

BUZZ NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

May all your hives survive and be productive in 2022.



Diary Dates

Saturday 15 January 7:00pm New Year dinner

All welcome. Look out for the email with further details. At the White Horse Inn Bradford on Tone.

Saturday 12 & 26 February All day Skep making workshops

with Vanessa Woodford at the Apiary. Limited to 12 places. There will be a charge for materials, at cost, which has not yet been calculated.

Saturday 19 February SBKA Lecture Day (more details to follow) The Exchange, Bridgwater

Wednesday 23 February 7:30pm First of 3 Selective Queen Rearing Workshops

with Maggie North at the Apiary. This is specifically aimed at confident, experienced beekeepers with at least 4 years of experience. Practical sessions will take place in early June with dates decided by the group.

Saturday 12 March 3:30pm SBKA AGM.

At Burnham and Berrow Golf Club. All members welcome. Two course lunch available before, a lecture (tbc) and afternoon tea.

Can you Help?

The traditional tool for skep making is a goose leg bone. Modern alternatives are available, but the traditional tool feels lovely in the hand. So if anyone is having a goose for Christmas could they please keep the leg bones and I will pick them up after Christmas to turn into skep needles.

If you are interested in doing the skep course and are having a goose or a small turkey you could make your own needle with the leg bones by:

1. Boil the bone and scrap off any meat left on it.
2. Use a hack saw to cut off one joint with a diagonal cut.
3. Scrape out the marrow from inside the bone.

4. Use some sand paper to remove any sharp edges at both the knuckle and the cut end.

The final result should look similar to the photo. You want the hollow centre to be 5-6 mm wide but not more or the needle will be cumbersome.

(P.S. Keep your favourite bone skep needle away from any dog as it will be eaten!)



TBKA Honey Show 2021

By Andy Glendinning



Many thanks to all those who entered this year's small, but perfectly formed Honey Show where we had 17 entrants and 51 exhibits. The Show was held at the TBKA's Heatherton Park apiary on Saturday 2nd October 2021. The Apiary's meeting room was bedecked in lovely bunting and flowers and the Taunton and County Show cups were on display for all to see what would be available to win in a 'normal year'. One of the main purposes of this year's Show was an opportunity for members to have a cuppa and bee chat. This they clearly enjoyed, as the end of the Show was delayed by over an hour!

A big thank you to the judges, Suzy and Bridget, who stayed right to the end, not only enjoying the freshly made cakes, but also passing on their valuable experience and knowledge to all.

Also, a big thanks to Dave, Mike, Angie, Barbara, Lyndsay, Vanessa and Maggie for helping to set-up, serving tea and cake and taking down the show. Looking forward to next year's show, 2022!



Oh and of course a review of the Show would be complete without a full list of the class winners, congratulations to all those who won a certificate and a really big thank you to all of you who entered into the spirit of the Show!

Class 1	Two 1lb jars of Light Honey 1st Maggie Smith, 2nd Janet Piper
Class 2	Two 1lb jars of Medium Honey 1st Russel Blackmore, 2nd Maggie North, 3rd Jim Walsh HC Lyndsay Hurn
Class 3	Two 1lb jars of Dark Honey 1st Maggie North, 2nd Mike Dillon
Class 4	Two 1lb jars of Crystallized Honey 1st Maggie North
Class 5	Two 1lb jars of Soft Set Honey 1st Andy Glendinning, 2nd Julie Husband, 3rd Vanessa Woodford HC Janet Piper
Class 6	Five Wax Blocks 1st Maggie North, 2nd Janet Piper HC Angela Sterrett
Class 7	One Standard Container of Cut Comb 1st Maggie North, 2nd Janet Piper, 3rd Angela Sterrett
Class 8	One Commercial Block of Wax 1st Maggie North, 2nd Janet Piper
Class 9	Three 1lb Jars of Honey labelled for sale 3rd Janet Piper HC Angela Sterrett, C Vanessa Woodford
Class 10	Novice: One 1lb jar of honey 1st Russell Blackmore, 2nd Simon Pidgeon, 3rd Paul James HC Jim Walsh, C Andy Glendinning
Class 11	Photo - A bee or bees close up & in focus 1st Julie Husband, 2nd Rachel Lewis HC Jade Trott
Class 12	Photo - Reflections of the beekeeping year 1st Angela Sterrett, 2nd Jade Trott
Class 16	Two Beeswax candles 3rd Angela Sterrett
Class 17	Needlework/embroidery/water colour/model/drawing on a beekeeping theme 2nd Rachel Lewis
Class 19	A poem about bees or beekeeping. (No photos) 1st Rachel Lewis
Class 20	A short article about 'What I learnt from my mistake!' 1st Helen Stephenson

