



# The London Beekeepers' Association

# LBKA News

## October, 2019

Now we're tucking our bees in for the winter, our attention is turning to shows, talks and courses. The National Honey show (page 4) is at the end of the month. It is about more than honey, with excellent speakers and a large trade show. LBKA will be running a microscopy course (p7) and will be helping people work towards their BBKA qualifications. And our AGM is in November (p5) at which we plan to have some honey-tasting (so do bring along some honey if you have any to spare). This month Richard shares his thoughts with us, Howard provides us with monthly tips on what to do in the apiary (p8), Natalie tells us what the AGM is all about (p5) and Mark on what bees are eating (p9) at this time of year.

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A big thank you to this month's contributors: **Natalie Cotton, Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols and Mark Patterson**. Thanks to **Martin Hudson** for proof-reading it. Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, do contact me.

Happy beekeeping.

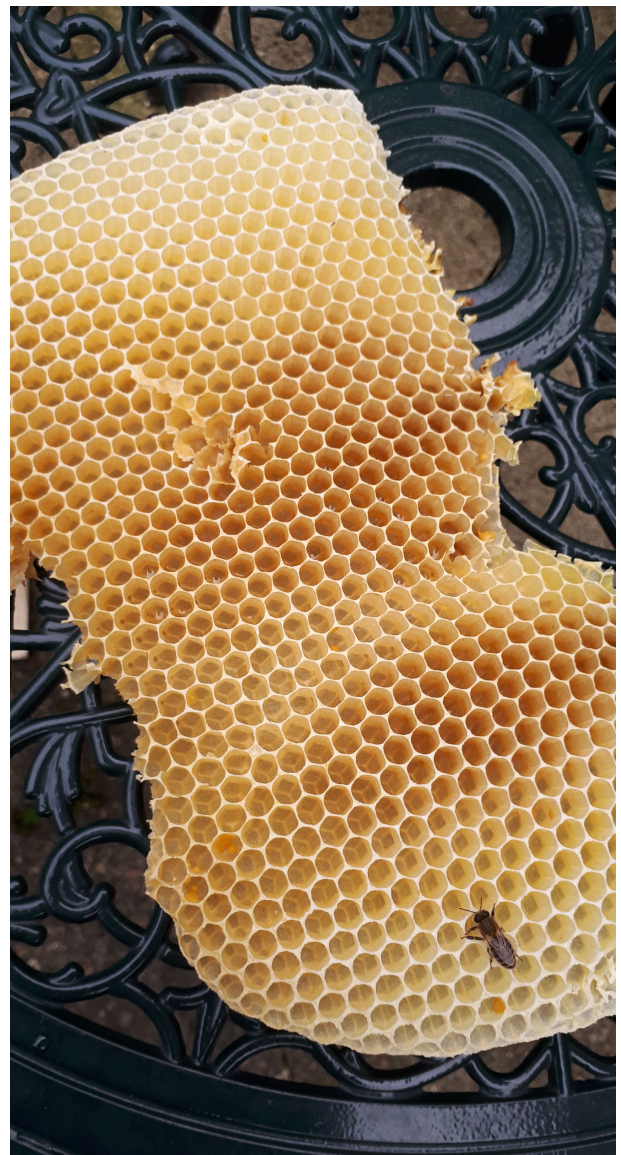
*Aidan Slingsby, Editor, [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk)*

## From our Chair

We need to talk about bees: what kind of bees and how many bees.

I have touched on this many times over the last two or three years, one way or another but I sense a change in the zeitgeist and I think we need to clarify and consolidate our position.

Most if not all our members know LBKA has been con-



*Honey bee on comb. Photo: Aidan Slingsby.*

cerned about the balance of honey bee colony density and forage availability for some years. The rise in popularity of beekeeping started over ten years ago, based in part on the premise that London was 50% open space and you could put bees everywhere. That would help bees which were apparently in decline.

The first question should have been, which bees are in decline? But in this simplistic model, bees meant honey bees. Awareness of perhaps more than 100 species of wild bees in London was not generally good. Poor information, misinterpretation of, or even misleading information about both London's environments and bees led to outcomes that should now be questioned more rationally.

We now know that London's 47% "open space" is not uniformly distributed and most of it is grass. We also know honey bees have indeed been put everywhere. We compiled data maps showing the relative distribution of registered honey bee colonies (courtesy of the NBU) and pollinator friendly forage (courtesy of GiGL). But we don't have much hard data beyond that, though anecdotally many long serving beekeepers in London will tell you honey yields are significantly down. That's the bees telling us food is not so plentiful in places.

