



Meet the Caker

There are around 900 members, spread across 23 branches that form the South East region of The British Sugarcraft Guild. Every single member has a story about their journey with cake and sugarcraft.

Here we interview Vena Fowler Wright of the London branch.

Please tell us about yourself

Initially I studied for a City & Guilds qualification in dressmaking, home management and cookery. I then obtained a Teachers Certificate and taught needlework for about 7 years in schools. In 1992 I obtained my City & Guilds 790 in Sugarcraft.



My interest in cake decorating began when I was given a piece of shop-bought birthday cake, which was awful, and I thought that I could do better. So I signed up for a course of evening classes in 1966 on cake decorating. After only two years I made my own wedding cake (photo on the left). In 1978 I was asked to teach cake decorating for 6 weeks, and I ended up teaching all aspects of cake decorating and sugarcraft for over 34 years! In the beginning the classes were mostly on royal icing skills as sugar paste and flower paste had yet to be invented!



Can you tell us about the Guild when it started?

I joined the BSG in July 1981 a few months after its first meeting in London in March 1981. The Guild was created by Eileen Swan and five others. It was created to support Cake Decorators to share ideas, knowledge, information and hold demonstrations and workshops, with the biggest event being the London Christmas Exhibition. The group quickly grew to over 100 members and other branches were established all over the country, however, I have stayed with the original London branch, and have been Treasurer for several years along with running the Cygnets group.



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

My first cake was a Basket of Roses cake and I was absolutely delighted with it! Even now I would say it was a great achievement. I'm also very proud of the wedding cakes I made for my two sons, and for my Mum's 100th birthday, which was in the shape of a book, one half was fruit cake and the other half was sponge.

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

It would have to be a non-stick board and rolling pin.

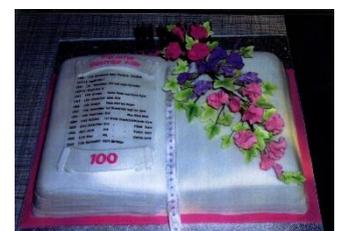


What is your favourite aspect of caking (eg, modelling, sugar flowers, royal icing, baking, etc) ?

My favourite aspect of sugarcraft now is sugar flowers. I love making them, and they look so very effective in sugar. For one of my son's wedding cakes, the sugar flowers were made to match the Bride's bouquet, which was made out of artificial flowers at that time.

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

Practice, practice, practice. Sugarcraft skills take time to master but do come with practice!



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

For me, its friendship and camaraderie. Meeting up and talking about all things sugarcraft with like-minded people and having the opportunity to both give and get advice. Our branch has been having meetings over Zoom since the initial lockdown, which are great, but meeting up in person is obviously much better!

Who is your hero in your branch and why?

I have to say that Gillian Barrett is the driving force behind our branch. She is very knowledgeable, always happy to help and a great support. Plus she is great fun and doesn't stop reminding me I taught her and am the cause of her being in the Guild!