

West Wilts BKA News

Showing Special Edition



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It's showtime!

Well not quite, but we thought we'd start early! It was in the pre-pandemic days when the show scene was in full flow, so we thought we would produce a special edition of the Newsletter to get you thinking and hopefully taking part. The honey shows are a chance to meet likeminded folks, learn more about honey and wax processing, demonstrate your produce and generally have a good day out.

So, your committee have decided to send out a 'Special Edition Newsletter' in the hope you will seriously consider getting involved in the Branch and County Shows:

- If you have been taking part, then great – you already know what they are about.
- If you have been thinking about it, then please read on and we hope we can encourage you.
- If you are busy that day, then let us know and we'll see if we can help get your exhibits there.
- If you think "it is not for me", then please reconsider and read on.



Introduction

Shows have been part of our rural heritage. They are the gatherings when we can compare and contrast our produce. We can get feedback on how to improve and get an assessment of how we are doing, but they aren't all about competition – they are a chance for friends, old and new, to meet and chat; a chance to learn new things and a chance to review the year. They are also great places to get ideas on how to do things differently (and that typically means cheaper or simpler!).

So why are we sending this out? There are several reasons, there has been the hiatus in shows, but even before then there were the signs that some people were getting nervous about showing and that was affecting the number of entries: we have lost some of the annual shows, not just in beekeeping but more generally, including the biggest in the Royal Show at Stoneleigh. The Royal Bath and West also took the difficult decision to reduce from four to three days to reduce costs and others are just not viable with increasing paperwork and costs, but the events themselves are no less enjoyable. We understand that some people just don't take part because they don't have the confidence, so we want to help. So, put simply, we want to give the maximum amount of opportunity and encouragement for you to get involved in the shows. There are many ways to do this, and it is not all about exhibiting – there are helping opportunities as well.

Another reason for sending this out is that Somerset BKA won the Royal Bath and West Shield...and quite decisively. They are a much larger association than Wiltshire, but that doesn't mean they should have an easy run of winning the inter-county trophy. Wiltshire has traditionally done very well, so we want to make sure everyone has the chance to be prepared to give them a run for their efforts!

West Wilts have a long history of showing with people that have done well at branch, County, Regional and National Level, but please don't let this success make you think you don't have a chance...you do!

There are classes for all sorts of disciplines – there is the artistry of the wax flowers, the elegance of the candles, as well as the finesse of the meads, the talent that goes into the honey wax products, the skill of the wax blocks and the craft of the other hive products that can all be shown. There is even the taste and aroma class where you can pitch your bees' honey against others on the taste and smell alone. If you are more adventurous there is a class for you...even if it is fighting with a set cake recipe that either burns at the drop of a hat or looks like a volcano the moment you turn your back on it...it is, after all, a bit of fun. The other aspect about showing is that it is anonymous, unless you win something, so you don't have your name plastered all over the table that you didn't win anything!

So, this year we are giving a bit of a 'push' – you may have noticed a push in the Honey Bee Times at County level – this is because Kennet think they have a chance in the Wiltshire stakes between the local branches, but spies also tell us that Melksham think they are in with a chance as well, so we need to give them a run for their money. But further than that, we also need to think to next June and let Somerset turn up at the Royal Bath and West prizegiving, only to be disappointed!

So, this special edition will give a few tips as well as the schedule for the show, so please consider taking part – you don't know whether it is for you unless you try.



Show Dates

September 2022

West Wilts BKA Honey Show - 10th September; Bratton Jubilee Hall: a chance to give it a go and get some practice to beat Kennet and Melksham four weeks later.

October 2022

Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day – 8th October; Corn Exchange, Devizes: the chance to show Kennet and Melksham that West Wilts is ready, willing and able.

National Honey Show – 27th-29th October; Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher: for those brave to pitch against the best in the country (and to see some fantastic lectures!).

June 2023

Royal Bath and West Show – 1st-3rd June; Royal Bath and West Showground nr Shepton Mallet: the chance to let Somerset know that the Royal Bath and West Shield was only on loan.

How do I find out what to do?

The Branch will be holding a special in-person lecture for members at 7.30pm on **12th August** at Bratton Jubilee Hall to learn some of the tricks and tips of showing by one of our members who has had such success at shows, both exhibiting and judging. It will include advice on how to prepare the various types and colours of honey, showing wax candles and blocks, preparing chunk honey and cut comb. It will also tell you how to make Polish, and furniture cream, lip balm and an easy way to make wraps. There will be tips on cake making and making biscuits as well as information about mead in its different forms and what the judge is looking for in a frame for extraction.

