

A LIFE IN 490 RECIPES



*Jane
Dorner*

A LIFE IN 490 RECIPES



JANE DORNER

Jane Dorner is identified as the author and illustrator of this book in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act, 1988.

Privately published and printed by the author © 2014
jane@editor.net

Set in Monotype Plantin, which was released in 1913 for hot metal typesetting and as a digital font in 2001. The dropped caps are Lucida Calligraphy, a script font developed from Monotype Chancery Cursive in 1992 and released digitally by Adobe in 2014. The cover is set in Gill Shadow.

Printed by Berforts Information Press Ltd

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author.



dedicated to

STEPHEN

for family & friends



Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Menus	8
3	Breakfast	18
4	Soup	32
5	Couvert	40
6	Breads and pastry	52
7	Fish	64
8	Meat	75
9	Fusion	96
10	Leftovers	125
11	Picnics	133
12	Salads	153
13	Tea	162
14	Desserts	177
15	Parties	204
16	Pick your own	220
17	Preserves	227
18	Drinks	238
19	Playful food	246
20	Cooking for one	253
21	Dramatis personae	262
	About the illustrations	278
	Index	279
	Bibliography	287
	Acknowledgements	288

1

Introduction

This book celebrates my 70th year in seven times 70 dishes. The number has a special magic. It symbolises a multiplicity of good fortune. There are seven colours in the rainbow; seven seas; seven wonders of the world; seven notes in a diatonic scale; seven talents in mythology; seven pillars of wisdom; seven ages of man. It is a number to make a fuss over. The 70 years I am marking are times in the kitchen where some 70,000 lunches, suppers, teas or dinners have been put to the plate – seven days a week. If it is true that you are what you eat, then preparing those plates tells my story.

The story is a mixture of recipes and reflections. Some evoke an occasion – like the pork-dressed-up-as-wild-boar that I made when Stephen first came to dinner. Or the terrines for our wedding breakfast that sliced into a hundred portions. Or the sweet-sour cabbage that came from a 1970s calendar and which was cheap, studenty and delicious. As the book grew, I saw that it was becoming a celebration of friendships, so I asked people who play an important part in my life to contribute – though in some cases it was like getting the meat out of a crab claw. If a recipe came from a friend – even if meticulously copied from a book – it's become 'their' dish (though where I do know the source, I've credited it).

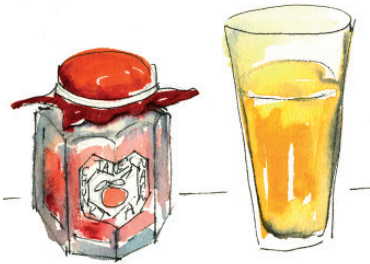
That means a lot of characters are marching across the pages of this book. Mini biographies appear at the end, because these friendships are all nurtured by the breaking together of bread and so they are part of my story of cooking and being cooked for. I also wanted to give background and context, so each section carries a part of my life as it relates to the theme of the chapter. The book is a self-portrait – in recipes and stories relating to food. Maybe I have a future great-grandchild in mind who just might be interested. Or maybe it's that stage in life when you want to account for yourself.

Ironically, one's nearest and dearest are the hardest to write about, and I couldn't ever do justice to how much I love them all, and they are a strong presence all the way through the book. Chronology only lightly seasons the section order and for the reader who does not already know who we all are, there is a family tree on page vi to help. Most readers will know that Stephen died before this book was printed and I had to alter the last chapter. For the rest he is there in the present tense, which is historically and emotionally right.



3

Breakfast



Entertaining for breakfast (brunch in effect) is quite hard work. Everything has to be co-ordinated so it is all ready and hot at once, with the toast hot-buttered and the coffee steaming with the frothy milk all ready to go, and the orange juice only-just squeezed. And there are lots of things to put on the table: butter, sugar bowl, salt cellars, jams, marmalades, segmented grapefruit halves, stewed fruits, smoked salmon, caviar, sour cream, croissants, Danish pastries, the Sunday papers – and all the elements for a full English. Plus Bucks Fizz. A proper entertainment breakfast – like a proper picnic – is ideally an *embarras de richesses* that lasts the rest of the day and requires just a tomato and some toasted cheese for supper.

Everyday breakfasts are a mixture of crunch and pap (granola, muesli, toast, porridge) all of which is a childhood-like start to the day. Most of my chapter-starting memory flotations flit across decades in no observable order, but this one starts rather neatly at the beginning.

My early years

My birth (26 October 1944) was not an easy one: I was premature and a caesarean – from ‘my mother’s womb untimely ripped’, I always liked to say. One lung wasn’t functioning and I was whisked away to spend my first six weeks in an oxygen tent. Just look at me now – who would have thought I started life underweight! But a fighter, I must have been.

My brother Steven, six years my senior, had allegedly ‘ordered’ a little sister and I was conceived in Aspley House in Aspley Guise in Bedfordshire, built by a disciple of Wren in 1690. I know this because Steven’s progressive school was evacuated to the house during the war and my mother was one of the teachers there. (This was Fortis Green School, founded by Beatrix Tudor-Hart, the nursery of which still remains round the corner from where we live now. I went to that nursery too. And so did Gaby.) Heino came from London at weekends, and one November he made some home-made fireworks tapering in twists of blue paper that fizzled bravely when lit and maybe let out a coloured spark or two. Steven’s initial pride turned into embarrassing disappointment.

‘Ordered’ I may have been, but Steven is said to have remarked, ‘Too much noise in this house’ when he came

back to London after the war. I was eight months when it ended, which is too young to have a memory that lurks. And that is of an air raid and I can picture my mother and myself hiding under the oak round table. That's all. There was a radio programme some years ago on how far back memories can go which appeared to disprove the accepted theory that most people can't remember things before the age of three. There was some theory that if you saw yourself hovering above the memory-scene then it was likely to be something you had reconstructed later from being told about it. But if you pictured yourself as being within it, then it might be a 'real' memory. Still, I don't think I can have grasped round-table-ness at eight months, let alone air-raid sound. Does the fact that I experience that moment as a memory make all my other remembrances suspect? Probably it does. Which is why court cases with conflicting eye-witness accounts are so interesting, and why I hold my annual Wittgenstein Poker dinner parties where I present duck-rabbit stew and we all share ambiguous interpretations of an object or event in memory of an occasion when Wittgenstein either did or didn't threaten Popper with a poker in Room H3, King's College, and the 13 people present each gave a different version of the same 10-minute episode (see page 205).

