



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

February, 2018

Welcome to February's Newsletter. Thanks to our contributors for producing the usual regular content including the monthly piece from Richard Glassborow our Chair, what to do in the apiary by Howard (p6), what flowers are out by Mark Patterson (p7), what happened at the last meeting by Mar Peláez-Muñoz (p5), and what happened on Facebook by Eugene Fahy (p11)). Thanks also to Vlad Zamfir for his article on moving bees (p9), Geoff Hood on hive sanitiser products and Jeni for her recent photos on New York hives.

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Thanks to this month's contributors: **Richard Glassborow, Eugene Fahy, Geoff Hood, Jeni Lea, Howard Nichols, Mar Peláez-Muñoz, Mark Patterson and Vlad Zamfir.** Thanks as usual to **Martin Hudson** for proof-reading it.

Would you like to join the esteemed list of contributors above? If so, please contact me.

Happy beekeeping.

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

From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

Only last month in this column I was reminding us all of some of the particular responsibilities we have as urban beekeepers. My point was more one of awareness that we, and our bees, are sharing a densely populated environment: we don't need to adopt special or different beekeeping practices but there should be an emphasis on certain aspects of good practice. We need to be considerate beekeepers. I went on to point out that many city authorities around the world regulate, limit or ban beekeeping.



Snowdrops. Photo: Mark Patterson.

I am raising this again this month because a couple of weeks ago I had an enquiry from a London Borough Council asking if there were any conditions, regulations or certifications that applied to beekeepers keeping bees in public spaces. Our initial response has been to send our standard recommendations for any apiary being set up on second party property, public or private. These recommendations include a risk assessment, some kind of proven standard of competence (e.g. BBKA Bee Basic), insurance, registration of colonies, and a written agreement between the Beekeeper and the host, etc. But we did also point out that there are some concerns over the density of colonies in some parts of London and, in particular, the balance between colonies of managed honey bees and forage availability. We added that there is a debate to be had on this subject.

I am just going to park that right here for a moment because it converges with three other events that took place in the last two weeks and these need to be introduced.

The first some of you may have seen, an article in the Telegraph (if you believe the headline) apparently blaming urban beekeepers for depleting the environment and making life difficult for wild bees. I am being a little naughty here, doing unto them what they have done unto us – simplify and sensationalise an element of truth to the point of distortion. Anyway, you can make up your own minds by [reading the article here](#). The Telegraph article is based on an [article in Science Magazine](#), not primary research.

We have not had time to check out the links but, whilst we don't doubt that honey bees do compete with wild bees (of course), that article too is somewhat subjective and journalistic in its choice of language and almost hostile stance towards honey bees. Nevertheless, many London Beekeepers have been aware for some time that our bees are in competition with wild bees and other pollinators. Personally, I care about that and hope that we, LBKA, can add this to the debate we are already trying to start regarding the density of honey bees in London and the balance with forage.

This brings me to the second event that happened just a couple of days ago: DEFRA finally, finally, supplied data from Bee Base to use in our data map alongside the GiGL data map of forage distribution in Greater London. (I think it has taken 3 years). There are many caveats on what the data represents, how it is interpreted, and what the limitations are, etc. but it does show a clear tendency for an increase in colony density towards the city centre and a commensurate decrease in forage. Of course we do not know what is enough forage but anecdotal evidence of honey yields and problems of starvation suggest many areas are out of balance. We intend to use this as a lever to encourage more forage (better London environment for bees and Londoners) but should we not also begin to debate the relationships between managed honey bees and wild bees at the same time?



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

This brings me to the third related event – our first monthly pub social. The meeting at The Lamb on the 30th proved, as we had hoped, that we have much to talk about! It was great fun. It was also an opportunity to tentatively explore partially formed ethical and philosophical aspects of beekeeping as well as sharing and comparing personal triumphs. We hope this good old fashioned social interaction will provide an effective forum for wider debates we need to have. So, please try to keep Tuesday 27th February free for the Cask Pub & Kitchen (6 Charlwood Street, Pimlico, SW1V 2EE).

