The London Beekeepers' Association
LBKA News

August, 2023

Sunday sees the highlight of our social calendar and we hope that you'll be able to come to our summer social. See your email for how to get yours tickets. Prior to the social at the Monthly Meeting, Richard will talk about sustainable beekeepings and will lead a discussion about it.

The Asian Hornet is in UK and is likely to become established in a few year's time. Geoff writes about what it might mean for you (p7), you can learn to recognised it (p6) and read about what BBKA thinks we should do about it (p7).

This month, we also have the personal story of how member Yohanna got into beekeeping (p9), Howard and Tristram's writeup of last month's Monthly Meeting. Howard has provided his usual summary of what we should be focussing on in the apiary and Mark has his "what's flowering at this time of year'. We also have some great photos from members.

Thank you to this month's contributors: Yohanna Akladious, Richard Glassborow, Geoff Hood, George Kozobolis, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Tristram Sutton and Luke Whyatt. Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, contact me. Please help make the newsletter better by providing content – photos, articles, thoughts, reflections, advice, recipes, poetry. . .

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

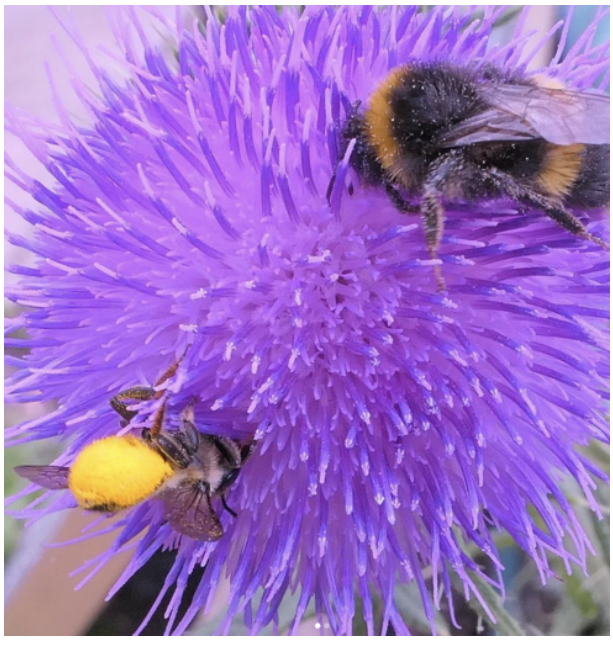
From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

A recent article published in the Evening Standard sparked off an interesting thread on BeeBanter last week. The article featured beekeeping at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London. We know the Royal Lancaster, they have been keeping bees there for many years, very well and their head beekeeper has been an LBKA member for as long as I can remember.

I don't want to dwell on the article here. It was disappointing to say the least but I am more interested in the range of views expressed by our own members on BeeBanter concerning the London Bee Situation.

This is timely because, even before the Standard article, it was planned that I give an update on the London situation and its implications for sustainable beekeeping at the Monthly Meeting on Sunday 13th, just before the Summer Social (to which I do hope lots of you are going to be able to attend). That choice of topic was prompted by a sudden surge of interest in the London Situation from Beekeeping Associations outside London which, in turn has been prompted by the resolution "to make beekeeping more sustainable",



Bumblebee on thistle. Photo: Richard Glassborow.

passed at this year's BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM).

Back to the BeeBanter thread: as feedback it was really useful to hear the different positions expressed. It is three years since we debated the subject prior to its adoption by the membership at the 2020 AGM. New members have joined or re-joined since then and, with disruption to ongoing debate from covid-19 an added factor, I realise that a bit of a reprise of the circumstances that led to the report and clarification of the LBKA Position might help some feel a bit more reassured.

The first point to make, and this cannot be understated, LBKA is a beekeeping club promoting the craft of beekeeping. That is our overriding priority.

The second point I would like to highlight is that the motive for undertaking the report was and remains in the interest of better beekeeping and the freedom to continue to keep bees in London.

Some of the comments on BeeBanter, though not explicit, seemed to imply that the report is somehow anti-beekeeping or that it is being used against beekeeping by some people or organisations. Lewisham Council's two hive limit on council land was mentioned by way of example. Councils have been muttering about regulations, limits and even bans on beekeeping for at least as long as old hand beekeepers have been muttering about there being too many bees in London. But neither side knew what was really going on. This was one of the reasons we started to try to better understand the situation – in the hope of fending off uninformed regulation by being seen to be trying to do something about improving this aspect of beekeeping in London through better information as well as better training and guidelines on practice.

