



# The London Beekeepers' Association

# LBKA News

## April, 2021

The final Winter Lecture this month – on Wednesday 21st April on “the future of pollinator conservation in the UK” given by the excellent speaker Prof. Jeff Ollerton – is an overdue marker of the end of winter. We have already had some reports of the very first swarms and Sunday’s Monthly Meeting will remind us of the ways to check and manage our colonies so they cause as little disruption to others as possible. Many of our announcements are the same as last month’s, because they are still relevant, so do have a look. This month, Kathy Stevenson is reviving the monthly update on LBKA’s apiaries (p11) and we have some nice photos from members. Do drop me a line if you have something good for future issues of the newsletter. Thanks to the regular contributors for their regular contributions, including from Richard (p1), Howard (p6) and Mark (p7).

As ever, we’re looking for more contributions from more members. Do email me if you can contribute anything including articles, photos and recipes.

<a href="#">From our Chair</a>	1
<a href="#">Announcements</a>	2
<a href="#">March’s Committee meeting</a>	6
<a href="#">Last month’s Monthly Meeting</a>	6
<a href="#">April in the Apiary</a>	6
<a href="#">Focus on Forage</a>	7
<a href="#">Bee imports via Northern Ireland</a>	10
<a href="#">LBKA Apiaries</a>	11
<a href="#">Members’ marketplace</a>	12
<a href="#">Upcoming events</a>	12
<a href="#">Committee</a>	13

A big thank you to this month’s contributors: **George Kozobolis, Richard Glassborow, Martin Hudson, Eugene McConville, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson and Kathy Stevenson.** Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, do contact me.

Happy beekeeping.

Aidan Slingsby, Editor, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)

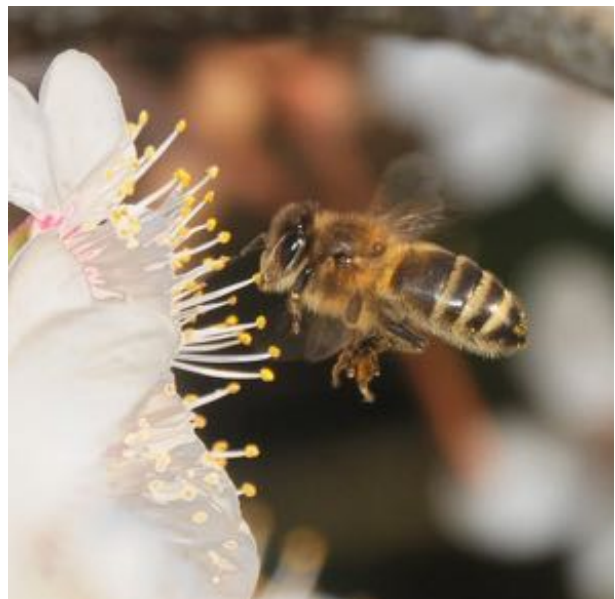
## From our Chair

*Richard Glassborow*  
[chair@lbka.org.uk](mailto:chair@lbka.org.uk)

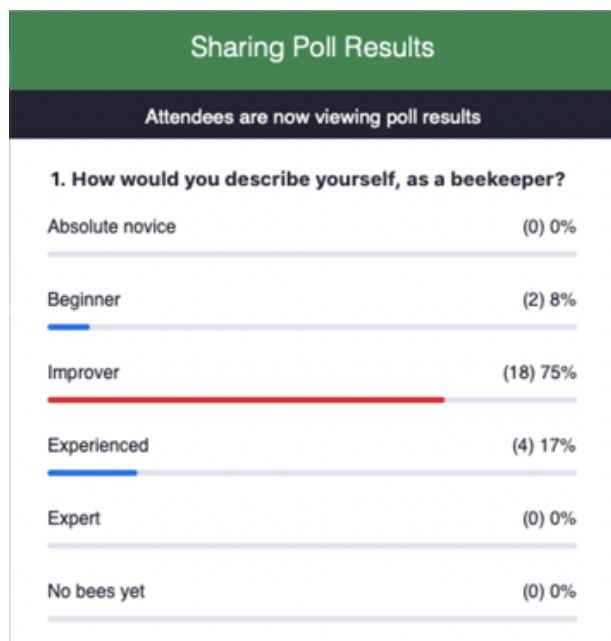
In his February contribution to our Monthly Meeting, “Beyond the Basics”, Bob Smith posed a question to those of us attending, “How would you describe yourself, as a beekeeper?” Beginner, Improver, Experienced, Expert, No bees yet?

It is perhaps not surprising that most attendees described themselves as “improver”. Bees are an incredibly complex organism and no matter how long you have been keeping them or wherever you are on the learning curve, there is always more.

