Buzzword

Herefordshire Beekeepers' Association

October 2026



HBKA Honey Show

will take place at Big Apple Harvestime - Much Marcle, on

Saturday 10th October

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Diary Dates

LAN meetings have now finished for the season

19th October – Zoom meeting – by the Buckfast Abbey team.
Subject to be announced.

24th / 25th October – Skep Workshop at Holme Lacy Village Hall
Currently fully booked, but check the website for cancellations.

Watch your emails for more details of exact locations and of further meetings.

Honey Show 2026



Well, everyone, the annual HBKA honey show is almost upon us and it falls to me to organise the entries this year. I would urge all our members to consider entering honey, hive products, produce, interesting beekeeping exhibits or artworks into the show as it is only the products of your beekeeping activities that will make for a successful show. There should be a class for each entry you wish to make and the more competition we have the better.

There is a full list of the classes available in this newsletter and I am waiting to hear which ones you are hoping to win!

It is well worth having a look at the tips and tricks document to help ensure that your entries are presented in the best way possible.



Please send your planned entry list to me as soon as possible so that I can prepare the labels you will need on the day. The email to use is:

dt.hbka.honeyshow2026@gmail.com



Our judge this year is Michael Badger and I know he will be expecting to have a challenging job to do.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need help with your entries.
Here's wishing good luck to everyone, I look forward to seeing you at the show.

Dave Taylor
2026 Honey Show Secretary

(pictures from the 2025 show)

HBKA Honey Show Tips and Tricks

The following tips, tricks and observations were collected from the judge during the HBKA 2023 annual honey show. Hopefully some of these will prove useful to members for future shows.

General

- Read the class descriptions carefully to ensure entries conform to the description. If an entry does not meet the class description then it will be disqualified.

- If you're not sure whether a honey is light, medium or dark, then coloured grading glasses can be borrowed to determine which class it falls into.

- For categories which specify a size and/or weight make sure the entry is within specification, as the judge weighs and measures all entries.

Honey

- Honey should be free of debris/foreign bodies. The judge uses a magnifying glass and torch to inspect entries, and if contamination is found the honey will not be judged. It is recommended to use a fine nylon mesh type filter prior to jarring to ensure that any small particles are removed.

- Entries in the liquid categories are also judged for clarity, so ensure there is no granulation (which is most noticeable at the bottom of the jar) and try to keep air bubbles to a minimum. Air bubbles can be removed by warming - apparently putting the sealed jars in a foot spa works very well for this as the added vibration helps work the bubbles out!

- Foam or scum left over from bubbles at the surface of the honey can be removed by placing a piece of clingfilm on the surface, and then pinching the middle of the clingfilm and pulling it up quickly, to remove the top layer.

- Jars should be appropriately filled so that when observed at eye level there should be no daylight between the contents and the bottom of the lid.

- Jars and lids should be identical and should be well cleaned (or even polished…!). Some jars can have manufacturing imperfections, so it is also worth trying to select jars without these.

- Honey on the bottom of lids should be kept to a minimum, so take care when transporting. The first thing a judge does when opening a jar is smell for aroma, so avoid removing or changing lids before the show, as some of the aroma will be lost.

Soft Set & Granulated Honey

- In the soft set category, the judge is looking for a fine, uniform texture, like peanut butter. This can be achieved by thorough mixing and rapid crystallisation, which happens when the honey is taken down to 12 - 14 degrees centigrade quickly.

- Oilseed rape and Hawthorn honey are particularly good to use for these categories due to high glucose contents, with the latter having a nutty, almond-like flavour.

- Make sure that jars are kept level whilst the honey is crystallising and then afterwards when it is stored, so that the surface of the honey is flat when the lid is removed.

- In the naturally granulated class it is acceptable for there to be frosting on the inside of the jar, but try to choose two jars which have a similar amount for consistency.

Honey Cakes

- Darker honeys, such as Heather honey, can work better for baked goods as the strength helps the honey flavour come through more.

- Visually, the judge is looking for the cake to have a flat top, without cracking or sinking and no soggy bottoms!

- Aim for a texture which is firm, but also moist and consistent throughout.

