



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

March, 2017

Following in last month's tradition of good news, LBKA has been awarded the Surrey Shield, recognising that we had the highest percentage of members who passed the Basic Bee Assessment last year. Congratulations to members who passed and thanks to those that helped them, particularly our Education Officer, Howard Nichols. Meanwhile, in the newsletter, Geoff has a detailed article about swarm collection, we reprint Jon's advice from next year about pre-emptive splits, we hear from all LBKA's apiary managers (thanks to Vlad for coordinating that). Howard, Mark, Richard, Natalie, Eugene and Emily (Heath) provide their regular features. And if you like pollen, see page 6.

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Thanks to this month's contributors: **Natalie Cotton, Eugene Fahy, Richard Glassborow, Petros Hahladakis, Howard Nichols, Ted Parkes, Mark Patterson, Emily Scott and Vlad Zamfir**. Thanks in particular to those who sent me material without me asking for it – this makes things a bit easier for me. Thanks to Martin Hudson for his proof-reading.

Please contact me if you would be willing to contribute to next month's newsletter.

Aidan Slingsby
Editor
services@lbka.org.uk

From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

This year the LBKA have taken a stand at two early Royal Horticultural Society shows, prompted in part by the need to distribute remaining stocks of pollinator friendly flower-mix seeds which need to be planted within the next 2-3 months, but also because, with the publication of our two new leaflets on bees, we are eager to test them on the public. A secondary benefit was an opportunity to sell honey from teaching apiaries and for any members who have stocks left.

Some of our members have already seen the leaflets, Helping Honey Bees and other London Pollinators, and Who's Who of London's Bees. For shows and events we have printed copies in fan-fold format but, in re-



Honey bee on wall flower. Photo: Mark Patterson.

sponse to popular demand we have added a downloadable A4 PDF format to <http://www.lbka.org.uk/leaflets.html>.

The leaflets are aimed at objectively raising public awareness of “bees” (in line with our charitable objects) and in the process hopefully clarifying some of the misconceptions about topics such as bee decline. “Bees” includes 275 species in the UK. Many are in trouble but honey bees, whilst not free from challenges or risks, appear to be doing ok, especially in London which has seen a 3-fold increase in the number of registered colonies in recent years.

The leaflets have met with a very enthusiastic public response so far; we distributed about 200 at the February RHS Early Spring Plant Show. The next show, the RHS Spring Plant and Orchid Show (March 28-30) – <https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-london-shows/rhs-spring-plant-and-orchid-show> – is supposed to be busier so we hope to spread the word further. Why not come and visit us or better still help (get in touch with Emily events@lbka.org.uk). And of course if you have any honey to sell, let me know and bring it to the monthly meeting on 12th. Contact me at chair@lbka.org.uk.

Of course these leaflets are not solely for distribution at the shows and events we attend. We are happy to distribute to schools and other relevant social enterprise organisations and corporations interested in making this subject part of their social responsibility policy. Depending on quantity and circumstance we may ask a fee to cover replacement.

At this point I would like to record the LBKA’s thanks to Mark Patterson who is responsible for the content of these leaflets. Without his knowledge this project would have been impossible to contemplate let alone realise. We would also like to thank Neal’s Yard Remedies who sponsored the design and production.

I am encouraged by the popularity of and interest in these leaflets and the role I hope they will play in better informing a debate about bees (all bees) and a better environment for bees (and us).

Announcements

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

Next Monthly Meeting

The next monthly meeting will be our annual session on **swarm control** at the usual venue – **Fairley House**



The venue for our monthly meeting – the white door on the left.

Junior School (220 Lambeth Rd, SE1 7JY) on **Sunday 12th Mrch** at **11:00**.

Next month will be more hands-on microscopy on **Sunday 9th April**. This time, you’ll be able to check for nosema in yours and other people’s bees. To test your bees, bring 30 or so of your older bees that you’ve killed humanely in the freezer, overnight.

LBKA Winter lectures

We have one more winter lecture lined up! As for the others, this will be at **Roots and Shoots** (Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN) at 19:00. Refreshments will be served from 18:30.

Our third and final Winter Lecture is now lined up for next Wednesday – **15th March** – to be given by Andrew Williams, a Nurse Practitioner from Guy’s Hospital. As with the other lectures, this will be at **Roots and Shoots** (Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN) at 19:00. Refreshments will be served from 18:30. Andrew will talk about **venom, stings, large local reactions, emergency treatment, immunotherapy** and where to obtain a referral to a specialist allergy service. We are pleased that Andrew will be offering his professional advice to us on this important topic.

Our Winter Lectures are free public lectures that are open to all. Spread the word! A £2 donation from non-LBKA members would be appreciated.

LBKA wins the Surrey Shield

The BBKA has awarded London Beekeepers Association the Surrey Shield for outstanding performance in the 2016 BBKA Basic assessments! Last year we had the highest number of members as a proportion of membership passing this assessment.

On a different note the BBKA publishes a list of the top 5 beekeeping associations in the country who have the highest number of members as a proportion of membership holding this assessment. We are currently the 2nd highest in the country.

Both of these are significant achievements for the association and reflect both our education aspirations and mentoring system. Mentors encourage mentees to take



Congratulations Howard!

the assessment as an integral part of the mentoring system. Thanks must go to all our mentors who have voluntarily helped and encouraged newer beekeepers over recent years. Thanks also to all LBKA members who have put themselves forward for this assessment in recent years.

If anyone is going to the BBKA Spring convention this month and can collect the Surrey Shield on our behalf, please email Howard at education@lbka.org.uk.

LBKA presents Howard with an engraved hive tool

Following last month's incredible achievement by Howard of becoming a Master Beekeeper, LBKA presented Howard with an engraved hive tool at the last monthly meeting. Well done Howard and thanks for all the work you do for the association!

LBKA stall at the RHS show

We had a successful show at the Royal Horticultural Society, selling honey, selling seeds and giving out our glossy new leaflets. Thanks to Richard, Mark and Jon for running the show and managing to get back for our first Winter Lecture.

Our new leaflet for free download

LBKA has two new leaflets, one on the types of bees found in London and one on how to help honey bees. They are available for free download from <http://lbka.org.uk/leaflets.html>.

Do you want bees?

Bees generate bees and an advantage of being in an association is that some members will have spare bees and some members will need bees. One of our many members' benefits is our list at http://lbka.org.uk/swarm_list.html that tries to help.

- If you'd like to go on the list of people that **want bees**, email services@lbka.org.uk. Please only add yourself if you are experienced enough to receive bees and indicate whether you'll take swarms and/or nucs. Your phone number and first part of your postcode will go on the list and will be available to all members. Note that swarms are usually only available at very short notice.





- If you have **spare bees** that you'd like to give away or sell, look at the list to find people to supply. Please check how comfortable the member is with receiving bees.

Bees may be offered as swarms (where the origin, health and temperament may not be known) or nucs (where the beekeeper has nurtured a miniature colony of bees – hopefully to the standard described at http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/library/nucleus_standard-l014_1342859848.pdf). For swarms, BBKA insurance requires that we don't sell swarms that we collect, so about £20 for out-of-pocket



Our two new glossy leaflets available for free download from <http://lbka.org.uk/leaflets.html>.



