



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

June, 2019

Welcome to June's newsletter! In the newsletter this month, we have news of some success in BBKA Module exams, a slew of calls for volunteers which are good opportunities for members to get involved, John write another report from the other beekeeping course we ran last month (p5), David summarises our last committee meeting (p8). Simon reports back on a talk that Richard and him gave to Blackrock (p12) and another of BBKA's "Positive Thinking" newsletters (p13). Thanks as usual to regular contributors Richard (p1), Howard (p9) and Eugene (p9).

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A big thank you to this month's contributors: **Eugene Fahy, Amanda Gdula, Richard Glassborow, David Hankins, Martin Hudson, John Kembury, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, and Margaret Wilson.** Thanks to **Martin Hudson** for proof-reading it. Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, contact me.

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

From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

Tuesday 21st May 2019 shall be known as "Swarm Tuesday"!

I don't know if the full mayhem that day was apparent to members not on the LBKA Swarm WhatsApp Group but let's just say, "our resources were stretched". And not only us: apparently Park Beekeeping Supplies ran out of equipment.

As beekeepers, we know about swarm season and still it always seems to be a surprise. But was it or, rather, is it an exceptionally swarmy year? Without records it is hard to know.

Certainly the perception is that this year the bees are really determined to get their DNA spread around. Since early March members have been reporting exceptional



Bumble Bee laden with pollen on a Welsh Poppy.

amounts of drone brood. But the weather has been unsettled so it looks as though colonies have held back. When we get a fine day, off they all go. This is not new. I can remember several occasions over previous years, setting off to collect a swarm phoned in by a member of the public and coming back hours later with 4 swarms: the phone just kept ringing.

What is new though, is being able to follow a bigger picture as the calls come in on WhatsApp. So is it more swarmy this year or is it just that we can see a bigger picture? It's a good question and it would be interesting to start keeping records in the interests of a better understanding of trends, influences, hot-spots, etc., and better beekeeping. The wider public remain generally fascinated and tolerant of bee swarms but I can't help thinking that they and certain authorities might take a different view if they saw the bigger picture too.

I know I have said this many times before but, at the risk of being repetitive and boring, we owe it to ourselves, each other and the public, to at least try to reduce the number of swarms resulting from our beekeeping activities.

Nobody pretends that it is easy and it is not something you learn overnight. In a sense, it is an area of advanced beekeeping that cannot be avoided, even when you are starting out. The LBKA does not underestimate how daunting this can be. If anyone, at whatever level, has any thoughts on how we can improve support and training of our members, please don't hesitate to post them on BeeBanter or contact someone on the committee. If your thoughts are tentative, unformed, controversial, etc., and you are not sure how to put them into words – come along to the pub social on the last Tuesday of the month

Announcements

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

June Monthly Meeting: Bee Health Day

Bee Health Day replaces our June Monthly meeting on **Sunday 9th June**. It will be at Walworth Garden (instead of our usual place). To come, you must **book** using the EventBrite links sent to members.

Understanding bee diseases is of crucial importance as a beekeeper, particularly in an area with such a high honey bee population as London, and particularly as two of the most serious and infectious bee diseases were rife in London last year. LBKA's bee health day



Walworth Garden, the venue for Bee Health Day

will bring some of the best expertise in this area to members, with a detailed and hand-on look at brood diseases, varroa, and tips on inspecting for disease. In addition to our team, two Seasonal Bee Inspectors will bring along real diseased comb so you can see first-hand how it looks. It is highly recommended that everyone who keeps bees (or is about to) comes to this event. Even if you've been to them in the past, you will certainly learn new things by attending.

Bee Health Day is a significant organisational undertaking by LBKA. We would like people to attend but places are **limited**. If you subsequently realise that you can't make it, **please email services@lbka.org.uk to cancel your order**, so we can make sure that there's space for people who want to come.

See [our webpage](#) for upcoming meetings and events.

Natalie's pub pick

The Pub Social will on **Tuesday 25th June**, from 18:30 at **The George** in Southwark (**77 Borough High St**, Southwark, SE1 1NH). It has a large outside seating area if it's sunny.

Success in Modules 2 and 3

We are pleased to report that the following two LBKA members were successful in the BBKA written modular exams in March 2019: **Frank Ryan** (Module 2, Honey Products and Forage) and **Robin Yearwood** (Module 3, Honeybee Diseases, Pests and Poisoning). Congratulations to both.

Beckenham Palace Flower Show

Beckenham Palace Flower Show will be on the afternoon of 30th June. LBKA have a stall to promote the association's message that "bees and flowers go together" and to raise the profile of pollinators and LBKA. It will be a great opportunity for members to meet the public to spread this message and sell some honey!

