



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

August, 2022

We've been making a huge effort to organise the hands-on and in-person events that we've been missing for the past couple of years. We have also been moving around London. Last month we were at Mudchute doing the end-to-end process of honey extraction. This month we are at Roots and Shoots with another hands-on session with the resident bees, which is followed by our main summer social (we hope you can come; tickets available on the door. . . if there's space). Next month, we will be meeting the bees at Battersea Children's Zoo.

Please let us know your views on our events as these are a lot of works to organise.

This month's newsletter is a bit thin. Please help by providing content – photos, articles, thoughts, reflections, advice, recipes, poetry. . . . Thanks to Richard, Howard and Mark for their regular and excellent contributions, without which there would be no newsletter.

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Thank you to this month's contributors: **Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols and Mark Patterson**. 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

Has Covid-19 had an affect on beekeeping? Probably not directly. Has Covid had an affect on beekeepers? It seems unlikely that any beekeeper has not been affected in some way. Has Covid affected LBKA? This is the question behind a lot of questions the Trustees are asking at the moment.

Strictly speaking it is not the virus itself that has affected this aspect of our lives but the behavioural changes that came about in an attempt to mitigate the potentially existential impact of pandemic. Lockdown exemplifies a pretty extreme example of behavioural change but it was compulsory, not a choice.

What we now have are voluntary changes in the way we are behaving. What is not clear is whether some changes are out of choice, preference even or whether



Hornet mimic hoverfly. Photo: Vane Milanov.



Physical distancing in our apiaries.

“things are just different” and we are all in the process of adjusting.

When lockdown happened LBKA “routines”, such as Monthly Meetings, Introductory courses, mentoring, Pub Social, Winter Lectures, stopped. We learned to replace some of these on-line and learned that some aspects could actually be delivered better that way. Geography and travel expenses are no longer the limiting factors of our Winter Lectures and online Monthly meetings can strengthen the format of Q&A sessions after every topic and benefit from a much broader range of membership sitting at home than could be relied upon to struggle through the metropolis on a Sunday morning.

And where would we have been without WhatsApp? More precisely, where would novice beekeepers, in particular, have been without this knowledge exchange forum or where would intermediate and experienced beekeepers go for their fix of bee banter?

But the longer this online existence goes on as the predominant platform the more it becomes apparent something is missing. Online discussions can be very informative, online course theory can be very good. Even the online pub socials can provide elements of social behaviour but you just can’t get to know somebody by sitting face to face on screen as well as you can by sitting next to them in a pub.

It should go without saying, if you want to keep bees you have to get to know bees. To get to know them you have to meet them and all the better if you can be shown them by somebody who knows them well and that goes on being true at all levels of experience. That is ultimately the point of a beekeeping association.

The world is not yet post-covid. We are not trying to go back to the old normal. We are looking for better ways to achieve better beekeeping and we instinctively feel that rebuilding social meeting has a part to play in that. That said, if we are to succeed in rebuilding anew, meetings have to be in a form, time and place that members can and want to attend. The Trustees

recognise this is an iterative process: we need feedback from attendees and non-attendees.

The August Monthly Meeting, 101 Rookie errors frequently made by experienced beekeepers is on Sunday 14th at Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN, 11am.

It is followed by the LBKA Summer Social, the first in three years. I can promise you, it will be hot! I hope to see you there.

Stay well.

Announcements

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

August’s Monthly Meeting, Spectacular Summer Social and Pub Social

August’s Monthly Meeting on **Sunday 14th August** at **11:00** will be at **Roots and Shoots** (Walnut Tree Walk, London, SE11 6DN) on “**101 rookie beekeeping errors frequently made by experienced beekeepers**”, a tongue-in-cheek title for what should be a really interactive hands-on session using Roots and Shoot’s resident bees and the apiary manager Sharon. We expect that many members will be able to contribute and it is certain that everyone will learn something. We will supply bee suits so need to bring your own (more hygienic not to). Please do come, as there’s nothing quite like an interactive hands-on session – something we have been missing in the past few years.

This will be followed by our **Spectacular Summer Social** at **13:00-16:00**, the highlight of our Social Calendar will include food from our favourite caterers “DelicaSisters” and drink. Members only, but members can bring guests. You will have had to have purchased a £10 ticket in advance, but you will be able to buy tickets on the door if there’s space.

