



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

May, 2020

Welcome to the second newsletter since the COVID-19 lockdown. The big LBKA news is that we will be having our **first online Monthly Meeting** on Sunday! Check your email for a link. We hope you'll join us.

The pandemic has of course not affected bees' tendency to swarm and this is happening (as expected) at an increasing rate, buoyed by some of the good weather we had last month. But it has affected beekeepers' ability to keep on top of this. We're starting to experiment with online events. There's Sunday's online meeting and those on Bee Banter will have seen Richard and Jakeline's innovative remote mentoring which has been opened up to members, with Jakeline and Richard becoming increasingly competent camera-persons.

This month, we publish NBU's guidelines on beekeeping and BBKA's advice on swarm collection (p4), a some pictures of members' apiaries (p6; please send in your pictures for coming months) and Tristram's updates of what's been going on in LBKA's apiaries, and a poem posted by Geoff (p9). Thanks for Richard and Howard for their regular contributions. to Mark for his rich back-catalogue of material that keeps giving and to Martin for proof-reading.

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A big thank you to this month's contributors: **Richard Glassborow, Martin Hudson, Howard Nichols, Mark Patterson and Tristram Sutton.**

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

From our Chair

Anyone who has kept bees even once at this time of year knows that timing is everything: inspect for swarm preparation every 7 days or you will miss it and at least half of your bees will be gone. That can be a challenge in our busy lives – we thought. But it turns out to be an even greater challenge in, for many of us, our not-so-busy lives of lockdown where yesterday was Monday and tomorrow is Friday. It's a small price to pay and I hope our members are taking care of themselves



Swarm in North London. Photo: Geoff Hood.

and surviving and that we are remembering which day of the week it is well enough to stop our bees from swarming.

I suspect many of us are finding this busy time of the beekeepers' year a welcome distraction from the extraordinary times we are living through and the constraints of lockdown. The government, through DEFRA, has designated Beekeeping activities a legitimate reason for travel but we are reminded to observe other measures to control the spread of coronavirus – notably keeping the recommended physical distance of 2 metres from others. Personally, I also wear a mask and gloves if I leave the house. This is of course not just about individual safety. These are public health measures: we follow them to protect the population as a whole. This principle and the disciplines of bio security should not be unfamiliar to beekeepers. Perhaps that experience will benefit our response to Covid-19 but equally the Covid experience may reinforce our beekeeping hygiene and integrated pest management.

Talking of integrated pest management, all beekeeping associations have been asked to form an Asian Hornet Team (AHT). Parts of London are in fact regarded as potential hotspots for exotic pests because of high levels of international movement of humans and goods, e.g. Covent Garden (market, Nine Elms – not the opera house). Exotic pests do not fly here, they hitch a lift. More of the AHT in due course but I would like to share a concern with all our members over the NBU/BBKA current strategy of trapping. There is apparently evidence from France that Asian Hornet trapping is an effective control measure, particularly if carried out in spring. The NBU/BBKA are urging beekeepers to deploy monitoring traps. They do point out that traps are indiscriminate and state that they need checking regularly, preferably every day but I know I am not alone in being concerned by this policy.

Obviously, the root concern is to do with trapping non-target species. There is no way of making traps target specific. I am not down-playing the seriousness of Asian Hornet – I have seen them in action – but at this moment their numbers in the UK are very low and their range extremely limited. Obviously, the whole point of monitoring is to understand where they are, in what numbers and how they may be spreading but at a time when the probability of catching an Asian Hornet is improbable in regions where they have been recorded (remember, there are only queens around for spring trapping) and highly improbable in regions where they haven't, can a practice that will trap thousands of non-target species be justified. It is easy to write, these traps should be inspected regularly, preferably daily but will that happen? I also think the design of the trap does not encourage, let alone prioritise, daily emptying. There is a debate to be had.

If you have any thoughts on this, please contact me, chair@lbka.org.uk or on Beebanter.

Stay well.

