



# The London Beekeepers' Association

# LBKA News

## November, 2015

Welcome to the November edition of the newsletter! This month, we're announcing parts of our educational programme for the coming year: a **microscopy course** (p2) and **Bee Basic revision classes** (p3) as well as Howard's roundup of this **year's education activities**. We've more **honey sales opportunities** (p4) and news about members' successes at recent honey shows. The company that make the Great British Bake Off have ask us if we know anyone who might want to apply – any ideas? There are also the usual regular features from Richard, Howard, Mark, Vesko and Tabitha. And Emily reports back from the London Honey Show, at which we had last month's monthly meeting. Don't forget this weekend's **monthly meeting** and next Wednesday's **AGM**.

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A big thank you to all this month's (record number of) contributors: Richard Glassborow, David Hankins, Martin Hudson, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Emily Scott, Tabitha Stanmore and Vesko Starchikov.

We're always looking for new and interesting contributions – please contact me if you're interested.

*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)

Last month we held a very well attended Monthly Meeting in the very smart surroundings kindly provided by the Lancaster Hotel who were also hosting the London Honey Show.

Several of our members met with some success in the show but particular congratulations must go to Paul Vagg who was voted **London beekeeper of the Year**. Well done Paul, a just reward to your myriad contributions to London beekeeping and your mentoring of new beekeepers in particular.

Several members who helped set up and run the LBKA stall also managed to sell some of their honey. The committee is at pains to pass on any opportunities that arise for members to sell their products of the hive but it does require volunteering to help or at the very least, arranging someone else to do so on your behalf. But I would like to point out that sharing the running of



*Mahonia. Photo: Mark Patterson*



A high varroa drop after Bayvarol treatment.

stalls like this tends to be very enjoyable and the more members the merrier. We generally announce opportunities in the News Letter and by email so do give it a try.

The topic for the Monthly Meeting was, "preparation for winter". Perhaps lulled by the comfort of the surroundings, we went significantly off-piste and ended up covering most of the beekeeping year! But as a follow-up I would like to share something related to varroa control that came up a few days later with one of my colonies. I had told the meeting that my preferred main procedure to control varroa was shook swarm, including using a varroa trap frame. This is supposed to be 97% effective. This year, out of 8 colonies I manage, only one had any significant varroa natural drop and that was inevitably one of the biggest colonies (more bees = more brood = more varroa). But after the meeting I found a second colony had developed a high drop, even after Apiguard treatment. I decided to treat with Bayvarol and the photograph here shows the drop after less than 24 hours! So even at this time of the year, keep an eye on the varroa drop, especially if any of your colonies are, or were very large. Ask any beekeeper, they are always the ones that succumb.

Finally, a quick reminder that our AGM will be at Roots & Shoots on November 11th. Please do come along. This year we have the important issue of voting over Charitable Status for the LBKA so a good turn out would be welcome.

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## Announcements

### November Monthly Meeting

November's monthly meeting will be on **Sunday 8th November** at **11:00** at **Fairley House Junior School** (220 Lambeth Rd, SE1 7JY) on the subject of varroa, including the recommended winter treatment with



This month's meeting venue: the white door on the left.

Oxalic Acid. We will also have Oxalic Acid for sale to members. This will be followed by the usual hot drinks, biscuits and chat.

### Annual General Meeting

Our **AGM** will be held at **Roots and Shoots** (Walnut Tree Walk, SE11 6DN), on **Wednesday 11th November from 6:30pm for a 7:00pm start**.

All are welcome to attend, but **only fully-paid-up members (who have joined since September) will be eligible to vote**. Members will be asked to elect a committee for the new year and there will be the opportunity to discuss the Association's activities over the past year. Additionally, the outgoing committee will be asking members on the night to vote on the proposal that the Association become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This will have significant impact on our Association, so it is important that members are aware of the implications. Full details of the meeting, candidates, motions and agenda have been sent to members and the evening will be rounded off with some refreshments.

Please do come if you can. Although we have some official duties to perform, most of the meeting will be a social event at which we can discuss what we want from our association.

### It's membership renewal time!

Thank you to all the 90 or so members who have renewed their membership – we appreciate your support.

If you intend to keep up your membership, don't forget to join, **not least if you're intending to participate in the AGM!** All members were sent individual renewal emails. If you didn't get yours, please drop Aidan a line on [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

### LBKA Microscopy Course: Anatomy of the honey bee and pollen analysis

The LBKA proposes to run a detailed microscopy course for interested members during the winter months. This is the 2nd year this course has been run by our association and is likely to be 3 × 2 hour evening sessions



*A photo from the microscopy course last year.*

organised and led by Richard Glassborow and Howard Nichols. It will concentrate on the use of microscopes for members to learn about both the pollen grain structure and the internal anatomy of the honey bee. It will be mainly hands on practical work and over the 3 weekly sessions we expect to deal with the following:

1. Simple theory of lenses, setting up of optical instruments and a summary of terminology used.
2. Investigation and analysis of pollen grains. How to prepare a slide. Use of negative and positive stains. Internal and external structure of a pollen grain and its features. Extraction of pollen grains from honey and analysis/identification of the flowers.
3. Embedding and dissection of the honey bee.