Announcements

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

February Monthly Meeting: Preparation for beekeeping year

Our next Monthly meeting will be on **Sunday 11th February at 11:00** where we'll be talking about preparation for beekeeping year, including early spring management and shook swarm. We will be at our usual venue of Fairley House Junior School, [220 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7JY](#).

The next monthly meeting will be on **11th March** on the subject on Nosema.

Monthly Tuesday Socials

Our first Tuesday Social was on Tuesday, 30th January at the Lamb in Bloomsbury. We had a good turnout of about 20 people. The pub happens to stock **Hiver Beer**, honey beer brewed by LBKA member **Hannah Rhodes'** company. **Hiver very generously organised a bucket-full of bottle Hiver beer for us!** Thanks very much! The bar also had their honey IPA on tap.



LBKA member *Jeni Lea* sent us some holiday snaps of some hives that she saw in Battery Park, New York. Another urban environment that is home to many managed honey bee colonies! Thanks for sending them – photographs from members are always welcome.

The next Tuesday Social will be on **Tuesday, 27th February** at Cask Pub & Kitchen (6 Charwood Street, Pimlico, SW1V 2EE). We will try to book an area for us.

Monthly Tuesday Socials These will be held in a different (food serving) pub each month. Any suggestions should be emailed to admin@lbka.org.uk.

Build your own nuc box

Last month we announced that Elliot was arranging some free sessions on making your own nuc box¹, either bringing your own flat-pack nuc box or by purchasing one on the day at cost price. If you're still interested, please contact elliott.hodges@lbka.org.uk. The sessions will be held in Holloway.

A Taste of the World of the Honey Bee

Our weekend courses are selling out fast. But it's a different story for our 'taster' course places, for those that want to find out more about bees but do not want the detail of the our beekeeping course. These are not selling well. If you know of everyone who might be interested or companies that might be inter-

¹Nuc boxes are versatile small hives that have many uses.

ested to send some of their staff, please direct them to <http://lbka.org.uk/courses.html>.

Development Update

Simon Saville
development@lbka.org.uk

Readers may recall that LBKA gave comments on the Mayor's draft London Environment Strategy (Nov 2017) and the initiative to make London the world's first National Park City. This is in line with the LBKA's objectives to promote:

- Better beekeeping
- Better public awareness of bees
- Better London environment for bees (and Londoners)

In the same vein, we are now preparing comments on the [draft New London Plan](#), which is open for consultation until 2nd March.

The London Plan is the key mechanism by which the Mayor gives direction to the Boroughs. The Boroughs' local development documents, plans and processes must be "in general conformity" with the London Plan, so it is an important document. The London Environment Strategy informs the relevant parts of the Plan.

Our hope is to ensure that the final plan is as bee-

friendly as possible. We also hope that our participation will help to build the LBKA's profile in London with key stakeholders.

Our response will reflect our current recommendations, which are to:

- Stop further habitat loss
- Improve remaining open space for wildlife
- Ensure that all new developments to provide bio-diverse habitat.

What's good for bees is good for Londoners too!

If any member wishes to make some inputs, please contact Simon at development@lbka.org.uk.

BBWear 25% discount

BBWear supply bee suits and give LBKA members a 20% discount. Well, **until 28th February, they will be giving us a 25% discount.** You'll need to book over the phone. Before you do so, please ask services@lbka.org.uk to confirm to them that you're a member.

BBKA swarm list

If you'd like to be on BBKA's swarm list this year, please contact Aidan at services@lbka.org.uk confirming the postcode and phone number you'd like to be listed. These will be listed on a public page (currently "under construction" but is probably some sort of interactive map).

This is an important public service by volunteer beekeepers, but expect to be called and don't expect all the calls to be about swarms of honey bees!

LBKA Swarms WhatsApp group

Internally, we coordinate swarm collection through a WhatsApp group. You should join this group if you're a swarm collector, want to learn to be a swarm collector or want a swarm. Contact Aidan on services@lbka.org.uk or Vlad on apiaries@lbka.org.uk if you want to know more.

