



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

October, 2017

Welcome to the October edition of the Newsletter! "Training" is a big theme this month now there's less beekeeping to do. Our Education Officer, Howard, summarises LBKA's training and education programme over the past year, encouraging members to do for their BBKA Basic and Module 1 assessments. He's also offering places on the hugely popular microscopy course we run that's free to members. We also look towards the Annual General Meeting on 8th November at Roots and Shoots where we'll review the past year and elect a new committee. Speak to one of the current committee if you're interested in standing and don't forget to renew your membership! Also contributions from Sara Ward on her beekeeping, Simon Saville on London as a National Park, and regular contributions from Richard, Howard, Mark, Vlad, Ted and Mar. And Emily Scott's last contribution, at least for a while.

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Thanks to this month's contributors: **Natalie Cotton, Eugene Fahy, Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols, Ted Parkes, Mark Patterson, Mar Peláez-Muñoz, Emily Scott, Simon Saville, Sara Ward and Vlad Zamfir.** Thanks as usual to Martin Hudson for proof-reading it.

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From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

So, nearly there!

This is the time of year when I begin to feel seriously bee'd out and look forward to things quietening down in the apiary. There may still be some issues with pests and disease and concern over whether our colonies have enough stores for the winter – or too much nectar is still coming in and should we put suppers back on. But generally the focus shifted from the apiary to the kitchen, or wherever you do your extraction, some weeks ago. Now comes the really hard work – selling!



Ivy, one of the final nectar flows of the year.



Many years ago the Vice President of IBM, Eastern Hemisphere (I think that was his job title) told me that it never ceased to amaze him how hard selling was and how expensive! Recognising that he probably knew more about it than I did I chose not to argue. And I remember it every year when it comes to selling honey.

And here, perhaps we can help each other. Certainly, providing opportunities for members to sell honey is one of the objectives for the events that the LBKA participates in. And of course this is entirely complementary with the other main objective, to raise public awareness of bees.

Other opportunities come in or are created by the LBKA, ranging from individual members of the public wanting local honey to larger scale sales such as supplying the the recent Fortnum & Mason Festival of Honey. LBKA Policy is to advertise all opportunities to the membership, usually in the News Letter. But it has to be said, lead times are sometimes very short so please scan the newsletter as soon as it comes out to

see if there is anything you can take up. There is one this week for members who could help us fulfil a request for 200 ½lb jars of liquid London honey. The jars are specific so you will need some still in buckets.

For Fortnum and Mason we supplied 600 jars of members and Association honey. Suppliers also have to present their honey at a public tasting on the shop floor. Having done a stint myself, deep respect to anyone who works in retail. Delivering to Fortnum & Mason's Goods-In in Jermyn Street is a nightmare so we started early. The Grocery Team were so interested to learn about the honey and the LBKA that I was asked to join one of their Staff Training sessions to introduce them to bees, honey and flowers. I was happy to do this just because they showed an interest but hopefully it is also helping to develop our customer base.

But there are so many opportunities all over London. It doesn't have to be the West End or large Events all the time, I am sure there are plenty of opportunities to combine raising public awareness of bees with selling members honey. I happened upon one such example that I hope will encourage members to explore their own neighbourhoods in a similar way.

Transition Town Tooting (TTT) organise an annual fes-



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

tival of locally grown food – the Tooting Foodival. I have bees in Tooting and I was asked if I could do something bee related at the Foodival. Why not. I took an observation hive, some LBKA leaflets and packets of pollinator friendly seed mix and honey from three different areas, Clapham, Balham and Tooting. On the way I was wondering why I had not bothered to break the heavy boxes of honey and just take a few jars of each. That would have been a mistake. Local events like this are a fantastic sales opportunity if you have local honey to sell. I highly recommend you look for similar opportunities in your area. And of course Christmas is on the horizon and there are always popup markets at that time of year.

If you do find something like this and are prepared to take a lead in developing it, the LBKA may be able to help and support you. And you would be helping the Association fulfil one of its charitable objects – raising public awareness of bees. But be prepared, remember what the Vice President of IBM Easter Hemisphere told me: Selling is hard work. But it is fun too.

Please let us know.

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 8th October at 11:00** on the subject of **fumigation of equipment and hygiene matters**. We'll be at our usual venue of Fairley House Junior School, [220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY](#). Unfortunately, the London Honey Show is not running this year, so no Lancaster Hotel meeting this year!

The next monthly meeting is on **12th November**, on

the (new) topic of “properties of beeswax, wax extraction and rendering”.