As for the quality of the data in the report, we know much of it is not perfect. But it is quite wrong to use considered margins of error to rubbish the report. The data is not being used in absolute terms but proportional to the level of certainty. This is entirely consistent with the way studies of this kind begin. You start with what you have and improve as and where needed.

But is more accurate data really needed before taking the current findings into consideration? The overall picture is not going to change as data becomes more precise. Over-reporting in NBU figures could easily be improved by beekeepers keeping their records up to date. But there is strong anecdotal reason to believe that under-reporting is considerable and that is by its very nature more difficult to tackle. So improved data on both sides there is likely to make the picture worse.

The Kew paper has relatively up to date forage data but only considers it in relation to honey bee needs. Even on these terms, some areas of London have colony levels 4x what the levels of forage can healthily support. Over half the registered colonies are in areas where the density is nearly double can be supported.

On top of that, wild pollinators must come into it, not least because that is rightly the way the world is going, for existential reasons. Managed honey bees are not really wild animals but neither are they fully domesticated. They fly wild and they forage wild. There is nothing anti-beekeeping about learning to better manage that.

I can well understand that this may be uncomfortable, especially for new beekeepers. But at the end of the day, I feel very positive about the position we are taking and that is what I will be talking about on Sunday.

I do hope there will be a good turnout. As I said above, there is a surge of interest in this by other beekeeping associations and, like it or not, London is getting noticed. We need to keep the debate going internally.

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 and Pub Social

August's Monthly Meeting on **Sunday 13th August** will be at the amazing Bell House (27 College Road, Dulwich, SE21 7BG) in Dulwich. This is a fantastic venue that we are lucky to be able to use. Please, please do come along to this special meeting and social. Richard will give a talk about sustainable beekeeping and then will lead a discussion about it. This will be followed by our **Spectacular Summer Social** with food from our favourite caterers, the Delica Sisters. You can bring guests to the the summer social, but please get your £5 tickets – see your email.

Our Pub Social will be on **Tuesday 29th August** will be at the Rising Sun (44-46 Ebury Bridge Rd, Pimlico, SW1W 8PZ) from 18:30.

September's Monthly Meeting on 10th September will be about Winter preparation.

Selling honey

Members can list their honey for sale on our website at https://lbka.org.uk/honey. Please let me know if you'd like to keep your entry by emailing services@lbka.org.uk and whether there are any updates. I will remove the details of those who do not contact me.

July's pub social. Photo: Yohanna Akladious.

"Last night's efforts. Need to finish off the bottoms. I've got a last batch, almost ready to come out of the moulds. then I'll put it away for another three months! Photo: Luke Whyatt.

Electric extractors

The committee has already agreed not to rent out our electric extractors to members because we cannot assume that members know how to use them safely and because that often come back damaged or even broken. We do rent out manual extractors – email Will at resources@lbka.org.uk to reserve.

We're thinking of running a member-led honey extraction day using the electric extractors where members bring along their supers and training and group help would facilitate safe and productive extraction. If you are interested, please contact Tristram on apiaries@lbka.org.uk.

LBKA book lending library

We now have a library and librarian! Thank you to Mary Walwyn for volunteering to catalogue, look after and lend beekeeping books to members. More details are in the members' area of the website at https://lbka.org.uk/library.

Monthly meetings

This year's monthly meeting will be as follows. Note that some of them will be special meetings with practical and/or social aspects. Please put them in your diaries! As ever, see our website for details with upcoming events on our front page, all events on our events page and in the members services part of the website.

Spotted by Richard. "Bee ID is widely recognised as being difficult, even by experts. I certainly find it so, especially these small solitary bees, not least because they are so small. I usually just ask someone who knows but while I'm down in Cornwall I'm trying to find time to learn how to do it myself." Photos and quote: Richard Glassborow.

Spotted by George: "A butterfly relaxing and feeding on a wild Jacobaea Vulgaris flower." Photo and caption: George Kozobolis.

- Sunday 13th August: Sustainable beekeeping and **Spectacular Summer Social**
- Sunday 10th September: Monthly meeting: Winter preparation
- Sunday 8th October: Monthly meeting: Natural History of bees

Old announcements from July

Check our previous newsletters or contact services@lbka.org.uk for more details.

