



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

September, 2018

Welcome to September's Newsletter! This month, as well as our usual contributions (a big thank you to our regular contributors), we've a new regular section on what the committee discusses in its meetings and Geoff reports on NBU's SE Regional Forum. We also have news, announcements and pleas for help. We're looking for an accessible new place to store our equipment, there are more Asian Hornet developments and we're looking for more people to join the committee, or help us in other ways. Do talk to a committee member if you're interested.

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A big thank you to this month's contributors: **Natalie Cotton, Eugene Fahy, Richard Glassborow, Petros Hahladakis, Geoff Hood, George Kozobolis, Jeni Lea, Carla Midcap, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson and Vlad Zamfir.** Thanks as usual to **Martin Hudson** for proof-reading it.

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

Happy beekeeping.

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

From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

This is the time of year when the Trustees are starting to compile their annual report. It is a natural period of reflection and review. The Report will be published shortly before the AGM on Wednesday, 7th November (a date for your diaries please) but I think it appropriate to introduce some of the broad themes here so that all members also have time to reflect on the character and state of our organisation and consider whether it is serving our needs and fulfilling the charitable objectives. I would add that the trustees are planning a member survey to formally collect members' views but this would be a good time to make us aware of the questions you think we should be asking.

Our activities are listed on the Charity Commission Website as:



A honey bee and the rear-end of a bumblebee disappearing into an artichoke flower, gorging themselves at the same time and place as LBKA members are also doing at the LBKA Summer Social. Photograph by George Kozobolis.

Promote the craft of beekeeping in an urban environment through education of our members and interested members of the general public. Promote the needs of pollinating insects other than honey bees, through media appearances, public outreach and collaborations with local councils, other organisations and academics. Develop and deliver pollinator forage-planting projects throughout London.

As some may recall, this time last year we streamlined this into a hopefully more accessible statement of what the LBKA is about:

*Better beekeeping
Better public understanding of bees
Better London environment for bees and Londoners*

The Trustees are very aware that many of our members may just want to keep a few bees in their garden or on their rooftop but we are also aware of a wider context and hope that all of us can recognise that all of these objectives are connected and that they are ultimately aimed at benefitting all beekeepers in London.

The wider context starts with keeping large numbers of stinging insects in the middle of a metropolis. There are now over 5000 colonies of honeybees registered on Bee Base in London. It is known that there are many more that are not registered and there are of course, feral colonies. Not surprisingly, there have been incidents, including members of the public being stung, swarming activity creating inconvenience, loss of business and expense, and of course with such densities there are issues around bee health.

We urban beekeepers should never take public interest, sympathy and at times, tolerance, for granted. Local authorities too are starting to be aware of the extent of beekeeping in London and have been looking to the LBKA for guidance on how to “manage” it.

I hope you are also aware of the data maps the LBKA have produced this year, the culmination of three years effort, comparing the distribution of registered honey bees with the distribution of pollinator forage in greater London. These maps show that London is not a uniformly “green city”. We are using them to support an initiative, ‘Bees and Flowers go together’, to help honey bees by improving the London environment. Better natural ecosystems in the overall urban environment will help bees but will also benefit Londoners too.

I hope this very brief background synopsis helps explain the rationale that all our activities should ultimately benefit our members and the wider public. On a level of self-interest alone, better beekeeping reduces the risks of adverse incidents that might lead to controls or restrictions; better public understanding develops interest in and support for bees (and tolerance) in a dense human social context; better environment for pollinators is obviously going to benefit beekeepers, some of whom



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

currently have to work really hard just to keep their bees alive let alone harvest any honey.

There are in fact many more positive outcomes from the actual activities that are intended to fulfil these objectives. The Trustees’ report and the presentation at the AGM will endeavour to go into more detail. And the member survey will see your position on the substance that lies behind this general context.

In the meantime, as I said at the beginning, this is a good time for us all to reflect on our bee club and a good time to let us know of anything you would like to be considered, of any criticisms, complaints, or indeed compliments and words of encouragement.

Announcements

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

September Monthly Meeting

This month’s meeting will be this coming Sunday **9th September**, at **11:00**, at the usual venue of Fairley House Junior School (220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY), on the subject “Preparing bees for the winter” including uniting colonies. This will be followed by the usual hot drinks, cake and chat.

Next month’s meeting on Sunday 14th October will be “Bees on the Move”, about the process of moving bees to a new apiary.

Monthly Tuesday Social: Natalie’s pub pick

The next Pub Social will be the **Tufnell Park Tavern** (162 Tufnell Park Rd, London, N7 0EE) on **Tuesday 25th September** at 18:30. After last month’s trip South of the river, this month, we’re delving deeper into North London than we’ve ever been for a LBKA

social! But it's a great pub close to Tufnell Park Tube station. It has just reopened after a refit and now [sports a fancy menu](#) so let's see what the place is like now. Hopefully it's still good!

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

Many thanks to the generosity of [The Three Stags](#) – the venue of last month's social – for the free pizzas they gave us! It was the second time that we've had some Monthly Social freebies (or "freebees"), the first time being our first ever social where [Hiver give us free beer](#). Thanks both!

Apiary site offered to us in Regent's Park

LBKA has been offered a site in Regent's Park for an apiary. If anyone would like to keep their hives there, please email Simon at development@lbka.org.uk.

The apiary would need to be managed to LBKA standards (at the very least, minimise swarming, the bees need to be non-aggressive and you'll need to keep the apiary tidy) since it would be linked to our reputation. It would also function as a teaching apiary for the LBKA.

Can you help us find storage space?

In recent years, we've been lucky enough to be able to store all our equipment in one fairly central and accessible place at Walworth Garden. Unfortunately, we have to move from there and currently storing our equipment in expensive commercial premises.

We're urgently looking for a cheaper alternative and we hope that members will be able to help.

