

APIARY NEWSLETTER



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Founded in 1913

Colony of Invasive Red Dwarf Honeybees found for first time in Europe

Discovery of [Apis florea](#) in Malta raises fears of devastating impact on native bee populations

The Red Dwarf Honeybee has established a colony in Europe for the first time, scientists have found.

The bee, *Apis florea*, is native to Asia and its discovery has raised alarm among Maltese beekeepers and conservationists, who fear the potentially devastating impact on native bee populations.

“It is concerning that *Apis florea* has been found in Malta,” said Dave Goulson, a professor of biology at the University of Sussex. “*Apis florea* is likely to compete for pollen and nectar with native pollinators, a group of insects that are already in decline. It is also very likely that these bees will be carrying multiple diseases which European bees may have little resistance to.”



Previous reports show the red dwarf species has slowly expanded its territory from Asia to the Middle East and north-east Africa, but until now it had never been reported in Europe. Previous reports show the red dwarf species has slowly expanded its territory from Asia to the Middle East and north-east Africa, but until now it had never been reported in Europe.



“If it is in Malta, this is the first occurrence of a honeybee in Europe that is not the western hive bee, *Apis mellifera*,”

When the colony, consisting of more than 2,000 adult bees, was discovered encircling a tree branch, DNA testing was done to identify the species. As soon as the species was identified as *Apis florea* it was removed and destroyed.

This new finding was yet another example of increasing temperatures due to the climate crisis driving the spread of species to previously unoccupied territories.

The researchers believe the mild winters in Malta and other southern European countries favour the survival of this invasive species. The red dwarf honeybee is also found in Israel.

It could be “a matter of just a few years” for this species to spread to another location given the large number of islands in the Mediterranean that are relatively near each other, and the fact that the continental land is also so nearby, it is very plausible that more of these incursions will occur in the future, threatening the biodiversity in ways that we may not even yet understand.



SS&DBKA HONEY SHOW 2024



As is now becoming an established format, entrants were invited to bring in their entries on Friday evening and Saturday, prior to an 'Open Judging' session by Mr John Goodwin.

John runs between 20 and 30 colonies in several apiaries from the southern to the northern boundaries of Cheshire.

John is BBKA National Honey Judge and a BBKA Honey Judge Assessor.

In a normal year he judges at between 10 and 15 honey shows as well as exhibiting at several shows himself. He is a Director of Nantwich Show and manages the annual Cheshire beekeepers honey show.

Unfortunately this will be the last year that John will be judging our show, as he himself said, Time for a fresh face to judge our show

Members gathered to show off their produce and expertise in 24 classes.

Ranging from the ever popular Honey Classes to the more unusual 'Bee related invention' class.

There really was 'something for everyone' in the show this year including classes to involve the younger members of the association.

Judging commenced at 10:00 am with John working his way through the many entries in the various honey classes. Each receiving a running commentary on the merits and also areas which could be improved upon to make show winning entries. This was a constructive narratory with some very keen insights into the requirements for 'national' level exhibits.

John then concluded his judging proceeding through the remaining classes which included

Honey Fudge, some beautifully made cakes, decorated cupcakes, the Young persons classes and finishing with Class 24 - A poem about Bees and /or Beekeeping.

After a short break, to collate the

results, the prize giving commenced.....the results of which

are shown in their entirety on the next page.....along with a few photographs of this years worthy winners...and of course our 'Best in Show Prize', which was this year awarded to Gill Knight for her Bee Related Craft Project



SS&DBKA Honey Show Results 2024 (1st Prize Only)