Item 3 will form the major part of the course with 2 full sessions covering this subject. Embedding, dissection of head, thorax and abdomen will all be separately dealt with. Did you know that a mammal is pinned on its back for dissection but a bee needs to be pinned face downwards?

- All equipment will be supplied by the LBKA
- Numbers must be limited to a maximum of 8 people due to availability of equipment and pupil/teacher ratio.
- There is no charge. It is part of your LBKA membership subscription.
- Date to be decided but likely to be 3 evenings in late January and/or February 2016.

Please note this course is open to all LBKA members. The only entry requirement is an interest. Although specialised in form it is for anyone interested or curious about these aspects of beekeeping. Microscopy and dissection are “niche subjects” and so equally accessible by both very new and long-standing beekeepers. It is not dependent upon length of beekeeping experience. It

is truly a fascinating sub-optical world and exploration is an adventure.

Please register your interest by email to [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk) as soon as possible. This does not require you to commit at this stage but, if oversubscribed, we have to allocate places on a first come / first served basis. Last year the event was oversubscribed within 24 hours of the newsletter being emailed to members.

See p12 of last March’s newsletter at <http://lbka.org.uk/newsletters.html> for a writeup of last year’s microscopy.

## 2016 BBKA Basic Assessment – register your interest

Both the BBKA and London Beekeepers Association encourages members to take the BBKA basic assessment where possible. The BBKA requirement for entry is that the applicant has been keeping bees for a minimum period of 1 year. The assessment is fairly straightforward and the syllabus can be downloaded free of charge from the BBKA website. Follow the dropdown menu for “Members” then “examinations and assessments”. The cost is £15 but this is not payable until next spring. Furthermore, if you pass then the LBKA will refund your £15 entry fee.

London Beekeepers Association will run a revision course in the spring for members wishing to take the examination. This is likely to last for 3 evenings (2 hours per evening) in early April. The assessment itself is both practical and simple oral questions. It lasts about 1 hour and will take place in May. We cover the theory on the revision nights and, for those wanting it, also offer a practical session at an apiary beforehand.

The assessment is not difficult, is within the capabilities of anyone who has been handling bees for 12 months and who is willing to download the syllabus and undertake some background reading during winter and attend the revision sessions. We also supply free course notes in electronic format.

Any LBKA member who has been keeping bees for a minimum of 12 months and wishes to take this assessment please confirm by email to [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk). We will then be able to let you have some electronic course notes to read at your leisure over the winter months. The BBKA website should be sufficient to deal with any queries regarding the assessment. Alternatively, ask another LBKA member who has taken it. Preparation for the Basic is an interesting way of continuing your beekeeping activities through the winter months. There is no commitment at this stage. Several members have already registered their interest and the winter reading material will be sent out later in November.

See p7 and 8 of last June’s newsletter at <http://lbka.org.uk>.





Maltby Street market.

[org.uk/newsletters.html](http://org.uk/newsletters.html) for some of last year's Bee Basic experiences.

## Want to sell honey at "Hiver and Friends" pop-up shop/bar?

Hannah from Hiver Beer has offered **LBKA members a chance to sell honey in the "Hiver and Friends" pop-up shop/bar** on Maltby St (SE1 3PA) amongst the railway arches of Bermondsey's famous "beer mile" in an area increasingly famous for its local food and street markets. Several people have vouched for its honey sales potential!

This would be available on Saturdays and Sundays until Christmas and it will cost us £20 for any day for which we use the pitch.

We haven't decided how to organise this. Possibilities include:

- individual members could use the pitch on certain days and pay the fee themselves
- groups of members could club together and pay the fee amongst the group
- LBKA runs the stall on a single day and sells honey from many members

If you're interested in this opportunity, email Aidan on [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

## New honey sales opportunities

**Cubana Bar Restaurant** are looking for good sources of bulk local honey (10-20kg a week) for their new site in Smithfield. If anyone is interested, please contact [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

Small delicatessen **Gusto and Relish** are looking for London honey to sell in their SW London shop (preferably local to the shop). If you'd like to find out more, contact Sally on [info@gustoandrelish.co.uk](mailto:info@gustoandrelish.co.uk) or 020 8878 2005.

## Preparing Honey and Wax talks

Surrey Beekeepers Association are organising a day of talks about preparing honey and wax on Saturday, 23rd January. See their poster on page 5.

## Potential NW3 apiary

Nikki lives next to Hampstead Heath (NW3) and would like to offer it as a site for one of our members to keep bees. If you'd like to know more, please contact [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) for more details.

## LBKA members in honey competition successes

Congratulations to LBKA members for their successes in the London Honey Show and the National Honey Show!

In the **London Honey Show** (pages 8 & 14). **Paul Vagg** was declared **Beekeeper of the Year 2015**. **Jan Fuscoe** won **Best Home Honey**, with **Vernon de Maynard** in third place followed by **Sara Ward** in fourth place. **David Dixon** and **Richard Glassborrow** won third and fourth place in **Best Honey from a Business/Education Site**. **Jo Hemesley** (and Inga Zubaviciute) got fourth place for **Best Rooftop Honey**. **Richard Glassborrow** won second place in **Best Packaging**. **Jo Hemesley** (and Inga Zubaviciute) won the **Battle of the Regions** with **Paul Vagg** in joint fourth place.

