

THE BLOOMSBURY COOKBOOK

Recipes for Life, Love and Art

Jans Ondaatje Rolls

WITH 165 ILLUSTRATIONS, 113 IN COLOUR

 **Thames & Hudson**

CONTENTS

The Charleston Trust 8

By Virginia Nicholson

Foreword 10

By Anne Chisholm

Introduction 12

Biographical Notes on Bloomsbury 20

1. BEFORE BLOOMSBURY (1890s–1904)	22
2. OLD BLOOMSBURY (1904–14)	44
3. BLOOMSBURY IN WARTIME (1914–19)	94
4. AN APPETITE FOR BLOOMSBURY (1920s)	142
5. BLOOMSBURY AND ABROAD (1920s–1930s)	220
6. BLOOMSBURY IN ECLIPSE (1930–41)	258
7. BLOOMSBURY'S OFFSPRING (1940s–)	302
Appendix: Additional Recipes from the Bloomsbury Archives	334
Chronology of Bloomsbury	346
Note on Imperial and Metric Measures in Recipes	348
Sources of Recipes	349
Sources of Quotations	353
Bibliography	364
List of Illustrations	368
Acknowledgments	373
Index of Recipes	376
Index	379

page 2: Detail of the fireplace in Clive Bell's study at Charleston.

page 3: Mark Gertler, *Peaches and Green Bottle*, 1931.

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FOREWORD

As a late arrival myself among the chroniclers of the Bloomsbury Group, I know very well how unlikely – indeed, how almost impossible – it is to find anything fresh to say about its members and their celebrated way of life. Bloomsbury is remembered for intellectual and artistic achievement, for sparkling, if malicious, conversation, and for its liberating disregard of social and sexual conventions. Perhaps because of some premature deaths, two of them by suicide, a certain reputation for earnestness and melancholy (what Vita Sackville-West called ‘Gloomsbury’) has also hung over the group. Laughter and the pleasures of the table are not immediately associated with Bloomsbury, but, as I discovered while researching my biography of Frances Partridge, their gatherings were more often than not hilarious and food and drink were taken seriously and much enjoyed. Now, as I work on a new edition of Dora Carrington’s letters, I realize again how important good meals were to her and her circle.

Even so, when I read this marvellous anthology I was amazed. Jans Ondaatje Rolls has indeed found a way to cast new light onto Bloomsbury, not by yet again re-examining their personal or professional lives or analysing their emotions, but by walking into their kitchens and dining rooms, unearthing their cookbooks, trying out their recipes (even the less tempting ones) and, above all, by immersing herself in their writings and paintings. She has followed the scent of cooking through novels, diaries, letters and memoirs, relating every mention of a dish or a meal to a recipe, if not one known to have been available to the writer, then to one of the same period. Her expertise on culinary matters is evident, but it is matched by her knowledge of and sympathy with the characters who devised the dishes and by the glorious drawings and paintings she has gathered to illustrate and complement the text.

So this book is much more than a delightful compendium of Bloomsbury’s taste in food. With a light touch and a sympathetic, amused eye, the author provides thumbnail sketches and deft, witty summaries of the people behind the recipes and their complicated relationships. Thus her succinct account of the Ham Spray ménage à trois between Lytton Strachey, Carrington and Ralph Partridge introduces a recipe for Ham Spray Triangles (ham and cod’s roe on toast) adapted from the cookbook kept by Ralph’s second wife, Frances, until the end of her life. This battered notebook, now expertly conserved in the archives at King’s College, Cambridge, has been put to good use by the author,



Vanessa Bell, *Apples*, c. 1916.

in a way that would have amused and pleased its compiler, who herself hardly boiled an egg until the Second World War but thereafter became a keen and accomplished cook.

Above all, however, this book is a happy demonstration of how a gifted writer with a genuine passion for her subject can surprise and inspire. Readers who already know the territory will be richly entertained; those who do not could not receive a better introduction, not just to Bloomsbury’s cuisine but also to its curiously enduring fascination. All have many treats in store.

Anne Chisholm

CHAPTER ONE

Before Bloomsbury

(1890s–1904)

<i>Talland House Crème Brûlée</i>	23
<i>Gingernut Biscuits</i>	25
<i>Recipe for Bread</i>	27
<i>Tooby Stephen's Monolithic Birthday Cake</i>	30
<i>Strachey Family Mealttime Reading Menu</i>	32
<i>Strachey Rice Pudding</i>	34
<i>Trinity Cream</i>	36
<i>Mushrooms with Anchovy Cream</i>	37
<i>Cambridge Zwieback Biscuits</i>	39
<i>Midnight Society Dates</i>	40
<i>Whales</i>	43
<i>Cambridge, Bohemianism and Bloomsbury</i>	43



Sophia Farrell, the Stephen family cook, 1890. 'Sophie' joined the Stephens in 1886 and remained working for various members of the family until she retired from service in 1931. From the Monk's House photograph album.

Talland House Crème Brûlée

"The kitchen, Sophie's kitchen, for she was dominant over all the other "denizens of the kitchen", as we called them in the *Hyle Park Gate News*,* was directly beneath our night nursery. At dinner time we would let down a basket on a string, and dangle it over the kitchen window. If she were in a good temper, the basket would be drawn in, laden with something from the grown-ups' dinner and pushed swaying out again. If she was "in one of her tempers", the basket was sharply jerked, the string cut, and we [were] left holding the dangling string. I can remember the sensation of the heavy basket, and of the light string."