Ideally, we're looking for a secure space (e.g. a lockable yard) within which we could keep our 10-foot shipping container which would store our equipment (e.g. hive parts, tools, honey extractors, other equipment, catering supplies, bee-related pamphlets). We'd be responsible for the container including its contents (and insurance), delivery (and eventual removal).

However we'd also be very happy to have a (secure and dry) garage or other out-building.

A limited number of LBKA members would have access to the container (which could be shared with you if necessary). We would like access to collect or drop off equipment at any time but usually at weekends.

If you might be able to help or have any ideas, please drop Tristram a line at resources@lbka.org.uk.

Asian Hornet update

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

On the afternoon of Friday 31st August, a beekeeper in the Foway area of Cornwall discovered 2 dead Asian Hornets in a hornet killing trap in his apiary. He also spotted another Hornet flying around the apiary. Seasonal bee inspectors were instantly called in to investigate, but with weather conditions turning to poor for foraging conditions, no hornets were seen flying again until Tuesday 4th September. By then the hornet specimens collected from the trap had been confirmed by DEFRA entomologists as *Vespa velutina* and contingency plans were rolled into action. A team of inspectors on the ground have been investigating using lines of sight and tagged hornets to triangulate the nest location. On Wednesday morning the nest was discovered and destroyed later that day.

Rumours of hornet sightings in neighbouring parts of Cornwall are being investigated but there are no further confirmed reports at time of writing.

Please familiarise yourselves with [Asian Hornet identification](#) and learn to tell it apart from the many similar looking native insects active at this time of year.

Consider standing for the committee

We're looking for new people interested in joining the committee or otherwise helping out, so enable us to do more. See Natalie's article of encouragement on page 6.

Harvest Stomp

We have been at [Harvest Stomp](#) since its inception in the Olympic Park a few years ago. We'll be there again on 23rd September. If you can help out and/or want to sell honey and/or other hive products, please contact Emily on events@lbka.org.uk.

National Honey Show entries

LBKA sponsors three classes at the [National Honey Show](#) in October: "Two Jars Urban Honey" judged solely on taste and aroma (Class 321), "Two jars of Jam, Marmalade or other Preserve" with honey as the only sweetening ingredient (Class 322), and "One jar of liquid honey" to be shown in an interesting or unusual transparent container (Class 323).

You'll need to [download the entry form](#) and send/pay by 8th October. If you're unable to go, last month, Geoff promised to collect entries from the October Monthly Meeting (14th October) and return them at November's Monthly Meeting (11th November).

NNSS
Non-Native Species Society
www.nonnativespecies.org

Produced by Lucy Cornwall, Claf Bony (NNSS), Gay Marks, Mike Brown (National Bee Unit) with assistance from Corine O'Flynn (National Biodiversity Data Centre Ireland) Stuart Roberts (BBKA)

Asian Hornet

Alert! Report sightings of this species to: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Species Description


Scientific name: *Vespa velutina*
AKA: Yellow-legged Hornet
Native to: Asia
Habitat: Nests usually high in trees and man made structures, sometimes closer to the ground; hunts honey bees, other insects and also feeds on fruit and flowers.

Not easily confused with any other species. Dark brown or black velvety body. Characteristically dark abdomen and yellow tipped legs. Smaller than the native European Hornet.

Introduced to France in 2004 where it has spread rapidly. In 2016 the first UK sighting was confirmed in Gloucestershire. High possibility of introduction through, for example, soil associated with imported plants, cut flowers, fruit, garden items (furniture, plant pots), freight containers, or other untreated timber. The possibility that it could fly across the Channel has not been ruled out.

A highly aggressive predator of native insects. Poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators.

Do not disturb an active nest. Members of the public who suspect they have found an Asian Hornet should send a photo to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.



Key ID Features

Asian Hornet Queen
Queens up to 30mm long, workers up to 25mm long
Entirely dark brown or black when active, marked with a fine yellow-rust
Legs brown with characteristic yellow ends

Asian Hornet vs **European Hornet**
Asian Hornet abdomen is almost entirely dark except for 4th abdominal segment

Asian Hornet 'hovering' for honey bee prey

Photos from: J. Hasleink, Rachel Scopes and Nigel Jones, Richard Bell

Similar Species

Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) for comparison

- Queen up to 30mm long, worker up to 25mm long
- Legs yellow at the ends
- Dark brown / black abdomen with a yellow / orange band on 4th segment
- Head dark from above, orange from front
- Dark coloured antennae
- Entirely black velvety thorax
- Never active at night

European hornet (*Vespa crabro*)

- Queen up to 35mm long, worker up to 30mm long
- Legs brown at the ends
- Yellow abdomen marked with brown on the upper part, not banded
- Head yellow from above, yellow from front
- Yellow antennae
- Thorax black with extensive brown markings
- May be active at night

Giant woodwasp (*Urocerus gigas*)

- Larger than Asian hornet, female up to 45mm long
- Legs yellow
- Distinctive yellow and black banded abdomen
- Long cylindrical body unlike Asian hornet which has an obvious waist
- Long yellow antennae
- Female has an obvious long sting-like appendage (ovipositor) which it uses to lay eggs in trees

Hornet mimic hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*)

- Abdomen has more yellow stripes than Asian hornet
- Legs darker than Asian hornets
- Only one pair of wings (hornets and wasps have two pairs)
- Large, globular eyes

Median wasp (*Dolichovespula media*)

- More extensive yellow and orange colouration on abdominal segments than Asian hornet
- Yellow markings on thorax unlike Asian hornet

Field Signs

Active April-November (peak August/September). Mated queens over winter singly or in groups, in various natural and man-made harboursages – underneath tree bark in cavities left by beetle larvae, in soil, on ceramic plant pots – potentially any small, well-insulated refuge. Makes very large nests in tall trees in urban and rural areas, but avoids pure stands of conifers. Will use man-made structures (garages, sheds etc.) as nesting sites.