- Storing and displaying the cake in an airtight plastic bag helps retain a strong aroma.

- Whilst the ingredients for the honey cake must be followed exactly as per the recipe, the baking instructions can be altered for better results. If the cake catches around the top or sides, then try baking at a lower temperature, but for longer. Alternatively, greaseproof paper can be used to cover the top and edges.

Super Frames

- The presented frame should have uniform, even cappings that are proud of the frame, which would be easy to uncap.
- The honey within the frame should be the correct viscosity for extraction, so there should be no evidence of dripping or crystallisation.
- Like the jarred classes, the frames are also inspected by shining a torch through them, so the frame selected should have a consistent colour of honey throughout.
- The woodwork of the frame should be clean and free from markings. If propolis has to be removed from the frame then use pure alcohol to do this, rather than scraping. This gives a better finish and ensures that the woodwork isn't scratched.
- Select the best side of the frame to present as the front and ensure there are no signs of wax moth larvae (e.g. silk webs).

Photographic Competition

- Pay careful attention to the focus on the subject of the image. For example, digital cameras will more often focus on a flower that a bee is on, rather than the bee itself. Macro modes can help with capturing fine detail in focus.
- Consider cropping photos to improve detail of the subject and the overall composition.
- The background that the image is mounted on should work with the image, and not detract from it.
- Brightness, contrast and saturation adjustment can be used to enhance the image, but take care to keep the image looking realistic.
- It is a broad category so consider images or themes within beekeeping which are novel.

Beeswax cakes & bars

- Choose wax from a source, or combination of sources that provides an attractive colour. Wax should not be overly dark or light.
- Ensure the wax is well filtered to ensure that it is as pure as possible. This generally means filtering it at least twice.
- Wax cools most quickly at the mould edge, which then leads to the middle of the wax becoming sunken. If the wax is cooled down very slowly after pouring (e.g. in an oven) then the surface will be more uniform.
- In the beeswax bars category, it helps if the moulds are filled whilst they are sat on kitchen scales to ensure all five blocks are an identical weight
- If displaying a beeswax cake in a wooden box, take care that the wax doesn't take on the smell of the wood.
- Storing wax items along with propolis ahead of the show can enhance their smell.

Candles

- When inspecting the bottom of the candles, the bases should be flat and the wick central. If they aren't flat then they can be levelled by pressing the base into a hot pan. Voids or holes can be filled by topping up with additional wax after the initial pour.
- Candles will be lit and then relit by the judge so check that they burn well. If the wax contains any traces of water then the flame will hiss and spit.
- The wick should be the appropriate thickness for the size of the candle. If the wick is too thick the candle will burn too fast and drip, if the wick is too thin then the candle will cup.
- Wicks should be waxed so that they are easy to light and stand straight.

John Moxley

South LAN meetings (August)

Dave Taylor gave a talk on uniting colonies where he explained why and when you would want to do this and when you wouldn't want to do this. He described various ways of uniting two, or more, colonies and there were a couple more suggestions from his audience. I thought this was only going to be a ten minute talk (how wrong was I) but it was generally agreed that the newspaper between the colonies method was the easiest and most straightforward. He left us with the information that the broadsheet papers are the best (larger sheets) but never use the Socialist Worker as there is a distinct danger your bees will go on strike!



Bob Cross gave us a talk on Autumn Feeding and in his usual style he brought along lots of samples and equipment for everyone to look at. He bought frame feeders, gravity feeders and the trays and containers that sit on the crown board. When it comes to the food, sugar syrup can be used during the warmer periods Summer and into Autumn, although, if you buy Ambrosia syrup this can be stretched a bit longer as it has already had the water taken out, one less step for the bees. Sugar syrup should be made with normal 'white granulated' sugar, other types of sugar are bad for the bees. Fondant (for bees) should be used during the colder periods, ie winter. You can make your own but it's not that expensive to buy it and a lot less hassle. Don't use bakers' fondant as this has had things added that are not good for bees. Pollen substitutes can also be fed to the bees, Bob gave away a pack of this for 'free' to someone in the front row. As the inevitable comments were made, Bob said "Oh, it IS out of date!" to which the reply came back "It's ok, my bees can't read!"



