

# The Newsletter



Vol. no 32. Issue 8 September 2025  
SBKA website [www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk)



**Yellow-legged hornet**

*Vespa velutina*



**European hornet**

*Vespa crabro*

## 1st - 7<sup>th</sup> September YLH - Asian Hornet Week

If you've read your BBKA News this month you'll know that it is the time of year to be looking out for the Yellow legged Asian hornet. More nests have been discovered this year than the previous total of all nests discovered in the UK. They are primarily in Sussex, Kent and Hampshire, but the odd one or two have been found in other parts of the country. They have been seen within 40 miles of your bees, and can fly 35 miles in one day.

Know what to look for and get the Asian hornet app at  
[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.ac.ceh.hornets&hl=en\\_GB](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.ac.ceh.hornets&hl=en_GB)

## Fred Clarke

It is with great sadness that I tell you that Fred Clarke passed away on Saturday August 23<sup>rd</sup>. He had been suffering pain for some time and was taken into Yeovil Hospital where it was discovered that he also had a kidney problem.

Fred was a stalwart of Somerton Beekeepers, having been the Honey Show secretary, along with his wife Pauline, for over 10 years. He also served as chairman of Somerton Beekeepers from 2016 - 2019.

Fred was a Science teacher during his working life and, like a lot of us, took up beekeeping in his retirement. He very much enjoyed the science of beekeeping and used his microscope to great effect, analysing pollens and some bee diseases too. His bees will go on, and are being cared for by one of our other members.



Fred in cheerful mood



Fred in his domain



Fred & Pauline at the Honey Show.

Several people have remarked that Fred was a gentle man and was, indeed, was one of those rare people who didn't hold a grudge. He always seemed to be jolly, and his standard greeting to me was 'And how are you my boy?' Fred and Pauline have two daughters and also grand children, who will miss him very much, and our thoughts go to

Pauline and her family at this traumatic and emotional time.

## Fred Clarke - A personal tribute

It's not often that you come across someone that you can't find a bad word to say about, after all, we all have our faults. But perhaps, to me at least, Fred Clarke was the exception. We clicked the instant we met. He was a pleasant, well spoken, eloquent man, with a calming nature that rubbed off on those around him. He also had, an often unseen, wicked sense of humour!

Between 2016 and 2019 he was Somerton Beekeepers' Chair, during which the current apiary site was developed and completed. He was particularly pleased that his choice of name, 'BeeSpace', was selected by the members for the new name of the apiary clubhouse.

Along with his wife Pauline he was part of the Honey Show team for nearly 10 years. Becoming Honey Show entry secretary in 2015, he played a major role in shaping what is now one of the best stand alone branch shows in the country. When he hosted our regular team meetings they were full of banter and hilarity, but somehow we still got everything organised. I'm sure Pauline's coffee and cake helped.

He didn't just run the show he also won the occasional prize, taking the Novice shield in 2016, but his proudest moment was in 2023 when his light honey won best in class to win the Langford Perpetual Cup.

During his time as a beekeeper Fred did have mixed fortunes with his bees, with them often disappearing without his knowledge! We've all been there. One thing Fred didn't have was disease in his hives. He loved his blow torch and would scorch his boxes black, he wasn't catching EFB.



Fred with local MP Sarah Dyke

It was a privilege to have known Fred and I will personally miss him more than I can say. He was a great human being, truly one of the best people I have or will ever know. He loved his cricket, cauliflower cheese and was partial to a 'wee dram' of single malt. So, I ask you all to raise a glass when you can and celebrate a true beekeeping gentleman.

**David Rose**

# Yellow-legged Asian Hornet Week

## 1st-8th September 2025

Next week is Yellow-legged Asian Hornet Week there will be an **NBU Update** from Peter Davies, Operational Delivery Lead and also an **APHA Science Blog** released during the week.

### **Zoom Talk by Andrew Durham:**

#### **Yellow-legged Asian Hornet – Is Nest Destruction a Dangerous Delusion? Is Spring Trapping the Lesser of Two Evils? - Wednesday 3rd September 7.30pm**

Andrew is a Cambridgeshire beekeeper who started his research into the Asian Hornet (a.k.a. Yellow-legged Hornet - *Vespa velutina*) in 2014, travelling around France and researching the impact of the hornet on French beekeeping. The talk: as the hornet continues to make ground on the continent and is threatening to get established in mainland UK, this is an important and timely contribution to a debate that beekeepers are going to have to have before the NBU withdraws from the front-line battle to eradicate the hornet. Beekeepers on the continent are getting drawn into the general fight against the hornet and are being overwhelmed. Andrew examines the pros and cons of the different schemes in operation in France (and Jersey) and he suggests how beekeepers could best use their limited resources to serve their bees.

