

The Newsletter



Vol no 29 Issue 9 October 2022

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



The Queen's Bees

The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday September 8th, quite rightly, overtook all other news events. It isn't well known, but the Queen had colonies of bees in a secluded part of the garden of Buckingham Palace. All produce from the hives went to feed the Royal household.

The Royal Beekeeper, John Chapple, did as all beekeepers should, and told the bees of the passing of Her Majesty and that King Charles III is their new master.



Somerton Honey Show Trophy Winners 2022

Rob Kingsnorth	Paul Moorhouse	Jenny Harrison	David Rose
Dave Reynolds	Catherine Fraser	Ray Pattemore	
	Max Landrigan		

TROPHIES AND 2022 WINNERS

THE DAVID CHARLES NOVICE SHIELD Awarded for the most points gained in the Novice classes 1–10: Rob Kingsnorth

THE NOVICE TROPHY Runner up in classes 1–10: Alison Clewes

THE CHALLENGE CUP Awarded for the most points gained in classes 11–28: Catherine Fraser

THE MORRIS PLAQUE Awarded to the runner up in classes 11–28: David Rose

E.C.H. LANGFORD PERPETUAL CUP Awarded to the best exhibit in the Light Honey class 11: David Rose

THE BILL HARRIS CUP Awarded to the best exhibit in the Composite Class 20: David Rose

THE PEARCE COOKERY PLATE Awarded for the most points in the Cookery classes 29–34: Jenny Harrison

THE JOHN LINDARS MEMORIAL TROPHY Awarded for the most points in the photographic classes 41–46: David Reynolds

THE PERKINS GOBLET Awarded for the most points in the drinks classes 35–39: Catherine Fraser

THE SOMERTON DIVISIONAL TROPHY Awarded for the most points gained overall in classes 1–48: Catherine Fraser

ALLCOMERS' CLASSES PRIZE GIFT VOUCHER Awarded for the most points in classes 49–59: Robert Kingsnorth

CHILDRENS AWARD Awarded for the best exhibit in Children's classes 60–63: Max Landrigan

ALLCOMERS' HONEY CLASSES Awarded for the most points in classes 64–74: Paul Moorhouse

THE ALAN BROMLEY AWARD Awarded for the Best Somerton Member's exhibit in the Show: Ray Pattemore

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW BLUE RIBBON: Ray Pattemore

SPECIAL NOVICE AWARD (awarded by Novice judge): Robert Kingsnorth



Suzy Perkins judging the Novice section



Judges and stewards at work

The sun shone and record entries were recorded!

Some of the usual suspects walked away with the trophies, presented by County President, Jackie Mosedale. But it is always nice to see some new names on prize cards and we hope you'll come back next year and maybe take a trophy home with you as well.

We took the opportunity this year to re-name the Novice Shield, The David Charles Novice Shield, in honour of the work David did with new beekeepers and talking novices through the do's and don't at our honey show, for longer than most of us can remember. Something that Suzy Perkins is continuing to do. David loved a good Honey Show and we hope you all agree that this is a fitting tribute in his memory.

The outside market had a buzz about it with some traders selling out of stock. Cider and cheese seemed to be going down well. The Bee Tent, was busy all afternoon with 13 different beekeepers selling their wares and over £1000 being taken. We even had a card machine this year! And as always there was a great fascination in the observation hive, encouraging members of the public to sign up for our courses.

A huge amount of effort goes into organising the Honey Show, but it is all worth it when we have another great day like Saturday. There are always too many people to thank by name, you know who you are: Friday set-up, Saturday set-up and clear-up, catering team, bee tent team, observation hive specialist, refreshment team, raffle ticket sellers, stewards, judges, sign-putter-uppers,

parking stewards, market traders and anyone else that we have missed. A massive thank you!

Start thinking about those entries for next year! Mead can be prepared and candles can be dipped. We'll see you all on Saturday 16th September back in Keinton Mandeville. Put it on your calendar or in your phone!

David, Fred and Alison
Honey Show Committee



FOR SALE £450

Wolf WP 7500E petrol generator. 230V or 115V. 6500w continual output. Electric start.

This generator was bought by Somerton Beekeepers in 2017 as we had no electrical power at the apiary. It has had very little use and remains in excellent condition. This particular model has been superseded by the WPB95 10ES which retails at £799.99. Grab yourself a bargain.

Contact Eric McLaughlin on 07910 764069

Honey Labelling, Dos, Don'ts and maybes!

