

October, 2024

We had a great Monthly Meeting last month at which many LBKA members brought honey and at which Claire O'Brien gave a really interesting and informative talk about showing and tasting honey. We had around 40 jars of honey to tastes and had around 50 members! See Sakina Allali's writeup on page 5.

We have the AGM on Wednesday 6th November at a pub and there will be food/drink. We are at a **turning point** where some of the Trustees and members of the Committee are not planning to re-stand and we do not know of people who are planning to replace them. We need people to come forward to help run the association. Please see the call for nominations on page 5 (which was also emailed to you) and also more about volunteering for LBKA on page 3. This is a **great opportunity** to be involved in the running of a small charity in an area that we are all passionate about.

In the newsletter this week, as well as Richard's (p1), Howard's (p6) and Mark's (p7) monthly pieces, Sakina has written up our honey tasting event p5.

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Thank you to this month's contributors: Sakina Allali, Sharon Bassey, Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson and Ian Shackleton.

Finally, after ten years of editing this newsletter, I will be stepping down from this role. Does anyone fancy taking over? I'm very happy to help someone who wishes to do so.

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

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From our Chair

Richard Glassborow chair@lbka.org.uk

I want to talk about our WhatsApp group BeeBanter. Members of the group will know it provides a pretty rich diet of just what it says on the tin, BeeBanter.

Is that a compliment or a criticism? That's what I want to talk about: the pros and cons of BeeBanter.

So, what is it? A digital social space, where people meet and...chat? All of that. A help line? Yes, but...there are some buts. A source of beekeeping wisdom? There is certainly an abundance of beekeeping wisdom available but there is something in the struc-



Late foraging opportunities. Photo and caption: Aidan Slingsby.

ture of the platform that prevents it from becoming a "source". WhatsApp is all in the now. Ask a question and you will get an answer, maybe several answers, immediately. Just what's needed, at that moment. And then it's gone. On WhatsApp, stuff is always moving from the now into the past. There is little by way of continuity, review, debate and it doesn't naturally lend itself to going back so it is a difficult platform to develop consensus or agree differences on difficult positions.

This is frustrating, particularly because of the wealth of ingredients that abound in that stream from the now to the forgotten or unexplored past.

I know that I am not alone in my concern that the flow of ingredients on BeeBanter, despite some excellent knowledge exchange and links to wider perspectives on beekeeping, is revealing a tendency towards a kind of beekeeping by numbers where it is possible to slip into the habit of asking for one-off answers to oneoff questions rather than truly commit to "becoming a beekeeper". Responsible beekeeping is not easy. It just isn't.

So, here's a question: how do we share, debate and develop where our beekeeping is going, on a collective as well as a personal level?

And, by the way, currently, about 40% of members of the Association are on the WhatsApp group. Another way of looking at that is, over 50% of members aren't on BeeBanter.

If anyone has ideas on how to increase communications within and around the LBKA, please share.

Announcements

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

September's Monthly Meeting and Pub Social

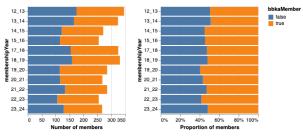
Our Monthly Meeting will be on Thermal regulation of the hive and insulation, on Sunday (13th October) at 11:00 at the The Barn at Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, Brockwell Park, London SE24 9BN. It will be delivered by long-standing member Vlad Zamfir.

The **Pub Social** will be on **Tuesday 24th October from 18:30** at the **Rising Sun**, 44-46 Ebury Bridge Rd, Pimlico, SW1W 8PZ.

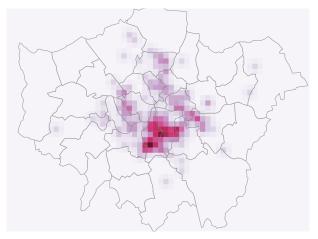
October's Monthly Meeting will be on Sunday 13th October on thermal regulation of the hive and insulation at The Barn at Brockwell Park Community



When members joined last year



Our membership numbers.



Where our members live.

Greenhouses (Brockwell Park, London, SE24 9BN) led by member Vlad Zamfir.

Membership renewals

Don't forget to renew your membership of LBKA (and associated BBKA membership is applicable). Members will have all got a personalised renewal link. It helps us (administratively) if you renew ASAP. If you don't do so within the next month or so, you will lose your member benefits until you do so.

If you did not get your renewal link, check your span folder. If it's not there, ask me for it by email. Let us know if you have any other questions.