And what of memories that one does not want to revisit because they conjure up a time of distress or unhappiness – or simply that you don't want to experience again that person you once were. Or for reasons of privacy, there are disclosures that even the most honest person will not make. Memories are nebulous phantoms: they only tell some of the story.

I remember many happy childhood occasions: imaginative birthday parties – one with a Hansel and Gretel house stuck with liquorice allsorts, another enacting a Grimm fairy-tale as a shadow play with me playing the princess wearing a tall crown like a Breton head-dress. Creativity was encouraged. Sometimes my mother would give me coloured glass beads to thread on strings and then she would sing the pattern created. I loved that. There was papier mâché, clay, sugar paper and pastels, glue, scissors and collage material on hand at any time. I remember salt blocks that you could buy at the grocers and that she brought home so I could do my 'Michelangelo' sculptures scraping away at the salt with a nail file – a slave, I remember, that sat on a shelf somewhere and gathered dust. Another time she cut a red cabbage in half and gave me purple ink to draw the patterns that it made.

Foodstuffs for art, then, but creativity in the kitchen wasn't rated. The first foray that I remember are some appalling buns, and it is surprising they didn't put me off cooking altogether. I imagine my mother was making something and I think I wanted my own bowl and my own ingredients and I was going to make buns. But there was still sugar rationing then – it must



Tomato essence

This is totally magic and a wonderful thing to do with a glut of tomatoes. Sophie introduced me to it in Raymond Blanc's *Kitchen Secrets* (2012). It is the basis of a tomato symphony and variations that I do when I have time. It freezes well so good for a second, or even third, occasion too.

½ kg cherry toms
½ celery stick, chopped
1 shallot, chopped
½ fennel bulb, chopped
1 garlic clove, sliced
5 sprigs thyme, stripped and
chopped
5 g chopped basil leaves
1 tarragon spray
2 tsp sea salt
1-2 tsp sugar
4 drops Tabasco, same of
Worcester sauce

1. Combine all ingredients in large bowl, mix and pulse in batches, for 2 seconds only.
2. Leave covered in bowl to blend for at least 3 hours.
3. Then drip through a muslin bag to collect the golden liquid as it drips through – 2-3 hours. Don't squeeze the bag, and if there is some tomato sediment, let it drip through a coffee filter to separate it. Takes a bit of time but worth it.
4. Use essence for soup, jelly, sorbet or risotto. Pulp can be used in soups or sauces (though it will need enhancing with a tube of purée if all the juice is taken out).

Tomato jelly

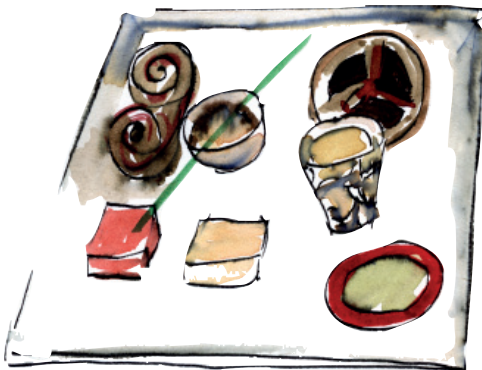
The *Secrets* recipe is frankly wrong – needs more gelatine. A little tip on gelatine got from somewhere (but is it true?) is that it loses its gelatinousness if you let it boil in the water when dissolving it.

200 ml tomato essence
2½ leaves of gelatine (i.e. 1 leaf
per 100 ml plus a bit for safety)
delicate little bits of red pepper,
tarragon and basil

1. Soak the gelatine (whole) in water.
2. Heat it with a little bit of the essence and mix with the rest.
3. Pour half into ice-cube shapes and leave for 10 mins.
4. Decorate with the little bits (*Secrets* says decorative tomato seeds but that's too much fiddle-faddle).
5. Cover with the rest of the mixture.
6. Leave for several hours or overnight.

Tomato symphony and variations

I have done the following, arranging a combination of some of these prettily on a plate:



a shot glass of the essence
a mini tomato stuffed with mozzarella
baby tomatoes stuffed with goats' cheese and put under the grill
2 cubes of jelly (one clear, one red)
a scoop of sorbet made from the essence
a tomato-red-pepper tartlet
a sliced rolled pancake or omelette with sundried tomato pesto and cream cheese
tomato palmiers with sundried tomatoes
a slice of black tomato with basil essence drizzle
tomato bread

Mushroom parcels

This is so impressive – and easy, easy. Just toss mixed kinds of mushrooms – preferably some of them exotic and maybe a dried cep or two for flavour – in olive oil with cooked, diced salad potatoes, tarragon, chervil and double cream and divide onto as many squares of greaseproof paper as there are people. Bring together all the edges and tie string in a double knot at the top, trim and pop into the oven for about 15 mins. Serve them as they are, with scissors to hand so guests can cut the string to open the parcel.

This would work with different herbs and baby vegetables and I've done it with celeriac and hazelnuts instead of the potatoes.

In *Plenty* (2010) Ottolenghi adds Pernod, but I don't usually have any and I didn't think it needed it. Bayleaf liqueur worked quite well on one occasion.

Fish parcels

This is out of my Magimix pamphlet and is like the mushroom parcels but this time you tie up the baking paper at each end so they look like boiled sweets, with the paper join at the top so that it will open out to form a little bowl when served. Andrew and Roz gave this the thumbs up when I tested it on them, but thought it best to decant the fish out of the 'sweet paper' onto the plate.

1. Sweat the juliennes briefly.
2. Place a portion in the middle of a square of parchment.
3. Put the fish on top and sprinkle with white wine, dill and lemon.
4. Wrap up the parcels tying at each end so it looks like a boiled sweet.
5. Bake for 25 mins on medium oven.

Christmas crackers

This was for years my speciality. Not sure where I originally got the idea from – a fancy magazine I daresay. I have a feeling the original used mincemeat, egg and brandy, but the seafood version was the one I used to do – transporting them on trays down to Catherington when we had a Hampshire Christmas with Steven & Co. There must be a way of incorporating a joke and a few trinkets in each cracker.

1. Make the filling of fish cooked gently in butter with a dash of cornflour, then add cream, egg yolk and white wine to thicken. Let it be quite thick when cooled.
2. For each person, paint melted butter sparingly over 2 sheets of filo to stick them together.
3. Put some filling in the middle at the bottom and roll up, sealing ends with more melted butter. Pinch cracker shapes at each end and clip together with strips of silver foil (several folds). Cut ends in a zig-zag pattern.
4. Bake in medium oven for 10 mins (keep looking as they can suddenly burn).
5. Decorate the top with shrimp and parsley + a squirt of lemon. (Or for a sweet version, some crystallised fruits and pinked rice paper tucked into the cracker ends.)