East London Beekeepers meetup

The East London Beekeepers will be meeting in the [Salisbury](#), Green Lanes, Harringay, N4 1JX on Tuesday 20th February at 19:30. All welcome.

Moving colonies in Winter

Aidan asked those present at the monthly meeting whether moving bees 2 miles would work in the depths of winter. In summer, this distance is considered close enough that the bees don't realise their home has moved and return to the original location. But in a cold spell in winter, bees will not be flying. There was a mixture of opinions (what about the those bees that were flying last Autumn – can they 'remember' local

landmarks 2 miles away?) but the general consensus was that it should be fine.

Aidan has reported that it was indeed fine. He put a nuc box with comb at the old location and the box was reassuringly empty after a week.

See also Vlad's longer article about his bee moving experiences on page 9.

Old announcements from January

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

Courses: We have two courses types of course: **A Taste of the world of the Honey Bee** and our flagship **An Introduction to Beekeeping**. See <http://lbka.org.uk/courses.html> for more information.

Build your own nuc box: Assemble your own Nuc box with Elliot, an experienced woodworker and beekeeper. E-mail elliott.hodges@lbka.org.uk for further information.

Apiary opportunity: Large garden in Putney is being offered as an out-apiary. Please contact elliott.hodges@lbka.org.uk if you're interested.

Old announcements from December

BBKA assessments It is still not too late to contact Howard on education@lbka.org.uk to register your interest in taking the **BBKA Basic** qualification, **Module 1** or **Module 2**. There is no obligation to actually take it, at this stage.

Membership renewals If you haven't rejoined and would like to, please renew your membership using the personal renewal link that you were sent by email. If you didn't get it (check your spam folder), email me at services@lbka.org.uk and I'll resend it.

Old announcements from November

LBKA education offerings: Please see [last month's newsletter](#) for our education offerings, which include: the microscopy course, help for preparing for the BBKA Basic certificate and help for preparing for the BBKA General Husbandry certificate.

Do you have any announcements?

If you've any announcements for the next issue of LBKA News, please send to Aidan at services@lbka.org.uk.



A particularly bad case of wax moth.



The Greater Wax Moth on the left compared with the Lesser Wax Moth on the right.

Last month's Monthly Meeting: All about Wax Moth

What happened at our meeting last month.

Mar Peláez-Muñoz
LBKA member

The first meeting of the year 2018 started with a general welcome to all attendees, a specific welcome to a beekeeper from Romania and a welcome to a member of the Fulham Vicarage Association.

January's meeting was about the fascinating topic of the Wax Moth and how to control it. Howard introduced the PowerPoint Presentation on this subject, with many pictures that would unsettle many a beekeeper – be warned!

Wax moth is a relevant subject in winter as wax moth eggs can hatch in frames over winter, with the caterpillars eating the wax and generally making a mess. Most beekeepers, in one way or another, will have encountered wax moth at some point. Howard showed pictures of the characteristic wax moth webbing peppered with black bits of faeces.

Beekeepers mostly encounter two types of moth, the **Greater Wax Moth** and the **Lesser Wax Moth**. Both are part of the *Leptidoptera* Insect Order in the *Pyrallinae* "snout moth" family in the *Galleriinae* subfamily. There's also the Bee Moth (*Aphomia sociella*), but this is only found in bumblebee nests.



A particularly bad case of wax moth, with black moth droppings and a caterpillar clearly visible.

The **Greater Wax Moth** was rare in the North of England but with warmer temperatures they are becoming well established there. Both the Greater Wax Moth and the Lesser Wax Moth attack honey bee comb. The Greater Wax Moth is lighter in colour with a wing span of 18-24mm. The Lesser Wax Moth is darker and smaller 13-19mm. Both eat bee larval skins or pollen in comb and they attack brood comb. Greater Wax Moth caterpillars (not maggots, as they have legs) are omnivorous, eating honey bee eggs and young bee larvae as well as larvae of Lesser Wax Moth. Lesser Wax Moths are not omnivorous. The Greater Wax Moth generally causes more damage to beehives than the Lesser Wax Moth and can also burrow into the woodwork, damaging it. The Lesser Wax Moth is more common and can stand lower temperatures.