November AGM and Committee nominations

The LBKA holds its **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** on **8th November** at **Roots and Shoots** (Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN). The Committee hopes members will join them to reflect on the previous twelve months and look to the future. All members will receive details by email from the Association Secretary (Natalie) over the next few days, so look out for an email from admin@lbka.org.uk. The email will include instructions on how to propose a resolution for the meeting, and include a list of Committee and Trustee roles available to members.

If you would like to get involved in the running of the Association then now is the ideal time! LBKA and its activities are **entirely run by volunteers**. We have no paid staff, but have freedom to develop activities that lie within our charitable objectives. We are increasingly being known and respected as a platform to educate for better understanding of beekeeping and pollination, and to campaign about issues that affect pollinators in London. If you have some ideas would like to get involved, do talk to committee members and come to our AGM. It's been a busy year for the LBKA and we want to continue to proactively support our members, the craft of beekeeping and the needs of bees in to 2018.

Everyone is welcome to attend the AGM, but **only those who have paid their subscription for the 2017-18 year are entitled to vote**. Please ensure you renew your membership in advance of the meeting.

Membership renewals

We have 300 LBKA members. Thank you to all those that are part of LBKA.

Our membership year has now ended (it ended on 30th September). If you'd like to continue being a member of LBKA (and we sincerely hope you do) you'll need to renew your membership. You will have all been sent a personal renewal link by email. If you didn't get it (check your spam folder), email me at services@lbka.org.uk and I'll resend it.

Two pieces of good news. Firstly, it's very easy to rejoin (but email me if you have any difficulties). Secondly, prices have not increased this year!

Asian Hornet sighting

The National Bee Unit has confirmed a sighting of the Asian hornet at an apiary near Woolacombe in Devon. This is the first confirmed sighting since last year, when



Asian hornet. Photo: National Bee Unit.

a nest was discovered in the Tetbury area in Gloucestershire. That Asian hornet incursion was successfully contained by bee inspectors who promptly tracked down and destroyed the nest. Work is underway to identify, destroy and remove any nests. Although the Asian Hornet poses no greater risk to human health than a bee, they pose a risk to honey bees.

The free Asian Hornet Watch reporting app allows people to quickly and easily report possible sightings of the invasive species and send pictures of suspect insects to experts at the National Bee Unit.

For more details see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-identified-in-devon>.

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, in that it is judged purely on taste, 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>.

What do you want to see in our Winter Lectures?

Over the winter months, the LBKA invites expert speakers related to the science and craft of beekeeping to talk to our members. Previous topics have in-

cluded beekeeping in the developing world and mead making. If there is a topic you'd be keen to see covered, then please send your suggestions to admin@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from September

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

South London honey wanted. Walworth Garden is looking for honey sourced reasonably close to Kennington. The honey should be "raw" and not modified in any way. Contact admin@lbka.org.uk for more details.

Site for two hives in Shoreditch: Shoreditch based advertising agency is looking for beekeeper to re-establish its rooftop apiary. They have two hives on site but have not had bees for several years. Contact admin@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from August

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

Last month's Monthly Meeting: Getting bees through winter

What happened at our meeting last month.

Mar Peláez-Muñoz
LBKA member

September is a busy month for beekeeping. There is lots of work to be done and it's starting to get late for this in October. Beehives are best left alone during the late Autumn and Winter months. Unless you are treating hives with oxalic acid in December the hives should not be disturbed.

The most important thing to do in preparation for winter is to make sure that the bees have plenty of stores and that the hive is protected against mice, woodpeckers and the weather. The colony has to be large enough to survive with a healthy queen. The number of varroa mites should have reduced with the treatment in August or early September with Thymol based varroacides such as Apiguard, Api Life, or pyrethroid based varroacides such as Apistan.

Bees consume 35lb of honey or sugar syrup between October and March and early April. In a cold winter, bees form a tight cluster and do not consume much honey. Howard gave the anecdote that the energy consumption of a colony in winter is only equivalent to 2 light bulbs, a relatively low amount (anyone who want to know the numbers should contact Howard Nichols at education@lbke.org.uk). In warm winters they consume more honey, but it's early spring – before there's much forage available - when bees go through their stores most rapidly. It is said that best time to do Spring feeding is in autumn.

A colony should go into winter with at least 15kg/35lb of stores (7 full frames). Since a national brood frame contains 5lb of stores, a super frame 3lb and a Langstroth frame contains 5lb, it is therefore advisable to have more than a single brood box to help with stores by adding a super and making sure that the queen excluder is removed so the queen is free to access the stores. The extra super can also be placed underneath so that bees can move the honey to the brood box and

then the extra super can be removed altogether. when, before winter?