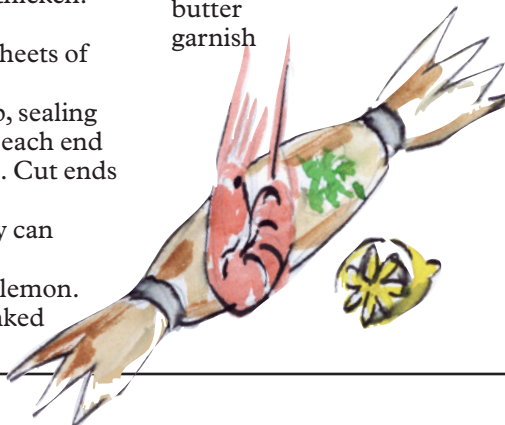
mixed mushrooms: 4-6 oz per person
potatoes: 2 oz per person
double cream



tarragon
oil
chervil
greaseproof
paper

juliennes of carrots, courgettes,
& red peppers
fillets of hake, salmon, perch or
other
white wine
lemons
dill

filo pastry
any seafood filling – scallops,
prawns, monkfish
butter
garnish



Stephen's Russian zhulien

He originally got this out of Lesley Chamberlain's *The Food and Cooking of Russia* (1990) but I haven't checked at source. We've met Lesley through both Dan and Vivienne on various occasions.

small chopped onion
button mushrooms
flour
white wine
sour cream
dill (or fennel)

1. Sauté onions, then add the mushrooms and cook until they give up their liquid.
2. Toss in flour and add white wine.
3. Then add the sour cream and bake in buttered ramekin dishes with chopped dill or other seasonings.
4. Serve hot (also quite nice cold).



Julia's sweetbreads

This is reconstructed from memory as I can't find the version she wrote out for me many years ago. I learned about them from her – and so many other things as well.

2 lb sweetbreads
vinegar and water
a few chopped shallots
flour
butter and a little oil
parsley & almond flakes

1. Soak in several changes of cold water and a few drops of vinegar for a few hours.
2. Remove all membranes and tubes.
3. Slice each sweetbread in half crosswise.
4. Dredge the sweetbreads in salted flour.
5. Heat butter and oil until very hot and add the sweetbreads and shallots, but don't move them around.
6. When they are a light golden colour on the bottom side (about 3 to 5 mins), with tongs, carefully turn them over to sear the other side until that side becomes a light golden colour.
7. Garnish with parsley and almond flakes and serve with toast.



Potted shrimp

Another old-fashioned British classic that I was sure I did from Mrs Beeton, but it turns out that the referring contents page is torn in my copy so I would have had difficulty finding it. It was on the internet, of course (with the anchovy an addition). This is perhaps the place to mention that my Mrs Beeton is an 1874 edition. I inherited it from Jojo in a somewhat fallen apart state. When Stephen and I went bookbinding to West Dean in 2010, I restored it to much satisfaction.

3 oz butter, plus melted butter
to serve
2 blades of mace
a pinch of cayenne
freshly grated nutmeg
14 oz peeled brown shrimps
½ tsp anchovy paste or
Gentleman's Relish
hot toast, butter and lemon
wedges to serve

1. Put the butter, mace, cayenne pepper, and a little grated nutmeg into a medium pan and allow the butter to melt gently over a low heat. Add the shrimps and stir gently, allow them to heat through and leave on a low heat for 5 mins.
2. Remove the mace blades, divide the shrimps and butter between ramekins and level the tops. Leave in the fridge to cool, and then spoon a thin layer of clarified butter over them.
3. Serve with hot toast and lemon wedges.

Philip C's gravadlax (buried salmon)

My school friend Philip (now very eminent) makes this every year and catches his own salmon to boot. From other sources, I deduce that the amounts of salt and sugar are not critical and some people think the weights are not necessary. This makes quite a lot if it is sliced thinly on bread.

1. Take a middle-cut piece of salmon and split lengthways.
2. Mix all the ingredients except the salmon together. Spread the mixture over one half of the salmon fillet and massage it into the flesh. Put the other half-salmon on top, skin side up; thin end to thick.
3. Cover with foil, and put an inverted oval dish on top. Add a heavy weight (Philip uses an encyclopaedia) and leave in a cool place for 2-3 days. Baste the salmon once or twice with the liquid that forms. Turn the salmon over every 12 hours. The longer you cure it, the firmer the flesh will be.
4. Unwrap the salmon and pat dry with kitchen paper. Slice thinly, either vertically or horizontally, and serve with rye bread.
5. If you only need to use one half of the salmon, the other half can be left in the fridge for up to a week or stored frozen for longer.
6. Mix dressing to taste.

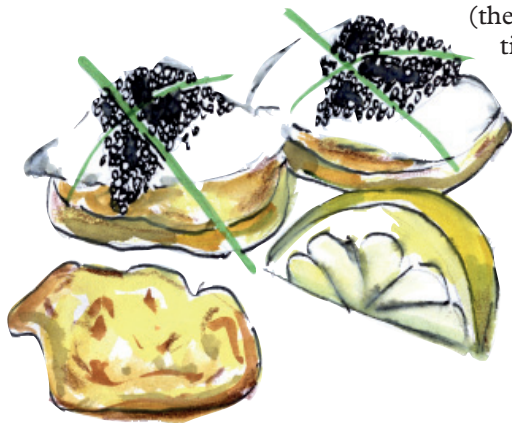
Clarissa L's farinata

There something similar in *Plenty* – individual sizes and topped with onions and cherry tomatoes and sour cream.

1. Stir ingredients and leave to soak for several hours.
2. When ready to cook, add the olive oil, chopped tarragon or rosemary and (optionally) chopped sun-dried tomatoes.
3. Pour into a hot-oiled pan, let it bubble and turn over. Should be thin but firm. Cut into segments. You need a flat large pan; her farinata was a winner, but mine have never been quite as good.

Blini with caviar

A great favourite both with us and the Greenwalds. Making the blini looks complicated on the page (they have to rise three times), but at one time I had it off by heart and it seemed easy. I'd look it up now in *The Cookery Year*. The only downside is that you have to fry the blinis while your guests are there and I don't like doing that any more.