Any members who are interested in helping to set up, man and take down our stand (and to sell their own



A team from Reuters, doing some filming at Eden and talking to Richard as part of a documentary on the medical applications of honey. Photo: Amanda Gdula.

honey), email Tristram at resources@lbka.org.uk for further details.

Mudchute Agricultural Show

LBKA has been invited to attend the Mudchute Agricultural Show on 29th and 30th June. As Mudchute Park and Farm on the Isle of Dogs is host to one of the LBKA teaching apiaries, this is a great opportunity to thank our hosts and to spread the "Bees and Flowers go Together" message in east London. There'll be a sheep show, fresh produce competitions and craft stalls, as well as the LBKA stand. We'll have an observation hive, leaflets to distribute, candle-rolling for children, (if there are volunteers to assist), and Mudchute honey to sell. If you are able to assist on the stand for part of either day, please contact Martin ASAP on events@lbka.org.uk.

Call for volunteers for our schools programme

Following last year's successful programme of school visits with our partner Charity, School Food Matters, we have just embarked on a further twelve visits over the next two months. The programme is funded by The Wholefood Foundation.

Our narrative principally involves the relationship of bees, other pollinators, flowers and food but the high-



Richard and his beemobile. Photo: Amanda Gdula.

light of each presentation is of course an observation hive of live bees. We visit each school for a day, during which we typically present to 4- 5 classes.

The schools selected include 1 infants, 5 Primary (+ 2 already visited), 2 secondary, one Special Needs, and 1 Pupil Referral Unit.

The dates currently being offered to schools are Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from June 18 to July 18 (which is the last day before term ends).

Locations include Twickenham, Isleworth, Wembley, Croydon, Southwark, Rotherhithe, Poplar, Forest Gate, and Ilford.

The programme is being led by Richard Glassborow and Martin Hudson and we would welcome members interested and able to accompany us on all or part of one or more visits so that we can begin to expand the team of volunteers.

If you are interested or would like to find out more, please contact Martin (events@lbka.org.uk) or Richard (chair@lbka.org.uk).

Paid beekeeping opportunity at Ally Pally

We have been contacted by John O'Conner, a privately owned grounds maintenance company, about a paid-for beekeeping opportunity at Alexandra Palace in North London (<http://www.alexandrapalace.com/>).

The LBKA Committee has agreed to offer this opportunity to members.

John O'Conner (JOC) are a national Grounds Maintenance service provider who also offer a beekeeping service for some of their customers ([see https://www.johnconner.co.uk/](https://www.johnconner.co.uk/)). One of their longest-serving clients is Alexandra Palace, who would like them to supply two hives and bee colonies on site. This would be a paid role in which JOC's client will support purchasing all hives, bees, consumables, PPE and equipment for the beekeeper. The visits to the apiary would also be paid.

Details are up for discussion, but the proposal is that the beekeeper would train on-site staff, so they can manage the bees in the long term. In the short term an LBKA-member beekeeper could be in charge, the JOC staff shadowing.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about this opportunity, please get in touch with Simon Saville at development@lbka.org.uk or 07572 612722.

Old announcements from May

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

Summer Social: will be on Sunday 18th August at Walworth Garden – put this date in your diaries!

“Buzzin project”: If you know young people in Hackney, Islington, Tower Hamlets or City of London aged 10-21 years old who are not in full time work or education and/or suffer from mental health problems, and are interested in getting involved with bees, refer them to info@apicultural.co.uk. Mark Patterson is looking for such people to recruit onto a **free** therapeutic beekeeping project he is delivering in Hackney with a local wellbeing charity funded by the Mayor's Office.

Bee-vac: Thanks to **Jon Harris** for his donation of a Bee-vac, which has been added to the list of equipment that LBKA members can hire.

Old announcements from April

BBKA Swarm list. If you'd like to be listed as a swarm collector on [BBKA's swarm list](#), contact services@lbka.org.uk.

Helping at LBKA events. LBKA's Events Coordinator – Martin Hudson – is always looking for help at our events. If you can offer help with any of these events that we are running, please contact events@lbka.org.uk.

Holland Park apiary. Our Holland Park apiary has finally moved from the roof (on which we weren't allowed to bring many people) to a lovely field (where we can). We can now use it as a teaching apiary!


Bees' own royal jelly may help save the hives

ROYAL jelly, a substance produced by worker bees to provide food for queen larvae, can spread immunity between honey bees, according to a new study.


Researchers, led by Dr Eyal Maori at the Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute at the University of Cambridge, created 'vaccines' using a molecule called RNA.