Part of one of our leaflets

expenses is reasonable. For nucs a price of £100-140 is generally reasonable.

LBKA and some of its members coordinate and collect many of the swarms that occur in London, and we will use this list to pass on swarms. Sometimes, this will be at short notice!

An advantage of buying from members is that the bees are local and the member will be able to tell you about their temperament, but you won't necessarily know when you'll get them. If you're in a hurry, consider buying bees from a reputable supplier.

Collecting swarms

This month's meeting will be about swarms (also see Geoff's article on page 15). LBKA members coordinate and collect many of the swarms in London.

Like last year, we have a WhatsApp group and an email list for people that collect swarms or are interested in attending a swarm collection. If you haven't collected swarms before, this is a chance to find out what's going on and how to observe or help. Email services@lbka.org.uk if you'd like to be added/removed to both or either of these.

Guest blog?

We currently have a permanent "guest blog" (p20). Emily Heath's excellent blog always makes a good contribution to the newsletter. However, we would like to rotate this a bit. Does any other member have a blog

that they would like to feature here? Let me know on services@lbka.org.uk

Mentoring Programme

Oscar Wilde once said: "The old believe everything; the middle aged suspect everything, the young know everything." If this quote is on your wavelength you are probably perfect for our mentoring program.

Would you like to be a mentor of LBKA members interested in becoming beekeepers? Were you once a mentee yourself and would now be happy to impart your knowledge to others?

We are looking for beekeepers with enough experience to help others, through hands on involvement, to work towards their bee basic qualification. Full support given.

If interested please contact Elliot (middle to old aged) mentoring@lbka.org.uk for further information.

Beekeeper wanted

A Community Garden in Fulham are looking for a beekeeper to look after their two hives. The existing beekeeper no longer wishes to do this. They can pay (in honey). Contact admin@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from February

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

Howard is a Master Beekeeper, the highest of the BBKA qualifications!

BBKA Spring Convention will be held on **7th–9th April** at **Harper Adams University** in Shropshire. The website (http://www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/spring_convention.php) is now live to book tickets and accommodation.

Old announcements from January

2017 BBKA Basic Assessment. LBKA encourages its members to take the BBKA basic assessment. If you've been managing bees for more than 12 months, we will help. Please confirm by email to Howard on education@lbka.org.uk for more details.

Want to be on the Swarm list? If you'd like to be added or to find out more, contact Natalie on admin@lbka.org.uk.

New committee roles: Tristram has now taken the role as resources officer (resources@lbka.org.uk), overseeing our equipment, their storage and maintenance. Elliot is now in charge of our mentoring programme (mentoring@lbka.org.uk). Vlad is now overseeing our apiaries (apiaries@lbka.org.uk).

Courses. Our introductory beekeeping courses are now full, but we still have spaces on our taster course – see <http://www.lbka.org.uk/courses.html>.

Seeds Are you able to sell any seeds? Perhaps you know of somewhere that would sell them? Talk to Mark on forage@lbka.org.uk if you'd like some seeds to try and sell.

NBU's 2016 Annual Reports are out and you can download them from <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=168>.

Old announcements from December

New committee. As a result of the elections at the AGM, the committee remains with two new additions: **Natalie Cotton** and **Elliot Hodges**. Natalie is the new secretary. See the back page for the full list.

Upcoming monthly meetings. Our exciting programmes of monthly meetings have been announced for the coming year. See <http://lbka.org.uk/events.html>.

LBKA membership. Contact Aidan on services@lbka.org.uk for any membership queries. Members can log onto the **members' area** at http://lbka.org.uk/members_area.html.

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.

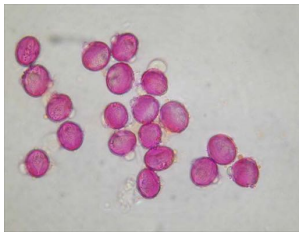
Last month's Monthly Meeting: Pollen under the microscope

What happened last month.

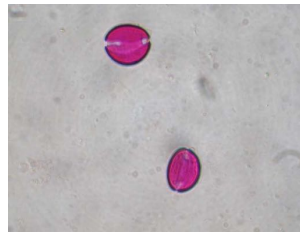
Natalie Cotton
admin@lbka.org.uk

Following a live demonstration of warming honey in January, February's meeting took the hands on approach a stage further. All attendees were invited to get involved and prepare their own slides of pollen for examination under the microscope.

Howard began the meeting with an introduction to the fascinating topic of pollen. Pollen is one of the four



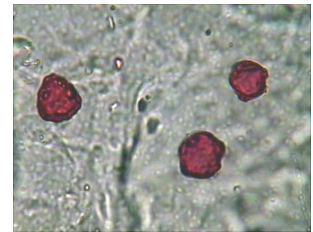
Aesculus hippocastanum (Horse chestnut)



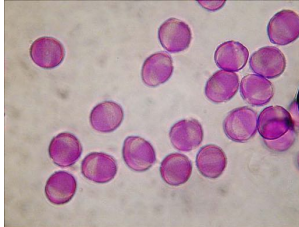
Allium ampeloprasum (Leek)



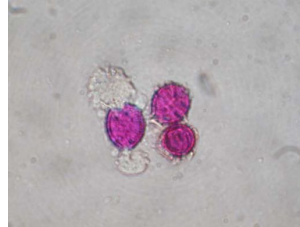
Bellis perennis (Daisy)



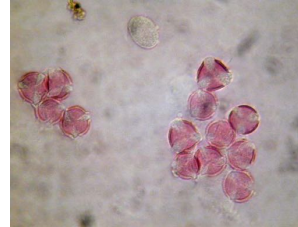
Betula pendula (Silver birch)



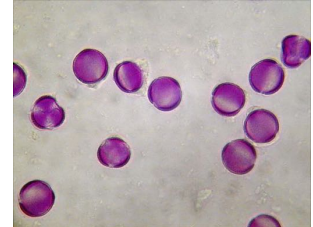
Lamium album (Deadnettle)



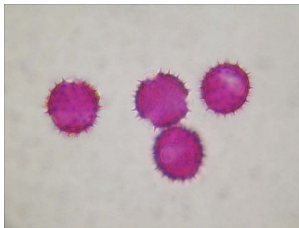
Borago officinalis (Borage)



Brassica oleracea (Broccoli)



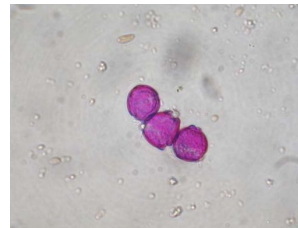
Brassica rapa (Oil seed rape)



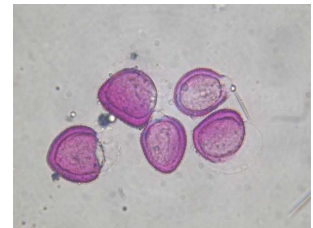
Calendula officinalis (Marigold)



