

Edinburgh bloggers – Hannah Ewan

✘ Hannah Ewan lives in Edinburgh and blogs at <http://blogs.spokenword.ac.uk/hannahewan/>

On her blog she describes herself thus :-“My name is Hannah Ewan. I am 24, and a Multimedia Journalism student at Glasgow Caledonian Uni.

I love stories about people, fictional or non-fictional. At the moment, I have a very open mind, but I think I would like to go into features writing, documentary making or food journalism. Or all three...?

It took me a while to get here, but having worked out what I want to do and found something that really inspires me (bring out the cheese board) is a huge relief. I believe in journalism as a social cohesive, a sounding board, and a lovely way to while away a Sunday afternoon.

My blog will be about food. Cooking it, eating it, reviewing it and producing it – not me, as I live in a top-floor flat with no garden, but the plethora of damn fine food producers to be found all across Scotland and the UK.”

Who are you and what do you do?

My name is Hannah Ewan. I live in Edinburgh and I'm studying for a postgrad journalism MA in Glasgow, commuting over each day. Before this I did an English Lit degree, so writing is somewhat in my blood by now!

I write a food blog, chatting away about anything that strikes me as interesting in the food world. Generally it's restaurant reviews and trying out new recipes, but I've also written about the science behind antioxidants, food in the news – and hope to continue branching out.

What made you start writing a blog?

I began my original food blog before my uni course: my interest in food was rapidly growing, and it provided a great platform for practising writing about it. My ultimate aim is to be a food writer (or broadcaster, or hopefully both), though I enjoy and hope to work in a wide range of other subjects before/as well as that. That's one of the exciting things about blogging: you're not restricted to writing about one thing, you can indulge all your interests. I write about every aspect of food as and when something occurs to me, but I could also, and am considering, having a thread totally unrelated to food on one page.

When I began my course, it was a compulsory part of a module to regularly update a blog. I'm very glad for that, as my posts had waned in recent months: you have to be disciplined to keep a blog! It also inspired me to widen its remit and subject matter, and put a bit more effort into my posts – they were being marked now, after all...It has formed a very good habit now, and is something I not only enjoy, but make sure I find time for.

What purpose is your blog serving?

Practice, primarily. It's a safe forum to practice my writing, with no other pressures than to write about what I find interesting. As far as my career goes, it's also a useful way to showcase what I can do to potential employers: food might be a totally unrelated topic, but it's more about how you approach and deal with a subject – and showing you know how to use an apostrophe!

It's also helping my knowledge. It motivates me to try new things, learn about new ingredients and techniques, and keep up to date with what's going on in the food news. It's a fast track to being published, really, even if I am publishing it myself!

Why did you choose WordPress/Blogger or other platform?

My original blog was on Blogspot. It worked well, it's clean, basic and functional. The uni blog is a WordPress one, and it is good to have all the additional widgets and tools. I'm going to stick with WordPress – it might not be free but I think it's more flexible as a blog/personal website.

Do your visitor numbers matter to you? Would you tell us what they are?

I genuinely try not to think about it! I have a sneaking suspicion, probably like everyone who's quite new to this, that I'm flinging material into an empty web void. I've had a couple of comments, and every time I do I feel a huge sense of gratification that someone is reading my stuff! I inactivated the 'followers' button on my first blog, because I didn't want to know if no-one's ever read my posts, and I don't actually know how to check on my new one...

It would be wonderful to know that people do read it, but in the meantime I'm happy to ramble to myself about food whilst imagining an eager audience.

What do you think you could do to improve your blog?

I think one of the problems with blogs is that, despite being so public, they often feel like a private space. This can mean I don't make as much effort with my writing as I would if it was for publication in a magazine, for example, especially if I'm in a rush. I need to upload photos to my more recent posts, and I want to concentrate more on what was originally my idea: taking ingredients I'd never used, researching and cooking with them. I do enjoy writing about a whole spectrum of things, but perhaps there should be some cohesive thread through it all!

What plans do you have for the future of your blog?

Discipline! I need to update it more regularly – I'm aiming

for at least once a week. I could very happily spend all day every day writing and updating my blog, but with an MA to complete, a wedding to plan, money to earn and friends to keep in touch with, it gets squeezed out to the periphery a bit!

I want to run a couple of post series: one on 'Hannah cooks...' where I work my way through a range of cuisines – French, Chinese, Indian, Japanese etc, and one on 'good producer/bad producer', exploring different characters in the food world and how they've contributed to food and drink.

It was also my new year's resolution to learn about wine: maybe I'll create an additional thread to document that...