

Community Pantry Day

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES COMMUNITY PANTRY

The clock is ticking. "He's running late today,"
"Wonder what we'll get?" "How much space do we have in the freezer?"
Clear the shelves, make room. The Fareshare delivery is on its way.

Every Tuesday the van arrives without fail, but we never know what's inside.
A crate of fresh fruit and veg – win! A dozen fresh chickens – clear out the fridge.
Or perhaps a box full of fruit loaves or mint-flavour sugar syrup?

Our Community Food Co-ordinator Rachael checks everything over, calculating what she can make in our kitchen with some bruised apples (a crumble), a crate of milk (macaroni cheese of course!) or beef mince (individual cottage pies). Our hardworking team of volunteers – who all hate waste – ferry everything out from the van into the pantry ready to restock the shelves, fridge and freezer. Unpackage the fruit and veg and make them into packs, unbox the ready meals, check the use-by dates (next month, or sometimes next year – result!), put them on the correct shelf and get ready for Community Pantry Day on Wednesday.

It takes the best part of a day and is hard, physical work. But no one complains (except when we have to throw out fresh food that's past its use-by date). Everyone at Active Communities, staff and volunteers, know how vital the Community Pantry is becoming to the people of Johnstone and beyond.

Active Communities has always been a charity which has responded to the needs of the community around us. When people wanted to run together, we created Jogging Buddies.
Singing together? Come along to Singing Buddies.

But what about food poverty and people struggling to pay their bills? Creating Station Seven, our state-of-the-art community hub in the former Johnstone Police Station, gave us the perfect opportunity to include a large kitchen and a Community Pantry which had the feel and look of farm shop and would make people feel they are shopping without the stigma at times experienced at a foodbank.

Tackling food insecurity with dignity is the foundation of our Community Pantry and we are so proud of the success it's become since it opened just under a year ago, and the community which has grown around it.

Active
Communities



RENFREWSHIRE TABLE FOOD ZINE



AN INTRODUCTION TO RENFREWSHIRE TABLE...

Hello and welcome to Renfrewshire Table, a publication that celebrates the vibrant food and community scene in our region. We are thrilled to showcase the work of Renfrewshire-based writers, foodies, organisations and their communities, and to share with you their inspiring stories and a mouth-watering recipe.

As you flip through these pages, you'll discover a melting pot of voices and perspectives, from the writers and artists exploring themes and personal associations of food, to the amazing groups who work to create more community inclusion and a more sustainable and accessible food system in their area.

At the heart of this project and publication is the belief that food has the power to bring people together and to create a sense of place and belonging.

We hope that Renfrewshire Table will inspire you to explore new culinary delights, familiar comforts and to connect with the contributors. We would also like to extend our thanks to artist Rebecca Johnstone, whose illustrations and design have brought these stories to life with such vividness and charm.

Renfrewshire Table is brought to you by OneRen with support and funding from the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

Happy reading,

Lorna Spada - Visual Arts Project Producer at OneRen



CONTRIBUTING ORGANISATIONS AND WRITERS:

Kairos+

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KairosRenfrewshire>
Instagram and Twitter: @kairos_women
www.kairoswomen.org

Ian McKenzie

STAR Project

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/STARProjectPaisley>
Twitter: @STARprojPaisley
star-project.org.uk

Laurie Donaldson
Twitter: @LaurieDD

Tawnya Selene Renelle

Twitter: @trenellepoetry, @beyondformwrite
Instagram: @tawnyarenelle, @beyondformcreativewriting
<https://www.beyondformcreativewriting.com/>

Daniel Brady Fernie

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_S6qTccltUNI699MVHdlHg



Asphalt of Innocence by Tawnya Renelle

Processed foods whether I want them to or not offer me a deeply engrained sense of comfort and familiarity.

Food banks in America during the 80s and early 90s were devoid of fresh produce and name brands were scarce and rare. Government issued cheese, butter, and powdered milk came in shiny silver bags. Dented cans and smashed boxes of off brand foods were something to be grateful for.

