

Harlow Bees-letter - September 2016

Upcoming Meetings

September 1 - Winter preparation

October 6 - TBA



Secretary Notices

Last month we had a splendid weekend at Parndon wood - many thanks to those members who volunteered their time (and bees) who made this possible.

Next month we are trying to arrange a very interesting talk about a beekeeping adventure in France, but as it is not confirmed I can't rightly add it above. If anyone has suggestions of what they would like in November's meeting get in touch with Nick (077 307 357 52 or wwwcight@gmail.com).

Typically, it's also getting to that time of year to consider the programme for next year, so if you have any suggestions of what you would like to see or hear next year then please get in your suggestions, to Nick or Pauline.

Harlow Honey show results

1. 2 454g/1lb jars of light clear honey
 - 1st Place **Mike Barke**
 - 2nd Place **Ian Barnard**
 - 3rd Place **Nick Holmes**
2. 2 454g/1lb jars of medium clear honey
 - 1st Place **Mike Barke**
 - 2nd Place **Val Jepps**
 - 3rd Place **Pauline Tidmas**
3. 1 Cake of Beeswax, between 99g & 128g
 - 1st Place **Val Jepps**
 - 2nd Place **Daniel Holmes (Junior)**
 - 3rd Place **Nick Holmes**
4. 6 Honey Nut Cookies
 - 1st Place **Pauline Whitcomb**
 - 2nd Place **Emma Whitcomb**

The Hive at Kew

Nick took a trip to see this scientific interactive piece of art at the beautiful Kew gardens and thoroughly recommends it to everyone.



Essex Honey show

Now we have had our practice at the Harlow show it is time to move on to the county show on Sat 10th & Sun 11th September - entry forms can be found on <https://ebka.org/whats-on/essex-honey-show/>. We would really like people to enter whatever they like, there are novice categories, junior categories, wax, candles, cakes, mead, beekeeping related inventions, photos competition, flowers, label design... oh and honey too...

Even if you aren't putting anything you would still be welcome to come along as it is a lovely day out at the Essex country fair, and you can give moral support to those volunteering their time to organise and run the Honey show event.

Set Honey

Honey contains two sugars, glucose and fructose. It is the glucose that forms crystals easily and turns the honey solid. If the crystals of glucose are large the honey will be hard. It can be liquefied in the jar by putting on a metal cap and giving it a half minute or so at full power in the microwave followed by stirring. Or stand it in a saucepan in some water and warm slowly. The late Ted Hooper recommended heating jars of honey in water at 60 degrees for one hour to keep it runny for six months. When honey solidifies slowly the crystals of glucose are large and the honey is hard. The best temperature is 14 degrees. The glucose crystals form quickly, they are small and the honey is soft.

Winter feed

Enough stores on the hives to last until April? Heft the hive. A colony needs 40 pounds of stores to last until spring. If the honey is hard the bees cannot use it and will starve. The colony eats little until the spring and then use more when the queen is laying.

Soft set honey

Many methods have been used to soften honey. One idea is to warm the honey to make it soft and then stir it gently for several hours using an electric paint stirrer. One commercial firm spent £2,000 on a machine to grind the large crystals down and so make a product that resembled toothpaste. One day our association will buy one.

My method to make soft set honey

A bucket of hard honey is warmed at about 35 degrees until it is completely liquid. While warm it is filtered. It then cools to 14 degrees. We need a quarter of that amount of soft set to seed it. The 25% is added to the liquid through a stainless steel strainer. It is well stirred. The next day it is partly set and may be bottled. There is no frosting on the jar. After a few days it does not flow and will not bend the spoon. Enter it in the show and win first prize.

Ragwort and Ivy

These produce honey which tastes awful. Ivy honey comes very late after feeding and promptly sets hard. Some people like these. There's no accounting for lack of taste. Ragwort is a wretched weed but there is a beautiful moth which eats it, the cinnabar moth. What a pity this moth is not more common.

by Roy Cropley

For sale

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

Newsletter Nick Holmes & Roy Cropley

Mailing Officer Lisa McCorkindale