

Spotlight on a Cake Decorator - Fay Gardner



How long have you been decorating cakes and what got you started?

In 1958, I saw a beautiful three-tiered cake with piped roses made by a neighbour. She was attending cake decorating classes at Liverpool Evening College, so my friend Bonnie and I decided to give it a go. We

walked from Moorebank, where I lived at the time, all the way to Liverpool for our first class. I was young, giggly and didn't know one end of my piping bag from the other! It was intimidating being with the more experienced girls but I was hooked from that very first class!

How long have you been a member of the Guild?

Since 1980 and in the years that followed, I held positions of Senior Vice-President, President (taking over from Bernice Vercoe in 1983), then after the State Body was formed, State



President and Vice-President and I was made a State Life Member. I was also on the State Committee and Judges' Committee. In 2004, I was made an Honorary Member of the Sydney Guild in recognition of my contribution to the Guild, both State and Branch.



What do you enjoy most about the meetings?

I haven't attended a meeting in recent times but have always enjoyed the friendship and camaraderie shared with other members whenever we got together. And I loved demming! It was a joy to share my skills and knowledge with the other members .. explaining techniques, answering questions and seeing their faces light up when they 'get' what it was I was trying to explain!



Has cake decorating changed much in the time you've been doing it?

My word, yes! I got married in 1946, just after the war and at a time when there were no cake shops,

only bakeries in Sydney. My uncle arranged for the wedding cake which was a beautiful cake, 3 tiers high with decorations made out of plaster of paris! Cake decorating has come a long way since!

Your most memorable piece/decorated cake?

I've always been interested in figure work. At one of the earliest Seminars organised by the Guild, I made some Lladro figurines. The church cake shown here was made, brick-by-brick, for the Bathurst Seminar and transported on a public bus from Canberra! In my early years of cake decorating, I got first prize in the Novice section in the Easter Show with a two-tier wedding cake.



What is the most rewarding part of cake decorating?

Apart from the satisfaction I get from creating wonderful works of art, I really enjoy teaching and get immense satisfaction from encouraging the interest



and seeing the progress of new students. I have spent many years teaching cake decorating starting in 1964 at the Ashfield Evening College.

What was your biggest challenge as a cake decorator?

Learning the craft! When I attended my first class all those years ago, I hadn't baked a single cake or done any cake decorating so it was a real challenge learning the skills from scratch. My mother sent me her fruit cake recipe, scribbled on the back of an envelope, and told me that if I messed it up, I should "give up this nonsense of cake decorating". Fortunately I didn't mess up!

If you had one piece of advice for a new cake decorator, what would it be?

Do a basic course, make sure you get lots of practise and get your hands on as many cake decorating books as you can, both old and new. Join the Guild and learn from the other members.



Read more about Fay and her outstanding contribution to the Guild here - <http://cdgnsw-sydneybranch.org.au/fay-gardner/>