The Pub Social this month will be on **Tuesday 30th August** from 18:30 onwards at Tufnell Park Tavern, 162 Tufnell Park Rd, London **N7 0EE**, a short walk from Tufnell Park Station (Northern Line). We’re back in North London this month. A nice pub with lots of space that serves food.

September’s Monthly Meeting on 11th September will be **another** hands-on session at **another** apiary at Battersea Park Children’s Zoo, Battersea Park, London, SW11 4NJ on “Winter Preparation” (meet at the main entrance). We’re really spoiling you this summer!

South of England Honey Show

- A unique opportunity open to Associations, their members and individual beekeepers.
- Competition judged by Bill Fisher.
- Hone exhibit preparation ahead of Local, County or the National Honey Show.

Bees &
Honey
SECTION at the



Previously held in the Bees & Honey marquee at the South of England Show during June ... now more conveniently later in the beekeeping year ... and indoors at the **Autumn Show & International Horse Trials**.

Same location - **SoE Showground, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TL** - New dates

Cash prizes for each class.

Trophies awarded to the winner of the "Bounty from the Hive" class and for "Most Points in Honey Classes".

NHS BLUE RIBBON AWARD for the Best Exhibit in Show.

Honey Show Schedule & Honey Entry Form

available to download via our link or the **South of England Showground** website from June 2022

Registration of entries accepted up to the 17th September 2022

Get together with your fellow members to register entries on behalf of your Association or Division.

Drop off entries at the Showground during the 23rd September.

Be smart, arrange for one person to deliver and collect entries from your Association.

Supply Honey from yourself or Association to have sold from our popular Sales Stall

Promote your Association or Division by providing flyers or notices about your Membership, Training and Taster Days.

For Enquiries & Info, contact:-

beesandhoneyinfo@gmail.com

Help as a Show Steward

for a day on honey sales & info. stands.

For Enquiries & Info, contact:-

chief.steward@deodar.org.uk

Visit us via this link ...



<https://www.seas.org.uk/competing-autumn-show-horse-trials/>

South of England Agricultural Society,
South of England Showground, Selsfield Rd, Ardingly, West Sussex RH17 6TL
Tel: 01444 892700 Email: info@seas.org.uk Website: www.seas.org.uk

The South of England Agricultural Society is a registered charity no. 227033



South of England Honey Show

The South of England Honey Show may be of interest to members. See their [website](#) and their flyer on page 3 for more details.

Honey Labelling Petition

A message from Stephen Barnes (Chair of BBKA):

The delegates at the 2022 ADM overwhelmingly mandated the EC to take action to address the issues of adulterated/fake honey. One of the actions was to start a petition to ask the government to update and overhaul the labeling requirements for the sale of honey. The petition closes on the 7th August and so far has been signed by 7,500 people, which is only 25% of the Association's members. A further 2,500 signatures are required to force the government to respond. Please can I encourage you and your friends to sign up.

If you'd like to sign the petition, do so [here](#).

Thanks to School Food Matters volunteers

As you know, we have been helping [School Food Matters](#) teach children about food, through the prism of bees.

School Food Matters is a charity that teaches children about food in school. They contract our local providers to deliver content and LBKA is one such organisations and is a useful revenue stream for LBKA.

Our involvement started a few years ago, with **Richard Glassborow** developing material and **Martin Hudson** coordinating volunteers and helping with delivery.

This year, **Richard Glassborow** and **Annie McGeoch** ran the South London operation, and **Lucie Chaumerton** and **Geoff Hood** ran the North London operation and ran the sessions with the help of the following volunteers: **Dominique Bernard, Deborah Blythe Tolson, Jane Cook, Rosemary Danelian, Gus from Alveoli, Linda Guarandau, David Hankins, Martin Hudson, Alison Kahane, John Kem-bury, Philip Linguard, Nicki Marani, Vane Milanov, Larry Osei, Ian Shackleton, Andrew Slade, Aidan Slingsby, Arthur Starzec, Kathy Stevenson, Tristram Sutton, Mary Walwyn, Sara Ward, Wilf Wood, Howard Wright.**

Over this summer, we visited 20 schools (with live bees in our observation hive), presenting to at least four classes each day. We also had 10 apiary days where school classes visited our apiaries. We therefore spread the word about the importance of pollinators for food production to several thousand children.

A big thanks from the committee to members who vol-

unteered for School Food Matters, particularly those that coordinated and did big chunks of the work themselves. We'll be having a get-together this week. Without volunteers such as these, LBKA would not be able to do anything.

