The Newsletter

Somerton & District Beekeepers' Association

Vol. no 32. Issue 9 October 2025
SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

SHOW TIME

Decorative beeswax entry

Somerton Honey Show

And what a show it was. The weather didn't help, but there were plenty of entries and the new Honey Show Team did us proud. See Matt Goodwin's Honey Show report inside

Catherine Fraser & the Rt Revd Michael Beasley - Bishop of Bath & Wells

Sam Middleton - Winner of Best Exhibit in show & The Blue Riband

Claire Hunter - Winner of the Novice Trophy

Jenny Harrison - Winner of the Pearce Cookery plate & The All comers' prize

Just some of the winners

Photos courtesy of Matt Goodwin, Claire Hunter & Bernie Perkins - Moss

THE NOVICE SHIELD
for the most points awarded in Novice Classes 1 -10 **Sam Middleton**

THE NOVICE TROPHY
Runner up in Novice classes 1 – 10 **Claire Hunter**
THE CHALLENGE CUP
for the most points awarded in Senior Classes 11 – 28 **Catherine Fraser**

THE MORRIS PLAQUE
Runner up in Senior Classes 11 – 28 **Mark Gullick**
THE LANGFORD PERPETUAL CUP
Awarded to the best exhibit in the Light Honey Class 11 **Catherine Fraser**
THE BILL HARRIS CUP
Awarded to the best exhibit in the Composite Class **Catherine Fraser**

THE PEARCE COOKERY PLATE
for the most points awarded in the Cookery Classes 29 – 34 **Jenny Harrison**
THE JOHN LINDARS MEMORIAL TROPHY
for the most points awarded in the Photographic Classes 41 – 46 **Rob Harrison**
THE PERKINS GOBLET
for the most points awarded in the Drinks Classes 35 – 40 **Catherine Fraser**
THE SOMERTON DIVISIONAL TROPHY
For the most points gained overall in Classes 1 – 48 **Catherine Fraser**

ALLCOMERS OPEN CLASSES
For the most points awarded in the Allcomers Classes 49 - 59 **Jenny Harrison**
CHILDREN'S AWARD
for the best exhibit in Children's Classes 60 - 63 No entries
ALLCOMERS HONEY CLASSES
for the most points awarded in Allcomers Classes 64 - 74 **Lynne Richley**

More Honey Show pictures highlighting:-

2 Richard Lockyer - Entries Secretary
3 Kerri Hendry
4 Sam Middleton & Lily Ryland
5 Suzy Perkins (honey judge) & Matt Goodwin - Honey Show committee chair
6 Gillian Islip - Somerton Beekeepers Chair

Somerton Beekeepers' Honey Show 2025

Friday 19th September was a glorious day, giving us all hope that the threat of rain on our Saturday parade simply couldn't be true! Although we woke to a grey morning, our spirits could not be dampened and despite a few showers all was well and the Show well and truly went on!

The competition hall looked fantastic, with new look divider 'ribbons' and beautiful flower arrangements, created by two of our volunteers, Joan and Chaia, set the exhibit tables off beautifully. With over 280 entries across most of the classes there was a great range of exhibits on view. Particularly encouraging was the amount of our 'new-bees' who entered and that they did so well. A few worried looks were seen spreading across the faces of the club's old guard! The addition of the colouring competition and opening it up to local schools, proved popular and something to be built on going forward. The entries being displayed were a lovely touch, and there was plenty for everyone to be interested in. As the judging began there was an air of anticipation about the place.

While the important judging business was going on inside there was a hive of activity outside with the setting up of the honey sales stand, the Bee Tent with the New Interactive Zone and the expanded Artisan Market. The kitchen was full of busy bees getting ready to provide refreshments when the public arrived from 12.00. A huge vote of thanks must be given to all those of you and friends who donated the many cakes and savouries that were sold to improve the overall experience of visitors to the Show. A special thanks goes out to Mr. Bob Burns, our expert Baked goods Judge, for the generous donation of cakes and goodies for all those helping with the show.