LBKA recognises that beekeeping takes place in a wider environment and one of our three stated core objectives is to work for a "better environment for bees and Londoners". Our "Bees and Flowers go together" initiative is our standard first response to the requests we still get from corporations and organisations wanting help to keep bees in London – to help bees.

Our maps do not in fact say there are too many honey bees in London. They show only an inverse relationship in the distribution of registered colonies and quality pollinator forage. What we are saying is, there are not enough flowers. The strategy is to harness and deflect public enthusiasm for helping bees into helping create a better environment (for bees and Londoners). That is not only appropriate; it is achievable at all scales – from pots to parks.

For those who are still intent on keeping bees we are promoting Guidelines on Responsible Urban Beekeeping and Keeping Bees in a Place of Work, in an attempt to mitigate some of the down sides to so many honey bees in London.

More than three years ago we published our first leaflets on "Helping honey bees and other London pollinators" and "Who's who of London's bees". Various encounters and platforms seem to suggest many of our members have a growing interest in wild bees, other pollinators and indeed the natural world. In our various outreach activities, events, talks and school visits, we present honey bees as a window onto planet earth on our doorstep.

All this has come from within LBKA – just because.

It is our position; very positive I think and it is very popular with the public.

But here is where the zeitgeist may be about to change. At the moment I sense only vague shapes on the horizon (isn't that what the zeitgeist is?): but I sense these shapes could be or become connected and change the social landscape of urban beekeeping.

Here are some of the shapes: enquiries from local authorities about beekeeping regulations; outside interest in our template agreement documents and risk assessments; grumblings about feral colonies (and the fact that we don't remove them); our own experience of swarm collection this year. And of course the recent publication of research into the impact of honey bees on wild pollinators in the urban environment.

This article is an [interesting read and I recommend the whole of it](#). But here is the concluding paragraph:

*Altogether, our results not only question the fast development of urban beekeeping and the enthusiasm of citizens and mass media for the installation of hives in cities, but also some of urban management practices supposedly conducted to sustain biodiversity. This underlines the need for new studies exploring how domestic and wild pollinators coexist in urban habitats. In conclusion, we suggest that stakeholders should take into account the impacts that apiaries could have on the wild fauna. If the capacity of urban ecosystems to provide the pollination function is to be preserved, land owners may focus their management practices on increasing floral resources and nesting habitats for pollinators in urban environments instead of adding honey bee colonies.*

As I said, we need to talk.

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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!

### October Monthly Meeting: Pollen analysis with microscopes

**October's** Monthly meeting will be about **pollen analysis with microscopes** and will be at **11:00 on 13th October** will be at **Fairley Junior School Hall** (218 Lambeth Rd, Lambeth, SE1 7JY). It will be a **hands-on** microscopy session where we'll be preparing pollen slides and looking at pollen grains through microscopes.



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

Please **bring some flowers from which we can extract pollen**. If you know what the flower is, then you can compare with some of our reference slides. As usual, there will be tea, coffee and chat afterwards. If anyone would like to bring some cake, I'm sure that would go down well.

November's Monthly Meeting on **10th November** will be on the glandular development of bees and natural history. This is a new topic for us, so do come along.

## Natalie's pub pick

This month's Pub Social will be at the [Grafton Arms](#) (72 Grafton Way, Fitzrovia, W1T 5DU) from **18:30** on **Tuesday 29th October**.

## LBKA wins award for its championing of bees

The LBKA is delighted to have won a DEFRA Bees Needs Champions Award as part of the Year of Green Action. This award is for projects benefitting not just honey bees but, in particular, wild bees. Clearly the judging panel recognised our efforts to promote Responsible Urban Beekeeping and our activities promoting Better Public Understanding of (all) bees and a Better environment for bees and Londoners.

The award submission required evidence of achievement in project objectives and we were able to demonstrate this in all areas of our activities:

*Better Beekeeping*  
*Better public understanding of bees*  
*Better environment for bees and Londoners*

This is not only a recognition of the direction the LBKA is taking but well deserved credit to all those volunteers who make the LBKA happen.

## Membership renewals

Our membership year has ended, so you will need to renew your membership if you wish to continue being a member of LBKA and to vote at the AGM (page 5).

