

The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

July, 2024

Firstly, congratulations to Annie for her part in Battersea Park Children's Zoo winning BIAZA's (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) award for their project "Educational apiary in collaboration with the London Beekeepers Association" for "holding formal and informal talks and demonstrations at the apiary for zoo visitors throughout spring and summer and highlighting the importance of pollinating insects and the biology of honeybees to visitors of all ages".

Also to announce our upcoming Spectacular Summer Social on 14th August at Bell House. Put the date in your diaries! We will be selling tickets for this at $\pounds 5$ each for members and their guests – details will be provided nearer the time.

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Thank you to this month's contributors: Yohanna Akladious, Annie McGeoch, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson and Monika Szolle. Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, contact me. Please help make the newsletter better by providing content – photos, articles, advice, recipes. . .

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

Announcements

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

July's Monthly Meeting and Pub Social

For Sunday's Monthly Meeting (14th July), Sharon Bassey will be opening her apiary on Sunday on "all things swarmy". It will be at **Ruskin Park** at 11:00. If you're coming, please tell us in the link that was emailed to you. Ruskin Park is next to King's College hospital and the nearest train station is Denmark Hill Station. Come through the Denmark Hill gate entrance and follow the path and you will find the community garden on your left. Parking is available on the side streets around the park — head to the bandstand and you will find the apiary nearby.

The park was opened in 1907 and named after John Ruskin a Victorian writer and Naturalist who lived nearby. The apiary has been used this year as a guaran-



From Abbey Gardens. Photo: Monika Szolle.

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Gold award for education from BIAZA for Battersea Park Children's Zoo (with LBKA).

tine apiary for swarms of unknown provenance. There are six colonies in the apiary, and we will be doing thorough inspections on all the colonies. There is a lovely wildlife garden adjacent to the apiary. Teas and Coffees will be available and there are local pubs nearby.

The **Pub Social** will be on **Tuesday 30th July from 18:30** will be at **Dame Alice Owen** (292 St John St, Clerkenwell, EC1V 4PA) which does good beer and pizza.

August's Monthly Meeting on Sunday 11th August will be our Spectacular Summer Social at Bell House (Dulwich). Food provided by the ever excellent Delica Sisters and there will be talk from Stephanie Slater, Founder and Chief Executive of School Food Matters. We will be selling tickets at £5 a head to members and their guests — details to follow.

Find bee buddies!

Members who "opted-in" to sharing their details with other "opted-in" members can see which members are local to them and their level of expertise. Feel free to use this to help establish local beekeeping buddies! See the page in the Members Area of the website. This facility has been available for the past six years or so.

Gold award for Battersea Park Children's Zoo (with LBKA)

Jamie Baker Battersea Park Children's Zoo

This year the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) held their annual award ceremony celebrating conservation, welfare and education projects across the sector. This year the education category saw 80 nominations, and we are proud to share that Battersea Park Children's Zoo has been announced as the winners of the category for their project: Edu-



From Abbey Gardens. Photo: Monika Szolle.

cational apiary in collaboration with the London Beekeepers Association. Chester zoo were the runners up within this category.

This award was given in recognition of the educational achievements of this project. The zoo has welcomed hundreds of children to the apiary as part of the school food matters honeybee programme. As well as this, Annie, our fabulous apiary manager, has been holding formal and informal talks and demonstrations at the apiary for zoo visitors throughout spring and summer highlighting the importance of pollinating insects and the biology of honeybees to visitors of all ages.

Last year the apiary project won its first award, a bronze BIAZA award as well as being nominated for the great British wildlife restoration award, where zoo manager Jamie attended an awards ceremony at the Houses of Parliament.

LBKA would like to thank Annie for doing such good work that played an important part in this well-deserved award and is having a good impact

Extractors

We rent out manual extractors to members – email Will at resources@lbka.org.uk to reserve.

Members welcome to visit LBKA's Apiaries

LBKA currently has four (operational) apiaries: Battersea Children's Zoo, Brockwell Park, Hyde Park and Mudchute Farm. They are overseen by Tristram but each is managed separately. Beekeeping activity happens weekly during the opening hours below. All mem-

bers welcome but we recommend you check with the Apiary manager before travelling in the members' area of the website on this page.

• Battersea Children's Zoo: Saturdays, 14:00

Brockwell Park: Sundays, 12:00.
Hyde Park: Thursdays, 15:30.
Mudchute Farm: Mondays, 14:00

See updates from apiary managers on page ??.

