



The London Beekeepers' Association

LBKA News

November, 2022

As winter approaches, LBKA is gearing up for its educational offering. See Howard's synopsis of the education activities LBKA are offering in the coming year on p3. In particular, the microscopy course is a unique opportunity to get hands-on experience with excellent tuition.

This month, we have Richard's monthly message, which very aligned to Sunday's monthly meeting, so please read and attend (via Zoom) on Sunday to add your voice to our planning. And, as ever, we have Howard's advice of what we do in the apiary this month and Mark's summary of what flowers and pollinators are up to this month.

Please help make the newsletter better by providing content – photos, articles, thoughts, reflections, advice, recipes, poetry... Thanks to Richard, Howard and Mark for their regular and excellent contributions, without which there would be no newsletter.

From our Chair	1
Announcements	2
November's Committee meeting	3
Education Matters	3
November in the Apiary	4
Focus on Forage	5
Upcoming events	6
Committee	7

Thank you to this month's contributors: **Richard Glassborow, Howard Nichols and Mark Patterson.** Would you like to join these esteemed contributors? If so, contact me.

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

From our Chair

Richard Glassborow
chair@lbka.org.uk

Those of our members signed up to the LBKA WhatsApp group, BeeBanter, and our Swarm collectors group will be well aware of what a useful and interesting platform the App can be. But for the benefit of members who have not tried it I thought it might be worth giving a brief synopsis of how it works and the useful roles it can fulfil.

BeeBanter is a self-managing user Forum, providing an almost instantaneous knowledge exchange and a place to share general bee-related interests, discoveries and concerns. The LBKA Swarms group is more concerned with logistics, a real-time exchange of information essential to ensure the prompt collection and distribution of swarms. It is principally for members who collect swarms, who want to receive swarms, and who want



"Just been to close a hive in prep for moving tomorrow. Didn't expect to find the girls hanging out and garden smelling of honey! OCTOBER 27!". Photo taken with a red light so as not to disturb the bees too much. Photo and quote: Richard Glassborow.

to learn how to collect swarms by following activity or joining an experienced collector to help and learn on the job.

I am aware that many people are not drawn to and may even be averse to the various digital platforms classed as Social Media, no doubt for a variety of reasons. I myself have misgivings about WhatsApp, mostly because of strong objections to the behaviour of the parent company, Meta (FaceBook) but also because, on a technical level, there is no native App for iPad, my preferred device. The various browser-based versions of WhatsApp are not very good. At some point we may consider migrating to an alternative like Signal but that is not on the agenda just now.

Personal technical preferences and positions on social media aside, as a tool, WhatsApp has many virtues and, as yet, there is little interference or influence from outside the user group. It is our space, the space we make it.

I am sure we have all heard the kind of criticisms commonly levelled at social media. These often include judgements like, just a load of frivolous nonsense, a sounding board for opinionated people who like the sound of their own voice too much, a distraction, a time waster. If you are an LBKA member who has not tried BeeBanter for any of the above or similar reasons, I strongly recommend you try it for yourselves. Yes, there is a steady flow of posts and it could even be said to get a bit intense at times. But you don't have to have your phone set to be pinging notifications constantly, you can dip in, ignore and catch up, you are in charge of how you interact with it.

What I can say with confidence is that you will not find it frivolous or dominated by a small number of individuals or narrow opinions and behaviour is characteristically friendly, generous and respectful. Whether you are a complete novice, a very experienced beekeeper or anything in between, this is a place where you can ask for and get help (usually instantly), offer advice, discuss the intricacies and challenges of beekeeping (at any level), and share and encounter subject matter from a much wider and deeper pool than most of us are likely to on our own.

All this generates a sense of community which I know many find very stimulating and supportive. There are two particular weaknesses: there is not much by way of user profile, especially of members not in your Contacts book, and that inhibits getting to know fellow members. But some may like that tendency towards anonymity. The other, if it is a weakness, is that contributions are very much in the NOW. There is a steady flow of content constantly moving on and little help if you want to "go back" or analyse content thematically. That is not to say you can't do that, it is just not particularly facilitated because it is not that kind of tool.

That said, BeeBanter provides the Trustees with valuable if informal insight into the needs, concerns and interests of the members who are active on it. We feel

it would be really helpful in developing the Association and meeting our educational objects if all members were on BeeBanter. But as things are, we have to be really careful to remind ourselves that typically, only about half the membership use it. Even so, that is perhaps a reasonable sample of the membership.

