

BOURNEMOUTH & DORSET SOUTH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

September 2024

Chairman's Report

During the last couple of months your Association has held two socials. It was good to see so many of you at both. In each case the weather was kind and from the feed-back (no pun intended!) they were enjoyed by all.

As September comes in we are turning all our attention to getting our colonies ready for the winter. Hopefully all your colonies have been treated against the dreaded varroa mite. Now is a good time to get some comb renewed as you begin feeding your bees. However busy you may be I do hope that you will find time to come to our first winter meeting at St Andrew's Church Kinson. There is free parking on site. Roger Patterson, who is well-known to a lot of us, is going to talk about "The Journey to Sustainability". I am sure this will focus on the desirability of raising queens from colonies in your immediate locality. Is this the right way forward? Come and find out!

David Aldersey

Association Diary Dates 2024-5

*Evening Meetings will restart in September:
St Andrews Church, Millhams Road,
Bournemouth BH10 7LN*

September 17th - Roger Patterson: "The Journey to Sustainability" A talk about buying different sub species of bees highlighting some of the problems that beekeepers face.

October 15th - Andy Willis: "Heather Honey". Taking bees to work heather as well as processing the crop.

November 19th - Margaret Murdin: Honey and processing.

December 10th - Christmas gathering member Joanna Bellis will give a talk entitled "Bees in music"

January 21st 2025: AGM

February 18th - Peter Darby: "Plants for pollinators"

March 18th - Martin and Clare: from Buckfast Abbey: "Defensive Bees"

April 15th - Spring Social with refreshments. Talk on the Osprey Project in Poole Harbour by one of the staff working on the project

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Thank you.

Lesley Morton

Speakers secretary
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Beginners Course Photos provided by Victoria Barker and Susan Davis





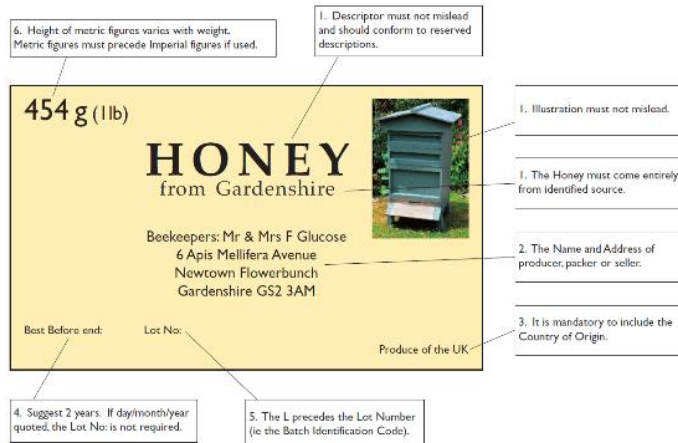
Honey Preparation for the Honey Show in November

“Making” honey is what beekeepers should be able to achieve and we would ask all members of BADS BKA to support their Show with their contribution of honey. We now have a showing class for young people. Please encourage any of your related youngsters to have a go.

Showing may seem a bit daunting. This simple guide may serve to encourage. Don't worry if this is your first time...we have all been there!

- Pour extracted honey via a coarse filter(s) into a plastic honey bucket and settle for a day or two in a warm room.
- Skim off bubbles/debris by applying and then peeling off greaseproof paper or cling film on the honey surface.
- Honey least likely to have bubbles is at the bottom of the bucket and can take off via a tap if present
- Filter bucket contents through fine gauze into competition jars whilst honey is warm (body temperature)
- If honey cold or set, then rewarm gently ...put honey container in a saucepan with a hot tap water jacket and on minimum heat so that water is below simmering. Alternatively use a warming cupboard.
- Jars should be overfilled so that some honey can be removed during final preparation (bubbles, excess honey lining the rim). This will ensure enough honey left so that can't see an air gap once lid is added.
- Jars used should match if the class is for more than one jar. Use honey, not food, jars. Ideally, the jars should have no blemishes when held to the light over a white surface.
- Keep a jar or two in reserve beyond the number needed for the class
- Allow lidded jar to settle in a warm room and then skim off bubbles using cling film, and cleaning the honey edge so not sticky when a fresh final lid is applied. To keep the aroma, don't un-lid jar for the last 3 days before the competition.
- Labelling: Having received the Honey Show Schedule, request labels from the Honey Show Secretary according to the classes you want to enter. Further instructions in the schedule for honey and for all the other classes.
- Apply label to the jar(s) as instructed in the Schedule. For the “Exhibitors Own” label class (Class 6), you need to create an additional label according to the regulations as if you were going to sell the honey (see overleaf, Honey Labelling BADS BKA Honey Show).
- Bringing jars to the Show: There will be a drop off at the September or October meeting for those that don't want to bring their jars on the day of the Show.

HONEY LABELLING (CLASS 6 only) for the purposes of the BADS BKA Honey Show



UK Honey 2015 Labelling Regulations supersede those in the BBKA leaflet L010 ...for further information please see...