2 tbsp white sugar
2 tbsp coarse sea salt
4 tbsp chopped dill
1 tsp juniper berries (optional)
4 tbsp mustard seeds or 1 tbsp caraway seeds
4 tbsp gin (optional)
plenty of white pepper
1 kg salmon fillet, scaled and pin-boned but skin left on

Mustardy dressing

2 tbsp dark mustard plus 1 tsp dried mustard powder
1½ tbsp sugar (maybe honey instead)
3 tbsp white wine vinegar
150 ml olive oil
loads of chopped dill

1 cup gram flour (chickpeas) – she sieved it but why bother
add to 1¼ cups of water
2 tbsp olive oil
herbs or dried condiments

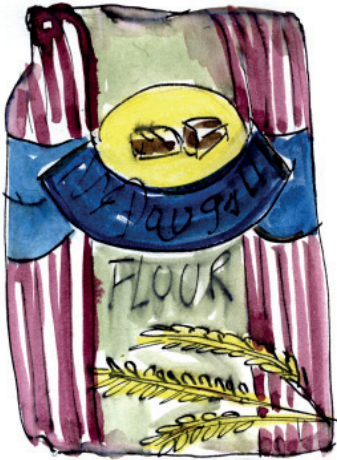
yeast
flour
onions
sour cream
lumpfish roe
2 eggs
milk
chopped onions
lemon segments

6

Breads and pastry

So to bread and pastry, which is the staff of life. Linked because they are made with flour which is the number one staple in our part of the world. Its political importance was even drummed into us at school with the Corn Laws and then the Repeal of the Corn Laws. Heady stuff that I dozed my way through. Perhaps this section should include pasta, but it isn't going to. I *have* made my own tagliatelli, draping them over a horizontal broomstick to dry – and yes, they were good and it was fun to do, but I'm not Italian and didn't learn the touch when I was five. And even Michel Roux went for the shop-bought fresh pasta on a blind testing, the other contenders being home-made and dried.

Friendship

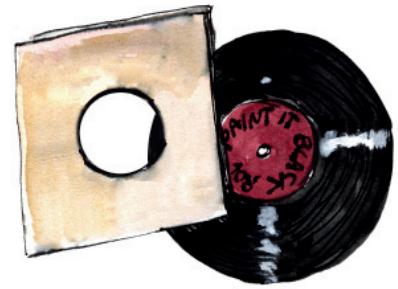


The staff of life for me is friendship. I've been very lucky to have several close friendships – more than my fair share perhaps. And one's capacity for new and meaningful friendships does not diminish with age, though, inevitably, long years of shared experience count particularly.

At Fortis Green nursery school my special friends were boys, particularly Johnnie-boy. There was also Peter Philips, who wanted to marry me and could not understand why I said no. He had one of those red trundle cars you could climb into and pedal about. Everybody envied it: I would have that too if I married him. But I was already betrothed to Johnnie-boy. I was told Peter cried and his mother protested to my mother, who must have communicated either approval or disapproval of my lack of materialism, otherwise I wouldn't have remembered it. How old were we? Six?

The friend I have known the longest is Sonja, because we sat next to each other at primary school and were Best Friends for ages. Once, we pushed our mothers into buying matching dresses in pink and grey diagonal stripes with a frill at the sleeve (very fifties), which looked sweet on little Sonja and unflattering on big Jane. Then we went to different secondary schools, wrote to each other for a while, and lost touch until her youngest and my oldest were five or six, when we met again and instantly knew why we had been Best Friends the first time round.

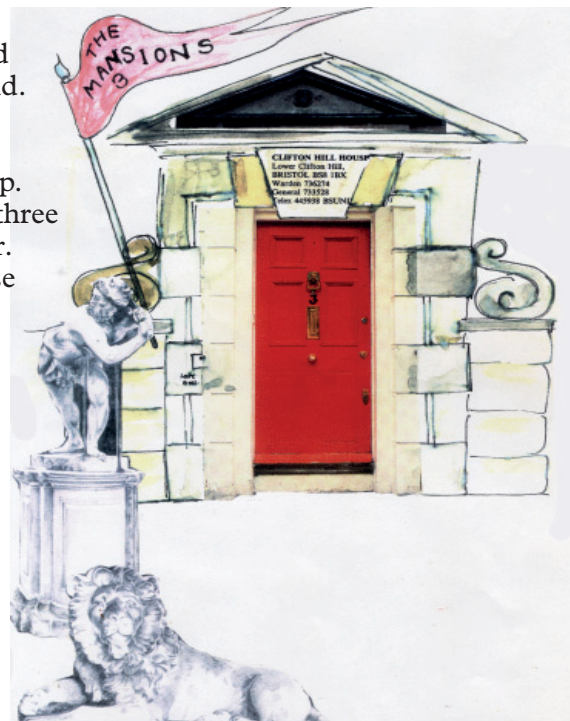
The prize for longest serving *in statu oldfriendibus* goes to Susanna (or Gail) whom I met at university when I was open and ready for intimacy. This was the period of my short, and only, stretch of diaries and is documented in detail. Some years ago, I was on the point of throwing the four little books away, but Susanna persuaded me otherwise. Nothing embarrassing in their naïve charm, she said. (Stephen, too, has a couple of small Letts diaries where typical entries, to the amusement of his progeny, read: ‘Fed mouse in a.m.; nought of int. in p.m.’.)



Susanna and I were both eager for love – I confidently expected to find it in a boy, but my diaries maunder at length on how drippy the boys at university were and, having gone to a co-ed school, I hadn’t gone boy-mad as my friends from single-sex schools had done. There was the odd crush on a friend or two of Steven’s, also on Richard III, Michelangelo, Laurence Olivier, Mick Jagger and the like. I also had crushes on Mary Queen of Scots, Miss Raymond the art mistress, Ingrid Bergman and probably some Head Girl or other as that was a fashionable thing to do then.

My first ‘grown-up’ friendship was with Susanna and it has endured through some rocky times: now my family is her family. She was the first person I could talk to about art and music (I have said I was a square – I am slightly lying about Mick Jagger: ‘Painted Black’ was probably my favourite pop song and I had a vague feeling for him, but crush is too strong a word). Susanna was in her third year at Bristol University when I was in my first. We both had rooms in the Palladian original mansion of Clifton Hill House hall of residence in Bristol and met in one of its little kitchens. I was slightly starry eyed that a third year wanted to know me and she was attracted to my unusual-for-her background. We would talk late into the night in her superior room (the best in the house and now divided into two) and both of us felt new worlds were opening up. The Warden noticed – she’d observed Susanna for three years ‘alone and palely loitering’ and now no longer. She invited us both to sherry and perhaps some wise words were imparted, but I don’t remember what they were. More Keats was quoted, I rather think.

