



Meet the Caker

There are around 900 members, spread across 24 branches that form the South East region of The British Sugarcraft Guild. Every single member has a unique story about their journey with cake and sugarcraft. Here we interview Becca Howie of the Portsmouth branch, in Hampshire.

Please tell us about yourself

I have always loved baking cakes, as, to be quite honest, my Mum wasn't too good at baking! But she always got the annual Dairy Diary from the milkman, which contained great recipes and so these were the first ones I tried. I now use my Dad's cookbook, dated 1971. It is a well used book with page markers for favourite recipes, especially the Christmas cake recipe!



Over the last few years I have found myself baking more and more, and wanting to increase my skills I contacted Ashley Allen (Guildford BSG) to learn how to cover a cake. I spent a lovely afternoon learning how to crumb coat with ganache and then cover with sugarpaste, and I then joined various workshops learning how to make cupcakes and leaves. But I really wanted to know how to make flowers, and Ashley encouraged me to join the BSG. So in 2020 I decided to join Portsmouth BSG as it was slightly closer to home. Then the virus arrived and I started to watch the R8 zooms, which have been phenomenal, and I have learned so much. I decided to enter the R8 spring flower competition and I was delighted to achieve first place in the novice group.



Please tell us about your first cake, and your greatest cake

My first novelty cake was this cow cake for my Mum! I had seen the cow shaped tins at my local shop and always wanted to have a go, and as my parents used to have cows I couldn't resist!

My proudest cake was the cake I made for my Dad just before he passed away. He always loved the autumnal colours in the trees and loved my colouring of the leaves on his cake, which I topped off with dahlias.



If you were stuck on a desert island, what would be your tool of choice?

Ball tools because they add movement and make something come alive.

What is your favourite aspect of caking (eg, modelling, sugar flowers, royal icing, baking, etc) ?

My favourite aspect of sugarcraft is sugar flowers. But I also enjoy modelling. It's very hard to choose between the two! This fairy castle cake was a cake I made with a friend and was the cake that really inspired me to learn more.

What is the one top tip you would pass on to a new caker?

I would say to be patient with yourself – for example, if you have hot hands, take your time and let your paste dry.



What is the best aspect of being a member of the Guild?

As I've only been to one branch meeting, just before we went into lockdown, I think the best thing about being a member is the variety of demonstrations and demonstrators on Zoom. I have learned so much!