<https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/labelling-of-honey>
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/1348/made>

'Honey' means the natural sweet substance produced by bees from the nectar or secretions of plants, or the excretions of plant-sucking insects, and stored in honeycombs to ripen and mature.

You must label the product with the name 'honey'. If any additive or ingredient has been added to the product it cannot be called 'honey'.

Honey must be labelled with the country in which the honey was harvested, for example 'Origin: UK' etc. Adding the country to the end of your address is not acceptable.

If you are selling the honey, you must have your name and address on the label. It does not need to be complete but from the information you should be able to be found.

If there is any reference to a particular plant or blossom (pictures or words), the honey must have come wholly or mainly (more than 75%) from that blossom or plant, for example 'Heather Honey'

If reference is made to a location, the honey must come wholly from that place, for example, 'Hampshire Honey'.

The net weight must be on the label - Lettering must be 4 mm high and in metric. Imperial marking can be added after the metric but must be less prominent.

You must have a best before date on the jar (specify month and year). Usually 2-5 years. No lot number required if date specified.

Adrian Rozkovec

Preparing wax cappings for the Honey Show ..

I bought these reusable bags from Sainsbury's, 30p each, and very useful for straining cappings. A handy hint for members?....



Sheila Orr

Solar Wax Extractor

The trouble with solar wax extractors apart from getting enough sun exposure, is that they mostly have a small capacity in terms of the number of frames they can house. Commercial models are not cheap and still limited in capacity. I have worked with a carpenter friend to produce one that is high volume and works. It is modelled on a wheel barrow so can it be readily moved around; too heavy to move otherwise. It can take up to 4 but preferably 3 12x14" frames at a time. The frames are put in at a slope, stacked so they overlap and can be supported in a National super box. The extractor is designed to house a National super so, rather than brood frames, you can load the box with 10 super frames at a go.

The super and frames are positioned over a commercial sized aluminium tray with a piece cut out at the lower end to enable the wax and smaller debris to enter a cake loaf tin via a coarse mesh filter. The whole is encased in an insulated box lined with black matt paint and covered with a double thickness sealed glass pane as part of the lid. The lid is hinged and using a light chain to hold in place when opened.

The empty insulated extractor. The bottom is stepped to accommodate the loaf tin flush to the more raised part on which the super box will lie....



Lid open. The wax collecting tray in position.



Load of four 8 by 12 " frames supported by the super box. Brood comb has melted off the wire frames. Wax has drained into the loaf tin below.

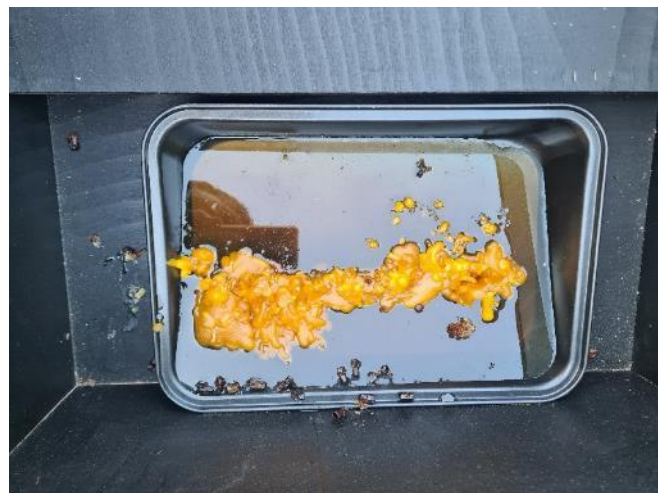


Alternative load; a full super of (empty) frames....



Wax fallen out of super frame (not tried a full box of frames yet, but can't see that it would not work).

If pre-wired frames are used, the separation from the wax and comb is much easier, and not so traumatic to the wiring than if done cold. The frames will still need a clean in a soda crystal hot bath but with this method there is far less residue to take off.



Wax floating in the loaf pan. This would not do for Showing unless purified further. See Sheila's article above for preparing wax cappings, the best source for competition wax...



The finished article... This is a mark 1 model and we already know the design can be improved upon ...

Adrian Rozkovec and Mitch

An Eventful First Season

Having helped my father with his bees as a teenager, I had always thought I would return to beekeeping at some stage. A few years ago, we had the opportunity to house a colony on our field at my office in Fareham which reignited my interest and I was able to assist the local beekeeper with his inspections a couple of times. In 2023, my neighbour Jean-René announced that he was attending a beginners' course with BADS-BKA so I decided that 2024 was going to be my year to restart and sign up for the course. Early in the course, I let Tony, the Fareham beekeeper, know that I was ready to get actively involved as I knew that he was

busy with other commitments and could not always attend our colony as often as he would have liked.

The course was highly informative and enjoyable, and we were lucky enough to be blessed with calm colonies to inspect and several out-of-the-ordinary scenarios to witness which would prove very useful later in the season.

