



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

September, 2015

Welcome to this month's newsletter. With honey harvesting over, can any of us win any prizes at one of the honey shows? Richard reports on the state of LBKA's teaching apiaries, Mark tells us what's in flower, Howard tells us what we should be doing in our apiaries and Vesko puts a Bulgarian twist on this. Callie comments on our hugely enjoyable social, Emily does a book review, Tabitha gives us last month's Facebook highlights and Simon gives us the final part of his honey standards two-parter. And Emily's been thinking about the beauty of bees.

From our Chair	1
Announcements	2
August's Monthly Meeting	5
Summer social	6
September in the Apiary	7
September in the Forage Patch	7
Our Teaching Apiaries	9
The Bulgarian Beekeeper	10
Musings of a Beekeeper: Honey standards (part 2)	11
Book review: Do beekeeping/The secret to happy honeybees by Orren Fox	12
August's Facebook (In)digest(ion)	14
Adventures in Beeland: The beauty of bees	17
Members selling to members	18
Honey for sale	18
Upcoming events	19
Committee	20

A big thank you to all this month's contributors: Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Callie Nell, Emily Scott, Vesko Starchikov, Tabitha Stanmore and Simon Wilks. Martin Hudson once again helped out with his proofreading.

We're always looking for new and interesting contributions – please contact me if you're interested.

Aidan Slingsby
Editor
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From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

August is over and beekeeping is a little quieter, apart from in my case that is, my least favourite task, washing and sterilising honey jars! Why I ask can we not buy them sterilised and ready to use? Those of you yet to buy your jars, don't forget there are some good discounts to members that can be found on our website – <http://www.lbka.org.uk/members.html>.

On the subject of honey it does seem to have been a mixed year for our members, some doing well some getting very little it seems. I have no comprehensive evidence here but wonder if others would be interested in us running our own Honey Harvest Survey? It should help build a better picture of the balance between colony density, forage and distribution in London. This could help our efforts to persuade local authorities,





Victorian Apiarists Association (VAA) badge.



Bernie Heinze, president of Melbourne BKA.

developers and others to improve the environment for bees – and, by extension, all of us. Please let me know if you think this is of interest, chair@lbka.org.uk

One of our members has also raised the question of analysing the pollen content of our honey. It's quite a time consuming process but Howard Nichols and I are wondering if we could practically achieve this during the quiet winter months, if only on a limited number of samples. Again, please let me know if you are interested. I am not yet sure if and how we could make it work but it would be good to know the level of interest. Also, it's one thing identifying pollen when the plant source is known, quite another identifying an unknown range of pollens in a sample of honey. If any of you are dab hands at identifying pollen, please, let's hear from you.

Before leaving the subject of honey, a quick reminder: the National Honey Show (<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/>) is October 29th–31st and the London Honey Show (<http://www.lancasterlondon.com/londoneventscalendar>) is also in October, but no details yet. It would be good to see more LBKA entries.

Last week I had an impromptu visit from a beekeeper down under: Bernie Heinze is president of Melbourne BKA and section representative to the Victorian Apiarists Association (VAA). We compared notes on bee-



Where we have our Monthly Meetings – the white door on the left. Source: <https://goo.gl/maps/dbB8a>

keeping and beekeeping associations. It seems, on the human side at least, some things are the same the world over. And of course much of the beekeeping is familiar. But I thought it might be interesting to share a few of the differences here. First of course, Australia has no varroa! Apparently they are expecting it and all the ports are surrounded with bait hives and monitored. But they do have small hive beetle. It was Bernie who identified the first case in Victoria. They have just had to learn to live with that and manage it in the way we have had to with varroa. A big difference is scale: the VAA badge shown here is in the shape of the state of Victoria. The straight line on the left is the border with South Australia. The wiggly line at the bottom is the south coast; the straight line top right, the border with New South Wales and the top wiggly line the Murray river. The whole thing is the size of the British Isles. Bernie has 10 hives, a scale familiar to us. But the biggest bee farmer in the association has 3,000 hives. And Australian beekeepers in some areas expect a crop of 150kg per colony. Now you know why there is so much Australian honey in our supermarkets.

Announcements

September Monthly Meeting: Honey: its treatment, handling, storage (and tasting!)

The next monthly meeting will be at on **Sunday 13th September at 11:00 at Fairley House Junior School** (220 Lambeth Rd, SE1 7JY).

Along with other honey related discussion and information you can check the water content of your honey. Please bring along a jar of honey to check its water content with a refractometer. It is illegal to sell honey with a water content >20% and so it is worth bringing and checking a sample to ensure your honey is legal in this respect.

Those members who will be entering exhibits in the

National Honey Show next month may also enlighten us with tips on presentation, etc and/or benefit from other members' experience and knowledge in this same area.

We will commence with a 10 minute slide presentation about the handling of honey with the remaining 50+ minutes being allocated to informal discussion, tasting, checking water content, etc. If you have not been to a monthly meeting before please do come along and introduce yourself to a committee member.

Note that "The Tour of Britain" will be taking place is taking place and TFL have advised that there will be road closures particularly in the Whitehall and Westminster areas, with Waterloo Bridge having restricted access for some of the day. More details at <https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/tour-of-britain>.

*For planning ahead, the meeting after that will be on **Sunday, 11th October** on the subject of "preparations for the winter".*

Honey yields

The LBKA wishes to run our own monitoring of members' honey yield. This will be part of our efforts to better understand the environmental profile in different areas of London. We are trying to get better resolution of colony distribution from the NBU so that we can overlay that with GiGL mapping of forage for pollinators. This should lead to a better understanding of the balance between honeybee colonies and available forage. Obviously forage availability is not the only factor in honey yield but monitoring should/may confirm this picture.

The objective here is twofold: to have a better evidence base to advise people on the suitability of locations for new/more colonies; to identify and prioritise if possible areas for forage improvement schemes and initiatives.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that this year has been very patchy across London. Some members have good honey yields while others have none. It would be good to try to find out why, particularly if colony density to forage ratio is playing a part. It would be very helpful and interesting to collect real data on this.

We will ask members to volunteer information about this shortly. Please be assured that any information you give us will remain confidential and that we will only report aggregated summaries, ensuring that nothing that could be used to can identify individuals is released. This survey will not be possible without your cooperation and so we hope that you're happy to do so.

Honey showtime!

The London and National Honey Shows are almost upon us! Please consider showing your honey at these

events. There's also a local Honey show in Croydon later this month (see events list at the back of this newsletter).

The London Honey Show (<http://www.londonbees.com/>) is at the Lancaster London Hotel (Lancaster Terrace, W2 2TY) on 11th October between 11:00 and 16:00. Entry is £1 per person (donated to a bee charity). There will be stalls, exhibits, hive display, a children's craft area, bee talks and delicious honey. The highlight of the show will be the awards ceremony with categories including **Best Home Honey, Best Rooftop Honey, South versus North of the Thames, Best Business Honey, Best Honey Packaging** and the **London Beekeeper of the Year 2015**. Enter your honey at <http://www.londonbees.com/the-london-honey-show-2013-2/honey-competition/>.