If you haven’t started to keep bees yet or have only just begun, how you answer is straight forward. I have heard “Expert” defined as a drip under pressure so maybe that’s why nobody chooses to describe themselves in those terms. Experienced can just be a statement of fact really. You have been round the block a few times, seen things before enough times to recognise them when you see them again but in all likelihood that time served has only increased your curiosity, your interest and the pleasure you derive from close contact with this extraordinary animal. In that sense, we are all improvers.



*Hungry honeybee attracted by the early blossom of the wild plum trees. Photo/caption: George Kozobolis*



*Poll of attendees at February's Monthly Meeting.*

But Bob's question was aimed more specifically at what new beekeepers need to get "beyond the basics" and what Associations like the LBKA can do to support them.

As far as I can tell, all Associations wrestle with this. Whilst it is relatively easy to provide a formal introduction to beekeeping followed by a period of mentoring (really to be considered as a part of the introductory training) it is evidently not straightforward to provide a formal continuation of learning, or more Associations would be showing the way.

I am talking here about improving our practice of beekeeping as opposed to knowledge of theory: the sort of learning that you can't really get from a book or YouTube until you have already reached a certain level of skill and understanding.

The first challenge is to know what the "next level" is. On the grand scheme of things, we want to keep bees. We quickly learn that we don't want to kill them: then we would like them to be healthy and maybe produce some honey. Because we are responsible urban beekeepers we don't want our bees to be a public nuisance or have a negative impact on natural biodiversity. We become concerned at the risks involved in moving bees (and pests and diseases) around the world so we start to think about where our bees do come from: we start rearing our own, we start supplying others . . . .

Not everybody wants to go the whole way of course but I suggest nobody wants to keep bees just to watch them die so we can call that a shared objective. But the point is, not one of these objectives is easy even to start out on let alone master.

The life of the honey bee is so complex and interconnected with other natural systems, there are so many variables that, of necessity, the model has to be sim-

plified to make the introductory level accessible to new beekeepers. But new beekeepers soon find out that the bees don't read those books and we are surprised and confused by what we didn't expect.

In fact, the unexpected is normal. So do we need to review the terminology of our learning path to help us adjust from the simple model to an understanding more in line with reality in all its complexity? "Improver" can imply intermediate or something more ambitious than we actually want to become. But perhaps improver is nothing more than a recalibration of "the basics". First we learn the basics, then we really learn the basics, then we really really learn the basics and feel comfortable and in control most of the time and in most of the normal but variable states of the bees, the weather and the demands of our lifestyle. Recognising that may help some of us settle to the task and not feel so confused by the bees or anxious that we seem to be "on the basics" rather a long time.

By the basics I of course mean the big 5: swarm prevention and control; disease recognition and management; varroa management; when, what, why and how to feed; and handling bees. Mastering these takes a long time. Mastering the basics is intermediate level. And because there is more to follow, we are all improvers.

Facilitating that development path will always remain a central objective of the LBKA. We are able to do so through the generosity of many of our more experienced members who give their time and share their knowledge in both formal and informal format: courses, mentoring, monthly meetings, the WhatsApp group, BeeBanter, this Newsletter. We are constantly thinking about, open to suggestions and seeking ways we might better support members at all stages of their beekeeping.

Stay well.

---

## Announcements

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

### April's online Monthly Meeting and Pub Social

This month's Monthly Meeting will be on **Sunday 11th April** at 11:00 on **swarm prevention and control**. It is one of the big challenges for urban beekeepers at all levels because there are so many variations in what bees actually do. In this monthly meeting we are going to shift the emphasis of a formal lecture format to make more opportunity for members at all levels to seek clarification of their specific concerns, uncertainties and interests and share their experiences, good and bad –



**Spotted by Eugene.** An *Ichneumon* wasp on a *Euphorbia* at Kew. Photo: Eugene McConville

a sort of BeeBanter Live. The session will be led by Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols and Geoff Hood. At the usual Zoom link (in the [Members' Area](#) and in your email).

The **Pub Social** will be on **Tuesday 27th April** from 18:30 (Zoom link in the [Members' Area](#) and in your email).

May's Monthly Meeting will be on Sunday 9th May on another important topic – Bee Health – particularly with all this European Foul Brood about.

## Join the committee!

LBKA is a reasonably-sized organisation with (currently) over 200 members that is building a good reputation for its stance on beekeeping, the quality of its outreach activities and the quality of its advice. We need more committee members to enable us to do more. Don't worry if you don't know quite what role you might be able to have. You'll find your place! Please contact any member of the committee (see back page) for a chat.

