

## WELSH NATIONAL CULINARY TEAM

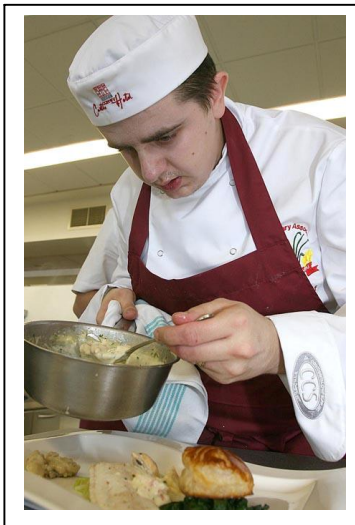
# MORE PROBLEMS FOR WELSH CHEFS AS THEY BID FOR OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALS

**Immediate: October 16, 2008**

Welsh chefs preparing to go for gold at the Culinary Olympics in Germany, the biggest competition of their careers, have been plagued by a nightmare series of events.

First, one of the Welsh National Culinary Team's pastry chefs was forced to withdraw on Sunday due work commitments, then another team member withdrew on Monday, then the lorry carrying all the team's food, equipment and uniforms was held up by a French ferry strike.

Now, this morning (Thursday), another of the chefs, Chris Owen (pictured) from The Castle Hotel, Conwy, has discovered to his horror that his passport is inside his knife box on the team lorry which is bound for Erfurt. Owen discovered the passport was missing last night, just hours before he was due to be collected by his boss, team manager Graham Tinsley at 6.45am this morning.



Tinsley has had to hastily arrange for the two chefs driving the team lorry to make a detour to Cologne Airport to drop off the passport with a courier who plans to fly it to Manchester Airport tomorrow morning where it will be collected by Owen. The young chef will then fly to Frankfurt before catching a train to Erfurt to join up with his teammates.

Tinsley, co-owner of the Castle Hotel, Conwy and Nant Hall, Prestatyn, only finalised the arrangements while waiting with the rest of the team at Manchester Airport for a flight to Germany this morning.

“Preparations for the Culinary Olympics have been an absolute nightmare,” said Tinsley, who will be competing for the fourth time at the major event, which is held every four years. “I have never known anything like this in all the years I have been with the team. If we end up winning a medal of any colour after all the obstacles, it will be a miracle.”

Before the latest series of mini disasters, the team had to contend with a £15,000 cut in sponsorship this year, which meant that they could not take a team of junior chefs to compete in Germany.

Then, just weeks before they were due to leave for Erfurt, they discovered that new rules for lorry drivers meant that Kevin Williams, a tutor at Coleg Meirion Dwyfor, Dolgellau, had to take a test to obtain his Class C licence, which he passed on Saturday.

Williams and teammate Mark Jones, a chef at Henbury Hall, Macclesfield, drove the team lorry down to Dover on Wednesday where they discovered the ferry strike. Luckily, they managed to get aboard the only ferry allowed to leave after the dispute was settled.

Hoping their luck changes, the Welsh chefs begin their quest for Olympic gold medals on Sunday when they compete in the hot kitchen element of the competition, producing 110 covers of a three-course meal. They then finish with the cold platter show on Tuesday, creating a range dishes including appetizers, main courses, complete menus, desserts, cakes and showpieces for a table display with a weddings theme.

The Welsh team comprises Tinsley, captain Wayne Roberts, head chef Portmeirion Hotel, Lee Jeynes, group development chef for English Lake Hotels, Dave Kelman, of Lower Slaughter Manor, Stow-on-the-Wold, Toby Beevers, freelance and Sally Owens, a tutor at Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, Rhos on Sea.

The support team includes Gennaro Adaggio of La Dolce Vita, Shrewsbury, Tom Middleton, of Hotel Maes-y-neuadd, Talsarnau, Harlech, Chris Owen, Kevin Williams and Mark Jones.

The Welsh National Culinary Team is sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government, C&C Catering Equipment Ltd, Brakes, Unilever Foodsolutions UK, Hybu Cig Cymru/ Meat Promotion Wales, Gourmet Classic Ltd, Villeroy and Boch, Friedr. Dick, Germany, Metcalfe Catering, All Clad and S. A. Brain and Co.

**Ends**

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