This early exposure to foods, this sense of gratitude and being fed has not escaped me as an adult and on some of my harder days I find I turn to these childhood foodbank goods for some kind of comfort. A kind of guilty pleasure, a cure for homesickness, something tucked deep in a cupboard I wouldn't want my eco-friendly vegan planet saving friends to know I have.

When I had to use a foodbank in my early 20s in Bellingham, Washington and they offered me fresh produce I cried. In part because I was so shocked, grateful, and frustrated at what had been my childhood.

I have the strongest sensation of memories connected to food stamps. Monopoly style money made of paper and brightly coloured that arrived monthly in the mail. My mother would give me \$5 and I would walk over 30 minutes to a small shop called Tom Thumb to buy candy. To buy candy just like any other kid, though I wasn't like the other kids because the bright piece of coloured paper money I used to buy my candy told everyone in the shop I was different. There was no mistaking my innocent purchase meant I was poor. And if I was poor, and also because I was a fat child, why was I buying candy.

I have strong memories of the culture of community that existed around poverty during those times. Of the community that formed around the food banks in parking lots. Flashes of single mothers in line at the church come to me and I see myself running around with a group of wild and feral children. Mothers in line smoking and talking, complaining and connecting. Children who didn't know any different other than coming to this place to get food.

Tonight, I succumbed to the food bank comforts of childhood or the closest equivalent I can get in Scotland. Cheesy Mac, not Mac and Cheese, smoked sausage not hot dogs, at least the Heinz ketchup is the same. It is like my inner child has crawled out from the depths of me with her own agenda of acute emotion and physical pain to bring this meal as a reminder, as a signifier, to offer some kind of comfort that was all she could find. As an adult I feel liberated from the shackles of a food bank childhood, free and privileged enough to afford healthy organic food of my choosing at all times. This meal though, it circles back like a ghost, an inescapable childhood memory in the form of food. Tonight, I try to eat it without shame or guilt. I try to feed the inner child and eat slowly, savouring and relishing in each bite. Each bite is a testament to who I was and who I am. I swallow each bite of processed and powdered cheese with the mystery meat of smoked sausage and the sauce of tomato and think, she will not be ignored and sometimes I have to feed her.



The Unleavened Day

by Laurie Donaldson

The unleavened day started, again, by not really wanting to get out of a warm bed in mid-winter. Rising, grudgingly, already thinking about returning to its embrace later, I looked to the reproach of another day, chasing comfort from mind.

But this biting cold morning, flecked with keen sleet, was no ordinary one. It brought longed connection, the breaking of bread, awakening of senses, maybe a needed warmth from that nostalgic smell of sharing between erstwhile confidantes and time to overwrite old differences.

We came together for the making of our own bread looking at each other obliquely, callow and ignorant but willing though our hands felt like clay. And we worked the dough as if we didn't know ourselves, stupidly faltering and uncertain, unlike any vapid TV chef, to prove ourselves, to show others.

When the loaf was eventually done, we tear at it roughly with floured hands into bits, heartfelt crumbs spilling from its frayed edges. We could have been croney politicians round this old baking table, missing the point, gnawing over troubles yet to resolve.

And we shared the savour of ourselves, made from elemental toil, better than any bread had ever tasted and forgot for the moment our distrust, old fractures, to claim this, what has risen towards us, something simple but easily forgotten. What does friendship mean if it does not mean this?

