

# SBKA NEWS

The Newsletter of The Shropshire Beekeepers' Association



June 2025



## Meet Mark Newman

With nearly as many job titles as he has apiaries... Find out who is Mark Newman?

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## Honey Show 2025

Advanced warning about the SBKA Honey Show September 2025.

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## World Bee Day Review

Rita Cliffe reviews a successful World Bee Day at the apiary.

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## June in the Apiary

A few more swarm calls are coming in. Word from Pest Control is that they are receiving lots of calls about bee extractions from buildings. Our BBKA insurance doesn't cover us to remove bees from buildings but ethical companies like Pestforce Shropshire and others found on U.K. Bee Removers [www.UKBR.org](http://www.UKBR.org) can remove most colonies without killing them. Please dissuade people from killing bees in their properties. The comb, honey and the chemicals stay unguarded and robbers take them back to their own colony and die too, they could bring it back to your apiary. There are plenty of wild flowers about and with both Telford and Shrewsbury councils leaving sections un-mowed along some of the roads so bees are bringing in nectar. Apiaries should be busy especially when it is not raining

Things to consider doing in June:

- \* Ready/return supers for the summer flow
- \* Inspect and knock down cups and uncapped queen cells
- \* Order jars and labels for summer honey & buy in treatments if you treat your bees for varroa.

## Call for Content

If you have news items, pictures of your apiary or bees, questions etc. please email them to [sbkanews@gmail.com](mailto:sbkanews@gmail.com) for inclusion in next month's newsletter.

Items appearing in our SBKA newsletter are for information only and are not necessarily the view of the editor or Shropshire Beekeepers' Association

Please send news items to  
[sbkanews@gmail.com](mailto:sbkanews@gmail.com) by 28th of each month

# A Word From the Chair

## **Keeping any livestock is always a challenge, with ups and downs.**

After a winter when many of us suffered unusual colony losses, the unusual spring weather - the warmest and sunniest spring since records began, together with the dry weather, has resulted in bumper honey crops for many, and early swarms. I have a sympathy with one of our members who said he had had enough of extracting honey and had a word with his bees to ask them to slow down as he had already extracted more honey this spring than the whole of the previous year. Bucket and jar sales are going well in the shop!

In the Apiary, following the severe colony losses we experienced over winter, we are now back to the number of colonies we want, thanks to those members who have donated swarms and colonies.

Earlier this month, Will Jones and I represented the Association at a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, the invitations being part of the Kings Award for Voluntary Service. A once in a lifetime experience, but with c.8000 other attendees it wasn't a close-up royal encounter, but the experience of walking around the grounds, meeting with some amazing people, and a good tea more than compensated.

This year's Apiary Open Day for World Bee Day was a great success and is becoming a fixture on the local calendar with numbers increasing each year and raising funds for the association. Many people returned after visiting last year. Thanks go to Rita Cliffe and her team for organising the day.



Thanks also go to Tu Pham who has taken over the management of the website from Rob Jarvie. Rob has done a great job in developing the new website, launched last year, it was always planned to be a temporary role for Rob, but lasted longer than anticipated.

Looking forward, we have the formal KAVS presentation by the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire on the 6th June, and the first Beginners Course starts on Saturday 7th June.



# Meet Mark Newman

**I purchased my first colony of bees about 12 to 13 years ago, having received training from Brian Goodwin.** I then found myself in a fortunate position of retiring, aged 55, having sold a manufacturing business in the north of the town. My retirement coincided with Shropshire Beekeeper's acquisition of Conduit Head. The timing was perfect. I had time on my hands and always enjoyed a practical project. Over the past 9 years it has been wonderful to be part of the transition of the site from an overgrown jungle with a vandalised building to the wonderful resource we have for beekeepers and the general public today.



As the site has developed so has my involvement with bees. Initially I learnt a great deal from fellow beekeepers, including the realisation that if you ask five beekeepers the same question, you'll probably get six or seven answers! As I started to expand my colonies, I undertook several BBKA courses including general husbandry and a couple of modules, I strongly believe that education and training are an important part of improving your beekeeping. I have recently finished delivering this year's Basic Assessment training, and hope the knowledge participants have gained will see them increase their honey yields and help them keep their colonies going through the winter. I enjoy mentoring new beekeepers, which, I find, is a really practical way of backing up training and passing on your own knowledge and experience.