In Hall there were formal dinners on Tuesday and Thursdays which the Warden attended. You had to wear a dress – and the regulation student black subfusc gown. A list would be posted of those who had to sit at High Table and you had to excuse yourself to the Warden that morning if you were not going to dine; if you did not sign out by 9 a.m. you would not be excused and you would have to have your meal standing up and then bow yourself out. It was in my first year, when I was in Hall, that President Kennedy was assassinated – I



Floral vegetables

I quite often buy vegetables instead of flowers: there's a double use, first as an attractive table display and then (before they get manky) as a supper dish. Autumn gourds last longest and then can become soups or be stuffed. A perfect Fibonacci romanesco looks splendid – but not for more than a few days – and I once bought a white, a purple, a green and an orange cauliflower in my favourite farmer's market (in Stroud). Mixing all four colours for this dish makes a pretty winter warmer.

florets of cauliflower and
broccoli
2 tbsp olive oil
tsp crushed coriander seeds
2 cloves crushed garlic
sea salt



same
ingredients
butter instead of oil
seeds and garlic not in
his version (nutmeg as an
alternative)

1. Mix all with your hand to coat evenly and spread on a baking tray.
2. Bake for 25-35 mins.

Tom's brassica 'cake' variation

1. Cut veg into florets giving them as long a stem as reasonably possible. Cut up the central stem into smallish pieces and use them to fill in any gaps in the middle.
2. Par-boil a bit (so still crunchy) and drain well.
3. Press florets into rounded pudding basin alternating colours and pile up to a half dome shape, salting, peppering and nutmegging as you go. Tom did his in layers for a striped effect and suggests a spiral. He also buttered the bowl first (which I didn't find necessary).
4. Pour in some melted butter, press down with a weighted saucer and steam for about half an hour. Turn out after letting stand for a bit. Makes a pretty effect.

Zim's fish

No cuisine involved, but I've had a pussy cat to feed for maybe two-thirds of my life so tins, dried foods, packets of squish, raw fish, chicken and chicken livers are in with the recipe mélange. Our Abyssinian Zim is a real character and very much part of the family. There have been references to him in many of the last 13 years-worth of Christmas cards (just visible running round a franking mark in this one from 2002, which was an envelope).



20

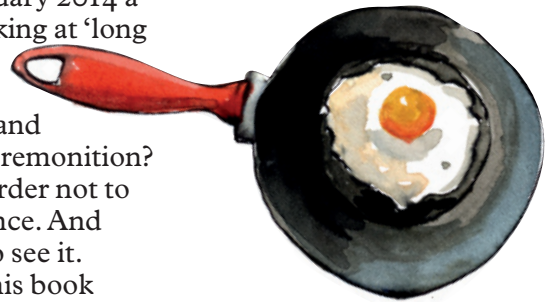
Cooking for one

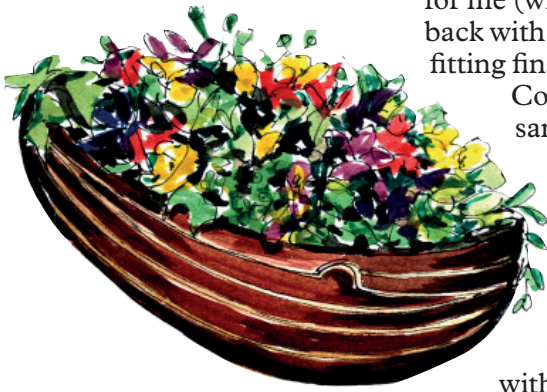
I have rewritten this chapter four times. It was always in the book, but my first version – written before Stephen’s final illness – had a feminist twist: waving the flag for independence seemed what solo cooking stood for. I felt I’d lived through a time of astonishing change in the growth-demise-resurgence of feminism. It was a huge, and hugely important part of my life and we all fought for things our daughters take for granted. In a way that’s good, because it shows we succeeded, at least in part – though only in part.

My second version was written in the consciousness that I might be faced with the reality of cooking for one much sooner than I would like. Stephen’s cancer was advancing over the year in which I was finishing writing this book. In February 2014 a doctor had warned me (not him) that we were looking at ‘long months; maybe a year’. In the event it was only two little months. The night before he died, I had done the illustrations and layout up to chapter 14 and put the PDF on an iPad to show him. Did I have a premonition? Certainly I was occupying myself on the book in order not to think about his illness and its inevitable consequence. And I was rushing to the finish because I wanted him to see it. He and I were going to bind the family copies of this book ourselves and were talking about how, and scribbling designs on the backs of envelopes. Because of him, I did not go for the economy solution of a glued binding but proper signatures, though whether I can bind them without him is uncertain.

So Stephen and Vita looked through the electronic version together while I made the last supper I ever cooked for him, bringing it up on trays for the three of us – he in bed, and Vita and I finding space for our plates beside the make-up and perfume on my dressing table. He had read the typescript and seen most of the watercolours, but I am glad he at least saw something of the final design. He died when this book was virtually complete: he is very present in it and it would not be right to go back and put anything into the past tense. It is his story too.

Even as I write now, some two months after his death, he is still present. Once a month my Christmas present from him arrives of, alternately, a pot plant and a cut-flower bouquet – so one month in four it is freesias, his favourite flower. In a strange machination of serendipity, in the very same delivery as the freesias Emily had ordered for his coffin came two bunches





for me (with a devoted message from him). We filled a theorbo back with them – 100 fragrant stems beautifully arranged – a fitting final decoration for a fine craftsman.

Cooking for one? – simple: cook for two and eat the same thing twice. Or that's what I originally thought.

But it is too soon for me to have experience of what it means when there is one of you *all the time*. In version 1 of this chapter, I had said I was not interested in cooking for one; now I must learn this skill, as I must learn to walk again with an amputated limb. For that is what it feels like when you have spent three-quarters of your life

with someone who is, unbelievably, not there any more: almost all my adult life.

Everyone I have asked says cooking for one should not take long. Obvious instant favourites include: pasta with sauce from a jar; a cheese omelette; a thick soup; something on toast; salad medleys; a shove-in-the-oven ready-made. The point seems to be to stoke up quickly and not waste time that could be better spent on doing something else. My own view has always been that you can do all the something elses *and* enjoy time in the kitchen. I had a little cooking ritual which involves descending from my attic eyrie (where I write) in time to catch all or some of a trio of Radio 4 programmes, which entertain me as I chop vegetables and push them about in a pan. With a cook's glass imminent, it is a pleasant division between the working day and the evening.