Virginia Woolf recalling her childhood holidays in Cornwall, 'A Sketch of the Past', 1939

* *The Stephen family newspaper, 1891–99.*

CHAPTER TWO

Old Bloomsbury

(1904–14)

- Apples: 46 Gordon Square* 46
Thoby's Cocoa and Biscuits 47
Vanessa's Loving Cup 50
Freedom Pie 50
Raie au Beurre Noir 53
Studio Omelette 54
Clive's Chocolate Layer Cake 57
Drinks from the Sideboard 60
Ottoline's Plum Pudding 61
Peppard Bones 64
Bunga Bunga 66
Roger Fry's Recipe for Marmalade 69
Post-Impressionist Paris Feast 70
Post-Impressionist Barbeque Beef 72
Post-Impressionist Centenary Orange Cake 74
Omega's Alpha Feast 75
Brandon Camp Poulet Provençal 81
Tunisian Citrus Fruits with Pork Chops and Crushed Sage 82
Tender Cutlets with Aphrodisiac Sauce 84
Meat Bobby 86
Supper at 46 Gordon Square 88
Brinswick Square Tray Food 89
Melymbrosia 91
Ye Olde Cock Steak Pie 92



Vanessa Bell, *Apples: 46 Gordon Square*, c. 1909–10. Vanessa painted this work from the first-floor drawing room of her house in Bloomsbury.

Clive decided that Duncan should have a good scolding. The only question was how should this be managed? He hit upon the idea of inviting him to dinner so that he and the accused should be tête-à-tête. Accordingly they went to some agreeable restaurant in Charlotte Street. They dined very well. Duncan, who had been forewarned of what was to come, waited for the thunderbolt to fall. The soup came; the entrée came; then the cheese, then some fruit, but no thunder. They had coffees and then a *pause-café* still no sign of trouble. Another glass, and Clive began to talk about the sacred nature of correspondence. He seemed to be about to come to the point, but somehow – it had been such a pleasant evening it seemed a shame to spoil it – better to order a third glass of brandy and then, coherent thought difficult, they wandered into the open air. “Just time to catch my tram,” said Duncan. “Clive, would you lend me a penny?”

Quentin Bell, *Elders and Betters*, 1995

Duncan Grant was one of Bloomsbury's most loveable individuals. He was 'the most entertaining companion I have ever known,' recalled David 'Bunny' Garnett; 'his lively mind never struck upon the obvious, and his sensibility made him acutely responsive to the mood of his companion.' Duncan was the youngest member of 'Old Bloomsbury' (Adrian Stephen, who was closest in age, was two years older), and he was good-looking, charming and cheerful: everybody's favourite paramour. In 1907 Duncan was introduced to Clive Bell and the Stephens through his cousin Lytton Strachey and it did not take long for them and the rest of the Bloomsbury circle to embrace his friendship wholeheartedly. Claude Summers, author of *The Gay & Lesbian Literary Heritage*, noted that Bloomsbury has been defined 'as a congeries of men and women in love with Grant', and it is true that Duncan had affairs with Lytton, John Maynard Keynes, Adrian, Bunny and Vanessa Bell. But to define the Bloomsbury Group simply as Duncan's innamorati is inaccurate, for he had many affairs outside of Bloomsbury as well.

Duncan was penniless, but somehow this never mattered to him or to his friends. Vanessa recalled: '[He] seemed unaware of the fact. If he wanted to go from one place to another he would borrow the exact sum, twopence halfpenny perhaps, which any of us could afford. If he wanted a meal he appeared, and contributions from each plate were willingly made. So he solved the problem of living on air with satisfaction to everyone.'

Occasionally he invited a friend to his Upper Baker Street studio for dinner and conversation. 'He made me an omelette in a frying pan over the fire, and we ate it on the bare wooden table with bread and cheese and beer,' Lytton wrote to Maynard in 1907. 'After that we drew our kitchen chairs up to the fire, and smoked

cigarettes and talked.' Less than a year later, Maynard, too, found himself sitting by the fire in Duncan's studio, savouring Duncan's latest accomplishment.

This is one of Diana Higgins's* recipes from *Grace at Charleston*.

Suggested ingredients, for two

2–3 TBS BUTTER • 4 STRIPS BACON • 1 CUP COLD, DICED POTATOES
3 EGGS • 6 SPOONFULS GRATED CHEESE

Fry together in a little butter, bacon and cold boiled potatoes, cut into small slices or diced. Then beat up the number of eggs required for an omelette. Calculate one (or one egg and a half for each person). Into the beaten eggs stir two or three spoonfuls of grated cheese.

Add more butter to the pan and when it is sizzling hot, pour the cheese and egg mixture over the bacon and the potato dice already in the pan. Cook well until brown one side and then turn the omelette and cook lightly on the other side. This makes an omelette that looks like a very thick pancake. Do not over cook – it must be both moist and brittle. Serve flat.

Clive's Chocolate Layer Cake

Clive and Vanessa Bell's marital bliss lasted only a few short years and from 1914 it was over in all but name. Soon after the children arrived – Julian in 1908 and Quentin in 1910 – their passion for each other subsided, and they took other lovers. When Vanessa became pregnant with Duncan Grant's baby (Angelica), Clive assumed full responsibility for the child. Although this was ostensibly living a lie, Clive and Vanessa saw it as a practical and socially acceptable way of honouring the truth; that is, Vanessa and Duncan's love for one another. Furthermore, they saw no point in ruining a good 'working' marriage when there was nothing wrong with their friendship.