Wax Moth plays an important role in controlling diseases in wild colonies, removing old and potentially diseased comb, keeping conditions such as nosema and European Foul Brood down.

Lifecycle

There are four stages in the life of the Wax Moth: eggs, larvae, pupa and adult. The movement between these stages is very much weather dependent, taking about 3 weeks to hatch in cooler temperatures. A silky web is a clue to the presence of Wax Moth, which is a resilient physical barrier that protects the stages of its development. Once the eggs hatch, it may only take a couple of weeks for this web to spread through the hive. Wax Moth tend to enter the beehive at night to lay eggs when the bees are less active.

One very interesting fact about Wax Moth is that they have the best sense of hearing of any species! The reasons are unknown, but likely to be either to help find a reproductive partner or to defend itself from predators (the main predators are bats).

Control Methods

There are two ways of controlling Wax Moth. The first one is prevention. Smaller colonies are more at risk,

so it is better to maintain strong healthy bee colonies, therefore it is recommended to combine two hives to help control Wax Moth.

Tapping the frame a few times often encourages the caterpillar to emerge from the cells and can be removed with tweezers. . . if you're quick! Wax Moth are more of a problem in stored frames that are not patrolled by bees. In live colonies, larvae can burrow through the slabs of brood causing Bald Brood where sealed brood loses its cappings.

Another way of avoiding Wax Moth is by controlling the protein source. Bee larval skin provide Wax Moth with its source of protein. Replacing old comb with foundation removes this source of protein. Also, avoid leaving comb debris scattered around the hive, shed or anywhere near the apiary.

Another way of preventing the spread of Wax Moth is by fumigating them in winter and then sealing the stacks of stored supers against bees, wasps and moths. Use duct tape to seal the gaps between supers and store the supers outside. Some people use silicone filler to fill small gaps. Certain sprays also work as a treatment for frames.

We'd like to thank Howard once again, for such a fascinating look at the Wax Moth.

February in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

February is a time of increasing activity for the bees. Although cold and rainy on the outside, and, to all appearances all appears to be very quiet, a lot is happening inside the cluster. Brood rearing is increasing and this requires use of additional stores. Bees consume relatively few stores in Winter but when they start to fly more in late February / early March the consumption substantially increases. Therefore, the main job of the beekeeper is to keep an eye on stores. Bee colonies are more likely to die out in February / early spring due to starvation, not due to the cold.

The queen will now be laying at an increasing rate. The empty cells inside the cluster will have been prepared and more eggs are being laid. The temperature of a broodless cluster is maintained at 20°C but a cluster with brood requires a 35°C temperature. This also consumes more stores.

If feeding is necessary then fondant is probably still the best bet. If, on a warm day, the bees are flying and emergency stores are required then feeding liquid stores is a possibility. Bees carry and metabolise nectar at 50% concentration. 1kg of sugar dissolved in 1 litre of water will give this concentration and so involve the bees in the minimum amount of work. If stores are not required then it is better not to feed at all so not to cause any disturbance.

On a warm February / early March day the bees will fly for forage. Main sources in February include snow-drop, crocus and early flowering hazel. The latter provides an abundance of pollen. If your bees have been foraging hazel then they will be coming back to the hive drenched in surplus bright yellow pollen. All these sources provide pollen only. Not nectar.

Dead bees about! Late February / early March is a challenging time for bees. The winter bees are now old but need to work at an increasing rate to feed larvae and young bees. Many of these older bees will be dying off and a disproportionate number will die in the hive. It is not unusual to find a large quantity of dead bees in front of the hive or behind the mouseguard. Just lift the mouseguard and brush out. This should not normally be cause for concern and does not mean that the colony is dying out. If you keep your hive on a concrete or stone floor then the quantity of dead bees may appear to be alarming. If kept on grass then there may well be just as many dead bees but they will appear substantially less.