Steve Utley

North LAN meetings

N LAN has had two meetings in September. We did look at the bees at the first meeting. We were looking at colony readiness for winter, we were looking at colony size, we were looking for brood in all stages and weight of the colonies.
All the treatments have been taken off; the higher temperatures were quite challenging for our chosen treatment – Formic Pro. At times it was bit touch and go.

On the second and last meeting of the season we did not go looking at the bees as it was starting to get cool and dark. We did however have a catchup and a chat about people's bee situations and talked about future plans.

A very big thank you to people who were attending our meetings. We will see you next year.

Rihards Krauze



Seasonal suggestions

It is a very warm and sunny autumn and ivy has abundance of flowers, which can be blessing and a curse. Keep an eye on the weight of your colonies. You want to have heavy colonies, but there is such thing as too much. If your bees fill out every available cell with ivy honey, the queen will have no place where she can lay eggs - which will present an issue of replenishing lost bees over winter. It might be good idea to replace a frame or two with empty drawn frames.

Whilst we are still on the role of bees, start cleaning down your equipment and make plans for next year. See what kit needs fixing and what needs replacing. Plan on reading a book that might help you with next season. I recommend "Healthy Bees, Heavy Hives" by Steve Donohoe & Paul Horton.

Rihards Krauze



Apis mellifera – on ivy

Committee Members

Chairman : Vacant **Secretary** : Janelle Quitman

Treasurer : Roger Gill **Membership Sec.** : Steve Utley

Committee: David Taylor, Simon Durrant, Roger Woodhead.

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LAN CO-ORDINATORS

North LAN: Mary Walter

East LAN: Simon Durrant

South LAN: Steve Utley

PATRON: Ellie Chowns, MP

To contact a member of the committee please look on our website for the appropriate email address: https://www.herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk/

The Herefordshire Beekeepers Association is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registered Number:1174917. Members of the committee are also trustees.

Further details at: https://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=1174917&subid=0

If you have contributions, pictures, ideas to propose for this newsletter, please contact Roger Gill at: news@herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk



If foul brood is suspected, contact our Regional Bee Inspector (RBI),

Caroline Coughlin t. 07500 891423

caroline.coughlin@apha.gov.uk

who will direct you to your local Seasonal Bee Inspector (SBI), either:

Ben Bowen t. 07557 178512

benjamin.bowen@apha.gov.uk

or

Liz Gardner t. 07867 351610

elizabeth.gardner@apha.gov.uk

Seasonal bee inspector vacancies 2027

HBKA ANNUAL HONEY SHOW SCHEDULE 2026

Saturday October 10th, 2026
Hellens Manor, Much Marcle, Ledbury HR8 2LY

JUDGE: **Michael Badger**

JUDGE'S STEWARDS: **John Moxley** (provisional)
Chris Lambert

SHOW SECRETARY: **David Taylor**

Class Descriptions

Exhibitors are strongly advised to study carefully the Schedule, General Notes and Show Rules set out below. Failure to observe these may result in an entry's non-acceptance or disqualification.