National Honey Show

The 91st National Honey Show (Thursday 27th to Saturday 29th October) at Sandown Park Racecourse (Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ) is three days of talks, workshops, trade fairs and list of honey classes is here. LBKA sponsors 3 classes (321, 322, and 323) so we'd encourage you to go for them, particularly as they are often won by non-LBKA members based in London. Class 321 is unusual as it's purely on taste and aroma, so worth going for.

Your association needs you!

Much of the committee has been in post for a long time and some will be standing down this year or next. So when we say **your association needs you**, it's not just cliche! There are too few people active carrying out the various necessary executive functions.

Being involved in a small charity like LBKA is a **great opportunity** to make a difference. It gets you involved in setting its strategic direction and to help make things happen. It can also give you experiences that can be helpful in your workplace. You can also put your professional skills to good use, such as social media, engagement, event organisation, web etc.

LBKA has **trustees** (responsible for the charity and setting strategic direction) and **committee** members (day to day running) of the association. Much of the current committee are both trustees and committee, but you don't need to do both. You still help us even if you're not on the committee.

Committee and non-committee

The committee is responsible for implementing/delivering the association's activities. The committee make decisions about implementation and different committee roles are responsible for different activity areas. We **need new people on the committee** to push forward new ideas and make them happen. You **don't need to be on the committee to help out** (but it often helps).

Whether on the committee or not, examples of things you could do to help include:

- organising hiring equipment to members
- helping manage social media (producing content, answering comments, connecting to other relevant accounts)
- producing videos
- editing and writing for the newsletter
- communicating to members
- outreach
- pollination activities (e.g. running LBKA's pollinator grant, writing to councils and landowners)

However, this list is **not** exhaustive. We would welcome people with ideas who can help make them happen. You might have ideas and skills that we don't know we need!

Trustees

You might stand as a Trustee if you're interested in influencing strategic direction. However, we also need a new **treasurer** and a new **secretary** (without which we cannot function). Anyone interested in such roles would have a long handover period with plenty of support.

Please talk to any trustee or committee member, if you want to know more.

Pollinator Fund

Good news - we're reinstating our Pollinator Fund as part of our commitment to help make London a better place for pollinators

Over the past few years, we have helped support pollinator-friendly planting, creation of habitat for beneficial insects, and the education of visitors to London's open spaces, including:

- Eden Community Garden, SW4: £500.00 toward herbaceous border project in St Paul's churchyard, Clapham.
- Friends of Hillside Gardens, SW2; £438.89 toward pollinator hedging project at Hillside Gardens community allotments, Streatham.
- St Mary's Secret Garden, E2; £480.00 for development of a wildflower meadow. (Project completed but grant not drawn down.)
- Friends of Westcombe Woodlands, SE10: £993.00 toward pollinator hedging & wetland garden creation in Westcombe Woods, Maze Hill
- Friends of Colliers Wood Parks & Greenspaces, SW19: £914.50 toward mixed pollinator border development and bug hotel provision at the Recreation Ground, Colliers Wood
- Prospect Walk Allotment Association, E1: £459.05 toward pollinator hedging, wildflower meadow & bee bank creation project at allotment site, Mile End
- Bell House, SE21: £1,000 toward creating new pollinator beds adjacent to lawn below terrace as seen at the recent LBKA summer social, Dulwich.

We welcome applications from members. We also welcome applications from individuals ororganisation known to members that already have a track record in successful grant making and share at least some of LBKA's charitable objects or aspirations. Such organisations may include:

- 1. charitable organisations owning land in the Greater London area;
- national conservation charities with a London branch;
- 3. organisations making grants for heritage/conservation work undertaken in London;

Further information about LBKA's Pollinator Fund in its current form is available at https://www.lbka. org.uk/pollinator_fund. Please contact David on treasurer@lbka.org.uk for more details and an application form.

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.

Extractors

We rent out manual extractors to members – email us at resources@lbka.org.uk to reserve. If you came to our honey extraction day, you will be able to hire an electric extractor.

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 members 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 "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.

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.

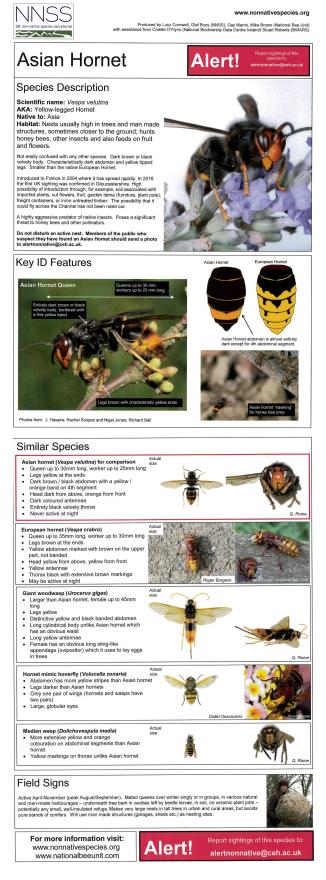
October's Committee meeting

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

Trustee business

Most of the Trustee part of the meeting was discussing preparations for the **AGM** at 18:30 on **Wednesday 6th Nov** at **The Sun**, Clapham Old Town. It was decided that that AGM should be about electing Trustee roles including Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Once appointed, the Trustee would appoint a committee and encourage wide participation. The Annual Report is almost ready and Richard will present the key points at the AGM. All documents need to be sent out on 22nd