Zoom

link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83766798003?pwd=MAKwGQjDdNspbbx6Rurhi3fHkr1vBl.1>

Meeting ID: 837 6679 8003 Passcode: 886868

The talk will be recorded and made available on the BBKA YouTube channel.

**Suzy Perkins**

**Somerton Asian Hornet Co-ordinator**

## From the apiary - August

Apart from two small window frames the exterior of the Bee Space has now been painted. Thank you to everyone who turned up to either or both painting work parties. Also, a special thank you to Matt Goodwin who spent almost a full weekend at the apiary to paint the interior walls and ceiling of the new extension, only doors, skirting boards and floor are yet to be done before we can put racking in to create a fully labelled store.

Over the past few months we have had fewer people turning up on Tuesday mornings, coupled with the work on the new extension, jars being delivered, jars being collected, Eric's Emporium, extraction of honey, maintenance of the site and looking after the bees, we could really do with more help. To encourage more people to help we will be having three more Saturday work parties this year. **They will be on 13th September, 18th October, and 22nd November.** I will put reminders for the latter two in subsequent newsletters. The start time for all will be 10:00 hoping to get away 13:00 latest. There will be various tasks ranging from painting to cutting hedges. I will try to have a list ready for the latter two dates and will include them in the relevant news letter. Thank you in advance for your anticipated, much needed help.



We have been worried that our bees may run out of stores because there has been very little forage in our area in August, in fact we have had to feed one colony. However, during the last inspection in August it seems the bees are starting to refill the supers let's hope this continues long enough for them to provide their own winter supplies. We also carried out a varroa mite count and found that only one colony had a high enough count for treatment but we may well treat them all. Honey has been extracted from three more supers and should be on sale at the Honey Show. We have seven strong and healthy colonies to take into the winter. Sorry to mention the "W" word this early in the year but knowing the British weather it can never be too early to prepare for winter.

We will continue to meet every Tuesday until November when we will change to every other Tuesday until Spring. Please come along and help if you can, as you know from the above we do need it. Biscuits and hot drinks are always available.

**Don't forget YOUR HONEY SHOW on 20th September at Keinton Mandeville** village Hall. Please get your entries in ASAP. If you can help out in anyway please get in touch and we will let you know where and when we need it, thank you.

**Julian Marter**

### **Hog Roast 2025**

There are still a few tickets left for our annual Hog Roast! Treat yourself and a partner/ friend (we don't have kiss cam!) to a great afternoon out at the Apiary. Lovely local outdoor reared hog with all the trimmings and yummy roasties, followed by a tasty homemade pud. Bring your own bottle, a chair and sit back and chill. It's a great way to end the season, revelling in summer glory in the company of like minded suit wearers!



Sunday 7th September 1400-1800.

Tickets are £16 for hog or £12 for a veggie option.

**Contact Ali C at [pansypots@icloud.com](mailto:pansypots@icloud.com) to reserve your tickets.**

## The Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day 2025

**Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> October**

10am-4pm, at The Devizes Corn Exchange, Market Place, Devizes SN10 1HS. Sophie Butcher, Show organiser has invited members of Somerton and Somerset Beekeepers to Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day 2025. While the Wiltshire County show is only open to Wiltshire BKA members, there are some **great speakers** you might like to listen to. Seats are on a first come, first served basis. There are also several exhibitors on the day, so it a good time to consider pre-stocking up on bee-related gifts for Christmas.

<https://www.wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk/events/wiltshire-bee-honey-day/>

### Timings

10.00 Show opens

10.00-11.00 *Marin Anastasov*: **Honey bees - 130 million years in the making**

11.30-12.30 *Stephen Fleming*: **Understanding and combating the yellow-legged hornet threat, with a look at the latest technology making tracking easier**

13.00-13.30 *Richard Rickitt*: **Thinking of becoming a beekeeper? How to get started**

14.00-15.00 *Roger Patterson*: **The Patterson Unit - a very different way of managing an apiary**

15.00-16.00 Honey show (for Wiltshire BKA members only) open viewing

16.00 Show closes

### Speakers

**Marin Anastasov NDB: Honey Bees - 130 million years in the making**

**Stephen Fleming: Understanding & combating the yellow-legged hornet**

**Richard Rickitt: Thinking of becoming a beekeeper? How to get started**

**Roger Patterson: The Patterson Unit - a very different way of managing an apiary**

**Sophie Butcher**

**Show organiser, Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day 2025**

## Letter from the Chair

I had a fun time last Thursday morning at the Apiary. Eric McLaughan, Julian Marter, David Furse-Roberts and I met to extract some honey. Hopes for a large volume were not high. Joe King had made a start when demonstrating on the Beginners course and had struggled to extract more than 3lbs of honey during the demonstration!



