

Sensational!

By Val Rhenius, National Honey Show Publicity Officer, and
Sue Carter, Schedule Convenor

The National Honey Show was finally back to its full impressive display of exhibits, two years after the COVID hiatus. Over 2,000 entries, not only from the UK, but from around the world, looked as impressive as ever in the great exhibition space of Sandown Park. Honey, mead and displays were in the first part of the hall with wax, cakes, comb honey and decorative items in the second section, the rest of the hall being filled with an array of information stands and leading trade suppliers.

A Royal send-off

Joyce Nisbet entered a wonderful display of a fitting tribute to the late Queen, with wax corgis, horses and superb candles in crown-shaped holders (photos opposite).

The bar was set high by judges

First prize in the 24 jars class was not awarded this year as none of the entries were deemed good enough; something to challenge yourself with next year? The equally difficult class for a frame of honey and nine jars of honey was won by John Roberts of Cornwall. Class 10, for clear honey entries from outside the EU, always well supported, this year had entries from around the world. The winning entry was awarded to Mariam Al Mutawaa from Kuwait. In the wax classes, Bill Fisher wowed the viewing public with his wax beehive (photo overleaf). The wax flower entries were all outstanding and the bowl of wax flowers produced by Sue Rawlings (see photo opposite) was, to quote the judge, the best he had ever seen. The display of candles and wax blocks filled a whole length of tables and several judges commented on the excellent quality of the wax on display. A huge thanks to all of the entrants for their efforts and well done to all of the winners.

Junior artists show their talents

We were delighted to see entries again this year from juniors featured as prize winners in previous Honey Show write-ups. This year we also received junior entries to the show from Mrs Burney's Bee Club CIC in Croydon (see photos overleaf). Debbie Burney, a primary school teacher, began, during the COVID-19 pandemic, thinking about using her beekeeping hobby to help get children outside and more connected to nature. She started her bee club in March 2021 with an apiary at the local Scout Outdoor Centre. Each of her three groups had an overwintered nucleus, which they cared for across the season. Most of the children are staying on for a second year when they hope to pass their BBKA Junior Certificates. Two of the junior groups produced lots of delicious honey earlier in the year and entered the local Croydon BKA honey show, where they were delighted to win second and third prize in the Junior Honey Class. Bill Fisher and Sue Carter, the judges at the Croydon Show, were very encouraging, giving tips for improving the honey to enter the National. Debbie brought a group of children to the National Honey Show on the Friday. They really enjoyed looking at the exhibits and making felt bees with the ladies at the 'Grans on the Make' stand. Just as they were about to leave, Debbie received a phone call from the judging team informing her they had won prizes. They received two Jean Blaxland Memorial prizes and the Schools Apiary Shield, presented by Bob Maurer, the National Honey Show Chairman! The children and Debbie were absolutely over the moon.



A fabulous display in Class 16.
Photos: Joyce Nisbet



Lifelike wax flower display by Sue Rawlings. Definitely 'a keeper'!



Another outstanding display of wax flowers by Alla Neal.



Left: Juniors from Mrs Burney's Bee Club pointing to their winning honey, also shown above, middle.
Right: National Honey Show Chair, Bob Maurer, with Mrs Burney's Bee Club holding the Shools Apiary Shield.



Some of the many excellent hive products are shown here.
Above: Sweet delights: A wonderful cake by Mrs Joanna Gore and tempting chocolates were made by Janine Sparks from Farnham BKA.
Bottom left: Beautiful needlecraft winning entry for Class 88 Needlecraft by Rosanna Seels.
Right: Bill Fisher's wax beehive; photo: Sue Carter.

A range of activities covered all interests

The National Honey Show has many activities running in parallel throughout the show. The main lecture programme ran from Thursday morning to Saturday afternoon, with international speakers, Dara Kilmartin, Grace McCormack and Apimondia president, Jeff Pettis. On Friday, in addition to the main programme, there were the *Bee Craft* lectures by PhD students presenting their research work, and on Saturday there was a series of talks for newer beekeepers. There was also a varied programme of workshops, with Dr Sara Robb's toiletries and Chris Park's skep-making among the most popular.

The trade hall was well-attended as always

As well as major equipment suppliers, the trade hall hosted a range of smaller, interesting stalls selling useful bee-related items and gifts alongside the information stands of the BBKA, the Central Association of Bee-Keepers, the Bee Farmers, the Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) National Bee Unit and others.

Why not watch videos of the live-streamed events on YouTube and Facebook?

To bring a flavour of the show to those who were not able to attend, or were wondering what they were missing, we expanded our presentation of short videos this year, 'live' from the show. Aided by experts from the AV team, borrowed from filming the lectures, firstly Bob Maurer, our chairman, walked us through some of the

activities as we set up on Wednesday. Then on Thursday, Enid Brown, our Judges' Referee, talked about the judging, while it was actually taking place. We had a chat with our sponsors, The Wax Chandlers, visiting the stand they shared with 'Grans' and walking across with them to their spectacular float; and we visited the skep-making workshop in action. These videos are still available to view on Facebook and YouTube, and will be joined on YouTube by the lecture videos as they are released at 5.15pm on the first Friday of the month throughout the coming year.

A special NHS in 2023

Next year will be the National Honey Show's centenary; 100 years since the first National Honey Show was held at Crystal Palace in 1923. As always, we are planning a great show for you with some special celebrations. We hope you will join us there, at Sandown Park during 26 to 28 October 2023.

"The National Honey Show had an impressive display of over 2,000 exhibits from the UK and around the world. Join us in 2023 to celebrate our centenary."