Announcements

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

May's ONLINE Monthly Meeting: Swarms: Understanding and preventing swarming

We're trialling going online for our Monthly Meetings! Richard will lead May's Monthly Meeting on "**Understanding and preventing swarming**" (originally "Bee Health Day"), content of which is partly driven by chats on the Bee Banter WhatsApp group. Although swarming is a natural phenomenon – a sign of a healthy colony strong enough to split into new colonies – it can cause disruption in built-up areas like London. We consider swarm prevention techniques part of responsible urban beekeeping. Understanding swarming behaviour is key to prevention. We will take you through what you need to know and do.

All members will have the **link to join in their email**. Contact services@lbka.org.uk if you don't. Supply your own coffee and cake!

Bee part of the A-Team

Would you like to be part of LBKA's [Asian hornet team](#)? You would need to learn how to identify Asian Hornet reliably and you would assist with local requests for help in identifying Asian Hornets. Communication will be via a special WhatsApp group. If you're interested, contact Elliot on mentoring@lbka.org.uk.

Maintaining beekeeping networks

Beekeeping is much easier when there is a local network who keep in touch and help each other out. This is why beekeeping associations are organised into local branches.

This is even more important during the current COVID-19 pandemic, whilst – of course – adhering to UK Government rules on social distancing. For example, some members – if self-isolating or otherwise incapacitated – may not be able to inspect and attend to their bees on a regular basis, especially if their bees are located at an out-apiary. It may be appropriate to have contingencies in place in case in such cases. Let us know if you can help, or the follow the suggestions below.

LBKA encourages and tries to facilitate members forming local networks. Ways of doing so include:

- **Bee Banter:** Being on the 'Bee Banter' WhatsApp group or members-only Facebook page or offering and asking for help when needed.

- **Sharing contact details:** Seeing [details of members](#) who've "opted-in" to share their contact details. If you want to opt-in, you can now do so in the [members' area](#)
- Maintaining contact with former mentors or mentees, if applicable.

The [members' area](#) on the website has more details. Email us if you need any help and we'll see what we can do.

LBKA Pollinator Fund

The LBKA Pollinator Fund aims to support small community groups to improve their local environment for the benefit of bees and other pollinators. LBKA will offer grants of up to £500 from this fund for small stand-alone projects, or as match-funding or seed-funding towards larger projects. In the latter case the larger projects must aim to benefit all pollinators.

Proposed projects need to be delivered in London and should help promote better beekeeping, better public understanding of bees, or a better London environment for bees and Londoners. While forage planting projects have been favoured in the past, applicants need not be confined to that particular activity – other suggestions would be welcome. And 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.

Project proposals which promote the conservation of wild bees and other pollinators through provision of improved forage and breeding habitats will be of particular interest. Projects that include planting early and late season forage for honey bees will be assumed to benefit other pollinators too.

Priority will be given to projects in publicly accessible spaces. If your space is on a housing estate, allotment or other site with restricted public access, you might consider how receipt of a grant could enable you to increase public access to the site in future. Greater public access to improved pollinator habitats is an opportunity for public education and information-sharing, so installing interpretation boards explaining the project and its aims, or providing more general information about London's pollinators, would be seen as a significant public benefit of any project.

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 for further guidance and an application pack.

Honey Bee Colony Winter Losses Survey

If you haven't already done so, please consider filling out COLOSS' "[Honey Bee Colony Winter Losses Survey](#)".

Honey requests

Someone called Simon (schiu3@me.com; Hoxton; N1) is looking for local (to him) honey to buy and someone (else) called Rachel (rachel.herriotts.king@gmail.com) is also looking for honey from City/Barbican. Please contact them if you can help.

Old announcements from April

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

Events cancelled: We've had to cancel all our events, including monthly meetings, pub socials and education/training events. We are experimenting with providing online alternatives to replace some of these. Any help/advice/ideas welcome.

Old announcements from March

Looking for beekeeper(s) Someone's looking for beekeeper(s) near Brockley to share an apiary on an unusual site. Please contact Natalie Cotton for more information at admin@lbka.org.uk.

Old announcements from February


Mark Patterson is LBKA's Forage Officer: His email will continue to be forage@lbka.org.uk. Thanks to Mark for taking on this role!