The National Honey Show (<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/>) is in Addlestone (Surrey) on 29th-31st October. Amongst the exhibits and talks are the competitive classes. Please consider entering your honey to the show, particularly for the London classes that we sponsor. Please see details on <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/competitive-classes.php>. We will assist members by taking entries on their behalf and our chair Richard (chair@lbka.org.uk) will act as a collection point. Please ensure that your entries conform to the regulations and are properly labelled and entry paid for.

- 241. Two jars of Light or Medium honey.
- 242. Two jars Naturally Crystallised or Soft Set honey.
- 243. One jar of liquid honey judged solely on taste, aroma and viscosity, to be shown in a transparent container.

Should be LBKA become a charity?

There will a vote at the Annual General Meeting (11th November) about whether we should become a charity. **This will have a significant impact on our association and so it is important that members are aware of the implications.** Please do look at the details – http://lbka.org.uk/lbkaCharityDocs_draft-07-2015.zip – and feedback any opinions to Tristram on mentoring@lbka.org.uk.

Harvest stomp at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

On **Saturday 19th September** our forage officer Mark will be co-hosting a bee information stand at the Olympic park with Olympic park beekeeper Eric Beaumont as part of the Harvest stomp edible open gardens event.

The event will be a celebration of London locally

sourced produce as part of the urban food fortnight and promoting bees and honey will be the theme for our stand on the day. **Volunteers to help man the stand and sell their London honey are welcome.** The event will be a smaller version of Lambeth country show and will be centred around the timber lodge cafe. We will have 2 observation hives, and the usual props on show. Please speak to mark (forage@lbka.org.uk) if you'd like to help.

The event is 12:00-18:00 but Mark and Eric will be onsite from 8am to set up.

Honey sales outlet: Stepney City Farm

Stepney City Farm are keen to stock members' honey in their farm shop – contact info@stepneycityfarm.org for more information.

Honey sales outlet: a Clapham delicatessen

There is an opportunity for members local to Clapham to sell honey at a delicatessen. If you are interested, please contact Jon Harris jon1harris@hotmail.com for details and arrangements.

Selling honey?

We often get queries about where to buy local honey. Aidan maintains a list of members with honey to sell, which he sends out to anyone who asks. They'll be able to contact you directly. **If you'd like to be included on this list, please send apiary location (plus first part of postcode), name, contact numbers/emails and sizes/prices to services@lbka.org.uk.** We'll put the list in the newsletter every month. This month, it's on page 18.

Members' services

Bee buying, extractor hire and discounts are examples of LBKA member benefits. We try to keep information about these accessible and up-to-date on <http://lbka.org.uk/members.html>.

Old announcements from August

Check previous newsletters at <http://lbka.org.uk/newsletters.html> or contact services@lbka.org.uk for more details.

Young beekeepers. If you're interested in running events for young beekeepers Ian (ian.homer@bbka.org.uk) from BBKA would like to hear from you.

Pearly Queen Honey is a Beekeeping Co-operative interested in buying honey from members – contact meetal_patel@hotmail.com.

Paid work running beekeeping courses for a school. Suitable candidates should contact Gary Lynch (garyllynch@spwt.net) for more details and a full brief ASAP.

Old announcements from July

Wax for artist: East London based artist, Claire, is looking for beeswax for her paintings – hamillclaire@yahoo.co.uk.

Wax for cometics: Gabby is looking for 570g–1.5kg of clean wax for making cosmetics and is offering cosmetics, a guided tour and medicinal plant leaves in return! gabrielle.boraston@groundwork.org.uk.

Craft bakery wants honey: A recently opened bakery near Half Moon Lane between Dulwich and Herne Hill is looking for London honey that's as local as possible. Call Stefan on 0770 100 9145 for more details.

Old announcements from June

Can you recommend online beekeeping resources and suppliers? We want to expand these parts of the website. Please email suggestions to Aidan on services@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from May

Do you have old honey in bulk? Emily Abbott (07971 453330 or emilyabbott@virginmedia.com) will buy it off you!

Photography project. Olivier (olivierbarjolle@gmail.com) is a French photographer based in London and is looking to photograph beekeepers of all ages, genders and ethnicities.

Old announcements from April

Volunteers needed for outreach activities: Contact forage@lbka.org.uk if you would like to get involved. We can provide training.

Old announcements from March

Forage-planting suggestions? Contact forage@lbka.org.uk if you have any suggestions.

Selling unpackaged honey to a London restaurant: contact Barbara barbaratager@gmail.com for more details.

Do you have any announcements?

If you've any announcements for the next issue of LBKA News, please send them to Aidan at services@lbka.org.uk.

August's Monthly Meeting

What happened at last months' meeting.

Aidan Slingsby
services@lbka.org.uk

Howard led this month's meeting on the subject of varroa treatment. Varroa is a mite that develops and reproduces in brood, then clamps into adult bees and feeds on them. The mites do not kill the bees in themselves, but shorten their lives and make them susceptible to viruses such as Deformed Wing Virus (DWV). Bees have difficulty dealing with it because it is an introduced pest – first appearing in UK in 1992 – for which our bees have not managed to develop reliable strategies or resistance to varroa and the viruses it spreads. If unchecked, they will also certainly decimate the colony.

Varroa is endemic in the UK - all colonies have varroa. All we can do is keep numbers low. There is not one reliable treatment for varroa – we need to constantly monitor for it and take measures to reduce its population when needed. Integrated Pest Management is recommended – a continuous programme of monitoring and a range of interventions to keep numbers low. These methods exploit aspects of the varroa and bee lifecycle. Perhaps the most important aspect is that most varroa lives inside brood, so colonies with lots of brood are at a higher risk.

Monitoring

Natural drop. The most reliable method of monitoring varroa is to put in the varroa board below the mesh floor of a hive and count how many mites naturally drop off the bees in a week. Use the Varroa Calculator – <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/BeeDiseases/varroaCalculator.cfm> – to help determine whether levels are too high.

Drone uncapping. Another method is to uncapping at least 50 drones with an uncapping fork and count the number of mites on the brood. Varroa prefers drone brood because its development cycle is longer, resulting in many more mites being hatched in those cells than in worker cells.

Integrated Pest Management

Integrated Pest Management is an approach to tackling pests using a variety of methods, each of which has a small but important effect on the pest.

Icing sugar. This not a very effective technique, but an article in BBKA news a couple of months ago



Varroa destructor.



A high mite drop. Source: <http://curbstonevalley.com/blog/?p=7329>

suggested that it was effective at preventing the varroa population exploding when used with other methods. After inspecting, shaking icing sugar through a sieve on the adult bees causes them to clean each other and knock off mites in the process. Howard said he used a sieve and a big salt shaker after inspections.

Drone culling. Since varroa prefer drone brood, removing drone brood reduces the varroa population. Since most of us give bees foundation from which it's easiest to draw worker cells, they tend to make drone cells whenever they have the chance. Replacing a brood frame with a shorter super frame usually results in them building wild drone brood in the space below. It is then relatively easy to cut this off (and feed it to the birds). Sacrificing brood is not nice, but it is an effective strategy that doesn't involve chemicals.