KENYAN LEMON MANDAZI

15 minutes



3-4 servings

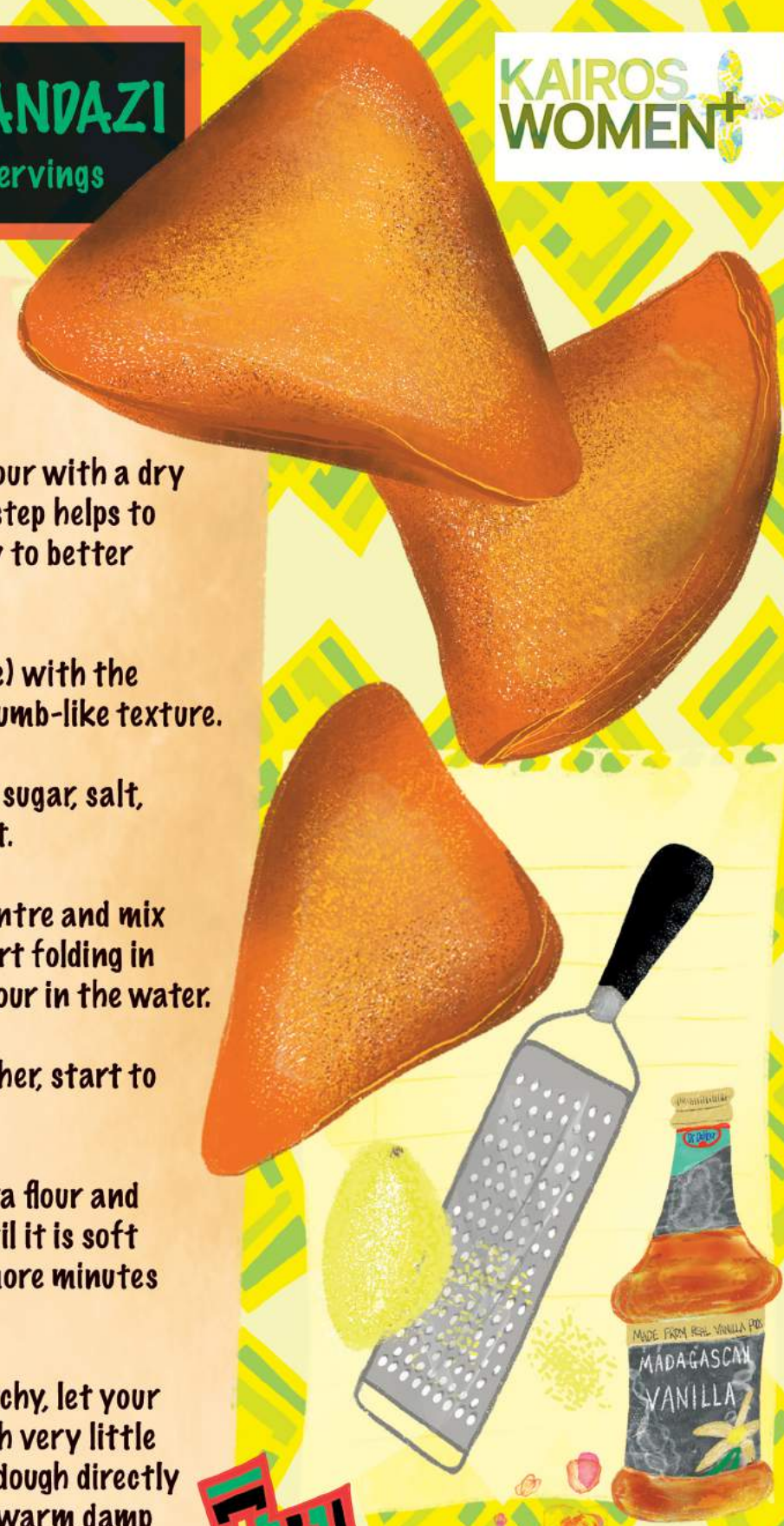
KAIROS WOMEN

DIRECTIONS:

1. Sift the flour into a bowl or beat the flour with a dry fork or whisk to remove any lumps (this step helps to aerate the flour making it light and fluffy to better absorb the ingredients).
2. Combine the butter (room temperature) with the flour and mix together to form a breadcrumb-like texture.
3. Create a well in the centre and add the sugar, salt, vanilla essence and the grated lemon zest.
4. Gently add some warm water in the centre and mix with a fork as you dissolve the sugar. Start folding in the flour from the centre as you gently pour in the water.
5. Once the dough has loosely come together, start to knead it with your hands.
6. On a clean surface, sprinkle some extra flour and start to work your dough kneading it until it is soft and elastic... this will take about 10 or more minutes of serious kneading.
7. Once your dough is soft and semi-stretchy, let your dough rest. Place it in a bowl greased with very little oil so your dough doesn't stick. Cover the dough directly with clingfilm and cover the bowl with a warm damp cloth. Rest it for about 10 minutes.
8. Divide the dough into 4 balls. This depends on the size of the mandazis you want. Less division if you want large mandazis.
9. Cover the other divided sections and start rolling out of one the balls into whatever shape you fancy.
10. Deep fry in hot oil until golden brown on all sides.
11. Drain and serve warm sprinkled with some icing sugar.

NOTES:

- * For all-purpose flour use 1 cup to 1 tsp of baking powder
- * Cut your dough into a triangular shape by rolling the dough into a circle, cut in half lengthwise, then across to make 4 quarters.



SOUP OF THE DAY by Dan Brady

Prunella knew how to count when she needed to, so whilst admiring Carol's gift on Countdown, she never once craved her numerical jiggery-pokkery, she did however, wish she owned some of Carol's gorgeous outfits, and she did sometimes think that it would be nice if she could have her hair (and make-up) done the way Carol sometimes had hers done, and if maybe she had one? Or say two pairs of Carol's fabby shoes that she would allow herself a little smile. But other than these tiny, but very desirable goodies, Prunella didn't particularly like Carol, too much exposure, everywhere you looked she seemed to be grinning back at you.

Only the other day when Prunella was making the tea she opened a tin of spaghetti hoops, she could have sworn that when the saucy circles had settled into the bottom of the pot, a perfect image of Carol's face beamed up at her, Prunella quickly put the pot on the highest gas mark available (no.9) to free herself from that mathematical puzzle that stared up at her. No, Prunella lay in bed, her husband Alcedo snoring like a weasel with a giraffe's tongue next to her and thought about the competition. She smiled and sighed, she clenched her fist and raised it above her head like a winning boxer.

"This time, this time it's mine!" she whispered before bringing down her fist and giving Alcedo a straight right to the back of his head, "AHHH...!" cried Alcedo rubbing the back of his head, licking his lips with his giant giraffe's tongue, scratching his posterior then shouting out in his slumbering state, "Don't order the swordfish!" Prunella rolled onto her side and smiled, "This time" she whispered and she too closed her eyes and began to snore.

Prunella owned a take-away shop 'Bake it or Sleeve It' making sandwiches, soups etc, she also took in small sewing and needle-work alterations. Every year Prunella would enter 'The Soup of The Day Competition' run by The Edinburgh Evening News, a competition to find the best tasting soup made in Edinburgh's take-away shops, the winner not only getting a financial reward, but, and this was what Prunella really wanted, a chance to have the big shiny silver cup displayed in her window for the next year.

Prunella's special soup was, 'Lentil and Orange Rind Treat'. This was a recipe passed down from her mother, Certhia, who in turn had had it also passed down from her mother, Sylvia, who in turn had, well anyway, let's just say it was an old family favourite.

Prunella's children, Fringilla and Corvus were both big fans of the soup and they would often go off to school on a lovely hot bowl of it. Prunella worked hard in her shop, she put her heart into every slice of buttered bread and her soul into every tray of carrot cake she made. But Prunella had a problem, every year she entered the competition, and this would be her fourteenth attempt to win the prize, she had been pipped at the post by Lanius, who owned 'Rock'n'Rolls', a little sandwich bar that also sold geological samples or bits of stone as you or I would call them, (someone had once taken a cheese sandwich, taken a bite from it and carefully placed it on a little stand in the display cabinet, between some Amethyst dated 300 B.C and a slice of Jade dated 500 B.C and attached a sign saying, Sannie, 200 B.C.

Lanius made the famous 'Chicken X'.