Each year at our Honey Show there is always a discrepancy on a jar of honey for sale, which results in a long debate as to what is right and what is wrong. This year was no different. A couple of jars for sale had, perhaps the right information, but in the wrong place or were missing something that should have been there, or had something that shouldn't! None of us are mass producers, but if we are selling a food product to the general public and not just friends and family, we should try and get it right. It's unlikely that you'll get fined by Trading Standards, perhaps just a wrap on the knuckles, but also not worth taking the risk. There was an excellent article in The BBKA News magazine last month (No 229, September 2022, pages 302-303 by Enid Brown (a Honey Show Judge). It fully explained labelling of honey and is well worth a read, but here are the essential 'dos, donts and maybes'. Please, if in doubt just ask.

The Dos:

🌀 Must have the word **Honey**. You can use "Somerset" Honey, but there is debate as to whether the name of a smaller village is allowable, as you have no guarantee where your bees are going to collect the nectar.

🌀 Contact details for the producer or packer. Name and full address. A mobile phone number or email address is NOT sufficient. Your honey has to be fully traceable.

🌀 The weight in metric units, i.e. grams or kilograms. From 200g - 1kg the size of numbers have to be at least 4mm high. There should be no gap between the numbers and the "g" e.g. 454g. You can show the weight in imperial units, however it is not a requirement and, if you do, the metric weight must be in bold or more obvious than the imperial and the weights must be alongside one another, e.g. **454g** 1lb

🌀 The country of origin, e.g. Produce of or harvested in England

🌀 Best before date. This needs to be Day/Month/Year format. If you put in this detail then you do NOT need a lot number, you can just put "Best before 31 July 2025". If you use "Best before end of 2025" omitting the day and month then you must have a lot number. Buy your labels with just **Lot** no. or **L**, then buy an

inexpensive numbering stamp. The same goes for Best Before dates. Simply have **BB** or **Best Before** printed on your labels. You can then buy a larger quantity of labels, which is less expensive, and you are set for years to come.

All of the above information on the label has to be within the field of view of the customer, not on the back of the jar. The label can say, "Best before - see base" as this is indicating where the additional information is, but you might as well just put the date!

The Don'ts:

☞ Words like pure, organic or raw should not be used. The word raw is an American term and has no legal standing in the UK. No honey from the UK should be called organic. Using this term requires confirmation and certification from the Soil Association.

☞ Misleading information, this could be a picture of a bee on a specific flower, when you have no guarantee that the bees visited those flowers. Your honey has to be almost wholly from one crop for it to be called something specific (mono-floral), such as oilseed rape, or heather honey.

The Maybes:

☞ Tamper-proof labels are not a specific requirement but recommended

☞ Information about not giving honey to children under one

☞ Information about granulation

☞ You can put pictures, but they must be relevant

☞ I can find no information to say you can't put a brand name, but keep it separate and smaller than the product name.

E.g. Old Orchard Estate

SOMERSET HONEY

I hope that helps and you will all check your labels to make sure that they are legal, so that next year at the show the same debate doesn't occur again!

Happy labelling

David Rose

Asian hornets found in Essex

Three Asian hornets (*vespa velutina nigrithorax*) have been caught in Rayleigh, Essex in the last couple of days. A concerted search is underway to discover the whereabouts of the nest. There is obviously no imminent danger to beekeeping in Somerset, but it does serve to show that being complacent about these intruders are a potential threat to **all** beekeepers in the UK. Be on your guard !!!

Mikes Bee Supplies

Click & Collect
www.mikes-bee-supplies.com
E: mikes-bees@outlook.com
T: 01278 445158

We take Cash or Card (no cheques)

Payment methods: VISA, Mastercard, American Express, PayPal

Products: Foundation, Bakers Fondant 12.5kg, Jars, Hives, Suits, And more!

Find us at 72 Wembdon Hill, Wembdon, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 7PZ

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 boxes £24 each, 5 + boxes £23 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.

Foundation. National brood and super, 14 x 12 brood available

Eddie Howe email:- redrascal444@gmail.com Mobile 07812 738793

Tel. 01458 272114

Visit to Buckfast Abbey Bee Dept - 27th August

20 of us made the annual trek down to Devon to visit Clare Densley and Martin Hann at the Buckfast apiary. Most people were impressed by the low key approach which our hosts have towards visitors and the content of the day. Although both acknowledged experts in beekeeping methods, with many years of experience and a great depth of knowledge. nobody felt as though they were out of their depth. What's more, they don't actually charge for the experience. We do, however, make a small contribution each, to the coffee and biscuit fund. Which we took full advantage of while Martin and Clare described what they do and the reasoning behind it, pointing out that no queen bees have been sold from there since 1998. All 'so called' Buckfast queens merely follow the thinking of Brother Adam who was responsible for the Abbey's fame in the beekeeping World.



