

Harlow Bees-letter - June 2015

Upcoming Meetings

4th June - "Wasps" with Danny Nicoll, then "What I would have done differently"
2nd July - "Photographing bees" - in nature & down the microscope, then Preparing for the Harlow Honey Show



Secretary Notices

Last meeting : We were lucky to be educated by Terry Clare on bee breeding. From selection criteria to adaptability, drone raising to disease control, Miller method to 3rd Day Queen cell culling, with such a diverse range within this talk everyone came away with something.

Swarms

All over the news in the last couple of weeks there has been news of so called 'bad beekeeping' leading to swarms which are upsetting the public. Please check your girls regularly for signs of swarming and if yours swarm and you can't cope PLEASE call one of our swarm collectors on the website to come and take them away for you.

June is busting out all over

This has been the worst winter for some beekeepers with so many colonies dying out. Some of those that survived are weak and slow to build up. We cannot blame nosema because there is little of it about. Last Autumn was mild and the combs were filled with late honey, much of it ivy. This has gone solid in the combs and the bees cannot uncap it. The honey sets with crystals of glucose separated by a weak, sweet liquid. It ferments easily and bees that eat it are prone to dysentery. They avoid going on the solid combs and even the old idea of uncapping it with a hive tool or spraying it with water is little help. The best solution is to cut out solid comb and replace with empty drawn comb or foundation. Bees may need feeding if foundation is used. It's a poor year when we have to feed in June.

Solid combs

I have 200 pounds of solid honey in combs, waiting for my attention. There are a number of ways of dealing with it.

- 1. It can be warmed at 45 degrees for 2 days, filtered and bottled as softset.*
- 2. When the set honey is heated with water the solution may be fed to the bees. It is a bit risky feeding honey to bees but if it has been heated it should be safer.*
- 3. Use a Pratley tray which heats the honey and wax above the melting point of wax (64 degrees). The honey may be bottled but is darker and its flavour changed.*

Success

Colonies that came through the winter without a build up of solid honey have done well this spring and have filled a super or two. In the past the oil-seed rape has been a reliable source of nectar. Nowadays there are newer types with less nectar or the weather has been unhelpful. Things were always better in the old days.

by Roy Cropley

This month elsewhere

US Plan makes millions of acres of federal land more bee-friendly but does not ban the use of neonicotinoids which research shows are closely linked to bee life loss.

For sale

Nucs of bees

5 frame national nucs £120
Terry Thrussell (01279 842367)

Buckets

- Honey buckets £2
David Tyler (01279 730228)

Wax for sale

- recycle wax with Roy
Roy Cropley (01992 626668)

Division committee

President, Spray Liaison & Swarm Liaison

Danny Nicoll

Chairman & Librarian

David Tyler

Vice Chair

David Tidmas

Secretary & Web Editor

Nick Holmes

Treasurer Pauline Tidmas

Divisional Trustee Martin Cavalier

Training Liaison Mike Barke

Council Liaison Brian Bull

Mailing Officer Zena Wilkins

News Letter Nick Holmes & Roy Cropley