

## **In it to win it? – Honey Show hints and tips**

If you missed our Zoom chat on Wednesday, then you missed a treat. Chris Carey is a member of Preston BKA and an experienced beekeeper of a good number of years. He used to be one of our branch members but, as he lives close to Preston, he decided to move his beekeeping closer to home and transferred his membership.



*On show*

Those of you who were around and knew Chris will remember him winning Honey Show prizes so we thought his knowledge and experience would help some of our less experienced Honey Show participants with some ideas.

His first remark was that our schedule really does include something for everyone and it not just about showing jars of honey. He encouraged everyone to have a go. Our beekeeping is mostly about us trying to work with our bees and sometimes second guess what they are up to. Chris said the Honey Show is a chance for us to choose what happens and how we do it.

### **Chris's top tips**

Prepare in advance and read the schedule. There are a number of points given for presentation so think about this and take care over it.

Make sure you use the correct jars and lids, fill so that no gap can be seen under the lid and clean/polish the inside of the jar first before filling. The jars should be gleaming and lids must be clean and free of dust. No honey should be between the jar and lid thread. Lids must move freely. If you are asked to show two identical jars then try and make sure the jar batch numbers match or are very close.



### *Not just honey*

Honey should be jarred a week before the show to allow aroma to develop in the jar. Don't open the lid again once it is ready. It should be fine filtered and as clear as possible, without bubbles or specks. Well prepared honey shines in the jar.

Size and weights in the schedule are important. All items should be the correct size or weight as show in the schedule, eg, wax cake, 200-260g, it should not be lighter or heavier.

If you display a comb ready for extraction make sure the case is clean and glass is polished. The honey should be without drips, evenly sealed and should be proud of the frame, ready to extract. Propolis or wax removed from the top and sides of the frame.

Practice if you need to and if there is a recipe then it must be followed. Both the honey fruit cake and honey fudge need some care in their preparation, they are both easy to overcook or burn. The Honey dessert class can be whatever you wish. You should be able to taste honey in your finished make.



### *Wax Butterfly winner*

Wax craft can be anything. We have seen flowers and butterflies made from wax in the past but the class is wide open for you to do as you wish. His recommendations included using wax cappings, saving fresh brace comb and being careful not to overheat wax as this can change its colour. Filtering is very important and wax should be free of specks and debris like honey should. There are plenty of ideas on the internet and also information about cleaning and processing your wax.

Photographs should be interesting. It isn't always the best produced photograph that wins, sometimes it can be the more unusual aspects of beekeeping that catch the judges attention. Be creative and think outside the box.

There are lots of different classes to enter, from honey to cake making, candle making and photographing, so we hope this meeting encouraged you to give it a go.