To build up stores strong syrup is ideal: 1kg of sugar for 600ml of water. It may be difficult to estimate the difference between the stores that a hive has and what a hive needs to survive the winter. An experienced beekeeper can estimate whether the bees need to be fed by lifting ("hefting") the hive. There is no need to use additives for syrup but some beekeepers like to use Ambrosia or Neopol.

There are several types of feeder. The contact feeders are very useful in Spring as bees in winter can't get to the well, and rapid feeders which are better used during winter. Several other types of feeder were discussed, such as the Ashford and Miller feeder which contain a well in the centre or the side.

Entrance blocks

The entrance blocks should be placed by now to avoid wasps and other bees trying to rob the hive. You can reduce the entrance after removing the supers in August so that the bees can defend the hive easily. When inspecting the hives you can cover the supers as 5 to 10 minutes of robbing can be devastating for a colony.

Protection against mice

Most mouse guards should be added at the end of September as mice anticipate and are ahead of nature, by early October mice are looking for a winter hideout. House mice and long-tailed mice can enter an unprotected hive, the build the nest, eat comb and bees, chew frames and leave faeces, this last example can be smelt upon opening the hive for its urine content. As the bees tend to cluster when the temperature drops they become less able to cope with mice as the cohesion of the hive fall apart. The position of the mouseguard has to be right. As mice can't get through a 3/8" diameter or less. Entrance blocks will keep them out as long as they are no more that 3/16" high (if the mice's skull can get through the whole body will. Once the risk of robbing has gone one can replace the entrance block with the mouseguards. Rats can also cause enormous damage to a hive as they can gnaw at the expensive hive woodwork as they need to keep their incisors sharp. If you see rats you must call the Council Environmental Services.

Protection against green woodpeckers

Green woodpeckers may learn to peck holes through hive walls when the ground is frozen, and once this behaviour is learnt, they are likely to return.

There are many ways to protect the colonies against woodpeckers, you can wrap the hives in chicken wire

or plastic mesh, you can attach strips of plastic to the hive as a deterrent, or using shiny CDs on a stick. Black bin liners can also be used to cover the hive but ventilation has to be preserved. The crown board can be raised with matchsticks to provide ventilation through the winter months.

Protection against the weather

The hives must be in a sheltered position away from the full force of the wind. Avoiding frost pockets is recommended as well as making sure that the site is not damp or liable to flooding. It is important to remember that during winter, it is not cold that kills bees, but damp so ventilation is paramount for the survival of the colony. Hive stands should be used. Hives should not be directly under trees which are likely to drip or drop branches onto them. Roofs need to be secured.

More bees

In general the best way for bees to survive winter is more bees, as there need to be sufficient bees to keep the cluster warm and prevent isolation starvation. Having a young queen to overwinter is also favoured even though there is no reasoning behind this; the collective beekeeping knowledge and experience suggests that young queens have more chances of surviving winter than old queens, it is suggested that older queens stop laying eggs earlier than young queens and they start earlier and faster the following spring.

Happy Winter.

Harvest Stomp

We were at the annual third annual "Harvest Stomp" festival at the Olympic Park, educating the public about honey bees and selling members' London honey. Thanks to Richard Glassborow, Mark Patterson and



Our stall at Harvest Stomp



Good weather helped bring lots of people out.



Selling members' honey at Harvest Stomp.



Candle-rolling was popular, as usual.



Emily Abbott for organising and LBKA volunteers Callie, Rupert, Andrew and Jeremy. The weather was beautiful and there was a good turnout.

LBKA's Education Activities in 2017

Howard, our education officer reflected on a year of LBKA's education offerings.

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

The beekeeping season has finished for 2017 and set out below is a summary of the education activities undertaken by the association for 2017. Our objective is to produce competent and confident beekeepers. The 2017 education plan has tried to meet this as best we can. A summary is as follows:

Monthly meetings

The primary function of the monthly meetings is a social meeting point but we also incorporate these meetings into our education programme. Although we need to include essential topics such as Varroa control and swarm control we try to introduce more intermediate and advanced topics. This year these have included disease recognition, use of compound microscopes for Nosema testing, and production and use of nuclei. For our February meeting we had the ambitious topic of pollen recognition and pollen slide preparation, including use of digital equipment to view pollen features. In addition many of the seasonal apiary tasks have also been covered but in more depth so that there is always something for everyone. Based upon member feedback the strategy seems to be successful. Anyone who would



People love seeing live bees (especially when behind glass).



like a particular topic to be covered in 2018 please contact a committee member and we will see if it can be included.

