

# the Petersfield Beekeeper



Part of a display of forage at the Honey Show.  
*HONEY SHOW RESULTS, REPORTS AND PHOTOS INSIDE...*

## AUTUMN FORAGE

I have never observed the much-warned-of 'June gap' but, after the bramble and chestnut finish in July, this year washed out by sudden heavy rain, there is a distinct decrease in 'natural' nectar for the bees to harvest until the ivy flows in September. August is a time when the garden comes to the rescue. The bees are everywhere, taking advantage of anything going and bee-watching is rewarded by a kaleidoscope of different pollens as the bees go gathering.



In years when July is wet and autumn conditions are just right we have the bonus of a heather crop. This year I have smelt the distinctive aroma of heather but so far it has not flowed to excess, quite a relief since heather extraction is a messy affair!



Many beekeepers dislike their bees bringing in ivy, it crystallises and expands in the comb but I always welcome it. As soon as I notice the scent of ivy around the garden I know it will be covered with every nectar-loving

insect imaginable from the smallest fly and hover fly through all manner of bees and butterflies and wasps to the European hornet, all happily foraging side by side. Suddenly my colonies

are a-buzz with activity. The bees are busy from dawn to dusk, ivy scent is everywhere and I can hear the bees drying the nectar from a good 10 meters away from the apiary. The winter stores are rolling in!

*Pippa*



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

At long last we can meet inside again at Petersfield Community Centre.

30 October: Season wash-up and social

27 November: Winter Talk, subject TBA

## Are your colonies ready for Winter?

*I am very grateful to **LUCY FROST** for this excellent summary of the actions we should be taking now to give our colonies the best chance of surviving the coming winter.*

### 1. Adequate stores

Current NBU guidelines of 20-30kg of stores are some 5kg higher than old beekeeping books advise. These higher requirements reflect the impact of milder winters on colony behaviour where we see many more days when the bees are active outside the hive.

A brood frame full of stores is about 2kg and a shallow frame about 1kg. This suggests overwintering on a minimum of a full brood and a half.

A quick sight inspection should give you an idea how well provisioned a colony is. Alternatively, you can heft the brood by placing your hand under the floor and tilting the hive (without the roof). If it feels like the hive is bolted to the ground, then there are enough stores.

If any hive is low on stores, then realise this is really the last opportunity to substitute with sugar syrup (mid-September is really the latest) as it will soon be too cold for the bees to process the syrup. If you have any unextracted frames set aside then you should give these to the bees. Otherwise, make sure you have fondant available to be fed later when needed.

### 2. QXs and Shallows

I remove queen excluders primarily because it gives me a chance to clean and scorch them thoroughly for the next season. Is there a problem simply leaving the qx in situ? You may have heard there is a risk the queen may get separated from the main cluster. I have no personal experience of this nor have I come across any beekeeper who admits this has happened to his/her colony.

I like to move the shallow below the deep but if your bees are well provisioned it is a two-man task to do it. There are a couple of benefits to this. The bees consume stores from the bottom up so in the spring you have a beautifully clean super to lift over the beautifully clean qx. Late winter inspections (see below) give a better picture of what the cluster is doing.

### 3. Keeping out pests

When the threat of wasp invasion is over remove entrance blocks and put on mouse guards straight away – you want to keep mice out and not shut them in!

If you look at the mouse guard you will notice that the holes go closer to one edge (I'll call it the top) of the metal strip than the other (I'll call that the bottom). Position the guard so that the bottom of the guard is at the bottom of the entrance slot, whilst ensuring the bees can still go in and out of the hive. The reason for this is so that any dead bees that accumulate in the entrance during the winter do not clog the holes. In particularly bad winters this can effectively seal the entrance.

If there is a risk of woodpecker attack, then unless you have WBC hives you should provide protection. Roofs should have metal covering; roofing felt is no protection from a woodpecker's beak. Woodpecker guards made from chicken wire should be placed around the whole of the hive at some 3 or 4 inches away from the hive. Alternatively, you could pin black plastic bin bags to the outside of the hive as these make a good deterrent. However, if these are put on without enough care you can cause condensation build up in the hive (see damp and ventilation below).

If your hives are exposed to large animals, say cattle, deer or even badgers, then you should

secure the hives with straps or ropes (ratchet straps are ideal). These should go over the roof of the hive and be attached to stakes drive into the ground on either side of the hive and tightened down.