Nevertheless, some of that pleasure must derive from the anticipation of sharing a meal, and the events of one's day, with another person. The elaboration of the food is designed to keep pace with the flow of conversation. If there is no exchange of ideas, then need the fork be long occupied, or the sink piled dispiritingly high? Cooking for one can be an enjoyable release from the tyranny of sweeping slices of onion off the floor, but only in the context of there being more moments of togetherness across the table than of solitude.

Solitude

I have always needed solitude; if I am not able to be alone in the house for several hours of the day then I feel edgy: too much social interaction without the white space of silence makes me bad-tempered. The quietness of an empty house restores the spirit and allows me to concentrate on whatever it is I am doing: writing; glass-making; designing or playing with Photoshop. No stairs creak; nor doors slam. I can lose myself in making something that wasn't there before. I don't like people looking over my shoulder to see what I am doing. The solitude of an empty house with no one coming home to it is another matter. Solitude that is chosen is not the same as

unwonted loneliness; the latter is not restorative.

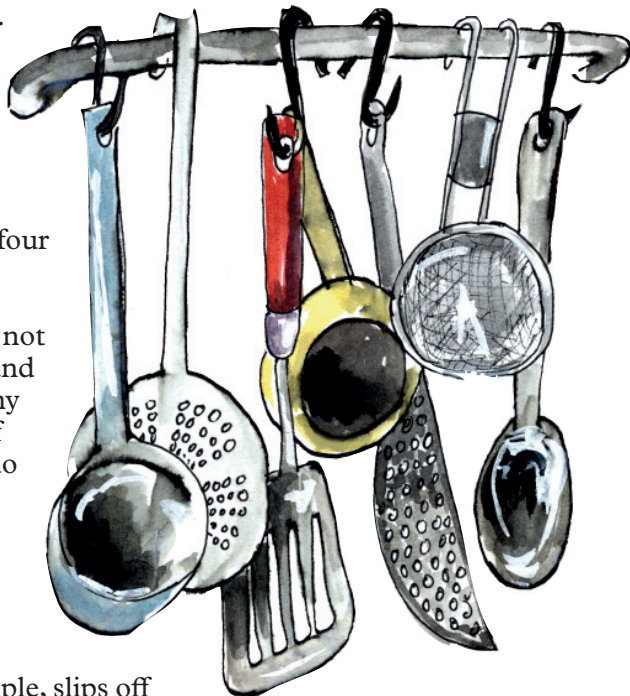
In this year – the year in which I am going to be 70 – I have been cooking more than usual, partly because I am testing some of the seven times 70 recipes that make up this book, and partly because my son and his family were with us for seven months while their house was being reconstructed. It is more rewarding cooking for four than for one.

The contrast, therefore, is painfully acute. Cooking for one is now going to be my life. I am not looking forward to it. I have friends, to be sure, and this book bears witness to their importance in my life. But as one journalist puts it ‘I have plenty of people to do things with – I just have no one to do nothing with’.

I don’t like to eat alone, so the television has become my supper companion: we talk to each other. And I learn things; it changes my mental picture. I learn, too, that there are some foodstuffs it is hard to eat from a tray on your lap on a comfy sofa – slippery linguine, for example, slips off the fork. That limits menu choices – or augments the napkin laundry.

Ever since my spinal injury I find it increasingly hard to stand for the long periods that good cooking demands. So I both anticipate, and fear, the possibility that a meal might one day become something you grab out of the fridge. I once accompanied my mother to the flat of a friend of hers who had committed suicide (as had her husband, the cartoonist Vicky, before her). It was the next day and my mother was helping to clear up. The image of a bitten piece of cheddar cheese put back onto a near-empty shelf in the fridge, with its crescent of teeth marks as if carved in yellowed denture wax, haunted me for years – and returns to me now.

Cooking for oneself is, in some sense, a marker of self-respect – like putting on make-up and brushing your hair on days when no one will see you. Or making your bed when no one is coming. Setting a jam-jar of daffodils on the kitchen window-sill for your own simple enjoyment of that burst of sunlight springing from the tight, green stems. It is in such rituals that we celebrate being part of a civilised world. Cooking for yourself alone is a social act where you are both the cook and the guest. It is like reading a book in isolated companionship – a good repast, but not the banquet of having someone to discuss it with. Cooking for one is a caring act, as shown by the word ‘artistically’ in step 5 of the first of this section’s contributed recipes on the next page.



About the illustrations

Most of the watercolours have been painted specially for this book, but I have also plundered various scribblings done over the years: the baby books I made for the children; little booklets for odd occasions; thank-you letters; envelopes sent in the post to friends to mark something special (a novel in the one below); some of the painted eggs that capture the essence of the year in which they were painted; a watercolour painted on icing; and cards and menus done over the years. More recently, I was making labels for Anna's Riverford preserves courses in exchange for a free cooking course or two, and my fruit and vegetable collection started with those.

The intention was for the watercolours to create a unity between the disparate recipes, although they too are from different eras and done for varying purposes. Two of them are not by me: the one on page 12, because I could not copy a Renoir, and in any case wanted it recorded just as it was. The other is Stephen's duck egg on page 97. And the banknotes on page 229 are more Photoshopped than painted, but such fun they were to do.

The total number of illustrations is divisible by seven and by the years of our marriage and matches the pagination in a mathematically pleasing way, but in both cases it depends on what is being counted and works if you only count the pages that have print on them and not the blank sides. The distribution of contributors plays a similar (but entirely correct) numerical game.