Bee Health Day

This was an entire day and held in May at Walworth Garden Farm. It was a comprehensive programme, both theory and practical. Thanks must go to Tristram for letting us use the hives at the farm.

Module 1

The association provided tuition for 4 members who wanted to sit the BBKA Module 1 in March 2017. 2 were unable to sit the exam but the remaining 2 who did were both successful. We are expecting to run a similar course early in 2018 for either Module 2 or Module 3.

Basic Assessment

We arranged tuition and the assessment for 9 members who took the BBKA Basic assessment in May and early June 2017. It is hoped that we can do this for even more members in 2018. Anyone interested in this assessment in 2018 please email your details and I will forward electronic course material for winter reading. It does not require any commitment at this stage.

Winter lectures

We had 2 winter/spring lectures and attendance at both of these was moderate. With the 2nd lecture the lecturer himself was unable to attend at the last minute. It was due to circumstances beyond his control but frustrating as we had hired the hall and members turned up, having given up their evening to attend. We compromised and still had a meeting but not as anticipated.

Beginners' Course

All the above events were free and included within the annual membership. We also ran our 2 usual beginners courses which is a fee paying event. Each course is for Saturday and Sunday and both were organised by Emily Abbott and Richard Glasborow. Both weekend courses were fully booked. Each weekend a variety of LBKA members were involved, each speaking or demonstrating a single aspect of the course content and attending the course for a day. The time given by all of these individuals is greatly appreciated.

Mentoring Programme

We have again been able to run our mentoring programme. This has been organised and monitored by Elliot Hodges and appears to have been very successful. We intend to match all people attending the Beginners Course with a mentor (assuming they want a mentor), but subject to availability of mentors and appropriate geographical areas. Elliot will, no doubt, communicate a summary to us in due course.

LBKA Microscopy Course: Anatomy of the honey bee and pollen analysis

Information about LBKA annual and highly popular microscopy course. Places are limited!

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

LBKA proposes to run a detailed microscopy course for interested members during the winter months. This is the 4th time this will have been run by our association and is likely to be 3 × 2 hour evening sessions organised and led by Richard Glassborow and Howard Nichols. It

will concentrate on the use of microscopes for members to learn about both the pollen grain structure and the internal anatomy of the honey bee. It will be mainly hands on practical work and over the 3 weekly sessions we expect to deal with the following:

1. Simply theory of lenses, setting up of optical instruments and a summary of terminology used.
2. Investigation and analysis of pollen grains. How to prepare a slide. Use of negative and positive stains. Internal and external structure of a pollen grain and its features.
3. Embedding and dissection of the honey bee.

Item 3 is expected to form the major part of the course with 2 full sessions covering this subject. Embedding, dissection of head, thorax and abdomen will all be separately dealt with. Did you know that a mammal is pinned on its back for dissection but a bee needs to be pinned face downwards?

- All equipment will be supplied by the LBKA
- Numbers must be limited to a maximum of 8 people due to availability of equipment and pupil / teacher ratio.
- There is no charge. It is part of your LBKA membership subscription.
- Date to be decided but likely to be 3 evenings at Walworth Garden Farm in January or February 2018.

Please note this course is open to all LBKA members. The only entry requirement is an interest. Although specialised in form it is for anyone interested or curious about these aspects of beekeeping. Microscopy and dissection are “niche subjects” and so equally accessible by both very new and long standing beekeepers. It is not dependent upon length of beekeeping experience. It is truly a fascinating sub-optical world and exploration is an adventure.

Due to the organisation involved we need to have an idea of those interested so that the sessions and content can be properly planned. Please register your interest by email to education@lbka.org.uk as soon as possible. This does not require you to commit at this stage.

Education Matters

LBKA believes in good education and training. Howard, LBKA's education officer, set out how we support LBKA members through BBKA's various training modules.

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

2018 BBKA Basic Assessment

Both the BBKA and London Beekeepers Association encourages members to take the BBKA basic assessment where possible. The BBKA requirement for entry is that the applicant has been keeping bees for a minimum period of 1 year. The assessment is fairly straightforward and the syllabus can be downloaded free of charge from the BBKA website. Follow the dropdown menu for “Members” then “examinations and assessments”. The cost is £20 and entry forms can also be downloaded at the same time.

