

Woodlands Apiary

May 31, 2013



WOODLANDS FARM BEE DAY – 28 MAY 2013

Tuesday couldn't have been a wetter day but that didn't put a dampener on Woodlands Farm Bee Day.

Wonderful things Kids, irrespective of the weather they turned up bubbling with enthusiasm, peering into, pushing and poking, asking and answering, so much so that it was quite a demanding session – then off they went on the Bee Trail returning sodden and muddy only to do more pushing and poking, tapping on the Observation Hive and spotting the Queen, asking and answering and so on and so forth.

From the Apiary I stocked an observation hive which was on display in the Barn. We also have five microscopes with slides of bee parts, including a Bee's Knee (try explaining the meaning of that to a five year old); another with the velcro-like fasteners to clip the wings together for flight invoked great interest; slides with different samples of pollen caused lots of oohs and aahs; and virtually anything else that they could push under the microscope was peered at; and, of course, we provided some free honey for tasting, all of which went down a treat!

As a first time event Bee Day points to the Apiary's possible contribution this and other Woodlands Farm events – certainly a stocked observation hive is a must but we need to consider how better to illuminate it so the bees' goings-on can be viewed more clearly – my microscope slides are a little tired and could be replaced with a new set and we need some new slides made up with different types of pollen and honey smears – it would be good to make up a UV filtered light box so we could see flowers how seen by bees ([Queen Mary College](#) is currently developing a bee vision database), and we need a greater area of display space to mount photographs, etc., to enhance the experience – any volunteers?



Bee Day was well organised by the Woodlands Education Officer Hannah – the objective was to introduce the Kids (and parents) to the diversity of Bumble and other bees that can be found on and around the farm – we could provide more support for this by installing and maintaining some bee nesting boxes for a few species of native wild bees, including *Osmia* (Mason Bees), *Anthophora Plumipes* (Flower Bee), *Anthidium Manicatum* (Wool Carder Bee), *Megachile* (Leafcutter Bees), *Chelostema campanularum* (Harebell Bee) – you will find some construction plans for a suitable bee nesting box at the Woodlands Apiary [webpage](#).

FERA SEASONAL BEE INSPECTION

Brian McCallum, the Seasonal Bee Inspector for South East of the National Bee Unit, the Food and Environment Research Agency carried out an inspection of the Apiary on 31 May 2013. He found the stocks free of disease etc., and healthy so our bees passed with, I guess that I have to say it this way, flying colours!

John Large