



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

September, 2017

Welcome to September edition of the Newsletter. Thanks to those who attended last month's monthly meeting and Summer Social and thanks Jon, Martin and George for clubbing together to write this up (page 5). Upcoming events (page 2) include "Harvest Stomp" in the Olympic Park where we will have a stall – come and see our stall and help out if you can. This month, we hear about Charlton House's Bee Day (page 3), get an update on Sally's resurrected colony (page 4) and find out about the London Environment Strategy (page 4), as well as regular contributions "from our Chair" (page 1), what to do in the apiary (page 8), what's in flower (page 9), our apiaries (page 11) and Facebook chatter (page 12). Sadly (for us), Emily Scott (page 12) is taking a break from London and beekeeping for a bit. After her excellent contributions over the past few years and I'm now (unceremoniously) looking one or more replacements. Please suggest some!

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Thanks to this month's contributors: **Jon Dale, Eugene Fahy, George Kozobolis, Richard Glassborow, Petros Hahladakis, Sally Haywill, Martin Hudson, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Emily Scott, Simon Saville, Peter Weller and Vlad Zamfir.** Thanks as usual to Martin Hudson for proof-reading it. Would you like to join the esteemed list of contributors above? If so, please contact me.

Aidan Slingsby, Editor, services@lbka.org.uk

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From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

LBKA is entering the last quarter of its first full year as a registered charity and the Board of Trustees has begun to reflect on how the year has been in preparation for reporting the full story in the Trustees' Annual Report which will be presented at the AGM in November.

This is not the time or the place to go into detail but I would just like to prepare the way for the report by drawing attention to the fact that this I think will prove to be a very significant year for LBKA.

Our organisation has been growing and changing since I first joined nearly 9 years ago but our change to charitable status seems to have coincided with and helped



Honey bee on borage. Photo: Aidan Slingsby.

focus what started as organic change into positive, coherent development. There is of course still much work in progress, as will become apparent when the trustees present their report on the year. And there will be more to follow as there seems to be no let up in the public interest in “bees” and urban beekeeping.

The trustees are very mindful to ensure our responsibilities towards our members remains a priority. As a charity we must also ensure our activities constitute public benefit but we believe these twin priorities are entirely compatible and that the LBKA purpose (vision if that is not too over-used a word) can be summarised as:

- Better beekeeping
- Better public understanding (of bees)
- Better London environment (for bees and Londoners)

Of course, gods and devils reside in the details but we will have to wait for these to be revealed. For now I am merely asking members to, “watch this space” and make a note in your diaries to attend the AGM, 8 November.

I would just like to take this opportunity to recognise that none of this has happened by accident and to thank, not just the current trustees (and executive committee) who contribute so much time, energy and talent, but also some recent committee members who played key roles in starting LBKA on this journey. I am thinking particularly of Karin Courtman, the previous Chair; Angela Woods, recent Secretary; and Jon Harris, previous Treasurer. And of course we must not forget the many members who now volunteer and make possible numerous LBKA events and activities. Thank you all.

Finally, I really enjoyed the Summer Social: great venue, great weather, great food and great company.

Announcements

This is our official place for announcements. If you only read one section of the newsletter, it should be this one!

September meeting: Preparation of bees for winter

Our monthly meeting will be on **Sunday 10th September at 11:00** on the subject of **preparing bees for the Winter**. We're back at our usual venue of Fairley House Junior School, [220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY](#).



The venue for our monthly meeting – the white door on the left.

We will also be selling **Apiguard** even though it's getting a bit too late to start treating.

The next monthly meeting is on **8th October**, on the (new) topic of “fumigation of equipment and hygiene matters”. However, we're hoping to host this at the London Lancaster Hotel at the London Honey Show as usual, so the time and place of this may change.

Harvest Stomp

We will have a stall at East London's annual Harvest Stomp festival at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on **Sunday 24th September** where we will be doing public outreach and selling honey. If you're interested in being involved, please email Emily on events@lbka.org.uk.

National Honey Show

The National Honey Show is a major event with lectures, workshops, exhibits and competitive classes. This year, it's on **26th-28th October** at Sandown Park, Portsmouth Road, Esher, Surrey KT10 9RT.