Preparing Honey for Show

By Bernie Perkins

Beekeeping is a craft in itself, showing is an extension of the craft requiring specialised techniques. Bearing in mind the old adage if you find a dozen Beekeepers discussing a problem you will get a dozen solutions, the following tips are based on my own experience and are no way meant as a definitive technique but merely a guide for beginners to showing. I hope you will find them useful.

Why show

Beekeeping is a fascinating hobby resulting in an end product that can be both enjoyable and rewarding should you choose to sell any surplus end product. As with any hobby that produces an end product, part of the pleasure comes from showing it off to other people with the same interest as you and also to members of the public, who increasingly derive pleasure from attending craft shows during leisure time. Showing is also a good discipline as it gives you the opportunity to have your product judged for quality and presentation against others thus raising the standards to the level required should you choose to sell any surplus. And finally, we all enjoy the satisfaction of having a prize card or maybe even some prize money or perhaps if you do really well winning a cup!

Run Honey

There are three classes of run honey, light, medium and dark. Light honey in this area tends to be the most common followed by medium. Dark honey tend to be quite rare and it may therefore be necessary to examine individual combs held up to a strong light source to ascertain its likely colour. As honey can vary in colour from extremely pale to almost black I would advise you to try and sort your combs into different colours so that you can extract them separately.

Points to Follow:-

1. If possible extract from new comb that is fully sealed.
2. Filter through a fine cloth into your settling tank.
3. Tilt settling tank forwards slightly, this will reduce the collection of air bubbles in the tap.
4. Leave the settling tank to stand for at least 24 hours, this will allow bubbles and impurities to float to the top forming a slight scum on the surface of the honey.
5. Wash and dry your honey jars, then warm the jars prior to filling as this will reduce the formation of unwanted bubbles.
6. When filling your jars tilt them slightly to allow the honey to run down the side of the jar, again this will help reduce air bubbles that can be fiddly to remove later.
7. Always over fill jars, this will give you a slight excess that can be skimmed off if required to remove any final imperfections and still maintain the required weight.
8. Allow honey to settle in the jars before removing any further bubbles that may appear.
9. Bubbles may be removed by use of a spoon or even a warmed kitting needle.
10. Once you have completed step 9 replace your lids ensuring they are spotlessly clean and leave sealed. Don't be tempted to open again until judging takes place as the first thing the judge will do on removal of the lid is smell the aroma of the honey that has built up in the jar since sealing. Also you risk allowing dust particles onto the surface of the honey. Finally a day or so before the show; if you find your honey has lost some of its sparkle; you can put the jars into a warming cabinet to clear it. (We use an old fridge with a light bulb in the bottom) or you can stand the jars of honey in hot water.

Granulated/Set Honey

On initial bottling follow the steps for run honey, ensuring removal of all air bubbles as these cannot be removed once the honey is set. Obviously honey will not granulate overnight to the extent required for showing so you will need to establish which of your honey is suitable well in advance of the show and jar it in plenty of time to allow it to fully set. The time that honey takes to granulate can vary dramatically from a few days to several weeks or months, so you should allow yourself plenty for time. It is also advisable to prepare more jars of granulated honey than you require so that you have a selection to choose from as the end result can vary from a completely even colour to slightly or even completely frosted appearance. (Slight frosting is acceptable for showing purposes.)

Creamed Honey

Creamed honey is achieved by mashing and blending until you are left with a completely smooth and creamy consistency, the honey should not have coarse granulations remaining once fully creamed. Allow creamed honey to stand for at least 24 hours before putting into jars, this will allow air bubbles to rise to the surface.

Comb Honey

Frames

New frames that are freshly drawn this year are best for this class as the wax and cappings will be a nice pale white to lemony yellow colour. Older frames are darker in colour and less attractive. The normal requirement for this class is one shallow frame suitable for extraction. The comb should be fully drawn out edge to edge and every cell filled with extractable run honey that is fully capped. You should check the frame by holding it in front of a bright light. This will enable you to check that there is no pollen or other contamination such as wax moth larva as you will lose points for these. Frames should be as clean as possible, remove any wax or propolis from the top and side bars by using a scraper or Stanley knife blade being careful not to damage the comb or yourself. Once complete display in a frame display case.