Calluna vulgaris (Heather)



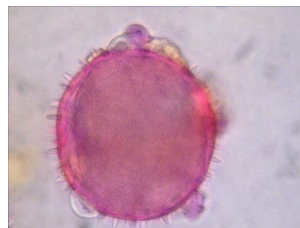
Capsicum annuum (Sweet pepper)



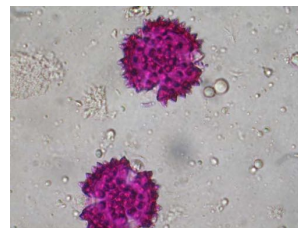
Hyacinthus orientalis (Hyacinth)



Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorn)



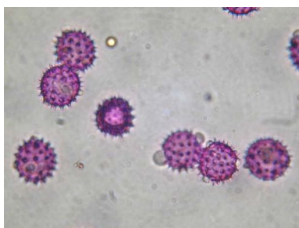
Cucubita pepo (Courgette)



Cynara scolymus (Globe artichoke)



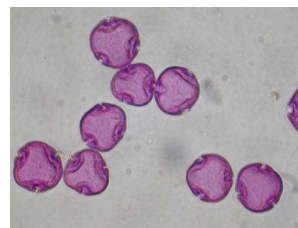
Digitalis purpurea (Foxglove)



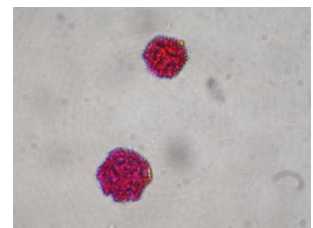
Helianthus annuus (Sunflower)



Platanus hybrida (Plane)



Tilia x europaea (Lime)



Taraxacum officinale (Dandelion)



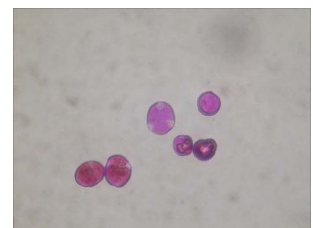
Ribes nigrum (flowering currant)



Quercus robur (English oak)



Galanthus elwesii (Snowdrop)



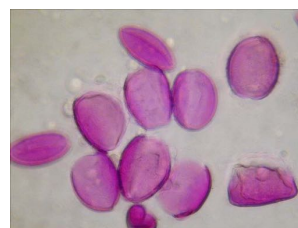
Hedera helix (Ivy)



Lonicera periclymenum (Honeysuckle)



Castanea sativa (Sweet chestnut)



Narcissus (Daffodil)



Papaver fauriei (Poppy)

Pollen comes in all shapes and sizes. Pollen itself is colourless – the colours come from the various oils it contains. When preparing pollen for mounting on a slide, we wash away the oil and dye purple. These photographs are just a small selection from <http://www.saps.plantsci.cam.ac.uk/pollen/index.htm>. Well worth a browse.

things that honeybees forage for (along with water, nectar, and propolis). There are a vast variety of pollen types, meaning identifying pollen grains under the microscope without knowing the plant in advance is a highly specialised topic carried out in professional labs. We had the advantages of knowing what we working with!

Most pollen grains are just 25 to 35 microns in diameter. The lumps bees bring back to the hive in their leg joints are formed of thousands of individual grains. The colours of pollen can vary, but it's an unreliable way to identify the type – a comparison of the differing colours on the two pollen identification charts Howard and Richard had brought along demonstrated the challenges with that.

Instead, the main way to identify pollen is through the shape and the features of its surface area. Shapes can vary immensely: from spherical, to triangular, to banana shaped. The main features are either pores on the surface area (known as pirate), furrows (colpate), or a combination of pores and furrows (colporate). As a pollen grain is a 3D object, even identifying these features can be challenging in 2D for the inexperienced. To aid with that, the technically literate members of the committee had hooked a computer up to the microscope to display the results, with a second computer connected to a pollen database. Possibly the most technologically advanced LBKA meeting to date!

The majority of the session was spent preparing slides to observe under the microscope. Members had brought in a variety of winter flowering plants, including rosemary, daffodil, mimosa and lily. Richard and Howard demonstrated how to prepare the slides, including degreasing and staining the pollen samples. Take a look at some of the images to see how members got on – and in the finest Blue Peter tradition, some that were made earlier.

March in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

Every spring is filled with beekeeping expectation. Once the season is underway it becomes diverted and consumed by the unexpected. Despite this fact of beekeeping life, it is still good policy to have a beekeeping plan. It need not be overly ambitious, just to learn something new. Last season quite a few of our members had little or no honey harvest. Therefore, the plan could be as simple as producing a surplus honey crop this sum-

mer. The key to such a strategy is having the maximum number of flying bees at the time of the summer nectar flow. Such a plan would need to incorporate a successful method of swarm control along with keeping healthy bees. Thus the simple aspiration of producing a honey surplus is quite challenging and requires both planning and sufficient equipment!

March is a time of increasing activity within the hive but it all depends upon the weather. For the beekeeper it is also a month of increasing anticipation. Assuming the weather improves then the colony at the end of March should be substantially different from the one at the beginning. The intervening days can include warm, sunny days, which encourage some plants to flower early, and bees to forage. The weather can just as easily revert back to cold. The former causes the bees to produce more brood and the latter to retreat back to a cluster.

Stores

The main job of the beekeeper is still to keep an eye on stores. Old "winter" bees are starting to die off and new bees are being born. Food reserves are decreasing but demand for food is substantially increasing. The bees will be using energy – flying on warmer days but bringing in mainly pollen, not nectar. They also need to keep the brood at a higher temperature (about 35°C) which also uses more energy. Stores can quickly be depleted in March and early April. This is undoubtedly the most important job for March, if not for the entire season.

First inspection

The first warm day from the start of March is an opportunity to have a quick look inside the hive. If so, then this will constitute the 1st inspection of the new season. The new colony card should be made up and inspection details recorded. Minimum temperature should be 10°C for a quick look but without taking out brood frames. If there is an exceptionally warm day with the temperature 14°C or more then a detailed colony inspection may be made. Otherwise, leave this until April.

If an inspection is not possible, then observing the colony entrance will provide invaluable information. If the bees are bringing in pollen, purposefully entering and leaving (flying a beeline) then these are always good signs. If the bees are aimless, listless or without purpose on a warm day then, prima facie, all may not be well.

Monitoring varroa mites

This is a good time to monitor the mite drop. Leave the inserts in for a week and count the mite drop. If > 2 mites per day then some action will be needed in Spring. If >7 mites per day then action is immediately required.

The National Bee Unit produces an excellent booklet "Managing Varroa" which is available for free download. There is also comprehensive information about varroa on the NBU website, including an on line varroa count calculator: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com>.

Siting your bees

Those who were on the LBKA mentoring schemes last year and have not yet acquired bees (but will do so) should prepare the hive and site. If acquiring bees by means of the purchase of a nucleus from a supplier then the order should have been placed by now. Demand often exceeds supply.