His soup was much lauded, his shop was famous and Lanius was a wealthy man and the shiny silver trophy had its own special place in his shop window. Sometimes at night Prunella would walk by his shop and stand and gaze at the trophy. She was a happy woman and she was content with her lot, she was happy with her size, not too big, not too small, she was pretty and although she knew that Alcedo had his finger in quite a few pies, she no longer worried herself about the games he played, she had two beautiful children and a lovely house with a front and back garden, but Prunella's mouth would slowly open and her tongue would slip forward over her bottom teeth and she would produce buckets of saliva as she drooled over the cup, often having to wipe her chin with a towel to hide her eagerness to possess the silver ornament.



star project

Growing up we had homemade dinners, fresh ingredients, always used from mince and tatties and steak pies to stews, chicken roasts too.

The smell from the kitchen made your mouth water, Looking forward to seeing what's going on your plate.

If you didn't eat it all, you got no pudding, And had it for your breakfast - No waste allowed.

Now with our own families, We just stick dinner in the oven and hope for the best. Brown, it's ready, black, it's burnt, that will do.

More processed foods available, Less fresh ingredients bought, We still have a pudding even finished or not.

Slow cookers now on the go, Fresh ingredients bought we didn't know, It's easy to try, no need to fry, Put it all in as one, Wait a few hours and your dinner is done.

By Claire Hamilton



New discoveries in food stop ignorance and simplistic boredom in the kitchen, community and family. It shares old recipes with otherwise new people that can become new favourites. By Tony Carr

THE FAMILY DINNER by Mai Bergman

Sitting around the dinner table, All of the family waiting with anticipation,

For the nice dinner, That mum has been cooking, The eyes light up,

It's the family favourite: "Burning Love"

What some mashed potatoes, some fried bacon and onions can't do, While today's experiences are being discussed, Among the family members around the table.

EAT MORE

Fruit and veg
Oranges
Organic foods
Drink plenty water

Vegetables
Eggplant
Greens
Energy
Tomatoes
Asparagus
Beetroot
Lentils
Eggs
Salads

By Annemarie Thompson



COWBOYS BY IAN MCKENZIE

It's grey outside.
The rain noiselessly runs down the window.
The electric fire wheezes in the quiet.
His voice is loud and desperate.
'Anybody else want to try their luck?'
My finger is moist with sweat. It's been crooked around
the trigger for so long, the cardboard is starting to wilt.

I'm unlikely to hit Doc Holliday.
My gun curves to the left. I should never have made it so small and detailed.
It always looks good when first drawn.
Barrel, trigger, guard, hammer, and cylinder with six fateful chambers.
Jack had warned me this would happen when he cut it out of the cardboard the night before.
We're back-to-back.
Me facing the action, Jack facing the other way, standing at the electric cooker.