## Paid opportunities for members

Every now and then opportunities for paid work relating to beekeeping come to the committee's attention. It is policy to make these opportunities available to all members. However, from experience, the process of advertising the opportunities in the monthly Newsletter is not always timely for the work required. We are therefore proposing to use a "framework agreement" type process to identify members who are interested, able and have the relevant experience, skills/qualifications and resources (including insurances where relevant) to



**Spotted by George.** Another hungry bee foraging on wild plum. Photo: George Kozobolis

respond to different categories of services required on a hypothetical basis in advance of real opportunities arising. This will allow a more appropriate response time when specific requests for services come in but retain the openness and fairness to potential member suppliers.

In the first instance we are therefore inviting "expressions of interest" from members for the following categories of paid services should they be requested by potential client businesses, organisations (potentially including the LBKA), or individuals:

- Beekeeping, apiary management, consultancy and delivery, etc.
- Bee related ecological, environmental, land management, planting consultancy, design and delivery services
- Bee related educational consultancy and support, including content development and supply, etc

Any member wishing to respond to this invitation please contact Simon Saville in writing [development@lbka.org.uk](mailto:development@lbka.org.uk), clearly stating which category/categories you are interested in and a brief CV of relevant experience and or qualification and any insurances held (if relevant). You may then be invited to respond in further detail to specific hypothetical requirements.

## Winter Lecture Schedule

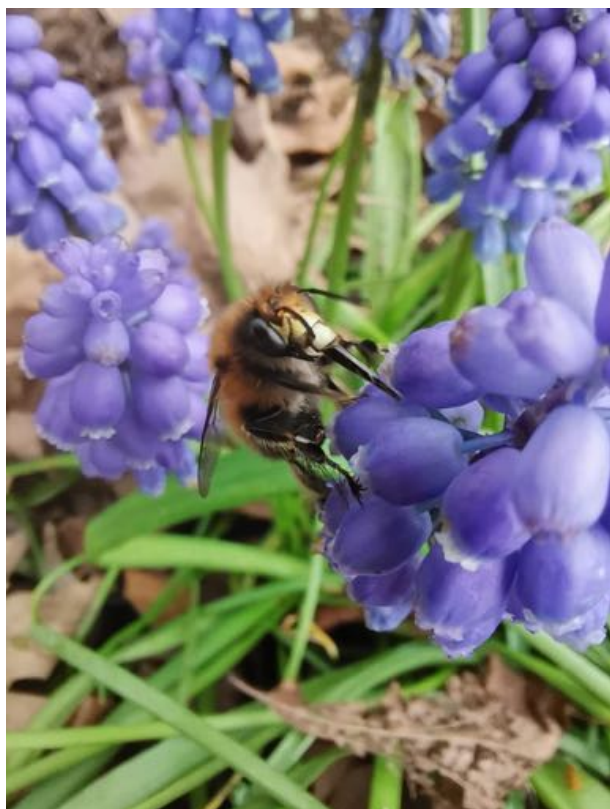
The remaining Winter Lecture will be on **Wednesday 21 April, 6:30pm** on "The future of pollinator conservation in the UK: opportunities and challenges" by Prof. Jeff Ollerton. Joining details will be emailed to members a few days in advance of the lecture.

Prof. Jeff Ollerton is an ecological scientist and author and has already given us a couple of winter lectures. Those that we recorded can found on our [webpage](#) for members.

## Are you "good" with social media?

If you are good at communicating with social media, then you could help LBKA!





*Spotted by Eugene. Male Hairy-Footed Flower bee on a Grape Hyacinth at Kew, in mid-March. Photo: Eugene McConville*

LBKA has a presence on all the main social media channels - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram - but we aren't currently using these channels as effectively as we could. We are looking for a Social Media Officer to take the lead in how these channels are used. Ideally, we would co-opt you onto the committee so that you're up-to-date with the latest discussions on key topics of interest.

Our social media channels already have an impressive reach, but we aren't using them very proactively to manage our communications. This is a good opportunity to help develop a profile of a local charity and its charitable objectives.

- Twitter: [@LondonBeeKeeper](https://twitter.com/LondonBeeKeeper)  
"Serving bee keepers & conservation enthusiasts in London"  
7,000+ followers  
5,000+ tweets since 2012
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/londonbeekeepersassociation/>  
Recently set up; little activity so far
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/> (open site)  
"Welcome to the open group London Beekeepers Association page. This page is not an official LBKA page but is managed by LBKA members as a means of public engagement, sharing of in-

formation and for discussion about beekeeping in London."