Old announcements from January

Consider getting more involved: Join our members' only "Bee Banter" WhatsApp group, join our members' only "LBKA-Forum" Facebook group, opt-in to sharing details with members, volunteer, read the newsletter. Contact Aidan on services@lbka.org.uk if you need any help with this.

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.



www.nonnativespecies.org

Produced by Lucy Curran, Claf Bony (NNS), Guy Martin, Mike Brown (National Bee Unit) with assistance from Colette O'Hara, National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBS) Stuart Roberts (BBKA)

Asian Hornet

Alert!

Report sightings of this species to:
alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

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 other 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 alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.



Key ID Features



Asian Hornet Queen
Queens up to 30 mm long, workers up to 25 mm long
Entirely dark brown or black when fully developed with a fine yellow sand
Legs brown with characteristic yellow ends




Asian Hornet abdomen is almost entirely dark except for 4th abdominal segment
Asian hornet 'honeying' for honey bees only

Photos from: J. Haszard, Rachel Scopes and Nigel Jones, Richard Bell

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

European hornet (*Vespa crabro*)


- Queen up to 30mm 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 (*Dacnusa 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
© Rhone

Hornet mimic hoverfly (*Vilucella 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
Dider Devoetere

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
© Rhone

Field Signs

Active April-November (peak August/September). Mated queens over winter singly or in groups, in various natural and man-made harbours – 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
www.nationalbeeunit.com

Alert!

Report sightings of this species to:
alernnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

May's Committee meeting

Here, we keep you up to date with what the committee discuss at our monthly committee meetings (and what keeps us awake at night). Let us know if you can help or have any suggestions that might help.

Aidan Slingsby
services@lbka.org.uk

Our second online committee meeting was yesterday. We're still getting use to the technology, so it worked a little bit better than last time.

We agreed on how we would assess and award the Pollinator Grants (still not too late to all Pollinator fund; see p3.

We will be having our first online Monthly Meeting on Sunday at which Richard will present slides on swarms and what to do about them, with Aidan acting as a moderator managing Q&A. Simon will also investigate how we might run the pub social

We discussed the School Food Matters programme. As long as there is a need for social distancing, events in schools will not be practicable, especially as a number of presenters are in high-risk categories for Covid-19. We will explore online alternatives if there is a demand from SFM and schools.

We also discussed our Asian Hornet Team of members who are able to coordinate activities with identifying and monitoring whether it arrives in London. Elliot to lead on this. There is deep concern amongst the committee about the use of monitoring traps because of their indiscriminate nature and that

Beekeeping under COVID

The National Bee Unit Beebase have issued the following [advice for beekeeping](#) under lockdown and BBKA have provided [advice for swarm collection under lockdown](#). This advice is reproduced below.

Beekeeping

As beekeepers, please be aware of the following guidance when looking after your honey bees. Updates to this guidance will be provided where necessary. You

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

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should keep up to date with the latest guidance issued by the Government as it is subject to regular change.

Defra, Scottish Government and the Welsh Government ask you as beekeepers to be responsible and to ensure that you continue good beekeeping practices, effective stock management and health checks whilst observing the Government's guidance on COVID-19.

You should follow Public Health guidance on social distancing. Everyone, including beekeepers, should avoid gatherings of more than two people and this includes at your apiary. You should maintain a distance of 2 metres between yourself and others to limit the spread of COVID-19.

General advice for beekeepers is as follows:

- You should continue to work and care for your animals in the normal manner, as far as possible. You should not take measures that compromise the welfare of the animals in your care.
- You should maintain good biosecurity at your apiary.
- You should not share beekeeping equipment with other beekeepers, particularly hive tools and other handheld devices and protective clothing.
- In line with the general advice on COVID-19, you should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water before and after you come into contact with any animal. Use hand sanitiser if that's all you have access to.
- There are currently no restrictions on movements of bee colonies that you are managing, such as moving bees to fulfil pollination contracts. However, you should observe the public health guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when carrying out these activities, including the guidance on social distancing and essential travel.
- If you are required to visit premises other than your own, you should familiarise yourself with the public health guidance on infection prevention and control and take measures to minimise the risks from contaminated surfaces.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, you should be self-isolating at home and should not be visiting other premises. Ideally, another beekeeper should take on this duty wherever possible. We are suggesting that local associations consider how they can support those confined or unable to attend their bees at this difficult time for all of us.
- If your bees are due an inspection by a government inspector, you should be aware that this may be subject to a delay depending on available resources within the inspectorate.
- If your bees are due an inspection by a government inspector, and you are in a high-risk group, or are showing symptoms of COVID-19, you must let your inspector know ahead of the inspection. Arrangements will be made that will limit the chance of COVID-19 being spread. This may include the

inspection proceeding without the beekeeper being present or delaying the inspection.

- For all inspections, 2 metre social distancing will be considered the minimum and so the beekeeper will not be able to stand at the hive side with the inspector while the inspection takes place.
- Imports of bees are still permitted. There is no evidence to support restrictions to international movement or trade in bees, and the UK has no additional rules for bee imports with respect to COVID-19.
- You should report any suspicion of notifiable diseases or pests to the authorities in the usual way – please see the bee health page on gov.uk for further information.
- You should use husbandry techniques to minimise swarming. If you have to respond to collect a swarm you need to ensure that you use the guidelines on social distancing when collecting the swarm. If that is not possible, then the swarm should not be collected. Therefore trying to prevent swarms is the best approach.

Swarm collection

BBKA Chair Anne Rowberry says:

The swarm collection service will still be in operation during the pandemic. Swarm collection can go ahead but you must take into account social distancing. Risk assess the situation and do not take unnecessary risks as health services will be under pressure due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. As always, only collect when it is safe to do so. We are working with DEFRA,

LBKA Apiaries

Our Apiaries manager Tristram updates us on what's going on with our apiaries.

Tristram Sutton
apiaries@lbka.org.uk

One of the relatively minor consequences of the current lockdown has been the frustration of our plans to expand the function of our 4 teaching apiaries from mentoring sites (and source of honey revenue) to places where common and esoteric beekeeping procedures might be demonstrated to the membership at large.

The idea of expanding the remit of our teaching apiaries originated in the popularity of the "bee health day" disease inspection demonstrations and started with a win-



Howard's apiary.

ter demonstration of the different methods of applying oxalic acid using water, gas or electricity.

The world seems so different now when it would have been quite an achievement for the association only to have maintained the existence of our four apiaries during these restrictive times.

The Government have issued guidelines for beekeeping during lockdown and these include limiting the number of people in an apiary at any one time to 2 and requiring social distance to be maintained within the apiary.

So, many thanks to Richard, Rob, Eugene and Petros and to those LBKA members who have stepped forward to not only help them keep our apiaries going but to move them forward.

For example, although it is just early May, there have been:

- shooks and re-queening going on at Holland Park;
- an NBU inspection due this week at Brockwell Park;

- an opportunity to split a colony identified at Mudshute; and
- the start of a series of broadcasts of inspections at Eden (no doubt soon to be released as a lockdown boxset).

Please check Bee Banter on WhatsApp for links to upcoming episodes!

Members' Apiaries

We'd like to feature members' apiaries during lockdown. Please send contributions to services@lbka.org.uk.

Howard Nichols

This is a view of my own apiary (right). The photo was taken on 15th April. The apiary is in the corner of an allotment site in south London. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the tool shed is closed and I cannot use the strimmer for cutting the grass. Already it is out of control but I am struggling with hand shears until I either lose control completely or the tool shed reopens at a later date.

Aidan Slingsby

Two hasty artificial swarms have resulted in an apiary with twice the number of hives that I'd like (next page). I can watch the bees from the safety of a greenhouse.