In the **National Honey Show**, we sponsor three honey competition categories: Class 241 (two jars of light or medium Honey, Class 242 (two jars naturally crystallised or soft set honey) and Class 243) one jar liquid honey. Congratulations to members **Geoffrye Hood** and **Sara Ward** for their successes in these categories.

## Want to be in The Great British Bake Off?

The company that make the BBC's **The Great British Bake Off** asked us to spread the word that they are looking for contestants. They must think that beekeepers will make good bakers with good back stories! I think we'd all like to see an LBKA connection to a contestant next year! See <http://www.thegreatbritishbakeoff.co.uk>.



# Surrey Beekeepers Association

**Saturday 23rd January 10 till 4pm**

Venue: Walton-on-Thames

(Full details will be sent with the confirmation of the booking)

## Preparing Honey and Wax

It doesn't matter whether we give Honey to friends, sell it, or enter your local honey show. We all want our honey and wax to make sure it looks its best. These talks will be of interest to all Beekeepers but of particular value to anyone planning to take Module 2

### Topics

Preparing honey for sale or show. Tom Salter

Wax processing. Andy Willis

Marketing your hive Products. Christine Stevens



£15 SBKA members £17 for non-members

Includes a light lunch

To reserve a place email: [rickwoodsbska@gmail.com](mailto:rickwoodsbska@gmail.com)

### The Speakers

**Tom** was introduced to bees and beekeeping in the 1950s. He currently manages 15 to 20 colonies on three apiary sites. Tom became a Master Beekeeper in 1998 and was awarded the Wax Chandler's prize, is a BBKA Senior Honey Judge, an experienced Senior Assessor for the Examinations Board and past Chairman of the Examinations Board.

**Andy** has won first prize for moulded candles at the National Honey show and hosted wax workshops for the BBKA. He made the candles which were given as the BBKA gift to the Queen, in her Jubilee Year, 2012

**Christine** started beekeeping in 1995 and ran up to 40 hives, a mixture of National and WBC, producing and selling up to a ton of honey a year, as well as rearing queens and raising nucs. She has served on the committee of Chichester Beekeepers for a number of years.

Surrey Beekeepers Association    Founded 1879    Registered Charity no. 1026386  
Affiliated to the **British Beekeepers Association**

**THE GREAT BRITISH  
BAKE OFF**

**WHO'S THE BEST BAKER YOU KNOW?**

The Great British Bake Off is back and we're looking for Britain's best home bakers to take part in the seventh series...

For more information and an application form go to:

[www.thegreatbritishbakeoff.co.uk](http://www.thegreatbritishbakeoff.co.uk)

Applications close midnight Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2016

## Old announcements from October

Check previous newsletters at <http://lbka.org.uk/newsletters.html> or contact [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) for more details.

**Do you have honey to sell?** Add it to our list of members with honey to sell – <http://lbka.org.uk/honey.html> and on page 17.

**Bulk honey to sell?:** LBKA member Laura Jean may buy it off you for her bee-friendly not-for-profit pop-up dining events – contact her at [laurajean@beekindanddine.co.uk](mailto:laurajean@beekindanddine.co.uk) or 07590 831666.

**Beekeepers of the future:** BBKA's Ian Homer is looking for help to find the beekeepers of the future – contact him on [ian.homer@bbka.org.uk](mailto:ian.homer@bbka.org.uk).

## Old announcements from September

**A Clapham delicatessen:** A Clapham delicatessen would like to sell local honey – please contact Jon Harris [jon1harris@hotmail.com](mailto:jon1harris@hotmail.com) for details and arrangements.

## Old announcements from August

**Young beekeepers.** If you're interested in running events for young beekeepers Ian ([ian.homer@bbka.org.uk](mailto:ian.homer@bbka.org.uk)) from BBKA would like to hear from you.

**Pearly Queen Honey** is a Beekeeping Co-operative interested in buying honey from members – contact [meetal\\_patel@hotmail.com](mailto:meetal_patel@hotmail.com).

## Old announcements from July

**Wax for artist:** East London based artist, Claire, is looking for beeswax for her paintings – [hamillclaire@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hamillclaire@yahoo.co.uk).

**Wax for cometics:** Gabby is looking for 570g–1.5kg of clean wax for making cosmetics and is offering cosmetics, a guided tour and medicinal plant leaves in return! [gabrielle.boraston@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:gabrielle.boraston@groundwork.org.uk).

**Craft bakery wants honey:** A recently opened bakery near Half Moon Lane between Dulwich and Herne Hill is looking for London honey that's as local as possible. Call Stefan on 0770 100 9145 for more details.



## Old announcements from June

**Can you recommend online beekeeping resources and suppliers?** We want to expand these parts of the website. Please email suggestions to Aidan on [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

## Old announcements from May

**Do you have old honey in bulk?** Emily Abbott (07971 453330 or [emilyabbott@virginmedia.com](mailto:emilyabbott@virginmedia.com)) will buy it off you!