For the competitive classes, LBKA sponsors three: “Two Jars Light or Medium” (#321), “Two jars Naturally Crystallised or Soft Set honey” (#322) and “One jar of liquid honey judged solely on taste, aroma and viscosity, to be shown in a transparent container” (#323). This latter class is unique that it's on pure taste alone whereas most of the other classes are more about how the honey is presented.

Do consider entering to any of the classes...but it would be nice if an LBKA member won one of the classes that we sponsor! Entry forms are now available from <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/download-schedule.php> to enter. Rules and regulations can be found at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/rules-and-regulations.php>.

Do you know someone who can provide us accountancy assistance?

When we became a charity a year ago, our assets were transferred to the current incarnation of LBKA – LBKA

the charity. This pushed our income over the threshold that requires us to have our "independently examined". This is unlikely to happen again for a few years as our usual income is currently below the threshold.

However, this year, we need someone to "independently examine" our account. This person does not have to have any professional accountancy qualifications, but needs to have a basic understanding of accounting...and not be an LBKA trustee or member. We are envisaging that this person be a partner, family or friend of an LBKA member. This is expected to be 3-5 hours work for which we would pay a nominal fee.

If you know someone who is interested in helping us out in this regard, please contact David on treasurer@lbka.org.uk.

South London Beekeepers with honey to sell

Walworth Garden is looking for supplies of raw London honey from apiaries reasonably local to Kennington.

The garden has had a long relationship with LBKA. Many of you who attended the annual Summer Social at the Garden in August may have noticed that they are already selling honey from the LBKA teaching apiary in SW4.

The Walworth garden apiary cannot produce enough honey to satisfy demand so they would like to broaden their offer and supply honey from different apiaries that are reasonably local to the area.

They will only sell honey in 8oz jar, labelling must be compliant and must also prominently display the post code of the apiary. The honey should be "raw", i.e. "straight from hive to jar" and not modified in any way.

Interested LBKA members please contact Natalie at admin@lbka.org.uk.

Site for two hives in Shoreditch

A Shoreditch based advertising agency is looking for a beekeeper to re-establish its rooftop apiary. They have two hives on site but have not had bees for several years. If anyone is interested in keeping bees there, then contact admin@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from August

Check our [previous newsletters](#) or contact services@lbka.org.uk for more details.

Nine (out of nine) LBKA members have passed BBKA Basic – Amit Desai, Peter Weller, Robin Yearwood, Daniel Stover, Hilton Sunday, Natalie Cot-

ton, Gustaw Szermer, Jonathan Richards and Gilles Schlutig.

Hiring honey extractors: We have extractors which can be hired by members – £10 to hire for up to 3 days with a £20 deposit. Contact Tristram on resources@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from July

High varroa levels: NBU warned that there have been reports of high varroa levels and suggested that we monitor levels, referring us to page 15 of the [Managing Varroa](#) booklet and the online [Varroa calculator](#). If levels are high, they suggest taking action to get numbers down.

Old announcements from June

Congratulations: Elliot Hodges and Vlad Zamfir have both **passed BBKA's Module 1** exams, with Vlad passing with **distinction**.

Discounts for members: A few suppliers offer discounts for LBKA/BBKA members – see details in our members' area on the website. One such company is **French Flint** who give us a 40% discount on jars.

LBKA swarm collection policy: see [May's newsletter](#).

Do you have any announcements?

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

Charlton House Bee Day

Peter Weller
LBKA member

On 24th August Charlton House held a Honey Bee Day. Several LBKA members (Vlad, Roger, Sue and Peter) keep bees on the roof of Charlton House and we were invited to participate in the event. Actually, thinking on it, our apiary may have been the starting point for the event. The Charlton House staff made great efforts in organising and preparing for the day with numerous bee facts posted on walls round the house, bee related cupcakes in the café, bee face painting, bee related stalls, including one to sell our honey, and a Bee movie. All this, thanks to Megan.

Our contribution to the proceedings was the “meet the beekeeper talk” and “tours to see bees in action”. These were repeated three times during the event. Roger and I presented a history of beekeeping at Charlton House and an introduction to beekeeping illustrated with a range of equipment. These talks were well attended and elicited a range of questions from ‘do you use flow hives’ to “how many queen bees are born in the world each year”. The tours to see our hives were extremely popular and completely overran the planned timings. One of us was posted on the roof to show bees on frames and explain how the apiary worked.

The event was hard work but very satisfying. It was lovely to see the children’s wide eyes when seeing live bees on a frame. We had LBKA pamphlets available for those requiring further information (thanks Natalie) and these proved very popular. All things considered it was a very successful day personally, for Charlton House and for LBKA.