For more information visit:
www.nonnativespecies.org
www.nationalbeeunit.com

Alert! Report sightings of this species to: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Please familiarise yourselves with Asian Hornet identification and learn to tell it apart from the many similar looking native insects active at this time of year. Source: [BBKA website](#).

Geoff to represent LBKA on two committees

Geoff Hood has kindly agreed to represent LBKA at the National Honey Show and NBU's South-east Regional Forum.

LBKA forum

Don't forget to ask for access to the [LBKA-Forum Facebook group](#) if you're a member. In the interests of openness, anyone is welcome to our [open Facebook Group](#) (as long as you behave!)

Seasonal Bee Inspector vacancies

In March this Year Brian McCallum left the National Bee Unit after 9 years of service and now our very own Mark Patterson is also leaving the bee unit after 3 years of service leaving the capital without any bee inspector coverage. The vacancies for this important role is now open via the civil service jobs portal.

With the number of hives in our region multiplying 3-fold in the last decade and the resurgence in beekeeping driving demand for increased imports of bees from abroad, it is crucial that these vacancies be filled. If you are an experience beekeeper, confident bee handler and want to apply [you can do so here](#).

Honey in NW3?

Deana runs the shop "Artichoke" in 36 Heath street, London, NW3 6TE. She'd like to stock local honey. If you're interested in supplying her, contact services@lbka.org.uk.

Paid one-to-one teaching opportunity

A novice LBKA member with one hive is looking for some one-to-one teaching and guidance in Battersea for the remainder of the season. She is happy to pay for time and expertise. The colony is from last year and seems to be doing well. But she needs help and advice on inspections, what to look for, varroa treatment and honey extraction. She can be free anytime that suits. If interested, please contact her on camilla.ween@gmail.com.

Hives in SW7 need a new beekeeper

Cynthia Oakes is looking for a beekeeper to manage her 4 hives in central London (SW7) as her current beekeeper is moving away next month. The hives are in a private residence, the beekeeper would need to have 5 years experience, would be responsible for honey extraction and would received payment and a share of

the honey. If you are interested then please contact Cynthia directly on email@cjokes.net.

Asian Hornets in Jersey

BBKA's latest edition of [Positive Thinking](#) has an interesting article about the arrival of the Asian Hornet in Jersey. Have a look.

Old announcements from August

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

European Foul Brood: This year has been a particularly bad year for European Foul Brood outbreaks in the Greater London area.

BBKA Basic Assessment success: Congratulations to Claire Cater, Jonathan Dale, Susannah Kingston, Alfonso Moreno, David Roy, Martin Crow, Jeni Harris, Cairis Hickey, Brian Kealy, Silviya Valkova, Simon Saville, Lena Spazier, David Phillips, Oliver Picard, Andrew Hudson, Sue Lee and Giovanni Zintu, who passed the BBKA Basic Assessment.

Extractor Hire: Collect from and return to Walworth Garden (206 Manor Pl, Kennington, SE17 3BN) by arrangement with Tristram (resources@lbka.org) at £10 each with £20 deposit.

Applying for grants: If you belong to another organisation, know of a local group, or are aware of an opportunity that might partner with us to attract funding that helps meet our charitable objectives, please contact treasurer@lbka.org.uk.

Looking for beekeeping partner school Pete is a teacher in Munich whose school keeps bees and who's partnered up with another school that keeps bees in France. He's looking for a UK-based partner school that keeps bees with children aged 13 upwards. Please email services@lbka.org.uk if you have any leads.

Old announcements from July

New privacy policy: We have a new [privacy policy](#).

We have over 300 members. Hooray!

We shouted out to our readers in Co Mayo and Mary Walsh who's a member of both us and them. Should any of them find themselves in London, they'd be most welcome to attend one of our events.

Old announcements from June

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 15) or post on the [LBKA-forum](#), the members' only Facebook page.



Ruth Cousins' meadow that she grew from one of our pollinator-friendly seed packets. We gave these seeds to her during our visit to School Groups at the South London Botanical Institute.

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

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.

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.

September's Committee meeting

This new section will keep you up to date with what the committee discuss 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

The committee met at 18:30 at Walworth Garden last Wednesday (5th September).

The first item on the agenda is the most urgent item – **we need to find a new place to store our equipment**. We've been fortunate to have all our equipment at a nice and accessible central location (Walworth Garden), but have now had to move our equipment into commercial storage premises at the cost of £29 per week for 8 weeks, rising to £58 per week thereafter. We are trying to find a cheaper alternative before the higher rate kicks in. We are writing to people who land that be able to host our container and we are also investigating various garage and other lock-up options. We will also put a note out to members.

We plan to run a **membership survey** later this month to ensure that we are doing what our members would like us to do.

We are starting to prepare to the Annual General Meeting in November by **compiling a report of our achievements and the state of the association** over the past year. This is a significant undertaking that requires input from the entire committee. We also discussed the committee's **workload** and ways in which we might be able to spread the load more evenly and how we prioritise the activities we choose to take on.

We are investigating use of Google's GSuite service to replace Dropbox as the committee's means for **storing and sharing files**. We are reaching the limits of Dropbox's free storage limit and GSuite offers more space and more services which are free to non-profit associations like ours. We are currently investigating the implications of this for our organisation.

We also discussed how we can **encourage some more LBKA members to join the committee** or otherwise help out. Over the next few months, we will be actively encouraging members to consider taking a more active role in LBKA through our monthly meetings, monthly socials, newsletter, Facebook and chatting to members. We particularly hope that some of our mentees will join the committee.

We also discussed issues with some of our **apiaries**.

