



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

July, 2018

Welcome to the July Newsletter! It's summer, so please put 12th August into your diaries for our spectacular Summer Social that follows our August Monthly Meeting. We'll be using the same excellent caterers as last year. Details about signing up will follow. It's also the month of the Lambeth Country Show, where we will have a our usual stall and members are very welcome to come along and help or just visit.

Highlights in the newsletter this month are Holly's story of bees finding a home between her window and shutters (thankfully, on the outside; p8), Simon (our Development Office) describing LBKA's contribution to the London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum (p7) and a vintage Daily Mail (c1963) article about an apparent connection between bees and the beekeeper (p12). There's also the regular crop of content that our regularly contributors tirelessly provide every month.

From our Chair	1
Announcements	2
Last month's Monthly Meeting: Bee Health Day	4
July in the Apiary	4
July in the Forage Patch	6
Bees and flowers at the London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum	7
The Accidental Observation Hive	8
LBKA Apiaries	9
Facebook (In)digest(ion)	11
Old news	12
Members' marketplace	12
Upcoming events	13
Committee	14

Thanks to this month's contributors: Eugene Fahy, Richard Glassborow, Jeni Lea, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Simon Saville, Holly Warburton and Vlad Zamfir.

Would you like to join the esteemed list of contributors above? If so, please contact me.

Happy beekeeping.

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

From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

I think probably all newsletters may have one thing in common – their contributors never know if anyone actually reads them. But I have been encouraged by several independent conversations with members recently in which unsolicited compliments about LBKA News have been enthusiastically made. If these conversations were anything like a representative sample, we must be doing something right.

So I would like to thank those readers for their show of support: I can assure you it is very rewarding and encouraging for contributors to know their efforts do not go unappreciated. I would also like to thank our many contributors, both regular and occasional, for the



Honey bee on a Hebe. Photograph by Aidan Slingsby.

wealth of knowledge, experience and ideas they are prepared to share so freely, and the production team for putting it all together month after month. That's a lot of people but I am confident none of them will be miffed if I only name one in particular: Aidan Slingsby, our Editor. Without Aidan, this newsletter would probably not exist at all let alone in monthly format (most voluntary organisations have quarterly newsletters) or to such a high standard of editorial and informative content. Thank you Aidan.

LBKA News has become an important embodiment of the LBKA community: it is almost like a "place" where information and ideas are shared and exchanged and stuff happens. It is certainly one of the go-to places, alongside the Facebook members-only [LBKA-Forum](#) and email, when the committee needs to communicate with the membership, and that role seems to be growing.

Before moving on I would just like to draw attention to the fact that all these platforms of communication are two-way. Members can and do submit content and or notices to the newsletter, email committee members and post on both the members only [LBKA-Forum](#) (email access request to services@lbka.org.uk if you do not have access) and on the public Facebook group, [London Beekeepers Association](#). The Trustees try to communicate appropriately with members through these channels and we hope we encourage members to communicate with the Committee.

Sometimes the content concerns practical or technical aspects of beekeeping (our core *raison d'être*), sometimes wider philosophical or contextual issues, such as the social responsibilities for urban beekeepers or our awareness of and relationship with wild bees and the natural environments that we all need to share (as I touched on last month), and sometimes we need to communicate over purely practical and organisational stuff. Whatever the context, communications are like the nervous system of any organisation: healthy and sustainable functionality requires information to travel both ways.

By way of currently relevant examples I am going to expand a little on the committee's logistical and planning needs to know numbers in advance for certain events like bee health days, monthly meetings, summer socials, winter lectures, AGMs. From experience we know that Walworth Garden is a beautiful location, with the right facilities and about the right capacity, historically, for events like bee health day and summer socials but not big enough for current average attendance of monthly meetings and AGMs. For winter lectures, sometimes it would be, though we would hope to need more capacity for the calibre of speakers we want to invite.

For the Summer Socials there is the additional question of how many to cater for, with significant costs involved and potential for waste or disappointment. Bee Health Days have to be capped because of capacity and if someone, for whatever reason, cannot attend when



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

the day comes, we recognise it would be good to have a means of communicating that so their place can be taken by someone on the waiting list.

The communication issue for the recent Bee Health Day was not one of managing capacity but rather filling it. The Doodle poll looked like a useful tool but for some reason we seemed unable to engage. Feedback from members who did attend the morning Bee Health session suggested email reminders played a big part in them signing up. We pointed out that some members don't like to be "pestered" by email reminders, but they were adamant that there can't be too many.