After the First World War, Vanessa and Clive moved back to Gordon Square (Vanessa had been riding out the war at Charleston and Clive at Garsington), and everyone saw everyone else much as they had before, although now Vanessa moved into 50 Gordon Square and Clive moved back to No. 46 (where he had kept rooms throughout the war and John Maynard Keynes was his landlord). They shared the same kitchen staff and took their meals together (at No. 50); and so communal had Bloomsbury's living become that even the servants, or 'the click', as they were known, were in and out of each other's kitchens on a regular

* Diana Higgins compiled a book of her mother-in-law's recipes *Grace at Charleston* (1994). *Grace Higgins was Vanessa Bell's housekeeper and cook; she entered the Bloomsbury story in 1920.*



Vanessa Bell, *Clive Bell and Family*, 1924. When Vanessa became pregnant with Duncan Grant's child (Angelica), Clive assumed full parental responsibility.

basis (almost as frequently as their masters and mistresses were in and out of the bedrooms above the kitchens).

Clive had many virtues, despite his philandering. The painter Dorothy Brett recalled: 'Clive Bell and Aldous Huxley were working as conscientious objectors. Curiously enough Clive Bell was immensely popular with the farm hands and farmers. He was jolly, never did a lick of work, but kept them laughing and gave birthday cakes to their wives and children.' According to Lytton Strachey, writing of Clive in 1905, 'His character has several layers, but it is difficult to say which is the fond. There is the country gentleman layer, which makes him retire into the depths of Wiltshire to shoot partridges. There is the Paris decadent layer, which takes him to the quartier latin where he discusses painting and vice with American artists and French models. There is the eighteenth-century layer, which adores Thoby Stephen. There is the layer of innocence, which adores Thoby's sister. There is the layer of prostitution, which shows itself in an amazing head of crimped straw-coloured hair. And there is the layer of stupidity, which runs transversely through all the other layers.'

In 1902, when Clive first visited the Stephens, he brought them some partridges. Later, when he would stay at Garsington, Ham Spray and Charleston, he would arrive with small gifts, sometimes chocolates, a brace of birds, or magazines. Whatever the occasion, he was always unselfish and considerate. This layer cake from *Fry's Chocolate Recipes* would suit not only his multifaceted personality, but also his gargantuan appetite for chocolate.

1/3 CUP BUTTER • 1 1/2 TSP BAKING POWDER
 1 CUP LIGHT BROWN SUGAR • 1/2 TSP SODA
 2 EGGS • 1/2 TSP SALT • 1/2 CUP SOUR MILK
 1/4 TSP CINNAMON • 1 TSP VANILLA
 3 TBS FRY'S BREAKFAST COCOA • 2 1/4 CUPS FLOUR

Grease and flour [21.5 cm (8 1/2-in.)] tin; mix, and sift dry ingredients, flour, baking powder, soda, salt, cinnamon and cocoa. Cream butter, add sugar gradually.



Roger Fry, *Still Life with Chocolate Cake*, c. 1912. Clive Bell had a gargantuan appetite for life, which helps to explain his multi-layered personality.

Suggested ingredients

1 LB PLUMS • SUGAR • 1 EGG • 6 OZ FLOUR • 1 BREAKFAST CUP MILK
 ½ TSP BAKING POWDER

Chop up one pound of apples (gooseberries, plums, or any other fruit will do) and put them in a greased pudding basin and sprinkle [plenty of] sugar over them; now make a batter of one egg, six ounces flour and one breakfast-cupful of milk; one half a teaspoon of baking powder must be added to the flour; when the batter is smooth, press it over the fruit and steam gently for one hour; care must be taken that the water remains boiling and does not evaporate too much. [Serves 6.]

Peppard Bones

'She had a small house at Peppard in the Chilterns, where she spent the month of July [1911]. I stayed at Ipsden, six miles from Peppard, and bicycled over every day, arriving about noon, and leaving about midnight. The summer was extraordinarily hot, reaching on one occasion 97°[F] in the shade. We used to take our lunch out into the beech-woods, and come home to late tea. That month was one of great happiness.'

Bertrand Russell, *Autobiography*, 1967–69

Ottoline and Philip Morrell acquired Peppard Cottage shortly after Philip won the Liberal parliamentary seat for Henley-on-Thames in 1906. They entertained frequently: regular guests included Roger Fry, the artist Henry Lamb, Bertrand Russell, Lytton Strachey, Desmond MacCarthy, Vanessa and Clive Bell, Virginia Stephen, and Helen and Boris Anrep.*

Once, when the bohemian painter Augustus John's two young sons came to stay, Ottoline recalled: 'Fearing that they would arrive with only a cotton overall each I went and brought them an outfit of clothes. We found it difficult to get them to eat, and when we asked them what they were accustomed to eat at home, they only answered in a deep voice, "Bones."'

This frugal soup recipe from a First World War cookery book will satisfy unpretentious bohemian tastes, and maybe even hunger. It can be prepared with simple ingredients, such as bones (rabbit and pigeon are fine), seasonal vegetables, pepper, salt and water. A dash of sherry will enhance the flavour, and will render the soup even more palatable.

* *Ottoline Morrell had affairs with Henry Lamb (in 1910–11) and with Bertrand Russell (in 1911–16).*