Honey sales were busy with ten beekeepers' honey on offer along with beeswax polish, beeswax blocks, wraps and delicious honey fudge, plus a dose of banter from the Team

The ever-popular observation hive had lots of visitors, and this helped encourage a few people to express an interest in joining the Beginners Course in 2026. In addition to seeing the bees, the Interactive Zone, gave the opportunity to experience some of the tasks of a beekeeper and allowing them to touch and have a play with some beekeeper's equipment. Visitors were spinning the extractor, puffing

the smoker, and wondering how on earth you catch a queen in that spiky thing!! There was even a colouring station for the kids.

Excitement reached fever pitch as the judges finished doing their thing and the all-important results were published, followed by the eagerly awaited 'Prize Cards'. Competition was strong across the Show, and there were some outstanding performances.

For the first time in the history of the Show (we are reliably informed) the 'Blue-Ribbon Award' was awarded to a Novice, Sam Middelton, giving him free entry to the National Honey Show at Sandown Park, Esher in October. It was a top year for Sam who also won the Novice Shield. Huge congratulations go out to Sam.

Catherine Fraser had another fantastic Show, winning a total of five awards, and the Allcomers Classes were especially hotly contested, with almost nothing between the top two positions in the Allcomers Honey.

Congratulations to all our award winners, see full list below, and a special thank you to the Rt Revd Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells, himself a Beekeeper, for making the presentations.

You may recall that all members of the Honey Show Committee stepped down last year, making the 2025 Show the first one for the new team. We would like to thank the previous committee members, for their support and guidance in our first year, and for not stepping all the way out, continuing to run the refreshments and Honey Sales. There were challenges along the way, and glitches on the day, but overall, I hope that we delivered a successful show that was enjoyed by all. To everyone that helped this year I say a HUGE thank you, as I've said before, the show really couldn't happen without you.

The Honey Show is Somerton Beekeepers' opportunity to show case our club, indulge in some friendly competition, recruit new beekeepers, interact with and educate the public. We want to keep it going, so if any members are interested in joining the Show Committee, please let us know, there is plenty of work to go round.

We look forward to seeing you all next year for another great day.

Matt Goodwin - Honey Show sub-committee chairman

NOVICE SHIELD AND BLUE-RIBBON AWARD WINNER 2025

SAM MIDDLETON

FULL LIST OF 2025 AWARD WINNERS IS SHOWN ON PAGE 3

The Hog Roast - Sunday 7th September

I have to admit when I got up to feed my chickens on the morning of this year's hog roast I was more than a little perturbed. By the time I reached their pen I was dodging lightening and taking cover from the ground shaking thunder claps. The chickens seemed less concerned than I did.

As the morning wore on the thunder god seemed determined to have his fun and things didn't get any better. It seemed the hog roast was doomed; winds, torrential rain, I was just waiting for one of the horsemen to appear. By the time Hazel and I set out to collect the hog from Pynes things were picking up. The sun came out! It seemed we were saved. Meanwhile at the apiary the team were 'all hands on deck' putting up gazebos whilst simultaneously planning for indoor fun.

Driving a roasting hog to the apiary is an interesting experience consisting of trying not to melt the high quality Korean plastic in the back and trying to avoid any heavy braking which would result in said hog joining us in the front seats. The smell of crackling and stuffing does get overwhelming after about ten minutes, let me tell you. Soon we were under way, hog was being carved, roasties were being shovelled and Ali D's super spanking homemade puds were being sliced and consumed in gluttonous quantity! The party goers sat under the gazebos at the long tables enjoying the early autumn sunshine, chatting, laughing and sharing stories and gossip. Wine was consumed, as was beer and cider and a pot of good English tea. Marion was on form flogging the raffle tickets for a silver bee pendant and managed to press gang a goodly sum out of the soporific crowd now stuffed so full of pork and roasties that they were unable to protest. Ruth Ames-White was the lucky winner when her raffle ticket was pulled from the bucket. She seemed pleased! Well done Ruth.

But all good things must come to an end and the afternoon drew to a close late on just as the storm clouds started to reform and threatened a massive deluge. It was a good day, and people left smiling, stuffed and mellow. The cares of the world left behind and hope for the season to come.

A lovely way to end the beekeeping year. The autumn draws on, fires will be lit and the light will draw short. But we know that in the hives the bees will be tucked up and feasting on their stores, waiting for the warm spring sunshine…just like us really.

