



# The London Beekeepers' Association LBKA News

## August, 2018

Welcome to August's Newsletter! This month, as well as our usual contributions (a big thank you to our regular contributors), Howard has news about our members who've taken the BBKA Basic Assessment (p6; spoiler alert: it's good news), Mark has worrying news about a summer of Foul Brood in London with important advice (p5), Emily reports on another successful year at Lambeth (p8), Geoff reminds us to keep the National Honey Show in mind when extracting honey (p13); with news of LBKA's new class in the show), Simon reports on his Korean visitor (p13) and Jeni has more more old news (p14).

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Thanks to this month's contributors (a longer list than usual): Emily Abbott, Eugene Fahy, Richard Glassborow, David Hankins, Geoff Hood, Jeni Lea, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson, Lavina Porter, Simon Saville 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 and see you at the Summer Social on Sunday (fingers-crossed for the weather).

*Aidan Slingsby, Editor, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)*

## From our Chair

*Richard Glassborow*  
[chair@lbka.org.uk](mailto:chair@lbka.org.uk)

We all know that beekeeping is seasonal, every year follows the same pattern, and every year is different in some way. This year will probably be remembered for what I believe meteorologists refer to as a "heat event". I don't know anyone who feels comfortable in a beesuit when the temperature is over 30°C and this year that seems to be the norm rather than the exception. But it is rainfall that is probably more significant to what has actually been happening with the bees. Though early spring was wet, there has been hardly any rain since April. Initially, the nectar was flowing and as the lime tree flowers approached, many of us started to be concerned about having enough supers. I removed several full supers in June, not for spring honey but so they could be extracted and returned. As it turned out, nectar yields were already slowing down and, in my case at least, extra capacity was not required (not yet anyway). I believe I am not alone in having a few under-filled, uncapped frames which can be extracted because



*Honey bee on Helonium. Photograph by Mark Patterson.*

the water content is around 14%. This is heavy honey and, if you have not extracted yet, my advice is do so while the weather is warm: it could get very difficult and slow when cooler.

While on the subject of extraction, please keep a record of your honey yields. LBKA would like to develop an evidence base of honey production across London to add to the data maps of forage and registered colonies. Your data will be anonymised and the ultimate objective is to improve forage availability and distribution in London. In other words, by benefitting bees it should benefit beekeepers too (and indeed all Londoners as flowers look nice). The National survey is usually too early for most London beekeepers and we also recognise that our exercise needs to identify yields from producing colonies. We aim to issue our own survey in the autumn, by which time we should know what our bees have achieved. In the mean time please make a note somewhere.

And now something completely different. I regret to announce that we are having to vacate the storage container we have been hiring at Walworth Garden. Having all the equipment stored in one place has been very convenient but having it stored in such a beautiful place and one in which we regularly use other facilities has been much more than convenient: it has begun to feel like “home”, even if not our home. Much of that feeling is also due to the accommodating relationship we have with our hosts, Walworth Garden. But they are a growing organisation and the space is finite. But I thank the Walworth team: it was great while it lasted and has helped us experience something of what a home can do for LBKA.

So, we are moving on. Storage is the immediate requirement and we have a plan. But if anyone reading this just happens to know of a vacant, secure space that could be used for storage or place to park a container, on a temporary or permanent basis, or they know someone who might know .... I would love to hear from you – [chair@lbka.org.uk](mailto:chair@lbka.org.uk). There are many criteria we would like to meet in an ideal world but three we think pretty unavoidable requirements are, security, key holder access and located in or close to the Southwark / Lambeth area. I realise that location is a current position based on historical precedent but the reality is that Southwark/Lambeth are logistically the most convenient to the majority of the current committee who need to use it on a regular basis and is also the area in which all current activities take place. It makes sense for storage, use and voluntary user to be relatively close. As it happens, this quest coincides with other activities already bringing us into contact with people and organisations who may be willing and able to help.

Meanwhile, on my favourite topic, communication: those on the swarm WhatsApp group will have noticed that it has been carrying some off-topic conversations recently! This is not a busy time for swarm coordination so it has not been a problem. Far from it, we have seen not only some really productive practical and



*Walworth Garden, the venue for this month's Monthly Meeting and Social*

theoretical exchanges but a very spontaneous positive sense of community. Is there a clue here that WhatsApp could have further uses for LBKA members? I think we should explore.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Emily Abbott whose honey enterprise, Hive and Keeper Ltd, has won four awards in the highly prestigious and competitive, Great Taste Awards. Well done Emily.

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## Announcements

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

### August Monthly Meeting and Summer Social

This month's meeting will be on **Sunday 12th August** at **11:00**. It will not be at the usual venue, but will be at **Walworth Garden** (206 Manor Pl, Braganza St, SE17 3BN).

It will start with a fascinating talk by Vlad on bees' **collection and use of propolis and water**. We will also be selling **varroa treatment**. It will be “Apilife Var” rather than Apiguard, but is very similar. In addition to thymol, it has other compounds like menthol and camphor and has a similar treatment process of 4 weeks and should be used after the honey has been taken off. The price will be £5 per hive treatment.

This will be followed by our **spectacular Summer Social**. The caterer will be “DelicaSisters”, a spin-off of the “Chickpea Sisters” who catered the event in each of the last 2 years. The menu is a north and east African blend with Mediterranean overtones, ideal for a lazy summer afternoon in convivial company. You'll need to get some ticket

You'll need to get (free) tickets to come – the link has been emailed to members – there are limited places,

so please tell us if you can't make it. You can bring a guest.

Next month's Monthly Meeting will be on **9th September** on the subject of **uniting colonies for winter**, part of preparing bees for the long winter (though it seems like a long way off at the moment). We'll be back at our usual venue.