Our **Holland Park** needs to move from the rooftop on which it is currently located, because of ongoing building work that has caused difficulties in using the apiary since last year. There is an area to which we can move and we are planning the logistics of the move, the storage requirements and whether it needs more planting. We were considering applying for funding for a major planting project, but we decided to shelve the idea because of lack of spare capacity for the committee members involved. Our **Mudchute** apiary has some damaged extractors that we are going to try and get fixed. We have also been offered an apiary in **Regent's Park**. One idea is that this might be an apiary which some of our North London beekeepers might use to host their bees. We will put a note out to members.

In **other business**, we discussed the upcoming Harvest Stomp and participation in BBKA's Annual Delegate Meeting in January.

Why join the LBKA committee?

As the beekeeping season comes to an end, so does the LBKA membership year... and the committee. We're looking for new members to join the committee and help run London's largest amateur beekeeping association.

Natalie Cotton
admin@lbka.org.uk

LBKA benefits from having a diverse mix of experience and viewpoints on the committee, so here are some of the reasons why you should consider getting involved, based on my own experience!

You'll make new friends, from all walks of life

The great thing about beekeeping is it unites people into a community of interest. You get to meet people that you otherwise wouldn't in the normal course of working and socialising. I really value the social connections I've made through being involved with the LBKA Committee.

You get to use your existing skills for a good cause

I joined the Committee two years ago, at the end of my first season of beekeeping. I wasn't at all sure how much I could contribute given that my beekeeping experience was so low, but in reality the LBKA needs a whole

mix of skills – from event organising, taking inventories, dealing with sponsors and businesses, market research or running social media. As beekeepers are from such varied background, you might have a unique skill to contribute.

You learn new skills

It goes without saying you will learn from a lot of very experienced beekeepers. But you also get the opportunity to hone other skills that are transferable in to the other walks of life. This year everyone on the Committee has been involved in setting up Governance, and I've learnt a lot about organising and administrating minutes, GDPR, drawing up agreements with landowners, and accounting for small organisations. Crucially, everyone is volunteers so it's a safe and welcoming place to try out new things.

You debate and work in a group

"Ask three beekeepers, and you'll get five opinions" goes the adage. When you have 10 around a table, you can expect a debate! I can't put enough value on having this dynamic, especially in an age where reasoned debate could be perceived to be dwindling.

It's fun

Obviously there's an element of responsibility to being on the committee, but we are all volunteers, and ultimately we do it because we enjoy it.

Hopefully there will be some new faces on the Committee this year. If you are interested, then please speak to any of the existing members. If you are interested in being more involved but not ready or able to commit to a committee role, then there are plenty of volunteering opportunities, from apiary managers to event support, so please get involved!

Last month's Monthly Meeting: Water, propolis and Social

What happened at our meeting last month.

Aidan Slingsby
services@lbka.org.uk

Last month was an extra-special summer social. Firstly, we were at Walworth Garden. Secondly, Vlad the meeting and it was on the new and fascinating topic of bees'



The meeting with Vlad talking about water and propolis. Photo by George Kozobolis

collection and use of water and propolis. Finally, we had the DelicaSisters serve us delicious food in the little haven that is Walworth Garden.

Water and propolis

Vlad led a meticulously-researched session on bees' collection and use of water and propolis. Slides were circulated to members via Facebook LBKA-Forum and email.

Propolis is a sticky substance that bees collect from trees and buds – particularly poplar, pine, willow, horse chestnut and birch – but they may also collect it (in small quantities) from human-manufactured products such as (road tar, paint or varnish). They collect it for its antiseptic qualities and its ability to block up gaps and stick things together. All beekeepers notice



Our caterers, the "DelicaSisters". Photo by George Kozobolis



More delicious food. Photo by George Kozobolis



Delicious food. Photo by George Kozobolis

it! Propolis can be green, grey, red or yellow and there was a striking photo of a bee with bright red propolis which bees carry in their pollen baskets. Its sticky nature means that bees can collect when the temperature is above 17°C, it can take up to an hour for a bee to collect, and between 30 minutes to a few hours for the colony to unload from a forager. It has three main uses: structural (attaching comb to wood), defence/weatherproofing (blocking gaps) and antiseptic uses (it's anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and can be used to isolate undesirable objects (like a decaying mouse that might have found its way into the hive in winter).

Water is essential for all life. A colony needs water to maintain high humidity (eggs have a higher chance

of hatching), to produce brood food, and for nutrition (from dissolved minerals). Bees specifically collect water independently to nectar (about 1% of nectar collection in total), with some bees appearing to be genetically predisposed to this. However, much of the water comes directly from the 80% of water found in nectar and indirectly from bees' metabolism. The colony's need for water varies from 150 to 1000g per day, depending on the temperature, time of year and size of the colony.

Spectacular Social

The spectacular summer social was indeed spectacular! DelicaSisters put on a good spread. The weather looked a bit iffy earlier on, but ended up being fine. We were prepared though - we have a large covered area. Thanks to all those members that helped and also for booking/cancelling your tickets so we could estimate numbers. For those who wanted to make the delicious (although I say it myself) honey cake (using accidentally fermenting honey that Geoff donated), [the Devonshire honey cake recipe is here](#).



That's it for the year! Photo by George Kozobolis



Happy LBKA members. Photo by George Kozobolis

September in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

The bee population will continue to decline in September but the new bees now being born will need to live through to next April, for up to 6 months instead of 6 weeks. They need to be healthy, free of varroa mites and associated viruses and with plenty of stores. Those

members who diligently applied Apiguard or another approved varroacide throughout August should now be the proud custodians of newly born healthy bees which are in a good position to withstand winter.