## Do you have any announcements?

If you've any announcements for the next issue of LBKA News, please send them to Aidan at [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

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# LBKA's 2015 Education Activities

Howard's roundup of our education activities.

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

The beekeeping season has finished for 2015 and set out below is a summary of the education activities undertaken by the association for 2015.

## Monthly meetings

As with 2013 and 2014 we have continued to introduce different intermediate topics as the theme for the monthly meetings. These have included disease recognition, use of compound microscopes for Nosema testing, queen rearing for the small scale beekeeper, Honey Regulations and the treatment and handling of honey. In addition, many of the seasonal apiary tasks have also been covered such as varroa treatments, swarm control, early spring management and autumn management of colonies. We have tried to cover both seasonal and intermediate topics so that there is always something for everyone. Based upon member feedback in 2014 the strategy seems to have been successful and so remained unaltered for 2015. Anyone who would like a particular topic to be covered in 2016 please contact a committee member and we will see if it can be included.

## Modules

Only 1 member took a modular exam in March 2015. Therefore, the association did not provide any group tuition as for the exams as in previous years.

## Basic Assessment

We arranged tuition and the assessment for 11 members who took the BBKA Basic assessment in May 2015. It is hoped that we can do this for even more members in 2015. Anyone interested in this assessment in 2015 please email your details (see p3) and I will forward electronic course material for winter reading. It does not require any commitment at this stage and you will still be in a position to make a final decision later.

## General Husbandry Assessment

In 2014 preliminary outline arrangements were made with the BBKA for training for anyone wishing to take this assessment. No LBKA members wanted to undertake this training in 2014 and no one has requested this for 2015.

## Microscopy course

The association has further invested in microscopes and related equipment. In February 2015, we ran a 3 × 2 hour evening courses in both pollen analysis and honey bee dissection. The course was immediately oversubscribed and feedback after the event was very positive. Therefore, we are arranging for this to be run again early in 2016.

## Bee Health Day

Each May, two Regional Bee Inspectors used to visit us to teach practical and theoretical aspects of different diseases. This was a major education event and always enthusiastically received. This was unable to go ahead in 2014 and 2015 due to internal changes within the bee inspectors' department. Due to funding constraints it is unlikely that bee inspectors will now have the resources to supply the course in the future. We are currently making plans to run such a course ourselves in 2016 with a view to it becoming re-established as an annual event.

## Winter lectures

We had 2 winter lectures and both of these were poorly attended. Each had about 12 attendees in number which is a little disappointing and we wonder whether there's demand for these. This is currently under review. Do let us know what you think.



*Our stall at the London Honey show. Thanks to Mark for setting it up.*

## October's Monthly Meeting. . . and London Honey Show

What happened at last month's meeting. . . and at the London Honey Show. See also Emily's report on the show on page [14](#).

*Martin Hudson  
LBKA member*

October's monthly meeting was held in the (comparatively) lush surroundings of the Lancaster Hotel in Bayswater, and was very well attended. It was held in the hotel so that members could support and visit the London Honey Show, which started at midday in the Hotel's main lounge, and where we were keen to raise our profile. The Lancaster Hotel has its own bee-hives on its roof, and clearly the hotel management is keen to promote beekeeping, which is why the annual Honey Show in London is held there.

At the meeting, our Chair, Richard Glassborow spoke about preparations for over-wintering of our colonies - with the help of his dinky scale-model of a hive. He emphasised the importance of keeping the bees dry, but ventilated, throughout the colder weather, and protected against creatures seeking warmth and food such as wasps and mice, and also against other more destructive invaders such as green woodpeckers, who may

learn that a hive is a source of grubs and honey! Hives located in the vicinity of larger wildlife, such as farm animals and badgers, also need to be protected from being accidentally or purposely knocked over by strapping them to a secure base.

The lively questions and discussion moved on, mysteriously, to swarm control - not exactly related to over-wintering (but you never know!) - and several members described the problems they had had with swarms during the 2015 season. Several first attendees were keen to learn about the basics of beekeeping, so the discussion provided them with lots to think about. The hotel provided coffee and biscuits, and the discussions continued after the meeting broke up.

Shortly before 1pm, we adjourned to the Honey Show downstairs (charging a very reasonable £1 entrance fee), where there were a few stalls featuring London honey and related products and equipment providers, as well as the hotel's own bee-related stall (with seemingly dozens of helpers all wearing the hotel's bee-related t-shirts!) and the LBKA stand which had been set up and staffed throughout the morning by Mark Patterson, and joined by - guess who - Richard Glassborow with his mini-hive! From the number of visitors crowded around the LBKA stall, it appeared that our presence there was valued. Corrine was selling her jewellery across the hall and Sharon (former winner of Beekeeper of the Year) was also in attendance.

There were a number of short talks arranged in an adjacent room, and the hotel took a party of inquisitive visitors up to the roof to view their hives. Several LBKA members submitted exhibits for judging, and at 3pm, the winners of the various categories were announced.



Well done **Paul Vagg, Jan Fuscoe, Vernon de Maynard, Sara Ward, David Dixon, Richard Glassborough** and **Jo Hemesley**.

It was fun meeting in a different venue for once, and LBKA probably enhanced the attendance at the Show by at least 50%!