Members are invited to bring along a jar of their own honey for showing and they will be advised on how to improve on the presentation.

The branch show will also have open judging...so you can also learn directly on the day!



New award for West Wilts

There are a range of trophies and awards that can be won at the West Wiltshire BKA Honey Show. These include trophies for a single class like the Aldo Cup for the best cake or the Kate Forbes Trophy for the most points by a member with less than two years beekeeping experience. There are also trophies for collections of classes, such as the Dick Mills Rosebowl for the most points in the honey classes and the Sister Lucie Cup for the best exhibit in the wax classes.

However, this year we have decided to start a new award for the best exhibit in the show – this is along the lines of the Blue Ribbon awarded at large shows that is given by the National Honey Show. The reason we have started this award is to commemorate our former Secretary and we thought this was most fitting since she had won so many Blue Ribbons at various shows. The award will be a professionally printed card that the recipient will keep. It will be a different colour to all other prize cards so that it stands out and, unlike a trophy, it will sit in pride of place next to the winning entry on the day.

That has meant we have had to do something with the Walt Conway Cup that used to be awarded annually for the best in show...that will now be repurposed for the most overall points.

Which class should I try?

This is a great question that so many people ask and the answer is simple: try any you want. The judges look for different things in different classes:

- In the clear honey they look for no signs of granulation or bee parts. This means it'll probably need filtering and if it has started to granulate it then warm it, but don't overheat it
- The soft set should be just that – soft and not spoonbendingly tough!
- The mead should be in the correct class and in the correct bottle.
- There are lots of hints and tips and we hope to give a little session for those that are interested.
- Of course, if you are under 16 years old or a novice beekeeper, then enter the young member or beginners' class – there is an easy prize there because there are usually low numbers of entries.

If you have any doubt on what class to enter but you have some honey, then seriously consider entering the black jar class. This is a class where the jar of honey is wrapped in paper or card so the judge can't see what is inside and they judge it on how it smells and how it tastes, but with all of these I haven't even scratched the surface and you'll find out more on **12th August**.

The class schedule is at the back of this Special Edition and we'll send it out again beforehand.

How do I enter?

There are two simple ways to enter – either email the Show Secretary (HoneyShow-WWBKA@outlook.com) in the week before or turn up on the day (at 9 am). Entering before makes it easier for the show team, so please do that but if you can't...or you forget, please turn up.

If you don't think you can make it but would like to enter, let the Show Secretary know and we'll see what we can do about getting your entries there on the day.



New logo

Since we are going to produce a new award and our stock of prize cards was getting low, we decided we needed our own branding...okay we could have used the BBKA logo, but we thought it would be nice to be specific to West Wiltshire BKA.

We had a think on what the logo needs to show – we could do something about the area in which we live, but that is possibly lost on other people, so we thought we would keep it simple, but follow the general style of the BBKA logo with capital letters around an outside hexagon with a simple queen bee in the middle. That way it would be simple to produce and we could use it for a variety of uses. Having the lettering as large as possible meant it would be readable even when it was quite small.

The only problem was the lettering didn't go all the way round the edge, so we either had to live with that or find something to fill the bottom. It would be nice to have a date of when the branch was started and that is why we put a call out for any information:

- One member remembers visiting the Apiary in 1976 when it was in Warminster.
- There were various references to a beekeeping club in the Warminster and Trowbridge areas in the late 1940s in some old documents we had, but we didn't know whether this was a continuous club.
- At the last apiary session, I mentioned my searches and someone suggested looking in the Warminster and Westbury Journal, since the club was originally the Warminster and Westbury District Beekeeping Association.

I also did a few other searches and managed to trace the history of the club to being re-formed in 1974...we had hoped it was older than this as there were links back over 100 years, but unfortunately not. I will write up what I know about the Beekeeping Associations in the area in a standard newsletter, but it does mean that we have now progressed to forming our own logo and can get on with printing some cards which are specific to West Wilts BKA.

So, what do you think? All comments gratefully received.



West Wiltshire Beekeepers Assoc. Honey Show 2022



To be held at the Jubilee Hall, Melbourne Street, Bratton BA13 4RW
On Saturday 10th September 2022

9am Staging - 10am Judging

Entries

Entries can be registered with the **Show Secretary** from Sunday 4th September 2022 until Thursday 8 September 2022 (inclusive).

Email: Honeyshow-WWBKA@outlook.com

Entries can be accepted at the Jubilee Hall from 9.00am until 9.30am on the day.

