

The Welsh National Honey Show at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show

Chris Cardew

I remember when I started beekeeping. I had been working with a beekeeping friend before having any bees myself, and he called me one day to say that he had a swarm and would I like it. From that point on I have been obsessed with bees and beekeeping. It wasn't until the following year that I had a small harvest of honey from my two hives: about 40 pounds as I remember. Honey was never my reason for going into beekeeping, but I remember to this day the great pleasure I had in giving my relatives and friends a jar of honey from my bees and the feedback from them: "You'll be selling honey soon Chris."

I started to organize talks and workshops for my local association, which meant talking to experienced beekeepers from around the country. I was asked if I would like to steward at the Welsh Honey Show, a part of the Royal Welsh Show. I hadn't shown honey myself, but always keen to learn, I jumped at the chance to steward for a few days.

What a wonderful experience it was, as a steward I was helping the exhibitors to set out their entries and chatting to them as they did. Most experienced beekeepers are more than happy to talk about the way they do things to novices as I was then. Very quickly I learnt that there are many different classes of honey, honeycomb, frames of honey, beeswax and related products, as well as honey cakes, biscuits and sweets. In the first year that I was a steward, there was a mead demonstration by experienced beekeeper and judge, Steve Guest. He talked about all the ways in which to make a prize winning, tasty and good-looking mead.

What became apparent was that many of the experienced exhibitors were also selling their products and several of them would display their winning certificates when selling honey. These were invariably experienced beekeepers who got into showing and selling honey as they became more experienced. I should point out that many inexperienced beekeepers show honey and other hive products and there is a novice section, so don't be

shy, it is a great way to learn more.

Not being that familiar at the time with country shows, I'd attended the RWAS in the past, also the Spring Smallholders Fair, but had never really had much understanding of how meticulously the exhibitors had prepared the exhibits for the show.

Of course, showing your produce means very careful preparation, following the show schedule closely (on the RWAS website in early Spring each year <https://rwas.wales/royal-welsh/competitions-royal-welsh>)

One way to learn quickly about the quality of honey is to be a judge's steward; the judge will ask you to help them as they judge each entry, and they are usually very helpful in explaining what they look for. Stewards can also show honey if they wish. It is also an opportunity for exhibitors and stewards to sell honey at the show.

The RWAS is a big national show which attracted over 200,000 visitors in 2022. Many visited the Honey section which is located in the Horticulture marquee. We see many beekeepers, mostly from the UK, but also from around the world. It's always interesting talking to beekeepers from far afield and hearing their experiences. So much of what I do, particularly with honey, has been learnt from these discussions.

An observation hive is a big attraction for young and old alike. It always surprises me how many people don't recognize honey bees. As a steward you might like to spend time talking to the public around the observation hive, answering their questions, sometimes quite obscure!

These two last points I feel, highlight the main purpose of the RWAS, education and community; making bees and beekeeping accessible to the public and then allowing them to view the many products that come from the hive.

If you are interested in showing, please watch out for the show schedule at this web address <https://rwas.wales/>

royal-welsh/competitions-royal-welsh. The honey section link will become live early in 2023. The Welsh Beekeepers Association will also have links to the RWAS Honey schedule when it goes live.

The RWAS Honey Show is a separate organization to the WBKA, but of course the WBKA is integral to the show, with its own stand every year.

If you are interested in being a steward, including being a judge's steward then please contact Chris Cardew chris_cardew@hotmail.com. Being a steward is voluntary, but you will get a free pass to the show and you will have time to look around other sections of the show.



The Show in preparation for judging.

Welsh National Honey Show Results

HONEY - MÊL

- 1 COMMERCIAL HONEY - Twelve glass containers of Honey of two or more glass sizes 1 Carys Edwards 2 Emyr Jenkins 3 Tracy Harper
- 2 COMMERCIAL CLASS - Twelve x 454g jars of one of the following: light, medium, dark, 1 Carys Edwards 2 Tracy Harper
- 3 COMMERCIAL HONEY - Twelve identical glass jars of one type of honey 1 Emyr Jenkins
- 4 Six matching 454g jars of any type honey (runny, soft set or heather). 1 Deborah Smith 2 Carys Edwards
- 5 Two 454g jars of light honey. 1 Carys Edwards 2 Tracy Harper 3 Raymond Strange 4 Rhodri Powell
- 6 Two 454g jars of medium honey. 1 Deborah Smith 2 Raymond Strange
- 7 Two 454g jars of dark honey (excluding heather) 1 Carys Edwards 2 Deborah Smith 3 Rhodri Powell
- 8 Two 454g jars of natural granulated honey 1 Deborah Smith 2 Shane Llewelyn Jones
- 9 Two 454g jars of soft set honey 1 Emyr Jenkins
- 10 Two 454g jars of heather honey 1 Rhodri Powell 2 Raymond Strange
- 12 One 454g jar of liquid honey displayed in a jar which will be covered prior to judging 1 Carys Edwards 2 Tracy Harper 3 Martin Jones

