Newsletter November 2025

Committee members: Pat Coleman (President), Ken Jeanes (Chair), Chris Andrews (Vice Chair and Programme Secretary), Mike Craddock (Treasurer), Anne Collyer (Secretary), Jane Jeanes (SBKA Trustee), Tony Johnstone Jeremy Lee (Apiary Manager), Brian Magor, Dennis White and John Wood

Welcome to the November Newsletter and welcome to our newest members. We hope that we will meet you all soon and you enjoy the beginners' course in January.

First of all – a huge thank you to Tony Johnstone for organising such a brilliant honey show. Thank you also to all those who came along and helped, entered and supported. It was a lot of work but well worth the effort and certainly generated lots of interest in bees and all things related. Results for classes and trophy winners are on the accompanying email. Tony is now stepping down as programme organiser and we thank him for all his amazing work over the past six years. Chris Andrews is taking on the role and has already secured some speakers and venues for next year – more details later.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this month's issue, and we welcome any ideas for future issues. Please let me have articles, notices etc by the 25th of the month for inclusion in the next issue. There will be a break in January and February, but I will circulate any information as necessary.

As ever, if anyone needs more information or has a question to ask, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will put you in touch with someone who can help. Anne Collyer, Branch Secretary SESBKA
sesbkasecretary@gmail.com 07803 243643 Presscombe, Shepton Montague, Wincanton, BA9 8JG

Just a quick reminder that subscriptions for 2025/26 will be sent out via email at the end of this month. If you don't receive an email by 7th November, please check your spam/junk folder - the email originates from noreply@membershipservices.org.uk - if nothing is received let me know.

An individual link is provided in the email which allows you to check / update your own membership details. Once you have paid the subscription (which still represents great value for money!), you will be sent an individual receipt.

Happy beekeeping! *Mike Craddock, Treasurer romibrcr@gmail.com*

Lionel's November Notes

I think by now the temperature has dropped generally below 15°C so I am now feeding fondant to my colonies that need feeding as the bees will not have time now to dehydrate the liquid sugar solution before they go into their cluster.

I had an enjoyable afternoon earlier this month. Stuart Anderson, the inventor of the Flow Hive, was in the area after attending The Apimondia Conference in Denmark and had expressed a desire to visit The Newt to see the Beezantium which he had seen on their website. After contacting Kerry Redman, who is in charge of the bees there, Stuart and Liz Gould, Stuart and Celia Anderson and I got a conducted tour of the Beezantium and the new Honey House and I can recommend a visit to anyone interested in bees

What a day we had at our Honey Show! I believe a record number of entries, plenty of tea and cake sales, lots of public to talk to and honey sold. I think it was probably our best show ever. Congratulations to Tony and his helpers for putting on such a great show.

On the 15th of October I helped man the AHAT stand at Taunton Racecourse for a collection of town and parish councillors where they were trying to anticipate any future problems which may occur and then they can be prepared to take steps to overcome them. The risk of flooding was the most obvious but we were trying to warn of the problems which the Asian Hornet would cause eg the loss of pollinators but most immediate would be the threat from a hidden AH nest if anyone strayed within five meters of it. We had plenty of interest in our stand and I was quite hoarse by the end of the day

2025/26 Programme of Events

Chris Andrews, Programme Secretary *christopherdandrews1957@gmail.com*

Thursday 13th November 2025 SESBKA AGM 7pm at The Market House, Castle Cary. The agenda will be circulated shortly, and we look forward to seeing you there.

2026 Dates
More details will follow but please see below dates confirmed so far for 2026.
Thursday 19th February at The Market House, Castle Cary – Stewart Gould on Colony Losses
Thursday 19th March at The Market House, Castle Cary – Eleanor Burgess on Pre Season Preparation
Thursday 9th April at The Market House Castle Cary – Catherine Fraser on Hive Pests
Saturday 23rd May Shepton Montague Plant Sale
Saturday 6th June Annual Bee Safari with Donald Mudie, Regional Bee Inspector – venues tbc

Catherine Wheel Toad-in-the-Hole with Honey and Mustard Onions
(BBC Good Food Recipe)

Recipe Corner

For the Toad-in-the-hole:
120gm plain flour
3 large eggs
275mil milk
1 large coiled Cumberland Sausage
4 tsp sunflower oil
4 rosemary or thyme sprigs

For the Honey and mustard onions:
1 tbsp sunflower oil
2 large red onions halved and thinly sliced
2tbsps plain flour
2tsp English mustard powder
1 chicken stock cube
2 tbsp honey
2tbsp wholegrain mustard