Cut Comb

Once again cut comb should be freshly drawn, containing run honey and be fully capped. Unlike frames for extraction the foundation should be unwired. If you use wide spacing you will achieve a thicker comb that will, as far as possible, fill a cut comb container. You will need to make yourself a template to enable you to cut the comb out in the shape of your container. Alternatively you can purchase a cutter specifically for the job. However if you choose to use a knife you will get a cleaner cut if you heat it first.

Chunk Honey

As with cut comb you will need to make yourself a template. The chunk of honey should ideally be large enough to fit tightly from the bottom of your honey jar to the neck, the comb cells should be pointing up as found in a hive. Once you have positioned the comb in the jar, slowly fill with run honey allowing air to escape. Whilst chunk honey can be fiddly the results can be extremely attractive combining the advantages of runny honey and comb honey all in a jar. It is also very popular with customers.

Wax

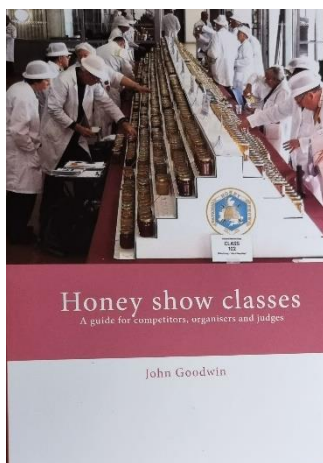
Wax is a subject dear to my heart and I could fill many pages with tips and techniques. The key tips I would give you are as follows:

1. Colour is one of the most important attributes for good show winning wax, it can vary in colour from almost white to black depending on your source. Generally speaking, judges prefer a pale primrose/lemon colour (muddy beige or coloured wax rarely wins prizes) the best coloured wax will normally come from cappings. When you are extracting the honey look at the colour of the cappings, try to separate off the different colours and save them.
2. Wash the cappings to remove any residual honey using cold or warm water, not too hot as you don't want at this stage wax to melt.
3. If you have one, I find the best method for melting wax is a double saucepan. Pour boiling water into the bottom pan and place your top pan containing the wax on top. Place pan on a low heat allowing the water to simmer gently and wax to melt in the top pan.
4. Straining. Once the wax is fully melted, pour it through a very fine piece of straining cloth (I use an old pair of my wife's tights as these can be thrown away once used) into a jug that has been warmed in the oven. Return the jug to the oven until you are ready to pour. Note: the oven should be on the lowest heat setting possible to maintain the wax's molten state.

You should now have perfectly clean wax of the correct colour this can be used for making candles, wax blocks or larger wax cakes. One final note, all equipment used for wax should be kept solely for this purpose as it is extremely difficult to remove tracers of wax from jugs and pans once they have been used for this purpose rendering them useless for any other use.

Good Luck.

Recommended Book



If you wish to read more about showing and competing in shows, Suzy Perkins recommends John Goodwin's book 'Honey Show Classes'

It very comprehensive covering the duties of the show secretary, the stewards and the judges and how they can carry out their duties and the tools they will need. It describes show classes and how contestants can prepare their exhibits for the different classes from honey, to wax blocks, candles and flowers, mead, cosmetics, hives, photographs and children's classes.

Published this year it is available in both hardback (£33) and paperback (£16.79).

The Auction 2021

This year the auction was a buyer's market with good bargains to be had.

All the volunteers did an excellent job and the club made a small profit after expenses.

In 2022 the auction will revert to being held on Sunday April 3rd.



The AGM

About 30 members attended the AGM. After reports from the council, our president Mary Adams present certificates for those who passed either the Basic Assessment or BBKA Modules or both. They were, in no particular order:



Jenny Squire



Jonah Jones



Jim Elliot



Anne Blackburn



Robin Williams



Russell Blackmore

Recipients who were unable to collect their awards in person were Vanessa Woodford , Robin Rees, Anne Pike and Jason Wallis,

After the awards Ged Marshal gave a fascinating talk on methods of pre-empting swarming.

Items For Sale

Ring Jenny on 01823 270465



2 Wax show cases £10 each



Honey grading glasses £25



Honey tester £25



Pond pump £50 o.n.o.



S/S settling tank £100 o.n.o.
(capacity 60lbs)

Veil Repairs ring Jenny on 01823 270465 / 07788407497