LBKA's Pollinator Fund

Don't forget about LBKA's Pollinator Fund!

The LBKA Pollinator Fund operates all year round, with grants of up to £1,000 available for full- or part-funded projects that have London pollinators at their heart. Applications are sought from groups such as schools, allotment organisations, tenant & residents associations, horticultural societies, and other small charities. So if you are a member of such an organisation which is developing plans, or just has a "wish list" of projects that might align with LBKA's aims, **please contact treasurer@lbka.org.uk for a Pollinator Fund guidance document and application form** or see https://www.lbka.org.uk/pollinator_fund.

LBKA videos

Just a reminder that videos of many of our Winter Lectures, Monthly Meetings and various other stuff can be found in the [Members' Area of the website](#).

Instagram

Please keep sending your bee related pictures to Lucie at instagram@lbka.org.uk or share them with your authorisation to publish on the Bee Banter WhatsApp group. And if you are on Insta do follow [@londonbeekeepersassociation](#).

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.

August's Committee meeting

Here, we keep you up to date with what the committee discusses at our monthly committee meetings (and what keeps us awake at night). Let us know if you can help or have any suggestions that might help.

Aidan Slingsby
services@lbka.org.uk

A large part of the committee meeting involved planning upcoming events.

Everything is in place for this week's Monthly Meeting and Summer Social. Sharon and Richard leading the meeting which will involve looking at and in hives



"Part Wagontrain part bag-lady, LBKA Chair sets out on another school visit". Photo and caption: Richard Glassborow.

and hoping that members of all experiences will benefit. We will have use of the hall and courtyard. 37 tickets have been booked so far and Richard will invite some additional guests of the association. David has booked the catering for the Summer Social and has set aside all the items that need to be brought to the venue. Richard and Annie will be bringing the items and organising setting-up. Annie and Richard will be leading next month's meeting at Battersea Children's Zoo on "Winter Preparation", after a quick talk about the Zoo. Later meetings will include varroa management, including discussion of non-chemical methods and Warré hives. We will also be following up Mary Walwyn's suggestion of a talk on this topic.

The committee are aware that they know little about the attitudes of members to the events we organise, with attendance being low. The committee will all contribute to designing a members' survey which may cover what kinds of beekeeping goes on in London, whether members are happy with our pursuit of the London Bee Situation, how we can make it easier for them to contribute, and what the barriers are to participation. The survey is planned before the AGM.

We are developing honey pricing guidelines for our apiaries and aim to complete and approve this so that we can use it this year.

We would like to enlarge the committee so we can do more. We have quite a lot of active volunteers but many are not willing to join the Committee. We are thinking of using a subcommittee structure, where subcommittees for specific roles comprise members who are not necessarily on the committee, led by a committee member, similar to the apiary management model. We encourage members to contact us if they would be interested in getting more involved.

August in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

The honey has been taken off and the beekeeper should now be starting to prepare the bees for winter. The objective for both August and September should be to put the bees in the best possible position to go into winter. They should be in a healthy condition, with a good queen and in a sound, weatherproof hive.

Preparing the colony for winter

A significant risk to the colony in winter is having too many varroa mites in the hive. The most common form of treatment at this time of year is Apiguard. This needs to be in the colony for a minimum of 4 weeks and is most effective when the outside temperature is greater than 15C. Early August is the optimum time to commence treatment as the honey has been removed and temperatures are still above 15C until mid September. There are other miticides which are also suitable at this time of year. The time for non chemical treatments has now passed.

Other winter preparations that may be dealt with in August are:

Sound and stable hive. Hives can be checked that they are on a stable and level surface. There should be no leaks or gaps as the hive must be waterproof and draught proof to withstand the extremely testing conditions of winter. August is also a time of robbing by other bees as the nectar supply is becoming limited. Wasps may also be a nuisance and so there should not be any gaps in the woodwork where they may gain entry. There should only be one way in and out of a beehive which is the front colony entrance. This should also be reduced so that the bees may defend it against invasion.

Strengthen colony with young bees. Worker bees produced from eggs laid in August and September need to live for up to 6 months rather than 6 weeks. A 50:50 feed of sugar syrup after the honey has been removed can stimulate the queen into continuing her egg laying whereas, otherwise, she will be decreasing this activity. Feeding for the Winter should not commence until September as any feeding done now will mainly translate into more bees, not more stores.

Other action to be taken this month

Entrance blocks. Use entrance blocks to help bees defend the colony against attacks from wasps and from robbing by other bees.