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## November 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)

November is not the most active of months for the beekeeper but a certain amount still needs to be done.

### Tidy up

Tidy up the apiary if not already done. Complete cleaning, sterilising and storing of equipment.

### Wax moth

Check stored supers for evidence of Wax Moth infestation. The lifecycle of the Wax Moth is substantially different to that of the honey bee. A Wax Moth egg is temperature dependent and is able to stay as an egg then hatch after a few weeks or months. Supers should be stored in a cold and draughty place if possible but also regularly checked during winter. If any evidence of Wax Moth is found the best way to deal with it is to place the frame(s) in a deep freeze cabinet for 48 hours. This will kill the Wax Moth in all 4 lifecycle stages.

### Varroa treatment

Consideration of and planning for further varroa treatment in December. December is the usual month for treating the colony with oxalic acid. Monitoring natural mitedrop in November is a useful diagnostic tool and precursor to actual treatment next month. Insertion of the varroa floor for 1 week in November will give useful information to the beekeeper.

### Are your hives secure?

Check the hive is secure and that the roof cannot blow off or be dislodged. Placing of heavy items such as a

couple of housebricks on the roof is usually sufficient for a National with a well fitting flat roof. They are designed not to blow off. A hive with a gabled roof may need tethering with rope.

### Entrance

A quick check behind the mouseguard is useful as dead bees and other debris can build up. It should not be necessary to remove the mouseguard to inspect, only if debris has accumulated. Debris can then be removed by simply inserting a ruler, piece of wood, etc and brushing away. The colony should not be opened.

### Bee Basic

For those who have not taken the BBKA Basic Assessment, please download the syllabus from the BBKA website and consider background reading with a view to taking the assessment next summer. The requirement is that you have handled bees for a minimum period of 1 year. LBKA will not pressurise anyone to take the assessment but will actively encourage and assist those wishing to do so. Reading about bees and beekeeping in the winter months is a useful way to spend our spare time and acts as a beekeeping bridge between the seasons.

### Next year's approach

Consider your approach to next season. Will you need an additional hive, nuc box or replacement frames? Most equipment suppliers have winter sales where they sell slight seconds. This is an excellent time to buy, especially if you search 2 or 3 websites for offers. If 2 or 3 people jointly purchase then you may even be able to save on the delivery charge. This is a cheaper option than buying equipment in spring and summer.

### And finally. . .

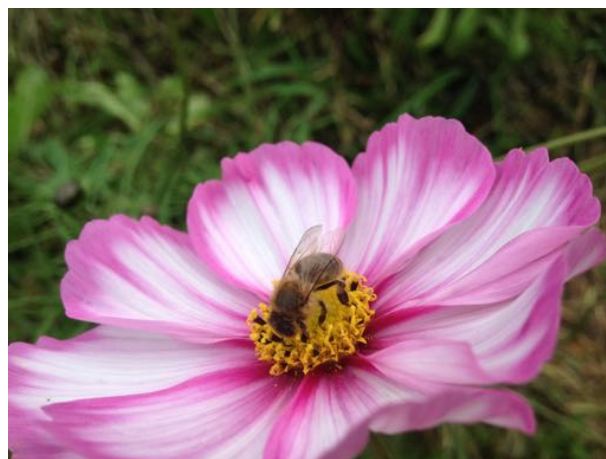
Do not forget our AGM. This will be at Roots and Shoots on Wednesday 11th November. We try to keep the official side to a minimum and it is also a social event.

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## November in the Forage Patch

Mark's regular update on what is in flower that bees like.

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



It's late October as I write this month's forage patch piece and the weather has been unseasonably mild and sunny most of this past week. Most days this past week my bees have been behaving as if it were still summer time pouring in and out of the hive and bringing back full loads of pollen and crops of nectar. Much of this forage they are returning with will undoubtedly be **ivy**, characterised by its pale yellow to white pollen and nectar which quickly crystallises. My hives are all chocka with ivy honey which the bees will use as their winter stores. Also in flower right now are **Mahonia** and **Viburnum tinus** which I've witnessed my bees nectaring on.

Only the most hardy of flowers are still in bloom in my garden as whilst the days have been mild it has on occasion been very cold at night with the first light frosts already touched us. My **pumpkins**, **courgettes** and **nasturtiums** are already keeling over due to the cold nights, only my **cosmos** and **sunflowers** persist out of the garden annuals I have flowering. Quite a few of my herbaceous perennials are struggling on however with **Cat Mind**, **Helenium**, **Rudbeckia**, **Asters**, **Golden rod** and **Penstemon** still in bloom.

Away from my own garden I've spotted **Abelia**, **Choisya**, **Hebe (Autumn Joy)** and **Escalonia** pushing out a late flush of second blooms, though not in sufficient abundance to entice honey bees to visit.

The ivy flow is now coming to an end with most of the blooms already fading and the signs of the first berries appearing. These will ripen in time for late winter and will provide a feast for over wintering thrushes and wood pigeons after the red berries of **hawthorn**, **cotoneaster** and **sorbus** have all been polished off.

