

# Hints & Tips for Entering Exhibits into The Robertson Show

## BAKING

**Judging is not finding fault or nit picking but an evaluation of quality and effort.**

### **Top Tips for Baking Classes**

*“Firstly, and most importantly, don't be afraid to enter! Don't make something and then think “that's not good enough to take to the show”. Enter into the spirit of the day, help fill up the table and you never know, you may even win a prize!”*

*Jenny Pole Baking Judge 2015*

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

Read the Schedule carefully. If a number of items or size is specified then stick to it ensuring that the correct number of items are displayed on plates e.g. 5 Cheese Scones and 6 pieces of Coconut Ice, no more, no less! You will lose points for the wrong number.

All baking should be presented on a paper plate.

Bread should be made 24 hours in advance.

Do not use commercial tin liners, show more skill by lining your own tins.

There should be no cooling tray marks on the top of cakes.

Savoury scones should be cut using a plain cutter and can be glazed. A fluted cutter is used for sweet scones. These are not usually glazed.

A cake or round of shortbread should be about 12mm (1/2 inch) thick.

Pieces of tray bake should be of an even size and shape with all four sides being cut sides.

Pastry should be of an even thickness, evenly baked and if it is a tart or flan then the underneath should not be underdone (No soggy bottoms).

Victoria Sponge jam filled no cream, no sugar finishing.

Chocolate cake, choice of filling, no decoration.

Fresh cream should not be used in any of the entries.

1. External appearance – No burnt fruit on surfaces, no ready-made tin liners and no cooling rack marks. Cooling rack marks can be avoided by using a sheet of baking parchment or silicon on your rack before turning out your cake. Avoid over browning fruit cakes by tying brown paper around the outside of your tin before placing it in the oven. To line a cake or loaf tin, first grease your tin then cut greaseproof paper to size and fit into the tin. Allow cake to cool before removing the greaseproof paper.
2. Internal condition – including texture and even distribution of ingredients.
3. Most importantly – highest marks are awarded for flavour and aroma.

## BAKED GOODS

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

### **Judges of baked entries consider:**

Primarily flavour and aroma.

The appearance colour, shape and regularity.

The condition, crust, texture, distribution of ingredients.

Spices, flavourings or salt should not be overpowering.

The odour should be pleasantly inviting and not indicate rancidity, mustiness, yeastiness, etc.

**Victoria Sandwich.** See Note 1 regarding cooling rack marks. Top of cakes should be flat, without air bubbles or crumbly edges. Both halves should be the same thickness, the top should not have any sugar finishing and the two halves sandwiched together with jam.

**Shortbread.** A shortbread round marked into 6 pieces. Your shortbread round should be about half an inch thick. Mark the sections with a knife before baking. The shortbread may be lightly sprinkled with castor sugar. The Judge will break the shortbread to taste and test the texture.

**Brandy Snaps unfilled,** rolled brandy snaps. It is best to use plain flour as this gives a much thinner, crisper, brandy snap. Lift the brandy snaps from the trays with a palette knife and roll them quickly round the greased handle of a wooden spoon. Slip them off the handle as soon as they set.

## CAKES

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### **Judges of cake entries look for:**

Well risen, even in shape and baking.

Correct proportion with smooth sides.

No lining papers or top cooling rack marks.

Crust thin and even.

Texture true to cake type.

Even distribution of fruit.

No flour pockets.

Flavour true, even and characteristic

Fruit Cakes. Judges will cut your cake in half to display the internal condition and will taste the cake by cutting a small piece from the bottom. Points will be lost for uneven distribution of fruit, burnt fruit on surface and a thick, well browned crust.

## COOKIES

A cookie is a biscuit made from a softer mixture, which is hand rolled or sliced from a roll.

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### **Judges of cookies entries look for:**

Uniform sizes and shapes, not too large.  
Flavour true, even and characteristic.

## SCONES

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### **Judges of scone entries look for:**

Even shape, size and colour.  
Size 5-6 cms (2-2.5 inches) diameter and almost as tall.  
Standing erect with flat top.  
Pale golden colour.  
Texture light and springy.  
True to flavour to reflect type.  
No boldness of flavour of raising agent.  
No overcooked fruit on surface.

Judges break scones to view texture and avoid compacting.

Cheese Scones. Use a plain cutter for all savoury scones, they may be glazed with egg or milk and grated cheese can be sprinkled on top. The Judge will break a scone to taste and assess texture.

## Small WHITE LOAF

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### **Judges of bread entries look for:**

The loaf should be well risen  
and evenly baked to warm golden brown.  
No glaze is needed.  
The base free from shaping cracks and bulges.  
A cut slice showing light, fine, silky and even texture,  
with no streaks or holes through inefficient kneading,

and crumb touch soft and springy.  
Flavour and aroma clean.