Public group, 2,800+ members

These channels have excellent potential to help us get our messages to key audiences, especially to non-members who have an interest in bees and beekeeping. Along with our excellent website, they are the public face of the Association – who we are, what we do, and what we stand for.

Please get in touch with Simon if you have an interest in getting involved: [development@lbka.org.uk](mailto:development@lbka.org.uk) and 07572 612722.

## LBKA Pollinator Fund

LBKA is now inviting members to apply for grants from the LBKA Pollinator Fund. This fund aims to support small community groups to improve their local environment for the benefit of bees and other pollinators.

From this fund, LBKA will offer grants of up to £1,000 to improve small areas. Grants can be offered for small stand-alone projects, or as match funding or seed funding towards larger projects. In the latter case the larger projects must aim to benefit pollinators.

Project proposals which promote the conservation of wild bees and other pollinators through provision of improved forage and of breeding habitats will be of particular interest to LBKA. For wild bees, breeding habitat provision can include the creation of nesting mounds for ground nesting bees, and bee hotels containing nesting tubes to provide homes for leafcutter and mason bees. For the benefit of other pollinators, projects could include the creation of loggeries for decaying timber nesting species, hoverfly lagoons as breeding habitat for other specific pollinators, and the planting of larval food plants for butterflies and moths. Projects that include the planting of early and late season forage for honey bees will be assumed to benefit other pollinators too.

Priority will be given to publicly accessible spaces. If your space is on a housing estate, allotment or other site with restricted public access, you might consider how receipt of a grant could enable you to increase public access to the site in future. For example, if it doesn't do so already, your site could hold open days or take part in London Open Garden events, giving the public the chance to visit the project and admire your work. If your site is within the grounds of a school, the educational benefits of your project will be weighted highly when your application is evaluated.

LBKA sees greater public access to improved pollinator habitats as an opportunity for public education and information-sharing. The installation of interpretation boards explaining the project and its aims, or providing more general information about London's pollinators, would be seen as a significant public benefit of any project.



*The first colony that Elliot has ever overwintered in an Apidea. "I was originally inspired by a pamphlet written by Ron Brown "Managing Mininucs – Honeymoon Flats for Honeybee Queens" (£2 from Northern Bee Books). It was my fourth attempt at over wintering a mininuc, so would encourage others to persevere if they have not got there yet. As a side project the process has taught me about the importance of adequate preparation for winter, monitoring store levels, how needs of smaller scale colonies differ with size, best practice for queen acceptance, prevalence of CPBV type 2 in densely populated colonies and insulative properties of polystyrene. This colony is doing well so their real estate is soon to be upsized to a full size nuc".*  
 Photo/quote: Elliot Hodges

For comprehensive guidance on the application process, and an application form, please contact [treasurer@lbka.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@lbka.org.uk).

### Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) talks

Excellent [series of talks](#) from the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA).

### BBKA Spring Convention on 16-18 April

Put this date in your diaries. The BBKA Spring Convention will be entirely online and will offer a mix of practical and scientific lectures and presentations, on the topics most requested, directed at a range of beekeeping experience, presented by the very best of speakers.

The electronic Convention programme is [available on the website](#), with full details of speakers and their talks. Entry to the Virtual Tradeshow (aka "The Marketplace") will be free and this will be everyone's opportunity to browse the latest beekeeping kit from multiple suppliers, all under one 'virtual' roof and to take advantage of special Convention offers.



### Contribute to the Newsletter

You'll see a few gaps in our regular contributions. If you can help with any of these (not necessarily every month) please drop me line. We'd welcome contributions from more members and would love it if you could propose a new regular feature. We usually end up with 300 or so members and the newsletters are [available to all on our website](#). Do email me if you can contribute anything including articles, photos and recipes.

We're looking for members to summarise the issues discussed in a digestible way. Please contact [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) if you may be able to help in some months.

### Old announcements from March

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

**Christmas Quiz winner:** Congratulations to **Mark Patterson** for winning the Christmas Quiz. Elliot arranged a very special prize – a bespoke glass bee by #CrazedPurpleGlass.

**Allotment Agreements with Beekeepers:** Our proactive strategy for **responsible urban beekeeping in London** seems to be working as we have been helping advise Lewisham Borough Council on allotment beekeeping policy.

### Old announcements from February

**BBKA Bee Basic:** If you're a beekeeper and haven't yet done the BBKA Bee Basic certification, please consider doing it. We will help you prepare for it. See Howard's piece on page 7 of [January's newsletter](#) which also outlines other aspects of LBKA's education programme.