Mentoring

Those who will not keep bees this year but want to have mentoring with a more experienced beekeeper should make suitable arrangements.

In case the worst happened. . .

Finally, on a sad note, if you find your bees are dead then it is imperative to close the entrance to prevent robbing. Make a note of what you observe then remove and destroy dead bees and frames. Sterilise the hive parts. It is important to try to find out why the bees have died. Winter and early spring colony losses seem to average 20% to 30% so you are not alone. It does not always mean it's the beekeeper's fault but it is essential to analyse and learn. Examples of reasons include, but are not limited to, the varroa mite (the number 1 offender), lack of stores, damp / inadequate hive ventilation, site situated in a frost pocket, failing queen, poorly mated queen.

On a more optimistic note, the beekeeping season arrives in March. We have several eventful months ahead. I sincerely hope that all of us have a productive season and achieve whatever aims and goals we aspire to!

Focus on Forage

Mark's tells us what's in flower at this time of year.

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

March is officially the first month of spring for us in the UK, though in London it has felt spring like for several weeks now. The first of the spring flowers are already putting on a colourful show of yellows, purples and shades of white. **Snowdrops** are starting to pass



Ground Ivy.



Anemone blanda.



Helleborus hybridus.



Ashy Mining bee on pussy willow in Archbishops Park in 2016.



Painted mining bee on pussy willow, Archbishops Park.



Snowdrops.

their best, having flowered in large numbers since late January. The early flowering **crocus** species are currently looking at their best across most of London. The later flowering large flowered crocus varieties are just starting to join the display too. These and other spring bulbous plants include **Winter Aconite**, **Anemone blanda**, **Squill** and **Muscari**. These are valuable early sources of pollen for bees.

Garden plants important to bees this month include the **Hellebores** (the hybrid Hellebores in my garden are particularly popular with bees at the moment), **Pulmonaria** and **Wallflowers**. Both the biennial bedding wallflowers and short lived perennial varieties are attractive to bees, but it's the Everlasting Wallflower *Bowles Mauve* that is flowering best at present; the others will put on a fantastic show towards the end of March and into April.

Several Spring flowering trees are important to bees and these include **White Poplar**, **Willow**, and **Hazel**. The large Hazel tree in my apiary has been flowering since January but is at its peak now. The willow and **white beam** catkins are just starting to open. One of the best small willows for gardens is **Salix caprea Kilarnock** which is a pussy willow type with large fluffy catkins which become covered in bright lemon yellow pollen. All manner of bees adore it. Last spring whilst cycling through Archbishops Park *en route* to the LBKA monthly meeting, I passed a trio of these dwarf weeping trees which were covered in **honey bees**, **Ashy Mining bees**, **Painted Mining bees** and several **bumblebees**. These trees all have pollen with a high protein and fatty acids content valuable to bees rearing brood and for queens fattening up ready to begin laying.

Shrubs flowering this month attractive to bees include **flowering currant**, **Sarcococca**, **blackthorn**, **flowering quince** and **camelia**. At last month's RHS early Spring Flower Show I bought 2 new camelias for my garden, a light pink one and a dark pinkie red one called "Adeyaka". Both are open single flowered varieties which flower from Late February through to Early May and are "self cleaning" varieties which mean the blooms drop as soon as they are pollinated, or if the blooms become frosted resulting in a neat looking shrub without the tainted frost damaged petals which can look unsightly.

Other flowers making an appearance include **lesser celandine**, **sweet violet**, **cowslip**, **primrose**, **white deadnettle**, **bugle**, **ground ivy** and the first of the **Spanish bluebells** (*Hyacinthoides Hispanica*) whose blue-green pollen Honey bees will collect. white deadnettle in particular is a valuable wild plant for bumble bees and some of the longer-tongued solitary bees. Its pollen is rich in protein and fats.

Speaking of wild bees, there are reports coming in from across the country over the past month with the first sightings of spring wild bees. This year some species have begun to appear very early indeed with reports of **Hairy Footed Flower bee**, **Painted Mining bee** and



Primrose.



Buff tailed queen on crocus.



Winter aconite.



Wild damson.

many **bumblebee queens** being spotted in and around the capital. In the last week of February I discovered 7 **Buff Tailed queens** alongside a **Garden bumblebee queen** and an **Early bumblebee queen** foraging on crocus blooms not far from my house.

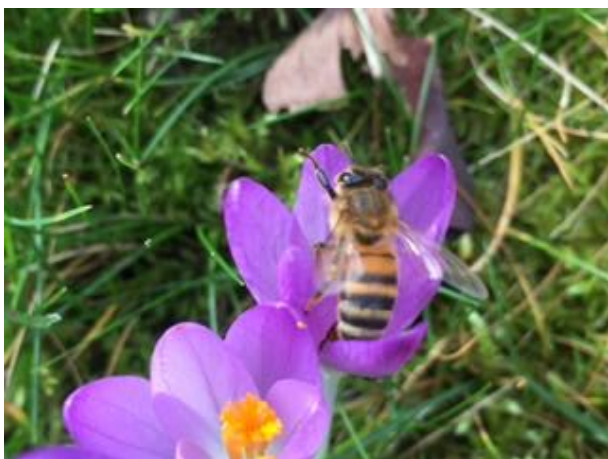
I'm hoping that the very cold snaps we've had this winter will benefit my fruit trees. Most fruiting trees perform best when they have been subjected to a good frosting over the winter. A very cold snap will kill off many pathogens and insect pests which can attack the tree and the difference in temperature triggers hormones and activates genes in the plant tissues important in the formation of flower buds. Temperatures in my garden in December and January reached lows of minus 10 Celsius so with luck this spring will be a good one for Apple, Pear and Plum blossom resulting in a bounty of nectar for bees in March through to May and a bumper fruit crop in late summer.

Jobs in the garden

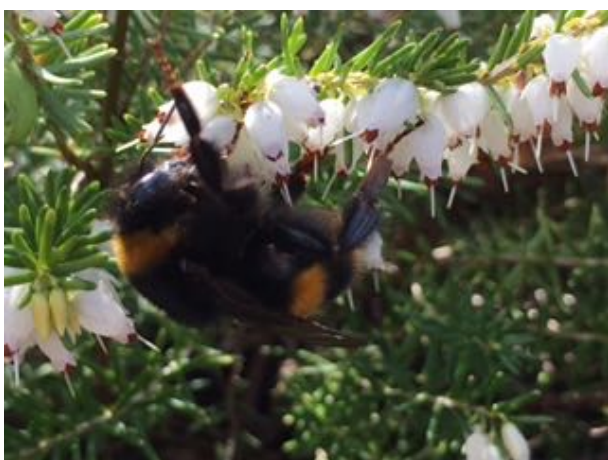
This time of year presents us with the last opportunity to lift and divide herbaceous perennials before they start to put on significant growth. I've just lifted and split my **Helleniums, hardy geraniums, Japanese anemones** and **sedum spectable**.

