

ACROSS THE POND

by Miss Windsor



Memories of a Lancashire Lass!

Hello, darlings! By a sheer stroke of serendipity Miss Windsor discovered this wonderful lady - Patricia Matthews - of Bolton, Greater Manchester, England via Social Media! Whom at the grand age of 67 years old became an author of her first cookery book, a YouTube sensation, and local celebrity – well, would you ‘Adam and Eve it’ (believe it)! Suffice to say, Patricia and Miss Windsor have many things in common, one being they’re extremely gung-ho at reviving recipes and cooking practices from a bygone era!

Patricia entered this world in 1946 and grew up in Bolton, which during such time was considered part of Lancashire. Along with a plethora of siblings, she was raised in a red brick, two up two down terraced house, which One would lovingly describe as a ‘bijou’ residence! Also, it boasted a cosy yet quaint backyard, which of course, is where One employed a washing line to hang out their ‘smalls’ (underwear) - oh, I say! Oh, and let’s not forget the rather ‘staid’ yet memorable coloured front door of - ‘conker brown!’ Patricia fondly recalled, “Friday night was bath night, in the proverbial tin bath, which was dragged in from the backyard into the kitchen by Mother, filled up with kettles and pans of hot water, then one by one in we got!”

During ‘post-war’ England, Patricia and her ‘kinsfolk’ were brought up within a traditional environment. Darlings, One should never underestimate the ‘hard graft’ of a woman’ because, back in those days, the duties of a ‘housewife’ were as equally taxing as the ‘manual work’ of a man! Also, Patricia’s upbringing being typical of that era, “We were very strictly brought up, no swearing, no answering back, respect to elders” – Oh my, now haven’t times changed!

With a slight ‘grin’ and ‘twinkle’ in her eye, Patricia continued to reminisce about her childhood days. “Every year the owners of the local ‘chippy’ (fish & chip shop) organised a trip for us kids to the ‘Grande Theatre’ in Bolton town centre to see a pantomime!” Apparently, “It was a real treat,” she gushed!

Indeed, those care-free times evoked pleasant memories of a true ‘community spirit’ where her local Independent Methodist Church held Christmas parties, concerts, plays, and ‘Rose Queen’ events!

Having risen to the rather commendable position of ‘head girl’ at Castle Hill Girls School, Patricia started her working life as a seamstress instead of joining her sisters at the local ‘cotton mill.’ She soon changed careers and worked as an admin clerk at William Walker & Sons leather factory and there, at the tender age of 20 years old, she met her beloved husband to be - Ronnie! Miss Windsor dared to ask, “Darling, was it love at first sight?” Patricia quipped, “Nope, but it was for Ronnie!”

You see darlings, now hopelessly in love and during those glorious days of ‘court-ing’ (American translation: dating), Ronnie introduced his ‘sweetheart’ to his legendary grandmother Sarah, who was born in Salford, Lancashire during the reign of Queen Victoria! Patricia affectionately described Grandmother Sarah as, “Straight laced, but with a ‘wicked’ sense of humour!”

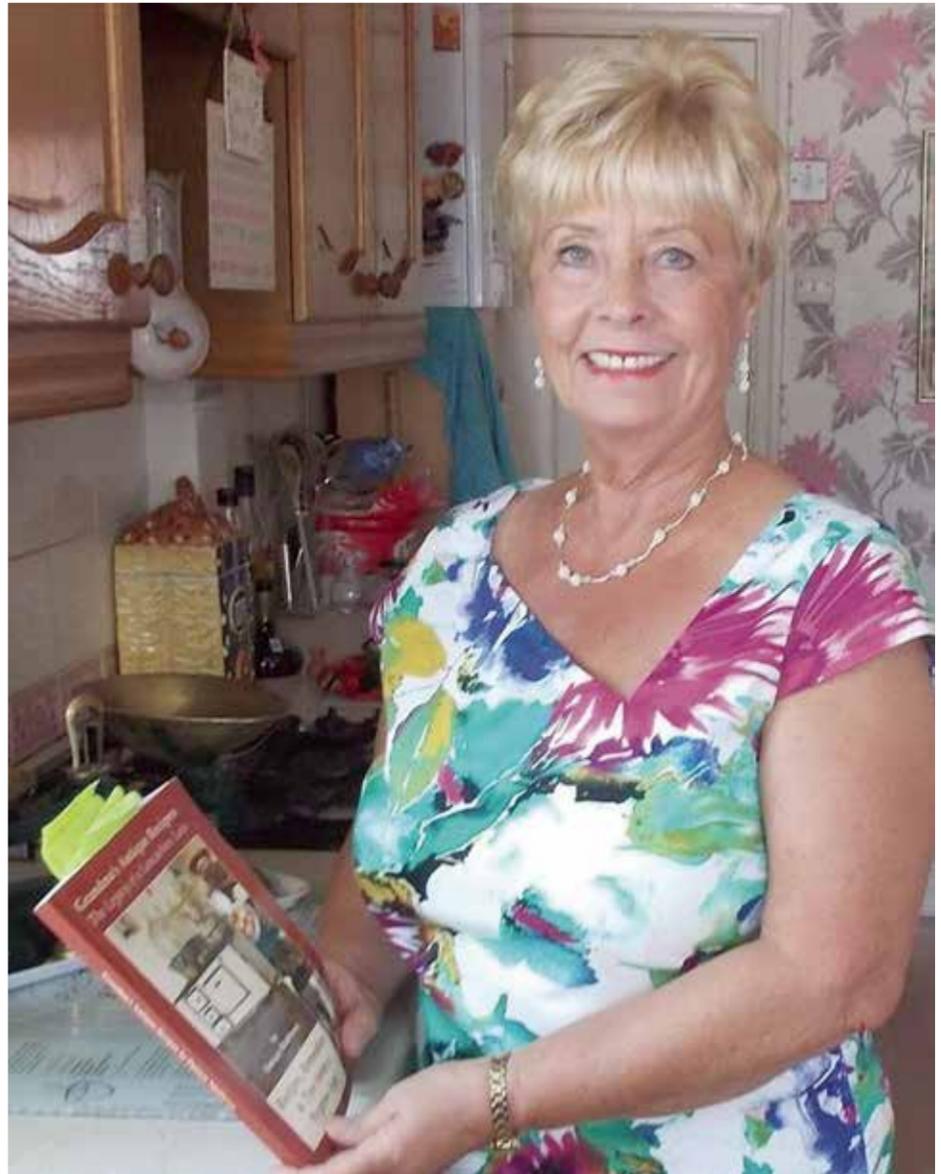
Patricia ‘giggled’ as she began to reveal a chucklesome memory of Grandmother Sarah, “If she didn’t like anyone on the TV, like ‘McDonald Hobley,’ Grandmother Sarah would make a funny gesture with her face by sucking in her cheeks and lips then moving them up and down like a duck” – how comical!