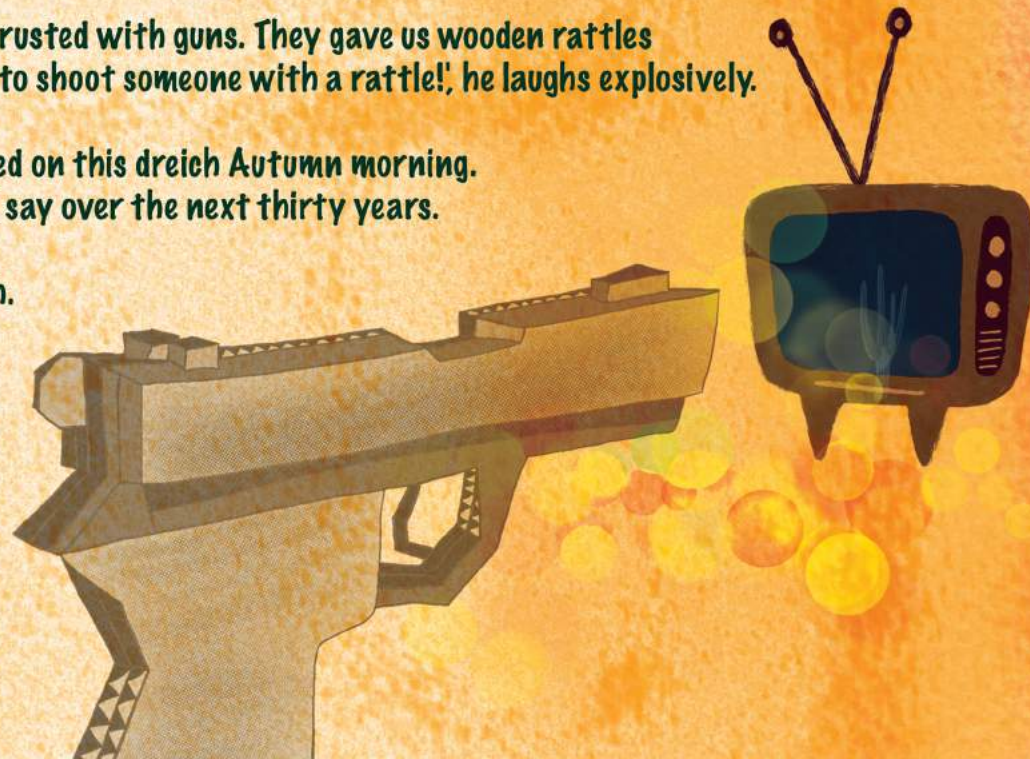
It's quiet.
The good honest townfolks (mum and gran) have fled to safety, (gone to the shops on
Saturday morning), and left us to face the music.
After an age, Jack comes back from the kitchen.
He puts up a wooden folding table and thumps two mugs down with teaspoons in them.
A nearly hardboiled egg in a cup, boiled for six minutes then shelled.
Then the egg is put in a mug and cut up with a hefty dollop of salted butter.
I'm glad he made this.

My weekly diet of Saturday afternoon cowboy films suggests cowboys only ate campfire
beans cooked by a man with a massive white beard or throat-burning whisky served as
an entree for an inevitable fist fight in a Western saloon bar.

Jack sits next to me on the small couch opposite the TV, the talk monosyllabic, if that.
I jump when Jack laughs as Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas set their jaws and march stoically
into the OK Corral, fists bunched, wooden window shutters pulled shut as the pair advance in grim silence.

Teaspoons scraping the bottom of the mugs looking for the last warm buttery shards of an egg are the
only sound to be heard. Jack's hand closes around the grip of an imaginary revolver, pointed at the screen.
We are ready to draw.
'In the RAF at Lossiemouth, we weren't trusted with guns. They gave us wooden rattles
during National service. Imagine trying to shoot someone with a rattle!', he laughs explosively.

I smile. We are full. Our stomachs warmed on this dreich Autumn morning.
'I'm all right, I had chopped egg in a cup', I say over the next thirty years.
'Nursery food', is always the response.
Good enough for partial cowboys, though.



Lanius had won the cup since its introduction, thirteen years ago, but Lanius was a cheat.

The man who made the final choice on who would receive the cup was Robin Rubecula, a man who liked his food
and it showed in his rather rotund appearance, but a man who, like most people liked his food even more if they
got it for free, and he did, every year round about competition time Lanius would send Robin Rubecula
a huge food parcel packed with all sorts of tasty delights for him to sink his big fat teeth into, Chicken X,
short-bread, blancmange, fudge, cream cakes, buns and lots more sweet fancies thus assuring that Lanius
would retain the cup.

Lanius felt confident that the prize was in the bag this year.

Unfortunately for Lanius, but even more unfortunate for Robin Rubecula, all that rich and very fattening
food that he had been receiving as a little sweetener, turned out to be just a little too sweet, resulting in
Robin Rubecula collapsing and dying whilst trying to run and catch a No.32 bus which would have taken him
down to the Ocean Terminal so that he could return a copy of Carol Vordermans latest keep fit/garden/house
makeover/antiques from under your sink d.v.d.