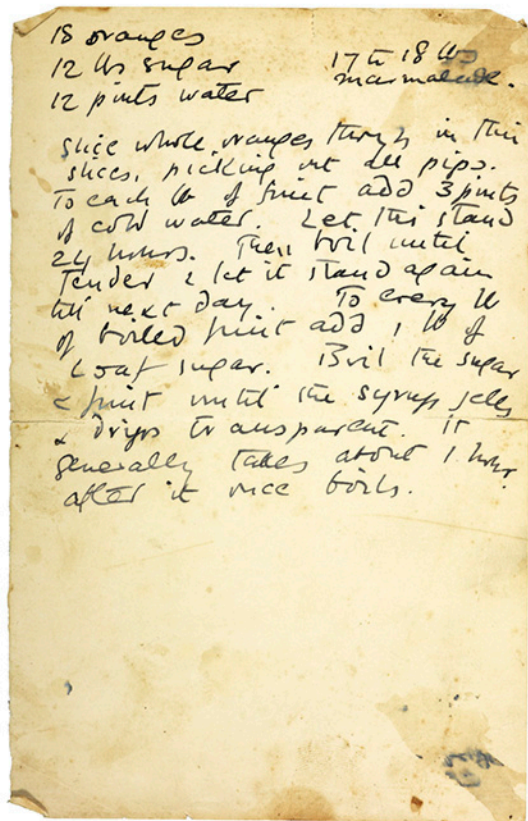


Simon Bussy, *Lady Ottoline Morrell*, c. 1920. Ottoline and her husband, the Liberal MP Philip Morrell, agreed to have an open marriage after Philip's first illegitimate child was born in 1904. Some of Ottoline's lovers (Bertrand Russell, Augustus John and Roger Fry) were regular guests at Peppard, a cottage she and her husband owned from 1907 to 1911.

2D. [1–2 KG] WORTH OF BONES, CHOPPED SMALL • 2 OZ DRIPPING
 2 LARGE ONIONS, PEELED AND CUT INTO SLICES
 2 CARROTS, SCRAPED AND SLICED • 1 TURNIP, PEELED AND SLICED
 ½ PT SPLIT PEAS OR LENTILS • 1 TSP MIXED HERBS
 SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

Put the bones and dripping into a saucepan, and fry a little over the fire to brown slightly, then add 2 quarts of cold water and bring slowly to the boil. Skim, and add the vegetables and peas or lentils (previously soaked). Stir till it boils, then simmer for 2 hours longer.

Remove the bones, add the herbs, and season to taste, then serve. The bones may be used a second time with fresh vegetables. [Serves 6.]



Roger Fry's handwritten recipe for marmalade, unknown date.

Roger Fry's Recipe for Marmalade

'Add to these gifts, which were as one may say open to the public, those with which in private he [Roger] charmed his friends, a playful intellect for instance, free fancy and a sense of fun, along with taste in food and wine, and you have beside a great critic a rare companion.'

Clive Bell on Roger Fry, *Old Friends*, 1936

Roger Fry became part of Bloomsbury in 1910. He was a captivating lecturer, influential critic and talented artist. He introduced Post-Impressionism to Britain, formed the Grafton Group (an artists' exhibition society), founded the Omega Workshops (an innovative domestic design collective) and liberated an entire generation of young British artists from the shackles of Victorianism.

But Roger's friends also saw another side of his personality, when he was at ease – reading, playing chess or thinking aloud. These were the times when his absurd gullibility surfaced and when his misapplication of scientific reasoning revealed itself. Often he made far-fetched assertions: that one day the planet would be governed by birds, for instance; or that an irregularity in the tides signalled that a 'dark star' must have entered the solar system and was playing havoc with the moon, and would shortly collide with the Earth. Sometimes the deductions of his logic baffled even himself.

But Roger's voracious appetite for life had a catalytic effect on pre-war Bloomsbury. His dynamism, integrity, experience and confidence made him, Virginia Woolf noted, 'the flesh and blood' of the group.

This is Roger's own recipe for marmalade. Use Seville oranges (available January or February) if possible, as their bitter flavour makes them the best variety for cooking.

18 ORANGES • 12 LBS SUGAR • 12 PTS WATER

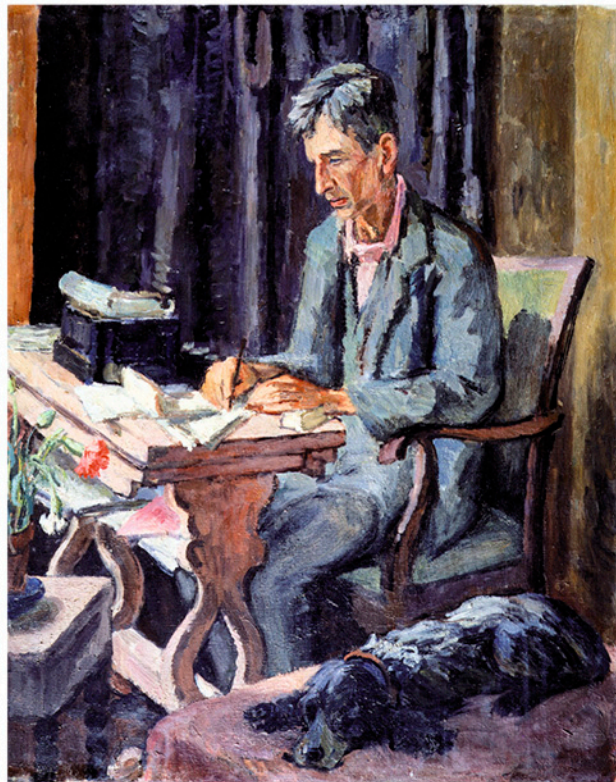
Slice whole oranges through in thin slices, picking out the pips. To each lb of fruit add 3 pints of cold water. Let this stand 24 hours. Then boil until tender & let it stand again till next day. To every lb of boiled fruit add 1 lb of loaf sugar. Boil the sugar and fruit until the syrup jells & dries transparent. It generally takes about an hour after it twice boils. [Makes 17–18 lb.]