Alison Clewes

Second hand bee-suit needed

James Raphael, one of our members, is looking for a bee-suit for his wife, as he's finally persuaded her that it is an interesting hobby. If you have a medium suit in need of a new home, or know of one, could you please contact James at jar19967@gmail.com

Apiinvert. Syrup ready to feed bees. Unlike sugar solution it requires no mixing, more readily accepted and less work required for the bees to invert (not wasting energy), more close to a natural food.
13kg 1 - 4 buckets £28 each, 5 + buckets £27 each
Apifonda. If you are venturing on a Queen rearing project this fondant is what you need. Very similar to Apiinvert, it is a paste not a liquid. If a colony becomes light through the course of the winter a dollop of fondant could well be the difference between life and death of the bees.
1 x 2.5 Kg bag £5.00, 1 box 12.5 Kg £25, 2 + boxes £24 each
The Apiinvert can be fed as a 'gee up' in the spring, emergency feeding during the 'June gap' and of course at the end of the season when preparing for winter.
N**ational Foundation** Available at excellent prices.
Deep wired, Shallow wired, Shallow unwired and cut comb.

email redrascal444@gmail.com**ndation.** National brood and super, 14 x 12 brood available
Eddie Howe email:- redrascal444@gmail.com Mobile 07812 738793
Tel. 01458 272114

A new Members Award for Somerton Beekeepers!

The **West Country Honey Farm Award** is presented annually by the Somerset Beekeepers Association to a bee farmer or beekeeper who has made a significant contribution to Beekeeping. Somerton Beekeepers are very proud of past winners in our ranks that have won this prestigious award. These include Joe King, Stewart Gould, Jackie Mosedale, Suzie Perkins, Gerald Fisher and David Charles.

Each year we aim to nominate one of our members, who we has been witnessed making a huge contribution. We are fortunate to have many contenders in our ranks who do much to promote and support others with beekeeping. In recent years the award has been very strongly contested and what sometimes holds extra sway in the final decision making, is whether the nominee has made a contribution through an office held at County Level.

This got some of us thinking! Somerton Branch would not be the thriving organisation it is without the immense contribution of many individuals. This sometimes goes unnoticed and yet we do recognise the amazing achievements of members in other ways as witnessed last week at our Honey Show.

We are therefore intending to introduce a **Somerton Members Award**. This will mirror the Honey Farm Award but at Branch level. Any member can nominate any other Somerton Branch member by outlining that person's significant contribution to Beekeeping at Somerton. There will be a small panel to consider the nominations including our President. As the award rolls out the winners from the past two years will join the panel. In the first instance, our past president, Jackie will join the panel. There will be a shiny new Award Board at the apiary to list the winners! In the next month you will receive an email with the form and further details attached.

Moving on to the apiary…… plans for its use and layout are gathering. However, I must admit I have been totally naive about the immense amount of work that was needed to be completed by a few, to get the building in a state of

readiness for the fixtures to be installed. I would like to thank everyone who has helped, putting in hours and hours of their time. In particular I will, on this occasion, single out Julian, our apiary manager who has had the headache of co-ordinating much of it, whilst also ensuring the apiary bees and grounds are thriving and in order!

Finally, congratulations to everyone involved in the organisation of the Honey Show, in particular the Honey show sub-committee of Matt Goodwin, Richard Lockyer and Lily Ryland. It was another fantastic show and the displays were absolutely amazing! I had a wonderful time on the raffle and we had such great feedback about the show from the public! Congratulations to everyone who entered. The show would not be possible without YOU!

Gillian Islip
Chair - Somerton Beekeepers

Fred Clarke

Fred's funeral was an amazing and heartfelt tribute to a man who was highly respected by all who knew him. All of the personal memories were charged with emotion, love and respect. Fred's wife Pauline has sent the following message to all members.

The family would like to thank everyone who sent such lovely messages and cards on Fred's death, also those who attended the celebration of his life at Mendip Crematorium. Fred loved beekeeping but most of all enjoyed all the friends he met through beekeeping over many years.