If you have not yet tried BeeBanter, why not give it a go. It is easy to join and easy to leave. You can turn off notification. You have to be a paid up member of the LBKA, but then all you have to do is follow the link in the welcome email or look at the members' area of the website.

I hope to see more of you there.

Stay well.

Announcements

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

November's Monthly Meeting and Pub Social

November's Monthly Meeting on **Sunday 13th November** at **11:00** will be at The Foundry (17 Oval Way, London, SE11 5RR). Led by Geoff, it will be about Winter Vorroa treatment.

The **Pub Social** this month will be on **Tuesday 29th November** from 18:30 onwards at The Kings Arms (25 Roupell St, London, SE1 8TB) a short walk from Waterloo Station (Northern Line).

December's Monthly Meeting on **11th December** will be our annual Christmas Quiz – led by Quizmaster Elliot Hodges – followed by a Christmas Social. It will be at The Foundry (17 Oval Way, London, SE11 5RR). We hope to see you there.

AGM: postponed to 6th December

Unfortunately, too few people attended our AGM for it to be quorate, so we will have a quick online AGM to confirm the appointment of a new committee for the coming year. This will be on **Monday 5th December** at 18:30 prior to the first committee meeting via Zoom. Please put in your diaries. Details will be sent to all members and we will need at least 20 attendees for the meeting to be quorate.

LBKA is looking for small meeting venue

In preparation for the coming year and in anticipation of a near-complete return to in-person meetings, LBKA is looking for new premises in which to hold small meetings.

We need space for monthly Trustee/Committee meetings, for BBKA Basic Assessment & BBKA Modules revision sessions, for our Microscopy Course and possibly also for our Introduction to Beekeeping course. These meetings are all expected to take place on weekday evenings, (throughout the year, but more in late winter & spring than other months), but need not all be held at the same venue.

If any member is aware of a venue that could accommodate meetings of this sort, for between 10 and 30 people at reasonable commercial rates, please contact treasurer@lbka.org.uk.

London Honey Show

Lucie, Sara and Salvatore were among members who won prizes this year. Well done!

Old announcements from October

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

Old announcements from September

Simon on Channel 4 News: Simon Saville (LBKA's secretary) was interviewed on Channel 4 New and did an excellent job of explaining the impact the climate on insect populations.

Old announcements from August

Honey Labelling Petition: If you'd like to sign the petition, do so [here](#).

Thanks to School Food Matters volunteers: without volunteers such as these, LBKA would not be able to do anything.

LBKA's Pollinator Fund: See https://www.lbka.org.uk/pollinator_fund for details.

LBKA videos: Just a reminder that videos of many of our Winter Lectures, Monthly Meetings and various other stuff can be found in the [Members' Area of the website](#).

Instagram: Please keep sending your bee related pictures to Lucie at instagram@lbka.org.uk or share them with your authorisation to publish on the Bee Banter WhatsApp group. And if you are on Insta do follow [@londonbeekeepersassociation](#).

November's Committee meeting

Here, we keep you up to date with what the committee discusses 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

Trustee part of the meeting. We put the finishing touches to the AGM planning. We also discussed the results of the member survey and will reflect on this for next time.

Executive part of the meeting. We agreed the topics and venues for the next few monthly meetings, discussed suitable venues for some of our smaller events and agreed to put out a call to members, had an update on our apiaries (we have been asked to give up the Holland Park apiary, but have a new Hyde Park apiary to move to), and discussed the provision of electric extractors to members, partly in response to discussion on Bee Banter sparked by the notice in the annual report.

Education Matters

Education opportunities for the coming year

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

2023 BBKA Basic Assessment

Both the BBKA and London Beekeepers Association encourages members to take the BBKA basic assessment where possible. The BBKA requirement for entry is that the applicant has been keeping bees for a minimum period of 1 year and is a BBKA member. The assessment is fairly straightforward and the syllabus can be downloaded free of charge from the BBKA website. Follow the dropdown menu for "Members" then "examinations and assessments". The cost is £20 and entry forms can also be downloaded at the same time.

Any LBKA member who has been keeping bees for a minimum of 12 months and wishes to take this assessment please confirm by email to education@lbka.org.uk. I will then be able to let you have some electronic course notes to read at your leisure over the winter months. One member has already notified his 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 keeping bees for several years but not previously taken the assessment then please do seriously consider taking it in 2023. It is well worth the effort.

