



**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Weather here exactly the same as last week – no better, no worse - rain, breeziness, scant sunshine, 13C. Some 30C under the temperature many of you have been flying into on the Continent for your summer holidays. I'm not sure we will ever be able to shear the sheep – not that they're bothered.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

**Courgette Burgers**

<i>2 medium courgettes, grated</i>	<i>small onion, finely chopped</i>
<i>2 tsp fresh root ginger grated</i>	<i>2 green chillies, finely chopped</i>
<i>wholegrain mustard</i>	<i>2 Hen Nation eggs, beaten</i>
<i>100g fresh breadcrumbs</i>	<i>4 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped</i>
<i>toasted buns, lettuce and tomato, to serve</i>	

*Squeeze out as much liquid as you can from the grated courgettes. Put the courgette into a bowl with the chopped onion, root ginger, chilli, mustard, beaten eggs, breadcrumbs and chopped coriander. Mix well, season with salt and pepper and shape into 4 flat patties. Heat some vegetable oil in a frying pan and fry the patties for 5-8 minutes turning once, until crisp and golden. Serve in toasted buns with lettuce and tomato and perhaps some mayo or yoghurt.*

**Fusilli with Courgettes**

<i>400g fusilli</i>	<i>2 tbsp olive oil</i>
<i>1 clove garlic, crushed</i>	<i>3 courgettes, cut in rounds</i>
<i>½ tsp dried chilli flakes</i>	<i>250g ricotta</i>
<i>2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped</i>	<i>2 tbsp flat leaf parsley, chopped</i>
<i>grated rind of 1 lemon</i>	<i>olive oil</i>

*Cook the pasta in a large saucepan of boiling salted water according to packet instructions to al dente. While the pasta is cooking, heat the oil over a moderate heat in a large saucepan and add the garlic and courgettes. Cook until the courgettes are beginning to brown, about 5-6 minutes. Stir in the chilli and ricotta and cook, stirring until warmed through. Drain the pasta, reserving half a cup of water, and return to the pan. Add the courgette mixture and mix through. If it's a little dry for your taste, add the reserved water. Sprinkle with the herbs, lemon rind and drizzle with some olive oil to serve.*

When it got to the point that my dad's rheumatoid arthritis and other age-related illnesses finally beat him and he couldn't get up the stairs at our family home, it was sold and he bought a house here in Richmond where my sister looked after him. He left it until the last minute as he couldn't bear to move. I came up from London and singlehandedly cleared the family home, boxed everything up. Most of it was never unpacked again. My dad died 6 months later, 6 months after I moved to live closer to him. Then we had to deal with all the stuff. My brother would take nothing, my sister would have virtually nothing, so I ended up with the whole lot. Unable to get rid of anything I filled my roof and put the rest into storage. I rented space in a large barn and there it sat for years, untouched.

About 6 months ago I got a call from the barn owner saying he needed the barn back and could I move it.

I went up there to find the rats had been living in the boxes for all those years. It was utterly revolting – the boxes and everything in them were full of rat excrement. The china and delicate things had been wrapped in newspaper, now yellow from rat urine, and stuck like glue to everything. All the ephemera from our family life, from the functional things – the teasmade, the Carmen rollers, the metal detector, tools, cooking implements – through to the treasured things – the teddy bears, books, diaries, mementoes, things passed down – all in this cess pit. I couldn't even touch anything. I got a skip and I had to throw virtually everything away. It was horrendous. There were about 8 boxes which were slightly less contaminated so I brought these home. I had nowhere to put them as I couldn't bring them in the house and I had no garage and no shed. I put them down the side of my house, out of sight, where I could then slowly go through them. The next day I emptied a couple of boxes of china into a plastic dustbin and then filled the bin with boiling water with bleach in. And then I left it there, and 6 months later it is still there next to the other boxes, all exposed to the elements. It became a sort of shrine, there down the side of my house. The books are starting to biodegrade and have become home to woodlice and earthworms – well so I discovered yesterday when I was determined to finally deal with it. I'm very sentimental. It was already harrowing having had to skip the bulk of it, of their lives. I couldn't chuck anything else into a bin.

What I couldn't salvage I decided I would bury. I got a strong man to come and dig me a massive hole under the conifer trees. Yesterday I started chucking things into it – anything which resonated – rusty potato peeler, dad's waterlogged toolbox, I scraped the books off the path with a spade and put them in. I started on a box which had had some protection as it was under a tree. I started emptying that into the hole – the boxes of IQ tests, I remember them well. Then I hit a lot of papers in my dad's handwriting – lecture notes, presumably – I started to feed them into the hole. As I was doing so I saw 'Chapter One'. I realised I had a massive bulk of chapters, an entire book. It didn't have a title, I read a few lines, but it looked to do with learning, personality and intelligence. Then there was what looked to be thousands of test results. What had he been up to ? I put it all in plastic bags and brought it into the house. And that is as far as I have got. But at least I have made a start !

Kind wishes and I hope you have a good week,

Isobel