The team fed fragments of virus RNA to honey bees. Just as humans become immune to the sample of disease in a vaccine, the bees also developed a resistance to the virus. The RNA fed to the bees entered their circulatory system, where it diffused into their jelly-secreting glands. The jelly was infused with the RNA molecules and the larvae which fed on this jelly received the same disease protection.

The immunity spread around the hive, and remained in later generations. This could be used to protect bees against viruses and Varroa mites, a significant factor in population decline.



Spotted by George Kozobolis in the Metro. He said "Would it not be a great blessing if this worked and the bees were immunised against the Varroa mite destructor? I do hope that this proves to be the long waiting truth and manages to spread immunity to the bee population. Perhaps other beekeepers may be interested to read the findings about varroa RNA molecules infused into Royal Jelly to make vaccines to feed the bees for immunisation against varroa and other pathogens. The heading cautiously says 'may help', so let's keep our fingers crossed!"



www.nonnativespecies.org

Produced by Lucy Curran, Cliff Bony (NNS), Guy Martin, Mike Brown (National Bee Unit) with assistance from Colette O'Han (National Biodiversity Data Centre) and Stuart Roberts (BKA)

Asian Hornet

Alert!

Report sightings of this species to: altrnonnative@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 altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.



Key ID Features

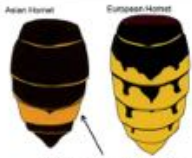
Asian Hornet Queen



Queens up to 30mm long, workers up to 25mm long

Entirely dark brown or black when fully developed with a fine yellow band

Legs brown with characteristic yellow ends





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

Photos from: J. Haszeln, 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 30mm 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 (*Ducerus 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 (*Vilucella 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 harbours – 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.nationalbeehiveunit.com

Alert!

Report sightings of this species to:
altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Old announcements from March

Members wanting bees If you want bees, please join the LBKA Bee Banter WhatsApp group (join using the [link listed here](#)) or the members-only [LBKA-Forum](#) Facebook page (ask services@lbka.org.uk to add you if you don't have access). If you want a swarm, join the LBKA-swarms WhatsApp group (join using the [link listed here](#)).

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.

LBKA's Beekeeping Course

We ran our second weekend beekeeping course last since the last newsletter with 30 attendees. Attendee John reports back.

John Kembury
 LBKA member

Being (no pun intended) interested in bee keeping and all its possibilities I thought I had better get to know the detail. So, a plan was required; a) join a club to find out more, aka LBKA; b) go to a couple of the socials and see if they have can hold a conversation with a few beers along the way; and if a) and b) true then, c) sign up for a Bee Keeping course.

The first two were easy. Happily I discovered LBKA folks don't have two heads and they don't mind chatting about all things bee-like or indeed other-like. Fortunately unanimously they all avoided the subject of Brexit. So I'm in the fold so to speak having attended a couple of Sunday sessions. At one of the winter lectures and then also at a social event I was told to keep an ear and eye out for news of when the course dates would be published as they are snapped up swiftly. I was also now getting their monthly newsletter which said look out for course dates on the LBKA web page.

Just as well, I signed up on line and then was told as part of the deal I get my membership back. Fantastic! The two day Bee Keeping course was held May 11th and 12th May at St Paul's Church hall in Clapham, South London. It was a bit scary at first, lots of information to absorb, but it all fell into place both during the well delivered lecture sessions, and the trips to see a couple of colonies.

The morning of the first day, I was greeted by the LBKA

Asian Hornet Identification leaflet. Source: [BKA website](#).



LBKA's signposting. Photo: Amanda Gdula.



Amanda showing her bees. Photo: John Kembury.



Claire Cater talking about her first year as a beekeeper. Photo: Amanda Gdula.



Inspecting bees. Photo: John Kembury.



Getting ready for meeting the bees. Photo: John Kembury.



Inspecting bees. Photo: John Kembury.



Amanda demonstrating honey extraction. Photo: John Kembury.



At Eden. Photo: John Kembury.



Equipment: What's essential and what's not Photo: John Kembury.



Finding the queen. Photo: John Kembury.



Inspecting bees at Eden with Richard. Photo: John Kembury.



Richard showing a frame. Photo: John Kembury.



Richard hive with nuc on top. Photo: John Kembury.



Honey tasting. Photo: John Kembury.

volunteers welcoming smiling faces with the weekends packed schedule, plus names tags and then found a seat. On display around the front of the hall were various instruments of bee keeping and more was still being brought in. If you are a person who likes gadgets and strange looking objects at scale, this could be your nirvana.

