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## Six of the Best for Wales in Top Chef Awards

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Six chefs are blazing a trail in Wales by achieving a top award that is designed to benchmark skills in the catering and hospitality industry in the Principality.

The six chefs have achieved the Applied Ability Award (AAA) Chef Certificate, which recognises the professional standard expected of an accomplished kitchen and larder chef working without supervision.

They join Neil Roberts, 2008 National Chef of Wales winner from the Waggon and Horses, Newtown, who became the first candidate in Wales to achieve the AAA Chef Certificate in May.

The six are Marc Roberts, Tyglyn Hotel, Aberaeron, Mike Horwood, Min-y-Mor Residential Home, Aberaeron, Gail Kelsey, cook at Llanafan Junior School, Aberystwyth, Wayne Roberts, Treysgawen Hall Hotel, Llangefni, Justin Robinson, Cambrian Training Company, Welshpool and Tommy Rowlands, Caffi'r Ceunant, Abergynolwyn.

Four of them have progressed to the top level after achieving the AAA Foundation Chef Certificate earlier this year. The AAA programme aims to drive up standards in the hospitality and catering industry in Wales by improving the skills of existing and aspiring chefs and cooks.



Jason Robinson in action during the AAA examination.



Mike Horwood, of Min-y-Mor Residential Home, Aberaeron, in action.

As an AAA mentor, former chef and restaurant manager Justin Robinson considered it so important that he knew everything about the AAA that he put himself forward for the professional cookery examinations.

He achieved the Foundation Chef award with flying colours in May and has now added the AAA Chef level to his qualifications.

The AAA October exams certainly gave him cause for celebration, as he also mentored Gail Kelsey, who achieved the Chef award along with Anna Absolon, Taberna Inn, Milford Haven and Gail Jones, Aberaeron Primary School, who achieved the Foundation Chef award.

Two of his colleagues at Cambrian Training Company, Nora Jones and Alison Phillips, also achieved the Foundation Chef award to enable them to better mentor candidates. Two of Alison's trainees, Matthew Stapleton, Brigands Inn, Mallwyd and David Blundel from Lake Vyrnwy Hotel, Llanwddyn, sat the same exam and achieved the Foundation Chef award.

Other chefs to achieve the Foundation Chef award following examinations at Coleg Ceredigion in September and October are: Kevin Allford, The White Horse, Bridgend, James Chatterton, Edenshine Restaurant, Afonwen, Brenda Jones, Bodlondels Residential Home, Aberystwyth, Huw John Morgan, Gwersyll yr Urdd Llangrannog, Llandysul and Alex Shales, Fourcroft Hotel, Tenby.

The AAA programme in Wales is fully funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and delivered by award-winning training provider Cambrian Training Company in partnership with Tourism Training for Wales.

The programme aims to guide up to 180 chefs to achieve Applied Ability Awards at either Foundation or Chef level through on-the-job training and mentorship followed by the practical exam, the last of which is in May next year.

Learners are mentored by experienced chefs in their workplace and have

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Gail Kelsey, of Llanafan Junior School, busy at work in the examination.

access to an online virtual chef channel to support the learning in preparation for the exams.

The AAA programme is overseen by the AAA National Committee whose director, Scott Anthony, revealed that a more advanced award for senior chefs, who have supervisory responsibilities, is likely to be piloted next spring.

"I am very pleased with the progress made in Wales," said Mr Anthony. "We are delighted to see candidates who have achieved AAA Foundation Chef now progressing to AA Chef and hope they can go on to become mentors. The awards are all about business development, career progression and recognition of craft skills.

"The main aim is to get AAA embedded into the national training and qualifications structure, which has taken time, but thanks to this pilot programme we now have the support to arrive at that destination."

Ruth Morris, AAA co-ordinator in Wales, congratulated all the candidates and said the AAA programme was an excellent way to not only benchmark chefs and cooks but also everyone delivering vocational qualifications in the catering and hospitality industry in Wales.

Mrs Morris can be contacted on Tel: 07989 470899 or by e-mail at [aaa@cambriantraining.com](mailto:aaa@cambriantraining.com). For more information about AAA visit [www.greatbritishkitchen.co.uk/aaa](http://www.greatbritishkitchen.co.uk/aaa).

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