Asian Hornet Identification leaflet. Source: BBKA website.

October. We will call for nominations for trustees and any motions from members on 11th October.

Executive business

We discussed operational aspects up upcoming events. We have produced a calendar Monthly Meetings that we will distribute to members shortly. October's monthly meeting is in hand. We still need a venue to November's. We are thinking of dropping the Christmas Quiz (due to lack of participation) and will come up with another idea.

We also have some updates. Since the reopening of the Pollinator fund, we have have had 6 expressions of interest. We might have a volunteer to help look after Social media. School Food Matters is now finished for the year and the final sessions went well. Finally, we plan a thank-you event for those who have volunteered for LBKA in the past year.

Notice of upcoming AGM and call for nominations

This has been emailed to all members.

This year's AGM is fast approaching and could be critical to the future of your association.

At the AGM all current Trustees will stand down and a new board of Trustees will be elected by members present. Of the current board, at least 4 will not be standing again. These include the current Secretary and the current Treasurer - together with the Chair, these are required Trustees under the terms of our Constitution, so if nominations for these roles are not forthcoming from within the wider membership we could face a constitutional crisis on 6th November.

Additionally, some of the executive functions carried out by current Trustees who won't be standing again will need to be carried out by others. This includes, but is not limited to, managing our website, managing our social media platforms & content, managing our resources and the storage thereof, facilitating the hiring of honey extractors, managing our relationship with the National Honey Show, Managing our Pollinator Fund, (probably a Trustee-level role), managing all communications with members, organising monthly pub socials, editing the monthly newsletter - the list goes on. Once elected, the Trustees will appoint an executive committee of members, (some of whom may also be Trustees), to carry out the work of the organisation, and we are in desperate need of members to step forward and offer to take on some of this work.

Please help us find a robust new board of Trustees and motivated team of additional members to carry on the work of the London Beekeepers Association.

- Trustees attached is a Trustee Nomination Form. If you are able & willing to stand as a Trustee for the coming year please find 2 other members to nominate and second you, then complete the form and return it as instructed – deadline, 20th October 2024. Also attached is a Trustee Roles document which explains briefly the responsibilities of the 3 required Trustees and additional Trustees "without portfolio". For further information about these roles please contact any of the current Trustees.
- Executive committee/volunteer role: if you don't want to have the responsibility of being a Charity Trustee but are able to help out with any of the Members' Services or other tasks, please make yourself known to one of the current trustees and let us know what you can offer

Finally, The AGM will also be an opportunity for discussing and voting on resolutions proposed by LBKA members. If you have a resolution to be considered, please also email admin@lbka.org.uk by 20th October 2024, with the particulars of the resolution, the name of the proposer, and the name of the seconder. Both proposer and seconder must be paid-up members of the London Beekeepers' Association for the year 2024-25.

Formal notice of the AGM will be sent to you as soon as possible after the closing date for these nominations.

Last month's Monthly meeting: Summer Social

Last month's Monthly Meeting.

Sakina Allali. LBKA member

What an event! I attended the Honey Tasting event at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London, what a location!

At the honey tasting event, as I was searching for the Chestnut Suite I was immediately drawn in by the smell of honey and it was like I was walking through a wild meadow. When I entered the suite the honey tasting was in full swing, and I was greeted by the warm, golden hues of the various honey jars lined up on the tables. As I embarked on finding a seat to start tasting some



Diverse London honeys from LBKA members. Photo:Sharon Bassey.

of the most amazing honey jars on the table my taste buds were on overdrive.

Every jar of honey had its own distinct aroma, from the floral notes of wildflower honey to the rich, earthy scent of buckwheat honey. As I dipped my wooden spatula into the amber liquid, the taste burst onto my palate-a delightful balance of sweetness and complexity.

As we went through discussing amongst ourselves on the table what each honey meant to them, it was clear that everyone could taste something different and had a different take on the honey.

