



Monday 6th February 2023

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's Sunday again up here, bright and sunny, still and mild. The snowdrops are out, so are the aconites. Even the first cluster of daffodils are in flower on the grass verge outside Norman Brown, the estate agents house. They never fail to be the first to bloom in his very own microclimate on the edge of Hurgill Road.

We have brussel sprouts again in the bags this week. I know we've had a lot recently but the season will be over soon so just making the most of them, then they will be gone until the autumn. And straight in with a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

Roasted Brussel Sprouts on the Stem

*brussel sprouts stalk
salt and pepper*

olive oil

Garlic Mayonnaise

*3½ tbsp mayonnaise
1 tsp lemon juice*

1 clove garlic, minced

Preheat the oven to 190C/ Gas 5. Wash and dry the stem. Place on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil then season all round with salt and pepper. Put in the oven and bake for 45 minutes until tender and browned on the outside, turning the stalk every 15 minutes to ensure even cooking. Mix the mayonnaise ingredients together. Cut the sprouts from the stem and dip in the mayo.

Crispy Smashed Brussel Sprouts

*brussel sprouts
thyme
2-3 tbsp maple syrup*

*rosemary
olive oil
salt*

Preheat the oven to 200C. Trim the sprouts and cook them in boiling salted water for 10-15 minutes then drain well. Put them on a baking tray and press each down gently with a fork to rough them up a bit. Evenly coat with olive oil, maple syrup, rosemary, thyme and a sprinkling of salt. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until crispy on top.

Chard and Potatoes

*250g chard
into chunks
olive oil
minced
¼ to ½ tsp red hot pepper flakes*

350g potatoes, peeled and chopped

3 or 4 cloves garlic, peeled and

Wash the chard and trim the stems, then cut the stems into 1" pieces. Fold the leaves together and cut into 1/2 " strips. Bring a large pan of salted water to a boil then add the potatoes and cook until almost tender. Add the chard stems and cook another 10 minutes, then add the leaves and cook until wilted. Drain the potatoes and chard. In a large frying pan, heat the oil over medium heat and add the garlic, cook a few minutes then all the red pepper flakes, the chard and potatoes and season well. Cook over a medium heat, stirring often, and mashing the potatoes gently as they cook, for about 8 minutes.

It's been a long time coming, but we are now in the final countdown to the Council Planning Meeting on 28th Feb where the fate of the field next to the house next to my house will be decided. There's a frenzy of activity to prevent 32 houses, some 3-storey, going on the 4-acre paddock, in this the most scenic part of Richmond adjacent to the National Park. Tree preservation orders have been approved or are pending on every scraggly, self-sown twig poking out the ground. The case against it is immense.

The main one being that I live here. My neighbours are forensic, especially those who will see their views and privacy disappear and a fortune wiped off their property value. I rented the field for about 12 years for my sheep, but in the last few years took them off and 'rewilded' it. Some weren't impressed by the thistles and nettles, and the seeds blowing into their gardens, but the butterflies, moths and pollinators love it, as do the small mammals and amphibians, bats and owls who hang out there.

The 'affordable housing' element is two blocks of three terraced houses starting at 350k, the others, up to 675k. I liked Richmond because it was very mixed demographically, but gentrification is underway. Ex-council houses are selling for £250k. Moro has appeared in the marketplace where Nat West was - a snazzy, eat any time you want, brasserie with a vegan menu. The pubs and tea rooms aren't happy. It was dinner between 12.30pm and 2.30pm, after which, cakes and scones only. An organic / eco shop has opened in Finkle Street next to Wilfred's the new'ish deli. The Saturday market is still an eye-sore: a stall selling out-of-date-biscuits; two fruit and veg stalls (not organic) ; a flower stall; a stall selling half-pieces of victoria sponge cakes and meat pies; and a cheese van. Especially embarrassing given on all the tourist blurb, a visit to the market is recommended. The farmers' market seemed to stop a couple of years ago - but all it sold was soap. But then we don't grow anything here. Some farmers' market it would be - sheep, wheat, pheasants and rabbits.

As for Liz Truss. How does she have the audacity to even show her face, let alone open her mouth. At most she should be spotted in a head scarf and dark glasses in the local Spar. The BBC and media, what are they doing allowing this deluded narcissist back into our lives. Here we were thinking she was gone, hidden away in contrition, when all she was doing was plotting her return. She's going to Japan to talk about policy on China. Isn't there some charge like 'treason' for such things. And Boris Johnson is no better, jetting round the world's leaders believing he still is one and refusing to accept his demotion back to being just a plain-old MP.

It's now Monday morning, coming with it, the news of the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria. Putin has just sent his condolences and offered help. What a screwed-up world !

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes, Isobel