

Cooking Edition – Spring 2019

haggazine



The magazine for blind and partially sighted young people in Scotland



Cooking Without Looking

Editorial



Looking at cooking...

Hey guys, it's been a while. Here at Haggeye HQ we have a lot to update you on. First, you may have noticed there was no Winter edition of Haggazine. Due to changes in RNIB, Haggazine has had a little break. I can't promise that a Haggazine will be published every quarter as they once were, but we'll keep you posted.

Second, we want to welcome you to a new member of staff, Rosine Pybus, CYPF Support Officer (Scotland) who is now leading on Haggeye as Mo Colvin has moved to her new role as CYPF Specialist Development Officer (Engagement) covering the UK. Getting back to the present, this Spring edition is focused on how to be as independent as you can in the kitchen. Whether you are planning on developing your skills at home or are transitioning into living independently, we hope that these tips and stories inspire you. Now get reading folks! **Rae**

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The banoffee baker

Finlay's giving it 110% in the Kitchen!

Hi, I'm Finlay, I'm 13 and in my spare time, I love baking at home with my mum! For Christmas last year, my mum got me an apron and a chef's hat which says 'Finlay Anderson Master Chef'!

I like making lots of different things in the kitchen but mostly I like baking sweet treats and desserts! My favourite things to make and bake are brownies, Victoria Sponge and Banoffee Pie!

I think preparation is key when you cook or bake. I get all of my ingredients and equipment out ready before I start because I like to be organised. This also means that things don't get as messy and makes it less likely for me to knock things over!

I use lots of different gadgets to help me in the kitchen.

When I'm following a recipe I will use my magnifier or my mum will read the information from her phone for me to follow.

At the minute my mum works the cooker and I am in charge of mixing everything together. I am looking forward to learning how to use the cooker myself in the future! I also want to learn to get more confident using sharp knives and hope that this will get easier with practice!

When I'm measuring or weighing ingredients for the recipes, I use talking scales which can convert measurements into different units and they can also measure liquids too! I also use a gadget that tells me when to stop pouring – I sit it on the side of a cup and when I'm nearly at the top, it vibrates to tell me to stop pouring!



The thing I like the least about cooking and baking is having to wash up afterwards, but sometimes my mum helps me to do the dishes, and my twin brother always helps with the taste tests!

The thing I have made that I'm most proud of has to be the Banoffee Pie because it's very difficult to make. I really love it when my nanny and papa come round and eat the food that I've made and I feel really proud when they enjoy it!

I don't really watch any cooking shows on TV but the person I would love to cook like is my papa because all of his food is delicious.

My top tip for anybody who wants to learn how to cook is that if you're not sure, just try it and keep going and giving it 110% because eventually you'll get it and the hard work will pay off!

Did you know?

Liquid Level Indicators

There is a small device called a liquid level indicator, which is very useful when pouring liquids. You simply put the liquid level indicator on the rim of the glass, mug, cup or pan and it will let you know when the liquid is near the top, so you know when to stop pouring. There are two versions of indicator, one makes a beeping noise and the other beeps and vibrates.

You may be able to access a Liquid Level Indicator through social services free of charge as part of an assessment of your needs and they can also be purchased online.



David Black's Cooking Without Looking

David is a cook working at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre and is keen to share his experiences of being a blind cook and 'cooking without looking'!

Initially David started out in the kitchen as a volunteer pot washer and worked his way up in confidence, experience and rank from there. He was first offered an opportunity for paid employment from the RNIB who, at the time, were managing the kitchen at the Sensory Centre in Falkirk.

David spoke fondly of his memories of cooking with his mum, explaining that he finds the process very therapeutic. He strongly believes that every day is a school day in the kitchen, and that it is always possible to learn new things! He currently runs an elementary cooking class for

others who have sensory impairments and is a keen advocate for sharing experiences to make every day living easier!

How did you get involved with cooking?

From a young age, my mum taught me to be as independent as possible and she saw how keen I was on cooking, so she used it as a vice to inspire me to become even more independent and develop my skills! As well as helping my independence in the kitchen, she encouraged me from a very young age to go to the shops



and purchase the necessary ingredients which also helped my confidence too.

What is your favourite meal to cook and can you share the recipe with us?

My favourite dish is leek and potato soup because it's a very simple dish to make. Leek and potato soup is the first dish that I teach students in my cooking class to make and it was also the first dish I ever taught my niece to make! The

only ingredients you need are three potatoes, two leeks, one onion, two stock cubes and half a pot of water.

It's such a versatile dish and with only a few minor tweaks and changes in the ingredients, you can change the dish totally and give my students



a range of alternative options, such as adding chicken and using a different stock to make a cock-a-leekie soup.

This simple recipe is a good introduction to peeling, chopping and navigating around the kitchen independently, whilst also allowing cooks to develop a sense of spatial perception within the kitchen!

If I'm in my own kitchen, or one I'm familiar with, I feel a lot more confident than when I'm in a different kitchen. In a new environment, I need to allow myself extra time, or sometimes a little support to build my confidence. Those who are not blind or partially sighted don't always appreciate how much cognition goes into cooking without looking.

Do you use any gadgets in the kitchen to make cooking easier?

I use talking scales and a talking temperature gauge for cooking and I also use a 'stab resistant'

safety glove, this makes me more confident in chopping and peeling in the kitchen.