See "members' area" for members' goodies

LBKA members can log in via the members' area on the website and see videos of past talks and meetings.

Old announcements from June

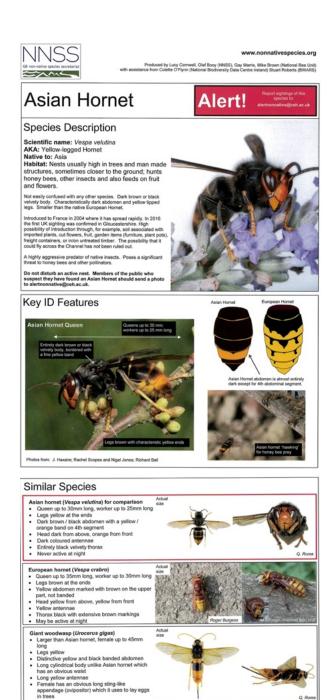
Congratulations!: Congratulations to those who passed their BBKA Basic Assessment: Elaine Ellis, Zoe Groves, Casper Rodgers, Geoff Everson and Georgie Herety. We strongly encourage those who've been keeping bees for at least a year to do their BBKA Basic Assessment. Please sign up for Howard's revision classes which happen over winter.

Old announcements from May

Tristram on ITN: Tristram was interviewed for ITN for International Bee Day at our Mudchute apiary. He appeared on the ITV news, talking about bees and the threats that pollinators face from the Asian Hornet.

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.



Asian Hornet Identification leaflet. Source: BBKA website.

Alert!

et mimic hoverfly (Volucella zor domen has more yellow stripes th

Median wasp (Dollchovespula media)
 More extensive yellow and orange colouration on abdominal segments than Asian

For more information visit:

www.nonnativespecies.org www.nationalbeeunit.com

Field Signs



From Abbey Gardens. Photo: Monika Szolle.

LBKA's association with School Matters activities

This is a short response on governance questions raised on BeeBanter 11 July, relating to LBKA's involvement with the educational charity School Food Matters (SFM).

David Hankins treasurer@lbka.org.uk

There are 2 strands to SFM's Honey Bee Program.

1. Beekeeper visits to schools

In the March 2023 newsletter (p2) and the accompanying email narrative, LBKA sought expressions of interest from members interested in undertaking these visits on a commercial basis. The commercial structure is a Framework Agreement between LBKA and SFM, with LBKA members meeting certain criteria being added to the agreement and subsequently contracting directly with SFM. A panel of 3 Trustees not seeking this work undertook the development of the Framework Agreement and the "vetting" of interested LBKA members.

These visits to schools a hard work, with 4 separate

lectures to pupils taking a full day to deliver including travelling, require the setting up and management of an observation hive for the 6-8 week duration of the program, include the resourcing and storage of additional props, and necessitate use of a vehicle capable of transporting all equipment and observation hive – so it is unsurprising that only 5 members (2 of whom are Trustees), eventually submitted applications to join the agreement.

Members accepting offers of visits are remunerated directly by SFM.

The Framework Agreement has had 2 years to "bed in", and if the program continues in 2025 the commercial opportunity will be advertised to members again.

2. Class visits to apiaries

Each school visited by a beekeeper sends a class to one of the LBKA apiaries for a half day later in the summer term. Organisation of these days is shared between SFM &; LBKA, but all the beekeeping-related delivery, (and increasingly most of the other content necessary to optimise the number of pupils in the apiary at any time), falls to LBKA.

These days require several LBKA members on site, (not least due to health & safety considerations), and can't be delivered by a single member, paid or not. So we run these events entirely with LBKA volunteers drawn from the teams of beekeepers who regularly manage the apiaries and others responding to requests in this newsletter, by email and on the WhatsApp group Bee-Banter.

LBKA is paid a daily rate for these events by SFM. However, these days are also seen as genuine volunteering opportunities for LBKA members, and are generally rewarding exercises. Trustees have agreed that volunteers should not be "out of pocket" due to their contributions on these days, (or when volunteering for any other event run by the organisation), so reasonable travel expenses can be reimbursed – this is an area where communication could be improved.

Asian Hornet Update LBKA News, July 2024

July's Committee meeting

Here, we keep you up to date with what the committee discusses at our monthly committee meetings (and what keeps us awake at night). Let us know if you can help or have any suggestions that might help.