It is always good to observe other beekeepers at work as everyone has their own approach to each stage and tips to pass on. Furthermore, you can gather which equipment you find useful and easy to use and which, for you, is or is not worth investing in. The room was set up to allow an easy and hygienic transition from one stage to the next. Roles assigned and we were off.....

**Removal of the Wax Cappings** Uncapping has to be one of the least favourite stages of the process. It's a messy, sticky business and we were interested to see how David's trial of a method using a hairdryer would work. He met with limited success but concluded it was due to the lack of power of the particular hairdryer he was using. Eric stuck with a heated uncapping knife and made steady progress. My old serrated kitchen knife was not used!

No attempt was made to uncap frames that were crystallised and these were returned to the empty supers. We concluded that in future years we must find the opportunity to extract the honey as soon as possible after removal from hives, to prevent this. We made up two supers of crystallised frames and returned these to hives for the benefit of the bees.

## Extracting the honey

The recently purchased stainless steel 9 frame radial extractor was loaded by Julian, ensuring an even weight distribution of frames. Starting slowly and building up speed, his muscle power enabled a good amount of honey to be extracted from the frames! It was dark in colour and we were pleasantly surprised that the total extracted amounted to a few bucket loads.

After this, the wet frames were returned to the supers and put back on the original hives to allow the bees to clean them up. This should take just a few

days. Cleaning up equipment was aided by a power washer...another piece of kit that I will add to my wish list!

## Filtering

We are once again in Eric's debt as he volunteered to take the honey away to filter it. The honey will be filtered and scum removed to enable it to be jarred, labelled (as per Honey regulations 2015) and ready for sale.

So far £400 worth of apiary honey has been sold this year. This is useful revenue in a year when we have had large outgoings. It is not just the bees we should be grateful to, it is also the effort taken by a few individuals, Eric in particular, who has worked to create a supply chain so sales happen!

As the honey show approaches, it was good to see and hear there was a good turnout for the two workshops organised by David Rose. Useful tips and methods were demonstrated and shared to elevate honey and honey products to Show standards.

Finally there is so much going on in the association at the moment to organise events, ensure the bees and apiary are in good order. This was recognised at this week's committee meeting. Thank you to all who have put in time and commitment to make this possible.

I hope you are having a successful beekeeping year, despite the many challenges and you feel you can have a go at entering a few classes at the Honey Show. Look forward to seeing you there!

## Gillian Islip - Chair

**Mikes Bee Supplies**

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TA6 7PZ

## BBKA September Talk: 'Preparation for Showing'

The next in our series of Zoom talks will be 'Preparation for Showing' with Liz Westcott on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 7pm. A recording of this talk will be available on YouTube for those unable to watch live.

Liz will give an overview of how to prepare honey and beeswax for the Show table. She will be looking at processing wax to a good standard so it is then possible to use it for making candles, one ounce blocks or a cake of wax. She understands that everyone's approach to wax processing differs depending on the facilities and resources available to them. There are several different methods of doing this. Liz will show you the method which works best for her but you may well do it differently and as long as clean wax is the end product then all is well. Liz will also talk about preparing honey for the Show table.

Liz has been keeping bees in Brixham, South Devon, for twenty years. She started showing about fifteen years ago and has enjoyed a certain amount of success at local honey shows. She is President of Devon BKA, Chair of Torbay BKA and for the last eight years has been the Chair and Show Secretary for the Bees and Honey Marquee at Devon County Show where the Devon Honey Show is held each year.

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?pwd=DYMZxTlmJjpRCLJjYjvblxgybQQdSZ.1>

Meeting ID: 812 3381 9992 Passcode: 527929

**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 £26 each, 5 + boxes £25 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.