All of last year's members have been sent a personalised renewal email that tells you how to renew your membership. All prices have been kept the same this year. Thanks for the 70 people who have renewed so far!

If you haven't got your renewal email, please email [services@lbka.org.uk](mailto:services@lbka.org.uk) for it to be resent.

## Register your bees

We have had a request from Tom Bickerdike, our NBU Seasonal Bee Inspector to remind members to register bees or update their apiary records.

As you know, LBKA greatly values the registration system and we encourage all our members to keep up to date. As well as the obvious benefits in disease management we rely on NBU registration for our data maps, showing the honey bee side of the forage/pollinator equation. Where the data are not good, it can frustrate our efforts to work for a sustainable balance between forage and bees across London. Please help by registering your colonies and keeping your records up to date whether it be new apiaries, expansion, reductions or closure of apiaries.

## 2020 BBKA Basic Assessment

Both BBKA and LBKA encourage members to take the BBKA basic assessment where possible. The BBKA requirement for entry is that the applicant has been managing bees for a minimum period of 1 year. The assessment is fairly straightforward and the syllabus can be [accessed from their website](#). The cost is £20 and [entry forms can also be downloaded](#) although they do not need to be sent off until next Spring.

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

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

Any LBKA member who has been managing bees for a minimum of 12 months and wishes to take this assessment please confirm by email to [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk). We will then be able to let you have some electronic course notes to read at your leisure over the winter months. Several members have already notified their interest. The BBKA website should be sufficient to deal with any queries regarding the assessment. Alternatively, ask another LBKA member who has taken it.

Preparation for the Basic is an interesting way of continuing your beekeeping activities through the winter months. Even if you have been managing bees for several years but not previously taken the assessment then please do seriously consider taking it in 2020. It is well worth the effort.

### Forthcoming Winter Courses

Howard describes some of our winter course offerings – microscopy and Module 1 – on page 7. Do contact him ([education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk)) if you'd like to sign up.

### National Honey Show and the competitive classes

The **National Honey Show is Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th October** at Sandown Park Racecourse (Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ). Despite its name, it has more of a focus on talks and workshops about bees and beekeeping and a trade show of the latest in beekeeping gadgets. Some suppliers (including Thornes and Maisemore) let you order on line and then pick up your order from the National Honey Show, which saves you postage.

### Standing for committee


Our Annual General Meeting is in November (6th November), at which the committee is up for election. We would welcome people interested in standing. Please contact any member of the current committee if you're interested in standing or knowing more about what being on the committee is like. If you want to get more involved in LBKA, this is one way of doing so, but you can also get involved in other ways. More details on page 5.

### Mark McDonnell has joined the committee

We welcome Mark McDonnell as newest committee member, who has taken on the role of Resources Officer ([resources@lbka.org.uk](mailto:resources@lbka.org.uk)) responsible for managing our equipment). We thank Tristram Sutton for fulfilling this role for the past few years and for becoming Apiary Officer ([apiaries@lbka.org.uk](mailto:apiaries@lbka.org.uk)), liaising with our Apiary Managers.

### Thanks for bee suit donations

We thank Partizan and adam&eveDDB for donating 5 beesuits to us. They are a production company who have just been shooting a commercial involving these 5 beesuits.



www.nonnativespecies.org  
Produced by Lucy Cornwell, Olaf Booy (NNSS), Gay Marrs, Mike Brown (National Bee Unit) with assistance from Colette O'Flynn (National Biodiversity Data Centre Ireland) Stuart Roberts (BWNSS)

Alert!

Report sightings of this species to: [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)

## Asian Hornet

### Species Description


**Scientific name:** *Vespa velutina*  
**AKA:** Yellow-legged Hornet  
**Native to:** Asia  
**Habitat:** Nests usually high in trees and man made structures, sometimes closer to the ground; hunts honey bees, other insects and also feeds on fruit and flowers.

Not easily confused with any other species. Dark brown or black velvety body. Characteristically dark abdomen and yellow tipped legs. Smaller than the native European Hornet.

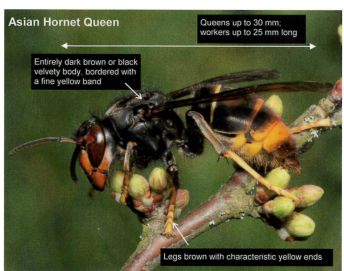
Introduced to France in 2004 where it has spread rapidly. In 2016 the first UK sighting was confirmed in Gloucestershire. High possibility of introduction through, for example, soil associated with imported plants, cut flowers, fruit, garden items (furniture, plant pots), freight containers, or in/on untreated timber. The possibility that it could fly across the Channel has not been ruled out.