I won't go into the breadth of topics we covered over the two days (look at the agenda on LBKA), though what I will say is, it was truly excellent. We had these bee nuts, sorry enthusiasts telling us all the theory, showing us safety gear, about their experiences, and covering the technical knowledge while making it real with their anecdotal stories. Best of all, on day two we got to sample a range of lovely London honey's. Clearly these men and women loved their hobby. During the course of lectures, we had calm delivery, technical brilliance, youthful exuberance, great experiences relayed to reinforce points. Intermingled with this we had afternoon visits; all bee suited and all looking like cybermen from Dr Who.

It was interesting to view the individual handling techniques of the beekeepers and approaches to the different colonies we visited. All I can say it was a fabulous experience and I felt privileged to have been able to attend. One of the lecturers summed the course up nicely and likened it to parenting. We can provide you with lots of technical knowledge, advice and guidance on the appropriate work wear, tools and ways of working, but we are always learning. Bee keeping is like dealing with teenagers, what works for one colony may not necessarily work with the other. Be prepared for the unexpected,. So my advice to novices like me is get on this course as soon as you can. Even if you are not ready to keep bees, you can help and you'll also probably make some great friends and have the possibility of buying probably the best honey in town.

Personally, I'm not quite ready for another teenager this year, so I'm looking forward to LBKA mentoring and being shown the way. Also, I'll buy my bee suit, smoker and J-tool (with possibly a few other select items!) and

start helping out whilst building up my knowledge and, oh buying some honey!

June's Committee meeting

Here, we 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.

David Hankins
treasurer@lbka.org.uk

While the May committee was dominated by governance issues, (as reported last month), the June meeting focused more on the practical side of what LBKA is doing.

The committee received useful feedback on the Introduction to Beekeeping courses, an update on allocating course delegates to mentors, (an exercise that should be complete by the time the newsletter is published), and confirmation that the G-Suite platform is up and running – this will be a great help in planning, communication and document storage/sharing. We hope to have new LBKA-branded gazebos for use at events later this month and some new electric honey extractors for hire at about the same time.

Decisions were made to attend a second event on the weekend of 29 and 30 June, (The Mudchute Agricultural Show – details elsewhere in this newsletter), to share LBKA policies more widely with members as part of a future website overhaul, and to assist teaching apiary managers in maintaining BeeBase records and communications with the NBU inspectorate.

Final planning for the Bee Health Day was completed, initial planning for the summer social and our winter lecture series was undertaken, and protocols for generating new web content were developed. There was a discussion on the overlap between LBKA and neighbouring BKAs, and it was agreed LBKA should aim to work more closely with other greater London associations.

Last month's Monthly Meeting:

What happened at our meeting last month.

Eugene Fahy
LBKA member

The topic of the May monthly meeting, delivered by LBKA member Geoff Hood, was "Queen raising from queen cells". New audio visual facilities at Fairly House, prompted the first question of the day, "how many bee-keepers does it take to set up a projector?" Whatever the answer, there was no shortage of suggestions.

While we worked out the technology, Geoff gamely carried on with his talk to the well-attended meeting. He began by outlining four types of queen cells:

- Autumn supersedure cells. Only two or three are produced; only is brought on and they can be hard to find. The bees have decided they need a new queen but they do not swarm as part of the process
- Grafted queen cells. These are made by the bee-keeper, where a twelve hour old larva is put into an artificial queen cell.
- Emergency queen cells which differ in appearance as they bend downwards.
- Swarm cells, usually found in large numbers along the bottom of the frame.

Geoff then moved to the question of which of these is the best for queen rearing. In order of preference, Supersedure cells are best but we are unlikely to be able to use them. Swarm cells are also good because they are raised from young eggs. Emergency cells can be good but the resulting queens often don't last as long because they have fewer ovules, which in turn means fewer eggs from the queen. However, mated queens from emergency cells will get a colony through winter. Grafted cells may be the poorest option. Queens normally mate with twenty five or more drones but artificially inseminated queens have semen from only two or three drones so they will be quickly superseded by the colony. There is also evidence to suggest that colonies bred from queens selected for good varroa resistance often are not good honey producers.

When queen cells are found, the first step is to perform a Pagden split. Seven days later, chose the best two queen cells. With ten frames in a brood box, the maximum split is into three nucs (possibly four with 14×12 deep national frames) but two is preferable. If you are short of nuc boxes a brood box can be dummied down to five frames, filling the void with bubble wrap.