#### 4. Weak Colonies

These should have been united with other colonies in September. But if this was not done for some reason or other, then it is possible to over winter a small colony with a bit of care and a lot of luck.

Place the colony in a nuc box ensuring plenty of full food frames and as much of any brood as possible. However, a frame with sparse brood and little food should be discarded in favour of full food frame. Keep the nuc box well off the ground to avoid damp and chill problems. Secure it in some way so that it cannot be knocked or blown over.

Alternatively, constrain the colony to the centre of a brood box using two dummy boards. Make up the colony as if it were in a nuc box as above. Fill the rest of the brood box (i.e. between the dummy boards and the hive wall) with frames of foundation. This will help insulate the colony from any cold snaps.

In both the above cases we are reducing the area that is available to wander over, to ventilate and to keep warm. Remember these weak colonies will remain vulnerable and may have insufficient bees to kick-start the colony in the spring.

#### 5. Damp and Ventilation

Colonies are seldom troubled by cold weather, but they are very susceptible to damp.

Hives should be mounted above the ground on stands. I allow at least eight inches between the ground and the floor. Under-supering helps insulate the cluster further from any ground chill so you might consider doing this. Roofs should be in a good state of repair to keep out bad weather and rodents. Ventilation is improved by propping up the crown board with matchsticks – one per corner. I close any feeder holes to prevent cold air “chimneying” through the cluster. If using black plastic bags for woodpecker deterrence ensure these do not lap over the crown boards thereby increasing condensation and reducing proper air circulation. Open mesh floor inserts I usually leave out.

#### 6. Winter Checking

Current NBU advice is to perform a quick inspection of your bees every two weeks to monitor the food situation, and feed fondant where necessary. It's also a good idea to see if cluster has moved away from the stores and if so, swap an empty frame with a full next to the cluster.

The inspections should be very quick - 30 secs at most. That means having fondant ready and with you and being clear in your mind what to do if the cluster is separated from the food.

#### 7. And finally...buddy up.

Several of the activities involve heavy or awkward lifting and often speed is of the essence. Try and enlist the help of a fellow beekeeper if you have not already done so. This will increase the chances of a successful outcome, ensure your bees are kept under better control while you are working them and general increase your level of enjoyment.

## HONEY SHOW MANAGER'S REPORT by D Parkinson

The Honey Show for the 79th year was held in the Rake Village Hall.

Last year it was not possible to hold the Honey Show due to the restrictions and for the protection of our members. It was decided that, due to the uncertainty of holding a Honey Show this year, an informal show should be created for members only. This was mainly to keep numbers to a reasonable level. Many members unfortunately still stayed away but perhaps they had taken a late holiday; this was despite the Honey Show being held as a social event for members to call in at any time of the day, for tea and cake (which was free).



The Show classes were revised this year and the open and members classes were integrated. In many cases these were duplicated, mainly in the honey classes. The main reason was to provide a more open show and simplify entries. In the past members have entered both the members and the open classes. In fact, for the last few years there have been no entries into the open classes by non-members.

Instead of judging the display and photographic classes this year all visitors were invited to select their preferences in each class, which were then collated to establish the winner. There was also a forage class in which members were invited to create a display of forage with their common and Latin names, disappointingly there were only two entries. This was rather surprising as most beekeepers are interested in the plants around their apiaries. Another new class was a drawing of a bee with all the named external parts. Again, there were only two entries. Does this mean that

beekeepers are not interested in the beautiful creatures that make up their colonies and provide honey to put on their toast for breakfast?

Another new class was introduced this year for other hive products to included polish, lip balm, hand cleanser and wax wraps. This attracted a good number of entries. A reason to include these new classes was because not all members have honey and there is a growing interest in these other hive products which are included in the National Honey Show.



Most beekeepers will have noticed earlier in the summer that the honey crop was going to be small. It was not however anticipated that a large number of colonies would in fact have little or no honey, except minimal amounts for the colony's day to day survival. Earlier in the season the Queens' laying rate was reduced and some colonies started to regress. This meant summer feeding, something which is almost unknown. But if you wanted your colonies to survive this was the only option. We did of course check that exhibitors were entering Honey and not sugar syrup. The result was that the number of entries into the Honey classes was considerably reduced to less than 25% of the number of entries in the 2019 Honey Show.



Although we had planned the Honey Show it was always uncertain whether it could be held, which made it difficult to plan to far ahead and book Judges. It was decided to hold an in-house event. In the address given by Tom Blackburn (Association President) at the presentations he considered that the judging had been professionally undertaken and equal to any Honey Show Judge.

