

ROYAL CHESHIRE SHOW 2019

JUDGES' REPORTS

Very positive reports have been received from the judges who came to the Cheshire Show this year, they were very complimentary about the marquee, especially the decorations and the displays of work. Many wrote about the high standards that are on display, and how it showcased to the visitors, the skills of WI members. We are grateful to the 35 members who volunteered to be stewards to the judges, their help was greatly appreciated. The reports give hints and tips to members so that they can improve their entries, and achieve high scores.

STAGING & INTERPRETATION

The theme certainly inspired some lovely displays. Interpretations were good, and there was an improvement in techniques and presentation. As there are now 4 classes which include staging and interpretation, so their hints are very useful.

- All items in a display should relate to each other in size.
- When making the baseboard, it should be slightly smaller than the schedule size, so that it fulfils the space required, without going over.
- All display boards and mechanics should be finished neatly.
- Be careful not to include trade marked items in the display.
- Don't overcrowd or under fill the space, 2/3 is a good amount.
- Cookery items should be displayed whole.
- Draping fabric is now out dated.
- Nothing should overhang the edge of the table.

FLORAL ART

Points were lost, mostly because the entrants had not read the schedule carefully. The measurements should be adhered to precisely, taking up too much space will lose points. The schedule allows unlimited height, so entries should take advantage of this.

PHOTOGRAPHY

There was a good entry in the three classes, most were well presented and some had included a title, this is useful to the judge, especially if it is an unusual subject.

BAKING

The judges were pleased with the high number of entries across the classes and the high standard that were achieved. It is a good idea to read the relevant pages of "On with the Show" as advised in the Rules and Guidelines in the schedule. Each item was judged individually, on its own merit, not in comparison to other entries.

- Sometimes it is best to use a simple recipe that you are confident with, rather than a complex one.
- Choose a recipe that can be made perfectly, that is interesting and is displayed correctly.
- The rules and guidelines in the schedule are good, and should be used when planning an entry.
- In the individual classes the flans were well made, with colourful combinations of fruit, with good creme patissiere, and not too much glaze.
- When cutting Chocolate brownies, do not use the edge, it is drier than the middle. Do not use too much spice. Additional fruit in the brownie improved the flavour.
- The standard of entry in the novice group was good, with good flavours and excellent textures.
- In Class 10, the standard of entry was high, even with a diverse choice of item the flavours and textures were excellent.

PRESERVES, JELLIES, CURDS AND CHUTNEYS

The judge was pleased with the high standard of entries and the good selection of fruit used.

- Always use a plain jar and lid, it is not necessary to put cloth tops on jars, they are not judged.
- Only use ONE cover, either a screw top OR a wax disc with cellophane.

- If using a wax disc, cut the disc to size so that it fits on top of the surface exactly, ensuring a good seal.
- Always fill the jar, the contents will shrink back when cooling, creating a vacuum. If the jar is not sufficiently filled, the gap will be too big for a vacuum to form, and risk spoiling the preserve.
- Always put the date of making on the label.

CRAFT

All the judges commented on the high standard of entries and the diversity of skills on display. In Class 10, the standard of entries was high, of 55 entries, 8 were awarded full marks. It is important to demonstrate a high level of skill to achieve top marks.

- Read "On with the Show" for guidance on what the judge is looking for.
- The more techniques used the greater the marks scored.

Embroidery

The show had a theme, "The Silver Screen", In this class not all entries actually linked their items to this theme, and as a result lost marks. If the link to the theme is not obvious, attach a note to the judge to explain the link.

- In cross stitch pictures, only one stitch is used and so expertise must be shown in other ways.
- Make sure the needle goes exactly through the centre of the hole, make sure that the threads are not twisted, particularly when using metallic thread. Make sure there is even tension in all stitches.
- Make sure that the frame fits the design, size and depth are important. Try embroidering within a frame, or use an art canvas to mount your work.

Fabric Craft

The standard of entry was high, the theme was well interpreted, however some items did not have an relevance to the theme at all.

- Marks were lost because of poor finishing, all entries should be in pristine condition, check that there are not dog/cat hairs on it, there are no stains on the fabric and that all tackings are removed.

- Take care when using stuffing, it should be even , and in cushions should fill the pad fully.

HARD CRAFT

The standard of entry was good, some unusual crafts were entered e.g Cartonnage, which originates from the tombs of Ancient Egypt. Those who related their entry to the theme achieved more marks than those who did not. Sugarcraft is now a craft, and is judged in the craft section of the show, entrants should be aware of this change.

YARN CRAFT

Again, the standard of entries was high, and again those who linked their entry to the theme gained higher marks. It is recognised that the Cheshire WI have some excellent felters, but one box needed more support, it is possible to support your felt with stiffener or a proforma. Although a crocheted Ubuntu (an hexagonal blanket, using different yarns) was beautifully made it was not linked to the theme, so a felted Mickey Mouse won the class.

NOVICE CLASS

The standard in this class was also high, the most points were lost because the item was not finished tidily, loose ends of thread should be sewn in, debris should be removed. The judge will look at each item thoroughly, looking inside, front and back . New entrants should read the guidance carefully, and look at "On with the Show" for full guidance on all crafts. The judge is very careful to make comments that should be helpful to the entrant to improve their work. This is the way the WI maintains its reputation for excellence in craft.

Thank you to all of our members who entered the show this year, the displays were very impressive, showing the talent and expertise of Cheshire WI members, without your support there would not be a show. As our Centenary Year Show is coming nearer, let us make this a splendid celebration by our talented members.

Kate Cawley, Judges' Secretary.