Aidan Slingsby services@lbka.org.uk

In the Trustee part of the meeting, we first discussed the future of the association and the difficulty in getting enough people to volunteer. David confirmed that he will be standing down as treasurer but that he would continue for another year for a handover period. We need to start to actively look for someone to become treasurer. We also discussed our approach to swarm collection and will review our guidance. Elliot floating the idea of having "roving mentors". He also highlighted a case where it seems an opportunist pest control company charged someone to spray a swarm with insecticide, leaving them half-dead. The committee will draft a letter to the company involved on behalf of the association.

In the executive part of the meeting, Sharon confirmed that the meeting at her Ruskin Park apiary is all in hand. The Summer Social at Bell House is also in hand. We decided the September meeting would be about entering honey into honey shows and include honey tasting. The committee, who usually meet online, agreed to meet in-person in the September meeting. The full disease inspection by Danyal Con that was organised by Annie seemed to go well and the committee thanked Annie for organising it.

The committee also congratulated Annie for her part in Battersea Park Children's Zoo winning BIAZA's (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) award for their project "Educational apiary in collaboration with the London Beekeepers Association" for "holding formal and informal talks and demonstrations at the apiary for zoo visitors throughout spring and summer and highlighting the importance of pollinating insects and the biology of honeybees to visitors of all ages".



(Mostly) capped super. Photo: Aidan Slingsby.

Asian Hornet Update

Update on what LBKA is doing about the Asian Hornet.

Sharon Bassey asianhornet@lbka.org.uk

There is a lot going on behind the scenes at the BBKA and the NBU which we all hope to have verified and be advised on soon. We have a new mapping system which is authorised by the BBKA which can monitor where our traps are, but it is only accessible by the Asian Hornet coordinators. So please send your trap/monitoring station coordinates.

Our Coordinators are Annie McGeough, Rebecca Teare, Elliot Hodges and Sharon Bassey. Our details are on the AH Whatsapp group and we can be contacted via that group or through asianhornet@lbka.org.uk.

The Asian hornet trapping has now turned its attention to trapping/monitoring for worker hornets. You should swap the nozzle for the Gardapis traps to the worker nozzle.

There have been a few sightings in Kent but not in the numbers I expected but it is early days and the weather may have been on our side for the AH but not unfortunately not for our bees! We have had just one notification from the NBU to go to a possible AH siting near Hackney which turned out to be a possible swarm which had left. Rachel who had spotted the Asian hornet hawking her hive last year went to check on this. The importance of having verifiers is crucial and we are always looking for more, your support in the coming months is so important.

The work of the team which came to Jersey fills me with pride and they are leading by example. LBKA initiated this response. The team have been doing sterling

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Filtering. Photo: Aidan Slingsby.

work with the road shows to raise awareness. Hats off to Annie, Guillaume and Rebecca. Many thanks.

The Asian Hornet Committee meet on the 18th this month and I hope to have more information for you going forward.



Bumble bee on hebe. Photo: Aidan Slingsby.

July in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk

July beekeeping work has 2 distinct parts. These are dealing with the early July nectar flow then, at the end of the month, removal of honey.

During May and June the bees utilise this period to build up their numbers and to swarm. There is now a lot less inclination to swarm and the bees direct their attention towards capturing the flowing nectar from the summer flowers. When they do this then supers can quickly fill and it is important that the beekeeper has sufficient frames and supers in advance of the flow. There will not be time to buy extra supers and to make up frames. Nor can the beekeeper extract the honey and return the super to the same colony as the honey is unlikely to be ripened until after the flow ceases.

Nectar flow

Exact timing of the nectar flow depends upon weather and locality but is usually mid June and early July in London.

How do I know when it has started? The coming and going at the colony entrance becomes a lot more purposeful when the nectar flow starts, bees leave the hive entrance in a determined and focussed way. They have the appearance of knowing exactly what they are doing and where they are going. As the nectar flow progresses then, of course, the supers also become heavier but, by this time, the flow is well underway.

Adding supers. Regular inspections are still needed but the beekeeper's attention should now be directed towards checking there is enough room in the supers. A cursory glance in the top super should be sufficient. When the frames in the top super are covered with bees

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then it is time to add another. Many beekeepers move the frames around a little by putting a few combs of honey and nectar into the newly added top super as this encourages bees to continue onwards and upwards. The nectar flow can also be used to draw out new combs from foundation.