### Old announcements from January

**"Bee Banter" WhatsApp group:** The join link is in the [Members' Area](#) and in your welcome email and **you can turn off notifications, if the traffic becomes too much for you.**

### 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](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

---

## March'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.

*Aidan Slingsby*  
[services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)

We postponed this month's committee meeting and will discuss important issues by email.

---

## Last month's Monthly Meeting: First inspection

What happened at our meeting last month.

*We need volunteers willing to help write these sections. Please contact [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) if you may be able to help in some months.*

*Aidan Slingsby*  
[services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)

This month's meeting was about First Inspection, with a specially-recorded video of Richard doing his first inspection followed by Howard talking about what one might find in a hive at a first inspection – both good and bad. We recorded the meeting and [it's available to members on our website](#).

---

## April in the Apiary

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

*Howard Nichols*  
[education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk)

This is the month that colony populations substantially increase and drones start to appear. I undertook my first full inspection of the year on each colony on 30th March as it was so warm. Some colonies were considerably advanced but others less so. I will now start my weekly inspection for queen cells so my beekeeping season has officially started I suppose.

The most important job for the beekeeper in April, given the usual variable weather, is to ensure that the colony is not starving. The stores in my own colonies are falling as most of the forage being brought in is pollen. More and more bees are being born, all of which require feeding. Colonies should normally be self-sufficient by the end of April but assuming the weather holds good. Therefore, it is essential to check stores on a regular basis and to record this on the record card. Those of us who ensured that our hive(s) had at least 35lb of stores last Autumn should not have a food shortage issue in the Spring. Those colonies with less stores last Autumn could now be running very short. Feeding can now be done with syrup but better to use a contact feeder if possible as, on cold days, bees may not be able to access a rapid feeder.



Other action to be taken this month normally include the following:

- **Remove mouseguards.** Remove mouseguards and replace with a clean, sterilised entrance block if not already done in March.
- **Mark queen.** If the queen is unmarked then this is an ideal time to find and mark her. The colony is now going to continue to expand in numbers up until July whereupon it will start to contract. Swarm control will be considerably easier with a marked queen. My own colonies all have original queens, none have superseded their queen.
- **Colony build up.** Is the colony continuing to build up? A significant benefit of keeping colony records is that the number of frames of brood is recorded.
- **1st full inspection.** If not done in March then the 1st full inspection and spring cleaning of the hive should be carried out. The best way to spring clean is to have a spare broodbox and floor and simply transfer all frames and bees into a new brood box then place this on the new floor. The old box and floor can then be taken away for cleaning. From then on regular weekly inspections should be made.

When inspecting a colony, 5 questions should be always asked and actions taken if appropriate.

1. **Is the queen present and laying?** You do not need to find the queen. If there are eggs and these are only 1 egg per cell, or newly hatched larvae, then this is evidence that she was in the hive and laying 3 or 4 days ago.
2. **Has the colony enough room?** This is a 2-part question, being enough room for the queen to continue to lay eggs and enough room for the colony to store nectar. If not then provide room by adding a super.
3. **Are there any queen cells?** Queen cups are to be expected and should normally be ignored unless containing an egg or larva. Queen cells require swarm control action by the beekeeper. If the bees have sufficient space then swarm control should not normally be an issue until late April or early May. If there is insufficient space in the hive, leading to congestion and inhibition of the circulation of queen substance, then swarming can be an April problem. Therefore, ensure that the colony has sufficient space. Add a super if necessary.
4. **Are there signs of disease?** This is a comprehensive question but the strategy is best approached by being familiar with healthy brood. Anything that does not fit this description is, prima facie, suspicious. Healthy unsealed brood is pearly white in colour, evenly laid, segmented and lies in a "C" shape in the cell. Healthy sealed brood is light brown in colour, evenly laid, dry and with slightly raised dome cappings.
5. **Are there enough stores until the next inspection?** The equivalent of 2 full National brood frames is regarded as more than sufficient at this time of year, even if there is a serious and pro-



*Flowering currant.*

longed downward turn in the weather. Nectar does not usually rise in UK indigenous plants until the temperature reaches 18C. So, beware of low stores.

We have passed the Equinox and Spring is now underway. The beekeeping season is with us for the next 6 months. I hope everyone enjoys themselves during the period. It can be challenging at times but extremely rewarding. Please do come along to our monthly zoom meetings to share your experiences and get help or suggestions with any of your queries. I hope your bees prosper and produce lots of honey for you. Happy Beekeeping for 2021!

---

## Focus on Forage

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

*Mark Patterson*  
[forage@lbka.org.uk](mailto:forage@lbka.org.uk)

As we enter April many of our true heralds of spring have begun to flower. Among them the pretty pink **Cuckoo Flower** *Cardamine pratensis*. This dainty little pink flower is a true sign that spring 'proper' has arrived. It's an important nectar plant for many pollinators and the main food plant for the larva of the **Orange Tip Butterfly** – a species sadly in decline.



