

# **SOMERSET BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION**

## **NEWSLETTER**

**July 2023, no. 153**



Please send any copy for the October 2023 edition to me by the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023

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## NEW LEAF AWARD 2023



For the last couple of years, Somerset Beekeepers' Association has been the extremely fortunate recipient of significant donations from New Leaf Life Design. New Leaf is the company run by Becky Wright, offering help with workplace wellbeing. Becky has a strong commitment to the World around us, and as a part of her commitment, gives a proportion of her income to Somerset Beekeepers' Association so that a new beekeeper who might otherwise find it difficult to start along this road, is able to do so.

This year's recipient is Adam Bacon who is part of a fruit and vegetable growing co-operative near Barton St David. Their mission is to supply organically grown produce to the local market, with as low a carbon footprint as possible. To

enhance this goal, Adam and the rest of the team intend to produce good pure honey for the local market as well. Setting up isn't cheap, as we all know, and so the New Leaf Award has provided a colony of bees and a hive. You can't manage bees without protective clothing and some essential hardware, so Adam is also receiving a BBWear bee-suit, a smoker, and a hive tool.

The hive and bees were delivered on Sunday June 25<sup>th</sup>. Stewart Gould and Adam installed the bees in the new hive while Becky looked on from a distance, although one ungrateful bee did manage to find her.

It might be a little late to ensure a harvest this year, but at least they will be set up to get off to a flying start next season.

If you know somebody or a project which might struggle to get started without help, give Maggie Norris – [secretary@somerswetbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@somerswetbeekeepers.org.uk) or me, Stewart Gould - [somertonbees@btinternet.com](mailto:somertonbees@btinternet.com) a short, but informative, explanation of why you think that the New Leaf Award could help and, who knows, perhaps we can.

***Stewart Gould***

## COUNTY HONEY SHOW



Entries are invited for the County Honey Show which is held as part of Taunton Flower Show on 4 and 5 August.

Taunton Division is hosting the competition and would like to encourage members from all divisions to enter.

There are 27 classes spanning honey, mead and wax as well as cookery, art, photography and even a lip balm for BBKA full members to enter.



There is no need to pay to enter the showground to bring in your exhibits – staging of entries takes place at 6-8 pm on Thursday, 3 August. On Saturday, entry tickets are much cheaper after 4 pm, so have a look around before picking up your exhibits after 6 pm.

For any questions or more information please contact Andy Glendinning at [andyglendinning@aol.com](mailto:andyglendinning@aol.com)



Entries close on Wednesday, 26 July. The schedule is on Taunton Division's webpage of Somerset site: <https://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/taunton.html>



## SUMMER BREAK

Our online lecture programme will resume in the autumn and, meanwhile, many recordings are available to watch. Visit the members area of Somerset BKA's website.



**Lecturer: Professor Dara Kilmartin**

### **Bee vision**

Honey bees have highly specialised structural and physiological visual features: an advanced form of the insect compound eye, a blue shift in the visible light spectrum compared to humans, ability to detect ultraviolet and polarized light and high temporal resolution allowing highly sensitive motion detection. The talk explores the knowns and the unknowns!



**Lecturer: Dmytro Kushnir**

### **Beekeeping in Ukraine**

Dmytro introduces us to Ukraine as a country - its geography, landscape, and forage, as well as looking at the impact that the war has had on the country's life and economy. He describes Ukrainian beekeeping and honey, and the effect of war on bees, beekeepers and forage.

### **Online study groups**

Our next online study group will be Module 5 – honeybee biology. The group will start at 7pm on Tuesday, September 5, and finish 10 weeks later. The exam will be held on Saturday, November 18 for those that wish to take it (there's no pressure!).

For the syllabus and reading list, visit the BBKA website.

Anyone interested in attending is invited to

email: [eventsofficer@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:eventsofficer@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk)

Study groups are great way to learn more about honeybees and are pitched at beekeepers who have passed the Basic and have been beekeeping for at least a couple of years. Participation requires solo studying for at least a day a week plus the online group session.

We intend to run a Module 8 study group in the New Year for those who have completed the other modules. [Module 8 is the last module to be taken; the others can be tackled in any order.]

## THE ROYAL BATH & WEST SHOW

Congratulations to everyone who exhibited, stewarded, and volunteered at the Bath & West Show - it was a terrific three-day showcase for beekeeping (and beekeepers!) and enjoyed by many thousands of visitors.