CHAPTER THREE

Bloomsbury in Wartime

(1914–19)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Plain Suet Pudding</i> 97 | <i>Chicken Pancakes</i> 120 |
| <i>Leonard's Fish and Chips</i> 98 | <i>Little Henry's Honey Cake</i> 122 |
| <i>Nellie's 'Good Soup'</i> 99 | <i>Charleston Coffee Pot</i> 124 |
| <i>War Rations</i> 101 | <i>Bunny's Honey</i> 126 |
| <i>Asbeham Scrambled Eggs</i> 102 | <i>Marrow and Ginger Jam</i> 127 |
| <i>Asbeham Rum Punch</i> 104 | <i>A Forsterian Salad (with Quentin Bell's Chapon Seasoning)</i> 128 |
| <i>Carrington's Virgin Salad</i> 105 | <i>Asbeham – 'Such a Dinner'</i> 130 |
| <i>Fruit in Wales</i> 107 | <i>Lytton Soup</i> 132 |
| <i>Sugar</i> 107 | <i>Armistice Chocolate Creams</i> 134 |
| <i>Teatime in Tidmarsh</i> 108 | <i>Pot-Boilers</i> 135 |
| <i>Pickled Pears</i> 111 | <i>Poulet en Casserole</i> 136 |
| <i>Bloomsbury Jam</i> 112 | <i>Mill House Christmas Chicken</i> 136 |
| <i>Cowslip Wine and Sloe Gin</i> 112 | <i>Unusual Oysters</i> 138 |
| <i>Tippy Chicken</i> 115 | <i>The Omega Wine Cup</i> 139 |
| <i>Hunter Chicken</i> 117 | <i>Economical Fish Dish</i> 140 |
| <i>Savoury Loaf of Pork</i> 117 | |
| <i>Garsington Pickled Cabbage</i> 120 | |



Vanessa Bell, *Leonard Sidney Woolf*, 1940. In 1917 Leonard visited the Co-operative Society in Lancashire where he 'drank quantities of tea and ate splendid plates of fried fish'.

them called it, was very different from Carrington's, however. They argued about it endlessly: he was all for it; she was not. For seven years Mark tried to make love to Carrington and when she did finally consent to sleep with him in the autumn of 1916 (after her visit to Wales with Lytton Strachey), she could see that 'sugar' had benefits, but still felt no overwhelming desire for any herself. For the time being, 'sugar' was best rationed.

She wrote to Mark in December 1916: 'I read Marlowe again last night and knew what one thing meant more than I did last week! It certainly is a necessity if one wants to understand the best poets. No she's not going on to say that is *why* she takes sugar in her coffee now. But taking sugar incidentally does not make one appreciate those poets more fully. But I only like sugar some times, not every week and every day in my coffee. I think you would like it so much and take it so often in your coffee that you wouldn't taste anything in time, and miss the taste of the coffee. But darling I shall look after that alright and only allow you three lumps a month. You've had more than three for this month. So no more till next year, you sugar-eater you!'

Of course, another reason why Carrington did not want to sleep with Mark was that she had fallen in love with Lytton. Mark was devastated and bitter when he learned the news and told her he could not understand how she was able to love a man who could not love her as 'completely' as he did. Hadn't Lytton once been in love with *him*? Mark wrote to Carrington: 'After the first course I waited and waited and nothing else came. Now, I simply must have sweets. After waiting for about fifteen minutes I gave my mouth a final wipe, got up and walked off in despair. What if I never get sweets! I sat and brooded all the afternoon about it and couldn't work.'

Teatime in Tidmarsh

'Tea was served in the dining room – a wonderful spread with farm butter, honey in the comb, home-made cakes and currant loaf, served in a pink lustre tea service.'

Gerald Brennan, *Personal Record*, 1974

After months of searching, Dora Carrington finally found a house where she and Lytton Strachey could live: the Mill House in the village of Tidmarsh, Berkshire. It was a small, romantic farmhouse set in an acre of land with an apple orchard, fruit trees, a vegetable garden and a little stream. To Carrington's well-trained eye, it was idyllic. In October 1917 she took out a lease (paid for by John Maynard Keynes,



Mark Gertler, *Portrait of a Girl Wearing a Blue Jersey* [Dora Carrington], 1912. Mark and Carrington began sleeping together in 1916 and referred to their lovemaking sessions as 'sugar'.

Saxon Sydney-Turner, James Strachey and Harry Norton*) and immediately began making pots of delicious jams and jellies for their new life together. In November she was ready to move in. She wrote to Lytton: 'Everything is packed with apples, artichokes and potatoes, instead of straw and paper! This method will probably insure [*sic*] all the china being smashed. But anyway the food supply is guaranteed for some months!'

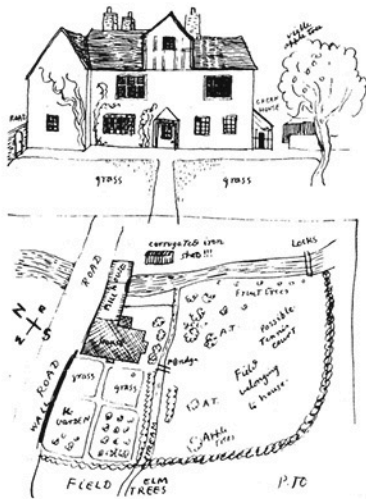
Carrington's goal was to make everything perfect for Lytton. She decorated the house lovingly: the walls, the doors, and the bookcases – even the tiles around the fireplace were painted with the utmost care and attention. She hired Mrs Legg to help her with the housework, but she did most of the cooking herself. She made sure that Lytton was continually stimulated by a bevy of young, beautiful and intelligent men, and that he took regular exercise, drank plenty of milk

* Harry – H. T. J. Norton, the mathematician – was Lytton's friend and financial sponsor. Lytton dedicated *Eminent Victorians* to him and paid him back with the proceeds from the sales of his book.

and ate his rice pudding. She looked after him, cared for him and fed him like a god – because to her that is what he was. Breakfasts were lavish, lunches sublime, dinners ‘indescribably grand’. Teatimes were heavenly: cakes, pies, breads, jams, butter and runny honey appeared extravagantly before Lytton each afternoon.