Class No.	Class	1st Prize
Novice Classes		
1	Class 1 - 1 jar 454g (1lb) clear honey	Kevin Mulliner
2	Class 2 - 1 jar 454g (1lb) set honey	Mark Mundy
3a	Class 3 (a) Frame of capped honey ready for extraction in a suitable bee-proof display box*	Rob Philpott
3b	Class 3 (b) Beginners Course Attendee 2024 Frame of capped honey ready for extraction in a suitable bee-proof display box*	No Prizes
Open Class entries		
4	Class 4 - 2 jars 454g (1lb) light honey	Alan Brewin
5	Class 5 - 2 jars 454g (1lb) medium honey	Martin Davis
6	Class 6 - 2 jars 454g (1lb) heather honey	Stuart Roberts
7	Class 7 - 2 jars 454g (1lb) dark honey	No Prizes
8	Class 8 - 2 jars 454g (1lb) set honey	Alan Brewin
9	Class 9 - A frame of capped honey ready for extraction in a suitable bee proof display box*	Stuart Roberts
10	Class 10 - 5 jars of honey ready for sale, fully labelled with all legal requirements	No Prizes
11	Class 11 - Own design honey label to fit 454g (1lb) jar displayed on empty jar. (Must comply with legal requirements)	Paul Mann
12	Class 12 - A photographic image, taken by entrant. Subject, bees or beekeeping. (Any size, Max A4 print)	Elizabeth Bennet
13	Class 13 - Beeswax 1 piece weight 200-255g (7-9 oz) - to be cast in plain mould	Martin Davis
14	Class 14 - Decorative use of beeswax	Gill Knight
15	Class 15 - Beeswax candles 3 pieces all the same	Alan Brewin
16a	Class 16 (a) - 1x 75cl bottle of dry mead with white plastic flanged cork	Stuart Roberts
16b	Class 16 (b) - 1x 75cl bottle of sweet mead with white plastic flanged cork	Alan Greenman
16c	Class 16 (c) - 1x 75cl bottle of other flavours (Melomel) of mead with white plastic flanged cork	Stuart Roberts
17	Class 17 - Honey fudge, 6 - 8 pieces following the same recipe as outlined on the Honey Show page on the website.	Gill Knight
18	Class 18 - Honey biscuits, 6 biscuits following the same recipe as outlined on the Honey Show page on the website.	Rob Philpott
19	Class 19 - Honey cake, following the same recipe as outlined on the Honey Show page on the website.	Wendy Woodward
20	Class 20 - Honey for tasting - members' vote - Supply 1x 454g (1lb) jar of honey - no label	Stuart Roberts
21a	Class 21 (a) - Young person class - One Decorative honey jar and lid with a Beekeeping theme - Highly Commended	Ellie Kent, Nancy Bennett, Chris Kent
21b	Class 21 (b) - Young person class - 3 decorated Rich Tea biscuits with a beekeeping theme - Highly Commended	Ellie Kent, Nancy Bennett, Chris Kent, Elizabeth Bennet
22	Class 22 - Bee related craft project with explanation	Gill Knight *** Best in Show
23	Class 23 - Bee related invention or beekeeping gadget with detailed explanation	Rob Philpott
24	Class 24 - A poem about bees or beekeeping; no more than 100 words, word count to be stated.	Wendy Woodward

Class 24: A Poem about Bees or Beekeeping attracted a good entry this year.
Here are just a few of the entries

The Business of being Busy

Retirement was rapidly looming,
"You'll get bored, get a hobby" they said,
"Don't sit around watching telly,
Or lazing about in your bed"

So I looked on all of the websites,
For ideas to fill up my day,
'A Bee Cub for Beginners',
Caught my eye, and it's starting today !

Three hives are now in my garden,
I'm tending their needs every day,
Checking for pests and varroa,
Keeping wasps and hornets at bay

In Autumn I am greatly rewarded,
With honey, it tastes so divine,
I'm now a fully fledged Beekeeper!
And I hope you've enjoyed reading my rhyme.

The Life of a Worker Bee

A larva she is, until her 21st day,
Emerging from a cell, she must tidy away,
Three days of cleaning for the next set of eggs,
Finally moving on to stretch her legs,
A rush of hormones, a nurse she becomes,
An excited new brood, in need of some mums,
Cleaning and building is next on the list,
Difficult jobs through which she persists,
Finally completing all of her chores,
A journey begins, heading outdoors,
Perchance she returns with golden legs,
Helping fill up those hexagonal kegs,
Despite all this work which she never did spurn,
She leaves once more, never to return

The Threat to our Bees

Something has come,
Across the ocean,
Something to threaten our bees,
It's name is the Asian Hornet,
And it crossed the ocean with ease.

I am a bee as you can see,
 I identify as a worker,
 I'd like to bask upon a leaf,
 But then I'd be a shirker,
 My mums the queen,
 She's rarely seen, but we just call her Dot,
 She moves around from frame to frame,
 Lays eggs you know, A LOT!
 My day is full from dawn to dusk,
 I never have the light on,
 I was a nurse but I've moved on,
 I want to be a forager,
 My favourite work is making bread,
 With pollen and some honey,
 Honey tastes of sun and flowers,
 But it really is quite Yucky

Honey bee I will give you a home,
 Your sisters, the queen and also the drones.

I build it from Cedar, a stand and a floor,
 A brood box, an entrance, without a door.