To produce queen cells in greater numbers, requires smaller, mating hives. The two makes shown at the

meeting were Apidea hives made from hard Styrofoam, costing £30 and Rainbow hives costing £9 and made from insulated plastic. This process also starts with a Pagden split but leaving more queen cells. The next step is to get the bees into the Apidea – it is preferable to use young workers from a super. Spray them with water to keep them in a cluster, scoop a small cupful (about 200 bees) and put them into the Apidea and close it up (having first put fondant in the feeder section). Leave the bees to settle for an hour or two then add the queen cell. This is normally done using a special queen cell protector which fits through a special gap in the top bars of the Apidea frame. Note that although the cells in the Pagden split will be charged after day six or seven, they are likely to be damaged if they are moved before day fourteen. Open the vent and spray with water. Keep the bees sequestered in a cool, dark place for 48 hours. To get the bees out of the Apidea, put an empty super on top of a queenless brood box, separated by a sheet of newspaper. Tip the queen and bees on top of this and close up the hive; the bees will chew through the newspaper and unite.

While Geoff gave a very detailed and informative presentation and dealt with queries as he went along, there was still some time afterwards for questions, followed by the customary refreshments.

June in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

Swarm control

This is still the main priority if the colony has not yet swarmed. Routine inspections should be made every 7 days to check for queen cells. Make sure you have sufficient spare equipment for swarm control. Upon finding queen cells, do not panic. You have sufficient time to close up the colony, go home to think things through and collate equipment. You are unlikely to have time to order equipment from a supplier, have it delivered and make it up. The National Bee Unit has useful helpsheets for free [download](#).

Removing honey

Another seasonal task in early June is removing and processing the spring honey brought in by the bees, if capped. If spring honey is removed then keep a watch on stores within the hive during June.

Collecting swarms

If your bees do swarm or you are called out to collect another swarm then personal and public safety should always be the overriding priority. Do not attempt to climb trees or use ladders beyond your capabilities. A simple order of action may be as follows:

- Make sure they are honeybees.
- If on someone else's land then obtain permission to enter from the landowner. If a branch of the tree needs to be cut then, again, make sure you have permission.
- Ensure any bystanders are moved away to a safe place.
- Put on bee suit and light smoker. Spraying the swarm with a fine mist of water is a refinement which will help keep the swarm in a cluster.
- Place a large sheet (an old bedsheet is ideal) on the ground underneath the swarm.
- After making sure that you are safe then deposit as much of the swarm as you can in a box or large bucket. Try to aim for 90% of the bees as you then have a 90% chance of including the queen.
- Turn box or bucket containing most of the collected swarm upside down on top of the middle of the sheet with a stone or piece of wood wedged between the box (or bucket) and the sheet. This allows access for the remaining bees.
- Come back at dusk to collect up the swarm by removing the stone and tying the sheet around the box. It can then be hived.

We continue to receive notifications of EFB in several areas of London. If collecting a swarm then it should be quarantined and checked before transferring on to an apiary containing other hives.

Other action to be taken this month

Add supers. Add supers as necessary, adding another in advance of it being needed by the bees. This may be either a brood super or a honey super, depending upon circumstances.

Varroa. Check varroa mite drop if not done in April or May. The Beebase varroa calculator is a useful diagnostic tool.

Asian Hornet. Continue to be vigilant for the Asian Hornet (see page 5). If you think you may have sighted one then it is essential to take a photo for submission to altrnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

Enjoy your June beekeeping activities.



Red tailed bumblebee on bramble blossom.



Sedums blooming on a roof top in Chancery Lane.

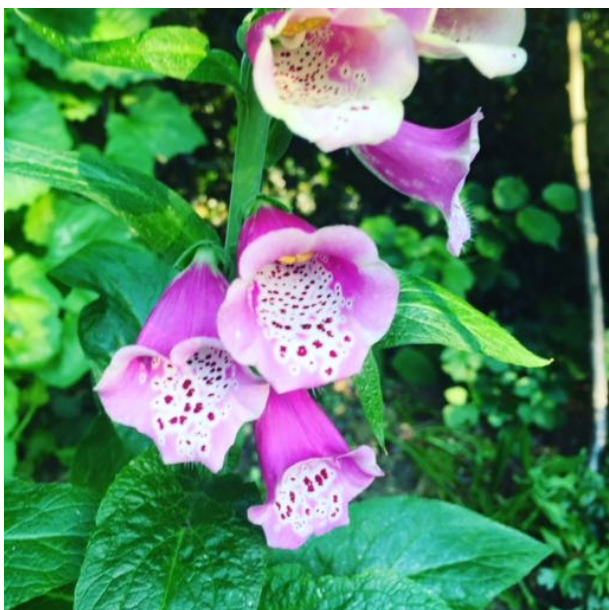
Focus on Forage

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

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

Early summer – June in particular – is a time of the year which brings uncertainty for many a beekeeper, and for those in rural areas in particular. June is the beginning of the summer season when the spring flowering plants and trees shed their blooms having been pollinated and now begin to form seeds, but the main flow of summer flowering blooms has yet to begin. Beekeepers refer to this period of change as the June Gap.