London Beekeepers Association will run a revision course in the spring for members wishing to take the examination. This is likely to last for 3 evenings (2 hours per evening) in early April. The assessment is both practical and simple oral questions. It lasts about 1 hour. We cover the theory on the revision nights and, for those wanting it, also offer a practical session at an apiary beforehand.

The assessment is not difficult, is within the capabilities of anyone who has been handling bees for 12 months and who is willing to download the syllabus and undertake some background reading. We also supply free course notes in electronic format.

Any LBKA member who has been keeping bees for a minimum of 12 months and wishes to take this assessment please confirm by email to education@lbka.org.uk. We will then be able to let you have some electronic course notes to read at your leisure over the winter months. Several members have already notified their interest. The BBKA website should be sufficient to deal with any queries regarding the assessment. Alternatively, ask another LBKA member who has taken it. Preparation for the Basic is an interesting way of continuing your beekeeping activities through the winter months. Even if you have been keeping bees for several years but not previously taken the assessment then please do seriously consider taking it in 2018. It is well worth the effort.

2017 or 2018 General Husbandry Assessment

This assessment is open to anyone who has been keeping bees for a minimum of 5 years, is registered on

BeeBase, has passed the basic and has a minimum of 3 queenright colonies and a queenright nucleus. The BBKA entry fee is currently £55. It is a demanding and challenging assessment, largely practical, covers a wide range of tasks and takes place at the candidate's apiary. The syllabus is available for download on the BBKA website under the education section. Although demanding, it is an excellent way for the beekeeper to progress and get from where he or she is towards where he or she wishes to go.

DEFRA will provide funding for the training as part of its healthy bee programme but the course attendees are expected to contribute £50 towards the cost. 20 hours training is included between January and May 2018. Before the course candidates are expected to familiarise themselves with the syllabus and acquire knowledge of its contents. People undertaking the training in early 2018 would normally take the assessment in 2019. Details can be obtained by emailing gen.manager@bbka.org.uk or by looking in the beekeeping press.

October in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

Feeding syrup to the bees should have been completed by the end of September as the colony will now find it difficult to process and cap the syrup due to the colder temperature. If left uncapped then there is the risk of fermentation and dysentery over the winter months. A colony should go into winter with at least 15kg (35lbs) of stores if possible. This will avoid the possibility of the bees dying of starvation in a cold spring.

The bees will start to cluster as temperatures fall. Clustering starts at about 18C and the cluster becomes smaller and more compact as temperatures continue to fall. They form a complete cluster at 13C. Other than this the colony will continue to operate as usual but on a much smaller scale. The queen will still be laying a few eggs, nurse bees nurturing a smaller amount of brood and bees should still be flying in the day throughout October. Bees should be foraging on Ivy, which is the last flowering plant of the year. If Apiguard was diligently applied in August and a feeding programme undertaken in September then the colony will be in optimum condition to face the next few months. This leaves the beekeeper to make final preparations for win-

ter. The objective is to put the bees in the best position to deal with winter by trying to do small things to tip the scales in their favour.

The hive

Check that hives are secure, straight and stable. If using a wooden floor then the colony should be slightly tilted slightly forward. Bees have evolved over millions of years to deal with cold temperatures and do this with relative ease. They cannot deal with damp and condensation. During winter they need to uncap and metabolise honey to keep warm. As a result of this, water vapour is produced. If the hive is not adequately ventilated then dampness will build up leading to fungi growth. It is essential that the hive interior remains dry throughout the winter. This is another advantage of using an open mesh floor.

Mouseguards

Once the night frosts commence then mice will look for a dark, warm place to hibernate. The smell and disturbance will upset the bees and, in more extreme instances, the colony can die out. Use of a mouseguard is extremely effective but there must be no way a mouse can bypass it.

Gardening measures

Check there are no branches grown up over summer and now overhanging the hive. If so then prune to remove. Also check that grass and weeds have not grown up around the hive and these will both reduce ventilation and promote damp. A quick trim with a strimmer or garden shears should be sufficient for the winter.

