

**BEHIND THE CAFÉ KITCHEN WE HAVE ANOTHER KITCHEN THAT WE USE TO PREPARE SALADS AND CATER FOR OUR CONFERENCE SERVICE. THE CONFERENCE ROOMS ON THE TOP FLOOR ARE IN CONSTANT DEMAND FOR MEETINGS AND TRAINING EVENTS AND IT IS THE JOB OF THE HOSPITALITY SECTION TO KEEP DELEGATES WELL FED AND LOOKED AFTER. SOME OF THE PREPARATION AND DISHWASHING ALSO TAKES PLACE IN THE COMMON ROOM NEXT DOOR TO THE CONFERENCE ROOMS UPSTAIRS: IT ALL INVOLVES A LOT OF RUNNING AROUND!**

## **A Day in the Life of the Hospitality Supervisor**

“I aim to come in about 8.00am to check the conference rooms and make sure everything is set out and clean. I’ll also check the heating: we have storage heaters but in winter we can add some extra heat in the morning, or if it’s summer I’ll open the windows.

This is my favourite part of the day; it’s quite precious as I get a lot done before the trainees come in. I like to start a job and see it through, but with the trainees you have to keep breaking off to check on them. If I could get up early enough I’d come in at 7.00am!

I usually prepare the morning coffee in the common room upstairs and set it out in the conference room along with a trolley for the dirty cups. I’ll go in later and clear the trolley as quietly as possible, or just leave it until they break at midmorning if they are in the middle of watching a video or something.

The groups usually start at 9.00 or 9.30 and I always greet them when they arrive – we have regulars so I know a lot by name – and confirm timings of breaks. The people who arrange the bookings are not normally the ones who come along, so we’ll do our best to accommodate their wishes; quite a lot of things get changed on the day.

I try to be back downstairs to the kitchen for 8.55 when the trainees arrive, along with Ros our catering assistant. Hospitality has two personalities; we’re responsible for the conference catering but we also make salads and baked potatoes for the café. We need to have some salads ready by 10.00 when the café opens and the rest by 12.00 when the hot food starts. We also have to schedule our day around when the groups are having their breaks.

One of our first jobs is to get the baked potatoes oiled and seasoned and into the oven. Our oven is gentler than the café one which is a bit fierce.



Then everyone will chop up vegetables on the big central table; we have standard salads like tomato and basil, coleslaw and carrot and cheese. The café has space for eight salads and what else we make depends partly on what we are doing for the groups: we'll make a bigger batch of that and put some to the café.

If we are making scones for the groups we cook them as near as possible to the time they are needed so they are still warm. The scones are made up in the café kitchen but cooked in our oven.

The trainees start having their morning break from 10.30 and after that we're heading towards lunch. Groups can book hot or cold food: the most popular option is probably rolls and wraps, which are served with salad and a piece of cake or fruit. It takes a good two hours work to prepare the rolls: they come up fresh from the bakery at 10.30 and most of us will be busy doing that after tea break.

If groups want hot food, like soup and lasagne, this is made by the café. I'll check all the timings with the café and we'll set everything out with nice serving bowls for the salad, bread, butter, hummus etc.

The trainees start having their lunch from 12.00 but my break is variable. Yesterday I asked a trainee to keep an eye on the lunch dishes for the group upstairs and went to help out in the café because a walking group had just come in and they all decided they wanted toasties!

In the afternoon it's a case of cleaning up. We have a dishwasher upstairs in the common room and there's always someone using the sink downstairs. This is the one job that a lot of the trainees try to avoid: one or two can devote an entire day to avoiding eye contact with the washing up!

In the afternoon we'll also be doing veg prep for the next day: we'll get as much done as possible, though within reason as we want things to be fresh. We try to get everything mopped up by 3.30 when the trainees have their tea break. After that we all move through to help clean up the café. The catering manager has paperwork to do then so I'm responsible for both the café and hospitality for the rest of the afternoon.

Once the groups have finished upstairs we try and set up the tables and chairs ready for the next day's session. It is a lot of running about and we're constantly working to deadlines. I'm always surprised when the trainees pull all the stops out: they are a good bunch.👍

**Neil**