

2021 Honey show report by Graham

Well, we finally have had our 2021 Honey Show and what a great day it was. 73 entries over 14 classes, a very gratifying turnout on a bright sunny Sunday and a clutch of prizes for first time entrants. Congratulations, not only to the winners, but to everyone who was able to produce an entry in March, held over from November. John Rennie told me that he had to “borrow back” jars of honey he had already sold to customers. Well done everyone. Especially thanks to Linda, who did a wonderful job of organising the show at such short notice. (She was rewarded by finally beating Jim McColm to first prize in the light honey class, a career best.) Thanks to Alex for opening and closing the event. And last but not least a huge thanks to Hugh Holmes, our excellent judge for the day, for leaving home at 3.00am to catch the ferry from Belfast. Now that’s what I call dedication.

Some personal memories of the day:

I won't repeat the list of winners that Linda has already sent out by e-mail, but I do have some highlights in my mind that don't feature there. I was privileged to assist Hugh Holmes, as his steward for the day. Hugh was an absolute gentleman, professional, courteous and infinitely patient. This was his very first show as a qualified judge and he displayed all the qualities it takes to become a judge, in spades. John Rennie's recommendation by the way.

This was a personal “Oscars Night” for Heidi Hunt who left with an arm full of trophies. She won the “best honey in show” with an entry that won the blind taste category. Hers was the smallest jar entered and Hugh was concerned that it would not qualify for weight. So we weighed the jar and it came in with a few grams to spare. When Hugh tasted it his face lit up, and we agreed that good things often come in small packages. For the rest of Heidi's achievements please refer to Linda's list

Anne Burton-Smith won “the best exhibit in show” trophy, for a colourful, humorous, heart warming crochet work. Hugh obviously knew a thing or two about craft work as well as honey, he remarked “that has taken a lifetime to make.” A view that was shared, I think, by the whole hall.

Mark Mitchell won the tankard for the photography class. This was a close up of worker bee in flight with a full load of pollen. He really caught the judges eye with this and I know that he wanted to discuss with Mark what equipment he had used and all the technical details. I am pretty sure that it wasn't a Kodak Instamatic.

There was one entry that did not win a prize, but was so widely admired that it didn't matter. Yonus entered an absolutely stunning refurbished classic van, complete with Dunragit Walled Garden Honey livery, in the “re-purposed equipment” category. Hugh ruled that it did not meet the requirements of the category, but that it would grace any classic vehicle show that you cared to name. Speaking to Yonus afterwards, he told me that everyone he passed on the way to the show was smiling and waving to him as he went by. Keep your eyes open for it. I am sure that it will be on a road near you soon.

Hugh, very generously, invited me to sample all the honey and traybakes at the same time as he did. I can tell you that by about one o' clock I was experiencing a sugar rush that Keith Richards might have envied. I don't know how these honey show judges do it!