At this time of year honey bee colonies are approaching their peak in worker population in readiness for the summer flow, queens are laying at a prolific rate and colonies have many larvae to feed. A reduction in incoming nectar and pollen as the spring flowers cease but the summer flowers are yet to peak can leave large colonies struggling to feed themselves or fill supers with surplus honey for the beekeeper.



Foxgloves are out now.



A bumblebee on field scabious.

Fortunately in urban areas like London the June Gap is rarely felt because our towns and cities contain an abundance of exotic plants which bloom throughout June, filling the gap in forage availability.

As I write this month's piece I'm in Northumberland for a family wedding. During the drive up from London I've been following the progress of the various flowering trees, shrubs and wild flowers growing along the motorway verges. Down in London, **horse chestnut** is all but over on the 1st of June but in Newcastle they are still in full flower with many inflorescence still to be pollinated. The same goes for **hawthorn** and **oil seed rape**. In London, hawthorn is now going over, oil seed rape is long over, but in the Midlands oil seed rape was still flowering, hawthorn was still flowering strongly meanwhile in Newcastle and northwards oil seed rape in some fields is still in full bloom and the hawthorn is looking very fresh.

Throughout the whole 350 mile drive northwards I've been treated to carpets of **buttercup**, **ox-eye daisy**, **pink campion**, **tufted vetch**, **wild carrot**, **purple or-**



Honey bee on sedum ocre



Campanula blooms

chids and **bird's foot trefoil** blooming in the road verges. Driving past Newcastle I passed a patch of **bee orchids** on the side of the A1.

Early summer flowers like **lime**, **sweet chestnut**, **oriental chestnut**, **pseudo acacia**, **bramble** and many of our flowering **hedgerow herbs** and **meadow flowers** have already begun to bloom. In the meadows around Tower Hamlets Cemetery and Mile End Parks in East London, **weld**, **scabious**, **sainfoin**, **lucerne**, **bugloss**, **rest-harrow** and **bird's foot trefoil** are in full bloom attracting **honey bees**, **cuckoo bumble bees**, **flower bees** and **leafcutter bees**.

Last week whilst inspecting my city centre roof top bees I noticed that the **sedums** on the green roofs are just starting to come into flower. Whilst of limited usefulness to bees generally the sedums' brief few weeks of bloom do provide some much needed respite to pollinators in the very heart of the city where good forage is hard to come by. **Honey bees** and tiny **short-tongued solitary bees** are particularly frequent visitors to sedums on green roofs. Other plants important to city centre bees include **pyracantha (fire thorn)** **cotoneaster** and **ceonothus** which are often grown as amenity shrubbery and blooms of which provide much needed pollen and nectar.

In urban parks and gardens **privet** hedges are coming into bloom. Beekeepers loath privet because its nectar produces a bitter tasting honey that is unpalatable to most, but for the bees privet is a good source of forage. Other garden shrubs important as sources of nectar in urban areas include **hebe**, **choysia**, **pyracantha** and **cotoneaster** – all are popular with bees and are widely planted in urban car parks, and amenity areas around housing developments. The latter two have already by-and-large finished flowering now, but **choysia** and **hebe** often have a second flush of blossom and will continue to bloom well into summer.

Urban areas contain many exotic trees which flower after our native species have ceased flowering. These include **sweet chestnut**, **pseudo acacia**, and **Tree of Heaven**. Along railway embankments, **fire weed**, **thistles** and **teasel** are also blooming.

Right now in my garden, **nepeta**, **geraniums**, **campanulas**, **thyme**, **sage**, **valerian**, **perennial cornflower**, **wall flowers**, **escalonia**, **osteospermums**, **teucrium**, **lamb's lugs**, **oriental poppy**, **knifophia**, **eremus** and **giant echiums** are in bloom attracting large numbers of bees. Soon the **lavender**, **echinops**, **cardo** and **echinacea** should follow.

This month is a good time to 'Chelsea chop' late flowering perennials to extend the flowering season later in the year and ensure there are still flowers well into autumn for bees. Plants like **helenium**, **belianthus**, **golden rod (solidago)**, **asters**, **dahlias** and **leucanthemum** can be chopped back by about half. This will encourage multiple new flowering shoots from lower down the stem producing a larger mass of slightly smaller flowers later in the season, extending the forage for the bees and ensuring there is colour in your garden late in the season. Now is also a good time to take green cuttings from plants like **penstemon** which will root fast as long as they are kept moist – their deep tubular flowers are popular with longer tongued bumblebees.