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**Eddie Howe** email:- [redrascal444@gmail.com](mailto:redrascal444@gmail.com) **Mobile 07812 738793**

**Tel. 01458 272114**

## Honey Fraud - Worrying stuff from The Observer newspaper

'It's like a fine wine', says Sarah Wyndham Lewis (a honey sommelier), A good honey has its own terroir, she adds. "We're looking at about 200 substances in honey, and they are responsive to the soil, the weather and the prevailing conditions ... You've got this extraordinary potential for limitless variety."

It is not just a question of taste; many beekeepers believe that honey is at the heart of one of the world's biggest food frauds, and that some, including jars sold in the UK, is blended with cheap sugar syrup from China, allowing it to be sold at a much lower price. "We're hiding some very dirty secrets here," says Wyndham Lewis. "Nobody wants to tackle it."

Britain is the world's biggest importer of Chinese honey. In the coastal provinces of eastern China, sprawling factories heat, blend and pack jars of one of the world's most traded commodities. The region is also a hub for the manufacture of fructose syrup, which can mimic the taste of honey and pass some authenticity checks.

UK regulators have been accused of being "supine" in the face of a huge and largely undetected global fraud. Under current rules, a blend of honeys from different countries does not require those countries to be listed on the label. Last year, beekeepers attending a food fair in Paris secretly recorded sales teams from east Asia claiming the UK was targeted with the cheapest honey because of a lack of robust and effective testing.

*The Observer* has obtained and analysed more than 500 authenticity laboratory test results conducted on UK supermarket honey since 2018, commissioned by beekeepers and fraud investigators. They reveal how some of the country's best-selling honeys have repeatedly failed tests to detect sugar syrups used to bulk out products.

Importers have challenged the reliability of these tests, but in 2023 the European Commission published its own. These revealed that 147 out of 320 samples from across Europe were considered suspicious, because of at least one marker of "extraneous sugar sources". All 10 samples blended or packaged in Britain, but likely to have originated overseas, failed the tests.

A clue can be found in the price tag, Wyndham Lewis says. Some supermarket own-brand honey sells from as little as about 80p. "[It's] sold at a price point which will tell you immediately that it cannot be real honey because nobody could produce it at that price. They're asking people to buy a product which has no traceability at all."

Her husband, Dale Gibson, co-founder of Bermondsey Street Bees, says these jars are unrecognisable as honey. "A proper honey production person cannot make any

money at that price,” he says. “You can't really even buy the jar for that price if you're a small producer, let alone fill it with honey, label it, transport it [and] all the other things you'd have to do.”

China exported more than 169,000 tonnes of honey last year, more than 47,000 of which were sent to the UK. Germany imported fewer than 2,500 tonnes in 2024.

Bernhard Heuvel, a commercial beekeeper from Germany and president of the European Professional Beekeepers Association, flew to Shanghai in May to visit one of the global hubs of honey production, fitted with secret filming and recording equipment. He claims so much of the honey supply chain is bulked out with syrup that prices have collapsed, driving beekeepers out of the business.

Cheap sugar syrup is marketed with claims it can beat most standards tests used to authenticate honey. Chinese authorities are keen to protect the world's biggest honey industry, but the bioengineered syrup is sold in vast plastic drums for as little as 75p a kilogram and flows largely undetected into the supply chain.

“We were secretly filming [for a German documentary] the business dinners and also negotiations,” says Heuvel. “Factories we were visiting had containers of the syrup and the honey. Factories were telling us to import it to Europe and mix it. “They were saying to us: 30-40% syrup is no problem with any kind of quality of honey. The higher the quality of honey, you can go up with the syrup.” Even a blend of 90% bioengineered syrup and 10% honey can pass some widely used tests, he adds.

On Mexico's Yucatán peninsula, beekeepers have seen the price of their produce collapse, and blame adulterated Chinese honey. In 2018, they sent a representative to the UK to buy a range of honeys and send them to an accredited German lab for testing. Ten of 11 jars – including own-brands from some of the UK's biggest supermarkets – failed the most advanced authenticity tests, called nuclear magnetic resonance. None passed all the authenticity tests.

The honey importers and the national food watchdog dispute the reliability of the tests. In November 2020, the UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA) concluded: “We considered all available evidence regarding the authenticity of this honey, including extensive traceability records. We were satisfied that no further action needed to be taken.” Tesco said its honey was “100% pure” and could be traced back to the keeper but recognised a more transparent honey testing regime was required.