Having lost our previous colony over the winter he delivered a nuc in late March. Once they were settled and the weather had improved, we transferred them to their new hive (we'll call it Hive 1) and it was clear that we had a good queen (red marking) by the rate at which the colony was already expanding. In early May, the brood box was filling nicely and we considered that they might be ready for a super in a week or so.

My first lesson was that if you think a colony is nearly ready for a super, then it probably needs one straight away! This became quickly apparent as, a week later, having unwisely left an empty super on top (previously housing the feeder), the bees had gratefully filled it with natural and very beautiful comb (see photo).



The brood box was also home to numerous queen cells. Realising that a swarm was imminent we created a shook swarm with several healthy queen cells and housed it nearby in a nuc. My lesson here, noticing how quiet this colony became, was that it would clearly have been preferable to move this shook swarm to a location much further away to avoid the return of bees to Hive 1. Nevertheless, Hive 2 (as we will call it) progressed quite well and a new queen was seen about a week later albeit not yet laying.

In the meantime, our original queen in Hive 1 had clearly not had her swarming itch scratched and took to the skies just a week after the shook swarm. They landed close by in a wild rose bush and were easily recovered by Tony (I was stuck in meetings!) and transferred to another nuc which would become Hive 3 and was now the new home of our original red marked queen in case you have lost track!

Just two days later I woke up to a flurry of text messages from my neighbour Jean-René who had just gone on holiday and asked if I could be on standby to receive a swarm on his behalf. It turned out to be a freshly emerged swarm from the apiary on top of the Sovereign Centre in Boscombe. Fred, the apiary manager, was busy that morning so, with not insignificant apprehension, I set out to tackle my first swarm



It was rather awkward and I have since been told other tricks that I could have applied but at the time. I chose to slide my cardboard box up the side of the oil drum and brush the cluster of bees down from the top.

As the new empty hive was very close by and it was a hot day not ideal to leave the swarm in a box, I decided to tip them straight into the brood box. Several return trips were required to recover the stragglers and by tipping them onto a board and sheet in front of the hive I was able to confirm that the queen was inside and I enjoyed the satisfaction of watching them all march in! An inspection and feed a day later confirmed that they were happy in their new home so JR was able to return from holiday the owner of a new colony which is currently in good health and developing well.

Back to the Fareham apiary, and it only took a week for the troublesome Hive 1 to push out a further cast swarm. This colony was still in the process of re-queening from the previous swarm so it's unclear exactly what happened. This therefore became my second swarm collection and it was even more awkward than the first, being low down in a very dense hedge. After some judicious pruning around the cluster, I managed to transfer a reasonable clump of bees to the box although, given the disturbance created to get them out, it felt like most of the swarm had taken to the air! I left them for the day and overnight and happily they settled down and all went into the box. They were then transferred to their new home and became Hive 4 - phew!!



Things started to settle down and Hive 3 (original red queen) was building nicely, the Hive 2 (shook swarm) queen was now in lay and so they were also back on track. The original Hive 1 was now depleted but a new queen was present though not yet laying. Hive 4 (latest swarm) was weak and no queen visible. After keeping a close watch, it became apparent that this colony was queen-less. After taking advice and doing some further research, we decided to try to save the colony whilst eliminating the laying workers and spoiled brood. We lifted the brood box and replaced it with a new one full of clean frames of foundation so that all flying bees would return to this new hive. The old brood frames were then shaken off on the other side of the field (and later destroyed). This all seemed to go to plan and the new hive re-filled nicely.

The following morning I returned early before they were flying and united the queenless Hive 4 with Hive 1 (the weakest of the other three) using the newspaper method. I had been warned that this might not work as the workers from the queen-less colony could kill the host queen but happily this was not the case and Hive 1 is now returning to a much stronger position.



That was the end of June and thankfully since then, regular inspections have shown all 3 hives to be in good shape, with viable brood and, as of the end of July, boasting a super and a quarter of honey each. This should be enough to recover a few full frames from each hive for extraction, which will be my next challenge and, knowing me, a messy one!

Nick Earl August 2024

Recipe

Due to the length of this Newsletter I have left this item off. Don' forget you can enter Honey fudge, biscuits or fruit cake into the Show (recipes for all these will be in the Show Schedule)

Dear Members – Your Contributions please

The next Newsletter will be in December. I don't mind what you would like to send in so long as there is a bee theme...good or bad experiences, some ideas on how to do things better, anecdotes, interesting photos, honey based recipes.

Also, I invite you to send me the story of one of your mistakes! I have made plenty over the years and in this newsletter. Please contribute and don't feel embarrassed. If you want your piece to be anonymous it will still be acceptable!

Thank you

Adrian Rozkovec newsletter@bads-bka.org

Bee Supplies – Mike and Liz Duffin

Mike is selling off his stock and will no longer be a local agent for Thornes (EH Thorne Beehives Ltd) but has second equipment to sell off. Mike says come and have a look....

National Hive equipment including brood boxes, 5 frame nucs, crown and clearer boards, queen excluders etc. Also, a large stainless steel settling tank

a large solar wax extractor and a polystyrene
Langstroth hive.

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