Mix the flour, eggs and milk in a jug with ½ tsp salt then set aside for at least 30 mins. Heat oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas 7. Put the coiled sausage in a large ovenproof frying pan (25cm diameter works well). Pour over the oil and brown in the oven for 12 – 15 minutes.
Remove the pan form the oven and carefully lift out the sausage. Pour the batter into the pan and carefully put the sausage back on top, scatter with herbs and return to the oven for 25-30 minutes.
Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan and cook onions for about 10 minutes until starting to caramilize. Stir in the flour and mustard powder and crumble in the stock cube. Gradually stir in 500ml of water until you get a smooth sauce then add the honey, wholegrain mustard and season. Bubble for 5 minutes then serve with the toad-in-the-hole, mash and vegetables

Somerset BKA

Honey Sales Map

If you would like your details added to the Somerset Honey Sales Map, please let me know. This is available to members of the public via the Somerset BKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/local-honey who are searching for a local honey supplier.

Somerset County Lecture Day Saturday 7th February 2026 at The Canalside Conference Centre, Marsh Lane, Bridgwater, TA6 6LQ - an excellent day and well worth going. There is something for everyone whether you are a novice or an experienced beekeeper and is a good chance to meet beekeepers from other areas of the country.

More details to follow.

The SBKA AGM will be hosted next year by Central Branch on **Saturday 7 March 2006** at The Crossways, North Wooton, BA4 4EU from 12 noon onwards. There is ample parking and there will be a paid bar. A two course lunch will be followed by a talk by Professor Claire Bethune from Plymouth University. Claire has an article published in the September 2025 BBKA News entitled '*A sting in the tail: when beekeeping bites back*'. She will be talking about her research around the development of severe allergic reactions in some individuals despite years of normal tolerance.

The AGM 2026 will then follow.

More details to follow

BBKA News

BBKA November Talk: 'Becoming a Show Judge'

The next in our series of Zoom talks will be 'Becoming a Show Judge' with Shirley Bond on Tuesday 18th November 2025 at 7pm. A recording of this talk will be available afterwards on the learning platform, along with recordings of all previous talks, for those unable to watch live.

'Shirley is a Master Beekeeper, BBKA Show Judge and Chair of the BBKA Exam Board. She is involved in teaching beekeeping and associated skills at local and national levels. Shirley has won prizes in shows at local, regional and national levels including prizes at the National Honey Show for honey vinegar.'

Zoom link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?pwd=DYMZxTImJjpRCLJjYjvbIxgybQQdSZ.1

Meeting ID: 812 3381 9992 Passcode: 527929

Kind regards, Jane Medwell, BBKA Trustee

Message From BBKA re Swarm Collection

We have recently become aware that a company involved in bee removals has obtained swarm collectors' details from the BBKA Swarm map page. They have used this information to send text messages encouraging swarm collectors to promote their services. While this is not considered a data breach and falls under what is known as the 'Analogue Gap' (more information here: Analog hole), we feel that this behaviour abuses the system and contradicts the page's intended purpose.

We are concerned that such unsolicited contact may lead some people to withdraw from the swarm list. The BBKA is writing to the organisation to request they refrain from this practice. We are investigating options to avoid this happening in the future.

This company was also included on our 'Bees in Buildings' page and I can confirm that their listing has now been removed.

Please pass this message to your swarm collectors, along with the Board of Trustees' sincere thanks for their valuable work in responding to public calls about bees of all types. This is a vital aspect of our beekeeping efforts, and their contributions are greatly appreciated.

Kind regards, Diane Drinkwater, BBKA Chair

And Finally…..

Consisting of the Greek word Pro, which means 'before' and Polis which means 'city' lie the origins of the word propolis; literally representing that which the bees produce in front of their hive.

It is true Italian violin-makers could increase their instrument's tension and firmness by propolis varnish, helping them create their warm and melodious sound. The world-famous Stradivarius violins got their dark colour by the addition of 'dragon's blood,' the reddish resin from the fruit of the Dragon Blood palm tree, added to propolis varnish.

In Grusinian medicinal essays of the 12th -15th century, the healing power of propolis is mentioned frequently. Here is an example for a remedy against inflammation of the mouth and treating cavities:

One takes propolis, adds a little arsenic, red lentil, yarrow and germander and pulverises and strains it. Then a spoonful of olive oil and honey is added. Everything is mixed well and placed on the ill tooth.

NB don't try this at home!

From Propolis by Klau Nowottnick – published by Northern Bee Books.

Pat Coleman, President