London Beekeepers Association will also 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.

2023 BBKA Modular examinations

These are written examinations, each on a different aspect of beekeeping, and will be held in March 2023. The LBKA usually offers tuition to members wanting to take one of these examinations and will continue to do so this winter. The support offered depends upon the number of people who intend taking a particular module (there are 7 modules in total and I will offer tuition for 1 module, depending upon the interest). A lot of information is on the BBKA website. Anyone who is interested in developing their beekeeping knowledge by this route should first look at the BBKA website under the education section. There is a lot of information including a FAQ factsheet. Simply enter "module" in the search engine on the website. Then contact me by email on education@lbka.org.uk to register your interest. I will then communicate directly with you. People who have taken the Basic in 2022 may be particularly interested in pursuing this.

Please note that a certain amount of commitment is required, both by me as tutor and the candidates. It is not something that can be decided and pursued at the last minute. Those who may be interested should contact me now so that we can consider what options we all have.

2023 Microscopy Course: Anatomy of the honey bee and pollen analysis

The LBKA proposes to run a detailed microscopy course for interested members during the winter months. This will be 3 × 2 hour evening sessions organised and led by Richard Glassborow and Howard Nichols. It will concentrate on the use of microscopes to enable 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. Simply 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 2023.

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 long standing 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 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 as demand usually exceeds the 8 available places.

November in the Apiary

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

Howard Nichols
education@lbka.org.uk

Autumn has finally arrived. My bees are flying a lot less and clustering more than a fortnight ago. It is too late for liquid feeding but, hopefully, all our colonies have



Lucie was one of the winners in the "Display of Home-Produced Products" category at the London Honey Show. Photo: Lucie Chaumeton.

sufficient stores in them to last through to next spring. There is little work to do with the bees this month but some attention is needed.

Mouseguards

Put on mouseguards if not already done so. Before securing in place, it is worth poking a stick around the hive floor so as to dislodge any mouse that may already be occupying the hive.

Tidy up

Tidy up the apiary if not already done. Complete cleaning, sterilising and storing of equipment.

Store foundation

Ensure any unused foundation is properly stored flat and in plastic covering to prevent deterioration.

Check for wax moth

Check stored supers for evidence of wax moth infestation. The lifecycle of the wax moth is substantially different to that of the honey bee. A wax moth egg is temperature dependent and is able to stay as an egg then hatch after a few weeks or months. Supers should be stored in a cold and draughty place if possible but also checked during winter. If any evidence of wax moth is found the best way to deal with it is to place the frame(s) in a deep freeze cabinet for 48 hours. This will kill the pest in all 4 lifecycle stages.

Plan for varroa treatment

December is the usual month for treating the colony with Oxalic Acid. Monitoring natural mite drop in November is a useful diagnostic tool and precursor to actual treatment next month. Insertion of the varroa floor for 1 week in November will give useful information to the beekeeper. If Autumn treatment with Apiguard or other such authorised product was successful then mite drop should be low. If mite drop is high then the treatment has not been as successful as anticipated and the beekeeper should re-evaluate the Autumn methodology.

Check the hive is secure

Check the hive is secure and that the roof cannot blow off or be dislodged. Placing of heavy items such as a couple of housebricks on the roof is usually sufficient for a National with a well fitting flat roof. The roofs are designed so not to blow off. A hive with a gabled roof, such as a WBC, or a nucleus hive may need tethering with rope.

BBKA assessments

For those who have not taken the BBKA Basic Assessment, please make a serious effort to do this. Discuss it with someone who has already taken it – you will find it is not a daunting prospect at all. Download the syllabus from the BBKA website and consider background reading with a view to taking the assessment next summer. The requirement is that you have kept bees for a minimum period of 1 year.