A School Food Matters visit in East London. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CdOaAq3oCUR/>

Check stores. Check that bees still have sufficient food reserves after the honey has been removed.

Uniting colonies where appropriate. A large colony has a better chance of coming through the winter months than 2 small ones. This can be deferred until September.

Reuniting colonies. If you successfully artificially swarmed a colony then the artificial swarm and colony of origin can be reunited.

Prepare to rotate out old frames. Old brood frames can be marked and moved to the flank of the broodbox. These will be easier to remove and replace next Spring. They should not be replaced for now as the bees will not draw out the comb at this time of year unless coupled with feeding.

Protect and store supers against wax moth. If you have the opportunity to put super frames in a deep freeze for 48 hours then this will kill all 4 stages of the Wax Moth lifecycle. Take care when removing the frames from the freezer as they are very brittle until the wax reaches ambient room temperature again. Acetic acid may also be used but special care is required as it is corrosive. Burning of Sulphur strips is another method. These 3 methods may be summarised as follows:

- **Freezing:** effective against all 4 stages of Wax Moth
- **Acetic Acid:** effective against 3 stages of Wax Moth (not always against pupae)
- **Sulphur strips:** effective against 3 stages of Wax Moth (not against eggs)

My own viewpoint is that old brood combs should always be burnt and that fumigation and retention is not an option. Conversely, super combs are an extremely valuable resource and the beekeeper should make every effort to look after these on behalf of the bees until next spring.

Finally, our Summer Social will take place at Roots and Shoots after the usual monthly meeting. The association has embarked upon its post lockdown reunification of members by resuming monthly meetings and the monthly pub social. The Summer Social is part of this journey for us to meet up with each other again. Belonging to LBKA is not just about keeping bees. It is important to meet face to face with each other and the Summer Social (and the AGM in November) are excellent opportunities to do that. Please make the effort to come along.

Focus on Forage

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

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

Late summer for the bees is one of the most desperate times of the year when they can struggle the most to find enough food to eat. Many people find this fact difficult to believe if the weather is often hot and sunny and presumably great for the bees but it is in fact often one of the leanest times for the busy insects. At this time of year colonies are large with many mouths to feed and as the beekeeper has removed the honey crop the flowers are also diminishing in abundance meaning the bees can struggle to replace honey which has been taken off. For this reason it's crucial not to be over-greedy and take all the honey leaving the bees with no stores for themselves.

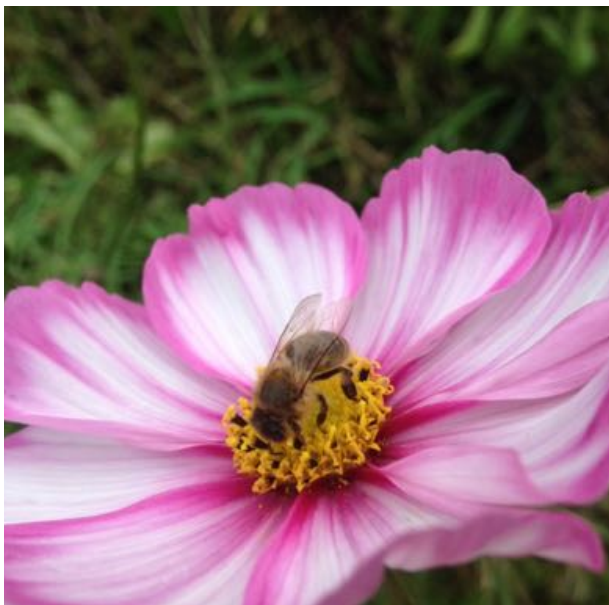
Come late summer the majority of our nectar-rich native wild plants have ceased flowering and gone to seed, especially woodland and meadow flowers whose flowering period is in rhythm with the closing of the woodland canopy and cutting of meadows for hay. **Bramble** and all our native trees have also long since finished flowering and are now sporting fruits and seeds leaving little for the bees.

Away from **heather** moorland and **heath**, the only real bountiful sources of forage from native wild plants are **Greater willow herb, thistles, ragwort, bindweed** and **hogweed** – though many of these are early this year and already going over. Along water courses **purple loosestrife, marsh woundwort, water mint** and the invasive **Himalayan balsam** provide welcome relief but not all colonies are in range of such localised sources of forage.