How do you manage to keep yourself safe in the kitchen when working with boiling water and a hot stove?

Preparation is the key to working with boiling and hot items. There is absolutely no need to put pre-boiled water into a pan, just as there is no need to put things onto a hot baking tray, or into a pre-heated oven. Altering preparation times and cooking times will allow you to safely put cold water into a pan to bring to the boil, or to put food into a cold oven and turn it on once it's in. You can also allow food to cool in the oven or on the stove, rather than immediately removing it from a direct source of heat.

Do you find it hard when you're wearing oven gloves and you lose your sense of touch?

I use oven mitts which do hinder my sense of touch, but it's more about learning to develop your confidence and coordination with the

mitts or gloves, so you need to practice and gradually increase your confidence through time (Top Tip: maybe use cold pans to learn the best way to navigate your cooking environment with your oven gloves). As a person with a visual impairment, you'll be far more used to learning and adapting to the world around you and it's such an automatic process that often it happens without you realising!

What is your best advice on cooking meat when you may not be able to see the colour change and worrying about food poisoning?

The best tool you can use for cooking meat when you can't rely on sight is a talking thermometer. You can check the temperature of the meat regularly to make sure it reaches the optimum temperature for cooking, and ensure it holds that temperature for the optimum time to cook!



Can you tell us about the biggest challenge you faced in the kitchen so far?

The biggest challenge I've ever faced is the one I've always got – other people's perceptions! Usually when people find out that I'm cooking without looking because I'm blind, they worry about health and safety and red tape, imagining the worst case scenario, rather than visualising the potential.

Do you have any last words of advice for our Haggazine Readers?

Regardless of whether you are blind or partially sighted, you can still cook (and enjoy cooking) healthy meals with a little patience and practice! When you lose your eyesight, often people assume your other senses are heightened, when in fact the only sense that gets automatically sharper is your common sense!

Did you know?

Talking Food Thermometer

Talking Food Thermometers can be used to measure the temperature of your oven, or can be used to probe food whilst it's cooking. The thermometers speak the temperature in measurements of Degrees Celsius or Fahrenheit and can be used to help find out how close food is to being cooked. Talking Food Thermometers are widely available online and are particularly helpful when cooking meat.





Heat Resistant Gloves

Heat Resistant Gloves can be used as a safer alternative to oven gloves or a tea towel. Gloves provide better dexterity and grip with each digit being able to move independently and having less of an impact on your sense of touch.

Cooking on gas

Catherine's Cooking on Gas!

I love food, but I had never been overly confident in the kitchen. Not that long ago at all I could have quite happily baked you a cake but gave the hob a very wide berth. Until, one day in the supermarket I had an overwhelming desire to eat bacon. I am very fussy about bacon, I like it cooked exactly the 'right' way, just about to snap but definitely not burnt.





It's always lovely when someone cooks for you but so often people just don't get bacon 'right'.

I went home and cooked bacon in a frying pan on a gas hob. It went ok, not great but ok. I had to send a picture to my

parents because I wasn't sure whether it was ready to come out of the pan. In their opinion it should have come out several minutes before but it tasted pretty good. The trick you see with anything to do with independent living, and life as a whole really, is to have a go. You'll then either get better with time or you'll discover a different way to do it.

Necessity will probably always be one of the best motivations for learning a new skill. While I was at university I lived about two hours from home. With this in mind I either

had to go about like a bit of a minger or learn how to do laundry. Washing your clothes is one of those 'adulthood' tasks that there really isn't a one right way to do. Come up with a system that works for you and always remember nobody is perfect, everyone makes mistakes, and even without the barriers of sight loss no one is safe from an occasional laundry disaster. At least once something will magically shrink and pairs of socks will just inexplicably become separated forever.

Independent living does not mean you have to do everything by yourself. My friends help me shop and sometimes even cook me dinner and my family answer a stream of questions over the phone. Last week I had a lesson in ironing with an RNIB rehabilitation officer. Next week I have asked to go over chopping vegetables. Asking for help is an important life skill, particularly where a pizza buffet is involved and you ask a very nice fellow pizza eater to tell you what and where the options are. I love food.

Did you know?

Support with Rehabilitation and Mobility

Rehabilitation is provided by either your local authority, or a local organisation acting on their behalf. It enables you to learn or re-learn some of the essential daily living and mobility skills which may have been affected by your vision impairment or sight loss.

The sorts of activities your Rehabilitation and Mobility Officer can help you with include:

- **Independent Living Skills which could involve, shopping, cooking, home organisation etc.**
- **Mobility (indoors and outdoors) such as learning new routes in different settings such as in college, at your workplace, or in your home environment.**

- **A Rehabilitation and Mobility Officer can look at travel using public transport and different mobility aids.**
- **Low vision aid assessments and equipment provision.**
- **Signposting to other services and organisations.**

Anyone can make a referral to the Social work and Rehabilitation and Mobility Team by calling the duty worker who is available Monday to Friday 09:00 – 12:00 by calling **0131 652 3140. You can also ring just for advice or information, the duty worker will be happy to talk you on any areas of concern you may have.**

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The forum for blind and partially sighted young people in Scotland

This magazine has been created, developed and written by young people from the Haggeye Engagement Team and produced by RNIB.

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