The judging was divided into categories and judged by members that had the requisite knowledge to judge the category and they were as follows:

Brad Davis - Honey, Wax and Mead,

Alison Turner – Confectionery.

Melanie Espin – Other Hive Products.

Chris Clark – Forage and Anatomy.

Ali Hollingbery and Hilary Hayward were the Honey Stewards

Elizabeth Eveleigh and Martin Smythe were the Scorers and Record Keepers.

Helen de Peyrecave and Penny Adams provided a continues supply of tea and cakes.

Dean Gregory and Chris Clark with other members set up and cleared the hall for the Show.

Anne-Chantal Ballard – provided the floral displays around the hall.

Sir Tom Blackburn – Presented the Trophies.

It was a good team effort, and I am grateful to all those people involved who made this possible and an enjoyable occasion.

It was disappointing that only 16 members (21 in 2019) entered the Show out of a membership of 180 members. Especially as the classes covered a wider number of classes to accommodate for a poor honey crop. The number of classes had been reduced to 36 classes (48 in 2019) in the schedule but had a wider scope than had been available in prior years.

There were some dispensations for entries this year as some of the classes could not be achieved due to poor weather and performance by the colonies. Combs were not drawn out to the extent that they are normally. The reason for the dispensation was to ensure a variety of entries could be on display to show a full range of products from the hive.

This year we were not able to award the Blue Ribbon which can only be awarded by a National Honey Judge, for the reason that this year we did not achieve the requisite number of entries to qualify to be able to award the Blue Ribbon.

A summary of the entries in the Honey Show were as follows:



	2021	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
<b>Open honey and wax classes</b>	36	47	48	20	47	39
<b>Other open classes</b>	29	28	42	38	29	30
<b>Display class</b>	23	29	23	14	12	12
<b>Members' honey and wax classes</b>	0	61	68	42	70	56
<b>Novice classes</b>	5	5	9	3	2	6
<b>TOTAL ENTRIES</b>	93	170	190	117	160	153



Class	Class Description	First	Second	Third
1	Two Jars Light Honey	Helen De Peyrecave	-	-
2	Two Jars Medium Honey	Richard Brewer	Derek Beesley	Nicky Easton
3	Two Jars Dark Honey	Richard Brewer	-	-
4	Two Jars Crystallised Honey	Richard Brewer	-	Peter Reader
5	Two Jars of Soft Set Honey	-	-	-
6	Two Jars Chunk Honey 50% Comb	Ali Hollingbery	-	-
8	Two Jars Heather Honey Blend	-	-	-
9	Two Containers cut comb of heather 200g to 255g	Ali Hollingbery	-	-
10	One Shallow Frame of Comb Honey for extraction	Ali Hollingbery	Dean Gregory	-
11	Six Jars Liquid Honey (labelled for Sale)	-	-	-
12	Six Jars Soft Set Honey (labelled for Sale)	-	-	-
13	Two Jars of liquid or set Honey and 3 beeswax blocks 28g	-	-	-
17	One Jar of Liquid Honey	Derek Beesley	Andrew Rhodes	Ali Hollingbery
18	One Jar of Soft set Honey	-	-	-
19	One Block of Beeswax	Ali Hollingbery	-	-
20	One Bottle Dry Mead	David Parkinson	-	-
21	One Bottle Sweet Mead	David Parkinson	-	-
30	Two matching Cakes of Beeswax moulded 115g to 170g	Elizabeth Eveleigh	-	-
31	Two plain moulded Candles any size	Elizabeth Eveleigh	-	-
32	Two Tall Candles under 1½" plain or pattern any method	Richard Brewer	Elizabeth Eveleigh	-
33	Two matching Models using a mould with or without a wick	Elizabeth Eveleigh	-	-
34	Six Blocks of Beeswax matching of 28g	Ali Hollingbery	Elizabeth Eveleigh	David Parkinson
35	Cake of Beeswax 285g to 340g commercial	Elizabeth Eveleigh	David Parkinson	-
40	Honey Fruit Cake to recipe	Anne-Chantal Ballard	Elizabeth Eveleigh	Louise Buchanan
41	Honey Dressing own recipe 227g Jar	Katie Eveleigh	-	-
42	Six Honey Cookies	Katie Eveleigh	Elizabeth Eveleigh	Derek Beesley
43	Honey Nut Blondies to recipe	Katie Eveleigh	Derek Beesley	Elizabeth Eveleigh
44	Four Cup Cakes any flavour to recipe	-	Elizabeth Eveleigh	-
50	Furniture Polish (must contain Beeswax)	-	-	-
51	Lip Balm (containing Honey & Beeswax)	-	Elizabeth Eveleigh	-
52	Hand Cleanser (must contain Honey)	Rebecca Eveleigh	Katie Eveleigh	-
53	Two Wax Wraps 30cmx30cm	Elizabeth Eveleigh	-	-
60	Photograph any background must contain Honeybee	Peter Reader	Elizabeth A	Ali Hollingbery
61	A line drawing of Honeybee naming all external parts	Elizabeth Eveleigh	Helen de Peyrecave	-
62	Floral Display of 5 honeybee forage plants	Helen De Peyrecave	Elizabeth Eveleigh	-
63	Decorative Plaque for front of Hive.	Helen De Peyrecave	Elizabeth Eveleigh	Graham Eveleigh