May in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

May (and June) is all about swarm control. Due to such a warm April 2020, plant growth and the beekeeping calendar are both about 2 to 3 weeks ahead of the seasonal normal. Hence, for many of us, swarming issues are already an issue and currently being dealt with. Routine inspections should be made each 7 days to check for queen cells. If 2 brood boxes are used (brood and a half or double brood) then the bees nearly always build some of their queen cells between the 2 boxes. A simple routine check may be made by lifting



Aidan's apiary, from the safety of a greenhouse

/ tilting the upper brood chamber to inspect the bottom of the frames in the upper box. It is not necessary to remove all frames using this quick method but it is not foolproof. The only way to be entirely sure is to remove each brood frame then carefully and systematically inspect each one by shaking off the bees.

Signs of swarming

Swarm control action is only needed when 1 or more queen cells are seen. Build up of drones or drone brood is not a sign of swarm preparations. Neither is the building of queen cups unless containing larva and royal jelly.

Action to be taken

Quick but not immediate action is required. Do not feel intimidated into taking immediate action. There is time to close up the colony, think matters through and collate necessary equipment. Do not attempt to simply destroy the queen cells, as this will not remove the swarming impulse. Best solution is Artificial Swarm method but this does depend upon finding the queen. Most beekeeping textbooks cover this method.

What if the queen is not marked?

If the queen is unmarked and you cannot find her then shook swarm is an option. An empty (no frames in it) spare brood box is needed. All bees on the brood frames are shaken into the empty brood box on the same site. A queen excluder is then placed above the empty brood box (now containing all the bees) and the original brood box with frames and brood is placed above the queen excluder, then crownboard and roof as usual. A couple of hours later the bees have reorganised themselves with the queen and some bees below the queen excluder and brood and some bees above the queen excluder. The 2 elements can then be separated. It is disruptive for the bees but not harmful. Again, textbooks cover this method.

Other action to be taken this month

Brood disease inspection: A specific brood disease inspection should be carried out if not already done in April. This should involve shaking all the bees from each brood frame, one frame at a time, into the bottom of the hive and carefully checking each brood frame for signs of abnormality. As with any disease or pathogen, the sooner it is detected and a course of rectification commenced then the more the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Add supers: Add supers as necessary, adding another in advance of it being needed by the bees. A super may be required either below the queen excluder or above it.

Draw foundation: Use May nectar flow to draw out some foundation into drawn frames.

Varroa: Check varroa mite drop if not done in April.

Spares: Make sure you have sufficient spare equipment for swarm control.

Enjoy: Most of all – enjoy your May month of beekeeping! We are all fortunate to have this absorbing occupation, especially in these troubled times. ?

Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. This article is reprinted from last year.

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

Bees struggling to build up in April should now have an easier time as the spring nectar flow improves. One or two of my colonies are not doing so well this year whilst others are booming. The good weather and improved availability of forage is helping them to recover



Rowan blooms.



Honey bees visiting my apples.



Ceonothus up close.



Bird cherry.

– though I will be unlikely to get a honey crop from these recovering colonies this year.

Plants important to bees this month include **Horse Chestnut** (dark red pollen), **Sycamore** (pale yellow pollen), Sorbus trees such as white beam and **Mountain Ash** (pictured), **Bird Cherry** (pictured) and **Elder**. In parks, gardens and municipal areas **Choisya**, **Cotoneaster**, **Ceonothus** and **prunus laurocerasus** 'lunken' are all shrubs visited by bees.

Herbaceous perennial plants important to bees this month include **Dandelions** which are coming to the end of their main flowering period in London, **Green Alkanet** (pictured; now at its peak), **Forget-me-nots** and **Spanish Blue bells** with their green-blue pollen.



Green alkanet.

Starting to make an appearance are the first of the summer flowers which will become much more important later in the season when the trees have ceased blooming. These include **Scabious, Knapweeds, Centurea, Valerian, thistles, milkweeds** and the simple flower of **umbellifers** and composite flowers.

Right now in my garden the bees are visiting my **Bowles mauve wall flowers, apple blossom, Pulmonaria and strawberries**.

As we transition from spring into early summer the flowers change guard and so do the wild bees.

Many of the early emerging solitary bees will by now have built nests, provisioned for their offspring and are beginning to die. Their offspring will emerge next March to begin the cycle again. Some are bivoltine meaning they have a second generation later in the summer but for many including the hairy footed flower bees their time for this season is coming to an end, the males now bleached grey by the sun instead of their fresh gingery blonde.