Other plants like **perennial cornflower**, **oriental poppy**, **cat mint**, **sage** and **teucrium** can be chopped back very close to the ground once flowered at the end of this month, fed, watered and mulched they often produce a second flush of new growth and later flowering blooms. Other plants can be encouraged to continue flowering for longer by simply dead heading – removing the fading flowers before they have an opportunity to set seed. The plants desire is to reproduce so it will keep on sprouting new blooms until it does so or the season ends.



Presentation to Blackrock's Green Team

Simon reports on a recent presentation to global investment management firm Blackrock.

Simon Saville
development@lbka.org.uk

On 16th May, Richard Glassborow and I visited the offices of Blackrock - a global investment management firm in the City of London - to present to their "Green Team". The title was "A brief history of bees and flowers - the first & next 150 million years". This included information on our "Bees and Flowers Go Together" initiative.

Their London office has over 2,000 employees, and about 200 of these are connected to the Green Team. We had an audience of about a dozen, and a lively set of questions – and heard that feedback was very positive.

There continues to be a steady stream of big companies

expressing interest in bees, and wanting to “do something to help them”. We are able to explain that Honeybees in London are not endangered, but other species of bees are struggling. This is largely due to habitat loss and degradation, for example as front gardens get paved over.

LBKA is keen to work with businesses in London to help bees, support apiaries and create forage. We suggest a range of ways to get involved, for example:

Opportunities for companies:

- Promote bees and beekeeping internally among staff
- Support an apiary
- Support a green space with pollinator-friendly planting, possibly at their own offices
- Arrange a paid-for Beekeeping Taster Course by LBKA
- Financial support to LBKA for the “pollinator agenda”
- Use their contacts in business / The City to promote the “pollinator agenda”

Opportunities for individuals:

- Volunteer at a local apiary
- Join LBKA and take the LBKA Introductory Course
- Pollinator-friendly gardening, as simple as planting some LBKA seeds

Positive Thinking (issue 21)

This is this month's edition of BBKA's "Positive thinking" newsletter, within our newsletter! Find out the latest news in BBKA's world.

Margaret Wilson
BBKA Chair

Training for Volunteers and Trustees

After the Spring Convention it was brought to our knowledge that some remarks were made on a limited number of occasions that were very insensitive to certain of our members. None of those people who may have been offended have made a complaint to the Trustees however it was brought to our attention by some who witnessed the insults and were distressed on their behalf. We are unable to apologise to those offended but what we are doing is to arrange compulsory

training on equality and diversity and to include unconscious bias speaking in public places. Comments that were acceptable in the distant past are now totally unacceptable, but if you are above a certain age, some of those comments may be repeated without thinking. This training will include all Trustees and Volunteers who are in a position to address the public.

Accounts Management

Our Management Accountant has worked wonders in the time she has been with the BBKA. Each budget holder is now able to receive exact details of their income and expenditure whereas in the past the accounts system only produced end of month figures without details. To do this has been a rather intensive task taking many hours and I know that Sarah Laidler who has that post has worked tirelessly to rearrange the account to be more open and accessible, she has been first in the office and many times there until 7pm at night also attending the office at weekend when she can work without interruption of telephones etc., I would like to say a personal thank you for her dedication to the task and celebrate with her on a job well done.

Although in accounts it is always a moving feast and the more you improve the more detail you think you can provide.

eR2

Another task well done in the office is that of the eR2 data manager, Michelle has worked tirelessly in getting this up and running, working with the associations and branches to help them to understand how it all works. I also have to mention Martin Smith, who has been instrumental in the programming and problem solving and Mark Oakley who has been the one to test the programme before its issue. I know that a few of our members will now be muttering that it was not plain sailing but the majority of members having got over the first hurdle say it has improved their efficiency and it is all now much easier than in the past.

As I am somewhat a dinosaur about IT I take my hat off to those who are now fully operational on the system. This only leaves a small minority who are having problems, hopefully now getting to where they need to be.

Can I mention also that Michelle has suffered some sharp and unwarranted comments from members asking for help. I am sure that you will agree that if someone is bullying or rude it is perfectly acceptable for her to put the phone down without further response.

School Membership

We are continuing to try to attract schools into the BBKA. It needs one member of staff to join and to have some training for the position, another couple of helpers are advisable and we are hoping that the

local branches/associations will offer support to these schools. There is nothing more rewarding than to imprint such an important subject onto a developing mind, the children are very inquisitive and ask far more questions that you think are possible and most have little fear. Although there are some who have already the opinion that if it buzzes it is dangerous, it is so nice to counter that belief and explain the life of a bee and what the tiny creatures do. It is not just looking after the bees, it is the harvesting of the honey and then using that honey in a baking class, art classes are also improved as they try to draw a honey or a bumblebee and certainly our 'Bees in the Curriculum' is a must for any school. If your branch is able to support such a school, please contact your local schools to see if they have the land and the will to help their pupils understand more about nature.