BBKA Bee Basic Assessment. We are delighted to report that **Arthur Starzec** and **William Bunker** have both passed their **BBKA Bee Basic Assessment**. Very many congratulations! Please contact Howard on education@lbka.org.uk if you're interested in taking it next year.

Old announcements from June

Award for Battersea Children's Zoo's partnership with LBKA. We were delighted to hear that Battersea Children's Zoo **won an educational award** for their **partnership with LBKA** from **British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA)**.

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.

Spotted by George: "How reducing the hive entrance to one or two bee spaces has its benefits despite some inconvenience for the returning loaded worker bees. A wasp overpowered by the bees lies dead in front of the small and easily defended hive entry." Photo and caption: George Kozobolis.

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

Richard went through the presentation he's planning to give at the Monthly Meeting on Sunday. This was followed by a discussion. All present agreed that this presentation indeed should be given to the Monthly Meeting.

The committee agreed to continue with the current plan to try an engage more members to offer to get more involved with the association. Some members of the committee are planning to stand down over the next couple of years and it's important to have people willing to replace them. Discussions should start at the Summer Social.

Arrangements for the Sunday's Monthly meeting are in hand. The venue is ready and catering is ordered. We currently have 50 people who've bought ticket for the social.

The committee acknowledged that it's only a matter of time that the Asian Hornet will be in London. It agreed to follow the lead from the BBKA and that we should promote information on Asian Hornet traps and their use (to lower the risk of killing other insects), promote information on identification of the Asian Hornet, to

Spotted by George: "This Hornet a Mimic Hoverfly (Volucella Zonaria) has been trying hard to get access in the beehive to obviously lay its eggs. It is harmless to humans and has no sting. It is seen here resting on the hive roof. According to Wikipedia: "their larvae live in nests of bees, hornets and social wasps as 'comebsals' which means long-term biological interaction (symbiosis = Greek for living together/co-existing) in which members of one species gain benefits while those of the other species neither benefit nor are harmed". Obviously, bees do not like bringing up and feeding other species but being so busy they cannot always guard against every peril so the hornets survive!" Photo and caption: George Kozobolis.

include it in the Introductory Course, and also have it as a topic for an upcoming Monthly Meeting.

We had an extraction day recently and will organise another one. It is a good way of educating people about use of equipment.

BBKA is celebrating 150 years of existence and have offered association a donation of a tree or edge. We will accept and plant in one of our apiaries.

Last month's Monthly meeting

Last month's Monthly Meeting.

Tristram Sutton and Howard Nichols
apiaries@lbka.org.uk and urleducation@lbka.org.uk

I do not need to win a honey competition to know that my honey tastes the best. Nevertheless it was fascinating to learn from John Chapple his tips on preparing honey for the upcoming National Honey Show.

John is a long standing LBKA member, former president of the National Honey Show and many times winner of various categories over many years. His talk was invaluable to those wishing to enter this year. Unfortunately it was only attended by 8 people but all those attending appeared to be most enthused by the content and delivery of his talk. No Powerpoint slides, just a bag of accessories (jars, grading glasses, etc.) and communication of many years knowledge and experience. His tips included:

Spotted by George: "Here it flies close to the beehive's landing board but it fails and tries again" Photo and caption: George Kozobolis.

- The importance of the jar, treatment of that jar before filling with honey, and handling of the jar after filling.
- Importance of treatment of the lid before use. This is to prevent small debris from unscrewing and screwing during the judging process from falling on to the surface of the honey.
- Importance of where to take the sample from in the honey bucket. I have always believed it to be in the middle but this is not so, the reason being due to density of the honey. Taking water content readings from top, middle and bottom of a bucket of settled honey is likely to give slightly different readings on the refractometer. how to distinguish medium from dark and light honey
- which classes to enter and how closely one needs to follow the category descriptions (given in the free booklet available on the show's website).

John also gave many insights into the judging process (suggesting that my brand of honey with its "lovely" creamy film of wax particles on the top a non-starter. . .).