Finally, a mention of woodpeckers. January and February are the months when colonies are most at risk of damage by the green woodpecker. This is when the ground becomes very hard and woodpeckers cannot dig for insects. They may turn their attention to a beehive. The ground has been very soft throughout January due to the rain other than for a brief 2 or 3 day cold snap. If February does turn cold then this is a potential pest.

Other jobs to do

- Carry on reading the beekeeping books.
- Formulate an outline plan for the forthcoming season. Have a strategy to develop or improve a particular beekeeping skill during 2018.
- Assemble frames and ensure you have sufficient equipment for the season.
- New beekeepers who have not yet found a suitable site should try to do so by the end of the month. Once the beekeeping season starts then life can move at an alarming pace.
- Stay in touch with your fellow beekeepers! Do not forget the LBKA monthly meetings (usually) on the second Sunday of the month. We now also have a monthly mid-week social event.



Willow

Focus on Forage

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

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

February is typically a very cold month of the year. According to the Met office, 17th February is on average the coldest day of the year.

So far this winter has been mixed with some very warm spells in December and January producing temperatures as high as 22°C in London. We've also had some bouts of snow, sleet and plenty of frosts in between.

This has been a confusing winter for the bees who have been flying like it's summer one day and then subjected to bitter cold frost the next. Talking to beekeepers around the region I'm hearing many people are having to feed fondant now to keep their colonies from starving. I am having to feed several of mine. During the very warm days over the winter my large colonies have been very active and have robbed their weaker neighbours. I'm now having to feed the weaker colonies to maintain them until spring, meanwhile the large colonies now have more stores than they went into winter with.



Hellebore

Whilst the first signs of spring are beginning to show, it will still be some considerable time before the first proper nectar flows begin so I will have to continue to feed my bees for now. Right now in the garden **snowdrops** and the first **crocuses** are beginning to bloom. These won't provide any nectar for bees but they will offer some early pollen which colonies need as they resume brood rearing.

There are other valuable pollen sources that are making an appearance in February.

Winter Aconites (*Eranthis hyemalis*) are beginning to appear. Their bright lemon yellow flowers are attractive to bees which will collect their pollen. They are members of the Buttercup family.

In gardens **hellebores** are also flowering offering much needed pollen. Hellebores come in a wide variety of colours. The hybrid hellebores are particularly hardy and easy to grow as are the native stinking hellebores (*Helleborus foetidus*) which can be found in gardens and in wild areas too.

Winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) is a relative of our native Butterbur but flowers much earlier. It's not a UK native and can be quite invasive when established in the wild but is a great garden plant for bees in late winter. The flowers are shaped like a toilet brush and pink in colour.

The first **daffodils** (*Narcissus sp.*) are beginning to bloom. Despite their attractive flowers, daffodils and other narcissus are poor forage for bees. I have never seen a Honey Bee visit them and only occasionally have I seen desperate Bumblebees alight on them.

Wall flowers (*Erysimum*) are flowering now and will continue to do so right through till late spring. Bees will visit both the popular bedding type wall flowers as well as the longer lived everlasting perennial types. Their purple and orange 'bowls' are particularly good for bees as they have a very long flowering period and will bloom almost continuously all year round.

Off the ground there are several shrubs and small trees which are now flowering and these may offer rewards



Viburnum tinus

of nectar on warm days alongside the pollen they produce. These include **Mahonia** or **Oregon Grape** which grows in our towns and cities in abundance and flowers throughout the winter providing nectar and pollen for bees. In southern towns and cities **Buff Tailed bumblebees** (*Bombus terrestris*) continue to be increasingly active throughout the winter, surviving largely on this plant. Around 75% of winter flowers visited by bees are Mahonia. The variety 'winters sun' is particularly attractive. Bees taking advantage of Mahonia blooms in winter have few other insects to compete with and can fare better than some colonies active in summer.