Plant out herbaceous perennials that were grown from seed or cuttings last year. Get them in the ground now so they have time to spread out their roots ahead of the coming growing season. Less hardy plants may still require protection with fleece. Have fleece available to protect the blooms of soft fruits. My **peach** and **nectarine** buds are starting to open – will I get any fruit this year?

Early March is the last opportunity to prune apples and pears. Stone fruits such as peach, plum and apricot should be pruned in late summer. When pruning apples and pear resist the urge to cut back too much growth which the trees respond to by putting on excess vigorous regrowth. Unlike plum and other stone fruits which flower on the previous year's wood, Pip fruits require 2 year old material to develop flower/fruit buds.



Honey bee on crocus.



Buff tailed queen on winter heather.

LBKA Apiaries

Vlad has coordinated articles from all four of LBKA's apiary managers, giving us a comprehensive summary of what shape they are in as we approach the new bee-keeping year.

Vlad Zamfir, Petros Hahladakis, Richard Glassborrow and Ted Parkes
apaires@lbka.org.uk

Brockwell

Petros Hahladakis

Having last checked the hives almost 3 weeks ago, paying a visit after storm Doris I wasn't too sure what to expect. Previously, we had had some problems with the enclosure we use at Brockwell, but luckily this time it managed to survive the high winds pretty well. The hives are also well strapped down (mainly due to past vandalism) so they got through the winds largely unscathed.

Of the 3 hives we have, 1 had been taken down the



Strapped Down Hives at Brockwell.

fondant placed on top slowly and continued to do so, another hasn't touched it at all, but the 3rd which had only just made a start on them at the last check had managed to clear almost two thirds of the 2.5kg block. After giving them a top-up and having a chat about it with David who helps out, what we think has happened is that the intermittent sunny spells we've had caused the queen in this hive to get into action earlier than the others. Walking around the gardens I can see that the snowdrops and crocus are starting to come out so hoping for a bit more sun to let the bees work these plants instead.

We also have a few interesting weeks coming up at Brockwell. With the standstill order still in place after the EFB outbreak we await the arrival of bee inspector in the spring to give them a look over before performing a shook swarm, and hopefully getting the all-clear.

Looking over the EFB experience, aside from having to destroy the bees, another setback has been the standstill order on what is effectively an out apiary. Not being able to move equipment back and forth, primarily to clean it more easily at home has caused a few issues,



Bee enclosure at Brockwell.



Flower Patch at Brockwell.

and is definitely something you need to be aware of if you ever find yourself in the same situation (is it better to take equipment to an out apiary as and when you need it or to leave it there and not be able to move it if you end up with a standstill order?).

Eden

Richard Glassborrow

Following storm Doris, I went to the apiary to check for damage. The hives are strapped down to heavy concrete bases as a precaution against just such a wind and, sadly, mindless vandalism too. Thankfully, everything was fine.

The air temperature was a breezy though sunny 9.5°C and all four colonies were flying and bringing in pollen. I have had fondant on 2 for some weeks but today was the first time there had been significant consumption and I added a fresh supply. I also added Neopol (fructose fondant/pollen) to a third colony to see if it gives them a bit of a boost as I usually split this colony early to create the observation hive for LBKA outreach activities and shows we attend.

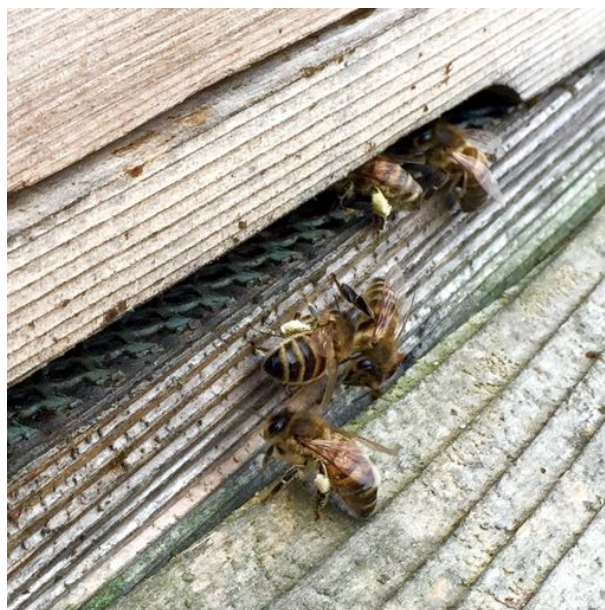
I am in the process of moving one colony across the apiary so that it is in a better position and, critically for teaching, outward facing. I have found that in warmer times, hives can be moved some distance along the flight path before it gives returning foragers a navigation problem (as opposed to sideways from the flight path or rotating). But in this cool weather I am not chancing more than a few inches at a time. They will be in place by the time the action really starts.

Any time now the weather should be warm enough for a first inspection. Fingers crossed no nasty surprises. In the meantime frame-making is on the agenda, a good opportunity for mentees to pick up some skills (that's my excuse for getting other people to do it). I always shook swarm colonies every year as my main varroa control strategy (good for control of other diseases too). Last year this was delayed for various reasons but that turned out to be an advantage as it avoided a later artificial swarm control. In the past I have shook swarmed early only to find that 4 weeks later they were going into swarm mode and another set of frames was needed.

Holland Park

Ted Parkes

The hives at Holland Park are progressing with the season and on warm days they are all active and the bees are bringing in pollen. A sign the queen may indeed be laying and the hive building brood. This can be a concern if the weather turns cold and the bees are spread out or not in sufficient numbers to keep it warm. This may also put added stress on the winter stores. So I have been maintaining a constant supply of fondant on all four hives. I'll move to a 1:1 sugar syrup as soon as



Holland Park Pollen.



Storm Doris and the empty hives at Mudchute.

the weather permits. Let hope mother nature continues to cooperate.

Mudchute

Vlad Zamfir

For most of February, the hives at Mudchute have been very quiet every time I have visited them as it wasn't very warm on those days. However, having peeked under the fondant bag I put on top of each colony, I could see a few inquisitive bees looking out and trying to determine who's disturbing them. With regards to colony strength, I fear that the smallest one has not wintered well and I may find it has not survived when I do the first inspection. However, I could feel a warm patch on the crown board which gives me hope that they may yet pull through.

Storm Doris was not very forgiving at Mudchute and toppled a stack of equipment on an empty hive in front of it (silver lining that it was empty). Sadly, one of the WBC lifts and the roof got damaged as a result but nothing a hammer and some glue can't fix. Thankfully none of the occupied hives suffered any damage. A few of the nuc boxes (both polystyrene and wooden) got thrown about but they're still in one piece. So, lesson

for next time: secure the stacks of equipment against immovable objects like a fence.

As the start of the new season is fast approaching, I am building frames and refreshing my knowledge of how the colonies behaved last year by looking at my records. This will inform my plan for managing them in the coming season.

Splitting Colonies for Swarm Pre-emption

We've republished Jon's article from last year.

Jon Harris
LBKA member

"How do I stop my bees swarming?" I hear you ask. Well, every year I 'split' mine to avoid swarming and I have only been caught out on one occasion in the last ten years, so it's well worth a try if you are prone to a swarm or two!