Queen trapping. This is an advanced technique in which it's important to get the timings right and to understand exactly how it works. You trap the queen in a single frame using a special case that works like a queen excluder. This forces the queen to only lay there. Since brood is only in one frame, most of the varroa population will be there. Then you discard the brood. Continuing this over several brood cycles is very effective.

Various chemical methods. Some products such as

Hive Clean can be used during the season. These are not really designed for varroa treatment but may help. Other chemical methods are described below and can be used during the season (under certain conditions). For example, LBKA treats swarms with Apiguard as a matter of course. **If you're selling honey, any chemical treatments must be recorded along with the batch number of the product used.**

Shook swarm. This drastic measure removes all brood and is effective in serious cases of varroa infestation. It is not really part of Integrated Pest Management though!

Autumn treatment (now)

No matter what methods have been used earlier in the year, Howard recommends treating after the honey has been taken off when winter bees are being produced so that colonies are healthy going into winter.

Thymol-based treatments (e.g. Apiguard). Thymol-based treatments only work when the temperature is above 15°C and the bees are still active and takes at least four weeks. For this reason, it should be started in early August. Thymol taints the honey so can only be used after honey for human consumption is taken off. Howard demonstrated how it is applied. The packet is opened and placed just above the brood nest. An eke may help provide the space needed. The hive is reduced with gaps sealed where possible. This includes restricting the entrance, putting the varroa board in and taping it up. After two weeks, another packet is added to be left in for at least 2 weeks. So far, there's no known mite resistance to these thymol-based treatments.

Miteicide treatments (e.g. Apistan or Bayvarol). These rapidly-acting treatments used to be effective, but unfortunately, a mites are good and becoming resistant to these. They therefore should not be relied upon and should certainly not be used repeatedly in consecutive years. They are fast-acting and work at lower temperatures than thymol-based treatments. Some of these products claim that subsequent honey extraction is possible.

MAQS is a new treatment based on formic acid that is gaining wider acceptance. Howard wouldn't use it now as he thinks it's still too new – earlier treatments used to reduce in a high bee mortality – but thinks that it is the future. It *kills mites whilst still in the cells* so is very fast-acting and does not need to be in for longer than a varroa life-cycle as is the case for apiguard. It also work at low temperatures. Some people had experience using it and one new member said he used a lower dosage than recommended and found it to be effective.

Winter treatment

Howard recommends using oxalic acid in late December to early January. At this time, there will be no brood

and the mites will be on the bees' bodies. Oxalic acid kills the mites on contact. The safest way to treat is to drip the acid on between the frames but there are other application methods too.

Summer social

Callie's notes on the Summer Social that followed August's monthly meeting. We had about 35 attendees. It was a social notable for the **incredible selection of home-baked cakes** from members who turned out to be bakers of the highest calibre (and for everyone having too good a time to take any photographs!) The committee are grateful to Hannah Rhodes for providing a couple of cases of her delicious Hiver Beer – we hope to publish an article she's writing about it next month.

Callie Nell
services@lbka.org.uk

The Summer Social was graced with mixed weather this year, however the rain did stop, turning it into a pleasant afternoon. The food was good, especially the lovely salads and great puds everyone brought along. I also partook of some Hiver beer, very moorish.

The great thing about the association and get togethers like the Summer Social is the cross pollination of knowledge which I believe especially true at the LBKA. With great respect and appreciation I would like to thank everyone always willing to share. I never walk away from any get together not having learnt something.

However the Summer Social was also a reflection of the year past, and a wide variety of topics was discussed like who harvested the most suppers, MAQS Strips, feisty bees and the 40 yard beekeeper dash – like the lions in Africa – the beekeeper is capable of great speeds over short distances and has been known to perform amazing feats of jumping high fences in order to avoid the guard bees that take umbrage at us nicking their honey. Hard to believe but never the less true!

Another aspect of LBKA that stood out to me is the success of the mentoring scheme, it was with pride that I could see the year's mentees on the road to becoming knowledgeable and practical beekeepers.

September in the Apiary

Where we should be with our colonies at this time of year.

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

The bee population will continue to decline in September but the new bees now being born will need to live through to April 2016, for 6 months instead of 6 weeks. They need to be healthy, free of varroa mites and associated viruses and with plenty of stores. Those members who diligently applied Apiguard throughout August should now be the proud custodians of newly born healthy bees.

Feeding the colony

This is the main job for September. A full sized colony needs to have 35 lbs. of honey to see it through to next April. A National brood frame holds 5 lbs. and so the equivalent of 7 frames is needed. If, say, you estimate 5 frames of honey is currently in the hive then this is 25lb and a further 10lb is required. 1lb of sugar will make 1.25lb of honey (honey is 80% sugar and 20% water). Therefore, using this example syrup should be made from 8 lbs. of sugar to complete the stores. Any surplus will not be wasted as it will be used by the bees next spring.

Feeding fondant in winter causes the cluster to break up and is an unnecessary disturbance. It is preferable to feed in September and so ensure that there are sufficient stores for the winter. Fondant in winter should only be used as an emergency feed, not part of a planned strategy. The best time for winter and spring feeding is in the preceding autumn!

If feeding is left until October then the bees will be unable to evaporate down the water content to less than 20% and then cap the stores. This is likely to lead to the syrup fermenting over the winter period. All feeding should be completed by the end of September.

Sugar must be white granulated sugar. Any other sugar is harmful to the bees. A stronger syrup should be used at this time of year as this means the bees have less work to do in evaporating off the water. This syrup is not for immediate consumption but for winter and early spring stores. 1kg of sugar dissolved in 660ml of warm water is the desired strength.

If the feeder needs to be topped up then it is essential to wear a veil. Bees may not appear to be very active if late in the month and cooler but they will surge through the feedhole if the feeder is disturbed or taken off.

Other action to be taken this month

Marking the queen. If the colony has a new queen born this summer then now is the best time to find and mark her. The colony is contracting with the brood limited to just a few frames and this makes it a much easier proposition. If the queen is marked then next season's swarm control will be so much easier.

Checking the hive. Hive body should be draught free and the roof should be waterproof. Now is the time to replace any defective or ill fitting equipment before the onset of winter.

Mouseguards If it starts to turn cold then these should be fitted late in the month or in early October.

September in the Forage Patch

Mark's regular update on what is in flower that bees like.

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

September heralds the start of autumn and the end of one beekeeping year and the start of another.

Temperatures will soon begin to drop to barely above double figures and day length will become noticeably shorter as the month progresses.

For our honey bees September offers the last chance to stock up with honey to see them through to next April when the conditions for nectar foraging will resume.