Their devotion was mutual. In 1918 Virginia Woolf wrote to her sister, Vanessa Bell, ‘after tea Lytton and Carrington left the room ostensibly to copulate; but suspicion was aroused by a measured sound proceeding from the room, and on listening at the keyhole it was discovered that they were reading aloud Macaulay’s Essays!’

Unfortunately Carrington’s collection of recipes has been lost. These two recipes are from Helen Anrep’s scrapbook. They are very good, but nobody ever put together an afternoon tea quite like Carrington.



Dora Carrington, sketch of the Mill House, October 1917. When they moved to Tidmarsh in 1917, Carrington treated Lytton Strachey like a god.

Jam Roly Poly

2 LB SUET CRUST [6 OZ SHREDDED SUET, 1 LB FLOUR,
PINCH OF SALT, COLD WATER] • JAM

[Sift the flour and salt together. Mix in the suet. Add sufficient water to make a stiff paste.] Roll crust in a long strip about twice as long as wide, spread jam on to within 1 inch of edge, roll up, seal the edges well. Put in a scalded floured cloth [and] tie up ends [and] put in saucepan of boiling water, and boil 2 hours. [Serves 6.]

Johnny Cake

Two thirds of a teaspoonful of soda, three tablespoons of sugar, one teaspoonful of cream of tartar, one egg, one teacup of sweet milk, six tablespoonfuls of Indian meal, three tablespoonfuls of flour and a little salt. [Preheat oven to 175°C. Combine the Indian meal, sugar and milk. Whisk in the egg. Sift together the baking soda, cream of tartar, flour and salt. Mix well. Combine with the egg mixture. Transfer to a small, greased and floured baking tin and cook for 30–40 minutes. Slice, spread with butter and serve. Serves 6.]

Pickled Pears

‘But beside the rooms created for Lytton and visitors there was a string of others which were her [Carrington’s] special province. The kitchen, of course, and the still-room where she made country wines. Her cowslip wine was nectar, her sloe gin unequalled. Then the jams, bottled fruit and vegetables, chutneys, pickles, preserves. Her pickled pears were a revelation. The making of these was part of Carrington’s secret life. I was in her confidence in all such occupations, for I shared her tastes, and it was I who had introduced her to Cobbett’s *Cottage Economy*. Sometimes things went wrong. Her first attempt at bottling broad beans led to a series of explosions and to the most nauseating smell.’

David Garnett, *Great Friends*, 1979

Like Carrington’s pickled pears, this recipe, adapted from *Mrs Beeton’s Book of Household Management*, published in 1915, is a (pleasant) revelation.

8 LB FIRM, SOUND PEARS • 6 LB PRESERVING SUGAR
FINELY GRATED RIND AND JUICE OF 3 LEMONS
2 IN. WHOLE [ROOT] OF GINGER

The bizarre-looking hearth in Clive Bell's study at Charleston was supposed to jettison heat effectively into the surrounding room. It was designed during the Bells' first winter there in 1916–17 by Roger Fry, constructed by Bunny Garnett, and appreciated by all – for in that bitter winter, the hearth was the only source of heat in the house (apart from the coal-fired kitchen range). At teatime, everyone would huddle around it; a pot of tea would be produced and, Quentin recalled, 'a confection called marrow jam' would appear, 'the vegetable marrow being made more palatable – that at least was the intention – by being flavoured with ginger.' This recipe from Grace Higgs is not at all unpleasant, although Quentin 'never conquered the dislike of vegetable marrows'.

4 LB MARROW, DICED (WEIGHED AFTER REMOVING SEEDS AND SKIN)
 3½ LB SUGAR • JUICE OF 2 LEMONS • 3–4 OZ ROOT GINGER

Steam the marrow until tender, this takes 15–20 minutes. Put marrow into basin in layers with sugar and lemon juice, leave to stand for 12 hours. Put marrow and sugar into preserving pan, bruise the ginger well and tie in a muslin bag, add the ginger to the marrow. Stir over a low heat until sugar has dissolved. Boil jam rapidly until setting stage, this takes 20–30 minutes. Remove the bag of ginger, test for setting, pot and cover.

A Forsterian Salad *(with Quentin Bell's Chapon Seasoning)*

'A pageant requires not only splendour, but a touch of the grotesque, which should lurk like onion in a salad.'

E. M. Forster, *Abinger Harvest*, 1936

E. M. Forster ('Morgan' to his friends) is one of the better-known members of Bloomsbury, but he was always on the outside of the group, grazing at the periphery. His thoughts on love, honesty, social conventions, civil liberties and religion were all very much in tune with Bloomsbury, but there were differences too. Morgan preferred Italy to France, Beethoven to Mozart, and was, in himself, diffident, non-confrontational and retiring. 'Lytton nicknamed him the Taupé, partly because of his faint physical resemblance to a mole, but principally because he seemed intellectually and emotionally to travel unseen underground and every now and again pop up unexpectedly with some subtle observation or delicate quip which somehow or other he had found in the depths of the earth or of his own soul,' recalled Leonard Woolf in his autobiography *Sowing*.



Dora Carrington, *E. M. Forster*, 1920. In the cold winter of 1919–40, Morgan (who was trying to keep warm) burnt his trousers by standing too close to Leonard and Virginia Woolf's 'cosy stove'.

Of all his Bloomsbury friends, Morgan was closest to Lytton Strachey and Leonard and Virginia Woolf. He was a regular guest at their country houses and once, on a visit to Monk's House (the Woolfs' Sussex home from 1919 onwards), he burnt his trousers on their 'cosy stove', while trying to keep himself warm. Fire seemed to be the order of the day, however, for when Morgan went out for dinner that evening to Charleston (still wearing his burnt trousers), the beam between the kitchen and the hall also caught fire. Fortunately the fire brigade was quick to arrive and serious damage was averted.