## Monthly Tuesday Social: Natalie's pub pick

We're going back South of the River for our August Monthly Social, which will be at the [Three Stags, 67-69 Kennington Rd, Lambeth, SE1 7PZ](#) on Tuesday **28th August** at **18:30**. They describe themselves as a "popular South London gastropub" that is "steeped in history" and "true to its roots". They have rooftop beehives and they "produce the best local urban honey around" (but then don't we all?) Hope to see you there.

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

## European Foul Brood

This year has been a particularly bad year for European Foul Brood outbreaks in the Greater London area. See Mark's article on page [5](#).

## BBKA Basic Assessment success for LBKA members

Congratulations to LBKA members – Claire Cater, Jonathan Dale, Susannah Kingston, Alfonso Moreno, David Roy, Martin Crow, Jeni Harris, Cairis Hickey, Brian Kealy, Silviya Valkova, Simon Saville, Lena Spazier, David Phillips, Oliver Picard, Andrew Hudson, Sue Lee and Giovanni Zintu – who both took and passed the BBKA Basic Assessment. LBKA's 100% pass record is testament to our members' dedication and the support of Howard Nichols who helps prepare them. See Howard's writeup on page [6](#).

## Extractor Hire

It being that time of year, I hope you will welcome this reminder that LBKA have some honey extractors. We have four extractors for hire (one electric and three manual including one for the larger framed super).

They are collected from and returned to Walworth Garden (206 Manor Pl, Kennington, SE17 3BN) by arrangement with Tristram ([resources@lbka.org](mailto:resources@lbka.org)) who is usually at Walworth on Sunday mornings but can be there at other times by arrangement.

They cost £10 each to hire and there is a £20 deposit

which is returnable on the clean and timely return of the extractor.

Whether or not you avail yourself of an LBKA extractor, we hope you have a great harvest this year.

## LBKA classes at the National Honey Show

LBKA has always sponsored three classes at the [National Honey Show](#) in October, which are open to all beekeepers who produce London honey. This year, we've shaken things up a bit.

We've retained two of the classes (mostly) as is: "Two Jars Urban Honey" judged solely on taste and aroma (Class 321) and "One jar of liquid honey" to be shown in an interesting or unusual transparent container (Class 323). Class 321 is unusual in that it's judged purely on taste and aroma and the usual exacting regulation on the type of jar don't apply.

However, we've changed Class 322 "Two jars of Jam, Marmalade or other Preserve" with Honey as the only sweetening ingredient.

Please keep these in mind if you're lucky enough to be harvesting honey at the moment. It would be great to get more LBKA members winning in these categories. See also Geoff's writeup on page [13](#).

## LBKA's grant-making policy

In recent years LBKA has been involved in a number of small projects which align with the "Better environment for bees" charitable object now embedded in the LBKA constitution. These projects included bulb planting in Lambeth in partnership with the Friends of Archbishop's Park, forage planting also in Lambeth in partnership with Eden Community Garden members and volunteers from Nandos, and a more ambitious wildflower and forage planting programme on the Isle of Dogs in partnership with Mudchute Farm and the London Borough of Tower hamlets, with funding provided by a Tesco "Bags of Help" grant. A large number of LBKA members volunteered to help deliver these projects.

Unfortunately we have not been able to identify any similar projects for the current year, but the committee would like to find a suitable project or two for the coming year. As lead times for the types of activities we've been involved in to date can be long, and as many such activities are seasonal in nature, we are seeking suggestions from LBKA members now with a view to developing a project to be delivered in Spring and/or Autumn 2019.

The type of project we are interested in needs to be delivered in London and should help promote better beekeeping, better public understanding of bees, and/or a better London environment for bees and Londoners. While forage planting projects have been favoured in the past, we don't need to be confined to that particular

activity, so other suggestions would be welcome. Any project would ideally involve a partner, (local authority, allotment association, environmental group, etc), but need not be "public". Many private organisations in London have land and other resources that can assist us in delivering our charitable objects! And finally, a suitable project need not be fully funded, as LBKA's charitable status and growing profile offers greater opportunity for donors with similar aims as ours to be matched with projects requiring modest funding.

If you belong to another organisation, know of a local group, or are aware of an opportunity that might fit the above criteria, please contact [treasurer@lbka.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@lbka.org.uk).

## BBKA Basic Assessment success

All 17 LBKA members who took the BBKA Basic Assessment passed, maintaining LBKA members' 100% success rate! Of those, 15 passed with Credit.

Well done all and thanks for Howard for helping prepare the candidates and organising the assessment and thanks for Vlad for hosting some of the practical assessments. See Howard's full article on page 6 and see Jonathan Dale's writeup in June's edition of the newsletter.

## Looking for beekeeping partner school

Pete is a teacher in Munich whose school keeps bees and who's partnered up with a school another school that keeps bees in France. He's looking for a UK-based partner school that keeps bees with children aged 13 upwards. Please email [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) if you have any leads.

## Old announcements from July

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

**New privacy policy:** We have a new [privacy policy](#).

**We have over 300 members.** Hooray!

**We shouted out to our readers in Co Mayo** and Mary Walsh who's a member of us and them. Should any of them find themselves in London, they'd be most welcome to attend one of our events.

## Old announcements from June

**COLOSS survey.** Please take part in the COLOSS survey, a Europe-wide research effort to try and understand honey bee losses: [filling out the survey](#).

**European Foul Brood.** It's about! So take extra care when collecting swarms, particularly from SW4, SW8,

SW9, SE4, SE15, SE23, SE22, SW2, SE21, SE24, N17, N22 where it's been reported.