So we are reconsidering how we let members know about upcoming events and how we establish accurate attendance numbers and make booking arrangements when planning requires. So we ask for our members' understanding, forbearance and cooperation as we try to improve – it's in your interests. Please make suggestions or just let us know what you like, don't like, etc.

The next test will be the Summer Social on August 12th at Walworth Garden, members and guests of members only. This has always proved to be a very special occasion. Don't miss it.

Announcements

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

July Monthly Meeting: Honey treatment, properties and extraction

This month's meeting will be on **Sunday 8th July** at **11:00-13:00** on the subject of **honey treatment, properties and extraction** at the usual venue of **Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY**.

Next month's Monthly Meeting will be on 12th August. Vlad will talk to us about the bees' collection and use of propolis and water. Both are very important for the health of the colony and this is a fascinating topic that we've not previously covered in our meetings. This will be followed by our **Summer Social**.

Monthly Tuesday Social: Natalie's pub pick

Our July Monthly Social will be at the Sekforde Arms, [34 Sekforde St, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HA](#) at 18:30. Hope to see you there.

Monthly Tuesday Socials will be held in a different (food serving) pub each month. Any suggestions should be emailed to admin@lbka.org.uk.

LBKA Summer Social: 12th August

After August's monthly meeting is the highlight of LBKA's Social Calendar – the spectacular Summer Social.

This will be open to LBKA members and their guests. The caterer will be "DelicaSisters", a spin-off of the "Chickpea Sisters" who catered the event in each of the last 2 years. The menu is a north and east African blend with Mediterranean overtones, ideal for a lazy summer afternoon in convivial company.

We will need members to register for this event (to get the catering right) and we will probably charge a small fee to help cover the costs. More details soon. For now, please put in your diary!

New privacy policy

As a result of new EU legislation, you'll have all received a lot of GDPR-related emails from various places asking you to opt-in to their mailing lists.

We also need to comply with this and we (particularly Vlad Zamfir) has been making sure that we do – and we do! We have now published our [privacy policy](#) which tells you what information we hold on you, what we do with it and your rights in this regard.

Over 300 members

We now have over 300 LBKA members this year. Many thanks for everyone's support of the organisation.

Lambeth Country Show

Our biggest regular annual outreach event is our stall at the fantastic [Lambeth Country Show](#) on 21st and 22nd July. The stall is manned by members. If you'd



Nice logo.

like to volunteer to help, please email Emily at events@lbka.org.uk.

A shout-out to our readers in Co Mayo

Mary Walsh is an LBKA member who also has a base in Co Mayo and has introduced beekeepers in the Ballina, Ballyhaunis, Belmullet and Westport beekeeper groups to LBKA News.

Co Mayo beekeepers are most welcome to come to our events, listed on our [homepage](#) and here on page 13. How about coming to the [Lambeth Country Show](#) on 21st and 22nd July and meet the London beekeepers? Or come to one of our Monthly Meetings or Pub Socials?

Mary says "you will find LBKA very interesting as they keep a wide variety of bees, not just the native black bee and they will be as welcoming to you as they have been to me!"

Old announcements from June

COLOSS survey. Please take part in the COLOSS survey, a Europe-wide research effort to try and understand honey bee losses: [filling out the survey](#).

European Foul Brood. It's about! So take extra care when collecting swarms, particularly from SW4, SW8, SW9, SE4, SE15, SE23, SE22, SW2, SE21, SE24, N17, N22 where it's been reported.

Want to sell to other members? If you have a beekeeping-related product or service that you wish to tell other members about, either ask services@lbka.org.uk to add it to the members' marketplace section of the newsletter (p 12) or post on the [LBKA-forum](#), the members' only Facebook page.

Asian Hornet. Be vigilant in looking out for the Asian Hornet.

Wax. Fiona Pearce-Burrows is looking to purchase wax for use in making beeswax wraps. Please contact fiona@fionapearceburrows.com.

Monthly cake. If you would like to bake a cake for an LBKA a monthly meeting, please let Aidan know on services@lbka.org.uk.

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

Old announcements from May

New teaching apiary in North London? If you're interested in managing the apiary there, please e-mail apiaries@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from April

Nucs and swarms. To be added to [here](#) or to be added to the swarms WhatsApp group, email services@lbka.org.uk.