Sally's Warré Hive.

Update on Sally's resurrected colony

Sally Haywill
LBKA member

In April 2016 I had to move my bees, a supremely large and healthy colony, to a new site on the Higham Road allotment, Tottenham. The move seemed to go well, but shortly afterwards the colony numbers completely bombed. It looked as if it would die out.

Fast forward to August 2017 and the colony is now thriving, having grown to approximately six times its former shrunken size. They are healthy and bringing in lots of (at the moment white) pollen. I have given them a slab of Neopoll for many months now, and they have gone through two slabs. Other than that I do not treat with anything, nor have I done so for the past 5 years. I will be moving them into (well, they will have to do the moving, gradually, over the next season or longer) a Warré Hive from the National they are in at the moment.

The London Environment Strategy – what does it mean for beekeepers?

Simon Saville
LBKA member

The Mayor has just published the draft London Environment Strategy (LES), which is open for consultation until 17 Nov.

This is an integrated strategy that covers air quality, waste, noise, climate change mitigation and energy, adapting to climate change, and “green infrastructure” to address the many challenges that London faces. The aim is to make London greener, cleaner and ready for the future, with an anticipated population of 11 million by 2050.

The part of most interest to beekeepers will be the section on green infrastructure, a term used to mean the whole network of green and blue spaces including parks, green spaces, trees, woodlands, hedges, rivers, wetlands and green roofs.

The vision is to make London the greenest global city, with more than half its area "green" by 2050 (up from 47% today). To do that, the Mayor has supported the campaign to make London a National Park City and has committed to increasing the amount of tree cover by 10%. New trees could be good news for bees and biodiversity, as long as we don't just get London Planes!

Green infrastructure will be promoted through the planning system – to protect and better manage what London has already, and to incorporate new green infrastructure into development plans. This looks to be good news, because we know that there is a shortage of bee forage in parts of London.

The Mayor has already launched a new £9 million Greener City Fund to create and improve green spaces and encourage more tree planting in London. Grants are available now for Community Tree Planting (applications close on 29 Sept) and for Community Green Spaces (closes 20 Oct).

The strategy also introduces the concept of natural capital accounting in what it calls a "radical new approach". We all know that green infrastructure can improve biodiversity and ecological resilience. But it can also reduce the impacts of climate change, store carbon, improve air quality, improve water quality, promote healthier lives, reduce car dependency, and encourage more walking and cycling. These benefits are called "ecosystem services". Natural capital describes the economic benefits of these services that the environment provides for free, and presents them in a similar way to other capital assets, like buildings. Whether this increases the amount of money available for green infrastructure remains to be seen, but it does at least re-frame the argument.

The strategy says that parks will be made more accessible, and better connected via greener streets. Buildings will become greener, with green roofs and walls, and drainage systems that allow rainwater to flow back to rivers and streams more naturally. Habitats will be protected and enhanced to ensure green space improvements serve to increase the diversity of London's plant and animal species.

Given the limits of the Mayor's powers, much of this will have to be achieved by influencing others and working with partners – including Boroughs, developers, London Wildlife Trust, charitable organisations (like LBKA) and communities.

So, what does this mean for LBKA and its members?

First, we need to understand the concepts of green infrastructure, ecosystem services and natural capital, and to work with these as we frame proposals and talk to potential partners.

Second, there is an opportunity to comment on the proposals, and maybe nudge them to be a bit more

bee-friendly. For example, what types of trees to plant, and where?

Third, to get behind the initiative to make London a National Park City – an opportunity to improve and increase green spaces near us.

Fourth, to encourage bee-friendly applications for Greener City Fund grants as a way of doing something practical, immediate and local.

If you're interested in the full 400-page document, you can download it from the GLA website, or, better still, you can read about it on my [blog](#).

Last month's Monthly Meeting: Honey regulations, labelling, varroa control and the Summer Social

A joint effort this month, with Jon Dale and Martin Hudson reporting with words and George Kozobolis reporting with pictures.

*Jon Dale, Martin Hudson and George Kozobolis
LBKA members*

The summer social at the lovely Walworth Garden was blessed with an exceptionally sunny day, though over the course of the morning meeting, many members were forced to take refuge in the shade, and others had to turn up their hearing aids to maximum to overcome (some unsuccessfully!) the noise of our uninvited guests, the regular passers-by on the Heathrow flight path! However, there was a record attendance – over 50 members and their friends, and it was a wonderful day.