I've been busy in the greenhouse this past week, cleaning the green house firstly to evict slugs and snails hiding in stacks of empty pots and cleaning algae and moss from the windows to ensure over wintering plants receive as much light as possible through the dimly lit winter. Having been cleaned I am now busy propagating cuttings from my favourite aromatic shrubs including **lavender**, **sage**, **rosemary** and cuttings from **flowering currant**, **Escalonia** and **Hebe**. I've also been cutting down fading stems from herbaceous plants and lifting and dividing them to propagate for next year. This week I've done this to **marjoram**, **mints**, **cat-mint** and next on my list is the **Heleniums**, **Asters** and **Kniphofia**.

My bulbs are now all in the ground including an additional 200 **Saffron Crocus**. The ones I planted last year are just beginning to flower offering pollen to the bees on warm days and soon **Saffron** for my kitchen!

Other tasks to be getting on with in the garden include collecting fallen leaves to make leaf mulch for the garden – this is great as a top dressing for suppressing weeds and feeding the plants.

There precious little for our bees to forage on between now and Late Winter/Early spring and not a great deal of activity from our bees either so we may take a short break from forage in next month's newsletter and I shall have to think long and hard about something else to write about.





## Forage planting day

David reports on our LBKA forage planting day at Mudchute Park & Farm (by one of our apiaries) on Saturday 24th October. Thank you to Mark for organising this, to Richard for the photos, and to **Neil's Yard Remedies** and **Ashurt** for providing the funds to buy the plants.

*David Hankins*  
[treasurer@lbka.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@lbka.org.uk)

Had this event been planned for the following day, there'd have been nothing more appropriate to recall it than those last few lines from the speech in Act IV Scene III of Henry V, by William Shakespeare – you know the ones... “And gentlemen in England now-a-bed, shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here, and hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks, that fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.”

It was a bit like that, really. We were too few in number, toiling in unforgiving ground, hounded at every turn by coarse grass, bramble and builders' rubble – and then it rained. But we won the day! Joking aside, we got the job done – well, mostly. 1,500 plug plants in the ground and pleasantly aching muscles in testament to

our efforts. The results should be noticeable from late spring to autumn in future years, along the southern fringe of the children's play area, which is on the right after entering the Pier Street gate.

It was understandable that so few were able to attend on such short notice, but we couldn't announce the date until it had been agreed by staff at Mudchute – something that took far longer than anticipated. We will factor in some of the lessons learned that day, and hopefully enable more LBKA members to visit the city farm and our teaching apiary there on a future planting day.

Well done Mark for all the planning, negotiating, plant procurement and equipment provision on the day, and a big Thank You to all those who turned up for the fun... you few, you happy few, you band of brothers and sisters.





## The Bulgarian Beekeeper

*Vesko continues his month-by-month series writing about his beekeeping back in his native Bulgaria.*

*Vesko Starchikov  
LBKA member*

In November bees in our country usually become inactive in the winter. Only during long warm autumn do the bees still fly during the day. At night – due to lowering temperatures – they form a cluster. Sometimes after the first frosts in October, some November days are warm enough for bees to fly and for the queen to start laying. Generally, the intensification of the activity of bees and the colony in November is not desirable, especially if they start raising a brood. Keeping required temperature for growth (34.5–35 °C) at low outdoor temperature exhausts bees and deteriorates their overwintering. Bee colonies overwinter better when the temperatures stay low enough for the bees to stay inside the hive.

Well prepared colonies do not need my intervention.



They need full rest. I have to protect them from domestic and wild animals, woodpeckers, people and wind.

My work in November is mainly indoors where equipment is stored. I finish any honeycomb sorting that I didn't do in October and also cut all scrapped honeycombs from frameworks. The wax from the combs must be sorted by quality – darker section are where more generations of bees were born. I separate white wax – which did not contain brood – and melt it by boiling in water to make wax products.

Based on the wax balance of the apiary, I estimate how much wax I need for the coming season. I buy comb foundation to ensure I have enough for new frames. This will allow me to cull all the old and unfit combs.



House which is part of the apiary on the mountain.

In the warehouse where beekeeping equipment and especially the honeycombs are stored, I take measures to protect them from mice.

In November, I list what equipment I will need for apiary next season - hives, casings, frames, centrifuge, small equipment, etc.

Although bee colonies are resting in November, I visit the apiary periodically to check the condition of the hives, especially after storms and heavy snowfall. I also check hives for woodpecker, mouse, and other animal damage. If I find any, I take immediate action to fix them.

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## September's Facebook (In)digest(ion)

Tabitha gives us a quick roundup of what's been happening on our open Facebook page. Join us on <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/>.

Tabitha Stanmore  
LBKA member

### Bee feeding/preparation for winter

At the beginning of the month there was continued concern over the amount of food available for colonies, with many eating through their stores too fast and little capped honey. Many members were debating whether to start feeding this early, or hold off until the ivy had come out.

Richard warned about varroa counts in strong colonies after finding a huge varroa drop 24 hours after treating with Bayvarol. The colony was shook swarmed in March and treated with Apiguard in August/September, and has been strong enough to produce 49 kg of honey. Richard emphasised that Bayvarol



Llyr with his award.

shouldn't be a first resort as mites are quick to build up resistance, but is very effective when used in moderation.