Sow your wild flower mixes. Now is the time to start sowing any wildflower seed mixtures you might have, for a good display of flowers for the rest of the year. We have some suggested suppliers on our [website](#).

Possible Central London apiary opportunity. If you're interested, email resources@lbka.org.uk.

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: Bee Health Day

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

LBKA's Monthly meeting in June took the form of its annual 'Bee Health Day', held in good weather in the pleasantly 'rural' environment of Walworth Community Garden in Southwark. In the past, this event has been much in demand, and because practical working with bees involves capacity issues it was organised as a morning session repeating in the afternoon and members were asked to sign up for their preferred session on a Doodle Poll. Had the number of places been exceeded the 40 places available priority would, as in the past, have been given to those already keeping or managing bees.

Each session comprised 3 parts, identification of bee diseases, understanding varroa and the tools available for devising an effective integrated pest management strategy, and a chance to carry out a practical pest and disease inspection of a colony. These sessions were led respectively by former LBKA Chair, Karin Courtman,



Bee Health Day at Walworth Garden.

Geoff Hood, and Tristram Sutton, the Apiary Manager at the Walworth Garden apiary.

Unfortunately, only 12 people were present for the morning session (out of 19 who had signed up), and only three for the afternoon (out of 5), but this gave those who did attend a much more involved session. Because of the low afternoon attendance, all the tutors joined in for all three sessions, so it became something of a 'masterclass' where – as with many beekeeper gatherings – many different views being expressed about what was being discussed.

Pest and disease management is a crucially important skill for beekeepers to acquire and events like this are intended to provide an essential focus and practical information exchange for beekeepers at all levels. This is not easy. When so much information is involved the tendency is too much for beginners and not enough for the more advanced beekeepers. The spontaneous masterclass offers a clue perhaps for a format that might suit intermediate and advanced keepers but there were also indications that the subject could easily be overwhelming for beekeepers still acquiring basic principles.

But as Richard pointed out, one way round that is to take every opportunity to get on top of this part of beekeeping. He has been going to bee health days for 10 years and always learns something new.

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 there is relatively little nectar flow and the bees utilise this period to build up colony numbers then 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.

Nectar flow

Exact timing of the nectar flow depends upon weather and locality but is usually late June and July in London. Rain does wash secreted nectar from the flowers but, hopefully, we will continue with the good weather.

There are at least 2 ways of knowing whether it's started. The first is to keep in contact with other local beekeepers and association members. This is an advantage of joining an association – you become part of a pool of knowledge and experience. The second is to watch the colony entrance. The coming and going 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.

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 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 the 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.

Most of us use Porter bee escapes incorporated into a

clearing board. These work well provided they are used properly and the metal escapes are clean and not stuck with propolis. After about 48 hours most of the bees have gone down through the 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.

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 the upturned hive roof and covered with a sheet or large cloth. 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.

Other action to be taken this month

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 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. Reduce colony entrances when the nectar flow ceases.

The nectar flow is a golden opportunity to undertake a brood disease inspection. As the bees are so busy with the nectar then removal of dead larvae from the brood chamber is not their number 1 priority. Leaving the brood disease inspection to 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.

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

Reserve your use of an extractor next month if you usually hire LBKA equipment.

Come along to our monthly meeting on Sunday, 8th July. We will be discussing honey properties, treatment and extraction.



Privet

July in the Forage Patch

Mark's has been really busy, so this article is from a couple of years ago.

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 × 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 (*Tilia tormentosa*) which is an exotic introduction and flowers a bit later than our native limes. Its nectar is toxic to bees and when there 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.



Bird's Foot Trefoil

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 street sides. 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 al-*

tissima), **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 **Choisya**, **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.

Bees and flowers at the London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum

Simon Saville
LBKA Development Officer

LBKA's primary focus will always be on better beekeeping and supporting our members, but we have started to pay more attention to promoting a better public under-

standing of bees, and to creating a better environment for bees in London. We have summarised this last point as Bees and Flowers go together".

In June, Richard Glassborow and I had the opportunity to present our Bees and Flowers" message to the London Boroughs Biodiversity Forum. This is a meeting to which all the borough Ecology Officers are invited, plus representatives from the GLA, TfL, London Wildlife Trust and so on. This was an opportunity to engage with a broad community and to see how our messages were received.