Thank you
Pauline

First Aid & Food Hygiene

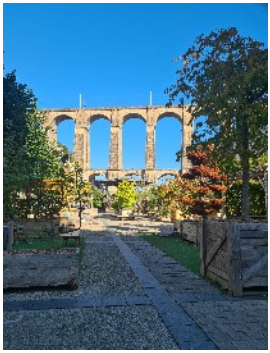
Two very important courses have been arranged for our members.
Saturday 1st November, First Aid training
Saturday 8th November Food Safety Training.

Both courses are subsidised for our members. in return, we would ask that you are prepared to be available to use these skills at some of our events. Both are certificated and useful in work, social or volunteer situations.

Both courses will be held at Edgar Hall, Somerton.
We have several members signed up, but if you would like to add your name, or have a friend who would like to take advantage of either course, please contact me at:

jackiemosedale@gmail.com

Just when you thought it was safe to come out of the closet



We've all got a little bit complacent when it comes to Asian hornets, but one has recently been spotted on the remote island of Tresco (Scilly Isles), 26 miles from Lands End.

On our annual foray to Brittany I thought that I would go back o the ivy bush where I saw my first Asian Hornet in 2017. I needn't have bothered. While sitting in a small municipal garden in the centre of Morlaix, we were buzzed by several Asian hornets and on our walk to a restaurant that evening, saw several more foraging on the floral displays. On the coast at Roscoff, we sat on he harbour wall and were buzzed by a few more, and revisiting the ivy bush adjacent to the ferry-port, produced several, giving this photo opportunity.

Roscoff is precisely 100 miles from the nearest point on the English coast - The Lizard in Cornwall.

From the Apiary September 2025

Since the last news letter we have been able to get through a significant amount of work at the apiary, thanks mainly to the Saturday work shop on the 16th September, a significant equipment painting effort from Karen and David Rose and an increase in numbers on Tuesday mornings. This has now put us in the position where I can postpone the next two Saturday work parties. So don't turn up on the 18th October or 22nd November because I think we can now cover what needs doing with the Tuesday morning volunteers. Thank you very much to everyone who has helped out during September.

The bees seem to have settled down into their autumnal behaviour and all seven colonies are still looking strong and healthy. We are now feeding them with sugar syrup in order to keep their level of stores high enough to last them through winter. I have been asked several times "when should we stop feeding syrup?" in my experience the bees usually help with that, if you are feeding with syrup and the bees stop taking it down, then that is one of the best indicators. Normally we would stop feeding syrup around mid October but that is dependant on temperature. If temperatures stay higher for longer than is normal then you could possibly feed syrup for longer. Who knows how global climate change is going to affect the way we keep bees in the future. Whatever you decide to do, if in doubt later in the season feed fondant. Don't forget to put your mouse guards and woodpecker wire on at the end of the month.

We will be meeting every Tuesday until November when we may be changing to every other Tuesday depending on work load. I will confirm that in the next news letter. Please come along and help if you can, everyone is welcome. There are usually some very experienced bee keepers there to answer any questions you may have about bee keeping. Eric's Emporium will also be open. We also have hot drinks and biscuits, what could be better.

Julian Marter.

Fondant Recipe

Following on from Julian's mention of fondant in the apiary article on the previous page, here is an easy recipe to follow. This is, basically, a recipe for fudge, but without butter or flavouring. The addition of a little citric acid or lemon juice will invert the sugar, turning it into fructose and glucose. This will slow down the speed at which it spoils and dissuade it from going completely solid. This recipe will take 1gm of citric acid, which is the amount contained in 20g of lemon juice. Fondant is available commercially (see page 9) but it is £25.00 for 12.5kgs.

You will need 1 large saucepan 1 hand or electric mixer (or a large spoon), a Cooking thermometer & moulds (semi transparent take-away food containers are ideal)

1. 1 kg granulated sugar, 300ml water, 20g of lemon juice. Pour sugar, water and lemon juice into saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring occasionally.
2. Remove lid and check temperature with cooking thermometer, continue on a rolling boil with lid off until temperature reaches 234^{o}F (112^{o}C).
3. Remove from heat and cool to around 160^{o}F (71^{o}C).
4. Whip with mixer (preferably electric) until mixture begins to become opaque and creamy in colour.
5. Mix until it becomes difficult to do so.
6. Pour into containers and replace lid, otherwise it will attract moisture.
7. Allow to cool undisturbed. If you can remember sugar mice, that is what it should look like, but a little softer to the touch.
8. To feed bees, remove lid & place inverted tubs over the feed hole in crown board, immediately above brood chamber. Place an eke on crown board and replace roof. An eke is a frame about 50mm high and the same outline as the hive. It simply ekes out a little room to put things in.