UK regulators say results suggesting possible adulteration do not conclusively prove fraud but are a red flag for further investigation.

A government spokesperson said: “We take any type of food fraud very seriously. We work closely with enforcement authorities to ensure that food sold in the UK

is not subject to adulteration, meets our high standards – and maintains a level playing field between producers.”

The FSA has limited resources and prioritises products in the food chain that pose a risk to health. There is also no agreement in the industry or among regulators on a single test that could establish whether honey is adulterated, meaning it is laborious and costly to try to uncover the supply chain of fake honey. European regulators, however, have been more determined. In March 2023, an investigation called *From the Hives* found the highest number of suspicious honey consignments were from China (66 out of 89). In the EU, 44 operators were investigated and seven were sanctioned.

The EU has since introduced rules to require producers to label jars of blended honey with the countries of origin from June 2026. The UK is considering similar rules. The EU has also set up a project to improve testing, with a view to establishing a reference laboratory, and proposals for a traceability system.

A spokesperson for the Honey Association, which represents UK importers, said it considered the 2023 European Commission report to be “biased and questionable”. They added: “Leading experts in the UK, who have spent decades specialising in honey testing, have suggested to us that to date they have seen no credible scientific evidence suggesting that honey fraud or adulteration is a widespread issue in the UK.”

The British Retail Consortium told *The Observer* that retailers had tightened checks and were “working closely with the Food Standards Agency and the food crime unit to tackle fraud in honey”. But the scale of the fraud has been highlighted by the congress of the International Federation of Beekeepers’ Associations, also known as Apimondia, which will be held in Copenhagen next month. For the first time in its history, [it will not award a best honey prize](#) because of the challenge of it being “fully tested for adulteration”.

Adrian Charlton, principal scientist at Fera Science, a UK research organisation that provides honey testing, says more investment is needed to validate testing methods for honey. “We don’t have the tools to unequivocally prove whether there’s fraud or not.”

The C4 test, the most commonly used check in the UK, can easily be beaten by fraudsters. Charlton believes a “weight of evidence” approach is required, using various tests and supply chain documentation. No single test can be definitive, says Rick Mumford, FSA’s head of science and research. “The FSA, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the government chemist have worked closely together to develop practical methods for improving authenticity testing, including a weight of evidence toolkit and honey sampling protocol.

“As honey is a complex natural product, new techniques and tools are being developed to help businesses, government and enforcement agencies tackle honey fraud now and in the future, so consumers can have greater confidence in what they are picking up in their weekly shop.”

But a clue to authenticity to what they’re buying can be found in the price tag, says Wyndham Lewis. Some own-brand honey sells for 80p, “that will tell you immediately it cannot be real honey because nobody could produce it at that price. They’re asking people to buy a product which has no traceability at all.”

### **The science**

One of the most widely used authenticity tests is called the C4 sugar test (also known as AOAC 998.12), which is designed to detect syrups from plants such as maize and sugar cane. Sugar molecules in these syrups come from C4 plants, so named because the first organic compound synthesised during photosynthesis contains four carbon atoms, while nectar typically collected by bees comes from C3 plants.

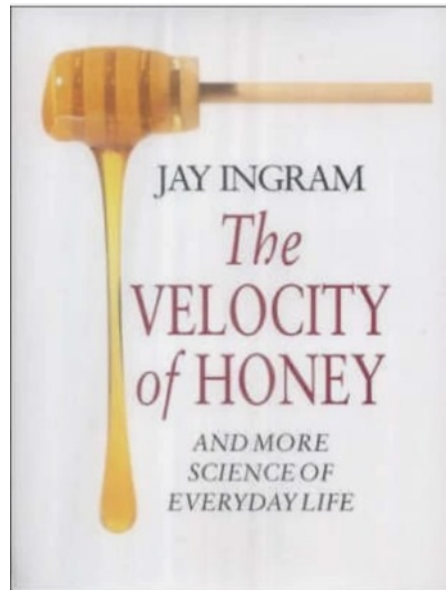
The fraudsters carefully formulate syrup to beat the C4 sugar test using syrups more closely resembling the composition of honey. More sophisticated tests have been developed, but over the years a race between fraudsters and government

### **Not a riveting read**

If you should have the misfortune to be stranded in Yeovil for a few hours and take to the library as a last resort, as I did recently, may I suggest that you don’t make the same mistake that I did, and pick this book from the shelves.

It has to be one of the most boring books that I have ever opened.