LBKA is often approached by organisations wanting to do something to help bees, with the idea of having hives on their roof. This triggered us to compare the density of registered colonies in London with the availability of good quality forage (pollen plus nectar). Broadly, we found an inverse correlation – there being a higher density of registered colonies in central London, but relatively less forage.

Added to this, we know that the number of colonies in London has been increasing and that our green spaces are under pressure from development. Although London has 3.8 million gardens, only 60% of this space is green". From 1999 to 2007, the equivalent of 2.5 Hyde Parks per year of green garden space was lost (3,000ha). This is partly caused by Permitted Development rights that allow extensions and paving of driveways without planning permission.

A colony of honeybees needs a surprising amount of forage each year – 50kg of pollen and up to 300kg of nectar – enough to fill a bathtub. This is just to keep the colony going, and does not include resources needed to produce surplus honey for us to harvest. Multiply by some 5,000 registered colonies in London and it's 250 tonnes of pollen and over 1,500 tonnes of nectar!

Strictly, we can't say whether there is too little forage in parts of London – but we do know that some beekeepers need to feed their bees all the year round. We are planning to do a survey of honey yields across BKAs in London to see whether the lower amounts of forage are having an impact on honey harvests.

We stressed that the LBKA approach is threefold: first, to try to stop habitat loss; second to encourage the improvement of existing habitat; and third to create new habitat for forage. These initiatives can work at the small scale – window boxes – or at the large scale in London's parks.

Our information and messages were well-received by the attendees. There was considerable interest and concern about the potential shortage of forage in central London. There was support for the creation and improvement of new habitats, with Ecology Officers willing to listen to advice on how best to manage their parks for pollinators. And we had a lively debate about the extent to which honeybees and wild bees compete for forage!

We said that we are seeking to increase public awareness



This is what we found in May. . . looking through the kitchen window from the inside.

about the need to create appropriate natural habitats for bees. And also that we want to create collaborative networks combining communities and organisations with ideas, land managers, planners and developers with opportunities; and businesses with interest and resources. We have a number of leads to follow up, so watch this space.

The Accidental Observation Hive

Holly recalls her surprise at a swarm moving into the space between the window and shutters. . . and what she did about it.

*Holly Warburton
LBKA Member*

I did the LBKA beginners Beekeeping course in 2013 and then was mentored by Sharon Basseby at Southwark Park and Stave Hill Ecological Park, Rotherhithe. I was hoping to adapt my roof in London for Beehives. But it turned out to be too complicated. I hope that one day I will be able to convert it. In the meanwhile, I keep my beehives at our house in France. I am lucky



I spent days watching, filming, photographing, watching the waggle dance and seeing the bees building the honeycomb.

that my beekeeping friend can look after them when I am not there.

In May we had a wonderful surprise when we arrived at the house. A swarm had arrived in between the shutter and kitchen window! So from inside the house, I had my dream observation hive!

Over the next few days we watched the honey bees make the honeycomb. The colony grew. I spent days watching, filming and photographing, watching the waggle dance, and seeing bees building the honeycomb. Finally we opened the shutter from outside and we saw 10 beautiful combs inside!

We put a hive on the window sill and managed gradually



We opened the shutters from outside...



... and saw these wonderful combs inside!

to get the bees inside the brood box. When the Queen was inside the honey bees quickly started to follow and they all went into the hive. In the middle of the night we transported the hive to my friend's field with his other hives. We will bring the window hive back to our garden with my other hives at a later date. Although I loved them being behind the shutter it is good to be able to look through the window again!

It felt like such a gift to the house and to us to find them there !

LBKA Apiaries

News from LBKA's apiaries. Just brief updates from three of our four apiaries this month.

Eden

*Richard Glassborow
LBKA Apiary manager for Eden*

Eden has had a bit of an interesting development: a stack of empty supers stored close to a nuc full with



We managed to get them into a brood box.



Nice to be able to look through the window again!



We might be moving to this beautiful meadow at Holland Park.

bees had both bees and some nectar in it. When Mark Patterson, the DEFRA Bee Inspector, and I saw this we suspected a swarm had taken residence (the crown board sealing the supers had slightly warped, leaving a gap for bees to get in). However, when we looked in, there was no sign of a queen or brood. The queen may have been a virgin but, while that makes her much harder to spot (she looks much more similar to a worker), would not have explained the way the bees were behaving. With a virgin queen the bees organise the comb in advance, making sure there is enough space for her to start laying; in this case they were storing nectar but in a somewhat random pattern, without keeping a clear space for the queen to lay.

