



Monday 8th June 2015

Dear Customer,

Well hallelujah, the farm shop is now open, the café is open, and even Swaphopper has launched. Like buses, on the day the shop opened, I received an email from the website designers saying they were ready to launch. So how's that then – three businesses up and running in the space of a week and two on the same day. Anyway on that basis my thoughts my have inevitably turned to how I can actually now try and make some money. I've been thinking of taking up poker - online poker. Victoria Coren won a million pounds playing it. If she can, then why can't I. I've never played before but does that matter.

So if you want to join Swaphopper, we are now live at www.swaphopper.co.uk and it will be great to see you there. Be there or be square. Putting my new 'techy' hat on, we are 'beta' testing, which I now know means that we are still tweaking and improving and fixing any snags. So if you do come and join us, we'd appreciate any feedback on how it's working for you so we can tweak it to perfection.

Well we have been very busy in the café all weekend, the shop has been quite busy and given we have not yet done any publicity I am reasonably happy. We need to double what we are doing and more ideally but it's a good start. But who knows what tomorrow will bring. I think our summers have to be good as no-one goes out in the winter up here and winter lasts 9 months. Now that the items on the building work 'to do' list have all but been crossed off, I am writing the publicity / pr / social media one. The problem with this list is that it is infinite, and an infinite list is a horrible thing, a piece of work that never ends. I only like the ones that have a beginning and an end. There's nothing better than crossing something off – done, accomplished, never to do again – progress. You don't ever get that satisfaction with the infinite list, as soon as you pause to reflect, things get added to it thick and fast.

Anyway, one piece of good news is that the Kofud Larsen chairs aren't as tiny as I thought. In fact they're absolutely fine – generous even. It's ridiculous what the imagination can do – they just got smaller and smaller in there until they were no bigger than chairs for a dolls house. It's no wonder I couldn't look at them.

A text has just popped up from a friend. He says he dreamt about me and that I was 'going to Burma with a comedy-sized bag of money'. Well hopefully that's the poker paying off.

That is the news from Richmond and here are a few recipes you could try this week:

Cheese and Tomato Stuffed Courgettes

<i>2 courgettes, halved lengthways</i>	<i>1 garlic clove, chopped</i>
<i>1 mozzarella ball, chopped in cubes</i>	<i>200g cherry tomatoes, chopped</i>
<i>olive oil</i>	<i>Parmesan, grated</i>
<i>8 basil leaves, chopped</i>	<i>sea salt and black pepper</i>

Preheat the oven to 190C. Scoop the flesh out of the courgettes being careful not to break the skins and set aside the flesh. Place the skins in a baking tray with the skin side up and drizzle over a little olive oil. Put in the oven and bake for 10 minutes. Put the garlic in a bowl and add the chopped courgette flesh. Add the tomatoes and the basil and season with salt and pepper. Mix all the ingredients together well. Fill the courgette skins with the mixture and top it with Parmesan cheese. Mix the mozzarella cubes with a little olive oil and place this on top of the Parmesan. Place them in the oven and bake for 15-20 minutes until the cheese is golden brown.

Courgette Pasta Bake

<i>1 onion, peeled and sliced</i>	<i>2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped</i>
<i>2 tbsp olive oil</i>	<i>2 peppers de-seeded and diced</i>
<i>2 medium courgettes, sliced</i>	<i>few French beans or florets broccoli</i>
<i>2 tomatoes, chopped</i>	<i>1 tsp dried herbs</i>
<i>110g Cheddar cheese, grated</i>	<i>350g penne pasta</i>

Preheat oven to 180C. In a large frying pan heat up the olive oil and fry the onion until it starts to go soft. Add the garlic, pepper and tomato and herbs. Meanwhile put the pasta in a large saucepan and cover with boiling water. Simmer for 12-15 minutes. When the pepper is soft, add the courgettes and beans. Cook for a further 5 minutes. Put the pasta in a large bowl. Stir in the onion, pepper and courgette mix. Stir in ¾ of the cheese. Place in a large baking dish. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. Bake in the oven for 25 minutes. Serve with a fresh green salad and some balsamic salad dressing.

Peachy Brown Sugar Cake

<i>175g plain flour</i>	<i>2 tbsp polenta</i>
<i>1 dessert spoon baking powder</i>	<i>1/8th tsp salt</i>
<i>2 free range eggs</i>	<i>75g light brown soft sugar</i>
<i>150ml semi-skimmed milk</i>	<i>4 fresh peaches, peeled, stones removed and sliced</i>
<i>30g butter, melted</i>	<i>3 tbsp light soft brown sugar</i>

Preheat oven to 180C/Gas 4. Grease and flour a 25cm springform cake tin. Combine the flour, polenta, baking powder and salt and set aside. In a medium bowl, beat the eggs and 75g sugar. Stir in the flour mixture, mixing until just combined. Gradually beat in the milk and set aside. Pour batter into the prepared tin, arrange the peach slices on top of the batter. Drizzle with melted butter and sprinkle with remaining brown sugar. Bake in the preheated oven for 45 minutes, or until a small knife inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Allow to cool 10 minutes in the tin before removing.

Kind wishes,

Isobel