Clare looking quite stern

A stroll up through the woods led us to the half dozen hives in the home apiary, and we were talked through the problems which they had experienced with certain hives, including an outbreak of Chronic bee paralysis virus.



After a leisurely lunch at the Grange Restaurant, we all made our way back to the 'bee shed' for a debriefing on what we'd seen before lunch, and a look at some of the very interesting artefacts and photographs of earlier days there. One amazing item is Brother Adam's queen rearing cabinet, capable of holding around 1000 queen cells. If it ever went on to the market, I could see it fetching a lot of money. There are also some wooden boxes which honey, ready for market, was transported in, and a cardboard honey pot, which was used before glass jars became the norm.

Sadly, a few people had to cancel, but I'm sure we'll be making a return journey next year.

Running for charity - in a bee-suit

I am a member of Somerton Division, and as some of you may know, next month, on 16th October, I'll be attempting to set a WORLD RECORD at the Bath Half, as the fastest man in a beekeeper's suit to run a half-marathon. It's all been officially approved through Guinness World Records, and I'll be documenting it while running as evidence!



I'm not sure what motivated me to do such a thing but I'm actually quite excited...I'll be running in a full beekeeper's suit, gloves and boots, so it won't be fast and it certainly won't be pretty.

Fortunately though, thanks to the lovely people at [BBwear](#) I'll be running in (some!) comfort as they have lent me their Ultra Bee Suit, which is 100 per cent breathable, compared to my current suit, which is only 12 per cent!

I'm not doing this just for the hell of it, though. I'll be running for a local charity that does a FANTASTIC job - **We Hear You**. Their mission is to provide free therapeutic support for children, families and individuals in Bath and North East Somerset, Somerset and Wiltshire who are affected directly or indirectly by cancer and other life-threatening conditions. So if you can help, any donation is gratefully received.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sam-landrigan>

Thanks in advance,
Sam Landrigan

Massive nest containing 1,600 Asian hornets is found – and the insects are still alive after spending 28 hours in the freezer

BEING hunted, thrown into a plastic bag and frozen alive would probably spell the end for most creatures – but it turns out that the Asian hornet can be hard to kill. The team responsible for tracking the invasive species have told how the half-dead occupants of one of the biggest nests they had ever encountered emerged to attack – despite being frozen for more than a day. The nest, which weighed just over 8kg and was close to a metre in width, was found in a field near Waitrose in Vallée des Vaux. Jersey Asian Hornet Group volunteer Bob Tompkins said the team became aware of it when a dog walker spotted hornets disappearing into a large bramble patch on the edge of a footpath.

The nest, which weighed just over 8kg and was close to a metre in width, was located in a field near Waitrose in Grands Vaux. ‘It was the biggest ground-based nest we’ve ever had, said John de Carteret. ‘You can imagine what would have happened if someone was just coming along to pick blackberries.’

More than 1,300 hornets were removed using a specially designed vacuum, while a further 235 from the monster nest were caught in nearby traps. The nest was transferred to a freezer, where it was stored for 28 hours before its dissection by group members John de Carteret and Bob Hogge. However, Mr de Carteret said that the process – which usually kills all of the resident insects – had failed to wipe out the large nest’s population. ‘Normally they just go in overnight. We peeled the bag back, took a look and thought “hang on, that’s a live hornet coming out”,’ he said. The nest, which appeared to contain around eight or nine combs, was immediately put back into the freezer to be dissected later this week.



Record numbers of Asian-hornet nests have been found in Jersey this year, with the count standing at 132 at the time of writing. This has broken the previous record of 83 nests located by the Jersey Asian Hornet Group in 2019, which was followed by 38 the year after and 63 in 2021. The Island’s Asian-

hornet co-ordinator, Alastair Christie, last month urged anyone working outdoors, such as those preparing for the branchage (*whatever that may be - ed.*), to check their surroundings before cutting vegetation. The warning was issued shortly after a farmer was attacked by a swarm and stung several times, due to accidentally striking a nest with a mower.