For those who are unfamiliar with the hugely popular Bees and Honey feature, it's big! Somerset, Wiltshire, and Avon BKAs are all involved with individual exhibits and work together to offer visitor activities plus there are some bee-related trade stands.

Somerset's exhibit was all about the importance of bees to pollination and featured a colourful array of plants, fruits, and vegetables. An observation hive was a magnet for young and old alike, all keen to spot the queen.

Our Asian hornet awareness exhibition, complete with pinned insects, nests, and children's colouring sheets, was a great draw. Besides it we ran a honey authenticity stand where we could talk about adulteration and celebrate the taste of local honeys and some single varietal Mediterranean honeys. I guess it's no surprise that our spring and summer honeys were the public's favourites!

For visitors with a taste for the good stuff, there were hundreds of jars of honey and hive products offered for sale by competition exhibitors.

Somerset volunteers were involved in practically everything! From beekeeping demonstrations, candle rolling and children's drawing, to stewarding and selling honey, we were there!

Also, we were very successful in the competitive classes. Outstanding were Bridget Knutson (Wedmore Division), who won a cup and blue ribbon for the best exhibit in the show (a magnificent three-tiered display of products from the hive) and the best overall mead cup; and Christine and Mark Gullick (Somerton Division) who between them won four cups and many prize cards. Christine was presented with the trophy for the most points awarded to a Somerset beekeeper plus there were cups for the composite class, most points in classes bh41,42 and 43 and most points in classes bh7 to 37 excluding classes 25 to 30.

One of our BBKA module study group members – Alla Neal from Hampshire – donated her points from winning the heather honey and two beeswax classes amongst others to Somerset's overall tally. David Pearce (Taunton Division) picked up a number of firsts for his honey and his brother, Malcolm from Devon BKA, also gave us his points. Maggie North (Taunton Division) created an exquisite arrangement of wax flowers and was only pipped to first place by a National Honey Show winning exhibitor.

In spite of Somerset's successes on the show bench, we just lost out on winning the county shield (awarded to the county which win the most points) to Wiltshire. I'm sure we'll reclaim it next year!

Anne Pike, Somerset BKA President



Candle rolling is a popular attraction.



Christine Gullick, Somerton Division, scooped the cup for winning the most points in the show. The cup is presented by steward Chris Rawlings.



Steward Chris Rawlings presents the cup for the best exhibit in the show to Bridget Knutson, Wedmore Division





This magnificent display of products from the hive won Bridget Knutson, Wedmore Division, the blue ribbon for the best exhibit in the show.

Thanks to Anne Pike for the photos and captions.

## Somerset European Foul Brood Study

(Assessing regional swarm collection and housing practices)

As you will know, Somerset has a high incidence of European Foul Brood (EFB) in our bee colonies. Hollie Pufal from Newcastle University is doing research on the particular strain of EFB in Somerset, as part of her PhD.

This season Hollie is doing research into whether EFB is spread by swarms, and special kits have been distributed around the county for the collection of samples. If you would like to contribute to this research and don't have a kit then contact Hollie directly on [h.i.pufal2@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:h.i.pufal2@newcastle.ac.uk), and she will send you one.

The idea is to collect bees from swarms and the nearest neighbouring colony to where the swarm is housed at three different time points:

Timing	Swarm	Nearest neighbouring colony
At time of swarm collection	Sample A: Scoop of adult bees	Sample B: Nurse bees only
Six weeks after swarm collection	Sample C: Nurse bees only	No sample required
Early September	Sample D: Nurse bees only	Sample E: Nurse bees only



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said that Sample B can be collected from any colony in the apiary where the swarm will ultimately be positioned.

Good practice when collecting swarms is to isolate the swarm by housing it away from your main apiary and other bees, until there is brood which you can assess for disease. The study protocol therefore seemed to rule anyone out who does this, as there would not be a neighbouring colony to collect Sample B from.

Hollie has clarified that the purpose of collecting from a neighbouring colony is to rule out the spread of EFB from that colony to the swarm. She has therefore

If you would now like to help with this important research, then please get a kit by contacting Hollie on [h.i.pufal2@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:h.i.pufal2@newcastle.ac.uk)