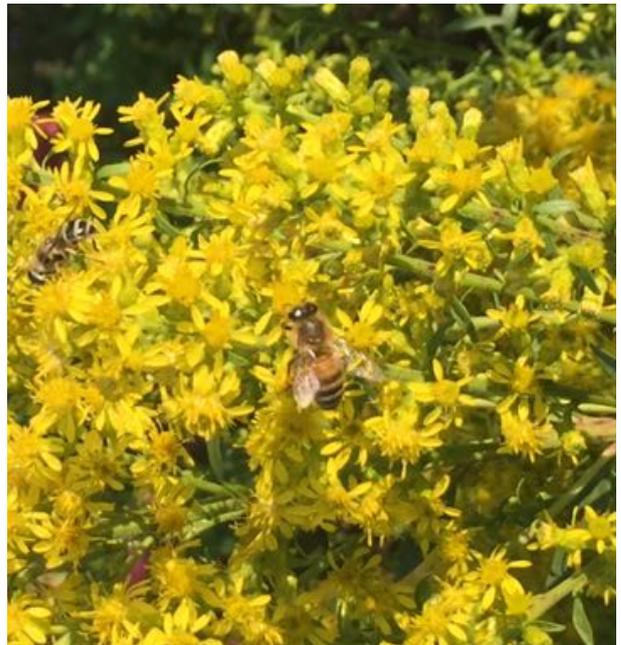
Other jobs

Make sure that spare brood and super boxes are cleaned and put away in a cold place for the winter to deter wax moth. Placing combs in a deep freeze for 24 hours if possible kills all 4 stages of wax moth. The bees put a lot of work and resources into making the comb. The beekeeper, as custodian over the winter months, has a duty of care to look after this valuable resource until returned to its rightful owners in the spring! Other equipment such as queen excluders, crownboards should also be cleaned and stored the same way.

Finally, October is the month for the National Honey Show. This is the 86th year of this event and will be held at Sandown Park Racecourse from 26th to 28th October.



Autumn crocus



Golden rod

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. **Would anyone else like write this important monthly piece?**

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

October signals the end of the active foraging season for our bees. By the end of the month our colonies must ensure they have sufficient stores of honey and pollen to last them through until spring. Pollen becomes available again when the crocus and snow drops bloom but the weather is often too cool for the bees to fly to take advantage of it. Nectar is an even longer wait. It's usually April when the first substantial nectar sources begin to flow so October really is a "make-or-break" month for our bees if they still need to pack away winter stores.

Apart from ivy substantial blooms of any particular plant are becoming rare this month. In gardens **Dahlias**, **Echinacea**, **Rudbeckia** and **Cosmos** persist but they will soon begin to keel over as the first frosts hit.

Winter flowering shrubs like **Viburnum tinus** are however starting to bloom and will peak at around New Year. These offer the bees pollen and sometimes nectar when winter days are mild enough for them to fly.

In about a month's time we should see the first **Mahonias** begin to bloom. These are frequented by honey and buff tailed bumble bees on mild winter days.

Jobs to do in the garden this month include propa-



Ivy blooms

gating semi ripe cuttings from your favourite flowering shrubs. Lavender, rosemary, hebe, flowering currants are all easy to propagate in this way. Push 6" cuttings into gritty compost and keep cool and moist over winter.

If you're planting bulbs for bees, October is the best time to do this.

As leaves start to drop from trees, collect and bag to make leaf mould to mulch plants next year. Mulching helps prevent plants drying out in dry weather and helps to keep them flowering and your bees well fed.

As perennials begin to die back you may want to begin clearing the old stems. Some plants benefit from having their core exposed to the cold over the winter whilst others benefit from the insulating properties of their dead stems and leaves.



Sedum Autumn joy

LBKA Apiaries

News from LBKA's apiaries.

Mudchute

Vlad Zamfir

LBKA Apiaries Manager and Mudchute Apiary Manager

The bees have been doing fine in Mudchute in September even though they seem to have forgotten that winter is just around the corner. Compared to the inspection I did 3 weeks prior, on the 30th of September I noticed no change with all colonies maintaining brood nest size (8 frames of brood in one of the WBCs). This is slightly worrying me as they're using up resources rather than putting away stores for winter and ivy is now at peak bloom around Mudchute and they won't have much left to forage on afterwards. However, the supers of honey I've left them should carry them over into the next beekeeping season.

Holland Park

Ted Parkes

LBKA Apiary manager for Holland Park

September has been a busy month, in particular the past couple of weeks. As we ease into Autumn and the cooler temperature there are lots of things to take care of in the apiary. Recently we have been tasked with moving a hive to clear the way for some repair work on

the adjoining roof top. It was a swarm from earlier in the season and it was decided to merge it with a weaker hive. That has been completed successfully and the new combined hive is doing well. We also removed all of the supers in preparation for extraction and got the Autumn Varroa treatments on all of the hives.