Feeding the colony

This is the main job for September. Unless you have your bees close to a large ivy source then it must be assumed that they have now ceased to be in a position to forage any surplus and so feeding syrup is the only option to ensure they go into winter with sufficient resources. A full sized colony needs to have 35 lbs. of honey to see it through to next April. A National brood frame holds 5 lbs. and so the equivalent of 7 frames is needed. If, say, you estimate 5 frames of honey is currently in the hive then this is 25 lbs. and a further 10 lbs. is required. 1 lb. of sugar will make 1.25 lbs. of honey (the final product is 80% sugars and 20% water). Therefore, using this example syrup should be made from 8 lbs. of sugar to complete the stores. Any surplus will not be wasted as it will be used by the bees next spring.

Feeding fondant in winter causes the cluster to break up and is an unnecessary disturbance. It is far better to feed in September and so ensure there are sufficient stores for the winter. Fondant in winter should only be used as an emergency feed, not part of a planned strategy. The best time for winter and spring feeding is always in the preceding September!

If feeding is left until October then the bees may be unable to evaporate down the water content to less than 20% and then cap the stores. This is likely to lead to the syrup fermenting over the winter period. All feeding should be completed by the end of September as the colder it gets then the less active the bees become.

Sugar must be white granulated sugar. Any other sugar is harmful to the bees. Sugar prices in the discount supermarkets are about 65p per kilo which is more expensive than previous years (2016 was 45p and 2017 was 50p).

A stronger syrup should be used at this time of year as

this means the bees have less work to do in evaporating off the water. This syrup is not for their immediate consumption but for winter and early spring stores. 1kg of sugar dissolved in 660ml of warm water is the desired strength.

If the feeder needs to be topped up then it is essential to wear a veil. Bees may not appear to be very active if late in the month and cooler but they will surge through the feedhole if the feeder is disturbed or taken off.

Other action to be taken this month

Mark the queen. If the colony has a new queen born this summer then now is the best time to find and mark her. The colony is contracting with the brood limited to just a few frames and this makes it a much easier proposition. If the queen is marked then next season's swarm control will be so much easier. You may have had a marked queen in the summer but she could now be superseded which means marking is necessary.

Check the hive. Hive body should be draught free and the roof should be waterproof. Now is the time to replace any defective or ill-fitting equipment before the onset of winter.

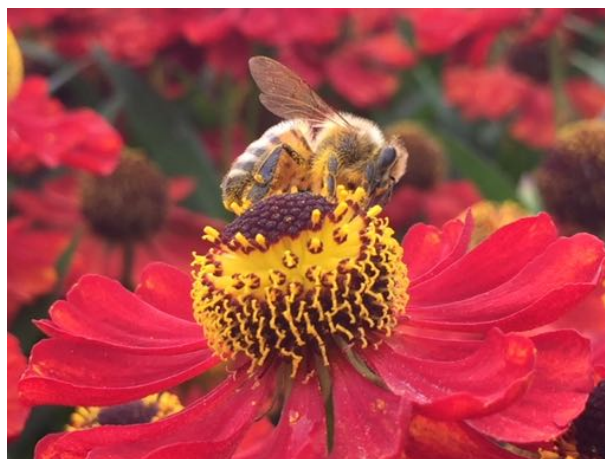
Protect against wasps and robbers. Entrance blocks must be *in situ*. Many beekeepers reduce the entrances to as little as 2 or 3 bee spaces at this time of year. If a colony is being robbed it is extremely difficult to stop other than moving it to a new site more than 3 miles away.

Fumigate supers. These should be fumigated if not already done. Fumigated supers should be put in a place secure from wax moth and vermin.

Asian Hornet Each time you visit your bees it is now important to be vigilant to the possibility that these are in your locality. September is the month they are likely to be more active and "hawking" bees if in the UK. Take the trouble to spend a few minutes observing the colony entrances and underneath the hive to check for their existence. As beekeepers we are in the front line of the UK's defence against this invader.

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

This article is somewhat longer than usual. This simply reflects the many tasks needed to be undertaken in September. It does not have the stresses of May when we need to deal with swarm control but there is still a lot to do before it gets cold. I hope that all our members prepare well for the winter and that their bees survive and emerge with vigour in the spring.



Helonium.



Aster.

September in the Forage Patch

About the flowers that bees are visiting at this time of the year.

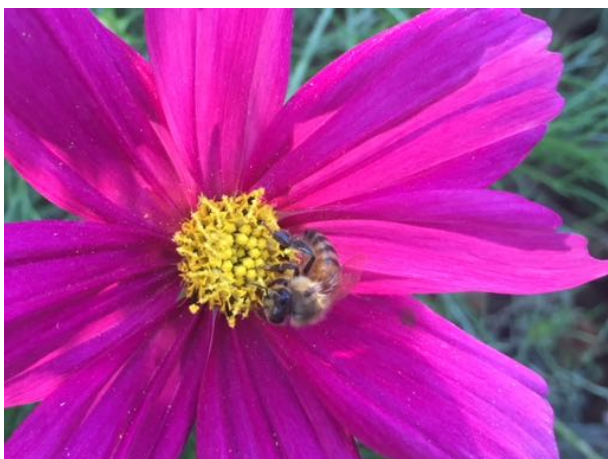
Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

After a scorching hot summer where the mercury rose to record levels for record lengths of time, our efforts now shift to preparing our bees for winter. It's been a mixed summer for beekeepers. Travelling on my rounds across Greater London I've witnessed a few beekeepers whose hives have brought in bumper crops but the majority seem to be down on their luck this year.

We often assume that prolonged hot sunny weather must be great for the bees but it can actually be counter-productive if the hot spells last too long. During the intense heatwave this summer many summer flowering plants failed to yield much nectar as they simply couldn't afford to lose the precious moisture need to



Hebe.



Cosmos.

secrete nectar. This has meant many hives have failed to bring in a big crop of honey and many (especially if supers have been taken off for harvest) now require urgent feeding to bulk up their food reserves before winter arrives.

