



Monday 22nd February 2021

Dear Customer,

I don't know what sort of snow that was, but as it thawed, it took half my house with it. The render has been dropping off in big chunks. At least it has thawed though, it's suddenly milder - grey and rainy now but with a spell of dry weather forecast and perhaps a glimpse of the sun. The fortnightly green bin collections which stop in October, start again on Friday heralding spring. I even saw two daffodils in flower on the grass verge outside Norman Brown the estate agent's house. He lives on a road which runs parallel to mine, at the back. This is the so-called 'West End' of Richmond, the sunny side. While all the houses have adequate gardens, Norman Brown's is a massive 3-acres. When you're an estate agent, you can take your pick. Across the top of his garden he has planted a wall of giant conifers which give him privacy but completely block the otherwise beautiful views of all the houses behind him.

When I moved up here I viewed about 100 properties in the area. Richmondshire was my oyster. Such is the excellent exchange rate when you sell up in London and head North. Nothing felt right so I put notes through the doors of the houses in two streets I liked the most and this one came up. It was built by some jewellers from York in 1926. They sold it in 1961 to the lady I bought it from, so just two previous owners. I'm still hopeful of finding the bag of rubies and emeralds under the floorboards. The problem when you love your house, you've made it your home, is that it traps you. You're not going anywhere because you've already arrived. Your own voluntary lockdown which state lockdown has brought into sharp focus. Oh to pack ones bags and be off.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

Horseradish Celeriac Mash

1 celeriac	2 cloves garlic, peeled
650g potatoes	100ml milk
2 tbsp horseradish sauce	2 fresh bay leaves
knob of butter or margarine	parsley, chopped

Peel the celeriac with a sharp knife and cut into medium-sized cubes. Place it in a pan with the garlic and cover with cold water. Peel the potatoes and cut into the same-sized cubes and place in a separate pan with cold water. Bring both to the boil and simmer for 15–20 minutes until tender. Heat the milk in a small pan until just simmering, stir in the horseradish and bay leaves and remove from the heat. Drain the potatoes, garlic and celeriac, return to a single pan and mash together until smooth. Add the warm milk, butter and seasoning and beat until smooth. Serve scattered with chopped parsley.

Carrot and Coconut Soup

1 tbsp vegetable oil	30g fresh root ginger, grated
2 red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped	500g carrots, peeled and chopped
fresh coriander, leaves picked, stalks finely chopped	500ml fresh vegetable stock
400g can coconut milk	lime or lemon, juice

Heat the oil in a pan and add the ginger, and half the chillies and soften over a low heat for 5 minutes. Add the carrots and coriander stalks and cook for a couple of minutes, then add the stock and 200ml water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 15 minutes until the carrots are tender. Add the coconut milk and simmer for a further 5 minutes. Blend until smooth and season. Put back onto the heat, warm through and season. Take off the heat and stir through soe lime or lemon juice to taste juice. Scatter with coriander leaves and the rest of the chillies to serve.

Potato and Carrot Latke

500g potatoes, peeled and coarsely grated

1 onion, coarsely grated

2 Hen Nation eggs, beaten

flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped

200g carrots, coarsely grated

1 tsp caraway seeds

2 tbsp butter or margarine melted

Preheat the oven to 180°C / Gas 4. Put the grated potato, carrot and onion into a clean, dry tea towel and squeeze out as much liquid out as possible, then tip into a large bowl. Mix in the caraway seeds and eggs then season generously. Grease a 20cm loose-bottomed cake tin and tip in the grated mixture. Press to level it out, then bake for 40 minutes. Remove from the oven and pour over the melted butter or margarine. Return to the oven for 15 minutes or until golden. Remove from the tin, sprinkle over the parsley and serve cut into wedges.

I just want to introduce you to Roslyn Byfield who is a longstanding customer and has been writing a blog called Therapists in Lockdown.

“I started the blog in April 2020 (my blogging debut!) because, as a therapist, I thought it would be important to track over time the sociopolitical aspects of the pandemic and how (reflecting psychoanalytic theory) authority figures such as employers and politicians function as proxies for our earliest authority figures (ie parents or other caregivers). It was shown by psychoanalysts like Donald Winnicott that if our needs are not met by these figures, especially our psychological needs, this has a lasting deleterious effect on our mental health. My point is that if we are not psychologically 'held' by our political leaders during times of crisis like Covid, if we find we can't trust them (proven many times over this last year), this will contribute significantly to public anxiety. This has indeed proved the case, with mental health regarded as the second 'pandemic' society is suffering from, with only reduced services to cope with it.”

I completely get that. We have not been 'held', we have been strapped to bucking broncos and given the ride of our lives. The link to Roslyn's blog if you want to check it out is www.therapistinlockdown.co.uk

I hope you have a good week !

Kind wishes,

Isobel