Below I have listed two ways of splitting colonies, one for when there are no queen cells and one for those times you look in and there are queen cells and they are ready to go (we have all been there!)

I always plan to split mine before they produce any Queen cells so there is no fear of them catching me out, but you can split once there are queen cells. It is really easy to do and a 90% success rate in beekeeping is a great result!

The only additional equipment you will need above and beyond all your normal inspection equipment is a nuc box (if you are desperate you can use a full hive, however the best option is a nuc, as it is small and portable) and the frames made up to fill the nuc.

Splitting should only take place once there are drone bees around, as we need them to fertilise the new queen!

If there are no queen cells

- Build the splitting into your normal weekly inspection.
- Locate the queen in the hive and move her to the nuc box on the frame she is on. Ensure the frame she is on has some stores and pollen on it.
- Use one of the frames from the nuc in the main hive to replace the one you have taken, put the frame on the edge of the brood box and move all other frames together to maintain the central 'cluster'.

- Locate a frame in the original hive that has eggs that are less than 3 days old (upright) and mark it and put it back in the hive.
- Shake at least 3 or 4 frames of bees in to the nuc, a lot will return to the hive as they are flying bees, but you need at least 2 or 3 of the frames to be covered in the nuc to make it viable and also create an impact in the original hive. Do not shake the marked frame with the eggs, as this may damage the eggs.
- Make sure you have the correct number of frames in the nuc and now put it together and move it to one side.
- The hive will know that the queen has gone and in most cases the noise they make will be different and they do tend to be a bit more aggressive.
- Put the hive back together and leave for week.
- Move the nuc to a new location a few metres away from the hive.
- Feed the nuc with syrup and feed feed feed !
- Seven days later, go back in to the hive and go through each frame, they will have produced multiple emergency queen cells.
- Remove and depose all but 2 or 3 of the queen cells, mark the frame with the queen cells on it, as this makes it easier to keep an eye on. Make sure you pick the biggest and healthiest looking cells as close together as you can.
- Now close up the hive and leave for 2 weeks, by which time the queen should have hatched, take a little look and see if a queen cell has hatched, I tend not to destroy the remainder, just in case the first does not work out, she will ensure they are dealt with!
- There is a small risk at this point that they will swarm, but this has only happened once for me in ten years.
- Now leave for a week and then start to check for eggs, this will indicate she is fertilised and in place, it may take her up to 2 weeks to start laying.
- You can now raise the nuc as a new colony or take the queen out and re combine the bees with the old colony.

If there are queen cells.

- Locate all the queen cells in the hive, look on every frame and locate all cells!
- Pick the best 2 or 3 that are big and healthy and close together, cut all others out and destroy, ensure you mark this frame so you can spot it easily.
- Locate the queen and move her on a frame to the new hive, ensure there are no queen cells on the frame she is on!
- Shake 3 or 4 frames of bees into the nuc, but not from the frame with the queen cells on.
- Feed the nuc as above and move to a new location
- Close up the hive and leave for 4-7 days.
- Go back to the hive and ensure they have not made any more queen cells. If they have, cut these out and destroy them. This is why you mark the frame

with the original ones on and don't destroy them by mistake.

- Leave them for 2 weeks and then go in and spot her and look for eggs.
- You can re combine the bees from the nuc if there are eggs or raise it as a new colony.

If it goes wrong and you have no Queen in the hive

If there is no sign of the queen in the hive, or the queen cells do not hatch, you have 2 options.

- Cut out the dead queen cells and re queen with a new queen, you could use the old queen from the nuc or a new one.
- Place a frame of eggs from the nuc in to the hive once you have cut out all the dead queen cells and the bees will raise a new queen.

The last option has a greater impact on the hive as it will be another 3/4 weeks until they have new bees, so I would go for the first option – getting a laying queen in to the hive as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns, I am happy to answer them on the LBKA Facebook page or message me on Facebook.

“The Bees are Swarming – HELP!”

A description by Geoff Hood of what to do when a swarm is found. If you're interested in joining the swarm list, please contact Natalie on admin@lbka.org.uk.

Geoff Hood
LBKA member

When a swarm occurs in the countryside, no one phones the police, no one phones the Council and no one phones the BBKA. Sometimes, some well meaning soul might phone the local beekeeper and he/she can collect it. But honeybee swarms can be a real nuisance in an urban environment – a swarm in Regent Street will stop the traffic and cause chaos. In an urban environment – such as London – when a swarm emits, neighbours get angry, the public get scared, children cry, some phone the police. Many phone the Council and their outsourced switch board may tell them to contact a pest control officer to kill them!

Or if they've read their manual correctly, they may go onto http://www.bbka.org.uk/help/find_a_swarm_coordinator.php and find a nearby registered



It's all a load of rubbish.

voluntary swarm collector supplied by beekeeping associations such as LBKA. London has many beekeepers whose swarms may cause problems, so we need plenty of swarm collectors.

I find 80% of the calls that I take in outer London will be bumble bees or wasps (don't remove them). But 15% will be swarms and 5% established honeybee colonies. But they don't all come at weekends. I only collected two swarms last year, but I did collect 25 swarms one year!

So how do you start collecting swarms? The best thing is go out with someone else who is on the BBKA swarm collectors list, or at least see a demonstration to get an idea of the problems. You will need Public Liability insurance as, if you cause a problem rather than solve one, your household insurance does not cover it. You get swarm Public Liability insurance of ten million pounds as a LBKA member, but only with the **full BBKA option**.

The 'Usual Method'

The usual method of collecting a swarm is to knock the bees into a straw skep, cardboard box or similar, wrap the container in a bed sheet and transport them, usually at dusk, to an apiary where the bees walk up a flat board into a hive. Sleps are made by hand and cost about £60, but any lightweight container will do – a cardboard box, bucket, raffia, wicker or waste paper basket, or Nucleus box.

I use a straw woven basket or cardboard box. My box



Catching a swarm is like catching a fish.

is always flat in the car boot, together with an old sheet, in case I get a call to a swarm. Bees when newly collected need to have something to cling to in order to cluster, because they are full of honey and automatically want to start wax building. In a skep or woven basket, they can cling easily to the rough surface. In a Nucleus box you can use foundation frames but in a cardboard box or bucket you need to jam a few twigs inside to help them cling.

Getting a call and collecting a swarm

The telephone call will be from a person worried about bees – “I have a swarm of bees in my lawn” or “I have a hive of bees in the tree...” (they often don’t know the beekeeper terms). They are often excited and confused about height or numbers. A ‘lot’ of bees can be 10, just above my head height, or they can be 30ft up a tree! Don’t dash off skep in hand... find out more about the bees first.

What are they? Don’t collect or move anything other than honey bees. You are not insured for bumble bees and you are not a pest control officer, so definitely no wasps or hornets. If they are in a bird box, they are tree bumblebees. If they are coming out of a wall/tree, then they are bumblebees or a colony (and therefore not a swarm) of honey bees. If they are in the ground or compost, they are wasps, bumblebees or mining bees. If they are in an empty bin, maybe honey bees. If they are in the lawn, they are lawn bees. If they are fluffy,



My bees never swarm!