Consider your approach to next season

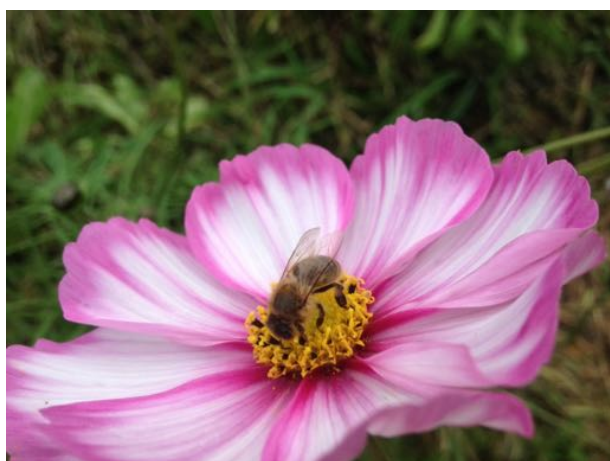
Will you need an additional hive, nuc box or replacement frames? Most equipment suppliers have winter sales where they sell slight seconds. This is an excellent time to buy, especially if you search 2 or 3 websites for offers. If 2 or 3 people jointly purchase then you may even be able to save on the delivery charge.

Focus on Forage

Mark tells us what's in flower at this time of year. This article is the one we used last year.

Mark Patterson
forage@lbka.org.uk

Only the most hardy of flowers are still in bloom in my garden as whilst the days have been mild, it is starting to become much colder at night. My **pumpkins**, **courgettes** and **nasturtiums** are already keeling over due to the cold nights, only my **cosmos** and **sunflowers** persist out of the garden annuals I have flowering. Quite a few of my herbaceous perennials are struggling on how-



ever with **Cat Mint**, **Helenium**, **Rudbeckia**, **Asters**, **Golden rod** and **Penstemon** still in bloom.

Away from my own garden I've spotted **Abelia**, **Choisya**, **Hebe (Autumn Joy)** and **Escalonia** pushing out a late flush of second blooms, though not in sufficient abundance to entice honey bees to visit.

The ivy flow is now coming to an end with most of the

blooms already fading and the signs of the first berries appearing. These will ripen in time for late winter and will provide a feast for over wintering thrushes and wood pigeons after the red berries of **hawthorn**, **cotoneaster** and **sorbus** have all been polished off.

I've been busy in the greenhouse this past week, cleaning the green house firstly to evict slugs and snails hiding in stacks of empty pots and cleaning algae and moss from the windows to ensure over wintering plants receive as much light as possible through the dimly lit winter. Having been cleaned I am now busy propagating cuttings from my favourite aromatic shrubs including **lavender**, **sage**, **rosemary** and cuttings from **flowering currant**, **Escalonia** and **Hebe**. I've also been cutting down fading stems from herbaceous plants and lifting and dividing them to propagate for next year. This week I've done this to **marjoram**, **mints**, **cat-mint** and next on my list are the **Heleniums**, **Asters** and **Kniphofia**.

My bulbs are now all in the ground including an additional 200 **Saffron Crocus**. The ones I planted last year are just beginning to flower offering pollen to the bees on warm days and soon **Saffron** for my kitchen!

Other tasks to be getting on with in the garden include collecting fallen leaves to make leaf mulch for the garden – this is great as a top dressing for suppressing weeds and feeding the plants.

Upcoming events

See our [website](#) for an up-to-date version

Sunday 13th November: Monthly meeting: Winter Varroa Treatment

11:00-13:00 at The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR

This month's meeting will be on winter varroa treatment. Followed by chat with coffee and cake. Non-members are welcome to come and find out more about LBKA.

Tuesday, 29th November: Pub Social

18:30 onwards at Kings Arms, 25 Roupell St, London SE1 8TB, a short walk from Waterloo Station (Northern Line)

A nice pub with lots of space that serves food.

Monday, 5th Demember: AGM (new date)

18:30 at Via zoom (details sent by email)

We postponed our AGM as it had too few members to be quorate. This is the rearranged one. We hope to have at least 20 members at this one so we have confirm the appointment of a new committee before they are due to meet.

Sunday 11th December: Monthly meeting: Christmas quiz and social

11:00-13:00 at *The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR*

This month's meeting will be a Christmas Quiz and festive social.

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:** Simon Saville, admin@lbka.org.uk
- **Education:** Howard Nichols education@lbka.org.uk
- **Membership:** Aidan Slingsby, services@lbka.org.uk
- **Events:** Annie McGeoch, events@lbka.org.uk
- **Apiaries:** Tristram Sutton, apiaries@lbka.org.uk
- **Mentoring:** Elliot Hodges, mentor@lbka.org.uk
- **Resources:** Will Fry, resources@lbka.org.uk
- Stuart Kennon, stuart.kennon@lbka.org.uk

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