Strange goings-on in Cornwall

Jackie Mosedale, President of Somerset Beekeepers Association and Somerton Division is in Cornwall at present, and has been sending back photos of some strange bee related objects. This giant bee is in the gardens of the Eden Project near St. Austell.



On visiting the Lost Gardens of Heligan, which is very badly sign-posted (*maybe on purpose*) she noticed that the skeps which had been kept in bee boles, are now looking decidedly dilapidated, which is a shame, but she also noticed this rather grandiose bug hotel. Well, you'd have a job to miss it.

The bee boles used to be quite a spectacle as can be seen from this old photo. It seems they have now fallen into disrepair, which is a shame. As with most things at Heligan, they were a glimpse into bygone days, when keeping bees was a necessity if you wanted some sweetness in your life. Sugar, as we know it wasn't readily accessible until the end of the 18th century.



Electrical connection

The saga continues. The meter man called at the apiary on the morning of September 29th, to install the meter, but proclaimed to chairman Eric that although the meter has electricity flowing to, it, and the cables next to it feed the building electrical system, he couldn't actually connect the wires to the meter. Consequently Mark Caldwell, who is one of our members, and an electrician is, on Saturday morning, having to drive 10 miles just to insert two wires into our meter, and then the electricity will flow. Hallelujah! It's only taken two years.

Candles and beeswax needed.

Cobbs Wholefoods in Somerton are looking for beeswax candles and beeswax. If you have any to sell, **contact Jane on 01458 274066**

Also looking for beeswax is **Wayne Jones on 07855 665579**

Land for bees

Several people talked about land for bees at the Honey Show but these people left their details. Need a home for an out apiary. Give them a shout.

William Pitt - Babcary tel. **07496 494651** or email: w.m.pitt@icloud.com

Annie Wray - Langport tel. **07768 612234** or email: anniewray@gmail.com

At the apiary

September is a busy time at the apiary. Honey has to be taken off, and the crop has been good this year, then extracted and jarred ready for sale. Some hives had very low mite counts of less than one mite per day, when tested. These hives we opted not to treat. The ones with higher counts were treated with Formicpro.

The decision has to be taken as to whether smaller colonies should be united to improve their chance of surviving a winter. The criterion is usually, are they at least five frames of bees? Below this their survival chances are not good. We decided not to unite any colonies this year, although one hive is rather border-line.

Wasps have been a nuisance and therefore hive entrances were reduced and traps placed on each hive, which needed periodic emptying and reloading with diluted jam as the bait.

Each hive needs to go into the winter with 40 lbs of stores to survive. Each hive has been assessed and syrup feeding introduced. Winter feeding syrup is made up of 2lb of sugar to one pint of water, making 2 pints of syrup. Most hives were left with approximately twenty pounds of their own honey needing therefore twenty pints of syrup each to reach the target level of forty pounds of stores (water is removed from syrup before storing).

Ironically global warming and mild winters has increased the need for winter feeding. When I started beekeeping fifty years ago the suggested amount of winter stores was 30lbs. In those halcyon days when beekeepers wore vests, winters were cold, and the queen stopped laying for significant periods. The bees were therefore not forced to maintain a brood temperature of 96 degrees Fahrenheit (35°C, and could cluster for long periods, using limited amounts of stores. With warmer winters the queens keep laying, the brood temperature must be maintained and the bees use the stores to generate the necessary heat. Hence they need more stores. Hopefully the weather will remain sufficiently good that we are able to complete winter feeding of syrup, hitting the target of 40lb of stores per hive. If we don't, we will have to resort to using fondant as a supplement

We are turning our thoughts to winter maintenance. The hedges need to have their annual haircut, the vegetation cut back, raked up and removed. This depletes the nutrients in the soil and favours our wild flowers rather than coarse grasses and nettles.

AS well as our usual tasks, there is a steady flow of visitors to the apiary, members collecting their honey jars and Formicpro on a Tuesday morning. Everyone is welcome to come and join in on a Tuesday morning for some good company, tea/coffee and kitkats, and carry out the tasks of the day. Always feel you can come, you will be most welcome.

Joe King

01749 890357.

Dates for your diary

The Mind of a bee

Zoom Talk by Lars Chitka

Thursday Sept 29th

7.00pm

Free to attend

Click on link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mind-of-a-bee-with-professor-lars-chittka-tickets-394422467217>

National Honey Day

Friday 21st October

Somerton Beekeepers AGM

Somerton Parish Rooms

TA11 7NB

Thursday November 10th

7.00pm

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