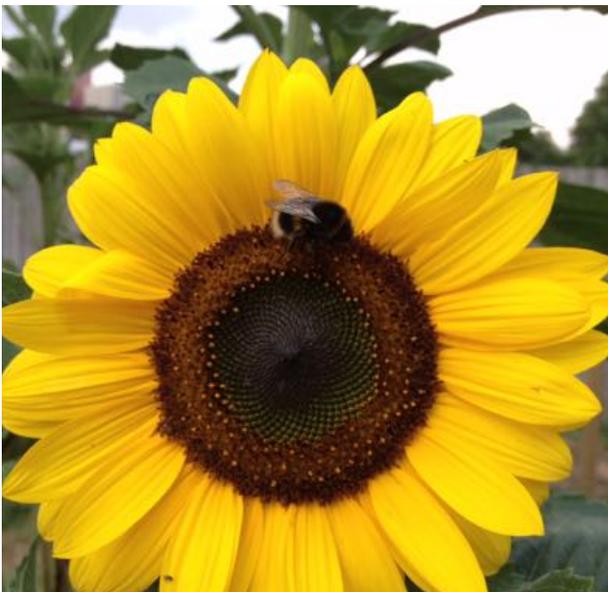
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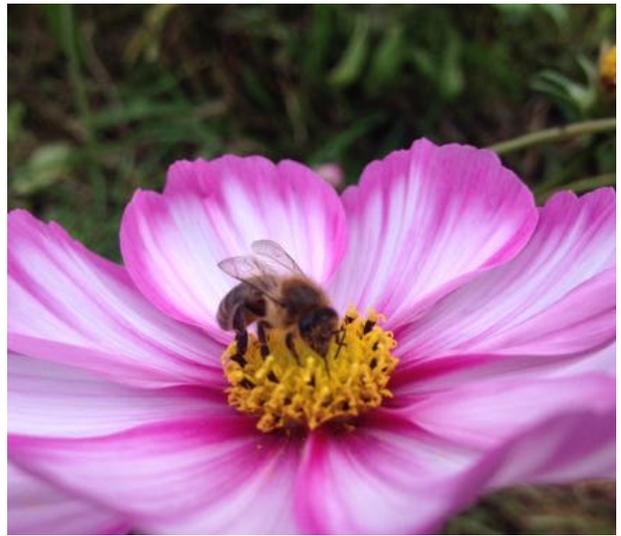
Ivy flowers almost ready to open.



Hebe great ornamental flowers July to September.



Sunflowers offer copious amounts of nectar on warm days.



Honey bee visits a Cosmos flower.



Dahlias provide bright yellow/orange pollen.

Most of our native flowers are now long since over flowering but a few persist. **Asters, Field Scabious, Purple Loosestrife, Water Mint, Mallows and Purple Hoarhound** continue to flower. On disturbed ground and brownfield sites yellow toadflax and willow herbs and bindweed are also persisting.

As with August it is domestic gardens which throw a lifeline to our bees in the form of late summer flowering exotics such as **Echinacea, Rudbeckia, Penstemons, Hebe, Buddleia, Dahlias, Sunflowers and Cosmos.**

One native plant that does flower late in the season and which almost all pollinators rely heavily upon for their last source of nectar and pollen is **ivy**. Right now all over the capital ivy is preparing to flower and we should see the first open blooms by end of the first week of the month. I cannot understate the importance of Ivy for our native pollinators. Whilst many Beekeepers hate ivy honey citing its readiness to crystallise and become

rock hard as a reason not to like it, it's flowers are crucial for many wild bees, hover flies and butterflies. In late September millions of pollinators such as the Painted Lady butterfly and Hornet hover fly will make an epic 9000km journey to sub saharan Africa fuelled on Ivy nectar. Many of our overwintering pollinators also rely on its nectar and pollen to fatten up before going into hibernation.

One pollinator in particular is an Ivy specialist- the Ivy mining bee *Colletes hederæ*. This small highly striped bee feeds almost exclusively on Ivy blooms and is only seen in autumn when the climbing plant blooms.

Jobs to do this month.

Plant spring flowering bulbs like **tulip**, **snowdrop**, **crocus** and **anemones**. These will provide much needed fresh pollen very early in the season when brood rearing commences.

Take semi hardwood cuttings from **hebe**, **lavender**, **flowering currant** and **everlasting wall flowers**. Remove the lower leaves, dab with hormone rooting powder and push into gritty compost. Keep cool and moist and by spring they will have established roots and provide flowers for bees the following season.

If you plan to plant a flowering hedge or flowering tree this winter now is a good time to order your field grown bare root plants for mid winter delivery.

Our Teaching Apiaries

News from LBKA's teaching apiaries.

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

I am pleased to report all our apiaries are in pretty good shape, although, progress on Holland Park remains frustratingly slow.

Eden apiary has not produced much honey this year but I have to say it has been a better teaching apiary for that. Last year was hard work which sometimes took precedence over the mentoring. We will of course miss the cash from honey sales this year but all the other apiaries have been more productive so we can't complain. I am particularly pleased with the fact that no swarms escaped from Eden this year. We have also had a measure of success with varroa control I think. Three out of the four colonies were showing a drop to single figures per week in early August. I put this down to shook swarms with a varroa trap frame in March.

The fourth colony is different with a drop of 200 in a week before treatment. This colony was also shook swarmed but it was also the biggest. Curiously the drop under treatment was 500 in 2 weeks – not that much different to pre-treatment. Maybe they are good at grooming! With the drop of the other hives so low, zero in some cases, I was tempted not to use Apiguard on them, but did so in the end to see how the results under treatment compared to the colony with the high count: the highest was 50 in two weeks so I am now more confident that the varroa population really is low in these colonies. I recommend shook swarm with varroa trap frame (the trap frame procedure can be used with an artificial swarm too).

Barbara reports that Mudchute still has three hives: Tom, Dick and Harry. Sam was a former hive that swarmed. All three hives are doing well and we are about to extract our honey from the hives this week. We are hoping to get a full super and half from each hive.

We have a strong team of beekeepers at Mudchute: Geoff Rimington and Nick Gallagher who tend the hives every week, and we have 6 mentees assigned to the apiary. Sadly, attendance is not good.

Petros reports that It was a busy, interesting and great learning experience this (beekeeping) year at the Brockwell apiary, which culminated with us taking one of our largest honey crops in early August.

After moving into the new apiary and the subsequent vandalism of the hives, our previous non swarming queens had a change in attitude resulting in the number of colonies increasing from the 4 that were successfully overwintered to 9. At the time, the rapid increase resulted in some desperate pleas for help as we quickly ran out of equipment to manage both the growing colonies and the swarms, so I was lucky to have the help of the community garden carpenters to quickly build some gear for our use. Simon Wilkes was helpful as ever providing much needed guidance and his magic swarm catching box during the more testing period of the swarming season.

We also had the largest and more consistent turnout of mentees when compared to the previous years, which was not only helpful during the frame building days but also helped us reinforce the basics of what we do, such as how to open hives, inspect frames and swarm prevention.

With the number of colonies back down to 5, and the honey harvest off we are now in the midst of preparing the colonies for winter by treating for Varroa (Apiguard), and sorting out the storage of the supers by treating for wax moth.

After all the winter preparations are done, then both Karin and I will be looking forward to a break from the apiary considering that last winter most weekends were spent sorting out the new apiary.

The Bulgarian Beekeeper

Vesko continues his month-by-month series writing about his beekeeping back in his native Bulgaria.