## TEA LOAF

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### **Judges of tea loaf entries look for:**

The loaf should be baked in a loaf tin.  
Presented well risen and evenly baked.  
Cracking of the domed top is not an issue.  
A cut slice showing even, fairly moist texture.  
Flavour well blended with main ingredient recognisable, ensure that nuts and fruit are well integrated  
Spices should not predominate.

## BISCUITS

### **As a guide biscuits are generally:**

Rolled and then formed with a 50 to 60mm diameter cutter.

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### **Judges of biscuit entries generally look for:**

A crisp snap when broken.  
Uniform size and shape.  
Thickness of the order 3mm.  
Fluted cutter for sweet / Plain for savoury.  
Even in colour, according to ingredients.  
Flavour true, even and characteristic.

If schedule requires "**fancy biscuits**":

Decoration and chosen colours delicate and refined.  
Biscuits need not to be of identical decoration  
and may be formed to different shapes.

If schedule requires "**sandwiched**":

Filling to be even and not excessive for all biscuits.

# PRESERVES

**Judging is not finding fault or nit picking but an evaluation of quality and effort.**

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

All preserves should be presented in clean, plain, straight-sided jars.

Jars and lids used for preserves should be plain, with no trademarks or names on them, as these contravene Trade Descriptions Act.

Labels should be on straight and clearly marked with the type of preserve and the full date of making.

Fill jars as full as possible. Immediately place a waxed disc on the hot jam or jelly. This will allow for slight shrinkage as the contents cool and it will enable the disc to form an airtight seal thereby preventing deterioration.

If the jars or lids are dirty, or the jars are not full or sealed when the jam drops below 82C (180F) mould may develop.

When completely cold, cover the jar with cellophane. There should be no air bubbles or scum within the contents.

Adding frills, paper covers, ribbons and gingham does not gain extra marks.

The use of preserving sugar can make a jam, jelly or marmalade too stiff due to the added pectin.

If cellophane covers are used they also need a well-fitting wax disc on top of the preserve.

If twist tops are used they should be new and do not need a wax disc.

Lemon curd does not normally have a metal top.

Chutneys should have vinegar proof lids or cellophane covers.

Preserves are marked on:

External standard:                      Container    Cover    Label    Appearance

Internal standard:                      Colour    Clarity

Quality (highest marks)              Consistency    Texture    Flavour    Aroma    Quantity.

**Lemon Curd.** The curd should be a bright yellow in colour, of a spreadable consistency, smooth with no air bubbles or scum. Cover as for jams and jellies.

**Savoury Jelly.** For jellies the above rules apply, the brighter the colour the better. Instead of cellophane, a new plastic lid should be used.

**Marmalade.** The jelly part of the marmalade should be clear; the peel should be well cooked and evenly distributed. To achieve even distribution, allow the mixture to cool slightly before filling the jars, otherwise fruit may rise to the surface. Proceed to cover as for jams and jellies.

JAM

**Comply with the rules for exhibitors.**

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

In a plain jar with a label of contents, detailing the day, month and year made.

Label plain, neat, clean and unblemished.

Contents reaching within 3mm of top of jar.

Covered with waxed disk and cellophane top or brand new plain metal top without internal waxed disk.

Polished external appearance with no finger marks.

A bright and even coloured jam. A dark, dull colour is often caused by over-boiling the jam to a set. The longer the boil after the sugar has been added, the darker the colour and the fruit flavour may be compromised.

Jams made with Jam Sugar (with added pectin) often produce jams with unnaturally bright colours, for example, Strawberry jam.

The jam is tested for consistency and texture. A gelled jam, with a set but spreadable consistency. If the jam has a pouring consistency, perhaps it was not boiled enough after adding the sugar and failed to set. A stiff consistency is often due to over-boiling the jam.

A syrupy consistency can be caused by using over-ripe fruit. To make the best jam use just-ripe fruit. Riper fruit decline in pectin content. Jams made from stone or soft fruit with skins should be tender, not chewy. These fruit should be cooked gently in water to soften their skins before the sugar is

The jam should have a fruity aroma, devoid of taint or mustiness. Aromas are often spoiled by recycled lids. A jam with an infusion of a vinegar preserve from an old lid is unpleasant. The flavour of the jam should be a balance; not too sweet and not too fruity, but true to the ingredients in the recipe.

## PICKLES AND CHUTNEYS

### **Comply with the rules for exhibitors.**

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

In a plain jar with precise label of contents including day, month and year made.

At least 12 weeks old and ready to eat.

Label plain, neat, clean and unblemished.

Contents reach within 12mm of top of jar.

Covered with a brand new white plain metal top.

Polished external appearance with no finger marks.

# HANDICRAFTS

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

When staging, the exhibitor cannot move any other's entry.  
The photograph must be the work of the exhibitor.  
The photograph may be professionally developed and printed.  
No photograph can be entered on more than one occasion.  
Mounting is optional

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**Judges of photographic entries generally consider these elements, listed in descending order of importance:**

### **Interpretation**

Does the photograph show originality?  
Does it comply with the class definition and rules?