### Honey and harvest

The London Honey Show took place on the 11th October. Paul Vagg won the 'Beekeeper of the Year' award, and Llyr Jones won 'Best Packaging' for his Kew Honey. Huge congratulations to everyone who won an award!

Geordy Mark gave a shout out to Nando's, who are a member of the Sustainable Restaurant Association and have been supporting the LBKA's forage planting efforts this year. They have been offering free space to urban beekeepers in London instead of using commercial beekeepers, and are looking to collaborate with the BBKA to spread the model to the rest of the UK. Mark's honey has been used to make Nando's limited edition chilli honey this year, and the Nando's chefs are experimenting with ways to put more sustainable honey in their dishes.

Norman shared a link from the IBRA for a new book of 'Honey Recipes from a Welsh Kitchen' – worth a look if you're not sure what to do with your harvest!

Bill shared a photo of the fruit harvest at Harrow BKA's main apiary – a lovely crop of crab apples and quinces!

Geordy Mark shared photos of the prairie meadows in Burgess Park, which have been flourishing since they





*Nando's limited edition chilli honey made with Mark's honey.*

were planted 3 years ago. Now there is forage for bees and other pollinators 10 months of the year, and a fantastic variety of plants. Mark and other LBKA members have been working at Mudchute City Farm this month to create a new meadow there - the planting day took place on 24th October and a good time was had by all!

Aidan shared Radio 4's Farming Today programme, featuring honey harvest, bees and pollination. You can listen to the programme on BBC iPlayer.

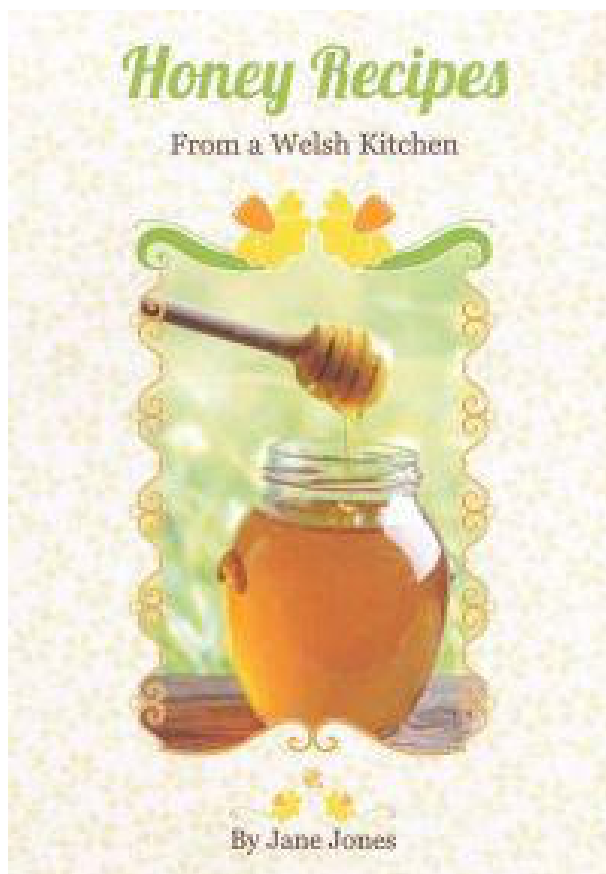
## Miscellaneous

Norman shared a video of IBRA trustee Rob Paxton speaking on the evolution of bees at the National Honey Show. You can see the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wtm8URk-V9A>

Karin shared an article from Farmers Weekly discussing a recently published review showing no evidence of neonicotinoids harming honeybees. You can read the article at <http://www.fwi.co.uk/arable/no-sign-of-damage-to-honeybees-from-neonics-review-shows.htm>

Alex posted an video on considerate beekeepers in the USA, showing a more positive side to counter the negative publicity US beekeepers often receive – <http://www.sltrib.com/home/3040156-155/denise-hunsaker-i-love-bees>

Norman and Margaret shared some really interesting information on bees' addiction to caffeine. New research from the IBRA, and headed by Margaret Couvillon, suggests that caffeine in nectar benefits the plant not the pollinator, with caffeinated forage causing honeybees to overestimate forage quality, and caffeine-enhanced foraging actually leading to decreased food stores. You can find the article at <http://www.cell.com/current-biology/abstract/S0960-9822%2815%2901054-4> and the video here <https://youtu.be/i9nE6yBEOfo>.



*Honey Recipes from a Welsh Kitchen.*

## Adventures in Beeland: London Honey Show

*Emily's regular guest article from her excellent blog: <http://adventuresinbeeland.com/>. This month, she reports the London Honey Show.*

Today I went to the fifth annual London Honey Show at the Lancaster London hotel. The Show includes the honey competition, talks and stalls to visit. This was the first year it's been held at the weekend rather than a weekday evening. It seemed a bit less busy than usual, but that may have been because it was on for longer.

### Hotel hives

The hotel has hives on their roof; one of the two employees who helps look after the bees showed us up to a room with a view of the hives. Though there are nine hives down there, only one is occupied at the moment, following problems with colonies dying out due to varroa.

I missed the first talk but arrived in time to hear





Harvest bounty.