## HONEY SHOW RESULTS 2021



**PDBKA TROPHIES 2021**

<b><u>Trophy</u></b>	<b><u>Awarded</u></b>
<b>The Cocke Trophy</b> <i>The highest number of points in Honey Classes 1 to 12.</i>	Richard Brewer
<b>The Steep Trophy</b> <i>The best Exhibit of Honey in any Honey class.</i>	Richard Brewer
<b>The Kathleen Marriage Trophy</b> <i>The highest number of points in Wax Classes 30 to 35.</i>	Elizabeth Eveleigh
<b>The Jack Dennis Trophy</b> <i>The highest number points Shallow Frame in Class 10.</i>	Ali Hollingbery
<b>The Lady Tollemache Trophy</b> <i>The highest number points Comb Honey Classes 9.</i>	Ali Hollingbery
<b>The Sir Humphrey Tollemache Trophy</b> <i>The highest number of points in Classes 11 and 12.</i>	No Award
<b>The Sid Trenchard Memorial Trophy</b> <i>The highest number of points in Class 13</i>	No Award
<b>The Rose Tankard</b> <i>The highest number points in Mead Classes 20 and 21.</i>	David Parkinson
<b>The Trevor Stubbs Memorial Trophy</b> <i>The highest number points in Novice Classes 17 to 19.</i>	Ali Hollingbery
<b>The Cole Platter</b> <i>The highest number points in Novice Classes 17 to 19.</i>	Katie Eveleigh
<b>The Mount Pleasant Trophy</b> <i>The highest points for photograph in Display Class 60.</i>	Peter Reader
<b>The Rogate Trophy</b> <i>The highest points for picture in Class 61.</i>	Elizabeth Eveleigh
<b>Novice Award</b>	No Award

## HONEY SHOW JUDGING - Honey Classes

It was a pleasure to judge the entries of those members who took the opportunity to test their ability to best present the efforts of their bees' endeavours at the Annual Honey show. I made notes of all the classes and am happy to respond to any emails from those members who entered and wish to know how I considered their particular entry (PDBKA@BeeDavis.co.uk). I also offer the following summary of the judging process for the jarred honey classes.

Before judging started all entries were checked to make sure they were entered into the right class. This was primarily to check the colour of liquid honey entries. David and the Honey Show administrators moved those that were incorrect to their correct class. Strictly this should be the responsibility of the entrant but requires use of standardised grading glasses.

Judging progressed one class at a time and was based on gradual elimination. The first stage in checking the jarred classes was to perform an external examination of the entries as they sat on the bench. Those that failed not being considered further. Next one jar of each entry more closely examined with the aid of a torch. Then an internal examination was undertaken with the aroma when first opened being noted. Finally a check on texture/viscosity and taste of those entries remaining was used to place the entries. If there were faults with an entry that was placed the points awarded were modified downwards accordingly. These points were used to award some of the trophies that bridge more than one class.

Finally, well done to all those who received a placing certificate and particularly well done to those who received a trophy (or two!). I would like to echo the thanks made at the end to the Honey Show administrators and David Parkinson by our President Tom Blackburn and wish David all the best as he leaves us for pastures new next season.

*Brad Davis*

**We are looking for somebody to help to keep our website current and interesting. If this is something you could help with, please contact [annechantal@btinternet.com](mailto:annechantal@btinternet.com)**

### *Your Committee for 2021/2*

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