Removing honey from the hive

A comb of honey should only be removed when it is at least 75% sealed by the bees. This is to avoid fermentation of the final product. There are several methods of clearing bees from the supers. These can be grouped into physical methods (bee escapes, etc), chemical methods (repellents available for purchase from bee equipment suppliers) and mechanical methods (blowers which blow the bees off the frames). Some beekeepers have concerns relating to the use of chemicals and mechanical methods are more akin to commercial beekeeping, not hobbyists. It is only the physical methods detailed here. The 2 most common physical methods are Porter bee escapes and shaking the bees off the frames.

Porter bee escapes

Most of us use Porter bee escapes incorporated into a clearing board. This works well provided they are used properly and the metal spring escapes are clean, not stuck with propolis. After about 48 hours most of the bees have gone down through the one-way valve and there are relatively few bees in the super. Better to use a crownboard with 2 bee escapes. If 1 malfunctions then the other is still in use.

Make sure there is plenty of space for the bees below the supers. If necessary then insert another empty super with frames below to house the bees. Ensure the bees cannot come back up into the supers being cleared. Ill fitting, non bee spaced equipment or defective Porter bee escapes are the usual reasons for failure.

Shake and brush

Another method is shaking the individual frames to remove as many bees as possible then brushing off the remainder. An extra super is needed to hold the shaken frames and this should be placed on an upturned hive roof and covered with a sheet or large cloth. As it is being used to hold honey (a food product) then it should not have direct contact with the ground.

This method causes a certain amount of disturbance to the bees and may not be suitable for a hive in close proximity to people. Its advantage is that it is quick and only involves 1 visit to the apiary. Porter bee escapes involve 2 visits to the apiary.

Other action to be taken this month

Check space. Once the nectar flow starts then most colonies abandon the idea of swarming as it is now not in their interests to do so. There is still a small risk of



Harvesting from a flowhive. Photo: Yohanna Akladious.

swarming and this is increased if the bees do not have enough room to store nectar. Another reason to ensure that enough supers are on the hive.

Check space. The nectar flow is a golden opportunity to undertake a brood disease inspection. As the bees are so busy with the nectar they have little time to remove dead larvae until the flow ceases. Leaving the brood disease inspection until autumn may leave insufficient time to take corrective action. Optimum times for a specific brood disease inspection are early spring and in summer whilst the nectar flow is in progress.

Reduce colony entrances. Reduce colony entrances when the nectar flow ceases to minimise robbing.

Focus on Forage LBKA News, July 2024



Privet

Plan your varroa treatment for next month. Decide your strategy and buy any supplies you will need.

Reserve your use of an extractor. Reserve your use of an extractor next month if you usually hire LBKA equipment. Email Will on resources@lbka.org.uk.

Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. This article is reprinted from last year.

Mark Patterson forage@lbka.org.uk

As we pass from June into July, all our hopes for a decent harvest now rely upon the **Lime** trees. Limes are blooming. There are 3 species of limes native to the UK: Large Leaved Lime ($Tilia\ platyphyllos$), Small Leaved Lime ($Tilia\ cordata$) and a naturally occurring hybrid of the before mentioned two ($Tilia\ \times europaea$). The small leaved Lime is common throughout England but in the south west it is largely replaced by the large leaved lime which thrives better on the lime-rich soils.

Be aware of the Silver Lime (*Tila tormentosa*) which is an exotic introduction and flowers a bit later than our native limes. Its nectar is toxic to bees and when there



Bird's Foot Trefoil

is a dearth in forage the bees may mistakenly collect its nectar and in the process become intoxicated before falling comatose beneath the tree.

Limes are capable of producing copious volumes of nectar but only if the weather conditions are just right. High soil moisture content from spring rains followed by very warm sultry weather is needed to trigger a good Lime flow.

Lime honey is highly sought after as it has a minty aftertaste and tangy tone to it. It's also high in fructose sugars and low in glucose meaning it stays liquid for a long time and resists crystallisation prolonging its shelf life and makes an attractive looking jar of honey for the sales stall.

We are fortunate in urban areas to have an abundance of lime trees growing in our parks and side streets. In London limes represent our biggest potential for a bumper honey crop but as mentioned earlier this only becomes a reality when the weather conditions come together at the right time. During a strong lime flow a healthy colony of honey bees can fill a super in a matter of days so it's important you have spare boxes at the ready.

Other plants which are important for our bees this month include **bramble** which should now be in peak flower. Like lime nectar, bramble is mostly fructose which leads to a light fruity honey which seldom crystallises. I am lucky that all my apiaries are bordering over ground railway lines which have an abundance of bramble growing along the sidings.