A highly aggressive predator of native insects. Poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators.

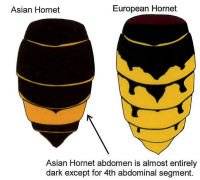
**Do not disturb an active nest. Members of the public who suspect they have found an Asian Hornet should send a photo to [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk).**




### Key ID Features



Asian Hornet Queen  
Queens up to 30 mm, workers up to 25 mm long  
Entirely dark brown or black velvety body, bordered with a fine yellow band  
Legs brown with characteristic yellow ends



Asian Hornet      European Hornet  
Asian Hornet abdomen is almost entirely dark except for 4th abdominal segment.



Asian hornet 'hawking' for honey bee prey


Photos from: J. Haxaire; Rachel Scopes and Nigel Jones; Richard Ball

### Similar Species

**Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) for comparison**

- Queen up to 30mm long, worker up to 25mm long
- Legs yellow at the ends
- Dark brown / black abdomen with a yellow / orange band on 4th segment
- Head dark from above, orange from front
- Dark coloured antennae
- Entirely black velvety thorax
- Never active at night

Actual size




Q. Rome

**European hornet (*Vespa crabro*)**

- Queen up to 35mm long, worker up to 30mm long
- Legs brown at the ends
- Yellow abdomen marked with brown on the upper part, not banded
- Head yellow from above, yellow from front
- Yellow antennae
- Thorax black with extensive brown markings
- May be active at night

Actual size




Roger Burgess

**Giant woodwasp (*Urocerus gigas*)**

- Larger than Asian hornet, female up to 45mm long
- Legs yellow
- Distinctive yellow and black banded abdomen
- Long cylindrical body unlike Asian hornet which has an obvious waist
- Long yellow antennae
- Female has an obvious long sting-like appendage (ovipositor) which it uses to lay eggs in trees

Actual size

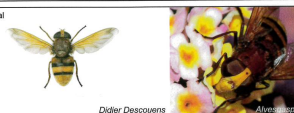


Q. Rome

**Hornet mimic hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*)**

- Abdomen has more yellow stripes than Asian hornet
- Legs darker than Asian hornets
- Only one pair of wings (hornets and wasps have two pairs)
- Large, globular eyes

Actual size




Didier Descouens

**Median wasp (*Dolichovespula media*)**

- More extensive yellow and orange colouration on abdominal segments than Asian hornet
- Yellow markings on thorax unlike Asian hornet


Actual size



Q. Rome

### Field Signs

Active April-November (peak August/September). Mated queens over winter singly or in groups, in various natural and man-made harbourages – underneath tree bark in cavities left by beetle larvae, in soil, on ceramic plant pots – potentially any small, well-insulated refuge. Makes very large nests in tall trees in urban and rural areas, but avoids pure stands of conifers. Will use man made structures (garages, sheds etc.) as nesting sites.



**For more information visit:**  
[www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)  
[www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com)

Alert!

Report sightings of this species to:  
[alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)

Asian Hornet Identification leaflet. Source: [BBKA website](http://BBKA website).

## Old announcements from September

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

**Research on beekeeping practice:** contact Tom Moody ([tom.moody@chch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tom.moody@chch.ox.ac.uk)) if you'd like to take part in his research.

## Old announcements from August

**BBKA exam success.** Frank Ryan passed the BBKA Module 2 examination and Robin Yearwood passed the BBKA Module 3 examination. Mark Patterson passed the BBKA General Husbandry. Well done all!

## Old announcements from July

**Congratulations to Andrew Slade, Alison Kings, Adela Vavrecka, Annie McGeoch, Kathy Jo Stevenson, Raphael Larizza, Jeremy Rosie and Rosemary Danielian** for passing their BBKA Basic Assessment.

## 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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# Annual General Meeting

Our upcoming AGM.

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

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place on 6th November at 6.30pm at Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN. All members are invited to attend the meeting – it's a good chance to meet other members, learn more about the Association's work, and have a say about what you want from the Association. You will receive a formal notification and papers two weeks before the AGM.

To sweeten the evening, we will also have some **honey tasting**. If you willing, please bring along some of your honey. We hope that there'll be a good range of London honey from all corners (and non-corners) of London.

