http://www.essexfieldclub.org.uk) ☘

## The Beetight Hive Inspection application

Those who have 'smart' phones (iPhones or android phones that can access the internet) may be interested in this free app. You can also register through an ordinary computer to use this site, although you're not likely to have that in your pocket when you're doing hive inspections! The website makes it easy to keep records, see the weather forecast for each apiary site, record honey harvests, forage and bee temperament – in short, all the points you need to note in order to manage your apiary effectively. Go to [www.beetight.com](http://www.beetight.com) to register. Have any Division members used this application, either at home or on their phone? We'd be interested to hear how easy you've found it to use in practice, and whether you would recommend it to others. ☘

## Essex Beekeepers Association AGM

The Essex Beekeepers 131<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 2.00 pm, at Writtle College, Lordship Road, Chelmsford CM1 3RR ☘

## Forest Festival

Many of you attended last year's Forest Festival on Chingford Plains, and it was a great success both generally and for the Division as we attracted a lot of interest and sold some honey. It's sad therefore to learn that this year the Festival has been cancelled as a result of spending cuts by the Corporation of London which owns and manages Epping Forest. If you know of any other local festivals or similar events that might be suitable for us to exhibit at, please let Helen or one of the Committee know. ☘

## Chair's Corner

Can't believe its March already, hope everyone is ready and waiting for the new beekeeping season. Ken's course is going very well I am popping in this week to help make frames.

We have had a Committee meeting on 15th Feb to start to arrange next years meetings. If you wish to see the minutes please contact our new Secretary Paola who will Email them to you. See you all at the next Divisional meeting. Helen Chadwick ☘



©Graham Ekins

## Have you seen this bee?

This is *Bombus Hypnorum*, and if you see one of these in the garden the Essex Field Club would like to know about it! ☘

## Next meeting - Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March

Our next meeting will be at Chingford Horticultural Hall, Larkshall Road, Chingford E4 6NH and as usual we will meet at 7.30 for an 8.00 pm start. This month Ted Grad is going to demonstrate the Artificial Swarm – essential for new beekeepers, and a useful refresher even for those with a few seasons' experience. ☘

## A polite reminder

Avril and George Smith kindly organise tea and coffee at the monthly meetings, and this is very much appreciated by those who attend. Please remember to put some money in the 'donations' pot, however – the numbers at monthly meetings have not always been reflected in the amount collected! This is a valued service, and we'd all like it to continue. ☘

## Beginners Beekeeping

The Beginners course run by Ken Barker is going very well. A special mention for Ken Piper, who has kindly attended each week to help put out the chairs and set the room up for the training – thank you, Ken. ☘

## The Divisional Apiary

was featured in the Financial Times recently! In an article about Landshare, owner Mark Stephens talks about his donation of use of the apiary land to our group. If you would like to read this article, go to [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com) and search for 'Landshare' to find the article entitled 'Breaking Ground'. ☘

## Tips from the Bee Man

In place of our usual seasonal advice for the next few months we are going to have some tips from an experienced local beekeeper. The first inspections are a good time to clip and or mark the queen; this will be invaluable later when the colony is stronger when you have queen cells and can't find the queen. When taking a hive apart, be gentle; the slightest knock will alert the bees. Cover brood frames with a cloth to keep the light out and keep the bees calm. ☘

## Contacts

**Chairman - Helen Chadwick**  
Tel: 0208 523 5770  
[chairman@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:chairman@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)

**Secretary – Paola Munns**  
Tel: 01707 873 984  
[secretary@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:secretary@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)

**Treasurer – Ted Gradosielski**  
Tel: 01992 890 986  
[treasurer@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)

**Newsletter – Olivia Burren**  
[editor@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:editor@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)  
Tel: 020 8504 0664

**Website - Kevin Cook**  
Tel: 0208 532 1584  
[webmaster@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk)