



Monday 18th January 2016

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well and you've had a nice weekend. I feel sure you've been out building snowmen. As a nice surprise there is another of Rosemary Wass' January King cabbages in the bag this week to help boost your immunity now winter has arrived. Here are some quick and tasty recipes you could try:

Stir-Fried January King Cabbage with Leeks and Caraway

600g January King cabbage	2 tbsp olive oil
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped	1 tbsp caraway seeds
2 leeks, trimmed and shredded	3 tbsp crème fraiche (optional)

Separate the cabbage leaves and remove any tough stalks. Roll up the leaves and shred finely. Heat the olive oil in a wok or large frying pan and add the garlic and caraway seeds. Cook for about 30 seconds, without letting the garlic brown. Add the cabbage and leeks to the pan and stir-fry for 6-7 minutes, adding a splash of water if the cabbage starts to catch. When the cabbage is tender, remove from the heat and stir in the crème fraiche. Season to taste.

Cabbage, Chilli and Cheese Soup

250g savoy cabbage, chopped	1 medium potato, diced
1 red chilli, sliced	50g basmati rice, cooked
150ml vegetable stock	60g mature cheddar, cubed
salt and pepper	

Put the cabbage, potato, chilli and stock in a large pan. Season with salt and pepper then simmer for about 15-20 minutes, until the potato is cooked. Add the cheese and blend, then add the rice and heat through.

Potato, Tomato and Onion Casserole

2 tbsp olive oil	2 large potatoes, peeled and cut into thin slices
2 onions, peeled and sliced	400g plum tomatoes, thinly sliced
2 tbsp dried oregano	salt to taste
½ glass white wine	handful cheese, optional

Preheat the oven to 375F. Spread the olive oil in a 9" x 13" casserole dish. Starting with the potatoes, make alternate layers of potatoes, onions and tomatoes. Sprinkle each layer with cheese, oregano and salt. Carefully pour the wine into the dish at one edge. Cover the dish with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover the dish and continue baking until the top is browned.

It was a sad week last week with the death of David Bowie. I think our own lives flashed before our eyes. The political commentators seemed the worst affected, trying to hold it together. Huw Edwards was in tears, they were just devastated: Mark Mardell ".....the lifeblood of his work has pumped through the veins of my own life" Andrew Neil..."No !!!!!"

Jon Snow ..."you may wonder why a straight old newsman gets churned up over a rock singer...but you see Bowie wasn't just a rock singer....he was the greatest rock star of our lives. Can you hear me Major Bowie – irreplaceable"

Robert Peston,"He defined my teenage years and has been the soundtrack of my life....the most important Briton of our age"

He'd rocked their world. I imagined a young Edwards, scarf round his neck, pupils dilated, sitting in a huddle playing Space Oddity with a young Peston on the dancefloor.

Words fail me when it comes to Bowie. I just played his songs and cried over his unique genius, and pondered how the world came to be so in love with such a beautiful, odd creature. It was easy wasn't it.

Determined to carry through with my New Year's resolutions and to put the bad start to the year behind me, I took the bold step of emailing a book publisher. You see, having written, and now understanding the length of a chapter, being approximately 4-6 newsletters, I'm fairly confident I can probably write a book. I had an encouraging initial response and was asked to send a CV, an extended biography and a one-pager. That seemed very straightforward. "Oh yes, I'll get that to you by the end of the week".

Right, I'll start with the biography. I spent * hours on the internet trying to find what an extended biography looked like. I could find no reference whatsoever to one, just a normal one which should be 250-500 words and written in the third person. But mine had to be extended – but by how much. I was on my own. I could find a lot of references to authors not being able to cope with writing their biographies and I soon realised why. It is not only difficult, it is impossible. I started off in the third person but it sounded stultified and insincere, so I found a new TV channel showing back to back property programmes - A Place in the Sun, Dream Homes by the Sea and Escape to the Country – I'd never come across it before, I was delighted.

Eventually I started writing but still road-blocked by how to sum up my life, I started on the book instead. Did I have the right voice, could I do it. I wrote a few pages – yep it was ok. By now it had been 10 days. They'll have no confidence I can meet deadlines. I had another day of property programmes then I finally wrote the biography. I flicked through their other authors – George Orwell, DH Lawrence, Kingsley Amis, people like that !

Then for the CV, I was back on the internet for another 8 hours looking for clue. I've never written one before. I've seen plenty, they generally end with the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and some volunteer work. I downloaded a template, started filling it out before ditching it - more suitable for a clerical job. I dug out the last 15 years of my diaries to find out what I'd done with my life and wrote one free-hand. I then sent the biography to my harshest critic - my brother. He liked it. Thank God. Mind, he's always thought my music and my writing were ok, it's just my businesses which stink. Just the synopsis now.

Please bear with me,

Kind regards,

Isobel