Index of recipes

- Adrie's Dutch duck 90
— poffertjes 28
Afke's Ten 249
aïoli 132
Alice's kapusta 122
— walnut torte 173
Allison's sloe gin 243
anchovy
 & cauliflower, salad 214
 Gentleman's Relish (*patum*
 peperium) 31, 50
 paté 47
Angela's klopses 79
Angelos's houmous 256
angels on horseback 46
Anna's almonds 45
— bay leaf liqueur 242
apple
 baked 201
 & blackberry, crumble 225
 bread 58
 & cabbage 122, 215
 cake, cinnamon (auntie's) 174
 caramel pudding 203
 & celeriac, soup 37
 cheese 236
 compote 25
 & damson, tansy 226
 fritters 29
 Normande 200
 pancake filling 29, 148
 pickle 231
 in red cabbage 123
 im Schlafrock 29
 snowballs 184
 tart 210
 with calvados sabayon 190
 rose 189
 tatin 188
 Tydeman's Late Orange 258
apricots
 & chocolate, tart 191
 glaze 187
 with pork 94
 with red cabbage 123
 with sauerkraut 122
 soufflé Rothschild 183
 in tagine 83
 & yoghurt 259
arancini 130
Armagnac clementines 237
artichokes 47
 in fougasse 144
 in salad 155, 157
 in vegetarian terrine 138
asparagus
 lunch 259
 in risotto 115, 258
aubergine
 baba ghanoush 45
 bake 106
 croquettes 107
 filling 102
 fridge, not keeping in 5
 hibiscus salad 158
 Imam bayildi 107
 kuku 146
 mixed vegetable 138, 144, 156
 onion & yoghurt mould 149
 & pomegranate 158
 twice cooked 106
avocado 144, 149, 157, 160
bacon
 blueberry pancakes 29
 in casseroles 86, 88, 113
 devils on horseback 46
 in goulash 78
 Krakow eggs 39
 lining terrines 139
 in meat loaf 81
 with pea soup 36
 with rabbit 87
 in sauerkraut 122
banana flambé 259
beans 124
 cassoulet 83
 fagioli 155
 & peas, toasties 46
 soup 39
beat till pale 5
Beatrice's fish curry 70
beef
 bolognaise sauce 81
 cevapčići 80
 chilli con carne 82
 corned beef hash 130
 cottage pie 129
 goulash 78
 klopses 79
 meat loaf 81, 82
 meatballs 79-80
 pörkölt 78
 stew 129
 stuffed peppers 82
 unstuffed cabbage 83
beer, home-brewed 245
beetroot 59, 105
Beth's coulubiak 72
Bill's Khaled Khaldoun hake 73
biscuits
 almond 169
 brownies 168
 crispbreads for cheese 59
 deconstructed 167
 flapjacks 167
 florentines 168
 gingerbread men 167
 jewel fingers 259
 macaroons 169
 meringues 169
 orange-almond tuiles 203
 shortbread 168
blini with caviar 51
Bo's stratagem 256
— Thai grilled chicken 89
bowls & baskets, edible 215-9
bread (*chapter 6*) 56-9
 8-strand 59
 apple 58
 breadmakers 56
 -and-butter puddings 181
 calzone 57
 comparative costs 54
 crispbreads 59
 date 166
 & dripping 249
 feeding loaf 57
 flatbreads 57
 focaccia 57
 fougasse 57, 144
 fridge dough 56
 harvest sheaf 58
 panforte 175
 pan perdu 26
 picnic loaf 143
 pita 57
 pizzette or pizza 57, 210
 rolls 56
 sauce 131
breakfast (*chapter 3*) 18-31
 apple compote 25
 cheese (second) 31
 granola 25
 grapefruit 31
 kippers 30
 pain perdu 26
 porridge 30
 toast 25
 see also eggs; omelettes;
 pancakes
Brenda's lamb with Sam's
 variation 84
broccoli
 baked brassicas 252

- Stephen (*ctd*)
 — Russian zhulien 50
 — salad-dressing 154
 — tomato pesto tart 140
 — walnut pesto 121
 Steven's frittata 148
 — lemon cordial 242
 — tomatoes 225
 stews, casseroles, ragouts 129
 almond-brandy chicken
 bean 39
 bigos 93
 chestnut & partridge 38
 coq-au-vin 88
 game 91, 92
 goulash 78
 mussels 69
 navarin de mouton 85
 pot-au-feu 256
 red pepper & squash 108
 tagine 83
 tuna pasta 119
 venison 86
 strudels
 poppy seed (mohnstrudel) 171
 savoury 139
 stuffing
 apricot 94
 for crown roast or duck 84
 liver 84
 Sucre lemon pie 188
 — white chocolate ice-cream 198
 sugar, *generally* 7
 summer pudding 193
 Susanna's apple caramel 203
 — omelette Arnold Bennett 70
 — Queen of Puddings 184
 sweet potato
 & goats' cheese, tartlets 140
 gratin 111
 pie 182
 walnut 140
 sweetbreads 50
 tagine 83
 Taiwanese dishes 94
 Takashi's hiyashi somen 213
 tarts (*savoury*) 100-5
 concentric circles 141
 courgette 141
 leek flan (poireaux) 101
 monkfish 71
 pesto 140
 potato cheese 140
 red pepper 140
 walnut 140
 tarts (*sweet*) 180-91
 apricot chocolate 91
 blueberry 225
 apple 210, 216
 apple rose 189
 caramel nut 182
 chestnut 190
 chocolate apricot 91
 fruit *in general* 187
 lemon 188
 marzipan
 pear 210
 prune 188
 orange 190-1
 plum 210
 quince (Santiago) 190
 tamarind 187
 toffee pear 200
 treacle 131
 tatin
 apple 188
 chicory 105
 potato & goats' cheese 105
 tea (*chapter 13*) 162-75
 crumpets 165
 cucumber sandwiches 165
 date bread 166
 drop scones 165
 teacakes 166
 toast 25
 Welsh rarebit 166
see also biscuits; cakes; tarts
 (sweet)
 tiân of onions 108
 Tom's brassica 'cake' 252
 tomato
 in bolognese 91
 essence 48
 jelly 48
 oven-dried 230
 & parsnip, dauphinois 111
 pesto tart 140
 risotto 117
 Steven's 225
 soup 37
 symphony 48
 tricolore salad 157
 turlu turlu 156
 Twelve Things platter 186
 Valentine eggs 28
 vegetables, floral 251
 vegetarian (*chapter 9*) 100-24
 aubergine bake 106
 aubergine mould 149
 brassica 'cake' 252
 butternut squash stew 108
 cheese on toast 255
 'chopped liver' 138
 courgette latkes 146
 crumbles 110
 eggah 146
 fondue 109
 frittata 147, 148
 fritters 109
 kuku 145, 146
 lasagne 120
 noodles (hiyashi somen) 213
 nut roast 105
 onion dishes 108
 pancake fillings 148
 pinenut roast 106
 provençal omelette 147
 quorn meatballs 80
 ratatouille, turlu turlu 156
 root vegetable rösti 146
 roulade 150
 salmon gateau 148
 spinach & lentil roulade 211
 strudels 139
 stuffed courgettes/marrow 107
 terrine, striped vegetables 138
 timbales 149
 Welsh rarebit 166
see also cheese; nuts; picnics;
 quiches; salads; tarts
 venison 86, 128
 Vera's noodlings 214
 vichyssoise 38
 Vicki's cabbage gratin 123
 — cashew carrot soup 38
 vinegar, flavoured 231
 Vita's pomegrinis 243
 — spiced lamb with raisins 86
 — toasties 46
 — wedding cake 251
 Vivienne's flan de poireaux 101
 — pot-au-feu 256
 waffles 29
 watercress-haddock roulade 150
 wedding breakfast, quantities 209
 weights & measures 7
 wine
 cooking with 245
 enjoyment of 260
 flight of 244
 Wittgensteinian duck-rabbit 92
 Who's Who (*chapter 21*) 260-76
 yoghurt
 & apricots 259
 & aubergine, mould 149
 cakes 192
 raspberry ice-cream 198
 tzadziki 116
 Yorkshire goose pie 212
 zag bag (zabaglione) 193
 Zibibbo port & blood orange
 conserve 233
 Zim's fish 252
 Zizzie's Armagnac clementines 237

