



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers
November 2010

www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

A night at the movies

Our October meeting saw a slightly different gathering – chairs at the Horticultural Society Hall were arranged in rows with an aisle in the middle, the lights were dimmed, and members settled down to watch some films on loan from the BBKA.

By way of a diversion while members were arriving and taking their seats we saw a film about bee keeping and queen breeding, including some footage of Brother Adam.

The main feature was a film about Bee Diseases, in particular American Foulbrood and European Foulbrood, the differences between the two, and how beekeepers can carry out a basic test on any suspicious looking frames. It also showed the process of an unfortunate beekeeper having his hives checked, diagnosed and then the colony being killed and the frames destroyed by burning. This was a useful reminder of the risk of these diseases, which are a worry for all beekeepers. Ken Barker was able to reassure us that the incidence of this is fairly rare, and he also gave a warning about the Small Hive Beetle, which thankfully is not yet present in the United Kingdom, but which can cause severe damage to colonies.

Sadly no popcorn or choc-ices were on sale, but refreshments were kindly provided by Avril as usual, and we then watched a black-and-white film from the 1930s showing some domestic beekeepers, working without protective clothing as far as we could see. This was an informative and entertaining evening, and as the BBKA have a number of films available on loan we may be able to repeat this next year with some different subjects.

BeeBase

If you have any concerns about disease of any sort, contact Ken Barker who is our divisional Bee Disease officer for advice. If necessary Ken can ask one of the county inspectors to attend your apiary. The National Bee Unit runs the BeeBase website which has a lot of information about bee diseases, and you can also register your details with them. This enables them to collate information about the number of colonies in the UK and their distribution, and to send out warnings if serious disease outbreaks occur in your local area. Registration is free, and will also give you access to your own apiary inspection history. You can find the website at www.secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase.

They are also currently running a Bee Husbandry survey – this is anonymous, takes only a few minutes to complete, and will provide them with useful information about beekeepers' use of varroa treatment, winter feed and other matters. ☘

Christmas Social



The December meeting each year is our Christmas Social event, and this year it will be held at Chingford Horticultural Hall on **Thursday 16th December 2010**. The large numbers now in the group have made it necessary for us to change the planning for this event. This year it will be necessary to buy a ticket in advance if you wish to attend.

The tickets cost £3.00 each and will be on sale at the November meeting or from Paola Munn who can be contacted at km.electricsltd@googlemail.com. All the food, drink and raffle prizes will be provided, so please buy a ticket and come along for a chance to chat with other division members and have some Christmas fun. ☘

Working bees

We all know that bees are intelligent, and are able to distinguish different smells. According to an article by Dr Reese Halter published in the Daily Telegraph on 2 Nov 2010, bees are now being trained to sniff out explosives, drugs and even to identify certain diseases. They are more accurate in identifying these substances than 'sniffer' dogs, require only ten minutes training and of course they are much cheaper to keep and transport than dogs. ☘

Chair's Corner

Some of you may know that Roy Cropley has recently returned home after major surgery. He is now making good progress, and we wish him well – we look forward to seeing him and Jessie back at our meetings plying us with wax foundation and giving us tips from his wealth of beekeeping experience. **Helen Chadwick** ☘



Next meeting Thursday 18th November Candle Making

As usual in the winter months, this will be held at Chingford Horticultural Society Hall, Larkshall Road, Chingford, E4 6NH.

We meet at 7.30 for an 8.00pm start. Ken Barker, along with Jackie and Peter Clarke, are going to show us how to make moulded and rolled candles from beeswax. We will all have an opportunity to have a go at making rolled candles from coloured foundation during the evening. ☘



Honey Survey

Some of you may have taken part in the BBKA Honey Survey last month. They now report that British beekeepers produced 3.5 million jars of honey last year. Based on the 80,000 hives registered with the BBKA, that's an average of 32lbs per hive. Some EFBKA members achieved much more than this!

The number of colonies registered with the BBKA has increased by 50% in the last six months. The value to the economy of the associated pollination is estimated at £200 million. ☘

Topical Tips for November

Your bees should be nicely tucked up for the winter by now with ample stores to get them through and well protected against predators such as mice and woodpeckers. In all the books they say that this is the time to check over all your bee equipment and make any repairs that are necessary etc. It is also a time when you can read more about beekeeping. Books studied after a couple of seasons' experience make much more sense than they did when looked at as a raw beginner. Don't forget that the Division has a library, and books are available at the monthly meetings to browse through and borrow. ☘

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