*Vesko Starchikov
LBKA member*

In September honey bees collect nectar from later-flowering plants and honeydew from deciduous trees. Honeydew honey is nourishing for humans, but it is not suitable for winter stores.

This late forage stimulates the queen to lay more eggs with brood on 4-5 frames. This brood is important because it will hatch into the winter bees for the winter.

In September I do a basic autumn review. The main thing I do is to check the quality and quantity of stores in the hives, determine the strength of the colonies, determine the qualities of the queen, how much to feed bee colonies and what is the quality of the honeycombs. I move the stores around so that frames with large sections unsealed honey is more accessible to bees, as unripe honey ferments easily and becomes unfit for consumption.

I also remove frames left empty after hatched brood and replace with sealed honey frames. I also check for old honeycombs with dark wax and replace them with new combs. If these combs still have honey, I centrifuge them and give the honey back to bees. For successful overwintering, I provide 8-10 kg of honey and a honeycomb with pollen of each family.

In September, I continue feeding of bee colonies in order to develop more brood during the autumn. I combine weak colonies to ensure that colonies are strong with good queens going into winter. I restrict the entrance of the hive and in put mouse guards to prevent field mice from using hives for winter shelter as they can cause a lot of damage.

In September I review the available frames stored in my shed and put those I cannot reuse into a solar extractor. In September the sun is not so strong, but suitable for melting old and unfit combs, obtaining high-quality beeswax. To prevent robbing, I examine the hives early in the morning or at dusk. When I remove honeycombs I put them into boxes that close well.

In conclusion, timely and properly-conducted preparation of bee colonies in the autumn is important for success overwintering.



View of my friend's apiary – we became beekeepers together many years ago.



View from my hometown Kalofer.

Musings of a Beekeeper: Honey standards (part 2)

In typical self-deprecating style, Simon describes his musings this month as being a "turgid episode" and promises something "more interesting" next month. "Turgid" or not, his articles on the differing approaches to honey regulation between US (last month) and EU honey standards is meticulously researched and interesting.

Simon Wilks
LBKA member

Within the European Economic Community, the predecessor of today's EU, the question of what honey was settled in 1974, when the various definitions (or lack of them) that existed in the nine member nations were harmonized.

The definition the EEC settled on ran as follows:

"honey" shall mean the foodstuff which is produced by the honey-bee from the nectar of blossoms or secretions of or on living parts of plants, and which the bees collect, transform, combine with specific substances of their own and store and leave to mature in honey combs. This foodstuff may be fluid, viscous or crystallized.

In addition, the EEC laid down that honey should not have foreign tastes or odours, have begun to ferment or effervesce, have been heated to destroy or inactivate enzymes, have artificially altered acidity or contain any substances in such quantity as to endanger human health.

To ensure quality control was possible, technical limits were set on the levels of water, sucrose, invert sugar, insoluble solids, minerals, acidity, HMF and diastase activity. Individual nations could ignore the last two for a few years, but otherwise non-compliant honey would have to be sold as 'Baker's or Industrial honey'

Furthermore, they also ruled that:

no product other than honey may be added to honey offered for sale as such.

That would, you might have thought, have put the proverbial tin lid on the matter. And so, for several years, it did.

However, as the EEC expanded, it became clear that food labelling regulations weren't up to scratch, and the European Commission proposed wholesale reform. Among these came, in 1995, a proposal for a directive on honey. Armies of bureaucrats duly slumped

into action and, by 2001, their work was finished. As far as we are concerned, this resulted in the 1974 rules being repealed and replaced by Council Directive 2001/110/EC, which eventually landed in the UK as the 2003 Honey

Regulations

The main aim of all this was to ensure consistent labelling, and that claims about monofloral or geographical origins were accurate.

In addition, however, new compositional requirements were added:

Honey consists essentially of different sugars, predominantly fructose and glucose as well as other substances such as organic acids, enzymes and solid particles derived from honey collection. The colour of honey varies from nearly colourless to dark brown. The consistency can be fluid, viscous or partly to entirely crystallised. The flavour and aroma vary, but are derived from the plant origin.

They also expanded the anti-adulteration clause, the final sentence of the 1974 definition, to become:

When placed on the market as honey or used in any product intended for human consumption, honey shall not have added to it any food ingredient, including food additives, nor shall any other additions be made other than honey. Honey must, as far as possible, be free from organic or inorganic matters foreign to its composition. With the exception of [Baker's honey], it must not have any foreign tastes or odours, have begun to ferment, have an artificially changed acidity or have been heated in such a way that the natural enzymes have been either destroyed or significantly inactivated.

For the avoidance of doubt, and taking the 1981 Codex Alimentarius as a guide, they continued that "no pollen or constituent particular to honey may be removed except where this is unavoidable in the removal of foreign inorganic or organic matter" and added a new definition for 'Filtered honey', described as being "honey obtained by removing foreign inorganic or organic matter in such a way as to result in the significant removal of pollen".

That, it would seem, would cover every possible eventuality. Or so it seemed. But as the bureaucrats were scribbling, genetically-modified crops were becoming a reality and the EU was being pushed to regulate these 'novel foods' in all their forms. That raised questions, not least about labelling.

When asked about GM in relation to honey in 1997, the European Commission wrote that they considered "honey unintentionally containing pollen transferred by bees from genetically modified crops does not consti-

tute a novel food within the meaning of the Regulation. Therefore, the labelling provisions of the Regulation do not apply”

Not everyone agreed, however. Including, Karl Heinz Bablok, an amateur beekeeper who'd set up an apiary near the Bavarian State Agricultural Research Centre, where GM crops were being trialled.

Being a suspicious sort, he had the pollen he was selling, and his honey, tested. He found both contained GM pollen and, having done so, reckoned it made his crop unsaleable, so he sued the State of Bavaria for compensation.

If he wanted a quick fight, he was disappointed. For the case, started in 2005, rumbled on like treacle until 2011 when the European Court of Justice (ECJ) was effectively asked to rule whether the EC's previous answer was correct. In other words, was the pollen unsaleable, and did the presence of GM pollen mean the honey was a GM product, and thus need labelling as such?

The ECJ took a while, but eventually came back with two answers. First, as the pollen itself had, they reckoned, no reproductive viability on its own, so didn't count as a GM organism. Technically, that meant he could sell it, but would need to label it if more than 0.9% of it came from GMOs. Secondly, and crucially, they ruled that the same applied to honey, where pollen should be treated as an ingredient, and thus if any more than 0.9% of the pollen within the honey was GMO-derived, it would also have to be appropriately labelled.

This might have helped Herr Bablok with his case in Bavaria, and it mightily pleased of anti-GM activists. But it didn't please everyone. Honey packers and importers, for example, realised they'd have to start testing honey and pollen to check the proportion of GM - a tricky and expensive business at best. And if they found enough GM pollen, they'd have had to say so on the labels, which wouldn't helped sales. Even worse, if the GM pollen came from varieties not authorised in the EU, they mightn't be able to sell it at all. That prospect terrified the blenders, who rely on a broad range of honeys, from a variety of sources to achieve a consistent flavour. So, like all responsible industries, they went wailing to their MEPs and, by May 2014 had got some amendments made to the directive that, among a few other tweaks, added this:

“Pollen, being a natural constituent particular to honey, shall not be considered to be an ingredient”.