At the AGM, the current Trustees (who are also the committee) stand down and candidates put themselves forward for election or re-election.

As we are a charity, we have a minimum requirement to have three Trustee roles (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) who have allocated responsibilities related to the governance of the organisation and, for the purposes of the election process, roles, or job descriptions, have to be provided for all committee members. However, the Association welcomes applications to join the Trustees and Committee from members who are uncertain as to what role may be suitable, as the incoming Committee will be able to share responsibilities as they see fit.

Committee candidates for roles other than the three obligatory trustee positions may choose to stand as Trustees as well as committee members, but we also welcome Committee members who don't want to become Trustees.

## Nominations for Trustee/committee roles

In preparation for the Annual General Meeting, and in accordance with the Constitution which can be found at <http://www.lbka.org.uk/constitution.html>, the outgoing Trustees are seeking nominations for the following three Trustee positions and further committee positions (with option for becoming a Trustee) for the coming year. Nominations should be emailed to [admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk) no later than 21st October 2019.

The email should state the position for which the nomination is being made (or if it is a general application to the committee), the name of the nominee, the name of the person making the nomination, and the name of the person seconding the nomination. All three parties to the nomination must be paid-up members of the London Beekeepers' Association for the year 2018-19, and the nominee should provide a brief personal statement in support of his/her nomination.

The positions for election are as follows:

1. **Chair** – this is a Trustee position  
Develop and maintain the strategic vision of LBKA; promote LBKA message to members and the wider public; carry and chair committee meetings and meetings of the Trustees; attend BBKA meetings and AGM; represent the association at formal or informal events where necessary; liaise with neighbouring associations in the furtherance of LBKA aims and policies; deliver the Trustees' Annual Report at the AGM.
2. **Secretary** – this is a Trustee position  
Ensure smooth running of and a co-ordinated approach to all committee work; facilitate all aspects of committee meetings, Trustees' meetings, the AGM and any EGM's as required; be responsible for compiling and distributing agendas and for

minuting meetings and distributing minutes; be responsible for online record keeping; assist the Chair in preparing the Trustees' Annual Report; be the first point of contact for all enquiries in to the organisation.

3. **Treasurer** – this is a Trustee position  
Keep an accurate set of accounts in compliance with any legal obligations, including the preparation of annual accounts; ensure the safe keeping and appropriate distribution of all income and expenditure; seek to maximise the value of LBKA assets through low risk investment strategies and best value procurement practices; facilitate the purchase of BBKA membership, bee diseases insurance, Beecraft and the Beekeepers Quarterly journal for members, as required. Please note that previous business or financial experience is required for this position.

Nominations are also sought for the committee. Committee members may also opt to become a Trustee of the Charity:

1. **Membership Services officer**  
Maintain an accurate register of members in accordance with data protection requirements; assist the Secretary, Treasurer and Resources officer in all aspects of internal and external communication and membership finances; maintain content on the official LBKA website; edit and deliver the LBKA newsletter; oversee the delivery of services to members that are not the direct responsibility of other elected officers, including periodically canvass members as part of a service review in order to further develop an attractive range of member benefits.
2. **Education officer**  
Organise the delivery of BBKA examination tutoring and arrange for assessments/examinations of Basic Assessment and modules to be carried out; Liaise with the NBU on health-education matters; oversee distribution of best-practice and advice to members through monthly meetings, an annual bee-health day, winter lectures, and otherwise as appropriate; promote members' fulfilment of National Bee Health Strategy; oversee a schedule of fee-paid courses for members of the public, as the resources/capacity of LBKA allow.
3. **Events officer**  
Be responsible for the Events and Shows strategy and priorities matched by benefits to members and, in conjunction with the Resources officer, matched by resources required to meet obligations. Also in conjunction with the Resources officer, build up and maintain equipment required to adequately represent LBKA at any events, shows and other outreach opportunities, including promotional and educational literature and other visual aids and branding; recruit, assign and coordinate volunteers to resource the requirements of LBKA activities such as courses, shows and events, etc.