Quentin Bell used to season his salads by rubbing a piece of bread with a clove of garlic and placing it at the bottom of the salad bowl. Either the bottom of the bowl was reached and someone would eat the *chapon*, recalled Virginia Nicholson, or one would unceremoniously burrow down into the verdant depths and fetch it out. Here is her recollection of how her parents liked to prepare and season their salads.



Vanessa Bell, *The Keynes-Keynes*, c. 1927. John Maynard Keynes's parties were 'the grandest' and 'most elaborately conceived' in Bloomsbury.

benefit 'of Civilization'. In 1940 Maynard founded CEMA, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (later the Arts Council of Great Britain). But his generosity extended beyond the public realm to incorporate the unique needs of his friends. He contributed towards the cost of Dora Carrington and Lytton Strachey's lease on the Mill House in Tidmarsh, and he paid a third of all running costs at Charleston. He paid for the education of David 'Bunny' Garnett's two sons and helped Duncan Grant support his elderly mother in her old age. He also entertained Bloomsbury with his brilliant mind and clever conversation and threw, Bunny recalled, "'the grandest" parties in Bloomsbury, as well as the most elaborately conceived', with dinner, champagne, costumes, conversation and theatrical entertainment.

Virginia Woolf described Maynard's *Twelfth Night* party in 1923 in her diary, as follows: 'Let the scene open on the doorstep of number 50 Gordon Square.

We went up last night, carrying our bags and a Cingalese sword. There was Mary H in lemon coloured trousers with green ribbons, and so we sat down to dinner; off cold chicken. In came Roger and Adrian and Karin; and very slowly we coloured our faces and made ready for number 46.... Suppose one's normal pulse to be 70: in five minutes it was 120: and the blood, not sticky whitish fluid of daytime but brilliant and prickly like champagne.... Shakespeare I thought would have liked us all tonight'.

Sunday Lunch at Cambridge

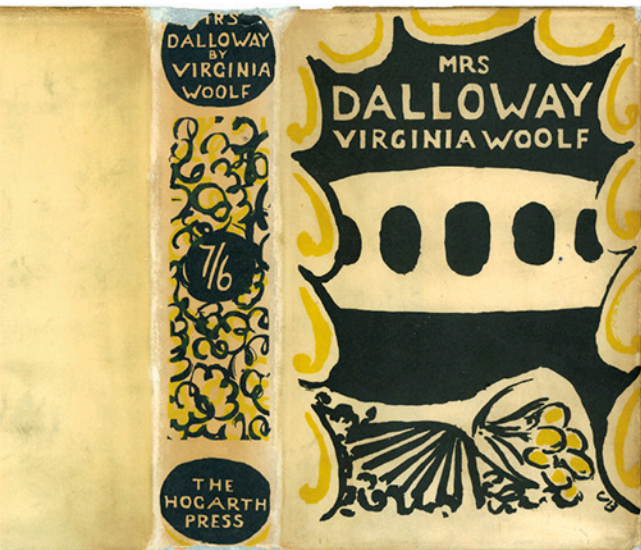
'Keynes's intellect was the sharpest and clearest that I have ever known. When I argued with him, I felt that I took my life in my hands, and I seldom emerged without feeling something of a fool. I was sometimes inclined to feel that so much cleverness must be incompatible with depth, but I do not think this feeling was justified.'

Bertrand Russell, *Autobiography*, 1967-69

The University of Cambridge pulsed in John Maynard Keynes's veins from the beginning of his life through to the very end. He was born into the university community (his father was a professor of economics) and spent his formative years, after attending Eton, mixing with the Cambridge intelligentsia, including his fellow Apostles. When his friends regrouped in Bloomsbury after 1904, Maynard certainly became part of the group, but he never let go of his Cambridge roots and always remained involved in the university – as a researcher, writer, college fellow, Apostle and bursar. When he died in 1946, he bequeathed his manuscripts and letters to the library of King's College, Cambridge, and also gave King's his collection of Impressionist paintings and drawings (now on long-term loan to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge).

On Sundays, Maynard typically ate lunch in Cambridge at 8 Harvey Road with his parents or at the Cambridge Arts Theatre restaurant with his wife, Lydia. But on 11 November 1923 (Armistice Day), he ate in his rooms at King's College with his fellow King's graduate, Apostle and great friend, Roger Fry. He wrote to Lydia: 'In a few minutes I have a large luncheon party in honour of Roger who is here. We eat

Oysters	Hock
Salmon Mayonnaise	Grand Marnier
Chicken Chaudfroid	Coffee
Damson Pie, cream.'	



Jacket design by Vanessa Bell for *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, 1925.

Virginia Woolf was an ardent walker, and through her novels one sees London and tastes it as she herself did. *Mrs Dalloway* walks its readers across the post-war city in 1923. Big Ben strikes the hour, the standard flies high at Buckingham Palace, the buses on Piccadilly roll along and the park gates remain inert: a place to pause before moving on. Apart from the visual landmarks, there is a stream of thoughts and reflections, as the MP's wife Mrs Dalloway inhales the sweet, earthy smell of a flower shop, tosses a shilling into the Serpentine, remembers her father's tailored suits and feasts her eyes on 'salmon on an iceblock'.

Clarissa Dalloway is an unhappy person because she is preoccupied with social rank and worldly success. She married not for love but for position and is therefore 'nothing ... not even Clarissa anymore; this being Mrs Richard Dalloway'. Her world is superficial; she knows it, and her servants know it.

When the undercooked salmon arrives at her resplendent dinner table, she sees how her life has fallen short of perfection. She has no identity of her own and her life has no purpose, despite the excellence of her food (described in the novel) and the importance and influence of her guests. The following five recipes re-create Mrs Dalloway's famous dinner party.