Around water and damp ground **Himalayan Balsam** is now flowering and will continue to do so right up until late August. Balsam is loved by many Beekeepers for its flowers providing forage in bulk at a time when there is often little else around. It's a contentious plant though, being a non-native plant and highly invasive. It's listed under schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as illegal to plant, knowingly aiding it, or allowing it to spread. The penalty if found guilty can exceed a £5000 fine and a criminal record. So please beware of those beekeepers on Internet forums advocating its

spread as a plant good for bees! Far better plants suited to damp ground include Water Mint, Purple Loosestrife and Hemp Agrimony which are all loved by bees.

Other good sources of forage joining the summer flow this month include **Tree of Heaven** (*Ailanthus altissima*), **Indian Chestnut** (*Aesculus indica*), **Chinese Privet tree** (*Ligustrum sinense*) and **Indian bean tree** (*Catalpa Bignoniodes*). All are abundant in urban parks and provide pollen and nectar after all our native trees have ceased flowering. Last year one of our members in north London had their honey analysed by a forensics lab and most of the pollen was from Tree of Heaven.

In urban areas shrubs including Choiysia, Cotoneaster, Privet, Philadelphus, Escalonia, Abelia, Santolina and Hebe will continue to attract bees.

Elder is just coming to an end along with **Dog Rose** meaning few native shrubs continue to flower into July.

As July progresses our bees become more and more reliant on ground level flora for their forage. Wildflowers like Bugloss, Birds Foot Trefoil, Vetches, Knapweeds, Thistle, wild Thyme, wild Marjoram, Scabious, Teasel and Umbellifers. Plants which many of us associate as 'weeds' and try our best to eradicate are often plants important to bees in high summer – among them Ragwort.

July and August are the months of the year when most Beekeepers remove their honey harvest but it is also the time of year when our honey bees are flying the furthest to find profitable flower patches. Research undertaken at Sussex University has shown that during July and August Honey Bees are regularly flying as far as 12 km away to forage and their decoded waggle dances indicated that the bees were making a bee line for nearby towns and villages where they can find abundant blooms in our domestic gardens.

We can all help make life a little easier for the bees in late summer by making better plant selections in our gardens. You can find planting suggestions on my website http://www.apicultural.co.uk/ along with some good suggestions for plants suitable for balconies and window boxes.

Upcoming events

See our website for an up-to-date list.

Sunday 14th July: Monthly meeting:

Apiary visit

11:00-13:00 at Ruskin Park Community Garden

Sharon Bassey is opening her apiary for this month's

Monthly Meeting on Sunday on "all things swarmy". It will be at Ruskin Park. Come through the Denmark Hill gate entrance and follow the path and you will find the community garden on your left. Parking is available on the side streets around the park - head to the bandstand and you will find the apiary nearby. The apiary has been used this year as a quarantine apiary for swarms of unknown provenance. There are six colonies in the apiary, and we will be doing thorough inspections on all the colonies.

Bee suits and gloves will be supplied.

Members only.

Sunday 11th August: Monthly meeting: Spectacular Summer Social

11:00-13:00 at Bell House, 27 College Rd, Dulwich, SE21 7BG.

Our annual Spectacular Summer Social will feature food provided by the ever excellent Delica Sisters and will follow our special guest speaker. Stephanie Slater is Founder and Chief Executive of School Food Matters and will talk about the Programme that LBKA has been part of for many years. Members and their guests only and you'll need a ticket (details to follow).

Tuesday 27th July August: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at Dame Alice Owen, 292 St John St, Clerkenwell, EC1V 4PA

Our monthly trip to the pub will be at the Dame Alice Owen, 292 St John St, Clerkenwell, EC1V 4PA which does good beer and pizza.

Sunday 8th September: Monthly meeting: Honey shows and tasting 11:00-13:00, location to be confirmed

We will have special guest, honey judge Peter Bashford who will talk about showing honey at shows. We will also have honey tasting and ask members to bring some of their honey to share. The diversity in taste and colours of honey from across London is wonderous! We will supply wooden tasting sticks.

Trustees

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: Simon Saville, admin@lbka.org.uk
- Education: Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- Membership: Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- Events: Annie McGeoch, events@lbka.org.uk
- Apiaries: Tristram Sutton, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- Mentoring: Elliot Hodges, mentor@lbka.org.uk
- Resources: Will Fry, resources@lbka.org.uk
 Asian Hornet: Sharon Bassey, asianhornet@lbka.org.uk
- Stuart Kennon, stuart.kennon@lbka.org.uk

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