**Want to sell to other members?** If you have a beekeeping-related product or service that you wish to tell other members about, either ask [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) to add it to the members' marketplace section of the newsletter (p 15) or post on the [LBKA-forum](#), the members' only Facebook page.

**Asian Hornet.** Be vigilant in looking out for the Asian Hornet.

**Wax.** Fiona Pearce-Burrows is looking to purchase wax for use in making beeswax wraps. Please contact [fiona@fionapearceburrows.com](mailto:fiona@fionapearceburrows.com).

**Monthly cake.** If you would like to bake a cake for an LBKA a monthly meeting, please let Aidan know on [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

## 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](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk).

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# Last month's Monthly Meeting: honey extraction

What happened at our meeting last month.

*Natalie Cotton*  
[admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk)

The high temperatures at July's monthly meeting meant it was appropriately sticky given the topic on discussion. Two first time attendees braved the heat to learn about honey extraction. Howard began by reminding all beekeepers of the legal matters that govern anyone choosing to sell honey. If you are doing so, make sure you are familiar with the key points of the Honey Regulations and Bee Diseases and Pest Control:

- Water content less than 20% - capped honey is generally less than 17%, so not including an excess of uncapped honey should address this. As a rule of thumb don't extract if a frame is less than 75% capped, or if you can shake it and liquid comes out. This can be tested with a refractometer, and Howard suggested looking for the cheaper Chinese models online if you are interested. You'll also find out if the water content is too high as your honey will ferment!

- Fructose and glucose not less than 60g per 100g – this will not present an issue unless you've fed sugar syrup when honey supers are on and the bees have stored the resulting sucrose. High fructose content causes a liquid honey and high glucose a crystalline honey.
- HMF content not more than 40mg/kg – your honey will comply with this as long as it's not been heated.

Honey is classified in to light (e.g. oil seed rape, which is very high glucose), light, and dark. Howard explained honeydew is an interesting example classified as a 'dark' honey. Bees collect it from aphids if there's not a honey flow in the late summer – it's popular in Germany, but not in the UK.

## Uncapping frames and extracting

Many devices are available to 'aid' the beekeeper in this, including expensive electric heated knives. Howard favours a bread knife dipped in hot water (a thermos flask is ideal) and a kitchen fork for uncapping the uneven bits.

Uncapped frames are placed in a centrifuge extractor and, basically, spin out of the frames to gather in the bottom of the extractor. LBKA has four extractors for hire, one electric and three manual (contact [resources@lbka.org.uk](mailto:resources@lbka.org.uk)). Honey that gathers in the bottom of the extractor is then allowed to flow in to a honey bucket before jarring. Howard recommends filtering through two fine-meshed kitchen sieves at this stage. If done slowly it will clear the debris that naturally gathers in honey – bits of bee and wax capping mainly. A top tip for removing the scum that will rise to the top of the honey bucket after it's sat for a day or so is to sit a layer of clingfilm on top and then gently peel back.

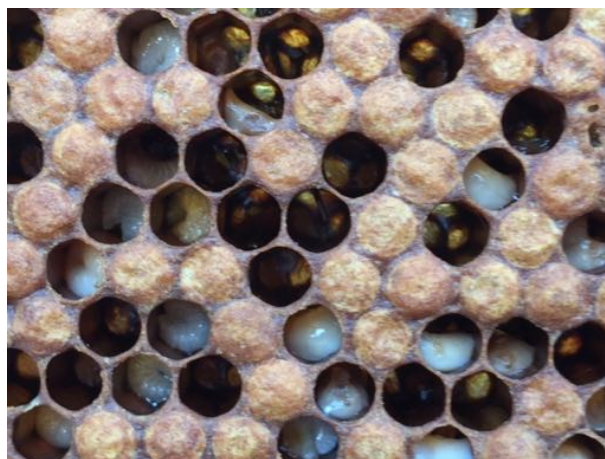
## Cleaning up – the hard bit!

Honey extracting is a sticky business so having damp cloths to hand to mop up drips and ensuring extractor taps are properly closed was amongst the advice passed on from experienced keepers. Honey dissolves in cold water, so putting an extractor under a hose or shower head and scrubbing the honey off is the best way to clean.

Cappings and frames can be placed back on the hive, above the crown board, as bees will effectively clean off all the remaining honey, leaving supers ready for winter storage.

## Playing with fire

Richard demonstrated uncapping a frame using a hot air gun, available from DIY stores as paint strippers. Once the technique has been mastered, it has the advantage of not producing cappings as they are melted off. Richard advised that a heat gun won't work if the



*European Foul Brood.*



*American Foul Brood.*

capped honey looks very dark in the frames, as this usually means the honey is pressed hard against the cappings.

Happy extracting, and please make a note of how much honey (by weight) you take from each hive, as LBKA plans to carry out a honey survey later in the year.

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## Foul Brood

This year has been a particularly bad year for European Foul Brood outbreaks in the Greater London area.

*Mark Patterson*  
*Seasonal Bee Inspector for London*

This year has been a particularly bad year for European Foul Brood outbreaks in the Greater London area.

The season started with outbreaks in South East Lon-



American Foul Brood with pepperpot brood pattern.

don in the Southwark/Lewisham borders area followed in May by a number of outbreaks in and around the Dulwich area.

More recently there have been outbreaks in the Camberwell/Walworth area and a cluster of outbreaks north of the river in Enfield, Tottenham and Harringay areas.

The most recent outbreak north of the river has concerned American Foul Brood.

European Foul Brood is a serious and notifiable disease and it's imperative that beekeepers familiarise themselves with what it looks like so that they can identify the pathogen and report its presence to the inspectorate.

## Collecting swarms from areas known to have European Foul Brood

The presence of European Foul Brood should not prevent you from collecting swarms. It's important that in urban areas swarms are safely collected and hived to prevent them going feral and becoming a nuisance.