There has definitely been a late flow and the bees have taken advantage. All of the colonies have good stores of both nectar and pollen. The concern now is too much nectar coming in and not enough room for the queen to lay. This we will continue to monitor and hope the bees relocate some of the honey they have stored in the main brood areas.

Extraction will hopefully take place before this note is published but there is lots of other Autumn work to be done at the apiary in preparation for winter. We will likely be reaching out for volunteers over the next few weeks in order to get everything cleaned up and ready for winter.

Facebook (In)digest(ion)

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

Eugene Fahy

LBKA Member

This month's posts kicked-off with a [report of a swarm and a picture](#) from Richard Glassborow. The mild weather meant many colonies were still foraging and prepared to swarm if they ran out of space. Mid-month, Richard's bees were [still foraging on the left-overs from his grape harvest](#).

A [request from Ahlam Alasadi](#) about the best direction for a hive to face in London brought the response from Geordy Mark that south-east is generally best as it maximises the benefit of morning sunshine.

Geordy Mark posted a [picture of a jar of Fortnum & Mason honey](#) with the question "Can you spot the error in the text on this honey jar?" The range of responses could best be summed up as "where do you start?". Replies highlighted confusion over the taste – lime (citrus) and the actual forage source – lime (linden)?, the abundance of marketing puff but lack of a producer's name. On the latter point, Jon Harris pointed out that the primary retailer can be listed as the contact if they hold all of the supply chain information back to the point of production. Geordy Mark also posted [pictures of LBKA's stall at the QE Olympic Park Harvest Stomp](#).

On a more encouraging note, Toni Burnham shared a link to a [story about a Syrian refugee](#), Dr Ryad Alsous of Damascus University, who fled from his homeland in 2012 and who now lives in Huddersfield. As an academic, he had 200 hives so he posted on Facebook to see if he could find work with beekeepers in Yorkshire. It brought an offer of a hive from a Manchester beekeeper and from this small beginning he developed the Buzz Project aimed at helping his fellow refugees and the long term unemployed find a sense of purpose through beekeeping. He is hoping to continue his academic research at Huddersfield University and says “helping the bees of Britain will be my way of saying thank you to a country which has given my family so much?”

Emma Nye [posted a link to an entertainingly written blog](#) from a novice beekeeper in the USA where he says that “loyalty nearly killed by beehive”. In this case the journey, with references to the Roald Dahl story “Royal Jelly”, is more interesting than its conclusion. [Spoiler alert]. The replacement queen was introduced too soon (six hours) after the colony became queenless. The workers were still loyal to the departed queen and killed the usurper.

Corrine Edwards shared a link to a [skep making workshop](#) this Sunday, 8 October at Roots and Shoots. It runs from 11am to 5pm so there is a clash with the LBKA monthly meeting.

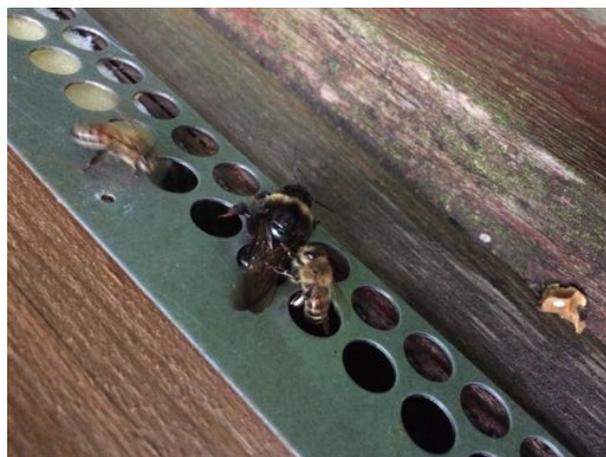
Finally, Angela Wood’s post is a [timely reminder to all of us renewing our LBKA membership](#) of the many benefits we enjoy and the good work done by the committee for bees and their habitat. This includes education for the public and members, raising awareness, producing policy documents on honeybee welfare and forage planting in London, mentoring and helping members to sell honey. All for only £15.

2017 Season with the Brentford Bees

Welcome to Sara Ward’s world at <https://www.hencorner.com/>.

Sara Ward
LBKA member

I can’t be the only LBKA member that has a Google Alert set up for “London Bees” triggering an email each time the topic appears online? As a household of season ticket holders for our beloved Brentford FC, we don’t mind hearing of the transfers, the goals, and the ups and down of our local football club. I am secretly very proud that they are known as “The Bees” and often wonder if there is any forage on Griffin Park that



Bees helping a bumblebee through a mouseguard.