**Stewart Gould**





## Our Honey Show

Less than 3 weeks to go to our Honey Show. It is, as has often been claimed, the 'Best in the West'. There simply isn't another show in the South West of England which compares, but in order to remain the 'Best in the West', it needs entries - **your entries**.

The entry form, Honey Show schedule and recipes are all included with this newsletter, and there is one more document which could prove invaluable to new members - 'How to win points at Honey Shows'. Couple that useful information with the two acclaimed sessions held by David Rose recently and you're ahead of the game.

If you haven't entered before, then try the Novice Classes. It's free, and perhaps more importantly for novices, **anonymous**. Only if you win a prize will anybody know that it's your honey. You can even sit in and watch the judging of those classes, and hear the judge's comments - both good and bad.

## Eric's Emporium

### Revised frame & foundation prices

Frame type	each	Per 10	Per 11
<b>Hoffman deep frames complete</b>	<b>£1.98</b>	<b>£19.80</b>	<b>£21.78</b>
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
<b>Shallow frames complete</b>	£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
<b>Foundation</b>			
Deep wired foundation	£1.42	£14.20	£15.62
Shallow wired foundation	£0.87	£8.70	£9.57
<b>Deep frame c/w foundation</b>	<b>£3.40</b>	<b>£34.00</b>	<b>£37.40</b>
<b>Shallow frame c/w foundation</b>	<b>£2.71</b>	<b>£27.10</b>	<b>£29.81</b>

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](mailto:emporium.somertonbees@gmail.com)

## **Reminder of the SBKA General Meeting - Saturday 6th September at 10.30am by Zoom**

All Somerset BKA members will have received the Trustees reports and accounts for Somerset Beekeepers Association, for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 sent in an email by the County Secretary Neil Wellum. They were successfully submitted to the Charity Commission by the 30 July deadline. Given that it was not possible to present the reports and accounts to members at the 2025 AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> March, the Trustees have called an additional General Meeting by Zoom. This provides the opportunity for members to receive the reports and accounts and ask any questions, as required by the SBKA's Operational Guide and Handbook. If you would like to attend the General Meeting, you can do so via the following Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87900561619?pwd=MEdYRXJlYmFXbEdEMG81S3hQMVgvZz09>

Meeting ID: 879 0056 1619 Password: 994066

Neil sent you the following papers for the meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2025:

1. Agenda for General Meeting on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30am
2. Report and Accounts for SBKA old registered charity 277803
3. Report and Accounts for SBKA Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1206483 (NB these are nil accounts)
4. Annex of SBKA branch activity reports for 2024 (NB accompanies 277803 report and accounts)

**Suzy Perkins**

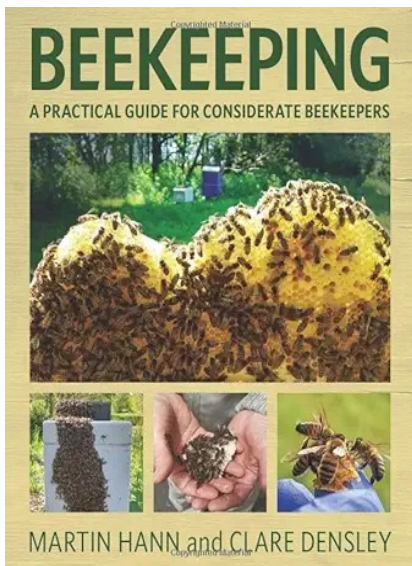
**Somerton Trustee for Somerset BKA**

## Visit to Buckfast Bees - 23<sup>rd</sup> August

It's the same each year, a bunch of beekeepers go down to Devon to visit the Buckfast bees, not quite knowing what to expect, and they all come away saying 'That was excellent'. It is such a relaxed environment and so informative. Here are a couple of pictures courtesy of Mel West.



18 people braved the Bank Holiday traffic and made the journey down the M5 & A38.



Marin Hann and Clare Densley from Buckfast will be visiting us in late October and will be talking about the eternal problem of getting your bees through winter.

You may also be interested to know that their long awaited book will be published in early October. RRP is !8.99 but if you order online from Amazon now, it will only cost you £15.99. They wanted to call it 'Go with the flow' but the publishers insisted on the "catchy" title of 'BEEKEEPING a practical guide for considerate Beekeepers'

## Honey bee super food



Scientists have developed a honeybee "super food" that could protect the animals against the threats of climate change and habitat loss. Bee colonies that ate the supplement during trials had up to 15 times more baby bees that grew to adulthood. Honeybees are a vital part of food production and contribute to pollinating 70% of leading global crops.