This year I have had a 70% reduction on the previous year's honey crop. I'm having to feed all but a handful of my colonies. Many of my Langstroth colonies have recently had £30 worth of feed given to them each. I've been giving them inverted fructose sugar syrup. This is much easier for the bees to handle and turn into storable honey as the sugars are more easy for them to process being already inverted. Other colonies I have had to mix syrup with hot water and granulated white sugar. Most of my colonies did not have any honey removed from them this year. After recent rain and the arrival of cooler weather I'm hoping that we will get some mild sunny weather this autumn to allow the bees a last opportunity to top up the stores I've given them with some real nectar.

Flowers out this month include many North American prairies species. Many varieties of **Rudbeckia** are in flower. Rudbeckia 'Prairie glow', Rudbeckia speciosa, Rudbeckia 'Goldstrum', Rudbeckia 'Little gold star' and Rudbeckia 'Summerina yellow' are just a few of the varieties which are great for bees. Similar in appearance



Anemone.



Ivy bee on ivy blooms.

to Rudbeckia and equally attractive are the **coneflowers** in the genus Echinacae. Varieties 'Magnus', 'Purpureae', 'Flame Thrower' and 'Sundown' are among my favourites.

In scientific trials the **North American daisy** (Helianthemum) regularly comes out on top as the best garden bee plant for late summer and into autumn. The variety 'Autumnal' is the best but 'Moerhiem beauty', 'Gold', 'Sahins Early' and 'Chelsea' are also very good. Other good bee plants for autumn include Aster Twilight, Aster 'Amelia', Moat of the Solidago Golden rods are good for bees particularly solitary bees, any of the single flowered Coreopsis, Kalimeris madiva, Sedum 'Spectable' and Sedum 'Purple Emperor,' Saffron Crocus, Japanese Anemones, Hebe 'Autumn Joy,' and Symphyotrichum novi-belgii.

By far the most important flower for pollinators this season is **ivy** (*Hedera helix*). It is one of the most important late season sources of forage for our pollinators and is greatly under rated. It's not just honey bees which rely on the ivy blooms, a whole host of in-



Coreopsis.



Sunflower.

sects rely upon the them to stock up before winter. Bumblebees and social wasps queens rely on ivy flowers to fatten up before their long winter hibernation, Hoverflies and butterflies also rely on the ivy to feed up before winters sleep. Honey bees will bring back the nectar and store it as honey to feed on during the cold winter.

Several of our pollinators are migratory and rely on ivy to fuel their long autumn migration south to warmer climes. One of the most spectacular examples of autumn insect migration is that of the Painted Lady Butterfly. For decades their migration was a mystery and scientists assumed that butterflies migrating north in spring climaxed and then perished before they could return south leading to a dead end population. Thanks to advances in modern radar technology the mystery has now been solved. Using sophisticated radar scientists have been able to track the butterfly's migration from central Africa through sub-Saharan Africa, across the Mediterranean and through Europe where 6 million butterflies cross the English Channel into the UK. Some of these butterflies make it as far north as Greenland. Using the radar technology scientists were then able to track 29 million butterflies making the return journey south in late September. The butterflies fly at an altitude of 500-1000 feet and are propelled south

by high altitude wind currents enabling them to make the journey to Africa in under a month. The longest insect migration in the world is fuelled largely on ivy nectar.

Another insect which relies on ivy, almost exclusively so is the Ivy Mining Bee (*Colletes hedera*). This attractive stripy bee is a relatively new addition to the British Isles. 40 years ago this was a very rare vagrant but in the past few decades it has expanded its territory north into the UK and is now increasingly common throughout southern England. This bee emerges from its 9 month hibernation in late August/early September and when it emerges it seeks out ivy blooms to collect nectar and pollen to provisions its offspring. They nest underground in burrows often in large congregations. You can help map their expansion in the UK by [submitting your sightings](#) to the Bee Wasps and Ants Recording Society

Whilst ivy is loved by many of our pollinators, it is not universally loved by beekeepers. Ivy honey is rich in Glucose sugars which means it readily granulates and can turn very hard as set honey in the comb. It can be difficult to extract. It also has a flavour which is unpalatable to many but to a few who find the strange flavour a welcome change. Personally I quite like ivy honey, once it has aged a little the flavours mellow and it's much nicer to eat. It makes good seed honey for creaming.

LBKA Apiaries

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

Holland Park

Carla Midcap

LBKA Apiary manager for Holland Park

August has been a busy month at the Holland Park apiary. After a brief handover, there was a change in management with a new beekeeper in place. In order to start off on the right foot, a massive tidy-up is in progress as well as a bit of pruning. Being on a rooftop the apiary has become a labyrinth jungle with the tangle of climbing wisteria and the low branches of the mimosa tree. Inventory will soon follow but for now the focus has shifted to the best time of the year: honey extraction!

But is it? The gentle and docile ladies with whom I had become familiarised during the course of the summer have suddenly transformed into confrontational and feisty bees! As a new beekeeper it is bemusing to see the temperament change so radically. As I take the

fourth stinger out of my hand I feel conflicted. Troubled by the sting but sorrowful for the bee that now has to die. Beekeeping is certainly an odd and bittersweet world.

Mudchute

Vlad Zamfir

LBKA Apiaries Manager and Mudchute Apiary Manager

At the Mudchute apiary, the start of August was pretty quiet as full inspections were not really needed and the only action I took was to reduce the hive entrances so that the bees didn't have to work too hard to defend against wasps (of which there were plenty). I also noticed the bees were starting to eat through their honey stores at a substantial rate, highlighting how hard it was for them to gather enough nectar for their needs (the dry & hot weather did not help).

On the first weekend in August the Mudchute Agricultural Show took place, where the LBKA had a stall manned by Mark and me. We managed to sell a bit of the Mudchute honey (there's a lot of it this year, see below) and helped spread the LBKA message that 'bees and flowers go together'.