If collecting from areas where there is foul brood present it is wise to adhere to the following:

1. Quarantine the swarm if possible in a separate apiary away from your production colonies or nucs being raised for sale.
2. Close up in a well ventilated hive/nuc and refrain from feeding for at least 2-3 days – provide water in a feeder if very hot. This encourages bees to use up their stomach contents drawing comb reducing risk of foul brood being present in the new brood nest. After 3 days feed to encourage further drawing of comb.

Once the queen is in lay check the health of the brood for signs of brood disorders.

## European Foul Brood (EFB)

How to identify European Foul Brood (EFB):

- Affects the open brood/bee larva
- Competes with the larva and consumes the pollen in the larvae gut
- Larva become mis-shaped, slouched in their cell, off colour (not pearly white), loose their segmentation.
- Larva if not removed dries up to form a scale at base of cell
- Brood often appears pepperpot

## American Foul Brood (AFB)

How to identify American Foul Brood (AFB):

- Affects sealed brood only
- Larva turn into a dark gloopy snot
- Ropes when poked with a matchstick
- cell cappings appear sunken and greasy, often highly perforated
- Larva if not removed dries up to form a scale at base of cell
- brood pattern often pepperpot

You can follow current Foul Brood outbreaks live on [this map on Beebase](#) as well as download useful disease guides.

Beebase is an incredibly useful but much under-used resource for beekeepers and I'd recommend all beekeepers occasionally visit the website to refresh their knowledge of bee disease, disorders and pests as well as general good husbandry practices.

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# BBKA 2018 Basic Assessments

How LBKA's Basic Assessment candidates all passed. Please also see Jonathan Dale's articles in the June edition of the Newsletter for a candidate's perspective.

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

This year a total of 17 LBKA candidates took part in the BBKA Basic Assessments. These took place over 5 days at 3 different apiaries during May and June. The process started back in November with potential candidates being given electronic course notes for light winter reading. These notes cover the syllabus from beginning to end. Formal study is not required, just a reading of the course notes over the winter months. In March



*BBKA Basic assessment.*



*Candidate getting grilled.*

and April we then had 3 × 2 hour revision sessions at Walworth Garden Farm and went through the syllabus item by item. Those candidates who wished for some practical instruction were also catered for. By the last session we had the 1st assessment date arranged with the assessor and 5 candidates were allocated a date and time.

So, on to the actual assessments which were held over 5 separate days at 3 locations.

The 1st session was on Sunday, 13th May and hosted by Vlad at Mudchute apiary. The weather was good, no rain and warm sunshine. Candidates arrived and departed throughout the day; each candidate arriving 1 hour before the allotted time so ensuring the assessor would not be kept waiting if anyone was delayed. The first day commenced at 10.00am and finished about 3.00pm. It was repeated the following Sunday at Mudchute. The assessor was Ireneusz Gajowniczek from Twickenham who assessed a total of 10 candidates over these 2 days.

On Sunday, 27th May 2 candidates were assessed by Pam Hunter from Sussex in my own apiary in Streatham. On Saturday 9th June, Pat Allen was the assessor. She travelled from Upminster to our Eden apiary in Clapham to assess 2 candidates. Pat came to Eden again on Saturday, 30th June to assess 3 more candidates.

On behalf of LBKA, I would like to thank all 3 of our assessors. All travelled a distance and freely gave of

their time and expertise so that all candidates could be assessed. It is greatly appreciated by all of us.

### What happens at the assessment?

The BBKA Basic is both a practical and oral assessment and lasts about 1 hour. Each candidate is asked to assemble a frame, light the smoker (including observing health and safety issues) then open a colony and demonstrate to the examiner that he or she can control the bees whilst, at the same time, answering a few straightforward questions about the colony contents. After going through the brood frames the candidate re-assembles the hive and goes on to the 2nd part of the assessment which is answering a series of straightforward questions about beekeeping, swarm control, bee biology and diseases. The syllabus is broad in its range but not particularly deep. The full syllabus is available for download on the BBKA website and within the education section. Both the BBKA and LBKA actively encourages their members to take this assessment as it is recognised as a substantial step forward in beekeeping education. Many public bodies also now require the beekeeper to have this certificate before they are allowed to keep bees on the establishment's land.

### How did our candidates do?

As stated above a total of 17 LBKA members took the assessment. A total of 17 were successful (in the order in which they took the test: **Claire Cater, Jonathan Dale, Susannah Kingston, Alfonso Moreno, David**



Our stall at the Lambeth Country Show.

**Roy, Martin Crow, Jeni Harris, Cairis Hickey, Brian Kealy, Silviya Valkova, Simon Saville, Lena Spazier, David Phillips, Oliver Picard, Andrew Hudson, Sue Lee and Giovanni Zintu.** Furthermore, 15 out of these 17 passed with Credit.

A major reason for this success rate is undoubtedly due to the commitment of all candidates. Another significant reason is the LBKA mentoring programme. Each year more experienced members freely give of their time to teach new members the craft of beekeeping. The newer member (mentee) assists the more experienced beekeeper (mentor) and so starts to learn a variety of skills during the course of a beekeeping season. This provides a solid foundation to the newer beekeeper. LBKA would like to thank all its mentors for participating in this invaluable service.

Finally, anyone who has kept bees for a minimum period of 12 months and wishing to undertake this assessment in 2019 can register by sending an email to [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk). Further details will be given in the Autumn LBKA newsletters.

## LBKA at the Lambeth Country Show

We were at the Lambeth Country Show

*Emily Abbott*  
[events@lbka.org.uk](mailto:events@lbka.org.uk)

First of all a huge 'thank you' to all who helped us this year for what was a hot, but successful weekend!