Please try to register all your entries before the day of the Honey Show

At the end of the show, exhibits will be handed back to the appropriate exhibitor by the Show Secretary or Judge's Steward

AWARDS

On completion of judging, the following awards may be made:

- Kate Forbes Trophy for the most points by a member with less than two years beekeeping experience;
- Chairman's Cup for the best exhibit in Class 6;
- Dick Mills Rosebowl for the most points in Classes 1 to 12;
- Sister Lucie Cup for the best exhibit in Classes 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22;
- Aldo Cup for the best exhibit in Class 24;
- Walt Conway Cup to be awarded to the competitor with the most points from all classes (points will be awarded 1st place – 3 points, 2nd place – 2 points, 3rd place – 1 point);
- Geraldine Lenert Excellence Award for best show exhibit.

Classes

See notes

1. Beginner's class: one 454g (1lb) jar of honey, any type, any colour, the entrant having no more than two years beekeeping
2. Young Member: one 454g (1lb) jar of honey any type see note 5
3. One 454g (1lb) jar: Light Run Honey
4. One 454g (1lb) jar: Medium Run Honey
5. One 454g (1lb) jar: Dark Run Honey.
6. Two 454g (1lb) jars of either: Light, Medium, Dark, Granulated or Soft Set Honey.
7. One 454g (1lb) jar: Soft Set Honey
8. One 454g (1lb) jar: Chunk Honey
9. 'Black jar': one jar of honey to be judged on taste and aroma alone. See note 6.
10. One Section
11. Cut Comb: minimum 227g (8 ozs) see note 7
12. Frame of Honey for extraction
13. Bottle of Dry Mead (see note 8)
14. Bottle of Sweet Mead (see note 8)
15. Bottle of Melomel (see note 8)
16. Bottle of Metheglin (see note 8)
17. Beeswax furniture polish (see note 9)
18. Beeswax mould, minimum 227g (8ozs)
19. Three wax blocks, 27g (1oz) each
20. Pair of candles, any method, one to be lit by the judge (see note 10)
21. Display of beeswax flowers, colouring allowed, containers will not be judged
22. Two Beeswax wraps 30 – 45 cm square (see note 11)
23. Display of six bee products on a tray, all different
24. Honey Cake (see recipe below – no changes to recipe permitted)
25. 6 Honey Biscuits
26. Photograph taken by exhibitor (see note 12)
 - a. Honey bee/s and flower/s
 - b. Aspects of beekeeping

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE OF EXHIBITORS

1. Only one entry per Class per person is to be entered.
2. All honey and wax (except class 20) exhibited must be the bona fide produce of bees kept by the exhibitor.
3. All honey to be exhibited in clear glass 454g (1lb) squat jars, labelled 1.25 cm (½in) from the bottom.
4. Gold coloured metal or plastic, screw on lids only. Chrome plated or coloured lids for honey jars are not allowed and will disqualify entry.
5. Young member under 16 years of age on day of show.
6. Sleeves will be provided on the day. Labels for this class are to be placed on the lid, sleeve and jar.
7. Cut comb to be shown in a white or clear plastic container with a clear lid.
8. Mead to be exhibited in standard punted bottles with white plastic topped flanged corks, containing approx. 75 cl. Melomel and metheglin to have flavour label on the bottle. Class labels to be placed 1.25 cm (½in) from the bottom.
9. Wax polish to be in a standard round container, metal or plastic, warning labels not required.
10. Must stand upright in candle holders.
11. Pure beeswax only, no other oils or resins to be added.
12. Photographs may be entered into both classes 25a and 25b. Size between 10cm x 15cm (4in x 6in) and 25cm x 33cm (10in x 14in), unframed but may be mounted.

HONEY CAKE RECIPE

Ingredients:

150g butter or margarine

100g light soft brown sugar

175g clear honey

15ml water

200g self-raising flour

2 eggs (Size 2)

Method:

Grease and line a round cake tin 15 – 20 cm diameter (6 – 8 inch).

Place sugar, butter, honey and water in a pan and heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved.

Sift the flour over surface and stir in. Beat well with a wooden spoon to remove lumps. Beat the eggs lightly then add to the mixture, distributing evenly.

Turn the mixture into the prepared tin.

Bake for 40 minutes at 180°C, Fan 160°C, Gas Mark 4

Leave to cool in the tin for 5 minutes and then turn out onto a wire rack until cool.

To be displayed on a plain white paper plate, with doily and in a clear polythene bag.