Skep and Sheet method.

they are bumble bees. If they are yellow, they are wasps. If it is July/August and bees are flying at head height from a shed or flat roof, they could be honey bees, but it’s more likely to be tree bumblebee drone mating behaviour. If they are brown and hanging in a ball from a branch, they are honey bees.

How long have they been there? Since today or yesterday is OK. But if they noticed them last week, it is not a swarm, but either an established colony of honey bees or bumblebees.

How high? Be careful. Start with swarms no more than head height. Don’t do anything out of your usual comfort zone. Start low or call for help. There are techniques for tall trees, but don’t try if you haven’t got the equipment. Also don’t try demolishing walls or roofs to get a colony out of a wall, roofs or chimney. Your BBKA insurance doesn’t cover that.

Take all your equipment and beesuit (see list at end of this article). If you arrive and find that it is a swarm, you’ll need to assess the situation. Is it within your reach and capabilities? If you’re not a steeple jack or



Swarm in Apple tree.



A split swarm, not two swarms.

roofer, don't climb roofs or trees. What are the hazards? Even friendly dogs don't like beekeepers in veils and white suits. Is it on accessible land? Have you permission to enter? Is it public space? If the general public can access it, you'll need to exclude them. I use yellow warning tape. Even with that, I have had people ignore it as they thought it cruel to keep bees in a box - and they get stung.

If it's in an accessible tree or bush, I always spray the swarm first with water. This pulls the swarm together and stops more bees flying off. If the swarm is in a position on a branch or object, place a bee-proof bedsheet on the ground beneath it to collect any bees that fall outside the skep/box when collecting. Then (if you have courage), holding skep or box under the swarm with one hand, give three sharp shakes of the branch with the other. This should get the bees into the skep or cardboard box. Turn it upside down on the sheet with a stone to lift one corner so they have an entrance. If you have the queen in the skep/box, the bees will start fanning at this entrance to attract any flying bees to the queen. Smoke the remaining bees heavily. If you didn't get the queen, they may return to their original location and you may have to repeat the whole procedure again.

But if on a solid structure that cannot be shaken (wall, fence or tree trunk), you can try to lift them off the wall by gently putting your hand behind the swarm¹, pulling it away, then shaking them off your hands. I then run the rest in with a brush of long grass

¹They tickle your hands quite a lot.

or bee brush while holding the container underneath and gently coerce them into it. I then smoke the area they were hanging onto. If the nucleus or brood box is made of new ply or new cedar, I burn a few sheets of newspaper in it to get rid of the fresh cut wood smell and then rub beeswax inside the hive. If I use a cardboard box, I just wax it with warmed beeswax to get the cardboard box smelling of bees. Bees seem to like something that smells like home. My bait hive and my swarm 14×12 nucleus box also has a drop of lemon grass essential oil dabbed inside as this mimics the queen pheromones.

The normal method is to leave the skep/box in the shade and collect it at dusk, when all flying bees have returned. So in fading light, pull up the sheet to cover the skep/box and tie the sheet up. Now all the bees are inside the skep and sheet and you can safely put them in your car (haha... you'll be lucky).

You then stumble in total darkness in the apiary trying to find somewhere to put the skep and sheet. You then return next day to run them into their new hive. However you can also run the risk of them absconding to a better home while waiting, if scout bees feel they have found a more suitable home. When the swarm has been out of their hive for more than a few hours, absconding is more likely. You should stay with the main box if on public path, park, or highway until dusk (but see My Method).



The Swarm you missed is now under the open mesh floor.

My Method

My Method evolved because staying with a large quantity of bees until dusk is a pain and in London most calls are on or near public areas, so I now do not leave bees in a skep and sheet.

Instead, I try to knock the bees into a six or five frames 14×12 polystyrene nucleus box. This is light and easily held near to the swarm. I remove all frames except one full frame of foundation and knock the bees in. I place the swarm nucleus box on the sheet with it slightly raised on bricks, and slowly put the other five foundation 14×12 frames in so as not to squash bees. I smoke the location the bees were on and then watch them for an hour. If the bees are settled, I smoke stray bees into the nucleus box and close it up (rotating the variable opening disk). I then remove this main part of the swarm in the nucleus to an apiary in daylight. On the sheet I leave my waxed cardboard box propped by a stone, I return to take the few stragglers later at dusk and shake them out at the apiary in front of the nucleus box before daylight fades. I can hear other swarm collectors saying: "you have left lots of flying bees" - but the bees left behind are little more than you get if a swarm leaves of its own accord. There are always stragglers and often these bees return to the old hive.

If the swarm is inaccessible using my nucleus box, I still use a skep/box but will immediately run them or throw them into nucleus box. I try always to find the queen while the bees run in and cage her. If I



Bees.

have a watching crowd taped off safely with my yellow tape, then running in is often my preferred method because, to the watchers, it's like magic as the bees go to the nucleus box (there has been applause... oh... the fame...). Here is a link to one of mine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzsJ9oKH-Js>

If you get a swarm that isn't via the BBKA/LBKA hotline and you want to keep it, you cannot charge for the swarm (as it invalidates your BBKA insurance), but you can accept a donation to cover costs of travel etc. Although you cannot sell your swarm, you can look after it until it is a proper colony or a 5 frame nucleus, then sell that.

If you are hiving your own collected swarm rather than collecting via BBKA then I am always surprised why swarm collectors put a prime swarm into a national nucleus box expecting it to stay while they feed them gallons of syrup. The bees are looking for a more spacious home than a five frame National nucleus. The scouts want at least a national hive size home. That's why I use a 6 frame 14×12 Nucleus which is only slightly smaller than a national brood. It means that I can leave most swarms to develop in the 14×12 nucleus box. In quarantine apiaries, I have often seen overcrowded nuclei only four weeks after collection. This overcrowded nucleus often absconds or swarms again due to overcrowding.

If you want to house your swarm in a normal hive, you prepare the hive with foundation, but you can add a single fumigated comb (drawn comb fumigated with 80% acetic acid), but no more than one frame, to allow the queen to lay immediately. The rest must be foundation or starter strips, The general view is not to feed for three days as, if the bees use all the honey they are carrying with them to convert to wax, this prevents any honey being stored with possible disease. I doubt this will occur as they carry so little honey, and I normally feed syrup after one day (either ambrosia inverted sugar or 2:1 sugar syrup).

If I put a large prime swarm into a hive then it has a queen excluder under the brood box but above the floor, to stop the queen absconding. I throw the swarm into



My rotating entrances with Queen excluder



Well, it is one way of transporting them home...

the hive with the five middle frames removed I then put these back slowly so as not to squash bees, and replace the crown board. The queen excluder should be removed after 4 days when the queen has started laying, or if you have a virgin queen, to allow her free access to go on her mating flights.