We got the tent up on Friday with the swarm Whatsapp group 'swarming' (sorry!) to Richard's aid. Thank goodness. . . As always with these things an element of mild panic is never too far away! I can't tell you how



The Mayor of Lambeth enjoying rolling a candle and the Lambeth Country Show.

much I appreciated having Kathryn, Richard, Sheena, Bryher, Martin, Vlad, Stephen, Mary and Mary, Jon, Angela, Jeni, Petros and Mark there.

The number of conversations with people about bees, plants (we could have sold our lovely floral display several times over) was tremendous. We also had 7 different honeys from members for sale which gave people a fantastic insight into how different honey can be. Despite the heat melting the wax our candle rolling was still popular with the Mayor of Lambeth stopping by with his entourage to have a go, but really the 'best customer' recognition award has to go to one of our newer members who came to see us and rolled 10 candles which are now all on display in her dining room!

## August in the Apiary

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

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

The calendar year commences in January but many beekeepers view the new beekeeping year as commencing in August. The honey should have been taken off and the beekeeper is now starting to prepare the bees for winter. The primary objective for August (and September)





*We were also at the Mudchute Agricultural show recently. Although it looks like our stall was quiet... this photo was taken before the public were let in(!).*

should be to put the bees in the best possible position to go into winter.

## Preparing the colony for winter

A significant risk to the colony in winter is the varroa mite. The most common form of treatment at this time of year is Apiguard. This needs to be in the colony for a minimum of 4 weeks and is most effective when the outside temperature is greater than 15°C. Early August is the optimum time to commence this treatment as the honey has been removed and temperatures are still above 15°C. Other miticides are, of course, available.

## Other winter preparations that may be dealt with in August

**Sound and stable hive.** Hives can be checked that they are on a stable and level surface. There should be no leaks or gaps as the hive must be waterproof and draughtproof to withstand the extremely testing conditions of winter. August is also a time of robbing by other bees as the nectar supply is scarce. Wasps may also be a nuisance and so there should not be any gaps in the woodwork where they may gain entry.

**Strengthen colony with young bees** Worker bees produced from eggs laid in August and September need to live for up to 6 months rather than 6 weeks. A feed of sugar syrup after the honey has been removed and a varroa treatment effectively completed can stimulate the queen into continuing her egg laying whereas, otherwise, she will be decreasing this activity.

## Other action to be taken this month

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

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

**Unite colonies where appropriate.** A large colony has a better chance of coming through the winter months than 2 small ones. Beekeepers are often tempted to overwinter 2 smaller colonies with the view to having 2 honey producing colonies next year. This is sometimes a mistake.

**Reuniting colonies.** If you successfully artificially swarmed a colony then the artificial swarm and colony of origin can be reunited. Alternatively, if both are large enough to overwinter then you may choose to leave and so increase your stock.

**Finding and marking the queen.** August and September the colony is reducing in population and finding an unmarked queen becomes easier. This will make next spring's swarm control so much easier.

**Protect and store supers against wax moth.** If you have the opportunity to put super frames in a deep freeze for 48 hours then this will kill all 4 stages of the Wax Moth lifecycle. Otherwise you will need to use acetic acid or sulphur. My own viewpoint is that used brood combs should be burnt and that retention is not compatible with apiary hygiene. Conversely, super combs are an extremely valuable resource and the beekeeper should make every effort to look after these on behalf of the bees until next spring.

**Check the apiary for evidence of Asian Hornet** September is the time of year that these are more likely to be attacking a beehive and therefore more opportunity for the beekeeper to spot one. Beekeepers are on the front line of the UK's defence against this predator becoming established in this country and it is incumbent upon us to remain vigilant and to actively look for the hornet.

**Finally, do not forget the LBKA Summer Social.** It is our main event of the year whereby members from all over London can meet up with each other in an informal and relaxed setting.

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# August in the Forage Patch

Flowers bees are visiting this time of the year.

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

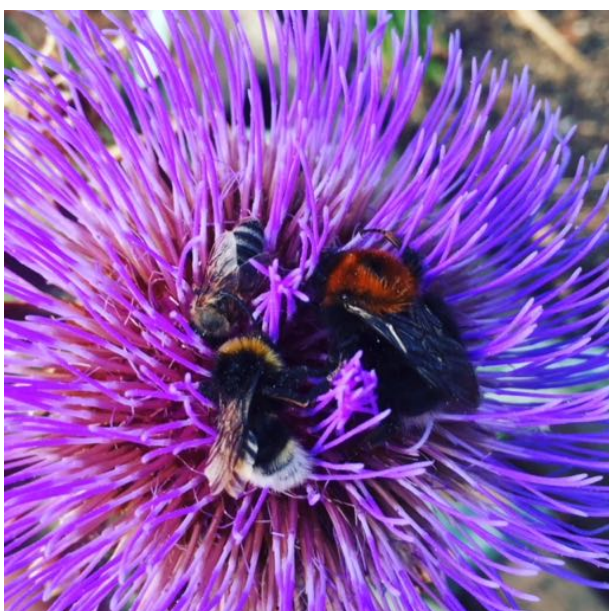
Late summer for the bees is one of the most desperate times of the year when they can struggle the most



*Erigeron*



*Echinops*



*Cardoon*



*Michaelmas daisy*

to find enough food to eat. This is particularly the case this summer with the prolonged very hot and dry weather leading to a dearth in nectar availability.

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

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

ing and are now sporting fruits and seeds leaving little for the bees.

Away from Heather moorland and Heaths, the only real bountiful sources of forage from native wild plants are Greater Willow Herb, Thistles, Ragwort, Bindweed and Hogweed, though many of these are early this year and already going over. Along water courses Purple Loosestrife, Marsh Woundwort, Water Mint and the invasive Himalayan Balsam provide welcome relief but not everyone is in range of such localised sources of forage.