Brentford Bees

might attract our “Real Brentford Bees” to go feasting there. I’ve looked into the history of their nickname and wonder whether our little corner of West London, that used to be orchards and market gardens supplying Covent Garden in Victorian times, was also famed for its honey bees that were priceless for pollination and heavy with honey due to fabulous forage. A local historian suggests that they were named The Bees as their football shirts used to have horizontal stripes and, of course, today’s young fans believe that Bee is just a syllable shorter than Brentford for an easy chant from the terraces.

I’m sticking with my belief that Brentford has a longstanding history of keeping honey bees and that my buddy, Thomas, and I are keeping that tradition strong!

So for the Real Brentford Bees, here at Hen Corner, we’ve had a season that has been just as unpredictable as that of the red and white striped boys at the end of the road. We’ve had three types of swarms (shook, artificial and natural), an unfortunate diagnosis (of



Class around the observation hive.



Veil and comb.



Honey bees on lavender.



Year 5 observation hive.

Nosema), successful treatment of aforementioned affliction, supers on, supers filled, supers empty – where did that honey go?

As for the teams, we started out with two colonies, went up to three then four, and after a merger, we were back down to three. Over the season, we've lost a few key players, namely four queens, to injury, forced retirement or possible transfer.

What about the fans? Well fortunately, this year has been very well supported. We've had bee fans of all ages come to meet the teams.

Junior bee fans have included 60 school children, 15 Girl Guides and 31 guests on our family courses. Whereas adults who have been to further their experience have included 41 guests and 3 mentees.

Whilst it's not a formal sponsorship deal, we were delighted to welcome Just Bee Drinks, as seen on BBC's Dragon's Den, to join in with a family course giving out bee friendly seeds for pollinators and their delicious honey based drinks. It's always nice when people value our wonderful players and want to cheer them on!

So as we reach the end of this year's season, we are wishing on the weather as our most vulnerable team is trying to rear a new captain and we fear they are running out of time?

To follow the story, look out for up-to-date news at <http://HenCorner.com>.

London National Park City

The aims of the Greater London National Park City campaign align closely with those of LBKA – to encourage people to better enjoy and care for our green spaces; to protect and enhance our urban natural and cultural heritage; to foster the wellbeing of our communities; and to inspire individuals, groups and organisations to share and act towards these aims.

The Mayor, Sadiq Khan, has formally declared support for the campaign, and it is hoped to launch the initiative in spring 2018.

The vision is for a city where people and nature are better connected. A city that is rich with wildlife and every child benefits from exploring, playing and learning outdoors. A city where we all enjoy high-quality green spaces, the air is clean to breathe and green homes are affordable.



From left to right: John Chapple, Andy Pedley, Don and Cliff. Ealing beekeepers in the snow.



From left to right: David, Don, Albert, Stan, John and Cliff.

Adventures in Beeland: Wending my Way West

Probably Emily's final blog post for a bit. We'll miss her Adventures in Beeland. I'm still looking for some other LBKA members' blogs to feature – please let me know if you have some suggestions.

Emily Scott
LBKA member

I have a bit of news. A couple of weeks ago Drew, Tommy and I moved to Cornwall to be near family. Apologies to anyone in Ealing I didn't manage to say goodbye to in person, in the end time seemed to rush by. Many kind-hearted people have helped me over the years since I first started coming down to the apiary and did the Ealing beginners course nearly a decade ago, back in 2008. I've enjoyed many a cup of tea in nice and not-so-nice weather, as you can see from the photos. It was very sad to leave.

However, it is exciting to discover a new area, especially one so close to the beautiful briny sea. We have had an offer on a house accepted and at the moment my plan

is to get bees in the spring once we are settled in. I may do a BBKA module exam meanwhile too to make sure I don't forget everything!

We will have a little garden which I want to make as bee-friendly and generally wildlife-friendly as possible. It will be my first time having a garden of my own so I have a lot to learn. If any readers have tips for keeping bees in Cornwall, let me know. I want to join the local association here as I think that will be the best way to get some nice local bees.

Upcoming events

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.**

Wednesday 8th November: Annual General Meeting

18:30 for 19:00 start at Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN

Our Annual General Meeting which will include elections for new trustees and a new committee, votes on motions and discussions about what LBKA should be doing in the coming year. All welcome, but only fully-paid up members are have voting rights. Followed by tea/coffee/biscuits.

Sunday 12th November: Monthly meeting: Properties of beeswax, wax extraction and rendering

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

Properties of beeswax, wax extraction and rendering. 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.

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.