A queen excluder, a super or two,
 A crown board and roof space, for air to flow through,

In Autumn the mouse guards will protect your home,
 Reducing the entrance to keep out your foes.

Ambrosia and fondant will help you survive,
 The wettest of winters 'til spring does arrive.

The weather come April, I hope will be warm,
 I pray I will see you, but please do not swarm.

JUST A FEW OF OUR WORTHY WINNERS THIS YEAR



NATIONAL HONEY SHOW 2024



Spurred on by their successes in our annual Honey Show, both Stuart Roberts and Alan Brewin were encouraged to enter in the [National Honey Show at Sandown Park](#), Esher, Surrey on Thursday 24th / Saturday 26th October 2024

We are delighted to announce that Stuart won 3rd place in Class 26: Two Jars Medium Honey and Alan won 4th place in Class 64: Melomel or Pyment Dry or Sweet for his Mead.

Congratulations to you both on your magnificent achievement..!



TANNERS WINE MERCHANTS WINDOW DISPLAY

Spotted on a recent visit to Shrewsbury by Penny Darlington, this marvellous window display at Tanners Wine Merchants, 26 Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury. When I contacted them, Marketing Manager, Christina Albon said:

“Bees are vital to our planet, not only do they provide delicious honey but they help produce and pollinate a significant amount of crops, without them our ecosystem would collapse. We need to look after bees!

Although vines are self-pollinating, the best wines are made from vineyards that encourage bees and support biodiversity. This could be done by increasing wildlife habitat areas and cover crops which helps regulate nitrogen levels and improve soils; setting aside areas for wild plants and flowers to grow; and by reducing chemical usage by working organically or in a sustainable



fashion. At Tanners we champion and support the growers and winemakers who are working in such a fashion. It isn't the easy option, it takes real commitment to develop and sustain such changes in the vineyard, but the long-term benefits are worth it and, crucially, the wines taste good!

A big thank you to Audra Davies and Christina Albon of [Tanners Wine Merchants](#), for their help.



WINTER SOCIAL EVENT 2024 AT STAFFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST



Our social event this year took place on the 30th November at Staffordshire Wildlife Trust at the Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford ST17 0WT just five minutes' drive from our Shugborough Apiary.

A big thanks to Steve Smith and Alex from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust for a guided walk around the reserve. For those of you who were unable to attend on Saturday The Wolseley Centre, is one of the county's hidden gems and it's completely free to visit – so why not make a date in your diary to pay them a visit

[The Wolseley Centre | Staffordshire Wildlife Trust](https://www.staffordshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/)



THE PRICE OF HONEY

A new feature where you get to submit...wellsometimes outrageously priced honey you have seen out and about on your travels.

First of the new feature goes to Alan Greenman who spotted this in a shop in Bakewell, Derbyshire...and doesn't it look appetising..??

However both of these pale into insignificance when compared to 'Elvish Honey' ... no not from 'Graceland' ...from Turkey



Who wouldn't pay £10.35 for 3/4 lb. of foamy deliciousness ??

Elvish Honey, Elvish Honey comes from the beautiful heights of Arhavi, where it is produced by a species of wild bees which gather nectar from local, endemic flowers and medicinal plants. These bees don't live in hives, but in a deep cave and their honey is extracted with the help of professional climbers.

Stunningly beautiful designer flask...



It's been called the 'Nectar of the Gods' Unfortunately this seasons harvest is sold out or you could have bagged yourself a bargain at \$1,500.00 for a 150 g flask. Which works out to £3,549.26 / lb.



And this one spotted by David Withers when he was in Scotland in October.

Bargain price of £6.99 for 1/4 lb.



For more shockingly priced Honey click here: [Worlds Most Expensive Honey](#)

LAST RANDOM THOUGHTS FROM THE APIARY...OR ARE THEY??



- What's the difference between a Hippo and a Zippo? ...One is really heavy, and the other is a little lighter.
- Have you ever thought...? It doesn't matter how hot or cold the room is.... it's always 'Room Temperature'....??
- What do you call a fish with no eyes?....A Fshhhhh !

If anyone has a 'Random Thought'send it to: spbka-mail@southstaffsbeekeepers.com

As usual find out more by clicking on the [blue letters](#) in this edition to find out more



CAN YOU FIND THE QUEEN

Have a good look around this edition of the Newsletter and see if you can spot where she is? In the September edition she was to be found laying in the comb in the 'Lasers and DNA Barcoding Help Tackle Honey Fraud' article on Page 3