*Marsh marigold.*

**Deadnettle, Dandelions, Coltsfoot, Primulas, Wood Anemones, Green Alkanet, Comfrey and Lungwort** are at last now coming in bloom 2-3 weeks later than last year. The latter 2 in particular are popular with the **Hairy Footed Flower Bee**. Another flower I'm noticing lots of **small solitary bees** on at the moment, is **Lesser Celandine**. This plant is unusual in the buttercup family (*Ranunculaceae*) as it is one of the few buttercups that is attractive to bees. Most other *Ranunculus* have nectar which contains the toxin protoanemonin which bees cannot digest and can lead to poisoning. Lesser Celandine, however, is popular with many of our early solitary bees and occasionally Honey bees. Many of the **Micro Andrena** solitary bees feed on the golden yellow flowers which form vast carpets among cemetery, churchyards and beneath hedgerows. Another member of the buttercup family which bees may visit at this time of year is the **Marsh Marigold**.

Most of the **tulips, crocus** and **Winter Aconite** have now long gone over but there are still **Daffodils** in flower (though they are of little use to our bees), **alliums, wild garlic** and **Muscari** (Grape Hyacinth) in bloom.

This time last year, across much of southern England, **bluebells** were making an appearance. They are later this year and so far I've only seen signs of the fresh green leaves, but no flowers yet. In another few weeks, they should be out putting on a gorgeous display of blue. Blue bells may be visited by Honey bees and can produce a honey crop but they are also popular with some



*Pulmonaria.*



*Celandine.*

of the longer tongued solitary bees. Most Bluebells in London will be the invasive Spanish bluebell, but a few locations still hold stands of the native species.

During the last few days **Flowering Currant** have started to bloom. This plant is a reliable indicator that spring proper has arrived and for me a timely reminder to undertake first proper inspections. I'm writing this 24 hours after doing full inspections on several colonies where I have had to add supers because the brood bodies are full of sealed brood and honey. If a flow starts now and the colony runs out of room they could begin swarm preparations.

Other important sources of forage this month are the willows. The catkins of willow bear copious amounts of sulphur-yellow pollen. If your honey bees are returning to the hive dusted in yellow they will most likely have been visiting willow. It's not just honey bees that visit willow. Many bumblebees and *Andrena* bees will also collect willow pollen, and seem to time their emergence with Willow catkins. Unlike the earlier flowering catkins of **Alder** and **Hazel** willow will also produce nectar. Other trees coming into bloom right now include **Field Maple, Sycamore, Poplar** and **Ash**. April is when we normally expect to see **Cherry Laurel** blooming in abundance but across much of the country this evergreen shrub is delayed flowering due to the recent cold.





*Muscari.*

On the 4th April I saw the first inflorescence about to burst into flower. Many of the small solitary *Andrena* bees rely on this shrub for pollen and nectar.

As we progress through April we should expect to see the first **Horse Chestnut** blossom. Chestnut produces very distinctive dark brick red pollen which honey bees will collect with enthusiasm. Chestnuts are one of the best examples of how plants communicate with their pollinators; the individual blooms of the flower stalk change colour as they are fertilised to inform the bees that they need not bother to visit that particular bloom. Other trees coming into bloom will include Cherry, Plum and Apple. Currently the Blackthorn is putting on a good show of blooms and on warm days the bees may bring in a crop from this nectar source. At one of my apiaries my bees have access to about 45 hectares of mostly **Blackthorn** scrub and they bring back copious amounts of the brown coloured pollen and can fill a super with honey in little over a week.

One of the larger gardens where I keep my Honey Bees includes a 34 tree fruit orchard. So far the **nectarines**, **peaches** and **Mirabel DeNancy plum** are the only trees to have flowered. The **pears** should begin to bloom shortly followed by the **apples**, **Victoria Plum** and **Greengage**. Worryingly the half dozen Crab Apples planted around the edge of the garden to cross pollinate our cultivated apples have already bloomed which begs the question what will our apples pollinate with this year? The varieties planted were supposed to flower in unison providing cross pollination and better



*Tulips.*

fruit set with the heritage apple varieties which unlike many modern cultivars do not self-pollinate.

On the outer edges of the city **Oil Seed Rape** will be starting to come into bloom and will flower well into mid-May. Beekeepers either love it or hate it for it can produce an abundance of honey but the grainy texture and trend to crystallise rock hard in the comb are drawbacks. Our member Geoffrey Hood produced a lot of Rape honey in 2015 and when I find time I intend to use it as seed honey to try and make Creamed Honey. If I'm successful you can expect a write up about that.