Honey Labelling Regulations

With part one of the meeting – on Honey Labelling – as dry as the weather, Richard Glassborow had the unenviable task of wading through impenetrable regulations around honey labelling to provide a summary for us.

Details can be found at for the [Honey Regulations 2015](#), and [Food Labelling and Packaging](#). The Food Standards Agency also have their own honey-specific section.



A summary of labelling requirements:

- Label must state that it is honey (and the content must actually be honey);
- A best before date must be included, typically 2 years. Having toyed with a millennium, Richard uses 3 years;
- Quantity must be shown in metric (grams etc), and if using imperial measurements should be after the metric weight and in smaller font. Mark recommended actually measuring when your jars reach the weight you're selling at, as frequently this isn't the neckline that we often use;
- The producers name and address must be present, sufficient so that you are traceable;
- A country of origin is required, regardless of your address. Use UK not England;
- Unless you have a detailed use by date (e.g. 31 August 2019), a lot number should also be included;
- All this information needs to be visible at one glance, i.e. not separate labels front and back, and should be on any packaged foods over 5g. From experience at the LBKA stalls, putting the effort into a good label is rewarded with sales, particularly if the honey is local to the market – though this can count against you if it isn't!

The Honey (England) Regulations 2003 as amended – and now incorporated into the 2015 Regulations – set out classifications of honey, generally named after the method of extraction. While we try never to heat-treat honey for fear of denaturing the enzymes and boosting HMF content, if you can't avoid this you may sell your



honey as "Baker's honey" for industrial use. This can also contain additives, as long as you say what.

The penalties for non-compliance are not clear, though as only a cursory glance in a supermarket shows the breaches of many common brands, small deviations from the minutiae appear unlikely to be challenged. Misrepresentation of what you are selling, however, is more serious.

London honey is particularly special because of its floral nature due to the variety of forage, and we are fortunate to not really experience a June gap. Richard was able to have some honey tested to analyse the source of the nectar; surprisingly he found no Horse Chestnut, and two of the samples were over 75% lime.

The water content of honey must be less than 20% to prevent fermentation. If the honey is not capped,



one can roughly assess the concentration from the viscosity, but Richard has bought a refractometer so has more confidently taken uncapped frames that are in fact ready.

Varroa Control

Mark Patterson took over to discuss Varroa treatments in the wake of an NBU warning of high counts. Infected colonies are becoming symptomatic, with brood dying as they try to emerge, tongues outstretched. Deformed Wing Virus, which can only be treated by removing the mite vector, is becoming more prevalent as the bees reduce for the winter. It is too late in the season for

most mechanical treatments, such as shook swarms or queen trapping, therefore chemicals are the only option.

Synthetic pyrethroids include Bayvarol and Polyvar. These are very effective but, used every year, or treating for longer than specified encourages mite resistance. There are also synthetic neuroblockers, which paralyse the mite so they fall off and die. Apitraz and Apistan are examples. Thymol based treatments include Apiguard and Thymovar, which are believed to erode the mites' carapace. Very mixed responses have been found to Apiguard, though this may partly be user error. Mark gave the example of some successful keepers who try to seal up the hive as much as possible to ensure



The Party!

The meeting ended with thanks to Richard and Mark for their contributions, and we moved on to the literally 'less dry' part of the day – the now annual Summer Social. Catering was again provided by the incomparable Chickpea Sisters, a Tooting-based social enterprise run by refugee and migrant women. A wide variety of hot and cold food was on offer, and drink was provided during a glorious lunchtime and afternoon. Although there must have been a record turn-out for the event, unfortunately not all those who signed up actually materialised on the day, so a considerable amount of food was not eaten, leaving the Committee with the problem of taking home what was left over.

Nevertheless, the Social gave everyone the chance to exchange beekeeping stories and experiences in a very relaxed and pleasant environment. Thanks are due to Richard and Mark for their contributions to the morning session – against all the odds – and to Tristram (Apiary Manager at Walworth Garden) and other members of the Committee who assisted in the organisation, and in particular to Walworth Garden and to the Chickpea Sisters. A great day out!

the evaporated Apiguard remains – entrance blocks are added, solid wooden floors temporarily used and duct tape covering joints between boxes. However, if the weather becomes too hot, the smell may be too much, and Mark has had two hives abscond in a very warm August.