"This technological breakthrough provides all the nutrients bees need to survive, meaning we can continue to feed them even when there's not enough pollen," senior author Professor Geraldine Wright at the University of Oxford told BBC News. "It really is a huge accomplishment," she says. "Honeybees globally are facing severe declines, due to nutrient deficiencies, viral diseases, climate change and other factors. In the US, annual colony losses have ranged between 40-50% in the last decade and are expected to increase".

Beekeepers in the UK have faced serious challenges too. Nick Mensikov, chair of the Cardiff, Vale and Valleys Beekeepers Association, told BBC News that he lost 75% of his colonies last winter and that this has been seen across South Wales. "Although the hives have all been full of food, the bees have just dwindled. Most of the bees survived through January, February, and then they just vanished," he says.

Professor Geraldine Wright was inspired to work on bee nutrition after beekeepers told her about how many of their bees were dying. In the lab at Oxford, PhD student Jennifer Chennells showed us small clear boxes of honeybees in an incubator that she feeds with different foods she has made. She uses kitchen equipment you could find at home to make the raw ingredients, and rolls out glossy, white tubes of food.

"We put ingredients into what's like a cookie dough, with different proteins, fats, different amounts of carbohydrate, and the micronutrients that bees need. It's to try to work out what they like best and what's best for them," she says. She pushes the tubes inside the boxes and bees nibble at the mixture. It's in this lab that, using gene editing, Prof Wright's team successfully made a yeast that can produce the six sterols that bees need. "It's a huge breakthrough. When my student was able to engineer the yeast to create the sterols, she sent me a picture of the chromatogram that was a result of the work," she

says, referring to a chart of the substance structure. "I still have it on the wall of my office," she explains. The "superfood" was fed to bees in the lab's hives for three months. The results showed that colonies fed the food had up to 15 times more baby bees that made it to adulthood.

"When the bees have a complete nutrition they should be healthier and less susceptible to disease," Prof Wright says the food would be particularly useful during summers like this one when flowering plants appear to have stopped producing early. Beekeepers often feed supplementary food to bees to sustain them. "It's really important in years when the summer came early and bees will not have sufficient pollen and nectar to make it through the winter," she says. "The more months that they go without pollen, the more nutritional stress that they will face, which means that the beekeepers will have greater losses of those bees over winter," she explains.

Larger-scale trials are now needed to assess the long-term impacts of the food on honeybee health, but the supplement could be available to beekeepers and farmers within two years. The study was led by University of Oxford, working with Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, University of Greenwich, and the Technical University of Denmark.

**From BBC Radio 4**

## Sugar prices as at 29<sup>th</sup> August

Isn't it amazing that most of the supermarket charge the same price for a 1kg bag

Supplier	1 kg	2kg	5kg	25kg sack
Tesco	£1.09	2.15	£5.00	
Sainsbury	£1.09		£5.35	
Morrison	£1.19	£2.15	£5.00	
Aldi	£1.09			
Co-Op	1.15			
Lidl	See in store			
Asda	£1.09	Ht		
Waitrose	£1.25	£2.25		
B&M	£1.09			
Farm Foods	2 for £1.50			
Booker Foods	15= £13.49	6 = £12.89		£16.49



OO GAUGE BEE KEEPER FIGURE & 2 BEE HIVES HAND PAINTED APIARY GARDEN ALLOTMENT

st\_aubyn\_uk (2717)  
100% positive Feedback

**£42.31**

### Beekeeping on a budget

If you think that beekeeping equipment is a bit expensive, then this might be the answer for you. 2 Langstroth hives, and a beekeeper with his own suit for just £42.31. Mind you, the honey yield could be quite small.

**Dates for your diary**

**New Beekeepers Practical Session 6  
Preparing for winter**

**Saturday September 6<sup>th</sup>  
10.00am**

**Somerton Beekeepers Hog Roast**

**Sunday September 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Somerton Beekeepers  
HONEY SHOW**

**Saturday Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>  
Keinton Mandeville Village Hall**

**Clare Densley & Martin Hann  
From Buckfast Bees**

**Thurs October 30<sup>th</sup>  
Seeing your bees through the winter**

**Somerton AGM**

**Thursday November 20<sup>th</sup>  
& Candle Dipping Workshop  
With Maggie North**

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