

## Harlow Bees-letter - May 2017

### Upcoming Meetings

May 4 - Making for Increase with Roger Patterson

June 1 - TBC



## Secretary Notices

Last month we had Bob Smith talk to us about the importance of bee space in a hive and why it is important to buy the right kit to make your beekeeping that little bit easier. I'm sure those of you attending enjoyed his funky style.

I'm also told those of you you attended the Ted Hooper lectures found them entertaining and informative, unfortunately I could not make it, but I heard good things.

This month Roger Patterson is coming to talk to us about Making for colony increase. In his words "This presentation explores several of them, many not seen in books, and includes ways of providing queens to head them."

## Swarms & Oilseed rape

The swarms have started, two calls this week, one too far away and another scarpered before I turned up. **Please check your hives for signs of swarming**, they won't give you a second chance, they will be off.

Oilseed rape is flowering in a few fields around Harlow; only a few, due to a very dry autumn and failed crops, or lack of pesticide depending on who you talk to. But it will **still catch out a few with crystalised stores** if you don't extract when the crop starts to go green in about 3-4 weeks. It does not take much oilseed rape honey to crystalise to then seed the rest to crystalise too.

## Events

- [BBKA Basic Assessment Training Day](#) - Sunday May 14th at Great Easton

For those interested in taking the BBKA basic assessment this is a great help.

- [Bee health & disease recognition day](#) – Thurs 15th June – Copped hall, Epping, CM16 5HS

As excellent time to learn first hand about bee disease, and its FREE - book early to avoid disappointment

- [Hallingbury Flower Show](#) - 16th July 12-4pm - Gaston House, Little Hallingbury, CM22 7QR

We will be having a stall at the flower show again this year and will be **looking for support from members** to run this.

We will also be going to Parndon wood on our annual beekeeping weekend in August, dates tbc, and we will be **looking for volunteers** to talk to the public about bees.

## Tea and Coffee

Its was agreed at the AGM that tea and coffee would be done by different people each month from now on, and that we would be asking for a volunteer for the next meeting at the end of each meeting. Please be forthcoming in this.

## Jars

The Jar order for this year is coming up quickly, please be advised that we are **looking for help** organise the local delivery of the order. If we can't get help then people will have to pick up their jars from Stock which is half way to Southend, to the south of Chelmsford. The Jars are sold at far below normal price due to the volume bought across Essex members in one go. Quick comparison £33.50 here Or £62.78 from the same retailer without delivery or £54 (inc delivery) from another retailer for 144 1lb jars with a plastic lid.

### Easter Holiday

We spent a week in Cornwall. The weather was perfect. Seven days of warm sunshine. The blackthorn in full flower. Miles of yellow gorse flowers. There were a few fields of oil-seed rape also yellow. The bumble bee queens had woken up and must single-handedly build a nest, lay eggs and gather nectar and pollen to feed the young larvae. There are lots of queen wasps about. The queens begin the nest of rotten wood and work until the youngsters take over the foraging business. They are usually a nuisance in late summer when they try to steal the honey from your hives. Do we get rid of the queen wasps in the freezer or let them go to make their nests? The vote is divided 50/50. That's democracy for you.. Our common wasp has a yellow abdomen and brown legs. We now have a nasty pest, the Asian Hornet, with a brown abdomen and a single yellow strip and yellow legs. If you find one catch in a jar, don't kill it and show it to the disease officer.

### Bee Space

Once upon a time our great grandfathers kept bees in all sorts of containers where the combs were stuck to the walls of their home. Usually they were made of straw and called skeps. The beekeepers relied on swarms to fill them. The bees could not be examined and extraction was by squeezing the combs. In a good year a colony might produce 15 pounds of honey. Some American beekeepers told Langstroth that a gap of 8 millimetres in a hive is used as a walk way and left clear. Less than that it is filled with propolis, more they put comb there. So Langstroth designed a hive with moveable frames. And we now find beekeeping so easy because there is a space of 8 millimetres around every frame. We can examine them every few days, look for problems such as signs of swarming and enjoy a harvest of over 100 pounds of honey from each hive. It beggars belief how many hives are put together without proper bee space. The worst thing is to mix some parts with top bee space and some with bottom bee space. Spare equipment. Every beekeeper would do well to have supers ready to go on to accommodate the large harvest this year. Have a spare hive ready in case you acquire a swarm. Put out a bait hive. Even if you don't want more bees other folks do.

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

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