

# Bumblebee Course Report, Treborth Botanic Garden, 23rd July 2011

A bright sunny morning greeted the 18 people arriving for the Bumblebee Course at Treborth Botanic Garden on Saturday 23rd July. During the reception, Nigel Brown, the garden's curator, kindly showed the group various moth species which had been captured overnight in the garden's moth trap. Fortified with tea, coffee and cake the attendees settled back into the laboratory where Oliver Prŷs-Jones, the course leader, introduced us to bumblebees and their biology by way of a PowerPoint presentation.

Oliver's presentation highlighted the difficulties in identifying bumblebee species, particularly so the recently recognised *Bombus lucorum* complex, where what we thought was a single species in Britain actually represents three morphologically similar species!

We were also given an overview of bumblebee ecology, their conservation requirements and an interesting briefing on cuckoo bumblebees. Oliver answered various questions which

were posed by the attendees, before we embarked on fieldwork in the gardens. Two field groups were formed, led separately by Oliver and his wife. Focusing on flowerbeds and meadows we encountered six different bumblebee species: *Bombus terrestris*, *B. lucorum* s.l., *B. lapidarius*, *B. pascuorum*, *B. hortorum* and *B. vestalis*, the latter being a cuckoo bumblebee. John Bratton also located *Conops quadrifasciatus*, a brightly coloured black and yellow fly which parasitizes bumblebees.



After lunch we returned to the laboratory to examine preserved specimens which Oliver had brought with him. Oliver demonstrated how to dissect male bumblebees in order to confirm visual identifications, but also reiterated the difficulty in separating some similar species. Different species were passed around the benches so that people could appreciate the often subtle differences between the species.

This popular course proved to be highly enjoyable and all the attendees were able to expand their knowledge on this group of invertebrates.



Oliver is co-author of the recently published book *Bumblebees* (*Naturalists' Handbooks* 6) which is available directly from the publishers at:

[www.pelagicpublishing.com/bumblebees-naturalists-handbooks-6.html](http://www.pelagicpublishing.com/bumblebees-naturalists-handbooks-6.html)

# Adroddiad ar y Cwrs Cacwn, Gardd Fotaneg Treborth, 23ain Gorffennaf 2011

Roedd yn fore heulog braf wrth i'r 18 o bobl gyrraedd ar gyfer y Cwrs Cacwn yng Ngardd Fotaneg Treborth ddydd Sadwrn 23ain Gorffennaf. Yn ystod y derbyniad, dangosodd Nigel Brown, curadur yr ardd, y rhywogaethau amrywiol o wyfynnod a oedd wedi'u dal dros nos yn nhrap gwyfynnod yr ardd i'r grŵp. Wedi cael te, coffi a chacen, setlodd y rhai a oedd yn bresennol yn y labordy lle bu Oliver Prŷs-Jones, arweinydd y cwrs, yn ein cyflwyno ni i gacwn a'u bioleg drwy gyfrwng cyflwyniad PowerPoint.

Tynnodd cyflwyniad Oliver sylw at yr anawsterau gydag adnabod rhywogaethau o gacwn, yn arbennig y casgliad *Bombus lucorum* sydd wedi'i gydnabod yn ddiweddar. Credid mai un rhywogaeth oedd hon ym Mhrydain ond, mewn gwirionedd, mae'n cynrychioli tair rhywogaeth debyg yn forffolegol!



Hefyd cafwyd crynodeb o ecoleg cacwn, eu gofynion o ran cadwraeth a hefyd briff diddorol ar gacwn y gog. Atebodd Oliver y cwestiynau amrywiol a holwyd gan y rhai a oedd yn bresennol cyn i ni ddechrau ar y gwaith maes yn y gerddi. Ffurfiwyd dau grŵp maes ar wahân, un dan arweiniad Oliver a'r llall dan arweiniad ei wraig. Wrth ganolbwyntio ar y gwllâu o flodau a'r dolydd, daethom ar draws chwe rhywogaeth wahanol o gacwn: *Bombus terrestris*, *B. lucorum s.l.*, *B. lapidarius*, *B. pascuorum*, *B. hortorum* a *B. vestalis*, gyda'r olaf yn gacwn y gog. Hefyd, daeth John Bratton o hyd i *Conops quadrifasciatus*, pryf melyn a du llachar sy'n parasitio cacwn.



Ar ôl cinio, aethom yn ôl i'r labordy i edrych ar esiamplau wedi'u cadw yr oedd Oliver wedi dod gydag o. Dangosodd Oliver sut i ddadelfennu cacwn gwryw er mwyn cadarnhau nodweddion gweledol, ond dywedodd eto ei bod yn anodd gwahaniaethu rhwng rhai rhywogaethau tebyg. Cafodd gwahanol rywogaethau eu hanfon o amgylch y meinciau fel bod pawb yn gallu gwerthfawrogi'r gwahaniaethau bychain yn aml rhwng y rhywogaethau.

Profodd y cwrs poblogaidd hwn yn un hynod bleserus a llwyddodd y rhai a oedd yn bresennol i ehangu eu gwybodaeth am y grŵp yma o infertebrata.

Mae Oliver yn gyd-awdur y llyfr a gyhoeddwyd yn ddiweddar, *Bumblebees (Naturalists' Handbooks 6)*, sydd ar gael yn uniongyrchol gan y cyhoeddwr yn:

[www.pelagicpublishing.com/bumblebees-naturalists-handbooks-6.html](http://www.pelagicpublishing.com/bumblebees-naturalists-handbooks-6.html)