We also had a lovely chair who shared fascinating insights about the unique steps that is taken when honey is put up for judging in a competitive way, what characteristics are to be followed and what each judge must follow through part of the judging process, sounded a task but what an amazing insight into the procedure and requirements.

It was also quite nice to hear from the beekeepers sitting in the room discussing their experiences on the process but also fascinating facts about what the bee's forage on, ascertaining the DNA of honey and what climate is doing to the bees in terms of having late blooms and extended wet winters. It was also exciting to see the anticipation on waiting to hear what people thought of their top honey for each table.

Such a lovely event and so nice to be in a room with fellow beekeepers who love talking about bees and what experiences they have with keeping hives and looking after these lovely creatures that produce some amazing tasking honey.

I will be coming back again and will very much so recommend this to fellow beekeepers, as it was such an amazing experience.

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 start to 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 subsequent dysentery within the colony over the winter months. A colony should go into winter with at least 15kg (35lb) of stores if possible. This will avoid the possibility of the bees dying of starvation in a cold spring or the necessity for the beekeeper to feed in spring. Due to the warmer winters the bees are flying more and clustering less during winter. Brood is usually present throughout winter which requires more heat to be released and so more stores being consumed. It is far better to ensure a full supply of winter stores in Autumn rather than having to feed candy in winter or syrup in spring, both of which, in turn, create additional problems.

The bees will now start to cluster as temperatures fall. Clustering starts at about 18°C, albeit very loose, and the cluster becomes smaller and more compact as temperatures continue to fall. They form a complete cluster at 13°C. 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 should be in optimum condition to face the harshness of the next few months. This leaves the beekeeper to make final sundry preparations for winter. The objective for October 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.

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, resulting in production of water vapour. If the hive is not adequately ventilated then dampness may build up leading to fungal 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 essential as it is extremely effective but there must be no way the mice 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 as 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 93rd year of this event and will be held at **Sandown Racecourse** (Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ) from **Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th October**. If you are unsure about going then ask at the LBKA October monthly meeting. It is always more enjoyable to go with someone else if possible.

Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. This article is the one we used last year.

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 be-



Autumn crocus

comes 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-orbreak" 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 propagating 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 mound 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

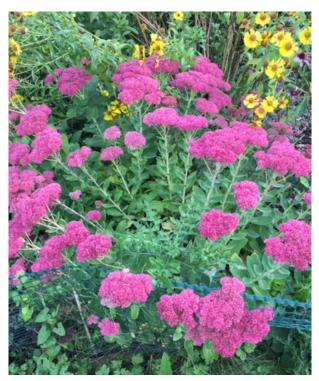


Golden rod



Ivy blooms

others benefit from the insulating properties of their dead stems and leaves.



Sedum Autumn joy

LBKA Apiaries in October

What's happening in LBKA's apiaries. Just one update this month

Hyde Park Apiary Ian Shackleton

We have closed up the hives for winter, not expecting to open up again unless we find, after checking the weight, that the hives need feeding. This we will do after the winter solstice. In early December we will treat for varroa with oxalic acid fumigation. We are securing the supers from wax moth with a patch of cardboard with a few drops of acetic acid on and wrapping them in black refuse sacks. We are now thinking what equipment we need for next year's season.

Upcoming events

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

Sunday 13th October: Monthly meeting: Thermal regulation of the

hive and insulation

11:00-13:00 at The Barn at Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, Brockwell Park, London SE24 9BN

Vlad Zamfir will talk about how honey bees regulate the temperature of hives and how we can most effectively help by insulating our hives.

Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th

October: National Honey Show

All day at Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ

The National Honey Show is three days of talks, workshops, trade fairs and honey competition. LBKA sponsors classes 321, 322 and 323 which are open to all London-based beekeepers.

Tuesday 29th October: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at Rising Sun, 44-46 Ebury Bridge Rd, Pimlico, SW1W 8PZ

Our monthly trip to the pub will be to the Rising $\operatorname{\mathsf{Sun}}$

6th November: Social and Annual

General Meeting

18:30 (for a 19:00 start) at The Sun, 47 Old Town, Clapham, SW4 0JL

Our Annual General Meeting. The agenda includes Trustees Annual Report, Election of Trustees, Sustainable Beekeeping in London, Asian Hornet Update - all preceded and followed by a social event in relaxing surroundings. Look out more details soon, including the invitation to nominate trustees. Membership runs until October, so don't forget to renew your membership if you haven't already done so.

Sunday 10th November: Monthly

meeting: Winter preparation *11:00-13:00 at TBC*

твс

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
- Asian Hornet: Sharon Bassey, asianhornet@lbka.org.uk
- Stuart Kennon, stuart.kennon@lbka.org.uk
- Elaine Ellis

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