The Honey Show also includes opportunities to buy

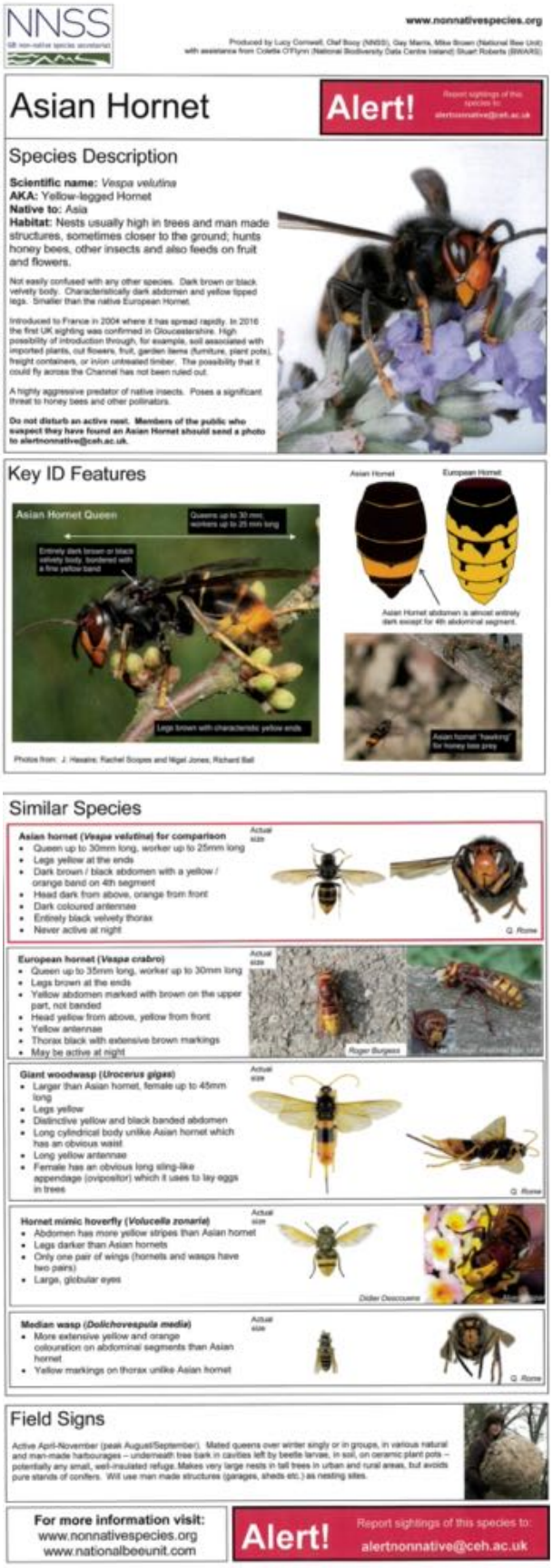
Spotted by George: " Following a flying bee the hornet makes another approach. . . and lands only four inches (10cm) away from the hive entrance!" Photo and caption: George Kozobolis.

equipment and learn about beekeeping from the many lectures given at the event.

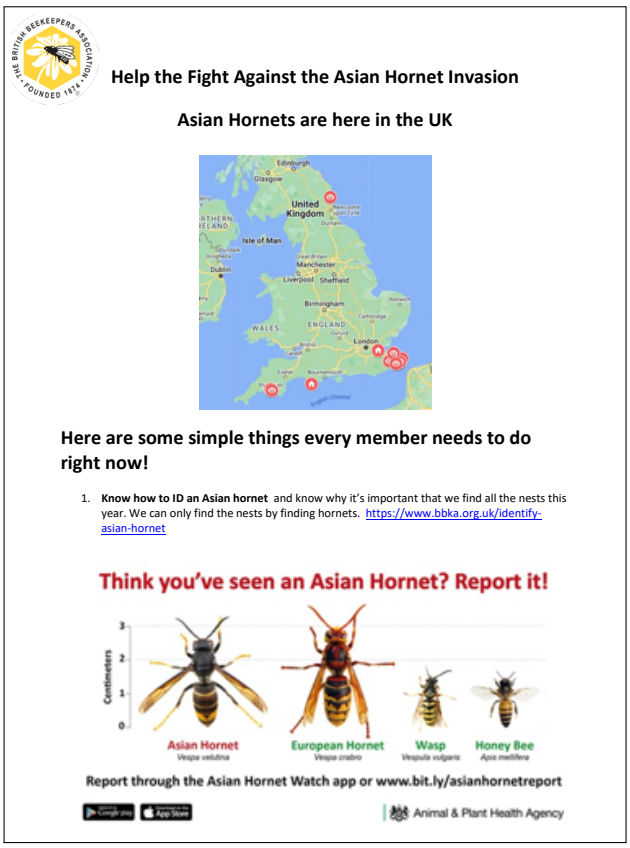
Any gathering of beekeepers is interesting and discussion at the monthly meeting opened up to cover topics as wide ranging as:

- the history of the LBKA (origins in 1880s)
- the pros and cons of rhubarb leaves as a way of applying oxalic acid (anecdotally effective but difficult to quantify dosage in hive records)
- pros and cons of the main autumn varroa treatments; smell as a key indicator of AFB
- the best way of getting into beekeeping (learn by beekeeping with others, such as from a mentor after attending LBKA's Introduction Course).