One of my passions however, and something I'm proud of is the development of the shop alongside Ivor Hucking. This has grown over the years. We started selling just a few hives from a local producer, now we have a great relationship with several National suppliers and sell well priced beekeeping items to members whilst raising funds for the association. Of course, our wealth of experience and advice comes free of charge! ... You can even grab a coffee and have a tour of the site whilst you're here!

In addition to the shop, I became a trustee, organise the swarm collection map, and love nothing better myself than an early evening call, from someone who knows very little about bees, with a swarm in a tree, or up a chimney! I organised the planting of the orchard at the apiary and help-out each year at the BBKA Spring Convention as lead steward for the Trade Halls. Being with all the suppliers has proved very useful. I am the Asian Hornet Action Team Co-Ordinator for the area, the training for which involved a very exciting week in Jersey a few years ago. Since becoming a beekeeper, I have travelled to Ghana and Malawi with Bees Abroad

where I helped set up a project teaching women farmers to become beekeepers.

As for my own beekeeping, this year I have bees on 5 sites, including a quarry, a farm, and an allotment, all of which present their own individual challenges and rewards. I have my own and a neighbour's garage, set up for hive construction, honey extraction and bottling – I was banned from the house several years ago!

I feel very fortunate to have found something in my retirement that is both practically rewarding and keeps me in contact with many like minded people. I look forward to many more years of serving in the shop, searching for swarms, stings, sticky surfaces, sweaty bee suits, and the satisfaction of sharing my honey with the people of Shropshire and beyond.



## HONEY SHOW 2025 27-9-2025

CALLING ALL MEMBERS TO OUR 2025 HONEY SHOW. NOW IS THE TIME YOU SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT THE CLASSES YOU ARE GOING TO ENTER AND WHAT PREPARATION YOU NEED TO BE PUTTING IN PLACE.

LAST YEARS WINNERS OF THE TROPHIES WERE WILLIAM JONES WHO ALSO ACHIEVED THE BLUE RIBBON AWARD FROM THE JUDGE FOR BEST IN SHOW FOR HIS DARK HONEY AND ANDREW BRUERTON FOR THE MOST POINTS IN THE NOVICE CLASSES.

NOW IS YOUR CHANCE TO GET THE BETTER OF LAST YEARS WINNERS AND GET YOUR NAME ON OUR BEAUTIFUL SILVER TROPHIES.

To help you along our judge from last year left some pointers to help everyone with their exhibits. It was unfortunate we couldn't let members in to listen to the judging but the lack of space prevented it.

**1. Candles.** It really helps if the wick has been waxed. It makes the candle easier to light. All candles are lit, left to burn for 5 minutes, extinguished and then relit. The base of each candle should be horizontal.

**2. Set Honey.** Need clean, non rusty, non dented lids.

Fill so that no air is visible between the top of the honey and the bottom of the lid. No bits in the honey. It helps to take your sample from the middle of your bucket.

**3. Liquid Honey.** Lids as above.

Fill as above. Warm gently to just less than 50 degrees to remove any crystallisation. Filter to remove any bits. [A cheap Thornes straining cloth will do it] Check with a torch through the honey.

**DON'T** swap the lids at the last minute. The aroma is lost and perfection is on taste, appearance and aroma.

I hope this will inspire you to get ready and show the long standing members that they can be beaten!

Novice Classes		Tick which categories you are Entering
Open to members with less than 3 years beekeeping experience		
Class 1	One jar of LIQUID HONEY any colour.	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>
Class 2	One Jar of SET HONEY, naturally crystallised.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open Classes		
Class 3	Two jars of LIGHT HONEY.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 4	Two jars of MEDIUM HONEY.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 5	Two jars of DARK HONEY.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 6	Two jars of NATURALLY GRANULATED HONEY.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 7	One BLACK JAR of HONEY.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 8	One Comb of LIQUID HONEY. Suitable for Extraction.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 9	Six 28g BLOCKS OF BEESWAX. Natural colour of any shape.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 10	One HONEY CAKE. To given recipe.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 11	One batch of HONEY SHORTBREAD. To given recipe.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 12	Two BEESWAX CANDLES any shape.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class 13	A PHOTOGRAPH. Any aspect of the life of bees. Up to A4 in size.	<input type="checkbox"/>

The T W Wilbrahams Memorial Trophy will be awarded to the Novice with the most points  
The Shropshire Star Perpetual Challenge Trophy will be awarded to the member with the most points in the open classes.



# Bees for Sale £150

Nucs ready soon, a couple of weeks.