4. **Resources officer**  
Manage and maintain LBKA equipment, its storage, use and hire, etc; in conjunction with the Events officer and Apiaries officer, manage the acquisition of new equipment and the disposal of redundant and unmaintainable older equipment; maintain an accurate register of the capital assets of the Charity.
5. **Mentoring officer**  
Recruit and support experienced members to act as mentors for new beekeepers; support the Apiaries officer in ensuring LBKA teaching apiaries have adequate capacity to deliver the mentoring program; assign course attendees to mentors and monitor feedback to ensure needs and expectations of the program are being met.
6. **Apiaries officer**  
Support teaching apiary managers to run LBKA apiaries in accordance with LBKA Guidelines to Responsible Urban Beekeeping; help managers find assistants (mentees and or volunteers) to help throughout the season, especially periods of high demand and facilitate holiday cover where necessary; organise shared resourcing where appropriate, and timely bulk purchasing of consumables and equipment; produce regular written reports on the condition and performance of teaching apiaries; assist apiary managers in maintaining good relations with apiary hosts, and identifying opportunities for collaborative work with the hosts; ensure that all apiary risk assessments and agreements between LBKA and Apiary hosts are kept up to date on an annual basis.
7. **Development officer**  
Develop a strategy for promoting the aims of the LBKA and the needs of pollinators to government and corporate organisations; represent the LBKA at meetings and events regarding pollinator strategy; develop relationships with corporate organisations in order to promote the needs of pollinators; support the Chair in engaging with other organisations with similar aims.

## General

The committee as a whole body has a general duty to initiate, decide and confirm general matters of policies, strategies and implementation that will guide the elected officers. In addition, it is required to appoint and instruct a delegate to the BBKA to reflect LBKA policy at the BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM) and any similar national or local forums that are relevant. Elected officers will also be responsible from time to time for overseeing the work of co-opted committee members and volunteer members working in furtherance of LBKA's aims. All elected and co-opted committee members will be bound by the LBKA's Code of Conduct for Committee Members. Additionally, all Trustees will be bound by relevant clauses of the Constitution.

If you are interested in any of the Trustee or committee roles above and would like to discuss the responsibilities in more detail, please contact Richard at [chair@lbka.org.uk](mailto:chair@lbka.org.uk) or Natalie at [admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk).

## Proposing a resolution

The AGM will also be an opportunity for discussing and voting on resolutions proposed by LBKA members. If you have a resolution to be considered, please also email [admin@lbka.org.uk](mailto:admin@lbka.org.uk) by 21st October, with the particulars of the resolution, the name of the proposer, and the name of the seconder. Again, both proposer and seconder must be paid-up members of the London Beekeepers' Association.

Formal notice of the AGM will be sent to you as soon as possible after the closing date for these nominations.

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## Last month's Monthly Meeting: Summer Social

What happened at our meeting last month.

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

This well-attended meeting was led by Vlad Zamfir. As usual, he had done extensive research on the subject of his talk, which was on colony defensiveness and has [made his slides available](#).

The first line of defence are the guard bees. They comprise around 10% of the colony population and it tends to the bees' last duty before they become foragers. They are stimulated by dark colours, rapid movements, mammalian scents and rough textures.

Once they identify a threat, the guard bees will raise an alarm. Other bees will have deal with the threat. This is mostly through harassment – flying around, emitting a high-pitched sounds and bumping into the intruder – but eventually there will be some stinging. Stinging releases the sting alarm pheromone, which will encourage others to sting the target. Guards will help disperse this pheromone by fanning their wings. It smells like very ripe bananas and is a blend of 40 compounds, some of which are analgesics.

The degree of defensiveness depends on a variety of factors. Queenlessness and high or low amounts of stores can increase defensiveness. The proportion of guard bees and the age profile of the bees in the colony also

affect older bees, which deliver more venom. Colony disturbance is an important trigger and includes vibration, movement in front of a hive and attack by wasps. After a disturbance, bees are on alert for some. Time, weather and resource availability are factors. There are also genetics at play – some colonies are more defensive and aggressive than others.

Tips for beekeepers include:

- replace queen if the colony is too hostile
- only open the hive when foragers are likely to be out
- make slow and deliberate movements
- wear light-coloured clothing
- don't bump/drop frames or tools on the hive and bees
- try not to crush bees
- don't open the hives more than once a week, if possible
- don't break comb and leave cleaning burr comb as the last task
- wash your bee suit regularly

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## Forthcoming LBKA Winter Courses

Howard tells us about the the winter courses that we plan to run, just another of our members' benefits.