Research

We have had only a few enquiries about the possible effects of the 5G network on our bees. Pam Hunter has suggested those who enquire to read the EKLIPSE report on the impact of electromagnetic radiation on insects, invertebrates and plants. This report reviewed all peer-reviewed papers and concluded that currently there is no clear evidence for any adverse effects on honey bees but also noted that more evidence is needed.

It is early days yet and as soon as we have more information we will of course let you know.

Show at Chatsworth 5th to 9th June 2019

If you are lucky enough to be going to the Garden Show at Chatsworth look out for the BBKA and Derbyshire Beekeepers marquee, you will meet some very enthusiastic members there who are giving their time without reward in order to help educate the public about the need for our pollinating insects, Honey Bees in particular, The Shows Team will set out displays to give an interesting insight into the life of a honey bee and how essential pollinators are in the world, there may even be a table showing the result of not having bees, the remaining food is rather boring and let's hope it will raise some awareness of their plight.

I was in a Garden Centre (my favourite shop) and a lady at the service desk was complaining that she could not get a particular insecticide, the staff member could only apologise and say it was a management decision, I was not close enough to intervene before the customer walked away but I did speak to the staff member and asked why she did not tell her the reason, well it transpired that she did not know the reason so I explained it to her hopefully so that she can pass that information on to other staff and customers alike.

Staff changes

We were very sorry to lose Alex who worked in the office, mainly on the Adopt a Bee Hive section but a wizard at taking members calls too, the nice thing is that he is now working among people nearer his age group but I bet he will miss the motherly attention he got from the ladies in the office.

Treasurer of the BBKA

Lyn Barker has been our very valued treasurer for a number of years but now finds that her time is more and more in demand looking after a member of her family, she is not deserting us at all and is there for advice if we need it. However, she has asked if we can find a replacement Treasurer to take over her role as she is really struggling to find the time for that role herself. So if you have the skills and the willingness to take on that post, please contact the office and they will give you an overview of the role, this is a voluntary with expenses only but it is a very interesting and not too demanding a role within the BBKA

Asian Hornet Action Teams

I would like to make another appeal for those areas that haven't got their AHAT teams in place to please do so and then notify Leigh Sidaway on gen.manager@bbka.org.uk of the contact details so we can put them on the map on the website. We do need as much in place as is possible before the queens start to reproduce the very many queens for next year.

Guest Blog

I'd like to feature a guest blog article from a member every month here. If you write a blog, I'd love to be able to reuse your content here (no extra effort for you!) Please let me know on services@lbka.org.uk.

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.

Upcoming events

Sunday 9th June: Monthly meeting: Bee Health Day

10:00-13:00 or 14:00-17:00 at Walworth Garden (206 Manor Pl, Braganza St, SE17 3BN)

This special event that replaces the normal monthly meeting.

Understanding bee diseases of crucial importance as a beekeeper, particularly in an area with such a high honey bee population as London, and particularly as two of the most serious and infectious bee diseases were rife in London last year.

LBKA's bee health day will bring some of the best expertise in this area to members, with a detailed and hand-on look at brood diseases, varroa, and tips on inspecting for disease. In addition to our team, two Seasonal Bee Inspectors will bring along real diseased comb so you can see first-hand how it looks. It is highly recommended that everyone who keeps bees (or is about to) comes to this event. Even if you've been to them a lot in the past, you will certainly learn new things by attending.

Due to limited places, you must sign up in advance through the EventBrite links send to members. Members only.

Tuesday 25th June: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at **The George** in Southwark (77 Borough High St, Southwark, SE1 1NH).

Our monthly trip to the pub. Catch up with all the latest news over a pint in a nice food-serving pub. It has a large outside seating area if it's sunny.

Saturday and Sunday, 29-30th June: Mudchute Agricultural Show

Mudchute Park and Farm, Pier Street, Isle of Dogs, E14 3HP

LBKA will have a publicity stall at this growing Show.

Sunday 30th June: Beckenham Palace Flower Show

All day at Beckenham Place Park Beckenham Hill Rd, Beckenham, BR3 5BS

Come and see our stall at the Beckenham Palace Flower Show!

Sunday 14th July: Monthly meeting: Foraging including undesirable nectars

11:00-13:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 218 Lambeth Rd, Lambeth, London, SE1 7JY

New topic, where we will learn about some of the less desirable nectars that bees choose to forage. 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
- **Resources:** Tristram Sutton, resources@lbka.org.uk
- **Development:** Simon Saville, development@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentor@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Martin Hudson, events@lbka.org.uk

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