Contact Pete for more details

07896045443



## June

### Lamb's ears *Stachys byzantina*

Reaching 50cm, the silvery flower spikes of lamb's ears bear whorls of small purplish or pink flowers through late spring and summer. They're attractive to many pollinators, especially bumblebees, while female wool carder bees (*Anthidium manicatum*) use the dense hairs on the oblong leaves to make nests. This distinctive bee has a line of yellow spots along its abdomen. The larger males can be found patrolling territories around these plants. They'll head-butt other flower visitors to drive them away including much larger bumblebees, while welcoming females.

#### OTHERS TO TRY

- ✦ Allium – in many sizes, best in lighter soils in full sun
- ✦ Foxgloves (*Digitalis*) – short-lived perennials that like rich soil in dappled shade
- ✦ Thyme (*Thymus*) – evergreen sub-shrub needing full sun on alkaline to neutral soil
- ✦ Cardoon (*Cynara cardunculus* AGM) – tall perennials requiring shelter from strong winds
- ✦ Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) – flowers and fruits best in a sheltered, sunny spot on free-draining soil



Female wool  
carder bee  
9-17mm

# The One That Got Away... Then Came Back

by Matt Comerford

**Walking towards my beehives I heard really loud buzzing from a tree.** I looked up to see a cloud of bees filling the sky in flight. They went over my house and into the back garden. They carried on over the field behind. I had to run to the front of the house and around the corner to get to the field, but in this time I lost them. I drove around looking for them but they were gone. Were they mine? Were they a wild colony flying over? I thought I would never know.

The next day about 1pm I heard loud buzzing out the back of my house. I looked out, it was a swarm coming in. They had chosen a stack of equipment I had out back ready to clean. From the direction they came in they had to be the swarm that got away the day before. I watched them settle, enjoying the wonder of the swarm.

After a couple of days I suited up and went to inspect. I had to as there were a few frames in there but not enough and I did not want to deal with wild comb again. Also I had to stop the robbers that were still trying to get in and the swarm had multiple entrances in gaps all around the boxes so not easy to defend. There was an empty super for making cut comb which the new bees had started filling for me which was an added bonus.



The Swarm Moves In

I went through the boxes, replacing the old dirty boxes and frames with new ones. Then I got to some frames that contained eggs, and there she was, a queen with a faint green dot on her back, my queen had returned. Mystery solved.



The Queen Has Returned

So sloppy beekeeping and missing a capped queen cell had led to them leaving. Sloppy beekeeping and not cleaning my old equipment led to them returning. Perhaps they missed me? Perhaps they didn't want to be wild? Or perhaps/probably a stack of old boxes and frames was just too good for them to ignore. Either way, she is home in time for the summer flow.





## World Bee Day

by Rita Cliffe

**A good day was had by all. We had 147 visitors through the gate, many of whom were local and said "they didn't know we were there".** Everyone worked hard and produced a day to be proud of. The activities were well received, making pebble bees, rolling a candle and making a bee bracelet.

The microscopes were also a great success. The weather was kind to us, cloudy but dry in the morning with the sun showing it's face in the afternoon. The refreshments went down well with a good selection of home made goodies on offer and even this year ice pops for the youngsters.



All in all we made just over £330 from the activities and refreshments and a further £250 for the shop in honey and candle sales.

A very successful day only made possible by the hard work and willingness to help from our volunteers and of course a fantastic selection of cakes. A big thank you to everyone who helped in any way.





## **Shropshire Beekeepers Association Beeswax Conversion**

Bring your clean beeswax  
to the SBKA apiary shop  
and we will swap it for  
new wired foundation

**For every lb of wax  
we will give you**

<b>B.S. Deep</b>	<b>2 ½ Sheets</b>
<b>B.S. Shallow</b>	<b>5 Sheets</b>

**No Cash Straight Swap**

This offer is only available on a Wednesday  
and Saturday Morning 9.30 to 12.30

# Shop Price List

01/05/2025

Price

Pre assembled National Frames (Seconds)		
SN4 Super Frame and Foundation	Pack of 10	£30.00
DN4 Brood Frame and Foundation	Pack of 10	£35.00
Please give us as much notice as possible, these frames will be made to order so that we can use the freshest foundation.		

Self Assembly National Frames (Seconds)		
SN4 frames for use in National and WBC supers, with Hoffman spacing side bars	1 x Frame	£0.85
	10 x Frames	£8.00
	25 x Frames	£20.00
DN4 frames for use in National and WBC brood boxes, with Hoffman spacing side bars	1 x Frame	£0.85
	10 x Frames	£8.00
	25 x Frames	£20.00

National Foundation		
BS Shallow foundation wired	Pack of 11	£10.00
BS Deep foundation wired	Pack of 11	£15.00

New!!  
New!!