My suspicion is that the bees in the nuc, which I expected to be overfull, had annexed the empty supers to give them more room. This would be more than unusual! We shall see. The nuc was completely overfull but it has now gone to a new home and a new split is in its place with plenty of space and work to do. The returning foragers from the first nuc should join this proto colony. It will be interesting to see if the bees in the super also join the new split.

Holland Park

*Vlad Zamfir
LBKA Apiaries Manager*

It looks like Holland Park apiary might be moving from the beautiful roof – which we can't use properly as a teaching apiary because of roof loading limits on the listed building – to an equally beautiful in a different way woodland meadow. Discussions are underway to turn the area into something like an invertebrate safari park.

Lavinia Porter who has been doing such a good job of managing The Holland Park apiary this year is going to be leaving London in September so we are looking for experienced beekeepers to work as a team to manage the apiary and mentor. If you would like to help, please email apiaries@lbka.org.uk.



Bees that appear to be storing honey off-site at Eden. But there they be a more conventional explanation.

Mudchute

Vlad Zamfir

LBKA Apiaries Manager and Mudchute Apiary Manager

The Mudchute bees have surprised me this year: I've run out of supers because they've been so productive. I've already extracted 2 supers of honey and will need to continue to do so for a few weeks as I can't carry more than 2 at a time using my handtruck and they're filling them fast. So by the time we have our July monthly meeting I'll have done 2 rounds of extracting honey.

As the above indicates, the bees are doing well but, if you remember from the previous newsletter, I had artificially swarmed a hive before I left on a 2-week holiday. So, after I came back, I left it alone for another week and then checked if the queen has mated (so left it alone for 3 weeks). Sadly, I found the queen cell unhatched with a dead larva in it (died before pupating) and the workers had just started to lay eggs. So, to stop the progression of this condition, I added a frame of eggs & open brood (open brood releases a pheromone which inhibits worker ovaries from developing). I've had to add two frames of open brood over the course of 2 weeks so that they stop laying eggs and then start to produce a queen. Fingers crossed this works as planned.



Mark's bees after suspected arson.

Facebook (In)digest(ion)

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

Eugene Fahy

LBKA Member

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" could apply the June postings on the LBKA Facebook page. Whether we could also say it was "the age of wisdom, the age of foolishness" is more of a moot point. Geordy Mark [posted some pictures of a fire at his Ealing apiary](#). Five colonies were destroyed in a suspected arson attack, a week before he was due to take his general husbandry exam. However, with help from Richard Glassborow and Sara Ward, the remains of some colonies were salvaged and [Geordy Mark has posted to say that these have made a healthy and quick recovery](#).

More evidence of the spread of vandalism directed at hives was provided by [a post from Northumbria Police](#) and shared by Deborah Lewis, about vandals smashing hives in Hebburn.

Continuing the good news, bad news theme, Geordy Mark [put a virgin queen and six workers in an introduction cage in an airing cupboard](#). Two weeks later, he suddenly remembered she was there and transferred her to a mating apidaea; a fortnight later she had mated and was laying well. This prompted some discussion about how quickly after hatching a queen needs to mate. Stephen Riley cited three to four weeks in laboratory conditions and Geordy Mark has found that in practice it can be up to six weeks, if you have queens bred from resilient stock.

The LBKA voluntary swarm collectors had a couple of busy spells in June and this was [reflected in some of the Facebook postings](#). There were requests for information on swarm collection from members of the public and some dramatic video, pictures and reports of swarms collected from the Shard, a pharmacy shop-front in Wigmore Steet and the Thames tidal way construction site at Battersea.

One of the many LBKA initiatives is distributing packets of wildflower seeds. Having bought some seeds at last years Foodival, Nicola Pattinson [posted pictures of a hover fly foraging on the flowers in her window box](#).

[Roya Elaine](#) and [Sara Ward](#) each shared different links related to Royal Holloway research which found that bumblebees placed in urban areas produce more offspring than colonies in agricultural areas. Dr Richard Gill who co-authored the study said "whilst this study does not suggest that urban environments are necessarily havens for bees, there must be components of the



Nicola Pattinson's hoverfly picture.

urban landscape that we can use to inform conservation strategies”

Finally, Richard Glassborow [reports a strange tale of squatters at the LBKA Eden apiary](#). Some bees found a way into a stack of stored supers which were ready to be put on producing colonies. They have started filling the frames with nectar but it is not clear what has happened. Possibilities include annexation by bees from an overfull nuc in the apiary or a cast swarm having taken up residence. If the latter, then eggs should start to appear in the next few days.