COMB HONEY - MÊL DIL

- 15 Two standard containers of granulated cut comb honey (minimum 227g). 1 Deborah Smith
- 16 Two sections of comb honey round/square.
- 17 One comb of honey, suitable for extracting, exhibited

in a plain case. 1 Dyserth Honey 2 Tir Capel Apiary 3 Rhodri Powell 4 Carys Edwards

BEESWAX - CŴYR GWENYN

- 19 Three matching candles other than moulded. 1 Paul Yates
- 20 Three matching moulded candles. 1 Deborah Smith 2 Tir Capel Apiary 3 Paul Yates 4 Karen Squires
- 21 A decorated beeswax exhibit to occupy a space not larger than 450mm x 450mm 1 Deborah Smith 2 Tir Capel Apiary
- 22 Six x 28g (approximately) moulded blocks of beeswax. 1 Deborah Smith 2 Tracy Harper 3 Emyr Jenkins
- 23 A tin of hard furniture polish (hazard labels to be used). 1 Martin Jones 2 Paul Yates 3 Raymond Strange
- 24 One container of furniture cream (hazard labels to be used). 1 Tracy Harper 2 Carys Edwards 3 Martin Jones

COMPOSITE CLASSES - DOSBARTHIAU

CYMYSG

- 25 Individual Composite Class 1 Deborah Smith 2 Tracy Harper 3 Emyr Jenkins
- 26 Association Composite Class 1 Rhodri Powell

MEAD AND HONEY DRINKS - MEDD A DIODYDD MÊL

- 27 One bottle of mead, sweet. (SG 1.006 – 1.025) 1 Carys Edwards 2 Deborah Smith 3 Martin Jones
- 28 One bottle of mead, dry. (SG 990 – 1.005) 1 Carys Edwards 2 Deborah Smith 3 Rhodri Powell
- 29 One bottle of melomel, hyppocras (fruit spices to be named), cyser or pyment 1 Carys Edwards 2 Deborah Smith 3 Tir Capel Apiary



Paul Yates of Cardiff, Vale and Valleys BKA won the Association Prize for the exhibitor winning the most points.