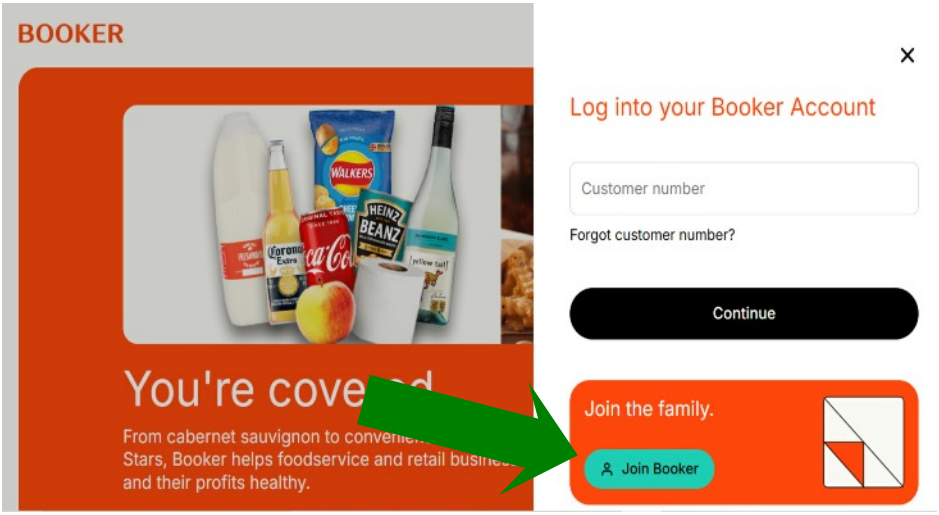
It is the stirring while cooling that ensures it doesn't set like a rock. Just like soft set honey, stirring stops the crystals from bonding to each other.

Note: If you intend to store your fondant, keep it in tightly sealed containers

in a cool and dry place. Don't feed too much to the bees at one time, as it will attract moisture, become gooey and run through the feed hole.
If you are buying fondant, make sure that it contains no additives which could be harmful to bees.

Inexpensive sugar

If you have been buying sugar from supermarkets, you ave ben paying in the region of £1.10 per. Kg, but it seems that a lo of our members are not aware that if they are full members of Somerton BKA, and therefore also members of the British Beekeepers Association, they can apply for a trade card at Booker Wholesale Foods. Their current price for a 25kg bag is £16.49 (66p per. Kg). Simply go to the Bookers website at:-
https://www.booker.co.uk/?login=true&returnUrl=%2Faccount%2Fregistration%2Fwhat-is-your-business



Press the **GREEN** **join Booker** button and enter your name - and the Business name as Somerset Beekeepers Association **(Not Somerton)**. The registered charity no. Is 12064833. You may also need your BBKA membership details.

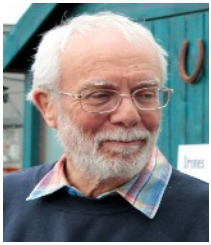
If you have any queries, google your local branch and give them a ring.

Important Message

It was agreed at the last Somerton BKA Committee meeting that a definite deadline should be set for any items to be included in the newsletter. This is because some anticipated items have been arriving very late in the month & some haven't arrived at all, meaning that the editor has had to compose articles highlighting crucial events.

Any Somerton member is welcome to contribute if hey have advice, reading recommendations, tips or ideas that other beekeepers may find helpful. It is also an excellent means of requesting second hand equipment or indeed, selling anything you no longer require

The newsletter is also now being proof read by a third party before being published, and this all takes time. The absolute deadline for all future issues is therefore the 22nd of each month.



The End of an Era

Joe King and Stewart Gould have been hosting the Beginners' Courses & Taster Days for the last 15 years, introducing around 1000 people to the 'ins & outs' and 'ups & downs' of beekeeping, but we have now reluctantly taken the decision to step back and let a younger team take up the reins. We've enjoyed every minute of it, including the ritual 'Bambi Burger' at the Halfway House after each practical session. We're absolutely certain that the courses will be in capable hands and wish the new team well in their endeavours.