The end of August was a completely different story: the 2nd round of honey extraction was done on the bank holiday weekend and then I put the varroa treatment on (Apilife Var). I had lots of help from David, our Treasurer, and my mentees (thanks so much for the help!), with getting the bees off the frames, transporting the honey to my house and manually extracting 5 supers (approx 50kg, 1st extraction was also around 50kg) via a 4 frame tangential extractor – which kept seizing up – and then getting the wet supers back on the hives in the evening (I think it took 4 h from the supers arriving to my house to them being returned to the bees). Now comes the jarring...

A note on why I left the extraction this late: no time to do it earlier. Usually, honey should get extracted early August so that there's plenty of time to treat for varroa and feed the bees for winter. Winter bees are reared now and you want them to be nice and healthy and not suffering from varroosis. Also, some treatments only work if the daytime temperature is above a certain level and can take 4 weeks so, if you're treating too late, your last few weeks of treatment may be ineffective if temperatures drop in late September. So, hopefully, you've not done what I have and started treating your bees before the end of August

Brockwell

Petros Hahladakis

LBKA Apiary manager for Brockwell

A very disappointing honey crop for Brockwell was made up for by the ever successful summer school holiday programme at the community gardens.

For the 4th year in a row we had children from the ages of 3 to 10 turn up to help us extract the honey crop. From starting off as a relatively small event it has grown substantially with 4 groups of 12 children coming in this summer. In each session we take the children into the apiary where we inspect a hive together and find the marked queen. They are then given a frame of capped comb from a cleared super to take into the extraction area where they get to scrap off the wax and spin the comb, before getting a small taste for their efforts. Considering the small number of capped supers we did have some creative solutions put in place to ensure that we always had some supers ready for the kids to take along with them:)

In the apiary itself we picked up that the hives were all very short on stores for this time of the year and that the ivy that normally comes up and provides most of our winter feed hasn't yet appeared, so have started feeding the bees. Considering we only managed to take supers off one hive, it shows the difficulties we had in the other 3 hives. With our winter preparations now under way with feeding and treating we have also taking stock of the hive sizes and have now decided to merge two of the smaller ones together via the newspaper method.

The National Bee Unit South East Region Forum

Geoff Hood attended the NBU forum in Guildford. He represents Barnet Beekeepers there and will now represent LBKA.

Geoffrye Hood

LBKA Member

National Bee Unit (NBU) Forum for the South East region, takes place every year. The forum is where representatives of each local Beekeeping Association meet with the Regional Bee Inspector and Seasonal Bee inspectors for the region in order to be updated on current issues and issues raised during the year.

This year the forum took place on Wednesday, 29th August in Guildford and was hosted by Sandra Gray of the South East Region RBI.

After tea and coffee, the first talk was given by Kirsty Stainton – a Senior science officer from FERA Scientific Services Ltd – on the DNA profiling of strains of European Foul Brood and American Foul Brood and how this can help in the treatment of EFB.

The continuing high levels of EFB in the South East region, especially in London, is of concern to the NBU. Analysis of bee samples has shown that in apiaries where an EFB symptomatic hive has been destroyed or treated, 80% of bees in other hives in that apiary will have non symptomatic EFB. Non symptomatic EFB in the general local bee population can be 20% or higher.

Each EFB strain will react differently and re-infection rates vary differently for the three treatments Oxytetracycline (OTC), Shook Swarm and destruction. The rise in EFB infections between 2004 and 2014 is thought to be due to EFB strains developing resistance to OTC. Since 2014, OTC has been used much less. As a result, EFB infection has started to decline. However, infection rates with some strains of EFB can be over 50% the following year, even with destruction.

There are 35 known EFB strains worldwide. Using DNA profiling, 19 EFB strains have been found in England. These different strains of EFB are normally regionally based. Two strains have been eradicated in recent years. More EFB strains are found in London than in other regions. This is perhaps due to bees and old equipment being bought into the London region.

Philip Rudland – ex-Seasonal Bee Inspector and bee farmer – gave the lunchtime talk on the Bee Apprenticeship Scheme and the trials and tribulations of getting the scheme started. The scheme is always over-subscribed, with the limiting factor being the number of bee farming companies big enough to support the scheme. Most are seasonal.

The after-lunch talk was on the NBU and Non Native Invasive Species Plan to track and destroy Asian Hornets' nests. The talk covered details of hornets found so far, Fortunately, DNA analysis has shown that nests in UK are of the French strain, but not closely related. This suggests that the policy of destroying nests that are found is successful and there are no hidden sources of queen hornets. The nest of the 'Cauliflower' Hornet found in the NW of England has yet to be traced, but baiting is continuing in NW England and Lincolnshire.

A further positive sighting of a hornet was confirmed on a Cherbourg-Poole ferry, but DNA analysis has not yet been completed. The forum was urged to combine their swarm collecting activities with an [Asian Hornet Action team](#). They would then be able to help members of the public with hornet identification as NNIS have 2000 sightings by the public so far this year to every Asian Hornet confirmation. A hornet awareness week will run from 10-16 September

A light hearted slide show by Sandra Gray was shown. She discussed the problems she had faced with only three SBIs. She added that following the resignation of the second London SBI, both London posts will be vacant and that the NBU would be advertising these posts.

Facebook (In)digest(ion)

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

Eugene Fahy
LBKA Member

This month saw two recurring topics, Asian Hornets and Aggressive (or should that be "defensive"?) bees. [Kathy Stevenson noticed a change in temperament in a recently combined colony](#) which now seems to be slightly light on stores. Karin Cheetah thought hunger could be the cause and suggested feeding. Anthony Patterson (AP) said even docile bees can become "stropky" at this time as they are defending their stores. He has also noticed an improvement in his bees' temperament since he changed from thyme based varroa treatments to MAQS.