The final group of treatments are organic acids, of which we are very familiar with Oxalic Acid. MAQS is a relative newcomer, and has the benefit of being the only treatment possible with honey on the hive. MAQS contains Formic Acid which, due to its ability to permeate brood cappings, is only required for 1 week. The NBU have been using 1 strip only in a National, and only on hives with brood covering more than 6 frames and a strong established queen. It's possible to remove queens to Apidea over the treatment period. The weaker bees will be affected, and many keepers have commented on the number of dead in front of the hive during treatment – this is actually a sign it's working. While relatively harsh on the bees, this is very effective on the mites and can be used if other treatments are ruled out by still having supers.

Several new treatments are currently going through the approval process by the Veterinary Medicines Directive, and these will allow us to vary our treatments between years and prevent mite resistance. It's important when doing so that each treatment removes at least 95% of the varroa, and you should treat all colonies in an apiary at the same time.

September in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

The bees' tetchiness subsequent to the end of the honey flow should now have ended and colonies are likely to be a lot calmer and easier to inspect. The bee population will continue to decline in September but the new bees now being born will need to live for up to 6 months through to next April, 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 or some other such varroacide 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 5lb 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 stores (stores are 80% sugars and 20% water). Therefore, using this example syrup should be made from 8lb 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 may 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. Sugar prices in some of the discount supermarkets is currently 60p per kg.

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.

Better to commence feeding all colonies in the apiary at the same time and in early evening or dusk which should prevent an outbreak of robbing.

Other actions

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 repair or replace any defective or ill fitting equipment before the onset of winter.

Protecting against wasps and robbers. Entrance blocks must be *in situ*. Many beekeepers reduce the entrances to as little as 2 or 3 bee spaces. If a colony is being robbed it is extremely difficult to stop.

Fumigate supers. These should have been fumigated immediately after having been returned to the bees for cleaning and removed again. Fumigated supers should be put in a place secure from wax moth and vermin.

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

Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. He was too busy to provide this this month, so I've used his piece from two years ago.

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.

Most of our native flowers are now long since over flow-



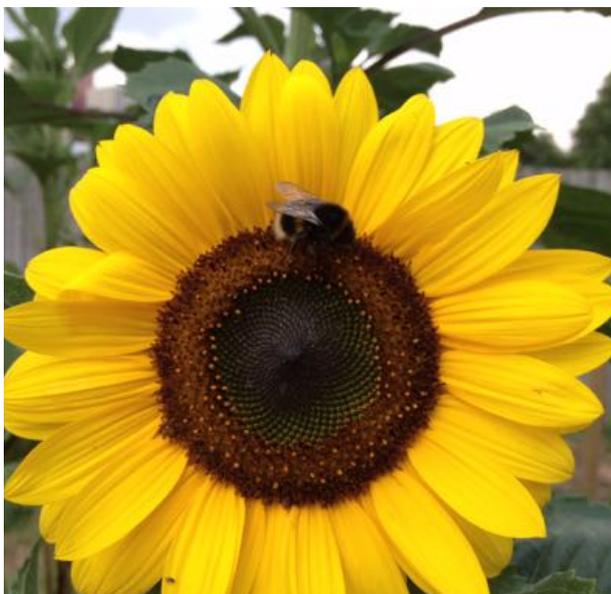
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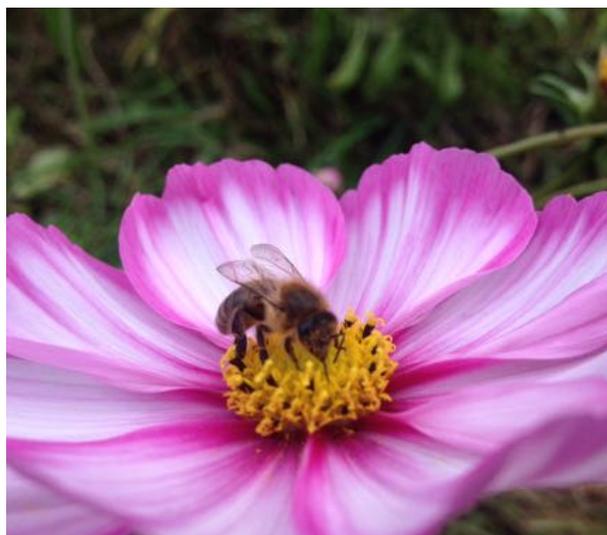
Ivy flowers almost ready to open.