As the early Andrena bees and flower bees disappear, a new batch of pollinators will take over, equipped to forage on a different set of later emerging plants. Soon we'll see the yellow faced bees, wool carder bees and leaf cutters visiting the flowers in our gardens.

Jobs to do in the garden

- Dead head spring flowering bulbs
- Plant out non hardy plants such as **tomato, runner beans, cucurbits and peppers**.
- Continuous weeding
- Water if dry
- Sow biennials now to ensure you have flowering plants for next spring. These include **foxglove, honesty and echiums**.

Poetry Corner

Geoff posted a poem on the Bee Banter WhatsApp group that tickled many of us. It's a poem by Pam Ayres, a poet and beekeeper and poem is also posted on a [beekeeping forum](#).

I miss my lovely wife, she's gone, I've lost her that's for sure,
Bees have tampered with her brain; she is besotted,
she's a bore,
She talks a different language; it's all gibberish to me,
With her Modified Commercial and her WBC.

She's working in the shed, I am a very lonely chap,
She's making up the frames, going tappy-tappy-tap,
I get no smile of greeting as she nails another batch,

Her mouth is full of gimpy pins. They might go down the hatch.

Every time I see my wife I think I'm going to choke,
She is permanently trapped in an engulfing cloud of smoke,
We'd apples on the branches once, that's how it used to be,
Now great swarms of honey bees are swinging from the tree.

I see a stealthy creature in the dingy undergrowth!
I catch a flash of metal and I swear a mighty oath,
"A terrorist!" I cry and leap up brandishing the poker,
To see my wife emerging with a hive tool and a smoker.

My spouse was cool and fragrant; once we cuddled and we kissed,
Before she took the veil and called herself an apiarist,
She drops her suit and doesn't care what anybody thinks,
It may be smoke or sweatiness, but either way she stinks.

I miss her company; we don't do anything together,
She takes her bees to Scotland; they go camping in the heather,
Then, when they come back again, her one and only topic,
Is honey Caledonian and glories thixotropic.

When buying birthday presents I am overwhelmed with gloom,
She's not a gal contented with a bottle of perfume,
Her needs are very complex. Can I find? Can I afford?
A solar wax extractor, straining tank and Snelgrove board?

Autumn is upon us; bleakly now the leaves are lost,
The hives are cosy in the cold no matter what the cost,
Varroa has been taken on with remedies assorted,
Mice are disappointed; Woody Woodpecker is thwarted.

My wife's on the extractor and the house looks like a slum,
She makes me wind the handle which in turn rotates the drum,
Thickly in the warming tank we watch the honey pour,
With hands stuck to the table and with feet stuck to the floor.

Now from our endeavour, see the product, see the fruits,
Of summer days spent sweltering in reeking gloves and boots,
By tanks of golden honey we are richly reimbursed,
I'd give my wife a cuddle...if she had a shower first.

I'll get it, one day.

Members' marketplace

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

Martin Kunz: I own [Diversity Honeys Ltd](#), that supply certified organic cotton bee suits (with/without ventilation). There's a discount for LBKA members in the [members' area](#).

Upcoming events

Sunday 10th May: Monthly meeting: Understanding and preventing swarming

11:00-13:00 **online** (see your email or email services@lbka.org.uk)

Although swarming is a natural phenomenon – a sign of a healthy colony strong enough to split into new colonies – it can cause disruption in built-up areas like London. We consider swarm prevention techniques part of responsible urban beekeeping. Understanding swarming behaviour is key to prevention. In our first ever online Monthly Meeting, we will take you through what you need to know and do. Bring your own coffee and cake.

Committee

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

- **Chair:** Richard Glassborow, chair@lbka.org.uk
- **Treasurer:** David Hankins, treasurer@lbka.org.uk
- **Secretary:** Natalie Cotton, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Apiaries:** Tristram Sutton, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- **Development:** Simon Saville, development@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentor@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Martin Hudson, events@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Mark McDonnell, resources@lbka.org.uk

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