A new judge was called in, Larus Canus, a local fishmonger with over sixty years experience of all things
briney. Lanius sent Larus Canus a big hamper a week before the competition day, but Larus Canus
returned it with a note thanking him but thought it would be inappropriate for the judge to accept such a gift.

Lanius read the note, slowly walked over to the display cabinet and carefully selected a good hand sized piece
of 300B.C Chalcedony (agate: semi-pellucid gem) and proceeded to throw it through the shop window.
The day of the competition arrived, Prunella was nervous, Alcedo tried to comfort his wife,

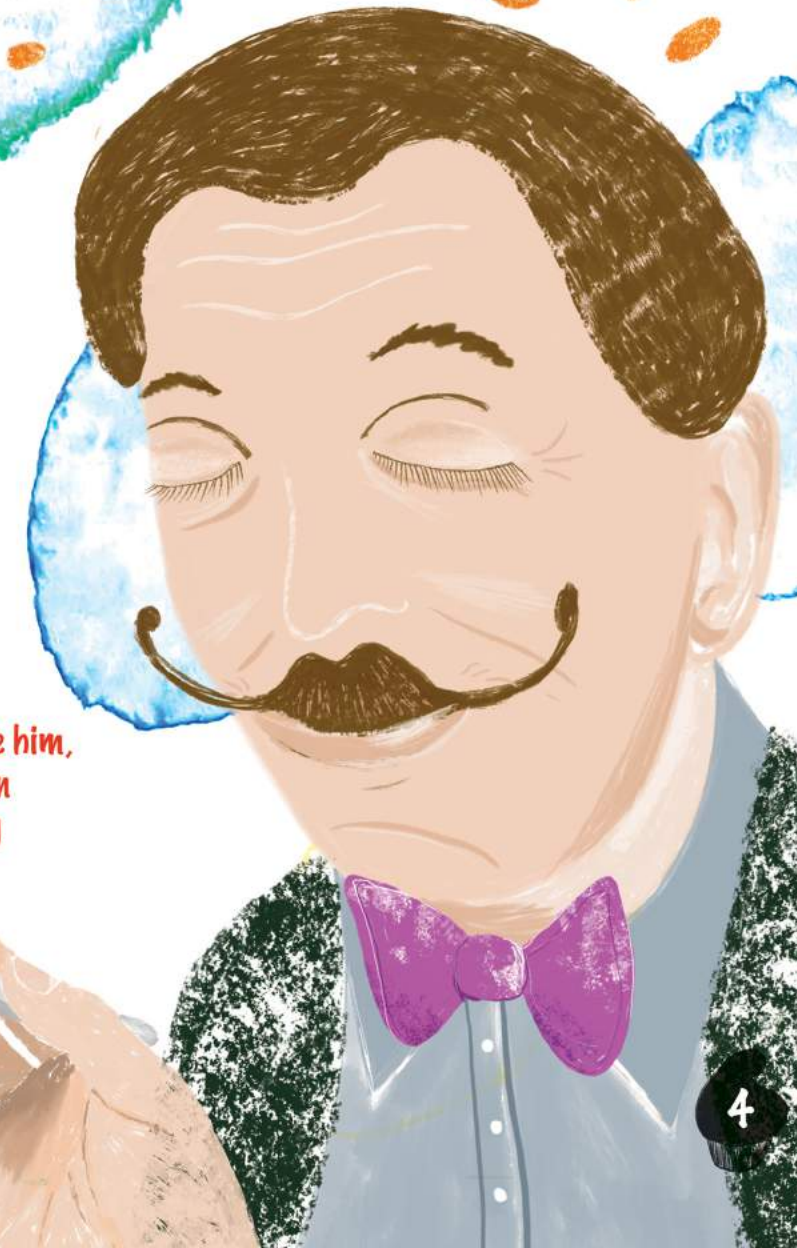
"Relax Pru, it's your year, the cup must be yours
this year, do we have any Paracetamol?
I have a splitting headache!"