This recipe was co-written by Henrietta and David 'Bunny' Garnett.

Cucumber Vichyssoise

3 LEEKS • 1 MEDIUM SPANISH ONION • 2 OZ BUTTER

5 POTATOES, MEDIUM SIZED • 1 CUCUMBER

[½-1 PT CREAM, OR A COMBINATION OF MILK AND CREAM]

Slice the white parts of the leeks finely. Discard the green. Slice the onion. Peel the potatoes & chop them. Put all into a saucepan & cover with water or with veal or chicken stock. [Boil gently until the potatoes are soft.]

Peel cucumber & add to the rest. Put through moulié or liquidizer. Add ½ pint or pint of milk & cream. Season. Put in refrigerator for several hours & serve very cold. Sprinkle with chopped chives. [Serves 6.]

The following was published in 1927, two years after *Mrs Dalloway*. It is from Chester's *French Cooking for English Homes*.

Mayonnaise of Cold Salmon

Remove skin and bones from the remaining pieces of cold boiled salmon. Let them soak for an hour in a mixture of [50ml] vinegar and [1 tbs] fresh tarragon leaves. Then wipe them dry on a soft cloth. Wash and pick two long or round lettuces and cut the outer leaves into shreds reserving the hearts.

Make a thick mayonnaise sauce (*see below*) and cut three or four hard-boiled eggs into eight pieces. Put these around a long oval dish as a garniture. In the centre place the shredded lettuce upon which the pieces of salmon must be laid. Cut each lettuce heart into four and place at the ends of the dish. Pour the mayonnaise sauce over the fish and lettuce. Serve the rest of the sauce in a boat to be handed with the fish.

Serve with pared crusts of bread and slices of lemon.

For the mayonnaise

Mix together the yolks of two eggs, the juice of a lemon [or 2 tablespoons], salt, pepper, [1 tablespoon] mustard and spices; pour some [25 ml light olive] oil, drop by drop, over the mixture, stirring meanwhile. If the sauce turns, add a little vinegar. The sauce must be of the consistency of thick cream. Vinegar may be added to taste.

Aspic moulds remained popular in British cooking until the 1950s. This chicken dish is from *King Edward's Cookery Book*, 1920.

daily for a week, taking up the brine that has drained off into the pan and pouring it over the mutton. When ready to boil wash off the salt and spices with cold water and place the leg into boiling water, letting it boil up, and remove the scum which rises; then put it back upon the stove and let it simmer slowly for three hours – if it weighs ten pounds; longer if heavier. Take it from the pot and place upon a platter with heavy weights over it and let it stand overnight before it is served. Then cut into very thin slices, thin as a wafer[.]

Queen of Pudding

2 OZ SPONGE CAKE • ½ PT BOILING MILK • 1 EGG
2 OZ CASTER SUGAR • ¼ OZ BUTTER • JAM

Soak sponge cakes well in almost boiling milk, then beat yolk of eggs [*sic*] well into mixture. [Grease ovenproof dish with butter and add cake mixture.] Put into oven until set [approximately 8–10 minutes at 180°C]. When set, cover top with jam, whip white of egg up stiffly with 1 dessertspoonful of caster sugar and spoon onto the top. Put back into oven until set [15–20 minutes]. Serve hot. [Serves 4–6.]

Charleston Grouse

'Dinner was at eight, and started invariably with soup, made with the rest of the joint. It was ample and rich, strong enough to be a whole meal in itself, and was tasted with care and appreciation by Duncan and Clive. Vanessa would change her dress and wear earrings – the men however merely washed their hands and perhaps changed their ties.... But there would also be a choice of game, shot by Clive in the neighbourhood.... And we were proud of the fact that we ate our own artichokes.'

Angelica Garnett to Anna Fewster, 5 October 2009

Once, when Leonard and Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot came to dine at Charleston, three enormous platters of roast grouse appeared on the sideboard. In contrast with John Maynard and Lydia Keynes's stinginess in serving grouse at Tilton (see pp. 152–54), Vanessa had inadvertently ordered 'two a mouth' instead of 'a bird between two', as Clive had suggested. This story has been improved with each retelling, and I have read accounts of eleven, sixteen and sometimes even twenty-two grouse appearing on the legendary occasion.

This recipe from *Warne's Everyday Cookery* is sufficient for three persons. Be sure to measure quantities accordingly.

1 GROUSE • 1 TSP LEMON JUICE • 1½ OZ BUTTER
1 SLICE OF FAT BACON • 2 OZ BACON FAT OR DRIPPING • SALT • PEPPER
FLOUR • WATERCRESS • FRIED BREADCRUMBS

Pluck and draw the bird, wipe it inside and out with a damp cloth. Mix a piece of butter the size of a walnut with salt, pepper and lemon juice, and put it inside the bird with the liver. Then truss as for a roast fowl, using, however, a finer trussing needle and fine string. Tie a piece of fat bacon over the breast and roast the bird in front of a clear fire or in a good oven. Baste it often with dripping, bacon fat or butter. A few minutes before serving, remove the slice of bacon and dredge the breast with flour, baste it with a little oiled butter and brown. The time for roasting depends upon the size and age of the bird. A young bird takes from 25 to 30 minutes and an older one ¾ hour.

To dish: Put the grouse on a hot dish, remove the trussing strings and skewers. Make gravy in the dripping tin as for roast beef, pour a very little round, garnish with watercress. Hand the rest of the gravy in a tureen. Chip potatoes, browned breadcrumbs and a green salad should accompany grouse.



T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf, 1924. Virginia set the type for Tom's *The Waste Land*, which was published by the Hogarth Press in 1923; during this time Tom, Virginia and Leonard became very close friends.