30 One bottle of metheglin or sack metheglin (type to be labelled) 1 Karen Squires 2 Carys Edwards 3 Deborah Smith

31 A non-alcoholic honey drink - recipe to be provided by the competitor 1 Carys Edwards 2 Tracy Harper 3 Deborah Smith

32 Once bottle of honey vinegar, flavoured or plain 1 Tracy Harper

33 One bottle of honey beer 1 Deborah Smith

GENERAL DISPLAYS - ARDDANGOSFEYDD CYFFREDINOL

34 A display of hive products suitable for a show window 1 Deborah Smith 2 Tracy Harper 3 Carys Edwards

EDUCATIONAL - ADDYSGOL

A felted bee 1 Deborah Smith 2 Tracy Harper

HONEY CONFECTIONERY - MELYS FWYDYDD MÊL

38 A Honey cake 1 David Stratford 2 Helen Willis

39 Bara Brith 1 David Stratford 2 Tracy Harper

40 Five flapjacks 1 Caleb Vater 2 Carys Edwards 3 David Stratford

41 A box of honey fudge 1 Raymond Strange 2 David Stratford

HONEY PRESERVES - CYFFAITH MÊL

42 One jar of honey preserves 1 Carys Edwards 2 Raymond Strange 3 Deborah Smith 4 Verity Vater 5 Tracy Harper

43 One jar of honey marmalade 1 Raymond Strange 2 David Stratford 3 Deborah Smith 4 Carys Edwards

44 One jar of honey chutney 1 Verity Vater 2 Paul Yates 3 Raymond Strange 4 David Stratford

NOVICE CLASSES - DOSBARTHIAU

DECHREUWYR

45 Two 454g jars of honey which can be either light, medium, dark or granulated honey but both ja 3 Dyserth Honey

UNDER 11 YEARS

50 A short handwritten illustrated poem / verse on a 'Bee' theme 1 Siwan Haf Davies

51 Three decorated biscuits 1 Siwan Haf Davies

OPEN GIFT CLASSES - DOSBARTHIAU RHODD AGORED

52 One jar of light honey 1 Tracy Harper 2 Rhodri Powell 3 Raymond Strange

53 One jar of medium 1 Raymond Strange 2 Rhodri Powell 3 Emyr Jenkins

54 One jar of dark honey 1 Raymond Strange

55 One jar of natural granulated honey 1 Raymond Strange 2 Rhodri Powell 3 Emyr Jenkins

56 One jar of soft set honey 1 Emyr Jenkins 2 Tracy Harper

HONEY - MÊL

58 Two 454g jars of light honey 1 Raymond Strange 2 Deborah Smith

59 Two 454g jars of medium honey 1 Deborah Smith 2 Raymond Strange 3 Karen Squires

60 Two 454g jars of dark honey (excluding heather) 1 Raymond Strange 2 Deborah Smith 3 Rhodri Powell

61 Two 454g jars of natural granulated honey 1 Deborah Smith 2 Raymond Strange 3 Carys Edwards

62 Two 454g jars of soft set honey 1 Deborah Smith 2 Emyr Jenkins 3 Tracy Harper

COMB HONEY - MÊL DIL

66 One comb of honey, suitable for extracting, exhibited in a plain case. 1 Karen Squires 2 Paul Yates 3 Tir Capel Apiary

BEESWAX - CŴYR GWENYN

69 Six x 28g (approximately) moulded blocks of beeswax. 1 Paul Yates 2 Tracy Harper 3 Deborah Smith

70 A pair of candles (1 to be lit by the judge only) 1

Deborah Smith 2 Paul Yates 3 Emyr Jenkins

MEAD/HONEY DRINKS - MEDD & DIODYDD MÊL

71 One bottle of mead, sweet. (SG 1.006 – 1.025) 1 Martin

Jones 2 Deborah Smith 3 Carys Edwards

72 One bottle of mead, dry. (SG 990 – 1.005) 1 Paul Yates

2 Rhodri Powell 3 Raymond Strange

73 One bottle of melomel, hyppocras (fruit spices to be named), cyser or pyment 1 Paul Yates 2 Deborah Smith 3

Tir Capel Apiary

74 One bottle of metheglin or sack metheglin (type to be labelled) 1 Deborah Smith 2 Carys Edwards 3 Karen

Squires

HONEY SPECIALS

80 SP1 - The Crawshaw Challenge Trophy - Class 1 Carys Edwards

81 SP2 - The Ceri & Jean Davies Cup - Class 2 Carys Edwards

82 SP3 - The EJ Tanner Perpetual Memorial Trophy - Class 18 Not awarded

83 SP4 - The Sir Evan Williams Trophy - Class 26 Rhodri Powell

84 SP5 - The WBKA Challenge Trophy - Class 34 Deborah Smith

85 SP6 - The Charlies H Davies Challenge Trophy - Classes 38 - 41 David Stratford

86 SP7 - The George Faraday Davies Cup - Classes 48 - 51 (Young Beekeepers) Siwan Hâf Davies

87 SP8 - The Warren Davies Trophy - Classes 71 -74 (Mead & Honey Drinks) Deborah Smith

88 SP9 - The HJ Evans Perpetual Trophy - WBKA HNOP Open & Closed classes Deborah Smith

89 SP10 - The Howard Davies Memorial Award for Best Comb in Show Place Exhibitor Karen Squires

90 SP11 - The Henry Ferguson-Thomas Memorial Award - HNOP Classes 5 -11 Deborah Smith

91 SP12 - The Robert Edwards, Meirionnydd BKA Memorial Award - Best Exhibit in the Meads and Drinks section Deborah Smith

92 SP13 - The Robert Edwards, Meirionnydd BKA Memorial Award - Best Exhibit in the Confectionery & Preserves Raymond Strange

93 SP14 - HNOP Classes 58 - 74 WBKA Deborah Smith

94 SP15 - EH Thorne (Beehives) Ltd - winner of class 45 Dyserth Honey

95 SP16 - EH Thorne (Beehives) Ltd - winner of class 48 Not awarded



Deborah Smith receives one of her three major awards. The award was announced by Fred Slater, Honorary Life Vice President of the RWAS and it is presented by the Show Ambassador, Lowri Lloyd Williams.

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