And so, thanks to the curiosity of Mr Bablok, the susceptibility of MEPs, London beekeepers need worry no longer. You might think we had no reason to worry, in any case. There aren't many agricultural research stations in London, and there's a ban on growing GM crops elsewhere in the UK. Crops for biodiesel and ornamental plants, are a slightly different matter, but the UK has a fairly comprehensive ban on growing both, for the

moment. Although GM foods can be sold in the UK, they're unlikely to get into honey, and the only ornamental permitted is a type of carnation that, at present, can only be sold as an imported cut flower. So, for the moment, our labels can stay as they are.

The contrast between the US and the EU is interesting. In theory, because the rules are more detailed, EU residents should know more about what's in our food than US citizens. But it's not as clear-cut as it looks, and there are some grey areas, not only over GMOs. Flavoured products, such as "Honey with a hint of cinnamon", seem to be very popular at present, but looking through the Honey Regulations, and the EU laws they rely on, it's not at all clear if they're correctly labelled. Flavoured whiskies, for example, such as Diageo's temptingly-titled "Urban Honey Spirit Drink", cannot be called whisky, and I don't quite see how a honey that obviously contains a 'food ingredient' counts.

Book review: Do beekeeping/The secret to happy honeybees by Orren Fox

The publishers of this book offered a review copy to one of our members who was willing to review it. I advertised it in the newsletter and Emily offered. This was first published on Emily's blog.

Emily Scott
services@lbka.org.uk

The "Do Book Company" publish books designed to help you learn something new and motivate you to do it. Other books in their series include 'Do Sourdough', 'Do improvise' and 'Do grow'. They gave me this book to review – one of the perks of being a beekeeper is you occasionally get free books about beekeeping!

I was impressed when the book arrived, as it is beautifully laid out, with lots of colour photos, pencil drawings and recipes. It also has that fresh new book smell!

The publicity blurb says:

By sharing the journey of 18-year-old beekeeper Orren Fox – who clearly remembers what it's like to be a rookie – you'll discover that keeping your own honeybees is easier than you think. Find out:



The 'Secret to happy Honey Bees' cover

- How and where to set up your hive
- The tools and equipment you need to get started
- The job of inspecting the hive
- How and when to harvest your honey

With delicious honey-based recipes shared by talented and resourceful chefs and cooks, including Honey & Co., you'll learn all about bees and their inspiring world of work and honey production. And may even be tempted to buy your first bee suit.

Things I liked about the book

Orren Fox obviously has a huge amount of enthusiasm and love for bees. He has put that into the book so that the wonder of bees themselves takes centre stage.

He tells us lots of amusing and atmospheric beekeeping anecdotes which would give newbies an insight into what it's like being a beekeeper. His writing is quite poetic, for instance his honey tastes like "apples, peaches and the Atlantic Ocean".

Though Orren is from the U.S., effort has been put into updating the book for the British market, with references made to the UK notifiable diseases and bee inspectors.

The book has been well edited and spell-checked, with no obvious grammatical errors or typos (unlike some beekeeping books in my collection). It's been professionally done and well put together.

There are practical and realistic tips, for instance Orren prepares his readers for bees being a money commitment which you might take a few years to earn back through honey sales. He also takes a gentle approach to his bees, carefully using a bee brush to move the bees out of the way before replacing boxes.

Things I wasn't so keen on

There are some sections of the book which I feel are misleading, puzzling or omit important information. For example, page 15 says "The queen is rather easy to find in a hive due to her size". Hmm, that must be why I have sometimes had to go through a hive multiple times before finding the queen amongst her 40,000+ daughters. Easy? I wish! She could do with being a bit bigger – perhaps the size of a hamster or even a small hedgehog.

Page 16 says "Workers live for the smallest amount of time, just over a month" – this is true of the summer workers busy at their nursing and foraging duties, but not of autumn-born bees, who can live for several months through the winter until early spring.

Page 33 says about wax foundation super frames that "they don't last beyond one harvest, while the plastic sheets last for many seasons." I don't know what Orren is doing to his frames as most beekeepers I know use their drawn-out wax super frames for several years!

Page 41 has a photo of blackened gauntlets – the most unhygienic gloves possible, which he admits have become gradually covered with propolis, wax and honey, so that his bees have become more and more attracted to them and cover his gloves during inspections. This doesn't sound like a good thing! His hive tools also look like they could do with a good clean with some washing soda.

Conclusions

This would make a nice present for someone interested in honey bees and who wants to find out more about what beekeeping is like. It's a nice light read without getting too overwhelming; I can imagine a non-beekeeper reading it for pleasure – which I can't say about Ted Hooper's Guide to bees and honey, excellent though it is!

It isn't a book which a beginner could rely on to see them through their first season or that a more experienced beekeeper could learn anything new from. I say this because there is only one page on varroa mites and one on swarming. So a fun book for a non-beekeeper wanting to find out more about beekeeping, but not the only one they should read before getting bees!



The fruits of Joe's labour

You can find Orren on Facebook, on Twitter at @happyhoneybees and on his blog at <http://happychickenslayhealthyeeggs.blogspot.co.uk> – by the way he has a fascinating post about going beekeeping in Nepal.

August's Facebook (In)digest(ion)

LBKA's open Facebook page is an active community of over 1000 from around London and other parts of the UK and world. Lots of interesting material gets posted, but here's a mere glimpse of what you might have missed.

*Tabitha Stanmore
LBKA member*

There have been only two things on beekeepers' mind this month: varroa treatment and honey extraction!

Honey

The Brockwell Park training apiary has done well this year, producing 400 8oz jars of honey. According to Mark that's a record for the apiary. Other hives haven't been faring so well. Angela and Jo have received starvation warnings in London and South Devon, while Mark's personal hives ate through half their stores in two weeks. Angela warned not to extract too much honey in case of a wet autumn.

Many pictures were posted of the results of the honey extraction process.

Jonathan posted photos of his honey extraction efforts this year, and thanks all LBKA members for their sup-



Paul took photos of his honey extracting team. Love the hairnets!



Jonathan's honey.



Jonathan's kitchen

port and advice. His bees have been surprisingly productive this year, and left him with a lot of bottling to do!

Marjorie asked the going rate for locally produced honey. The consensus was between £8-16 a jar depending on the area. Corrine suggested a guide price of £1/oz; Mark and Sarah both only sell up to 8oz jars, as people are less willing to pay higher prices for larger jars.

Mahmut asked where he could find organic UK honey; Mark replied that it's impossible to produce in the UK as beekeepers can't guarantee the bees will stay on organic land.

Neonics/bee die off

Mark shared the first crop yield data for 2015, which show that harvests have been particularly high despite reports of widespread flea beetle damage no use of neonicotinoids. Oil seed rape yields and above the 10 year average, at 3.5-3.7 tonnes per hectare, compared to the average 3.4t/ha.