1.	One container of cut comb with liquid honey in the cells (7-9oz in weight)
2.	Two 1 lb jars of Light Liquid Honey
3.	Two 1 lb jars of Medium Liquid Honey
4.	Two 1 lb jars of Dark Liquid Honey
5.	Two 1 lb jars of Naturally Granulated Honey
6.	Two 1 lb jars of Creamed/Soft Set Honey
7.	Two 1 lb jars of Chunk Honey
8.	***Novices only*** – Two 1 lb jars of Honey (Liquid, Granulated or Soft Set) (***See Rule 6***)
9.	***Blind Tasting***: (***See Rule 7***) **a)** one jar of Liquid Honey. **b)** one jar of Naturally Granulated, Creamed or Soft Set Honey
10.	One Super Frame ready for extraction displayed in a show case.
11.	One Super Frame, marked 2024, supplied by HBKA
12.	One plain cake of Beeswax weighing 7-9oz (200-255g) with a minimum thickness of ¾" (18mm)
13.	Five Beeswax Blocks each weighing approx. 1oz (27g)
14.	One bottle of Dry Mead.
15.	One bottle of Sweet Mead.
16.	One bottle of honey beverage to be displayed in any size clear glass bottle with removable cork, screw top or cap. (***See Rule 8***)
17.	Three single items of products of the hive. (***see Rule 9***)
18.	***LAN Challenge*** A collective display of Products of the Hive with the theme of '**Pollen and Pollination'**, no more than three items being produced by any one LAN member; with a maximum width of 30"; to be judged on both quality and presentation. LAN Tutors may advise but not participate in this class.
	Open Classes
19.	An item made primarily from beeswax. (***See Rule 10***)
20.	Three Beeswax Candles up to and including 1 ½" (38mm) diameter. To be displayed in non-combustible stands (one candle will be lit by the judge)
21.	Honey Cake – see attached recipe
22.	Honey Fudge - six pieces to be displayed – see attached recipe.
23.	One jar of honey preserve or fruit curd, displayed in a jar with a twist grip lid. The recipe should be provided with the exhibit.
24.	Honeybee pasture. (***See Rule 11***)
25.	Any interesting exhibit connected with beekeeping designed and made by the exhibitor, accompanied where necessary by a clear written explanation. (***See Rule 12***)
26.	**Children's Exhibit.** Anything connected to beekeeping (open to any child 15 years or under, age to be displayed).
27.	Photographic Competition on the subject of bees and beekeeping. **(*See Rule 13*)** **a)** A colour print, maximum print size 10" x 8", mounted on card with a mount size not exceeding A4. **b)** A group of photos (minimum of three) of any size on a common theme but must be presented within an overall mount size not exceeding A3. *(Captions optional. No framed prints permitted in any category*).

GENERAL NOTES.

A. Entries may be staged at the following times:
Friday October 09th from 4.30 pm – 6 pm.
Saturday October 10th from 8.30 am - 9.45 am.
B. Judging will commence at 10.00 am on October 10th.
C. Exhibits may be removed from the displays between 5 and 6pm on the 10th or may be collected on Sunday 11th.

SHOW RULES.

1. The show is staged under National Honey Show rules.

2. Unless otherwise stated, exhibitors may enter up to three items in any class, but can only gain one award in each, subject to the Judge's discretion to grant a special commendation.
Multiple entries must be clearly marked A, B, C, after the exhibitor's number except when the entry requires two jars when the number and letter on each should be identical.

3. No single exhibit may be entered in more than one class.

4. ***Classes 1-17*** are open to any member, Full or Associate, of the Herefordshire Beekeepers' Association (HBKA), together with Associate members who are full members of neighbouring associations. Show points will be awarded to prize-winning members of HBKA as per the schedule of points (*See Rule 11 below*).

5. ***Open classes*** are open to anyone, adults and children, whether or not members of HBKA.

6. ***Novice Class*** is open to any member who has not previously won a first prize, cup or trophy for honey in any previous Honey Show. The winner will receive free entry to the National Honey Show.

7. ***Blind Tasting***. Entries are limited to one jar per member in each sub class. Exhibits will be assessed on taste only and the sub classes judged separately. Blind wrappers will be provided on registration.

8. ***Class 16.*** A plain label describing the contents should be provided (e.g. Pyment, Melomel, etc.).

9. ***Class 17.*** Items may consist of any product of the hive, or item made using products of the hive for example propolis, pollen, polish, etc, to be judged on the quality of the exhibits rather than the display.

10. ***Class 19.*** Exhibits may include candles of any size or style, wax sculpture, encaustic art, etc., but must be created primarily from beeswax.

11 ***Class 24.*** Honeybee pasture. An arrangement of flora, which may include flowers, foliage and/or fruit, from which the honeybee gathers nectar and pollen. A list of species should be provided and will be judged as an integral part of the exhibit.

12. ***Class 25.*** Exhibits can include works of art, models, practical items etc., provided a clear link exists to bees or beekeeping.

13. ***Class 27.*** Photographs should be the original work of the exhibitor.

