

# The



## Campaign

Cooking is the Key

**Hannah Ridgeway** Design Dimension  
**Communications Manager** Dean Clough  
Halifax  
West Yorkshire  
HX3 5AX  
**T:** 01422 383191  
**F:** 01422 341148  
**M:** 07825 327 089  
**E:** hannah@designdimension.org  
[www.focusonfood.org](http://www.focusonfood.org)

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## PRESS RELEASE

The Cooking Bus at this year's Urdd Eisteddfod proved to be the highlight of the event for many young visitors who said it was their favourite exhibit.



There were plenty of opportunities to cook with Welsh S4C Chef Dudley Newbery, who was on *Focus on Food's* Cooking Bus number 4 throughout the event. As well as leading cooking lessons Dudley also worked with the *Focus on Food* team to complete the difficult task of judging this year's Urdd Cooking Competition finals.

It was the second year the popular chef, who proved to be a star attraction on the Maes (the showground), had joined the Cooking Bus at the Urdd Eisteddfod. Last year he joined the *Focus on Food* Health Challenge Wales Cooking Bus supported by the Welsh Assembly Government in Carmarthen.

The Urdd National Eisteddfod is a competitive festival for children and young people. Every year it takes place at a different venue and in 2007 cooking was introduced as a competition for the first time. This year it was held in Conwy in May and there were an enormous number of entries from schools throughout Wales.



*Focus on Food* recipes were used to test the skills of young chefs and the winners in each age group were presented with professional chef's pans donated by All-Clad - the leading pan company ([www.all-clad.com](http://www.all-clad.com)). The winners were: (9-11 years) Olivia Insole, Ysgol Gwan Y Nant, Barry; (12-15 years) Elin Childs and Ffion Rees, Ysgol Tregib, Llandeilo; (16-19 years) Sioned Roberts and Ceri Morris, Ysgol Tregib, Llandeilo.

The Eisteddfod celebrates the culture and language of Wales and the entire event is conducted in Welsh. Education minister Jane Hutt joined the Cooking Bus during the event and chatted to Dudley Newbery and *Focus on Food's* Executive Director Anita Cormac, as well as the youngsters who were learning new cooking skills on board.

Dudley believes cooking should be part of that culture. "A favourite Welsh dish for me would be a nice piece of Welsh spring lamb with new Pembrokeshire potatoes, mint and gravy."

But he knows the home cooking he was raised on is in danger of becoming a thing of the past and that generations are losing the skills to cook food from fresh ingredients.

"It is a problem," Dudley said. "We have to get young people interested in food. In schools it has almost become another science." Children, he said, needed to get involved in cooking first - the science of what happens in cooking could come later.



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“I think we have all got to eat and it is a life skill. The important thing is to learn to cook - not to get the qualification.

“If they could just make a soup or a stew, or bread and an omelette or know how to roast a joint it does not necessarily mean it is going to give a qualification but a life skill.”

The key to achieving that, he said, was to make it enjoyable, interesting and entertaining, and he praised *Focus on Food* and the Cooking Bus for doing just that.

“I think it is great!” he said. “I saw a Cooking Bus first in London and met Anita Cormac. We did not have a Cooking Bus in Wales at that time. A year later the Welsh Assembly Government had funded a *Focus on Food* Cooking Bus.

“It has given us the facility to enable young people to be in a kitchen environment where there is a creative discipline and they have felt that they have achieved. It is ticking all the boxes for teachers and parents. Let’s have another one - one for the north and one for the south!”