Viburnum shrubs include a number of deciduous and evergreen species which flower during the winter months. They are relatives of our native **Gelder Rose** (*Viburnum opulus*). Some of the most popular Viburnums with our bees include the evergreen *Viburnum tinus* whose sweetly scented cream blooms flower from November through to March and *Viburnum bodnaatense* whose pink flowers bloom from around Christmas to March.

Several **Clematis** species are useful forage sources to bees in winter. *Clematis amandii* and *Clematis cirrhosa* both have creamy white flowers and bloom in winter. Honey and winter active bumble bees will visit them for pollen.

Winter Flowering Cherry (*Prunus subhirtella*) flowers from late November to February producing pale pink flowers. I've very rarely seen any bees on the blooms but have often seen flies on them. In the absence of better forage like Mahonia bees will visit the flowers.



Mahonia.

Sweet Box (*Sarcococca confusa*) is a short growing evergreen shrub which produces extremely fragrant blooms (reminiscent of hyacinths) from late winter into early spring. It's one of those plants that you almost always smell long before you see it. **Winter Heather** (*Heaths Erica sp.*) produce tubular blooms in shades of white to pink throughout the winter. They are coming to the end of their flowering period now but still providing forage for bees brave enough to venture out.

Winter flowering Honeysuckle flower during winter, some of which are climbers and some of which are shrubs. One of the best is *Lonicera fragrantissima*.

Daphne shrubs are beginning to flower now and their intense perfume like scent will attract bees to collect their pollen.

Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) are flowering now and the long male catkins drip with pollen. On warm, days Honeybees may visit the catkins to collect pollen though the plants are wind pollinated and do not need the bees to reproduce.

Other trees that produce catkins may start to make an appearance in February include **willows** (*Salix sp.*) and **poplars** (*Populus sp.*) though they are usually a little later flowering.

A moving experience

Vlad give tips and experiences of a recent bee move.

Vlad Zamfir
apiaries@lbka.org.uk

In January, LBKA was approached by one of its members who wanted to donate his colonies. I would like to thank Vernon De Maynard for this kind gesture and promise we'll take good care of them.

The hives had to be moved from around Clapham to the Mudchute apiary, as it had enough space to accommodate them. Richard Glassborow helped me with the whole process – sealing the hives 24 hours before the move and also transporting them in his car to Mudchute.

Since the original site of the colonies and Mudchute are sufficiently far from each other, bees going back to the original site is not a problem that needed to be considered but, in moving bees there are some other factors to take into account besides health and defensiveness (in the context of proximity to the public):

- **Are all the bees inside?** If the hive is moved during the day and it's warm enough for bees to fly, the hive would need to be sealed shortly after sunset (preferably when it's dark) to guard against leaving too many bees behind
- **What's the temperature like?** If it's warm then the bees are more likely to overheat during transport. So they will need more ventilation and a water source they can use to cool down the hive. Remember: bees sense vibrations very well and will become agitated which will raise the temperature of the colony.
- **What's the size of the colony?** More bees = more heat generators. So it's going to be easier to keep a hive cool with fewer bees than with a lot
- **Will the bees still be inside the hives when you've reached your destination?** Gaps need to be sealed well (e.g. with tape) and no new gaps should be created during transport. One of the options is to immobilise the hives using straps
- **Have you prepared the site?** Allocated a spot for each colony, ensuring it's not too close to the other hives, oriented to minimise drifting, the hives will be level and won't sink in the ground, etc.

If you think about the above points, winter seems to be a good time for moving colonies: few bees means they won't generate much heat, it's cool outside and they're less likely to fly even during the day if it's cold. However, the vibrations will lead to the cluster being disrupted and the bees becoming stressed.

So Mudchute now has a total of 5 colonies with the new arrivals being wheelbarrowed in on dirt and gravel paths



Moving bees.

– plenty of vibrations there so they weren't impressed but the cool weather helped to keep them inside after we removed the tapes. I guess another advantage of moving colonies in winter?



Some hive sanitisers and 'bee tonics'.