We hope that many of our members will enter this year's National Honey Show. For those wishing to enter, **now is the time** to look at the National Honey Show website and download relevant information. For those entering this year's show, we will try to arrange



Asian Hornet Identification leaflet. Source: BBKA website.



Asian Hornet Identification information from BBKA.

carriage of your entries to Sandown Park Racecourse in Esher for this year's show if possible. The show date is **26th-28th October**. Once again, thanks to John for sharing his extensive experience with us.

At the end of the meeting Mary Walwyn showed us a selection of the more current beekeeping books from the LBKA lending library that she's now managing. See the contents of the library on our website.

The LBKA's monthly meetings are social, easy to get to, and welcoming to anyone interested in beekeeping. The opportunity to learn from very experienced beekeepers is priceless.

Are Asian Hornets already here?

The Asian Hornet is now in the UK and it's expected to because established in a few year's time. This is bad (but inevitable) news.

Geoff Hood
LBKA member

If you have kept up to date with the reports about Asian hornets on the Bee Banter WhatsApp group then you will have seen that Asian Hornets nests are being found in Kent and on the South Coast.

Does this mean that the Asian Hornet have become established in the UK?. Or could it be just a one off invasion due to a warm June and we will all be safe once the national Bee unit kills the nests?

The true answer is we don't know yet but it doesn't look good. The Asian Hornet has relentlessly spread across Europe – since being first found in southern France in 2004 – and has now reached the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Calais region of France.

We have had reports of Asian Hornet throughout the UK over the last few years and the National Bee Unit have traced the nests. So what's the difference now? Surely the NBU will find them just like previous years?

Asian Hornet sightings in the last few years have normally occurred in late September or October, The nests, when found by the NBU, have been primary nests with small secondary nests some distance away. It is thought that most previous incursions have been autumn bred queens hitchhiking into the UK on cross channel ferries either in vehicles or trapped inside caravans or camping equipment. There have also been Asian Hornet workers blown in by storms in Sussex and Dorset

This year the pattern is different. We have had the single incursions at Portland and Plymouth, with unconfirmed sightings inland in Oxford, Sudbury, Shrews-

bury and Kingsclere. Similar to previous years, these could be Asian hornet workers or Median Black Wasps that caused a recent scare in Poole Dorset. But what we are seeing in Kent this year is because confirmed sightings or nests have been found in Gravesend, Whitstable, Folkestone, Deal, Newhaven and Hawkinge. This means that the Asian Hornets have probably flown across the 25km of the Channel, though a worst case scenario would be that a 2022 nest was missed and these are nests from UK bred queen Asian Hornets in the centre of Kent. Only a DNA analysis will find out how related the hornets found in Kent are closely related to each other.

Are we all doomed to lose our bees? Well, not yet. But London could be less than two years away from its first Asian Hornet's Nest if the NBU miss a nest this year. Strong hives will survive but weak hives will not. Also, single hives are more vulnerable than groups of two or three hive because Asian Hornets are territorial, and a single nest is not strong enough to kill three strong hives. We will of course lose more than just honeybees because the Asain Hornet diet is 50% to 75% other insects. There will be a dearth of pollinators, as the single hornet nest consumes in a year 50,000 to 80,000 wasps, solitary bees. moths. butterflies and honeybees.

What can you do ? Can I suggest you make sure you know what an Asian hornet looks like so you don't confuse it with a European Hornet or a Hornet mimic Hoverfly. The BBKA page on Hornets has a valuable guide – see page 6. If you wish to get involved more, take the online test that validates your extra BBKA insurance when/if NBU asks LBKA for helpers to trace or trap Asian hornets. More information can be found here.

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 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, stable hive. Members are reporting good honey yields so many of us will also be extracting and processing honey this month.

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 15°C. Early August is the optimum time to commence treatment as the honey has been removed and temperatures are still above 15°C 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.

Hives should 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.

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 to help strength the colony with young bees. Otherwise, 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. This is essential at this time of year.