Larus Canus had tasted all the soups, he had
thinned all the entries down to the last two,
Prunellas Lentil and Orange Rind Treat and
Lanius's Chicken X. The Usher Hall audience
was hushed,

Larus slipped the spoon into Prunellas offering, he
raised it to his lips, sniffed, opened his mouth and let
it run onto his tongue, he rolled the soup around in his
mouth, slurping and licking and sucking his teeth
before swallowing with closed eyes.

He repeated this with Chicken X. Lanius looked over
at Prunella, his top lip curled up and he snarled. Larus
Canus looked down at the two bowls on the table before him,
he looked out at the silent crowd, shielding his eyes from
the glare of the spotlights, he reached down and picking
up a bowl, he held it above
his head like a priest
saying mass and shouted,

"By God it's got to be the
Lentil and Orange Rind Treat!"



CAKE IN THE COMMUNITY by Meena Patel

There's something I look forward to every year, each September I stock up on ingredients and I bake cakes for one whole week.... Layers of light fluffy sponges filled with home made jams and silky smooth buttercream, trays of rich squidgy chocolate brownies and millionaires shortbread, chewy coconut macaroons, colourfully iced cupcakes, cookies and biscuits of all shapes and sizes, comforting tea breads and sticky buns, whatever I fancy.

I play just a small part, along with others, to deliver something that we all think is very special. We are a few friends, all busy mums, and each of us has a role to play: baking, promoting, organising, negotiating, and juggling to endeavour to pull off the best coffee morning in this small corner of Paisley.

The morning arrives and the car is stacked up to the roof with tubs, trays and crates full of my home-made treats as well as plates, knives, towels, tablecloths and two children who have been dragged out of bed, blurry eyed to help. They will be rewarded later with cookies and cupcakes. The contents of the car rattle and clank loudly as we slowly drive the short distance to the venue.

The Community Centre has been draped in colourful bunting and is a welcome site as the car turns into the car park. We unload and fortunately there are no cake casualties to worry about this time. The janitor has been in early and laid out the tables in long rows running the length of the hall, we all busy ourselves setting up: cups are placed on saucers, crafts and cupcake decorations are laid out to keep the children busy, flowers and collection boxes are strategically placed on tables.

Friends pop in with more donations of cakes and bakes, it takes ages to cut and plate them all. As the last cake is cut and awkwardly slid onto the waiting plate we hear the sound of footsteps in the corridor outside, the doors are open to our first wide eyed visitors. Here we go!

There's always a bit of a queue at the cake table, you need to take your time to deliberate and search out your favourites, no one minds, there's plenty of chatter and lots of laughter. Plates are piled high and bags are filled to take home to give to neighbours that couldn't make it.

The Tombola always draws a crowd, it gets bigger every year and I wonder how many tickets have been folded this year? Guests huddle around the table and tickets are opened expectantly, hopefully today will be their lucky morning.

The kids are kept busy with the activities in the hall or wander out into the garden to play with the toys the playgroup has kindly lent us. "It's so nice to be able to sit down for a cuppa without being interrupted" I hear as I pass a table of young mums from the nursery. The tables fill up quickly, I recognise so many faces, friends and neighbours, boys finished with football training, children from the school and nursery. Our community loves their cakes, during covid when we weren't allowed to sit with each other and have a coffee morning we still baked and people came and collected boxes of cakes or they were delivered to doorsteps with a socially distanced wave and hello.

The man from the paper comes and takes a few photos of us all in our pinnies for the Paisley Express, the mums quickly clean the chocolate from the kids faces and we all smile broadly.

The cakes steadily disappear, there's not a lot left by 12pm. The last lemon and coconut slice has been fought for. Any leftovers will be taken into workplaces for a few more pennies or taken to the local hospice. Donation boxes are fit to burst, pennies are counted and the clear up begins.

The Macmillan Coffee Morning is one of the highlights of the year so if you fancy a blether over a cup of tea and a slice of cake, make sure you pop along to Ralston Community Centre next time.... Yum!

