

# GETTING AMONGST IT

*With more than three decades in hospitality and a career shaped on the floors rather than behind a desk, Ruth Clark has become one of Scotland's most respected housekeeping leaders. Now Executive Housekeeper at the Isle of Eriska Hotel, Spa & Island and Scottish Chairperson of the UK Housekeepers Association, she reflects on her journey, the impact of technology, and why recognition and support for housekeeping teams have never been more important.*

## **Can you share your journey to becoming Head of Housekeeping, and the key experiences that shaped your leadership style?**

I have been in the hospitality industry for over 33 years, with the majority of my career spent in housekeeping. Although I've worked across all departments, housekeeping is where my true passion lies. Alongside my hotel role, I have also been Scottish Chairperson of the UK Housekeepers Association for around four years, a voluntary position that allows me to support and advocate for housekeeping professionals across Scotland.

In September last year, I joined the five-star, three-rossette Isle of Eriska Hotel, Spa & Island as Executive Housekeeper. I moved from the Cairndale Hotel & Spa in Dumfries to return to the west coast of Scotland, closer to my family.

My career began while I was still at school, working weekends as a pot washer in a local hotel. That early experience inspired me to pursue a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Hospitality Management at Fife College, Kirkcaldy. During my studies, I completed a housekeeping placement at Cameron House on Loch Lomond, which confirmed that housekeeping was the career path I wanted to follow.

My first full-time role was as a Trainee Supervisor at the Forth Bridges Hotel, overseeing 108 bedrooms. I then progressed to Assistant Housekeeper at Marriott Dalmahoy before gaining wider experience at Castle Stuart in Inverness and later moving into management roles with Highland Heritage Coach Tours, including a period as Hotel Manager at The Highland Hotel in Crianlarich.

One of my most memorable roles was aboard The Hebridean Princess, the five-star cruise ship, where





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I progressed from Assistant Housekeeper to Head Housekeeper. Travelling around the Scottish islands on a five-weeks-on, two-weeks-off rota was an incredible experience and a real highlight of my career.

I see myself as a hands-on leader who leads by example. You'll rarely find me in the office - I prefer to be out on the floors, supporting the team, making beds and ensuring standards are met. It's important to me that my team know I'm there to support them while still managing the department effectively.

### **How has technology changed housekeeping in recent years? Are there any tools you now consider indispensable?**

Technology has transformed housekeeping operations. Real-time room management and inspection apps have made a huge difference, allowing us to see check-outs instantly and update room statuses efficiently. This has greatly improved communication between housekeeping

and front desk teams and saved valuable time.

### **What advice would you offer someone aspiring to a long-term career in hotel housekeeping or hospitality management?**

Housekeeping is a career, now more than ever. My advice is to work hard, stay committed and take every opportunity to learn and progress. Working your way up gives you a deep understanding of the department and opens doors to long-term success.

### **What would you like to see evolve in hotel housekeeping over the next one to three years?**

I would like to see greater support from management teams, particularly during challenging periods. When managers step in to help, it makes a real difference. I'd also like to see increased recognition and appreciation for housekeeping teams and the vital role they play in delivering exceptional guest experiences.