William pointed out that OSR yield varies hugely depending on the soil, and this year thrived where flea beetles struggled to survive. He also raised the issue that neonics are sub-lethal, and other alternatives are lethal to all insects so it is a lose-lose situation. Mark agreed that there is no clear answer, but argued making decisions without knowing the crop yield data was too hasty.

You can read the report here: <http://cereals.ahdb.org.uk/markets/market-news/2015/july/30/adas-harvest-report-1-week-3.aspx>

Angela posted a position statement from the BBKA on the EU's moratorium on certain chemicals being used on crops. The statement can be viewed here: http://www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/press_office/press_releases.php.

Mark posted a photo of a new initiative by Sainsbury's, to create bee hotels on their stores to support solitary bees. Richard said this was an easy gesture compared to lobbying farmers to drop monoculture, but Mark is just glad it's not more honey beehives on roofs.

Angela shared an article from the Washington Post stating that honeybee colonies are at a 20 year high in the US, and argued that honeybee extinction is a myth. There followed a discussion about the harm or good being done by Friends of the Earth and other organisations who are trumpeting the bee cause, with Heidi questioning how they are a force for bad. Mark replied that FoE have based their research on US statistics and farming methods which don't apply to the UK, and have launched schemes which are unscientific and don't contribute to current research or address habitat problems.

Andrea shared an article from the IBRA on the effects of certain GM crops on bee health. According to a new

study, *Bacillus thuringiensis* corn has no negative effect on bees. More at <http://on.fb.me/1KyY0Y6>

Mark posted about a conference with seminars addressing honey bee declines. He contacted the organisers to verify their research and sources, and is concerned that the seminars will be misleading. As yet the organisers have been unable to confirm any expert speakers will be attending, and BWARS is apparently strongly opposed to the topics in the conference.

Varroa/pest treatment

Unsurprisingly, varroa treatment has been a big topic this month. Angela recommended starting treatments no later than mid-August, to give the winter bees the best chance of being mite free and help ensure the colony is strong next spring. Everyone generally agreed, though Daniel said that in Belgium it's recommended to start before 1st August, and Nele suggested doing a second treatment in September after feeding the bees in August. Eleanor asked for advice on using MAQs instead of Apiguard as a treatment. She is concerned that her bees have tracheal mite after finding dead bees outside the hive with their tongues sticking out throughout the season. Other members suggested it is starvation, but Eleanor knows that they have had forage throughout, and they were fed well into May. Mark said that the only way to tell if it is tracheal mite is to dissect a bee and look down its throat with a microscope. He suggested calling in the bee inspector. Marjorie shared an article on the University of Sussex's research into controlling varroa. US are looking into how to enhance the natural hygiene of bees to combat varroa: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/lasi/sussexplan/hygienicbees>.

Callie asked whether Hive Alive was any good for varroa treatment. Karin and Kevin both said yes, and can be used for noisema too. Eleanor is using it for the first time this year, and 2/3 treatments in has seen some good results through varroa drop.

Eleanor found what looked like a hornet hovering outside her hive, and wanted advice on how to protect the bees. Mark wondered whether it was a mimic hoverfly, which are more common than hornets, and harmless. Merlin said the best way to deal with hornets is to find and destroy the nest (as long as they aren't protected in the area). The other alternative is to use a moth/wasp trap, which Roy has used very effectively for wasps and some hornets.

Recombining/nucs

Andrew asked for advice on a hive which has been queenless since June. He tried three times to make new queens by adding brood frames but without success, so united the colony with another 5 frame nuc with a purchased queen. After a week separated by newspaper, the queenless colony had not tried to join the other hive. Mark suggested the weather could be a factor, and if they are being fed too then they don't have an

incentive to unite. Barbara said they may have united but not eaten through the paper, as this happened to her before. Mark suggested using a travel screen to let their smells combine, then removing it.

Meadows

Karin ordered some native meadow seed mix, and is very excited to plant up a proper meadow. Mark shared a list of plants he is combining to create an urban meadow in Shepherds Bush.

Mark shared a list of plants he is combining to create an urban meadow in Shepherds Bush:

Bespoke native annual and biannual mix (to be sown with the perennial mix to provide colour in initial years): *Agrostemma githago* (Corncockle; 20%), *Anthemis arvensis* (Corn Chamomile 5%), *Centaurea cyanus* (Cornflower; 12%), *Chrysanthemum segetum* (Corn Marigold; 12%), *Daucus carota* (Wild Carrot; 12%), *Echium vulgare* (Viper's Bugloss; 4%), *Matricaria recutita* (Scented Mayweed; 7.5%), *Myosotis arvensis* (Field Forget-me-not; 1.5%), *Oenothera biennis* (Evening Primrose; 5%), *Papaver rhoeas* (Corn Poppy; 12%), *Reseda luteola* (Weld; 5%), *Verbascum nigrum* (Dark Mullein; 4%) and *Papaver rhoeas* (Corn Poppy; 12%)

UK native perennials (early to mid-summer colour with some spring interest): *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow; 4%), *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Common Agrimony; 5%), *Centaurea nigra* (Common Knapweed; 7%), *Centaurea scabiosa* (Greater Knapweed; 3%), *Primula veris* (Cowslip; 6%), *Galium verum* (Lady's Bedstraw; 6%), *Geranium pratense* (Meadow Cranesbill; 2%), *Hypericum perforatum* (Common St. John's Wort; 2%), *Knautia arvensis* (Field Scabious; 6%), *Leucanthemum vulgare* (Oxeye Daisy; 4%), *Origanum vulgare* (Wild Marjoram; 2%), *Malva moschata* (Musk Mallow; 4%), *Cichorium intybus* (Chicory; 4%), *Plantago lanceolata* (Ribwort Plantain; 1%), *Prunella vulgaris* (Self Heal; 7%), *Ranunculus acris* (Meadow Buttercup; 6%), *Rhinanthus minor* (Yellow Rattle; 5%), *Silene alba* (White Campion; 6%), *Leontodon hispidus* (Rough Hawkbit; 4%), *Silene dioica* (Red Campion; 6%), *Succisa pratensis* (Devilsbit Scabious; 2%), *Lotus corniculatus* (Birdsfoot Trefoil; 5%) and *Vicia Cracca* (Tufted Vetch; 3%).

Grass mix: Grass (50%), *Agrostis capillaris* (Common Bent; 3%), *Anthoxanthum odoratum* (Sweet Vernal Grass; 3%), *Briza media* (Quaking Grass; 2%), *Cynosurus cristatus* (Crested Dogstail; 22%), *Festuca ovina* (Sheep's Fescue; 22%), *Festuca rubra ssp. commutata* (Chewing's Fescue; 22%), *Festuca rubra ssp. litoralis* (Slender Creeping Red Fescue; 13%), *Hordeum secalinum* (Meadow Barley; 1%), *Poa pratensis* (Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass; 10%) and *Trisetum flavescens* (Yellow Oatgrass; 2%).