### Jobs to do in the garden

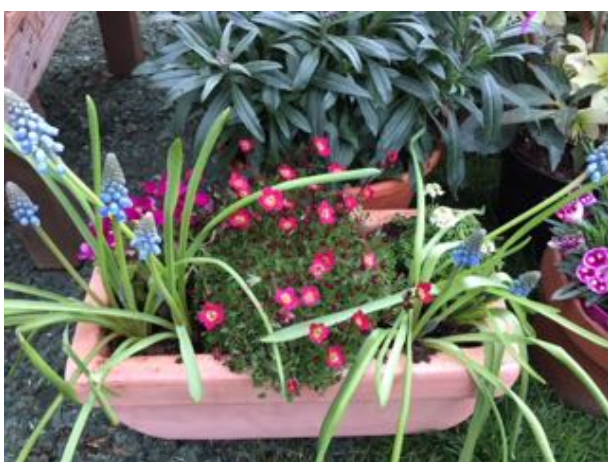
From now on, weeding will become a regular chore in the garden. For the past 3 weeks I have been meticulously pulling out the seedlings of **Germander Speedwell**, the first shoots of **Bindweed** and **Common Cleavers** which every year threaten to take over my garden. Keeping them in check requires constant attention. Weeding is a garden chore I like the least – if only it could all be about planting flowers!

Prune back damaged branches on shrubs and fruit trees. Storm Katie has battered quite a few trees on my allotment which will now need pruning. Remove dead or damaged tissues cutting to the branch bark ridge.

Plant out summer flowering bulbs once threat of frost has gone.



*Peach blossom in Fulham palace walled garden.*



*The pollinator friendly window box we took to Ascot.*

## Bee imports via Northern Ireland

Stop the importation of honey bees into GB from the EU via Northern Ireland.

*Anne Rowberry  
BBKA Chair*

As you are probably aware, there is a move to bring bees into the UK via Northern Ireland. This is to circumvent the law that prohibits Package Bees, Nuclei and Colonies entering the UK and is a result of a loophole allowing direct entry into Northern Ireland from the European Union. These bees would have a health certificate issued in the area of the EU from which they originated but would have no other serious inspections in Northern Ireland or when they enter the rest of the UK.

They are coming from southern Italy near the site where the outbreak of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) originated. Although officially there is not a threat of SHB in the area, there is little compensation if beekeepers report an

outbreak that would result in colonies being destroyed and restrictions put officially on the movement of bees in the area.

The SHB is in Italy and in the area where these bees are being bred. If they get into the UK they will spread rapidly.

The BBKA with Bee Disease Insurance, organised cooperation between Northern Ireland beekeepers, Welsh and Scottish beekeepers. Joint letters were sent to Ministers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The BBKA (or rather me, as it must be set up by an individual) has [organised a Parliamentary Petition](#). The petition is now live so please publicise as widely as possible. Please share the [link](#).

The UK Government should ensure that people cannot circumvent restrictions on the movement of bees from the EU to GB by moving them via NI. Unrestricted movement of bees could allow Small Hive Beetle to arrive and devastate British beekeeping.

The potential effect of allowing this avoidance of the import laws and the threat it carries to our bees is clearly not part of a legitimate trade and as such breaches the law. Historically, the imports of bees into Northern Ireland were small and therefore there is not a strong inspection service available. They would be challenged to inspect high numbers of Package bees before the bees are repackaged and shipped on to other parts of Great Britain as Package bees or Nuclei. More details can be found on the BBKA website and in the April edition of the BBKA News.

The BBKA is asking you to take a stand:

- Please sign the Petition and ask for support from friends, family and neighbours in signing the petition;
- Publicise the petition with your local press, radio and TV, MP, Councillors, magazines and any other contacts you may have such as gardening, sports, golf, and tennis clubs or anywhere we can get our concern heard.

We can make a difference but we need your support. Please sign the petition and confirm your email address in the link you will be sent.

Thank you for reading this letter and for your support.



# LBKA Apiaries

What's happening in LBKA's apiaries.

*Kathy Stevenson*  
LBKA member

LBKA's apiaries are set up for hosting introductory courses and Basic assessments as well as providing observation hives and honey for sale at various events. Each apiary is run by a team of volunteers, and there are four of them: the **Eden Garden** of St. Paul's church, Clapham, **Holland Park** in Kensington, **Brockwell Park** in the community garden centre, and **Mudchute** in the Isle of Dogs. With an aim to revive a newsletter column on what's happening in our apiaries, I would first like to introduce the sites to our new members. Having joined a team just before lockdown last year, I feel I can safely start this issue with Holland Park.