In normal circumstances a mated queen will start laying in a day or so but a virgin queen can take 14 or more days. I feed until the queen lays. If I keep the swarm in the 14x12 Nucleus, I rotate the entrance disk to the queen excluder slats, and open it after 4 days.

Equipment Checklist:

- Pruning Saw or loppers, Secateurs & handful of grass for a bee Brush.
- Skep or cardboard or lightweight Nucleus with foundation frames.

- A old sheet or old duvet cover. (bee proof no holes)
- Straps and string
- Water Spray to compact the swarm
- Somewhere to house them once caught,
- A roll of security warning tape
- Torch (optional)
- Queen cage (optional)
- A plan and courage to do it

Come and join us, LBKA need you.

Facebook (In)digest(ion)

Some of the highlights – and possibly lowlights – from LBKA's public facing Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/>

*Eugene Fahy
LBKA Member*

Perhaps in keeping with the beekeeping year, group members seemed to have awakened from the winter slumber and this has been a more active month on Facebook. Carl Dixon shared a useful chart from Sipa Honey Bees which gives the timeline for the lifecycles of queens, drones and workers - the graphic shows all of the stages at a glance: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154167180211610/>. Catherine Giordano shared a link to "Do Honey Bees Have Hairy Eyeballs? Amazing Facts about Honey Bee Anatomy". It is a concise description of honey bee anatomy in a Q&A format: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154194168426610/>

We had a number of video links this month. Carl Dixon's shows a queen moving over a frame, laying eggs: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154186998061610/>. Bohan Damjanovic shared a youtube video on building a queen bee incubator – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154158759636610/> – and Gary Fawsett posted a video link demonstrating oxalic acid sublimation <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154179152236610/>

Anyone in the Deptford area may be interested in a post from Dave Jw Day publicising Art with Bees, an exhibition of the work of Han Karpisek at Deptford cinema. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154180170746610/> A Guardian story, posted by Gary Fawsett, reported that Tesco stores in Devon and Cornwall have donated

discarded sugar from split bags to of sugar a local beekeepers' group. Geordy Mark noted that LBKA received £10k from Tesco last year for forage planting on the Isle of Dogs.

Andrew Tottenham shared a number of links - Busy Bees, an article in The Scientist, looks at the efficiency of bumblebees - the most active foragers can make forty times more trips than the least active ones. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154180368586610/>

"How Honey Bee Hives Changed the Internet" discusses a study which involved labelling and monitoring 4,000 bees to see how the colony organised foragers to collect enough nectar to survive the winter. The researches produced a "honey bee algorithm" which described how bees efficiently shifted from depleted pollen sources to fresh ones. At the time, the federally funded research was not seen to have any wider relevance. However, fifteen years later, an enterprising organisation realised it could use the algorithm to maximise its web-hosting revenue. Note: before clicking on the link, it is worth mentioning that each time I have linked to this article, I have been prompted to "learn more" about a process of scalp tattooing for bald men. If you are as follically challenged as I am, you may find the accompanying picture slightly unnerving: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154182039031610/>.

In a post publicising the LBKA's stand at the RHS Early Spring Flower Show, Geordy Mark and our editor Aidan shared a link to the LBKA's new leaflets. Helping honeybees and Who's who of London's bees can both be downloaded from the LBKA site <http://lbka.org.uk/leaflets.html>.

Karin Alton from LASI posted a picture showing a queen and her daughter on the same frame, Geordy Mark replied with another picture. He said he often observed perfect supercedure in one of his hives, with mother and daughter happily coexisting from autumn to mid-spring, by which time the older queen has gone: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2512721609/permalink/10154158590001610/>

Finally, Norman Carrick from IBRA publicised a 2011 book, "Varroa: still a problem in the 21st century", which prompted a lengthy response from Stan Houk highlighting some of the problems with relying on hygienic queens to promote varroa resistance. Stan calls for all beekeepers to introduce hygienic queens to prevent dilution of the genetics by queens mating with drones from non-hygienic strains. He says "resistant drone saturation is the only way to really move forward."



Biscuits and flapjacks



Snowdrops

Adventures in Beeland: Beekeeping amongst the snowdrops

Another guest post from Emily's excellent blog – <http://adventuresinbeeland.com/>.

Emily Scott
LBKA member

There was a properly bitter chill in the air last weekend, but I knew there would be a few tough beekeepers down at the apiary. Alan was packing up nails neatly into boxes and quickly had the kettle on. In the end four of us turned up around a small feast of cookies, biscuits and banana chocolate flapjacks.

There had been snow swirling around in the morning, but it didn't settle. No bees were flying, not even our usually eager nucleus bees. Still, the snowdrops had come on.



Poly nuc cluster.

One of the snowdrops looked like it had been nibbled at to reveal its pollen.

Inside the nuc the bees were still active over about four frames. They have fondant on the side; I just hope it doesn't get too cold for them to reach it. I smeared some extra blobs nearer the cluster.

Soon it'll be shook-swarming time! Alan has all his frames ready. I, of course, don't!

Members' marketplace

This section is for members offering beekeeping items or services to members or requesting items. Items could include nucs, wax and honey. Email services@lbka.org.uk to add something here.

Emily Abbott. I've got loads of 30lb buckets that I need to shift! Happy to donate them to anyone who could use them. They're all buckets that I bought for honey, so they're food grade, I've given them a quick rinse, and have got writing on them so I'm definitely recycling them, rather than offering brand new buckets! emilyabbott@virginmedia.com.

Mark Patterson: I'm running a rooftop beekeeping course on Saturday 20th May from my Putney apiary. Full details and booking are on my website: <http://www.apicultural.co.uk/courses>. geordymark@hotmail.com.

Upcoming events

Sunday 12th March: Monthly meeting: Swarm control

11:00-13:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY

An important topic for urban beekeepers – swarm control. Followed by the usual hot drinks, cake and chat. Meetings are for members only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association.

Wednesday 15th March: Winter lecture: Venom allergies and what to do

18:30 for a 19:00 start at Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN

Nurse Practitioner from Guy's Hospital - Andrew Williams - will talk about venom, stings, large local reactions, emergency treatment, immunotherapy and where to obtain a referral to a specialist allergy service. We are pleased that Andrew will be offering his professional advice to us on this important topic.

This is a free public lecture open to all, so spread the word! A £2 donation from non-LBKA members would be appreciated.

Refreshments served from 18:30.

Sunday 9th April: Monthly meeting: Microscopy/nosema testing

11:00-13:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY

A hands-on practical session with microscopes for testing your bees for nosema. Bring along about 30 of your bees which have been humanely killed in a freezer. Followed by the usual hot drinks, cake and chat. Meetings are for members only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association.

Committee

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee if you have any questions, requests, suggestions. We are:

- **Chair:** Richard Glassborow, chair@lbka.org.uk
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, treasurer@lbka.org.uk
- **Secretary:** Natalie Cotton, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Forage:** Mark Patterson, forage@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Emily Abbott, events@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Tristram Sutton, resources@lbka.org.uk
- **Apiaries:** Vlad Zamfir, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- **Emma:** Emma Nye, emma.nye@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentoring@lbka.org.uk

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