Late summer is one of the largest gaps in forage during the beekeeping season and ends with the brief glut of nectar provided by **ivy** flowering in the autumn. Ivy is the last opportunity for our bees to stock up for winter and for wild pollinators a chance to fuel migrations south to warmer climates or for females to fatten up in readiness for hibernation.

Research conducted by our friends at the University of Sussex has demonstrated that honey bees fly furthest to find forage in late summer with record flights of 12km being undertaken in August. In the case of the Sussex research it was found that honey bees were flying 12km to visit gardens in town centres where domestic gardens and public parks planted with bee friendly summer flowers were providing much of their forage needs. This goes to show just how important our urban gardens are for bees at this time of the year.

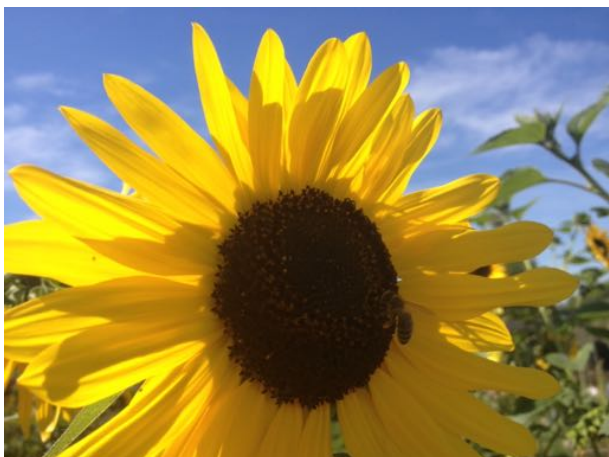
Many garden plants that are great for bees in late sum-



Cosmos.



Helianthus.



Sunflower.

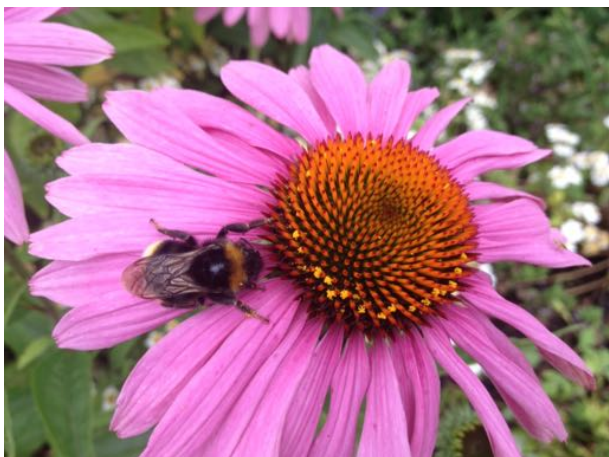
mer originate from North America where they grow in prairie habitats and have evolved to flower late in the summer and autumn avoiding the extreme heat experienced earlier in the season. Some good examples include **rudbeckia**, **echinacea**, **solidago** (Golden Rod) of which there are hundreds of varieties, **gallardia**, **penstemons**, **helianthus** (perennial sunflowers), **verbena** – particularly the species *bonariensis* and *hastata*. Probably the most attractive of all the North American plants grown in gardens for bees are the **heleniums**. Known as sneezeworts these late summer flowering perennials come in a variety of colours ranging from yellows, orange and intense reds. They are a magnet for bees and very easy to grow even on relatively poor soils. If ‘Chelsea-chopped’ in June they can provide a succession of blooms from late July right through to the first frosts of autumn.

Other plants attractive to bees include the **South African Eucomis** or “Pineapple Lily”. These plants are bulbous sporting a rosette of fleshy green leaves in summer followed by spikes of pineapple looking flowers in late summer and autumn. They come in a variety of colours from lime-green to pink and purple, some with flecks of red on the petals and flower stalk. Bees relish the pollen and nectar they provide and they are very easy to grow, being surprisingly hardy for such an exotic looking flower. Other South African plants attractive to bees include **knifophia** – the red hot pokers and Agapanthus. Knifophia have very long flower trumpets which have evolved to be pollinated by sunbirds. The flowers are hot shades of yellow, orange and red specifically to attract these birds which have very long bills and tongues equipped to pollinate the flowers. Whilst none of our native bees have the equipment needed to pollinate the blooms they can still extract the rich nectar from the flowers as it often drips and runs out of the flower trumpet and down the flower stem. **Agapanthus** are of limited usefulness to our native bees but the Common Carder Bumble Bee does seem to like them and I have often seen them foraging on Agapanthus in my own garden.