Planting up new meadows at Mudchute City Farm.



The meadows at Burgess Park.



The London honeys entered in the tasting competition. You can see the variety of colours from pale yellows to dark reds.

James Hamill, “Tales of beekeeping from around the world”.

James owns the Hive Honey Shop, a family-run business on Northcote Road, SW11. He has over 100 beehives and practises migratory beekeeping, moving the hives to secret locations in remote areas. He does rooftop beekeeping in London too and has kept bees for the royal family at St James’ Palace and Highgrove.

He meets with the beekeepers whose honey he sells to make sure their honeys are minimally processed, rather than heat treated and blended together from multiple hives.

His life made me very jealous, as in-between running the shop he likes to travel internationally to meet beekeepers in other parts of the world. He showed us photos from many places including Uganda, St Lucia, Turkey and Tuscany. He donates equipment to the beekeepers he visits and also purchases honey and old hives for his collection of historical beehives. His attic contains hundreds of honeys!

He has trekked to watch the honey hunters of Nepal, who construct their rope from natural materials gathered that day, then scale cliffs to take the giant combs of *Apis Dorsata* bees. They will slaughter a goat before setting off – if the goat had a healthy liver they

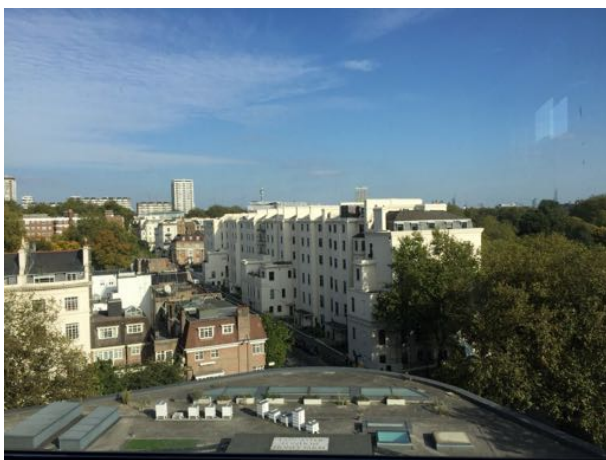


Some cute art work done by children at a local school.





*I especially liked the ecstatically grinning bees below, which have wings the size of butterflies.*



*Lancaster London hives.*

go ahead, if not this is a sign from god not to go. The honey hunting expedition is a perilous one.

James watched the local children standing underneath the cliffs as the honey was collected. They held their mouths open in delight as the honey rained down, not caring despite getting stung all over by the wrathful bees. Not just the honey is taken but the larvae too, which is a great source of protein. It's eaten boiled up with saffron.

A member of the audience asked how many colonies James lost last winter – he said none (apart from two nucs). He puts this success down to “absolute cleanliness”. He changes his equipment each season, using different summer equipment and winter equipment. Frames are changed each year. He uses wooden hives so that he can scorch them with a blowtorch and destroy potential diseases and pests (as Emma and I do too). For this reason he dislikes polystyrene or plastic hives, as they require chemicals to clean them. He uses thymol as a varroa treatment and has also used eucalyptus and peppermint oils.



*Jonesey winning.*



*Kew Honey.*

### Competition winner!

Jonesey won the best packaging award for his Kew honey. A win for Ealing!

## Honey for sale

Here's a list of members with honey to sell. Please email [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) for their contact details or if you have honey you'd like to sell.

### Clapham Junction

Jonathan Dale:

- 227g/8oz: £6.00 (or 2 for £10.00).

### Hackney (E8)

Jan Fuscoe:

- 8oz/227g: £5

## Dulwich (SE21) and Tooting/Streatham (SW16)

Sue Parminter:

- 8oz/227g: £5.00.
- 1lb/454g: £8.50.

## Streatham/Mitcham

Emma Nye:

- 8oz/227g: £6

## Stoke Newington (N16)

Aidan Slingsby:

- 8oz/227g: £5.00.
- 12oz/227g: £7.50.

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## Upcoming events

### Sunday 8th November: Monthly meeting: Oxalic Acid treatment

11:00-12:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY.

Winter treatment to keep varroa at bay. Non-members are welcome to come and find out more about LBKA.

### Wednesday, 11th November: Annual General Meeting

18:30 (for 19:00) - 21:00 at Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN

The Annual General Meeting is a chance for members to meet and discuss association issues. It is also where there will be committee elections and votes of other motions – one of which will be about LBKA becoming a “charity”. All welcome, but only current members have voting rights.

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## Committee

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee if you have any questions, requests, suggestions (and offers of help)! 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:** Emma Nye, [admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk)
- **Education:** Howard Nichols [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk)
- **Membership services:** Aidan Slingsby, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)
- **Forage:** Mark Patterson, [forage@lbka.org.uk](mailto:forage@lbka.org.uk)
- **Resources:** Paul Vagg, [resources@lbka.org.uk](mailto:resources@lbka.org.uk)
- **Events:** Emily Abbott, [events@lbka.org.uk](mailto:events@lbka.org.uk)
- **Mentoring:** Tristram Sutton, [mentoring@lbka.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@lbka.org.uk)

Our website is <http://www.lbka.org.uk/>.