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.

ering 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 hedera*. 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.

LBKA Apiaries

News from LBKA's apiaries.

Mudchute

Vlad Zamfir

LBKA Apiaries Manager and Mudchute Apiary Manager

August was a very easy month in the apiary as nectar kept trickling in after the main nectar flow and the majority of the frames got capped. The bees were fairly calm (rather than defensive as they usually are this time of the year) when I inspected, in part because there was still nectar around and in part because the colony was easily defensible (I reduced the entrances early on and all three colonies are quite strong)

The only problem with leaving the supers on during August is that the selection of varroa treatments that can be used with the supers on is reduced to one: MAQS. This treatment is only 7 days long but does carry the risk of killing off the queen if the day is too hot or the dosage is too high. Thankfully, all three colonies survived intact.

During the Bank Holiday weekend I did a second extraction and got 21kg of honey out of 22 national super frames. I'm glad this time I didn't find random sticky places around the house.

Brockwell

Petros Hahladakis

LBKA Apiary manager for Brockwell

Brockwell park is in the midst of its winter preparations for the bees, having just started its second round of Apiguard treatment. The Varroa drop after the first application was considerably higher than usual, so we are now looking to revise the integrated pest management (IPM) that we apply next year.

During 2017 the IPM mainly consisted of culling drone brood that was built on the bottom of a standard national frame that we placed within the deep nationals that we run, as well as a shock swarm that took place in the early spring (albeit this was more as a follow up to the EFB outbreak that occurred about this time last year).

We also received two swarms in nuc boxes during the summer which we have now both grown into full national brood boxes. One of the swarms seems to be struggling with Bald and Sac Brood which although not uncommon at this time of year as there is a drop in the number of bees, is also likely due to not carrying out any form of Varroa control when the swarm was received (hindsight is always great, but just like EFB it does help in the learning curve!).

For next year I am looking at introducing queen trapping at the apiary to help with varroa control, but its an expensive piece of kit and as it takes close to a month to complete this form of varroa control, you cannot get away with only having one piece of kit over the four colonies we hope to overwinter.

Looking back at 2017 we did have some form of success with our honey harvest in that we managed to extract the same amount from 2 hives that we did from 4 last year. Forage has never really been much of an issue for the apiary due to its central location within Brockwell Park and the community gardens that we sit within taking care to plant bee friendly plants as well as separately maintaining a walled garden which flowers and plants that produce plenty of pollen and nectar for the bees throughout the year.

As well as improving the varroa control for next year I am also going to start some basic form of queen rearing at the apiary, after all it is a LBKA teaching apiary and we all have to carry on learning about bees!

Facebook (In)digest(ion)

Some of the highlights from LBKA's [public facing Facebook page](#).

*Eugene Fahy
LBKA Member*

The month's posts started with a new Facebook group photo and a post from Geordy Mark to say he had [updated the files tab on the LBKA webpages](#). The tab contains useful links and documents including honey labelling regs and BBKA swarm collection policy.

Most of the posts fell into the categories of requests for experience and information sharing.

Maria Devereaux [asked for advice on dealing with wax moth on a colony weakened by vandalism](#). Angela Woods advised discarding the affected frames and Geoff Hood suggested using a dummy board to reduce brood box to nuc size, filling the void with bubblewrap, feeding with fondant and putting insulation on the roof.

Jeff Ophiuchus [asked about the most suitable varroa treatment for a six frame poly nuc](#). Geordy Mark said that synthetic treatments like Apistan and Bayvarol are good for small colonies so long as the mites are not resistant. He advised that thymol can interrupt egg laying and MAQS is too harsh for a nuc.

Kathie Binysh was having work done to trees near her apiary and [needed advice on keeping her bees sequestered for the day](#) as she had started Apiguard treatment. Geordy Mark advised against blocking the hive completely as a temperature rise would distress the bees. However he recommended sealing the hive (including the mesh floor) but leaving a reduced entrance. However if the bees have to be confined then said the treatment should be taken off and replaced when the work is over.

On an international note, former LBKA member Andrea Passante [asked for wildflower planting advice for an olive grove where he has his apiary](#). Karin Alton suggested cornfields annuals and perennials such as lavenders, thyme, rosemary and mint which should be let run to flower.