From South and Central America **cosmos**, **dahlias** and **zinnia** flowers are very attractive to bees providing nectar and pollen. The best varieties of course are the single open flowered types such as the Bishop series dahlias. My person favourite is “Bishop of Llandaff” with its bright red petals and dark centre covered in bright yellow pollen.

From New Zealand one of the best garden plants this month and widely planted in amenity spaces are the shrubby veronicas we know as **hebe** bushes. Right now hebe “Great Orme” is in flower on housing estates all across London and you can seldom walk past a specimen that’s not covered in pollinators. Later on nearer autumn the variety “Autumn Glory” come into its own with its darker purple blooms that persist well beyond the first light frosts of autumn.

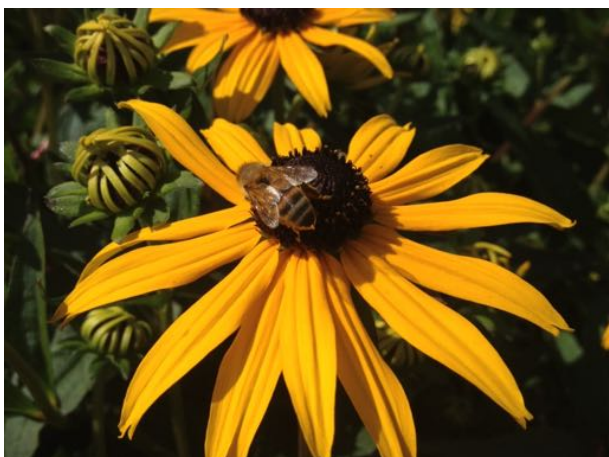
From China the *Sedum spectabile* “Autumn Joy” is a staple of gardens across the country in September when



Echinacea.



Golden rod.



Rudbeckia.

its cheerful pink heads of flowers brighten up the garden attracting bees, butterflies and hoverflies in abundance.

Another source of forage for bees in late summer comes in the form of overripe fruits. I have on several occasions witnessed honey bees sipping the sweet juices from bird damaged figs, **blackberries** and **plums** on my allotment alongside wasps and flies. This is probably not a widespread habit among honey bees nor a substantial source of forage for them but it's interesting to see how the bees do take advantage of the most unsuspecting resources during lean times.

This past week whilst walking down a south London street I came across a tall **hibiscus** bush in bloom that was covered in foraging honey bees. This was the first and only time I've ever seen a bee on a hibiscus bush. I have a beautiful purple flowered variety planted in my garden (on the burial site of my long deceased parrot who had purple wings) which fails every year to attract any bees at all and elsewhere I've never seen any bees on hibiscus. This bush I saw the bees foraging on was a white coloured variety with semi double blooms. The bees appeared to be collecting nectar but were getting a good dusting of pale pollen at the same time.

Upcoming events

See our [website](#) for an up-to-date version

Sunday 14th August: Monthly meeting: 101 rookie beekeeping errors frequently made by experienced beekeepers

11:00-13:00 at Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, London, SE11 6DN.

A tongue-in-cheek title for what will be a really interactive hands-on session using Roots and Shoot's resident bees and the apiary manager Sharon. We expect that many members will be able to contribute and it is certain that everyone will learn something. We will supply bee suits so need to bring your own (more hygienic not to). Please do come, as there's nothing quite like an interactive hands-on session - something we have been missing in the past few years.

Sunday 14th August: Spectacular Summer Social

13:00-16:00 at Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, London, SE11 6DN.

Our Spectacular Summer Social. The highlight of our Social Calendar will include food from our favourite caterers "DelicaSisters" and drink. Members only, but members can bring guests. You will have had to have

purchased a £10 ticket in advance, but you will be able to buy tickets on the door if there's space.

Tuesday 30th August: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at Tufnell Park Tavern, 162 Tufnell Park Rd, London N7 0EE, a short walk from Tufnell Park Station (Northern Line)

We're back in North London this month. A nice pub with lots of space that serves food.

Sunday 11th September: Monthly meeting: Winter Preparation

11:00-13:00 at Battersea Park Children's Zoo, Battersea Park, London, SW11 4NJ (meet at the main entrance)

This month's meeting will be about Winter Preparation.

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:** Simon Saville, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Annie McGeoch, events@lbka.org.uk
- **Apiaries:** Tristram Sutton, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentor@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Will Fry, resources@lbka.org.uk
- Stuart Kennon, stuart.kennon@lbka.org.uk

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