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

Uniting 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 should you so wish.

Mark old brood 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 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. Both these methods release toxic fumes so wear appropriate masks. 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 view is that old brood combs should always be burnt and that fumigation and retention is not an option for these. 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.

My Journey into Beekeeping

Yohanna is known to many of us through he active participation on the Bee Banter whatsapp group and for being a proud owner of a Flowhive. Here he tells us how he got into beekeeping.

Yohanna Akladious
LBKA member

Six years ago, my wife surprised me with a unique birthday gift–a two-day beekeeping event at Walworth Gardens. Little did I know that this experience would not only help with my allergies but also open the door to a fascinating world of bees and honey.

My wife had researched the benefits of consuming local honey, especially for those with allergies like mine. Intrigued by the idea, I embarked on this adventure, unsure if it was a gift or a tribal ceremony to face my fear of being stung by bees.

The two-day event I attended was a delightful mix of theory and practical sessions, leaving me longing for more. During the first day, we delved into the fascinating world of bees, learning about their anatomy, hive hierarchy, behaviour, and their significance in the broader ecosystem. As we followed our instructor, I couldn't help but pepper him with curious questions, wishing the day would never end.

The excitement continued on the second day as we embarked on a bee inspection and honey harvest. Having no prior knowledge of the process, I was thrilled to dive right in. We set up a process line in the potting shed, where we familiarized ourselves with various beekeeping equipment, uncapped the wax, used the extractor, sifted and collected honey in buckets, and finally jarred and labelled the golden goodness. The potting shed was permeated with the sweet scent of summer blossoms, making it a tempting place to stay indefinitely. However, we had to clean our equipment promptly to avoid attracting the bees to our delightful hideaway.

These two days were utterly mesmerising, and my passion for biology and nature surpassed even my love for honey. Exhausted yet fulfilled, I felt a sense of accomplishment and embarked on a personal mission to learn everything about bees. Let's be honest, if it were solely about honey, it would be easier to just buy the jars from the store.

Inspired by my experience, I decided to volunteer at the garden for the next four years, working closely with the knowledgeable Simon Saville, whose deep connection with nature resonated with me. It opened my eyes to the importance of respecting nature and understanding the vital role bees play as pollinators. I fell head over heels for bees and their intricate thought processes. One of my favourite books, "The Bee Democracy," fuelled my desire to explore all facets of beekeeping.

Under Simon's guidance, he established our own Community Beekeeping, which brought together a diverse group of bee enthusiasts. Through this community, we connected with fellow beekeepers, engaged in enlightening discussions about bees, and even enjoyed delightful summer and Christmas parties with Simon's moreish fruit cake. However, our Sunday gatherings were not enough for me, so I sought additional knowledge from beekeepers on YouTube, blogs, and books.

Last year, my longing for bees grew stronger, but living in London with limited space–a pram shed for storage and a small 11m x 5m garden–posed a challenge. To my wife's surprise, what started as a two-day Beekeeping gift evolved into an obsession, and the significant investment in equipment became a deal breaker. Undeterred, I explored various beekeeping practices from around the world, ranging from towering Japanese beehives with wild comb harvests to African woven mud baskets that weren't sustainable. That's when I stumbled upon the Flowhive from Australia, which had garnered mixed reviews. Eager to gather insights, I joined the Flowhive UK Facebook group to learn about its challenges and benefits. Additionally, Flowhive's global platform provided a valuable space for people to ask questions and seek assistance.

My journey taught me that beekeeping should always prioritise the well-being of bees rather than just focusing on honey production.

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.

Helenium.

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

Echinacae.

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 list.

Sunday 13th August: Monthly meeting: Sustainable beekeeping and Spectacular Summer Social

11:00-16:00 at Bell House, 27 College Road, SE21 7BG

Sustainable beekeeping. . . followed by our Spectacular Summer Social at the Our spectacular Summer Social. It continues our long tradition of summer socials with excellent food from the Delica Sisters. It will be at the amazing Bell House in Dulwich. It's a bit further out from Central London than usual, but it will be worth it in all respects! Booking necessary - see your email.

Tuesday 29th August: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at Rising Sun, 44-46 Ebury Bridge Rd, Pimlico, SW1W 8PZ

Our monthly trip to the pub will be to the Rising Sun.

Sunday 10th September: Monthly meeting: Winter preparation

11:00-13:00 at a venue yet to be determined

Winter preparation. 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:** 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.