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

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

LBKA proposes to run a detailed microscopy course for interested members during the winter months. This is the 6th time this will have been run by our association and is likely to be 3 × 2 hour evening sessions organised and led by Richard Glassborow and Howard Nichols. It will concentrate on the use of microscopes for members to learn about both the pollen grain structure and the internal anatomy of the honey bee. It will be mainly hands on practical work and over the 3 weekly sessions we expect to deal with the following:

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

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

- All equipment will be supplied by the LBKA
- Numbers must be limited to a maximum of 8 people due to availability of equipment and pupil/teacher ratio.
- There is no charge. It is part of your LBKA membership subscription.
- Date to be decided but will be 3 evenings at Walworth Garden Farm in January or February 2020.

Please note this course is open to all LBKA members. The only entry requirement is an interest. Although specialised in form it is for anyone interested or curious about these aspects of beekeeping. Microscopy and dissection are “niche subjects” and so equally accessible by both very new and longstanding beekeepers. It is not dependent upon length of beekeeping experience. Beekeepers in their first year enjoy this course just as much as older beekeepers. It is truly a fascinating sub-optical world and exploration is an adventure.

Due to the organisation involved we need to have an idea of those interested so that the sessions and content can be properly planned. Please register your interest by email to [education@lbka.org.uk](mailto:education@lbka.org.uk) as soon as possible. This does not require you to commit at this stage but attendees are dealt with on a strictly first come basis. In the past demand usually exceeds the 8 available places very quickly, sometimes within 72 hours of the newsletter being circulated.

## Module 1 Course in January 2020

A couple of members have expressed an interest in taking Module 1 in March 2020. This is the BBKA modular examination which covers Honey Bee Management and is a natural progression from the Basic syllabus. If a minimum of 4 people are interested then we will run this over 3 evenings in January and/or February. It is a BBKA requirement that anyone sitting any modular examination has passed the BBKA Basic. Each module is a “stand alone” written examination lasting 90 minutes. If interested then please email me and I will supply further details. It is not essential that attendees sit the Module 1 examination in March but the course will be specifically geared for those who are and will follow the BBKA Module 1 syllabus, line by line. Alternatively, please ask me at one of the monthly meetings.

# October 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)

Feeding syrup to the bees should have been completed by the end of September as the colony will now start to find it difficult to process and cap the syrup due to the colder temperature. If left uncapped then there is the risk of fermentation and subsequent dysentery within the colony over the winter months. A colony should go into winter with at least 15kg (35lb) of stores if possible. This will avoid the possibility of the bees dying of starvation in a cold spring or the necessity for the beekeeper to feed in spring.

The bees will now start to cluster as temperatures fall. Clustering starts at about 18°C, albeit very loose, and the cluster becomes smaller and more compact as temperatures continue to fall. They form a complete cluster at 13°C. Other than this the colony will continue to operate as usual but on a smaller scale. The queen will still be laying eggs, nurse bees nurturing a smaller amount of brood and the bees should still be flying in the day throughout October. Bees should be foraging on ivy, which is the last flowering plant of the year. This is currently in flower. Another reason that feeding should now be complete is that subsequent collection of ivy nectar will then be stored on the flanks making it easier to remove in spring if necessary. (If ivy nectar is brought in whilst feeding then many more frames may become clogged with ivy honey/syrup.) If Api-guard was diligently applied in August and a feeding programme undertaken in September then the colony will be in optimum condition to face the harshness of the next few months. This leaves the beekeeper to make final preparations for winter. The objective for October is to put the bees in the best position to deal with winter by trying to do small things to tip the scales in their favour.

## Preparing for winter

**Secure your hives.** Check that hives are secure, straight and stable. If using a wooden floor then the colony should be slightly tilted slightly forward. Bees have evolved over millions of years to deal with cold temperatures and do this with relative ease. They cannot deal with damp and condensation. During winter they need to uncap and metabolise honey to keep warm, resulting in production of water vapour. If the hive is not adequately ventilated then dampness may build up leading to fungi growth. It is essential that the hive



interior remains dry throughout the winter. This is another advantage of using an open mesh floor.

**Mouseguards.** Once the night frosts commence then mice will look for a dark, warm place to hibernate. The smell and disturbance will upset the bees and, in more extreme instances, the colony can die out. Use of a mouseguard is essential as it is extremely effective but there must be no way the mice can bypass it.

**Gardening measures.** Check there are no branches grown up over summer and now overhanging the hive. If so then prune to remove. Also check that grass and weeds have not grown up around the hive as these will both reduce ventilation and promote damp. A quick trim with a strimmer or garden shears should be sufficient for the winter.