Extras		
Frame Nails 19mm	Box, 500g (3000 nails)	£6.00
	Pack, 100g (600 nails)	£1.50
Frame Nail Hammer		£2.50
Frame Runners	Metal (pair)	£2.00
Frame Rest	Metal	£6.50
Castellated spacers 10 slot	Metal (pair)	£2.50
Mesh varroa sheet for floor	Mesh only	£10.00
Correx varroa board	500 x 500 cut to fit	£5.00
BS Honey 2 in 1 Poly nuc	Empty with feeder	£70.00
National Poly 6 frame Nuc	Empty with feeder	£74.00

New!!

Feeding & Health		
Ambrosia Syrup	12.5Kg Jerry can	£28.00
Ambrosia Fondant	1 Kg Packet	£2.00
Ambrosia Fondant	Pack of 12	£22.00
Fondant Aid	Single	£1.25
Ambrosia Fondant	12.5kg Block	£16.00
Apibioxal	5 pack	£18.00
Apiguard	2 pack	£8.00
Apilife Var	Per hive	£3.00
Apistan	2 pack	£6.00
Syringe	5 pack	£1.00





Accessories		
Smoker	Medium	£19.00
Smoker with removable basket	Dome topped	£20.00
Hive Tool	J type	£4.50
Hive Tool	Standard	£4.50
Queen Marking Cage	Plunger type	£2.50
Bamboo Queen Cage	Bamboo	£0.50
Queen Catcher	Clip type	£4.00
Queen Catcher	One Handed	£5.00
Queen Marking Pen - 5 colours available	Green	£5.00
Crown of Thorns	Wooden	£6.50
Queen introduction cage	Yellow	£1.00
Queen Excluder Cleaner	Wooden Handle	£10.00
Queen Clipping Shears		£3.50
Bee Brush	Wooden	£5.00
Hair Roller Cage/Mount/Cellhold		£0.30
Queen Excluder	Plastic	£4.50
Queen Excluder	Wooden	£15.00
Crown board	Wooden	£12.00
Clear Crown Board	Clear	£15.00
Rhombus Bee Escape		£3.00
Uncapping fork	Cranked	£4.00
Porter Bee Escapes	Pair	£1.00
Dummy Boards	National Super	£4.50
Dummy Boards	National Brood	£5.00
National Eke	Pine 50mm	£6.00
Mouse Guards	Metal	£2.00
Soda Crystals	Bag	£2.50
Rapid Feeder	2L round	£4.50
Rapid Feeder	6L square	£12.00
CAUTION AHEAD Bees At Work	Aluminium Sign	£10.00
Honey Bees Hard at Work	Aluminium Sign	£6.00
Cowboy hat and veil		£10.00
Straw hat and veil		£10.00
Haynes Bee Manual		£24.00

Processing and Packaging		
Glass Jars 1lb round with screw lid	25	£14.00
	50	£28.00
	Box of 72	£40.00
Spare screw on gold lids	63mm	£0.15
Glass Jars 3/4lb Hex with gold twist lid	Box of 84	£46.00
Spare gold twist lids	Each	£0.15
Tamper labels	100 x Gold / Black	£2.00
	500 x Gold / Black	£10.00
Double stainless steel strainer	2 sieves in one unit	£17.50
Honey storage bucket	30lb	£4.50
Honey gate	White	£5.00
Honey settling tank	60lb with tap	£20.00



# Hive Price List

01/05/2025



## National Hive 1

	Flat Pack		Assembled
Cedar	£126.00		£146.00

Floor, Brood Box, Wooden Queen Excluder,  
Super, Crown Board and Roof

## National Hive 2

Cedar	£150.00		£175.00
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Floor, Brood Box, Wooden Queen Excluder,  
2 x Super, Crown Board and Roof

## National Hive Parts

Reduced	National Floor	Cedar	£20.00		£20.00
Reduced	National Brood Box	Cedar	£30.00		£30.00
	Framed Queen Excluder	Pine			£15.00
Reduced	National Super	Cedar	£24.00		£24.00
	Crown Board	Pine			£12.00
	Clear Crown Board	Pine and Perspex			£15.00
Reduced	Flat Roof 4"	Cedar	£26.00		£26.00
	Hive Stand	Double			£60.00
	Green Hive stand	Double			£40.00
	Green single stand	Single			£30.00
New!!	Hive stand	Fixed leg			£45.00

All hives are seconds quality.

Images may not be a true representation of actual product.