Limes, tree of heaven, bramble, Indian bean tree, Indian chestnut and Chinese tree privet are now long over. Usually these offer some forage into high summer but this year they all flowered early.

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

Research conducted by our friends at the University of Sussex has demonstrated that honey bees fly furthest to find forage in late summer with record flights of 12

Km being undertaken in August. In the case of the Sussex research it was found that Honey Bees were flying 12km to visit gardens in town centres where domestic gardens and public parks planted with bee friendly summer flowers were providing much of their forage needs. This goes to show just how important our urban gardens are for bees at this time of the year

Many Garden plants that are great for bees in late summer originate from North America where they grow in prairie habitats and have evolved to flower late in the summer and autumn avoiding the extreme heat experienced earlier in the season. Some good examples include Rudbeckia, Echinacea, Solidago (Golden Rod) of which there are hundreds of varieties, Gallardia, Penstemons, Helianthus (annual and perennial sunflowers), Verbena – particularly the species bonariensis and hastata. Probably the most attractive of all the North American plants grown in gardens for bees are the Helenniums. Known as sneezeworts these late summer flowering perennials come in a variety of colours ranging from yellows, orange and intense reds. They are a magnet for bees and very easy to grow even on relatively poor soils. If 'Chelsea chopped' in June they can provide a succession of blooms from late July right through to the first frosts of autumn.

Other plants attractive to bees include the South African Eucomis or 'Pineapple lily'. These plants are bulbous sporting a rosette of fleshy green leaves in summer followed by spikes of pineapple looking flowers in late summer and autumn. They come in a variety of colours from lime green to pink and purple, some with flecks of red on the petals and flower stalk. Bees relish the pollen and nectar they provide and they are very easy to grow being surprisingly hardy for such an exotic looking flower.

Other South African plants attractive to bees include Knifophia, the red hot poker and Agapanthus.

Knifophia have very long flower trumpets which have evolved to be pollinated by sunbirds. The flowers are hot shades of yellow, orange and red specifically to attract these birds which have very long bills and tongues equipped to pollinate the flowers. Whilst none of our native bees have the equipment needed to pollinate the blooms they can still extract the rich nectar from the flowers as it often drips and runs out of the flower trumpet and down the flower stem. Agapanthus are of limited usefulness to our native bees but the Common Carder Bumble Bee does seem to like them and I have often seen them foraging on Agapanthus in my own garden.

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

From New Zealand one of the best garden plants this

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

From China the Sedum spectabile 'autumn joy' is a staple of gardens across the country in September when its cheerful pink heads of flowers brighten up the garden attracting bees, butterflies and hoverflies in abundance.

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

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

At this time of year I often see the bees working michaelmas daisies or Asters but at the moment they seem to be unmoved by the Asters. Perhaps there is something else they are foraging on right now?

Another plant popular at the moment and in fact through most of the summer months is Erigeron, otherwise known as fleabane. It's particularly popular with honey bees and short-tongued solitary bees.

If you're looking for late summer bee friendly planting inspiration and you're in the South East of England then I highly recommend a visit to the [Sussex Prairie Gardens](#).

This garden is at its best in late summer and is full of inspirational plants, most of which are also attractive to bees. The garden includes a small plant nursery where specimen plants can be purchased. Well worth a visit.

## LBKA Apiaries

News from LBKA's apiaries. Just brief updates from three of our four apiaries this month.

### Eden

*Richard Glassborow*  
LBKA Apiary manager for Eden

Eden, for the most part, exhibits evidence of low availability of nectar throughout July, with some colonies apparently consuming more than they are bringing in. But, because they are bees, there is always one colony bucking the trend. In this case, one, which had already yielded two capped supers at the end of June, appeared to be following the general trend of the others by not putting on significant weight in the supers throughout July. But when a disease inspection was carried out at the end of July, it was found that it had been shunning the supers and had instead filled and capped five full 14×12 brood frames with honey (one of pollen and 5 of brood). Was this a way of avoiding excessive heat at the top of the hive I wonder? It is certainly not their normal behaviour.

Pending varroa monitoring (the boards have been out to increase ventilation in the hot weather) all colonies seem disease free, including the swarm that squatted stored supers – which is a relief.

### Holland Park

*Lavinia Porter*  
LBKA Apiary manager for Holland Park

The Holland Park Apiary in July has turned into somewhat of a jungle as the climbing wisteria wraps its tendrils around the hives and the surrounding trees cast dappled light over the apiary.

We have been fighting a steady battle against wax moth, and two weaker hives (the products of an artificial swarm) have faded as a result. We have been on EFB alert however, have so far had no cause for concern, touch wood! We are left with 3 good hives and 3 very competent queens who are yet to exhibit signs of winding down their laying.

The end of the month also sees the end of my tenure and handing over the apiary to my successor, Carla, who I have faith will keep the apiary on its feet and hopefully send me a jar of honey!

### Mudchute

*Vlad Zamfir*  
LBKA Apiaries Manager and Mudchute Apiary Manager



*Mudchute's bees.*

July was such a dry month and everything looked so brown that I still don't know where the bees found enough flowers to get nectar from – it wasn't much but still a surplus over what they needed so the stores were steadily growing.

In regards to how the colonies are doing, I've been looking at them attentively to see if there are any EFB signs considering how much of London is affected by this disease and until now, I haven't found anything suspicious, thankfully. Otherwise, the colonies have started reducing the broodnest – as expected this time of the year – and the queenless colony managed to produce 3 virgin queens which did not kill each other so I had to put two in mating nucs and left 1 in the original hive. Until now, only the one in the hive is mated, one of the others got lost (possibly eaten by a bird) and the third still hadn't mated when I last checked.