**Other jobs.** Make sure that spare brood and super boxes are cleaned and put away in a cold place for the winter to deter wax moth. Placing combs in a deep freeze for 24 hours if possible kills all 4 stages of wax moth. The bees put a lot of work and resources into making the comb. The beekeeper, as custodian over the winter months, has a duty of care to look after this valuable resource until returned to its rightful owners in the spring! Other equipment such as queen excluders, crownboards should also be cleaned and stored the same way.

Finally, October is the month for the National Honey Show. This is the 88th year of this event and will be held at Sandown Park Racecourse (Esher, KT10 9AJ) from Thursday, 24th October to Saturday, 26th October. If you are interested in going then ask at the LBKA October monthly meeting. It is always more enjoyable to go with someone else if possible.

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## Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. This article reprinted from a couple of years ago.

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

October signals the end of the active foraging season for our bees. By the end of the month our colonies must ensure they have sufficient stores of honey and pollen to last them through until spring. Pollen becomes available again when the crocus and snow drops bloom but the weather is often too cool for the bees to fly to take advantage of it. Nectar is an even longer wait. It's usually April when the first substantial nectar sources begin to flow so October really is a "make-or-break" month for our bees if they still need to pack away winter stores.



*Autumn crocus*

Apart from ivy substantial blooms of any particular plant are becoming rare this month. In gardens **Dahlias**, **Echinacea**, **Rudbeckia** and **Cosmos** persist but they will soon begin to keel over as the first frosts hit.

Winter flowering shrubs like **Viburnum tinus** are however starting to bloom and will peak at around New Year. These offer the bees pollen and sometimes nectar when winter days are mild enough for them to fly.

In about a month's time we should see the first **Mahonias** begin to bloom. These are frequented by honey and buff tailed bumble bees on mild winter days.

Jobs to do in the garden this month include propagating semi ripe cuttings from your favourite flowering shrubs. Lavender, rosemary, hebe, flowering currants are all easy to propagate in this way. Push 6" cuttings into gritty compost and keep cool and moist over winter.

If you're planting bulbs for bees, October is the best time to do this.

As leaves start to drop from trees, collect and bag to make leaf mould to mulch plants next year. Mulching helps prevent plants drying out in dry weather and helps to keep them flowering and your bees well fed.

As perennials begin to die back you may want to begin clearing the old stems. Some plants benefit from having their core exposed to the cold over the winter whilst others benefit from the insulating properties of their dead stems and leaves.



*Golden rod*



*Ivy blooms*



*Sedum Autumn joy*

with about 30 keepers and your honey would be enjoyed 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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## 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

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## Upcoming events

Sunday 13th October: Monthly meeting: Pollen analysis with microscopes

11:00-13:00 at Fairley House Junior School, 218 Lambeth Rd, Lambeth, London, SE1 7JY

Hands-on session where we will be staining and mounting pollen grains on glass slide so we can study them under the microscope. Bring some flowers, from which you can extract pollen. 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.

Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th October: National Honey Show

All day at Sandown Park Racecourse, Portsmouth Rd, Esher, KT10 9AJ

Promoting the highest quality honey and wax products with international classes, lecture convention, workshops and beekeeping equipment trade show. We sponsor some classes in the show. [More details on their website.](#)

### Tuesday 29th October: Pub social

18:30-22:30 at [The Grafton Arms](#), 72 Grafton Way, Fitzrovia, W1T 5DU

The [Grafton Arms](#) will be our pub this month. Catch up with all the latest news over a pint in a nice food-serving pub. All welcome.

### Wednesday 6th November: Annual General Meeting

18:30 at [Roots and Shoots](#), Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington, SE11 6DN.

All members are welcome (please note that you must be a 2019 member though - so don't forget to renew!). As well as formal business, it's a chance to see the full picture of what LBKA does and to have a drink (non alcoholic or alcoholic) with both the old and new committee.

### Sunday 10th November: Monthly meeting: Glandular development of bees and natural history.

11:00-13:00 at [Fairley House Junior School](#), 218 Lambeth Rd, Lambeth, London, SE1 7JY

New topic, where we learn about the development of the various glands in the bee's body. 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](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)
- **Apiaries:** Tristram Sutton, [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)
- **Events:** Martin Hudson, [events@lbka.org.uk](mailto:events@lbka.org.uk)
- **Resources:** Mark McDonnell, [resources@lbka.org.uk](mailto:resources@lbka.org.uk)

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