Hive Sanitiser products and Nosema

As if to help us help us prepare for the next Monthly Meeting, Geoff tells us about the role of hive sanitiser products and Nosema control.

Geoff Hood
LBKA member

It has been several years now since Fumidill B – the old treatment for Nosema – has been off the shelves of retail shops. Currently there are no approved products for treating Nosema. This, of course, doesn't stop many of you asking what I treat my hives with when they have nosema!

The National Bee Unit approved method of treating the disease is to carry out a Bailey Comb Change. I am not going to repeat here how to do a Bailey Comb Change – there are [plenty of resources on the web that will help](#).

I'm often asked about the proprietary hive sanitisers and bee tonics. These are not treatments in the eyes of the law but are said by some to be beneficial for bees with Nosema. I have to stress again that these hive sanitisers or bee tonics are not approved by the National Bee Unit nor by the Veterinary Medicine Directorate. You are therefore using them at your own risk. I do not vouch for them in any way.

But let's go through them one by one.

Nosevit is made from plant extracts and essential oils and is mixed with syrup which is either sprayed on the

Bees on the comb or 250ml of treated syrup is drenched along the seams similar to oxalic dribble.

Hive Alive this is a solution based on Thymol that is mixed with syrup and is either sprayed on the bees and comb or 300ml is drenched on the bees in a similar fashion to oxalic acid.

Manley's Solution. An emulsion of thymol crystals, lecithin, isopropyl alcohol and hot water originally added to winter feed to stop the sugar fermenting, was found that at twice the concentration in syrup it reduced nosema disease in overwintering hive. An alternative method of applying is to spray the Manley's solution $\times 4$ concentration in syrup direct on the comb of bees.

Manufacturers could be liable to prosecution by the veterinary medicine directorates if they class their products as "treatments" because they haven't been licensed to be used in that way. So proceed with caution if you feel you wish to treat with these products.

Facebook (In)digest(ion)

Some of the highlights from LBKA's [public facing Facebook page](#).

Eugene Fahy
LBKA Member

This was another thin month on the Facebook page but it started on an encouraging note; both Geordy Mark and Sara Ward picked up a story about a [chance discovery by German scientists which may lead to a new low toxicity treatment for varroa](#). The study found that feeding bees 25 millimoles of a water-soluble salt called lithium chloride, can kill 90 to 100 percent of varroa mites within days.

Geordy Mark also highlighted [another study in the journal Science](#), which is slightly less encouraging for beekeepers. While acknowledging that 75% of crops worldwide depend on pollination, it says there are 2000 species of pollinators. The study suggests that competition from managed honey bee colonies can be harmful to wild pollinator species.

Geoff Hood posted a [link to the new Small Hive Beetle pamphlet](#) which has been issued by the NBU.

Ben Robards [asked if it is too late for Oxalic treatment](#). Geordy Mark replied that the colony will have brood again by now but that it is possible to inspect so long as it is done quickly and with minimum disturbance to the bees.

Finally, Geordy Mark posted a link to a recent edition of the BBC 1 programme, Food: Truth or Scare. The programme looked the findings of a study which [suggested that 75% of honey contains traces of pesticides](#).

Guest Blog

I'd like to feature a guest blog article from a member every month here. If you write a blog, I'd love to be able to reuse your content here (no extra effort for you!) Please let me know on services@lbka.org.uk.

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.

No marketplace items this month.

Upcoming events

Sunday 11th February: Monthly meeting: Preparation for beekeeping year

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

Preparation for beekeeping year and early spring management, including shook swarm. Meetings are for members only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association.

Tuesday 27th February: Monthly social

18:30 onwards at Cask Pub & Kitchen, 6 Charlwood St, Lillington and Longmoore Gardens, London SW1V 2EE

Our second Monthly Social will be in the [Cask Pub & Kitchen](#) in Pimlico. It serves food and drink. All welcome.

Sunday 11th March: Monthly meeting: All about Nosema

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

All about Nosema. What it is, how it functions, the two types and how to deal with it. 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
- **Development:** Simon Saville, development@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.