### **Technical Quality**

Is the subject matter in focus?  
Is the exposure correct?

### **Composition**

Is the subject matter the main element?  
Is the rest of the print well composed?

### **Presentation**

Is the print in pristine condition?  
If specified Is it pleasingly mounted and/or framed?

## ART/CRAFT

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of floral art entries generally consider six elements.**

Interpretation.  
Colour harmony.  
Design balance, proportion, space, form and texture.  
Plant material relativity and condition.  
Accordance and mechanics of other components.  
Presentation and effect.

**Marks may be lost for:**

Exceeding the allotted space.  
Not utilizing space allowed to full potential.  
Poor use of elements and principles of design.  
Poor workmanship and presentation.  
Lack of harmony.  
Creased, stained or unsuited accessories.  
Water leaking from the exhibit.

## HANDICRAFT

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of handicraft entries generally consider these elements, listed in descending order of importance:**

Workmanship skills and techniques.  
Design and colour harmony.  
Are the materials suitable and applicable?  
The general presentation, effect and finish.

**Each entry is judged on its own standalone merit.**

## ART

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of art entries generally consider six elements.**

Eye appeal (*focal point*).  
Colour.  
Perspective.  
Balance and composition.  
Tonal value.  
Use of materials (*presentation*).

## GREETING CARDS

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of greetings cards generally consider.**

**Appearance:**

Good design and suitability to defined subject.

**Overall Craftsmanship:**

Number of individual skills utilized and competence.



**Creativity:**

Artistic flair and choice of colours and materials.

**CROCHET**

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of crochet entries generally consider.****Entry:**

Showing craft to best advantage.

Colour, pattern, texture, yarns and suitability.

**Overall Craftsmanship:**

Tension hook to yarn demonstrating competence.

Edges neat, correct turning chains and accurate.

Finishing edges continuous, turning at each round and increasing/decreasing at the corners.

Seams neatly grafted or crocheted together.

Stitches collected two threads at bands to avoid holes.

All ribs worked in crochet.

Light blocking is advised.

**Presentation:**

New and unworn displayed to best advantage.

**KNITTING**

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of knitting entries consider these elements:****Design:**

Design and yarns taking full account of intended use.

Higher consideration to an original design.

**Finishing techniques are important:**

Tension consistent to fabric and texture.

Best chosen method of casting on and off.

No dropped stitches.

Shoulder seams and similar well crafted.

Any buttons and holes positioned to best effect.

Yarns joined at edge and loose ends darned neatly.

**Presentation:**

Blocking is best for most natural yarns.

Synthetics are best finished without pressing.  
Garments should be unworn.  
Attractively arrangement on the show bench.

**Baby Garments:**

No lacy patterns or fabrics.  
No ribbons at the neck or around face.

CROSS STITCH

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of cross stitch entries consider.**

**Entry:**

Showing craft to best advantage.  
Of pleasing appearance, eye catching.

**Overall Craftsmanship:**

Stitches even and accurately formed.  
Stitches of consistent quality in same direction.  
Thread centred and filling each hole.  
Even texture indicating strands separated before combining in the needle.  
Strands laying neatly during stitch formation.  
No visible trailing threads.  
Stretching straight horizontal and perpendicular. Judges of embroidery generally consider.

EMBROIDERY

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of embroidery generally consider.**

**Appearance:**

Effective combinations of fabric, thread, stitchery and material.  
Colour and texture appropriate to shape and defined use.

**Overall Craftsmanship:**

Skill in use and difficulty of stitches.  
Worked in, well chosen threads.

Edge of work suitable for the design and appropriate if traditional Hardanger or Ruskin Lace techniques employed.

**Creativity:**

Artistic flair in choice of stitching, colours and materials, all to achieve an integrated and imaginative result.

**Presentation:**

New and unsoiled, displayed to best advantage.

Shape not distorted with no design makings visible.

Frame complimentary and aligned with stitching.

**COLLAGE**

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of collage entries consider these elements:**

A balanced composition.

Sense of pattern, space and shapes.

Backing to enhance composition.

3D interest.

Choice of colours.

Mix of surface textures.

Adhesives suited to individual elements.

Wrinkle and pucker free backgrounds.

Stitching neat and appropriate.

Finished work well stretched.

Hanging mode able to support weight.

**WOODWORK**

These hints and tips are for general guidance only and in no way reflect the criteria that the judge will specifically use on Show Day.

**Judges of woodwork entries consider these elements:**

Craftsmanship and woodworking skills.

Wood choice to compliment composition.

Sense of balance and scale.

Any natural faults and knots integrated into design.

Grain showing element to best advantage.

No vice or saw marks.

Finished smooth, well-polished

Robustness and form in keeping with use.