

# SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BEEKEEPERS BRANCH NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

Editor: Mary Staffurth

Tel: 01732 462931 / Email: [marystaffurth@yahoo.com](mailto:marystaffurth@yahoo.com)

Branch website: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>



## Hard Work Pays Dividends at the Honey Show

The branch honey show, at the end of September, was a popular and successful event. This year's judge, Bob Smith, described it as a very good turnout. He was meticulous in his assessment of every entry and the judging took more than three hours.

*Paul Abbott*



Bob had several observations and tips for future entries. He pointed out that the labels on many of the jars of honey for sale did not have lot numbers. Although you can sell honey at the garden gate without lot numbers, if you are selling to retail then you need them. He said that, as a show judge, he did not know where the jars were being sold.

When it came to inspecting the honey classes, he found that people were being tripped up by "silly little things". For example, you need to filter the honey to ensure cleanliness. Bob also found that many of the jars had traces of dirt inside. He said that jars that are washed and left to drain can have traces of lime drying on the inside and his tip is to polish the inside with a cloth before filling with honey. In the runny honey classes, he saw several cases of "insipid granulation" which, in theory, could have disqualified those entries. The beeswax was generally quite clear, but some contained specks of dirt.

*Judge Bob Smith, on the right, with steward Tim Johnston before the start of judging*

The judge always has plenty of cakes to taste and this year we had a biscuit class for the first time. Many of us struggled to produce 10 matching biscuits and I had to throw away a burnt batch on Friday evening and try again. For the main cake we also had a new recipe, this time using wholemeal flour and no sugar. Bob said the cakes were alright but there were some that were overcooked, undercooked, oversized or undersized. The mead competition also changed this year. Instead of separate dry and sweet mead entries there was only one class.

*Simon Staffurth*



The overall winner for the 2025 show was Tim Johnston, who managed to secure seven first prizes in honey, honey label, wax and cake classes. He will be taking home the Sloane Challenge Cup for the highest number of points. The Captain Turner Cup for the clear honey classes went to Bob Blair. The Inglis Mason Cup for granulated or set honey was awarded to Liz Seal. The Wilbury Cup for a cake of plain moulded wax was won by Tim Johnston. The Bradbury Cup for mead went to Liz Birchenough. The Jenner Rose Bowl for the honey cake was awarded to Simon & Mary Staffurth. The Carter Cup for novice clear honey was won by Lee Smith.

The Hart Cup for novice granulated or set honey went to Paddy Green. The Crowther Shield for a mounted colour photograph was awarded to John Farrow.

There was a small craft fair alongside the honey show and plenty of people came to browse. The tea, coffee and cake stall did a brisk trade and Liz had a busy time selling honey.

*Mary Staffurth*

## Results in Full

2 jars light honey (clear): 1st Simon & Mary Staffurth / 3rd Paul Abbott  
2 jars medium honey (clear): 1st Bob Blair / 2nd Cliff & Pauline Hayward / 3rd Liz Seal / VHC Paul Abbott  
2 jars dark honey (clear): 1st Paul Abbott / 2nd Paddy Green  
2 jars set honey (naturally granulated): 1st Liz Seal / 2nd Paul Abbott / 3rd David Seal  
2 jars soft set honey: 1st David Seal / 2nd Cliff & Pauline Hayward / 3rd Liz Seal  
1 cake plain moulded beeswax: 1st Tim Johnston / 2nd Simon & Mary Staffurth / 3rd Jane Price / VHC Cliff & Pauline Hayward  
1 bottle mead: 1st Liz Birchenough / 2nd Paul Abbott / 3rd Bob Blair  
10 biscuits: 1st Simon & Mary Staffurth / 2nd Liz Seal / 3rd Paddy Green / VHC Sue Knights / HC Cliff & Pauline Hayward  
1 honey cake: 1st Simon & Mary Staffurth / 2nd Tim Johnston / 3rd Liz Seal / VHC Andrew Marshall / HC Cliff & Pauline Hayward  
6 cupcakes: 1st Tim Johnston / 2nd Liz Birchenough / 3rd Paddy Green / VHC Simon & Mary Staffurth  
Novice 2 jars clear honey: 1st Lee Smith / 2nd Obi Winter / 3rd Paddy Green  
Novice 2 jars granulated or soft set honey: 1st Paddy Green  
6 jars clear honey labelled and ready for sale: 1st Cliff & Pauline Hayward / 2nd Liz Seal / 3rd Obi Winter  
6 jars set honey labelled and ready for sale: 1st Cliff & Pauline Hayward / 2nd Tim Johnston  
A honey label of your own design: 1st Tim Johnston / 2nd Bob Blair / 3rd Paddy Green / VHC Cliff & Pauline Hayward / HC Paul Abbott  
A frame of comb suitable for extraction: 1st Tim Johnston / 2nd Matthew Crane / 3rd Paul Abbott / VHC Barrwood  
6 1oz blocks of wax: 1st Tim Johnston / 2nd Sarah Rapley / 3rd Jane Price / VHC Cliff & Pauline Hayward / HC Simon & Mary Staffurth  
A useful item of beekeeping paraphernalia made by the beekeeper: 1st Liz Birchenough  
Mounted colour photograph: 1st John Farrow / 2nd Paul Abbott / 3rd Sue Knights  
2 containers of cut comb: 1st Jane Price / 2nd Paul Abbott  
2 identical candles moulded: 1st Tim Johnston / 2nd Sue Knights / 3rd Jane Price / VHC Simon & Mary Staffurth  
2 identical candles dipped: 1st Tim Johnston  
A decorative or artistic item with a bee related theme made by the exhibitor: 1st Simon Olly / 2nd Martin Barrett  
Beeswax wrap: 1st Liz Birchenough

## Asian Hornet Info

Our Yellow-legged Asian Hornet coordinator, Martin Barrett, has set up a WhatsApp group for branch members. If you would like to join the STW Asian Hornet Information group send Martin a message with your name and area to 07403119207 and he will add you to the group.

## Membership Renewal

Subscriptions are due for renewal. An email was sent to all members on October 1st with the full details. There are four basic grades: Registered member, Friend, Partner and Junior member. Any questions contact Liz Birchenough, Membership Secretary and Treasurer: [membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk)

## Diary Dates

**Tuesday October 21 at 7.30pm:** Branch quiz and social at Weald Memorial Hall  
**Tuesday November 18 at 7.30pm:** Branch AGM and prize giving at Weald Memorial Hall

## Apiary Meetings

**Sunday 12th October at 11am:** Hilbert Road Apiary  
**Saturday 18th October at 2pm:** Barwood Apiary

*Send photos or articles for the newsletter to: [marystaffurth@yahoo.com](mailto:marystaffurth@yahoo.com)  
Go to our website for all the latest beekeeping news: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>*