Old news

Jeni Lee
LBKA Member

LBKA member, Jeni Lea, has an assortment of beekeeping-related articles from 1950s and 60s found in a Cornish barn. This one is from the Daily Mail, circa 1963. Enjoy.

What follows is the directly transcribed article from a c1963 edition of the Daily Mail.

Strange the way old Sam's bees said goodbye

They called the parson to see the strange way old Sam Roger's bees were behaving. "Nobody will believe us if they don't see it too" they told him in the Shropshire village of Myddle.

There is an old superstition that whenever a beekeeper dies the bees must be "told" or they will swarm and leave the hive forever. Mary Webb who immortalised the Shropshire countryside mentions it in her most famous book, *Precious Bane*.

So when Sam – village postman, cobbler and handyman – dies, two of his grown up children walked solemnly round the 14 hives and told the bees their master was dead.

He was buried with rural magnificence. There were over 60 wreaths on his grave. The next day a memorial service had just finished in the village church when Sam's relatives ran back to fetch the rector, the Rev. John Ayling.

Baffled

He said yesterday: "It was a lovely sunny day and coming straight over the wall from the direction Mr Roger's hives a mile and a half away was an amazing procession of bees. There were crocuses and snowdrops in the churchyard and other flowers on a nearby grave but the bees concentrated entirely on the flowers on the Rogers grave." He added: "I estimate that at any given moment there were at least 600 bees clustering on the wreaths. And I could see 60 or 70 bees coming and going at the same time. Of course I try and rationalise such events but if I didn't I'd say these bees had come to say goodbye to old Sam."

Shropshire bee experts are baffled the bees' visitation. Although the day was warm and bright bees are normally extremely torpid at this time of year. But in Mary Webb country they don't always expect things to be explained. They know, though, that after Sam's bees were told of his death they came to his grave and then went peacefully back to their hives instead of taking flight.

Members' marketplace

This section is for members offering beekeeping items or services to members or requesting items. Items could include nucs, wax and honey. Email services@lbka.org.uk to add something here.

Emily Abbott: I run Hive & Keeper Ltd a company that sells single apiary/harvest honeys from small scale beekeepers around the country. Jars are labelled with the honey's main flavour, the name of the beekeeper and where the apiary is. Hive & Keeper currently works with about 30 keepers and your honey would be en-

joyed by people across the country. Let me know if you have honey you want to sell, but don't want to jar and sell it yourself. We buy 30lb buckets (a minimum of 3). Check out <http://www.hiveandkeeper.com/> or email emily@hiveandkeeper.com.

overtones, ideal for a lazy summer afternoon in convivial company.

We will need members to register for this event (to get the catering right) and we will probably charge a small fee to help cover the costs. More details soon. For now, please put in your diary!

Upcoming events

Sunday 8th July: Monthly meeting: Honey treatment, properties and extraction

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

All about extracting honey. 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.

Saturday 21st - Sunday 22nd July: Lambeth Country Show

12:00-20:00 at Brockwell Park

Come and see our stall at the Lambeth Country Show, "London's biggest and best free family festival".

Tuesday 31st July: Monthly Social

from 18:30 at Sekforde Arms 34 Sekforde St, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HA

The Sekforde Arms is a real gem in the heart of Clerkenwell.

Sunday, 12th August: Monthly Meeting and Summer Social

11:00-15:00 at Walworth Garden (206 Manor Pl, Braganza St, SE17 3BN)

This month, Vlad will talk to us about the bees' collection and use of propolis and water. Both are very important for the health of the colony and this is a fascinating topic that we've not previously covered in our meetings.

Afterwards is the highlight of LBKA's Social Calendar! The spectacular Summer Social!

This will be open to LBKA members and you'll be able to bring guests. Don't miss it! The caterer will be "DelicaSisters", a spin-off of the "Chickpea Sisters" who catered the event in each of the last 2 years. The menu is a north and east African blend with Mediterranean

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
- **Development:** Simon Saville, development@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentor@lbka.org.uk

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

