



Monday 29th April 2019

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well and that you had a nice Easter. It's turned horrible and cold and wet, even inside my house. I have been doing some much-needed decorating and the house is now uninhabitable with paint fumes. All the doors and windows have been open all week, day and night, with the wind and the rain driving in. I've been absolutely freezing. But what a difference. At least it won't need doing again now until 2030. It took me hours to find the scrap of paper with the paint colour code of the extremely pale blue I use downstairs. I was so worried I'd lost it, my perfect blue, that I might now have it tattooed on my knee – CROWN EXP MATT S0510-B

We have super-duper white cabbage in the bags this week. You could shred it and braise it in stock or white wine for around 5 minutes to retain a slight bite, or for longer to bring out its natural sweetness. You could steam it for 6-8 minutes then drizzle lightly with sesame oil, melted butter or olive oil to finish. Or try one of the following recipes:

Coleslaw with Mustard and Lemon

<i>½ lemon, juice only</i>	<i>1 tbsp grainy mustard</i>
<i>100g natural yoghurt</i>	<i>3 tbsp chopped fresh herbs eg chives, parsley, coriander</i>
<i>½ white cabbage, finely shredded</i>	<i>half an onion, thinly sliced</i>
<i>2 carrots, peeled then peeled in ribbons</i>	<i>sea salt and freshly ground black pepper</i>

Put the yoghurt, lemon juice, mustard and herbs in a large bowl and whisk well to combine. Season with plenty of salt and pepper. Add the cabbage, shallots and carrots and mix very well. Allow to settle for 30 minutes before serving.

White Cabbage with Garlic and Coriander

<i>small white cabbage, about 700g</i>	<i>2 tbsp oil</i>
<i>1 large clove garlic, crushed</i>	<i>1 heaped tbsp coriander seeds</i>

Preheat the oven to 350F/ 180C/ Gas 4. Trim any tough outer leaves then cut into quarters and remove the tough stalky part. Pour the oil over the base of the casserole, add the crushed garlic and put into the oven to heat through. Meanwhile crush the coriander seeds in a pestle and mortar or in a basin with the end of a rolling pin. When the oil is hot and beginning to sizzle, add the crushed coriander seeds then the pieces of cabbage. Baste each piece with the hot oil and season with salt and pepper. Put it back in the oven for about 40 minutes or until the cabbage is tender right through when tested with a skewer.

Creamed White Cabbage

<i>white cabbage, shredded</i>	<i>50g butter</i>
<i>3 tbsp flour</i>	<i>250ml milk</i>
<i>salt and black pepper</i>	<i>freshly grated nutmeg, optional</i>

Boil a large pan of salted water. Add the cabbage and cook until just tender, a few minutes. In a large saucepan, melt the butter. Add the flour, mixing well, cook gently for 2-3 minutes stirring often. Gradually pour in the milk, mixing well with each addition. Cook gently, stirring, until the mixture thickens into a white sauce. Fold in the drained cabbage and season generously with salt and pepper, and nutmeg if desired. Cover and simmer gently for 10 minutes.

I had a knock on the door last week. It was a local farmer. Sixteen of my sheep been seen walking up Maple Road, a pleasant residential street of 70'- built houses with tasty gardens, heading up towards the 'industrial estate'. She thought most of them had gone back to their field but there were still at least 2 at large, she'd seen them in her arable field. I checked that field, they weren't there, I scoured the streets searching for them. Then there they were having selfies taken with two Japanese walkers doing the Coast to Coast who were giving them biscuits. Anyway, we got them back in their field and fixed the hole. Then last night as I was sitting shivering, there was a knock on my window, the sheep were out again, ten of them on my lane and two were in my neighbour's garden.

I say 'my neighbour', but no one has lived there for the 12 years since the elderly lady died and it was inherited by her relative in Cheshire. She was a very religious woman with an enormous lack of kindness and compassion. I remember how she used to complain when my rescued orphan lambs bleated from my garden, and when my rose petals from my fluttered onto her drive.

Existence is very strange, of course, but at least we used to have a semblance of a base line for 'normal'. And then there was fiction, and the two were quite distinct. Now, however, the new normal, the real world, it looks like fiction, looks unlikely, like the virtual world, like the world beyond our wildest imagination, like one big computer game. A 16yr old girl with pigtails, steely eyes and a mesmerising power descends from somewhere, to save the world. The political leaders fawn over her sycophantically. It is the spawning of Greta Youth, the fight-back.

The 'Tree-hugging Toddler Group' bring London to a standstill again with their nappies, bearing placards 'GET THIS BLOODY PLASTIC THING OFF ME', a giant mound of soiled, disposable nappies closes Vauxhall Bridge. **** nursery, we want the planetnow. One by one, picked off by police and carried away screaming to the creche.

I read a startling thing the other week. So much have we depleted the fertility and nutrients of the soils with crude industrial agriculture, that we only have 30-40 years of harvests left in Britain. Soil is incredible, there are estimated to be 20,000 to 50,000 species of living organisms in each gram of soil, a super-dynamic environment, the basis of our food chain. Or should I say, there were. We are destroying our ability to grow food. It takes 100 years to make one inch of top soil. Man is a blunt instrument undeserving of such a rich, beautiful and sophisticated home. It makes one's heart weep....

This week scientists and government officials from across the world meet in Paris to assess humanity's relationship with nature and discuss the first 'Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' report since 2005. Information gathered has been provided not just by scientists but also by conservationists working in different fields, on the ground, and from across the world. It will highlight the "social and ecological emergency". We will find out the detail but I think we can safely assume the gist.....that we've had it. For we know for sure that this configuration of world leaders, this agglomeration of narcissists, robots, psychopaths, comedians, KGB agents, property developers, fantasists and Angela Merkel will do absolutely nothing.

Kind wishes,
Isobel