

Cooks' Club



Niamh Donald and Maia Cumming 8B

Every week after school in the winter term, the budding young chefs of Year 8 met in the Home Economics department on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. It was attended by both boys and girls and assisted by senior volunteers. We cooked many dishes, both savoury and sweet, such as Oaty Energy Cookies, Chicken Noodle Soup and many more culinary delights.

Amongst the highlights of the year was baking and decorating cakes to celebrate European Day of modern Languages and making cupcakes for the J.A Lyttle Christmas Cup Cake competition. We used fondant icing to make a range of Christmas themed decorations for our cupcakes, which made a really delightful eye-catching display. Overall, Cooks' Club was a very



enjoyable experience that increased our confidence in the kitchen at home

and we now bake at every possible opportunity!

Future Chef

Katie Russell, 11G

It was February 10th, 2016, Belfast Metropolitan College. This was it! I had just served up blowtorched mackerel with calamari, chorizo, spinach and new potatoes, and to finish deconstructed strawberry shortcake. I could not believe that that I was one of seven young future chefs with the chance of winning a place in the National final. When I looked around me I saw seven neatly arranged work stations: a spectacle of colour and the rich aroma of delicious dishes all competing for the judges' approval. The atmosphere seemed almost calm. I had tried to zone out for the past one and a half hours. It had been organised chaos; a cacophony of sound: sizzling pans, clanging dishes and the chopping of very quick knives.

Two hours later and we were being called into an adjoining room. The tension was palpable. Dad, Miss Crockett and my mentor Chef, Roger Moynihan were with me and we were all

excited to hear the result!

The judge announced my name! I was the regional finalist! It was such a fantastic feeling. All of those afternoons practising in school and at home had been worth it. I had been awarded with chef whites, a cookbook and a Russums Knife set.

I had just a few weeks to get ready with a new menu for the National final on March 14 at Westminster Kingsway College, London. I travelled during the night before the competition with my parents, Roger and Miss Crockett. It was an incredible feeling to be representing not only Banbridge Academy, but all of Northern Ireland. We were told that 8,000 young chefs from 550 schools nationwide had taken part and now there were just twelve of us in the National final. I had two hours to produce a main course and dessert, three plates of each. The pressure in that kitchen was surreal. The London



final was an outstanding experience. I didn't win but taking part in such a prestigious competition is etched in my memory forever.

On my return home, I was contacted by Dani Barry, the only female Michelin Star Chef in Northern Ireland who invited me to cook alongside her at Deane's restaurant. What an honour! I would encourage anyone with a passion for food and interested in an exhilarating culinary challenge to have a go. Future chef was a superb experience.



Dairy Council Young Cook of the Year 2016

The accolade of The Dairy Council Young Cook of the Year 2016 has gone to Banbridge Academy's Olivia Miskimmons, in Year 8.

Olivia's Menu:

Finn McCool's Seafood Crumble served with Creamy Colcannon and Seasonal Northern Irish Vegetables. These were accompanied with Madden's Mellow Apple cider and Rocwell Still Natural Mineral Water.

Dessert was Bramley Apple and Bushmills Whiskey Tarts served with Yellowman Ice-cream, Warm Custard and a Cup of Apple Loves Mint Tea.

The final was held in Holy Cross College, Strabane on Tuesday 19th April 2016 and Olivia won not only the KS3 Northern Ireland final but was also selected as the overall winner of this

competition.

There had been weeks of preparation and every last detail had been thought of to make this dish look and taste spectacular. From the time Olivia submitted the application, there wasn't a minute wasted and the practising of dishes started almost immediately. Finn McCool's Fish Crumble became a staple in the Miskimmons' household and even Olivia's younger brother was in on the taste testing. One night, as he was eating the crumble he had a Eureka moment, announcing; "It tastes a little bland, it could do with a bit more salt and pepper". Olivia and the rest of the Miskimmons family believe this is what clenched the title for them and this last minute addition of more seasoning helped to give her the final edge!

After the announcement of the winners,

Olivia was treated like a celebrity as she had to do several photo shoots with her trophy and the ingredients she had used in her dishes. The judges spoke to her and reported that they were 'wowed' by her dishes, commenting that they were 'amazing'. Additionally the table presentation reflected local foods and customs.

Olivia coped with the pressure very well and this truly is an incredible achievement at this young age. The judges agreed that this would be the start of many culinary successes in the future for Olivia and they are excited to see her in the future at other equally prestigious competitions.

Olivia put in a huge amount of time and effort and it was great to see this being rewarded with the title of The Dairy Council Young Cook of the Year 2016.

Tesco Chef of the Year

Six Academy pupils entered this Tesco-sponsored competition on Wednesday 3rd February 2016. Their task was to create a main course dish using ingredients from a number of local primary producers used by Tesco's e.g. Gilfresh, Dale Farm. An excellent range of dishes were made by pupils and these were brought to Craigavon Civic Centre during the launch of the Mullahead Ploughing Match. The dishes were judged by Jilly Dougan from the Yellow Door and Sean Farnon from the Moody Boar Restaurant in Armagh. The judges were very complimentary about the standard of entries and dishes made by all the entrants. The dishes made by Jessica Lewis and Ellie Macauley were selected amongst the six finalists. They went forward to a 'Cook in' on the 27th February 2016 in the Tesco Marquee at the Mullahead Annual Ploughing Match. Ellie was first up and soon became a celebrity as she was



photographed with our local MLAs and MP!

At the final Ellie and Jessica worked hard and really impressed the judges with their organisation and cooking prowess. Cooking in a large marquee was a daunting experience and the compere, Frank Mitchell was very impressed by the standard of cooking, they could display to a crowd

of spectators, at such a young age. Jessica thought 'the whole experience was nerve-racking and helped to gain in confidence'. Unfortunately neither girl won, but the taking part was an invaluable experience in character building as well as developing their practical cooking skills. They would like to thank the Home Economics Department and their families for all the support they received.

Year 10 Mini-Marketeers

Eve Elliott 11B

Year 10 Home Economics pupils participated in a mini-marketing assignment in the summer term. Their task was to create a new food product using potatoes for the ready-made meals available at the Rosehip Bakery in Banbridge. The pupils showed great skill and created innovative dishes, which were reviewed by Mr Gordon Scott, proprietor of the Rosehip Bakery, and his marketing team. The dishes were judged based on creativity, palatability and suitability for the current ready meals market. The recipes selected were from Eve Elliott and Rebecca Elliott in 10B who made a vegan friendly, dairy and gluten-free dish called Spicy Spuds; Leanne Black who made Potato and Chickpea Masala also caught the eye of the judges as it was 'visually appealing'. Victoria



Hamilton and Rose Gibson also made Curried Potato Pasties which were judged as 'visually appetising and again suitable for the gluten-free range at the bakery. Following this the pupils were invited to prepare, cook and package their product in the Rosehip kitchen.

It was a great opportunity and rewarding experience to cook in the Rosehip bakery and sell our dishes to

the public. It gave us a valuable insight into the everyday running of a popular local cafe that we often visit and where my family have been customers of for many years. We hope our dishes are a successful addition to the range of ready-made meals at the Rosehip! On behalf of the other finalists, I would like to thank Mrs Francey and her department, as well as Gordon and his staff at the bakery for this unique experience.