Harriet also posted that she's very happy to see bees in her garden enjoying the lavender, and asked for

tips on what to plant for late summer. Bill suggested checking the RHS' Plants for Pollinators list, and Mark highlighted the monthly forage section in the LBKA newsletter (back issues available from lbka.org.uk/newsletters.html).

Other things

Marjorie shared photos of the frames she has been making – 1000 frames, mainly from scrap wood! Thomas posted an article on how he makes his own frames: <http://beekeepingafloat.com/2015/03/27/how-i-make-my-foundationless-frames/>

Tim shared an amazing video of honeybees keeping wasps from entering the hive – well worth a watch! <https://www.facebook.com/100008877245676/videos/1455258488113379/?pnref=story>

David asked for advice on what to do about his neighbour, who is concerned that David's bees will kill his fish. According to some pond life websites bees have been known to do this. Most LBKA members haven't encountered something like this, but suggested a net for the fish, or ensuring the bees had an alternative water source so the bees wouldn't be tempted to go near the fish.



Brood frame containing honey.



Emma inspecting a super frame.

Adventures in Beeland: The beauty of bees

Emily's regular guest article from her excellent blog: <http://adventuresinbeeland.com/>.

This weekend I have been thinking about how lucky I am to have access to the inner world of honey bees. I must have seen inside hundreds of different hives by now, but I never get bored of watching the bees. There is always some small detail that fascinates me, like one worker sticking out her proboscis to feed another, or a bee with glowing red propolis beads clinging to her legs, or a multi-coloured frame of pollen hexagons that reminds me of a stained glass window.

At this time of year the honey vaults are particularly impressive. Lacking a queen in their brood box for a month has led to Andromeda's ladies packing the brood frames with wall-to-wall honey. See how perfectly smooth and white the wax cappings are! And now imagine how impossibly heavy I find their brood box to lift. A frame like this weighs something like 5 pounds (2.2kg) and there are eleven frames in the brood box. They won't all be that packed with honey but still I can imagine the brood box could easily weigh about 40 pounds (18kg) upwards now.

With some complicated juggling around of frames and spare boxes I did manage to inspect both Andromeda's brood boxes and came to the depressing conclusion that either they've killed her or she's just not laying. After finding her in the super and then moving her down into the brood box last weekend I had such high hopes of coming along yesterday and finding some lovely new frames of eggs and larvae. Instead there are three new supersedure cells. I have left them to it, I doubt they have plans to swarm this late in the season. Just hope they can produce a mated queen from one as some colonies are already beginning to kick their drones out.

Above is Emma inspecting a similarly delightful but smaller frame of honey in Melissa's super.

Due to the various distractions of life and general absent mindedness, we had accidentally left a space in Melissa's super as well as Pepper's. In this case they built perfectly white undulating mounds down from the crown-board, so I was able to lift this beautiful comb out and insert a frame in the space. Bees are often incredibly reluctant to leave natural comb they're working on, so it took a lot of smoking to persuade them to move away so I could ease the comb off. It was very flexible and soft from the heat of the hive.



Bees on natural comb



Flying bumblebee



Bees on top of super



Bumblebee on pink flower

Above you can see the bees busy on the tops of the super frames. At this time of year inspecting is a difficult business as there are just so many damn bees. Around 50-60,000 of them. Everywhere you try to put your hands on a frame, a bee pops up. I have been finding that inspecting without gloves amongst this mass of bees concentrates the mind wonderfully. I am actually getting stung less ? because I move my fingers very slowly and carefully to secure a hold amongst the bees. Before I would get stung by accidentally squashing them, but this hasn't happened now for weeks. The catch is very sticky, mucky hands which are harder to eat cake with afterwards!

The main summer nectar flow is probably over now that blackberry is finishing flowering, but we will still have a little from ragwort, rosebay willow herb, himalayan balsam and then ivy will be the last main nectar crop in autumn. Our focus will now turn to harvesting the honey and luckily Emma has a lovely new extractor to help with that. She has already begun spinning some of the honey out, as you can read in her post Summer surprise. The beekeeping adventures continue!

Members selling to members

This section is for members selling things or selling services to others. This could include nucs and wax. Email services@lbka.org.uk for more details.

No one is selling anything this month.

Honey for sale

Here's a list of members with honey to sell. Please email services@lbka.org.uk for their contact details or if you have honey you'd like to sell.

Clapham Junction

Jonathan Dale:

- 227g/8oz: £6 (or 2 for £10).

Dulwich (SE21) and Tooting/Streatham (SW16)

Sue Parminter:

- 8oz/227g: £5.
- 1lb/454g: £8.50.

Stoke Newington (N16)

Aidan Slingsby:

- 8oz/227g: £5.

Upcoming events

Saturday 12th September: "Saving our Bumblebees", a talk by David Goulson

15:00 at Orpington Village Hall, 311 High St Orpington, Kent, BR6 0NN.

Professor of Biology at Sussex Uni, Dave Goulson, founded the Bumblebee Society and has published a number of best selling books; a popular speaker at many national and regional events, on 12 September, he will talk about the amazing life and behaviour of bumblebees, the problems they face, and what we can all do to help them.

This event is organised by **Sidcup Beekeepers**. You need to book in advance by emailing melody.faulkner@gmail.com and the **price is £3**.

Sunday 13th September: Monthly meeting: Honey tasting

11:00-12:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY.

The diversity of flowering plants in London honey gives London Honey complex flavour and helps make it highly-sought after. For this meeting, we ask those luckily enough to have had bees that produced surplus honey to bring some along to the meeting for tasting. We will provide tasting sticks. We will also talk about using refractometers to estimate the moisture content of honey. Non-members are welcome to come and find out more about LBKA.

Saturday 19th September: Harvest stomp

12:00-18:00 at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London, E20 2ST.

Our forage officer Mark will be co-hosting a bee information stand at the Olympic park with Olympic park beekeeper Eric Beaumont as part of the Harvest stomp edible open gardens event. We will have 2 observation hives, and the usual props on show.

Volunteers to help man the stand and sell their London honey are welcome – please contact Mark at forage@lbka.org.uk if you'd like to help.

Saturday 26th September: Croydon Honey Show

10:00-15:00 next to Sainsbury's, 130 Addington Rd, South Croydon, CR2 8LA.

This honey show is organised by the Croydon Division of the Surrey Beekeepers Association.

Sunday 11th October: Monthly meeting: Preparations for winter

11:00-12:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY.

Making sure our colonies are ready for the long winter months. Non-members are welcome to come and find out more about LBKA.

Sunday 11th October: London Honey Show

at Lancaster London, Lancaster Terrace, London, W2 2TY.

The Annual Honey Show is hosted by the Lancaster London hotel. Details to be confirmed - put the date into your diary!

Committee

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee if you have any questions, requests, suggestions (and offers of help)! We are:

- **Chair:** Richard Glassborow, chair@lbka.org.uk
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, treasurer@lbka.org.uk
- **Secretary:** Emma Nye, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership services:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Forage:** Mark Patterson, forage@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Paul Vagg, resources@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Emily Abbott, events@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Tristram Sutton, mentoring@lbka.org.uk

Our website is <http://www.lbka.org.uk/>.