Books that have inspired some of the recipes

- A Book of Middle Eastern Food* Claudia Roden (Penguin 1968)
- Anton Mosimann, Naturally!* (Ebury Books 1991)
- Cooking in Ten Minutes* Edouard de Pomoane (Faber & Faber 1967)
- Cool Food* (Murdoch Books 2003)
- Crazy Water Pickled Lemons* Diana Henry (Mitchell Beazley 2012)
- Driving Over Lemons* Chris Stewart (Sort of Books 1999)
- Elegy In An English Dining-Room* T Earle Welby (Methuen 1932)
- Family Heart Association Low Fat Diet Book* (1991)
- First Impressions* Josceline Dimbleby (Sainsbury's 1984)
- Fish Cookery* Jane Grigson (Penguin 1998)
- Five Minute Bread* Jeff Herzberg and Zoë François (Ebury Books 2011)
- Food for Free* Richard Mabey (Collins 1972)
- French Provincial Cooking* Elizabeth David (Penguin 1960)
- Good Housekeeping Magazine* (2005)
- Great Dishes of the World* Robert Carrier (Penguin 1963)
- Home Preservation of Fruit and Vegetables* (Ministry of Agriculture, Fish & Food 1971)
- How to Cook Book Three* Delia Smith (BBC Books 2001)
- Ice Cream: A History* Ivan Day (Shire Library 2011)
- In Praise of the Potato* Lindsey Bareham (Penguin 1995)
- Jelly with Bompas and Parr* (Pavilion Books 2010)
- Jerusalem* Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi (Ebury Press 2013)
- Kitchen Secrets* Raymond Blanc (Bloomsbury 2012)
- La Dolce Vita* Isabel Coe (Simon & Schuster 2005)
- Leon: Baking and Puddings* Henry Dimbleby and Claire Ptak (Conran 2011)
- Ma Cuisine* Magimix Handbook
- Marvellous Meals with Mince* (Sainsbury's 1982)
- Mastering the Art of French Cooking* Julia Child, Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle (Penguin 1966)
- Moro: The Cookbook* Sam & Sam Clark (Ebury Press 2001)
- Mrs Beeton's All About Cookery* (Ward Lock 1923)
- Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* (Ward Lock 1874)
- Naked Chef* Jamie Oliver (Michael Joseph 2001)
- Of Picnics & Pageants* Elizabeth David (Penguin 2005)
- Onions without Tears* Lindsey Bareham (Penguin 1996)
- Plenty* Yotam Ottolenghi (Ebury Press 2010)
- Purple Citrus & Sweet Perfume* Silvena Rowe (Hutchison 2010)
- Risotto* Valentina Harris (Cassell 2003)
- Roast Chicken and Other Stories: Second Helpings* Simon Hopkinson and Flo Bayley (Macmillan 2001)
- Saraban* Greg and Lucy Malouf (Hardie Grant Books 2013)
- Soups* Hannah Wright (Robert Hale 1985)
- Summer Cooking* Elizabeth David (Penguin 1965)
- Tender* Nigel Slater (Fourth Estate 2009)
- The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* Hannah Glasse (1747)
- The Best of Eliza Acton* (Longman 1968)
- The Complete Practical Cook* Charles Carter (1730)
- The Cookbook* Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi (Ebury Press 2008)
- The Cookery of England* Elisabeth Ayrton (Penguin 1975)
- The Cookery Year* (Reader's Digest 1973)
- The Dairy Book of Family Cookery* Alexandra Artley (Ed.) (Ebury Press 1983)
- The Delectable Past* Esther Aresty (Allen & Unwin 1964)
- The Fat Duck Cookbook* Heston Blumenthal (Bloomsbury 2009)
- The Food and Cooking of Russia* Lesley Chamberlain (Penguin 1990)
- The French Laundry Cookbook* Thomas Keller (Workman Publishing 1999)
- The Futurist Cookbook* Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (Trefoil Publication 1989)
- The Mediterranean Cookbook* Anna Macmiadhacháin, Mary Reynolds, Claudia Roden and Helga Rubinstein (1976)
- The Penguin Freezer Cook Book* Helga Rubinstein (Penguin 1973)
- The Vegetarian Bible* Prue Leith (Bloomsbury 2002)
- Whisky Kitchen* Sheila McConachie and Graham Harvey (GW Publishing 2008)
- Winter Collection* Delia Smith (BBC Books 1995)

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Louise Doughty (Silent Three) and Vivienne Menkes-Ivry for reading the manuscript in progress and for their helpful suggestions.

To Stephen who read it twice and who was encouraging me to finish it even in the last two weeks when he had taken to his bed.

To Hazel Bell for copy-editing the book and for considerable help in coaching me through my first ever attempt at an index and gently coaxing me into a fifth rewrite, at which point she ventured a positive comment.

To Andrea Livingstone for proofreading so enthusiastically and meticulously. It's impossible to trap every error. You put one thing right and something else goes wrong. Every time I combed through, I found something – and so, alas, will you.

To Anna Colquhoun and Ivan Day, both published cookery writers, who generously allowed me to incorporate and adapt their recipes.

To AWG Bro. Phil Abel who tried to help me with page design – though all failings in sensitivity to the niceties of typography and spacing are entirely mine – and PM Brian Webb for the cover lettering. Plus Bro. Sarah McMenemy who critiqued the

grammar of the cover drawings.

To Athelny Townshend (designer of *Glass Circle News* which I edit) for help with the InDesign template and for talking me through numerous problems of page layout.

To Paul Robinson for photographing the painted eggs.

And to all my friends who have entertained me to dinners and feasts all these years with thanks for their contributions to this book.