I also had to artificially swarm a colony on 5 brood frames and 2 supers, not quite sure what they were thinking. Both the original colony and nuc are building up, however.



One of the judges from a previous year. Source: <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/rules-and-regulations.php>.



Danah Kim and her sister in Walworth Garden.



50g honey sample.

## Save a jar of your honey for the show

Geoff Hood  
LBKA member

This year in London the bees have done us proud and produced some glorious London Honey. But which tastes the best? Of course it is your honey!

But how can you be sure? By entering a jar to the National Honey Show you can find out if yours tastes the best!

The National Honey Show is held at Sandown Park Racecourse, Thursday 25th to Saturday 27th October 2018. The name suggests it's all about honey, but actually, there are many excellent talks, workshops and plenty of equipment for sale.

Honey is judged by National Honey Show Judges as part of the [National Honey Show](#). However LBKA has **three** special classes for London beekeepers. These are: "Two Jars Urban Honey" judged solely on taste and aroma (class 321), "Two jars of Jam, Marmalade or other Preserve" with Honey as the only sweetening ingredient (class 322) and "One jar of liquid honey" to be shown in an interesting or unusual transparent container (class 323).

It only costs £1 to enter per jar but you need to apply direct to the National Honey Show to enter the LBKA Classes and get an entry label. For the class 323 all you require is one jar of any size and shape.

If you need your honey taken to the show, I will pick it up at the October LBKA meeting and return it to you at the November meeting. Please tell [geoffryhood@gmail.com](mailto:geoffryhood@gmail.com) if you want your honey collected. I will be taking photographs for the newsletter, so the winner will be famous. But if you enter, you'll be competing against me!

## Korean Connection

Simon Saville  
[development@lbka.org.uk](mailto:development@lbka.org.uk)

In July, I got an email from a student in Seoul – Danah Kim – who was visiting London and wanted to find

out about urban beekeeping. It shows that our website works!

I was able to host Danah and her sister at Walworth Garden and to show her the apiary there. We discussed the challenges of keeping bees in a big city and the particular relevance to Seoul. Beekeeping in Seoul is much less common than in London – where we have over 5,000 registered colonies – but it is getting more popular.

The discussion made me realise how lucky we are in London to have so many parks, gardens, allotments and other green spaces. In fact, over 47% of London's area is "green" – largely thanks for our Victorian forebears. Even with this amount of green space, we are concerned about potential shortages of forage in central parts of the city. In Seoul, this could be much worse – its population is twice that of London and the population density is over three times that of London (nearly 17,000 people per square km!).

Danah was interested in the LBKA approach to beekeeping and our emphasis on:

- Apiary security and the safety of neighbours / the public at large
- Keeping healthy bees: integrated pest and disease management
- Keeping friendly bees!
- Swarm prevention and control
- The importance of training and mentoring
- Encouraging the planting of forage for bees and other pollinators

She is making a presentation about urban beekeeping to her sponsors in Seoul and will be promoting some of our ideas. Hopefully this is a contact that we can maintain and develop.

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## Facebook (In)digest(ion)

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

*Eugene Fahy*  
LBKA Member

Having checked the date of [Richard Glassborow's post](#) to make sure it was not April 1st, I took another look (and another) at his "dancing" bees video – evidence that the only things stranger than beekeepers are bees.

Jonathan Lingham [posted a link to an Economist article](#) on rooftop beekeeping by businesses in central London,

focussing on Coutts bank on the Strand. The journalist had spoken to LBKA committee member, Natalie Cotton and produced a balanced article which mentioned some of the difficulties of keeping hives on a rooftop and highlighted the comparative lack of forage for the 5,000 hives in the Capital.

While we are still some weeks away from "the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" we have already had the Lambeth County Show and there are already signs that this could be a good year for honey yields. Richard Glassborow [posted pictures from the LBKA stand at the show](#), including one of the mayor, complete with mayoral chain of office, trying his hand at candle rolling. Graham Preston, [posted pictures of his surplus of four supers from two hives in just over a week](#) – forty pounds of honey in total.

For anyone who needs assistance extracting their honey, [Geordy Mark recommends social enterprise](#), the Bee Collective, which is also the LBKA's "bees for flowers" partner. Run by volunteers, the team have a fully equipped extraction centre and offer an extraction and bottling service in exchange for 10% of the honey.

Maria Devereaux [posted a picture of a small, suspected queen cell](#) and asked for advice. The consensus was that it was a play cup and of no concern. Geordy Mark added that, this late in the season, swarming is not a real concern so he tends to leave queen cells alone as it is an indication that the bees are not happy with their queen.

From slightly farther afield, Mariusz Chudy posted [a number of pictures of some prospective young beekeepers on a bee awareness day in Nottingham](#) and Sara Valenti [posted a tweet announcing that Bees for Development has got government aid to train Ethiopian beekeepers](#).

Finally, news that another celebrity has joined the ranks of beekeepers. Geordy Mark [posted a tweet](#) which shows Sir Patrick Stewart in full rig, standing in front of his garden shed and announcing that he has realised a childhood ambition to keep bees. There are no prizes for adding to the number "bald brood, to baldly go..." comments on the post.

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## Old news

LBKA member, Jeni Lea, has an assortment of beekeeping-related articles from 1950s and 60s found in a Cornish barn. This month, some "facts" about honey.

*Jeni Lea*  
LBKA Member

## Honey as Medicine

From "Facts about Honey with Selected Recipes" by Herbert Mace, Cornwall Beekeepers Association (undated).