We would both like to thank Alison Dykes without whose unstinting help with the catering side, venue booking and practical demonstrating, we couldn't have managed. Many others have pitched in along the way too, so a big thank you to John Webb, Jackie Mosedale, Eric McLaughlin, Steve Horne, Julian Marter, Catherine Fraser, David Furse Roberts - and not forgetting the large input from Fred Clarke.

We're not quitting beekeeping by any means, just stepping back a pace or two.

Stewart & Joe

Eric's Emporium

Revised frame & foundation prices

Frame type	each	Per 10	Per 11
Hoffman deep frames complete	**£1.98**	**£19.80**	**£21.78**
DN2 top bars	£1.06	£10.60	£11.66
DN4 Hoffman side bars	£0.46	£4.60	£5.06
Bottom bars per pair	£0.46	£4.60	£5.06
Shallow frames complete	£1.84	£18.40	£20.24
DN2 top bars	£1.06	£10.60	£11.66
SN2 Shallow (super) side bars	£0.32	£3.20	£3.52
Bottom bars per pair	£0.46	£4.60	£5.06
Foundation			
Deep wired foundation	£1.42	£14.20	£15.62
Shallow wired foundation	£0.87	£8.70	£9.57
Deep frame c/w foundation	**£3.40**	**£34.00**	**£37.40**
Shallow frame c/w foundation	**£2.71**	**£27.10**	**£29.81**

Please pay by BACS transfer to Somerton Beekeepers Lloyds Bank a/c no. 30407168. Sort code 30 90 90, using either the SumUp reference code or MAN xx where xx is the number on the paper invoice from the book in the BeeSpace.

Price list valid from April 2025

If you have any queries regarding availability of stock, or when goods can be collected from the apiary, contact Richard Lockyer at this dedicated email address emporium.somertonbees@gmail.com

Candle Dipping Workshop - change of date

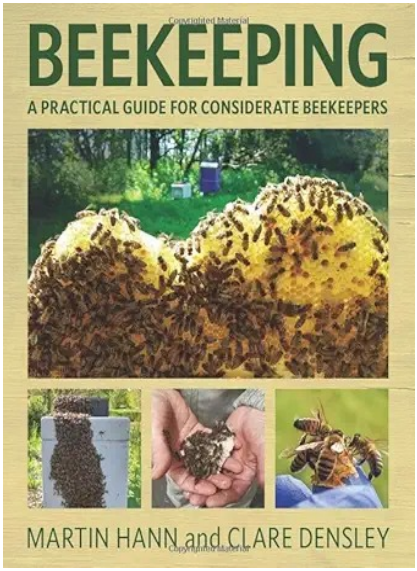
Candle dipping workshop lead by Maggie North will be held on Saturday 8th November from 2.00pm- 4.30pm at the apiary. There will be a talk followed by a practical workshop.

To book a place email chair.somertonbees@gmail.com. Places are limited to 14 people. Please book by 1st November **at the very latest.**

Seeing your bees through the winter

On Wednesday October 31st Clare Densley & Martin Hann from Buckfast Abbey Bees will give us the benefit of their extensive knowledge regarding he most troubling time for all beekeepers - The Winter.

As mentioned last month, Clare and Martin have finally got their book published, and if you order one online, I'm sure they will sign it for you.



Dates for your diary

Clare Densley & Martin Hann
From Buckfast Bees

Thurs October 30th
7.30pm

Edgar Hall, Somerton, TA11 6SB

Seeing your bees through the winter

Fist Aid Course
Saturday November 1st - morning
Edgar Hall, Somrton, TA11 6SB

Food Hygiene Course

Saturday 8th November - morning
Edgar Hall, Somerton, TA11 6SB

Candle Dipping Workshop
Maggie North

Saturday Nov. 8th
2.00pm - 4.30pm
Somerton AGM
At our apiary

Somerton Beekeepers AGM
Edgar Hall, Somerton, TA11 6SB

Thursday 20th Nov.
7.00pm

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