14. ***Labelling.*** Show labels will be provided by the Show Secretary on registration.
Jars & bottles: position the bottom edge of your label 20mm from the bottom of the jar.
Show cases: place one label in the top right-hand corner of the glass plus a second label on the top of the frame.
Wax products: labels should be fixed on the display base, not to the wax.

15. ***Show points.*** Members will be awarded points as follows:
    5 – First place.
    4 – Second place
    3 – Third place
    2 – Very Highly Commended
    1 – Highly Commended
    0 – Commended

    In the case of a tie, the participant with the largest number of high points will be awarded the trophy.

16. **Trophies.** Trophies will only be awarded to HBKA members.

Guidance on Presentation of exhibits.

a) Extracted honey should be exhibited in matching standard 1lb squat honey jars with gold metal or white plastic lids.
b) Pieces of chunk honey should ideally stand upright and extend fully from the bottom to the top of the jar.
c) National Honey Show Approved Grading Glasses will be used to determine colour of liquid honey.
d) Super frames should be displayed in show cases; these may be available for loan if requested in advance. Marked frames (Class 11) may be displayed in the rack provided.
e) Mead should be exhibited in clear, round, unmarked bottles of approx. 27fl. oz. or 75 ml capacity with flanged removable corks (black or white plastic is acceptable).

It will aid the job of show secretary if a list of your entries to the show can be forwarded to dt.hbka.honeyshow2026@gmail.com by Thursday 8th October.

RECIPES

HONEY CAKE *(To be baked in a 7" round tin)*

Ingredients:

5oz butter	4oz soft brown sugar
6oz clear honey	2 eggs
1 tablespoon of water	7oz self raising flour

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C, 350°F or Gas Mark 4.
- Grease and line the cake tin.
- Place butter, sugar, honey and water in a saucepan and heat until the butter has melted, stirring all the time.
- When the butter has melted, remove the pan from heat and allow the contents to cool to blood temperature.
- Gradually beat in the eggs, add sieved flour and mix until smooth (do not over mix).
- Pour mixture into the greased and lined tin and bake for 1 hour, or until risen and firm to the touch.
- Cooking time and temperature may vary according to the oven used.
- Cover the top during baking, if necessary, to prevent browning.
- Leave to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a cooling rack.

HONEY FUDGE.

Ingredients:

1lb of granulated sugar	5fl oz of evaporated milk
2oz of honey	2oz of butter
A good pinch of salt	

Method:

- 1. In a very large saucepan, boil the sugar, salt and milk for 5 minutes.
- 2. Add the honey and re-boil the mixture until a "soft ball" stage is reached at 115°C (240°F). Add the butter to the mixture and allow to stand until it is luke-warm.
- 3. Beat the mixture until it is creamy and spread into a greased dish. When it is nearly set, cut the fudge into 1-inch squares.

HEREFORDSHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION
HONEY SHOW AWARDS

JOINT BBKA/NATIONAL HONEY SHOW BLUE RIBAND

For an exhibit of outstanding merit. Awarded only if there are more than 100 entries in the Show. It includes a voucher for free admission and a free entry to an Open Class at the next National Honey Show.
If there are 50 – 100 entries, an HBKA Certificate of Merit will be issued.

TOM BRADFORD PERPETUAL TROPHY

Awarded to the full member gaining the highest aggregate points in all classes.

HOME GUARD CUP

For most points achieved in the Novice class. The winner will also receive a gift ticket to the next National Honey Show.

PERPETUAL CHALLENGE CUP

Awarded to the exhibitor domiciled in Herefordshire gaining the most points in Classes 2, 3 and 4.

EAVES PERPETUAL CHALLENGE CUP

Awarded to the exhibitor gaining most points in Classes 5 and 6.

HARRY GARDENER MEMORIAL TROPHY

Awarded to the exhibitor gaining most points in Classes 12, 13,19 and 20.

MAIDSTONE CUP

Awarded to the winner of Class 11.

JOHN HARLEY CUP

Awarded to the winner of Class 18.

MARY WALTERS PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

Awarded to the exhibitor gaining most points in classes 27a and 27b

BRITISH BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

For an exhibit of outstanding merit, where the number of entries is below that required for the BBKA Blue Ribbon.