- **Honey and Yarrow.** To an infusion of yarrow add a good spoonful of honey and drink hot at bedtime and on rising. This has been widely recommended for influenza and as a nutrient tonic in debility.
- **Honey and Milk.** Cup of warmed, but not boiled milk, with a teaspoon of honey. Good for delicate ill-nourished children and may even be given to infants. Has been highly recommended for cases of stomach ulcer and anaemia. Taken last thing at night, it is invaluable in treating insomnia.
- **Honey and Ipecacuanha.** Teaspoon of honey, juice of half a lemon and a teaspoon of ipecacuanha wine in half a pint of boiling water. Good for whooping cough.
- **Cough Candy.** Boil horehound leaves in soft water, strain through muslin, add as much honey as desired to the liquid and boil till the candy can be made into a soft ball when dropped into cold water. Pour into greased tins to set.

## Ointments and Cosmetics

From "Facts about Honey with Selected Recipes" by Herbert Mace, Cornwall Beekeepers Association (undated).

- **Freckles.** Anoint with a mixture of equal parts honey and cream.
- **Inflamed eyes.** A few drops of clear honey put in several times a day is soothing and harmless.
- **Honey and Lavender.** A tablespoon of honey with a few drops of lavender water.
- **Honey and Violets.** Infuse 2lb of violet petals in 2 qts of water. Boil up and add 2 lb of honey. Boil to a syrup and press through a linen cloth.
- Both the above are grateful applications of tender and sore places, especially useful for the mouth and tongue.



Wartime clipping.

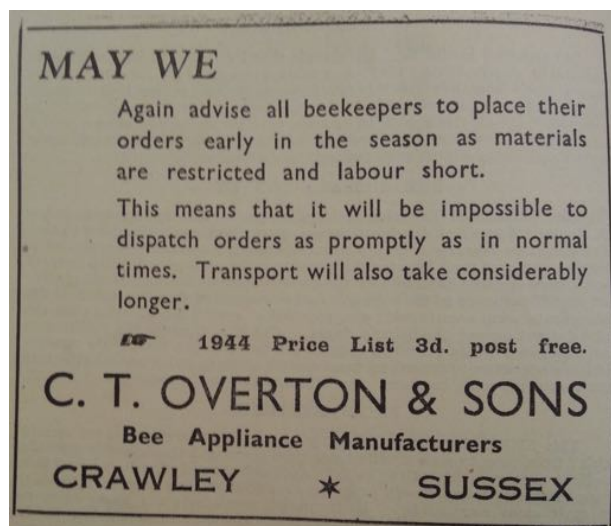
## Wartime clippings

Some interesting wartime clippings from Cornwall Beekeepers Annual Reports from 1940 to 1943.

## 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](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) to add something here.

**Emily Abbott:** I run Hive & Keeper Ltd a company that sells single apiary/harvest honeys from small scale beekeepers around the country. Jars are labelled with the honey's main flavour, the name of the beekeeper and where the apiary is. Hive & Keeper currently works with about 30 keepers and your honey would be en-



Wartime clipping.



Wartime clipping.

joyed by people across the country. Let me know if you have honey you want to sell, but don't want to jar and sell it yourself. We buy 30lb buckets (a minimum of 3). Check out <http://www.hiveandkeeper.com/> or email [emily@hiveandkeeper.com](mailto:emily@hiveandkeeper.com).

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## Upcoming events

### Sunday, 12th August: Monthly Meeting and Summer Social

11:00-15:00 at Walworth Garden (206 Manor Pl, Braganza St, SE17 3BN)

This month, Vlad will talk to us about the bees' collection and use of propolis and water. Both are very important for the health of the colony and this is a fas-

inating topic that we've not previously covered in our meetings.

Afterwards is the highlight of LBKA's Social Calendar! The spectacular Summer Social!

This will be open to LBKA members and you'll be able to bring guests. Don't miss it! The caterer will be "DelicaSisters", a spin-off of the "Chickpea Sisters" who catered the event in each of the last 2 years. The menu is a north and east African blend with Mediterranean overtones, ideal for a lazy summer afternoon in convivial company.

Members should check their email to find out how to register to come.

### Tuesday 28th August: Monthly Pub Social

from 18:30 at *The Three Stags*, 67-69 Kennington Rd, Lambeth, SE1 7PZ.

The Three Stags is a popular South London gastropub that is "steeped in history" and "true to its roots". They have rooftop beehives and they claim "produce the best local urban honey around". But then don't we all claim that? Hope to see you there.

### Sunday, 9th September: Monthly Meeting: Preparing bees for the winter

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

This meeting will be about preparing bees for the winter (though it seems like a long way off at the moment...) including uniting colonies. Meetings are for members only, but you're welcome to come as a guest to find out more about our association.

### Sunday 23rd September: Harvest Stomp

All day at *Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park*, London E20 2ST.

The Harvest Stomp is back and we'll have a stall there.



## 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](mailto:chair@lbka.org.uk)
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, [treasurer@lbka.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@lbka.org.uk)
- **Secretary:** Natalie Cotton, [admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk)
- **Education:** Howard Nichols [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk)
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)
- **Forage:** Mark Patterson, [forage@lbka.org.uk](mailto:forage@lbka.org.uk)
- **Events:** Emily Abbott, [events@lbka.org.uk](mailto:events@lbka.org.uk)
- **Resources:** Tristram Sutton, [resources@lbka.org.uk](mailto:resources@lbka.org.uk)
- **Apiaries:** Vlad Zamfir, [apiaries@lbka.org.uk](mailto:apiaries@lbka.org.uk)
- **Development:** Simon Saville, [development@lbka.org.uk](mailto:development@lbka.org.uk)
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, [mentor@lbka.org.uk](mailto:mentor@lbka.org.uk)

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