Angela Woods shared a link to the [latest newsletter from Greenspace Information for Greater London \(GiGL\)](#). This is an environmental records centre for London and a source of information about London's green spaces.

Norman Carreck [shared a link to an IBRA post on tropical beekeeping with top bar hives](#).

Sadly there were [more reports of vandalism this month](#).

Geoff Hood had hive straps cut at one of his apiaries, examination of CCTV footage showed the culprits to be young children. Geordy Mark said that NBU inspectors are reporting hive thefts elsewhere and emphasises the need for vigilance.

Finally we had reports of honey extraction from Geoff Hood and a post from Geordy Mark to say that the [annual ivy flow has started in SW London](#) – the last flow of the beekeeping season.

Adventures in Beeland: Messing about with wax

Another guest post from Emily's excellent blog – <http://adventuresinbeeland.com/>. Emily will be taking a break from London and bee blogging now, so I'm looking to feature another member's excellent blog – please let me know!

*Emily Scott
LBKA member*

We all have tasks we put off doing. One of mine has been having a go at melting beeswax to make candles. I had a feeling it might be a long and messy job. And I wasn't 100% sure how to do it either.

Well, I had some time off recently and Tommy was in nursery. So I finally had no excuse to put it off any longer. With the help of the brilliant book 'The Bee Book' (co-written by several talented beekeepers including Emma Sarah Tennant) I improvised – not quite in the right way – but the wax did melt!

I set up a bain marie over a Thornes double boiler. I was surprised about how long the wax took to melt and turned to the kind beekeepers of Facebook's Beekeeping Questions UK group for advice (a really helpful group which has just one rule that so many beekeeping forums lack: 'Be nice to people'). This is what they revealed to me:

Yep. I had completely missed that water went in the spout. There are even instructions on the Thornes website which explain this! In my defence, I did buy the boiler pre-Tommy.

I also got some great advice from lots of other beekeepers, such as Candida Williamson's comment below. It's important to use rain water if you are in a hard water area because hard water causes soap to form, which affects the quality and appearance of the wax (Reference Mid Bucks Module 2 study notes 2015, p.34).



Melting wax.

Well, as you can see from the photo below, eventually the wax did melt, even using my botched method. And one little candle was produced! It's on the dark side, but still a candle.

How do you melt your wax? In an oven, a bain marie, steamer, microwave or perhaps a solar extractor? Perhaps you use tights or baked bean cans? Many of these methods remain very mysterious to me but I know the best way to learn is by doing.



Candida Williamson I have a very similar double boiler. remove the whistle/stopper. Pour some water into the void between the inner and the outer skin. replace the Whistle/stopper. put your wax into the pan. Add a little rain water if you wish... I always do for a first melt, it makes removing the crud easier, (when cool the disk of wax will be floating on the water and the crud will be on the bottom of the wax disk and can be scraped off before subsequent melting and further filtering). The double boiler, with water in the void, does not have to have water in with the wax. Candles need VERY clean wax to burn well.
 Like · Reply · July 19 at 4:28pm

Upcoming events

Sunday 10th September: Monthly meeting: Preparation of bees for winter

11:00-13:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY

Preparation of bees for winter. Followed by the usual hot drinks, cake and chat. Meetings are for members



Sunday, 24th September: Harvest Stomp

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

We'll have a stall at this annual community festival that celebrates food and the harvest. Enter your food into one of the competitions! More details at their website.

Sunday 8th October: Monthly meeting: Fumigation of equipment and hygiene matters

11:00-13:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY.

Fumigation of equipment and hygiene matters. Followed by the usual hot drinks, cake and chat. Meetings are for members only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association. **Please note that this meeting may change – keep an eye on the webpage.**



only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association.

Committee

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee if you have any questions, requests, suggestions. We are:

- **Chair:** Richard Glassborow, chair@lbka.org.uk
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, treasurer@lbka.org.uk
- **Secretary:** Natalie Cotton, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Forage:** Mark Patterson, forage@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Emily Abbott, events@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Tristram Sutton, resources@lbka.org.uk
- **Apiaries:** Vlad Zamfir, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- **Emma:** Emma Nye, emma.nye@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentoring@lbka.org.uk

Our website is <http://www.lbka.org.uk/> and the pictures are in the same order as the names above.