Whilst Patricia’s mind swarmed with a warm sense of nostalgia, she indulged Miss Windsor with yet another humorous story of Grandmother Sarah, “Following an excellent Sunday dinner, and having washed and returned all the best china to the dresser, we were beckoned around the TV to watch ‘Songs of Praise’ which is still aired today!” With a wide smile, Patricia uttered, “Grandmother Sarah would sing along in her little ‘trill voice’ to the hymns she had already sung earlier that day in church, whilst sporting a big box, battery operated ‘hearing aid’ which was a tad similar to a transistor radio!”

Patricia then proceeded to take Miss Windsor on a ‘culinary jaunt’ down memory lane! You see darlings, Grandmother Sarah was an excellent cook and would lavish her grandson Ronnie and ‘wife to be’ with a pageantry of homemade scones, strawberry jam, and freshly baked bread adorned with tender slices of ‘ham-on-the-bone’ which was purchased from the local ‘Co-Op’ supermarket!

Also, Grandmother Sarah would ‘whip up’ an abundance of culinary delights in her 1950’s style ‘scullery’ which was painted in duck egg blue and dressed with red checked curtains! She used a ‘New World’ gas cooker and would cook and bake using blue and white enamel pans and pie dishes. Such vessels were used for the likes of Simnel Cake, Potato Cakes, Fruit Cake, and Potato Pie! Darlings, these are just a ‘handful’ of Patricia’s best-loved recipes from Grandmother Sarah’s book, which she regularly recreates for her family!

In fact, Grandmother Sarah hand wrote a ‘gem of a book’ which includes recipes



A proud Patricia Matthews holds a copy of *Grandma’s Antique Recipes*

handed down from relatives, friends, and neighbours for young wives to use in the future. This book comprises 160 recipes for cakes, cures, medicines, furniture polishes, and handy hints – well, what do ya know! But sadly, Grandmother Sarah passed away a few months before Ronnie and Patricia were joined in ‘holy matrimony.’ Thus, she left this ‘well-thumbed’ book of historical importance to Patricia in her ‘will’ along with her wedding ring, trifle dishes, rolling pin, and weighing scales!

Darlings, Miss Windsor expects you’re all dying to know what happened to this ‘gem of a book’? Well, for 40 years or so it laid safely tucked away within the comfortable surroundings of Patricia’s most appealing ‘drawers’ – oh, I say! Patricia had always longed to share the contents of this book, as it “gives an insight into the lives of women from Grandmother Sarah’s era.” So, following retirement, Patricia made plans to revive Grandmother Sarah’s handwritten legacy, and to share it with those culinary ‘enthusiasts’ of yesteryear!

The question is, ‘how the ‘heck’ did Patricia achieve such a thing?’ Well, with a little encouragement from her family, Patricia contacted SHN Publishing who relished

the opportunity and in 2013 published: *Grandma’s Antique Recipes, The Legacy of a Lancashire Lass*. At long last, a selection of Grandmother Sarah’s recipes for cakes, cures and medicines was finally available for our very own delectation!

Darlings, Miss Windsor recently purchased a copy from Amazon and she’s pleased to announce she thoroughly enjoyed the nostalgic content of such a delightful culinary read – what a beautiful way to pay homage to Grandmother Sarah. Also, don’t forget that Patricia has her very own YouTube channel – ‘Grandma’s Antique Recipes’, where you’ll learn how to cook in the tradition of Grandmother Sarah!

Darlings, Miss Windsor must retire now to her kitchen of ‘grandeur’ to try out a dish or two from her newly acquired cookery book! Please do visit my ‘blog’ via www.misswindsor.uk to read more about Patricia Matthews. Until we meet again darlings, One would be delighted to make your acquaintance via Instagram, Twitter and Facebook (@misswindsoruk).

Toodle-oo for now,
Miss Windsor X

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Triptych August 5 1-3pm

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