A brief description of Holland Park from the [London Wiki](#) goes like this:

*The northern half or so of the park is semi-wild woodland, the central section around the ruins of Holland House is more formal with several garden areas, and the southernmost section is used for sport. Holland House is now a fragmentary ruin, but a substantial part of its grounds were preserved from development and taken over by the local council. Holland Park contains a famous Orangery, a cricket pitch, tennis courts, a Japanese garden, a Youth Hostel, one of London's best equipped children's playgrounds, squirrels and peacocks. The remains of the house form a backdrop for Opera Holland Park productions.*

What? No mention of bees?

The apiary, set up by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, was situated on the roof of the colonnade next to the Orangery. When the LBKA took over in 2015, the roof load restrictions made it unsuitable for a teaching apiary. In 2018 the apiary was moved to its current location in the paddock.

Just north of the youth hostel on the edge of the woodland, the apiary is a bit difficult to see in high summer. The paddock, with proper farm gate and un-electrified electric fence, was a home to pigs in 2010. Their job was to reclaim the area from nettles and brambles in order to prepare the area for a wild flower meadow. Cattle were used later for the same reason. Right now the daffs are all aglow and the nettles and brambles are thriving again. The four hives are visible now, if you look!

The year 2020 was set to be a stunner for the Holland



*The apiary's pre-2018 rooftop position.*



*The apiary's current paddock position.*



*Holland Park's hives.*





*Social distance-sting in 2020.*



*Frank's hive stands.*

Park apiary. However, plans to develop this into a pollinator sanctuary "Bees and Flowers Go Together" were delayed.

Restart is expected in 2021, all being well, as LBKA partners with RBKC in the borough's Bee Superhighway initiative to improve habitat for pollinators. The charity, Hands On London, has volunteers planting up areas on Fridays.

We have two colonies presently and plan to expand to the 6 or 8 needed to cope with the rigours of a teaching apiary. LBKA will have use of the Ecology Centre, a purpose built teaching facility, with plans to restart face to face meetings, including a summer social this year. So, there you have it. 'Til next month, stay safe everyone!

---

## 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](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) to add something here.

**Frank Ryan:** I make beehive stands from strong premium-grade materials, painted an attractive holly colour using bee-friendly paint. Each stand is made to measure a for comfortable working height and has the option to expand from a single stand to a double. The dimensions allow for ratchet-strapping. Contact Frank on 07877388933 or [frankryan60@hotmail.com](mailto:frankryan60@hotmail.com).

---

## Upcoming events

### Sunday 11th April: Monthly meeting: Swarm prevention and control

*11:00-13:00 at Same zoom link as usual (in the Members' Area of the website and sent to your email).*

Swarm prevention and control is one of the big challenges for urban beekeepers at all levels because there are so many variations in what bees actually do. In this monthly meeting we are going to shift the emphasis of a formal lecture format to make more opportunity for members at all levels to seek clarification of their specific concerns, uncertainties and interests and share their experiences, good and bad. The session will be led by Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols and Geoff Hood.

### Wednesday 21st April: Winter Lecture: the future of pollinator conservation in the UK

*18:30 at ONLINE (members will be emailed the link beforehand)*

The lecture "the future of pollinator conservation in the UK: opportunities and challenges" will be given by Prof. Jeff Ollerton.

### Tuesday, 27th April: Pub Social

*18:30 onwards at via Zoom (see your email for a link)*  
Our ONLINE pub social in the historical surroundings of your own home. Bring your own beer. Using the usual Pub Social Zoom link in the Members' Area of the website and sent to your email.

## Sunday 9th May: Monthly meeting: Bee Health

11:00-13:00 at Same zoom link as usual (in the Members' Area of the website and sent to your email).

Understanding bee health and ensuring our bees are in tip-top condition.

## 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](mailto:chair@lbka.org.uk)
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, [treasurer@lbka.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@lbka.org.uk)
- **Secretary/Events:** Annie McGeoch, [admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk)
- **Education:** Howard Nichols [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk)
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)
- **Apiaries:** Tristram Sutton, [apiaries@lbka.org.uk](mailto:apiaries@lbka.org.uk)
- **Development:** Simon Saville, [development@lbka.org.uk](mailto:development@lbka.org.uk)
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, [mentor@lbka.org.uk](mailto:mentor@lbka.org.uk)
- **Resources:** Will Fry, [resources@lbka.org.uk](mailto:resources@lbka.org.uk)

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