After three years of trying in vain to improve what has now become a dangerously bad tempered colony, [Aby Sykes decided to call it a day and asked for help and advice](#). Some suggestions included requeening, which had already been tried, resulting in regicide. AP had a colony turn rogue recently, suffering 15 stings as he tried to inspect them. His view is that London beekeepers have a social responsibility not to tolerate very aggressive colonies. In the end Karen Cheetah came to the rescue and offered to rehome the recalcitrant colony.

[Jon Monnick asked if there had been any update on the Asian hornet sighting in Bury](#). This prompted a discussion about what has been happening in Jersey. Emily Scott posted a link to blog post by a beekeeper who went to Jersey to help track nests. <https://www.bbka.org.uk/news/hornet-nest-hunting-in-jersey> and gave a concise account of how Asian hornets predate on honey bees, noting that beekeepers are not protected either as a normal bee suit does not protect against the stings. AP posted [a link to a very useful hornet and wasp identification chart on the NBU website](#).

[Nancy Secchi saw a hover fly \(not to be confused with an Asian hornet\) which she thought was trying to snatch a bee as it left the hive](#). With apologies to any fans of Lynne Truss (Eats Shoots and Leaves) for the following: she asked if anyone had seen hover flies eat bees. AP said it may have been investigating the hive but they have no jaws with which to eat bees

Finally, Jon Harris asked if Bayvarol has been discontinued as a varroa treatment. AP said that it is still approved by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate but sellers need a distribution agreement for which there

is a licence fee. He suggests using apitraz instead of bayvarol as, so far, the mites are not resistant to it. Alternatively, he suggests MAQS which can be used while the honey supers are still in place.

Old news

Jeni Lea, has an assortment of beekeeping-related articles from 1950s and 60s found in a Cornish barn.

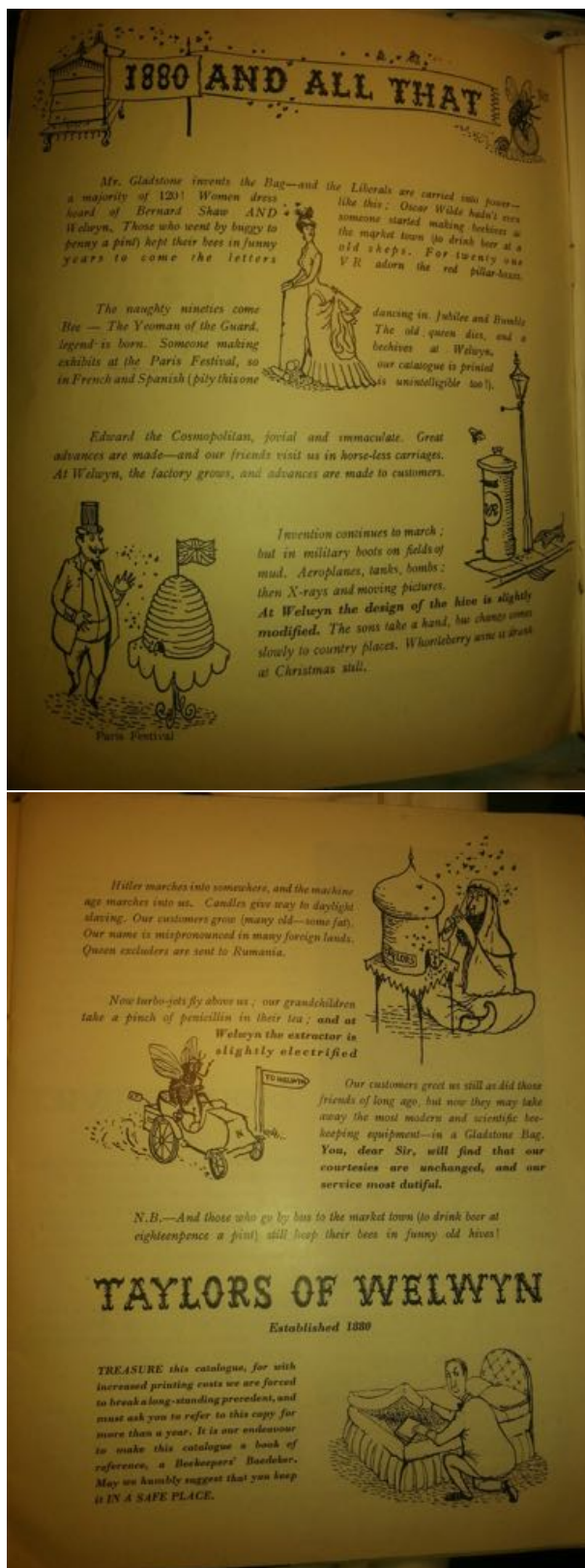
Jeni Lea
LBKA Member

This month, a contribution from "Taylors of Welwyn", c1960.

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 enjoyed 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.



This month's contribution from "Taylors of Welwyn", c1960.

Upcoming events

Sunday, 9th September: Monthly Meeting: Preparing bees for the winter

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

This meeting will be about preparing bees for the winter (though it seems like a long way off at the moment...) including uniting colonies. Meetings are for members only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association.

Sunday 23rd September: Harvest Stomp

All day at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London E20 2ST.

The Harvest Stomp is back and we'll have a stall there.

Tuesday 25th September: Monthly Pub Social

from 18:30 at Tufnell Park Tavern, 162 Tufnell Park Rd, London, N7 0EE

The next Pub Social will be the Tufnell Park Tavern. After last month's trip South of the river, this month, we're delving deeper into North London than we've ever been for a LBKA social! But it's a great pub close to Tufnell Park Tube station. It has just reopened after a refit and now sports a fancy menu, so let's see what the place is like now. Hopefully it's still good!

Sunday, 14th October: Monthly Meeting: Bees on the Move

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

This meeting will be entitled "Bees on the Move" about the process of moving bees to a new apiary. Followed by the usual hot drinks, cake and chat. Meetings are for members only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association.

Committee

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

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

