

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME: THE MANY INCARNATIONS OF SUMMER PUDDING

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Summer pudding is a simple, bread and berry pudding that is a regular on lunch tables during soft fruit season. Words such as ‘classic’ and ‘quintessential’ are often bandied around when summer pudding crops up, but compared to other well-known British desserts, it is a comparative youngster.

Whilst desserts such as syllabub and trifle date back hundreds of years, summer pudding recipes have only been appearing in print for just over a century. Notwithstanding the numerous debates and differing theories as to the origins of the pudding, the current holder of the title for ‘Earliest published recipe for summer pudding’ can be found in a book entitled *Sweets* (Part One), No. 6 in The ‘Queen’ Cookery Books, collected and described by S. Beaty-Pownall (1904).

Although this is the first recipe to use the specific name ‘summer pudding’, it is not exactly the recipe that we use today. Most jarringly, in this recipe the mould is buttered ‘as for apple charlotte’. The reason for this is not clear. With an apple charlotte, the combination of the bread, butter and the long, slow baking in the oven generates a deliciously crisp and golden exterior to complement and contrast against the hot fruit filling. Beaty-Pownall’s recipe doesn’t venture anywhere near the oven, so this crisping never occurs. Indeed, it is the softness and barely-held-together-ness of summer pudding that is one of its major attractions. When it is poured into the bread-and-butter-lined bowl, if the heat of the stewed fruit is hot enough to melt the butter on the sides of the basin, the result is going to be rather less delicate and rather more greasy than the recipe we know today.

Interestingly, the page preceding that of Beaty-Pownall’s summer pudding contains not only a recipe for apple charlotte, but also one for the children’s pudding, which bears a marked similarity to summer pudding. The buttered mould is lined with

sponge cakes and the filling comprises layers fresh fruit and brown sugar, topped off which a little milk and more sponge cake. The whole being baked in the oven for just half an hour.

All three recipes have similarities – a lined, buttered mould, sweetened & cooked fruit – and have been grouped together in the chapter on nursery puddings. All three puddings are delicious if well made and their attraction lies in part due to their simplicity. Apple charlotte and summer pudding are still enjoyed today and, if carefully made, are suitable for the most elegant of tables.

However, as with many recipes, there is a little more to the story if you look hard enough. Whilst I absolutely agree that the 1904 recipe for summer pudding is the earliest of its name in print, it's difficult to dismiss earlier recipes that call for lightly-stewed berries to be poured into a bread-lined basin which is then weighted and left to stand for several hours, purely because the name is different to the one we use today. Ms Beaty-Pownall acknowledges the tendency of the recipe to appear in various pudding disguises, and helpfully lists those of which she is aware, namely: hydropathic, Rhode Island and Wakefield. Also mentioned is a variation known as Doctor Johnson's pudding, consisting of alternate layers of sliced bread and stewed rhubarb weighted and left overnight to firm up. Despite my best efforts, I have yet to find any version under the title of Rhode Island pudding and nothing to link the estimable Dr Johnson with rhubarb, aside from his once mentioning it in a letter.

On my own bookshelves is an anonymous and un-dated (although research appears to indicate a publication date of 1892) Victorian publication entitled "More Tasty Dishes". One of the recipes in the book is for hydropathic pudding, which is merely summer pudding with a different title. I was delighted to finally find this recipe actually written down, because it had begun to take on almost mythical properties. For years I'd been reading articles that mention hydropathic pudding as being an early version of summer pudding. Served in Victorian spas, its lightness and freshness was a relief from the popular but heavy suet and steamed puddings of the day. Despite being mentioned

in passing in several articles on summer pudding, I'd been unable to find absolutely anything in print so I was beginning to wonder if this particular version was a myth itself.

Following the lines of the healthy dessert even further back, the recipe appears in another guise, Malvern pudding, as early as 1868. A spa town of renown since the seventeenth century, Malvern is surrounded by the lush, fruit-filled landscapes of both Herefordshire and Worcestershire, that overflow with the fresh berries used in this pudding. The combination of availability of ingredients and the stream of spa visitors, it is not unreasonable to assume that the pudding owes much of its popularity to this time and place. Visitors would take, if not the recipe, then certainly a knowledge of the pudding away with them, when they returned home after their invigorating stay in Malvern.

Of all the recipes I have been able to find, 'Malvern pudding' is the recipe's most popular incarnation, occurring in at least six books over a twenty year period from the 1860s to the 1880s, and onwards into the twentieth century as far as 1912. After the 1880s, the pudding undergoes a name change and recipes occur more frequently as 'hydropathic pudding', the geographical link to Malvern being dropped in favour of emphasizing the healthful aspects of the dish. It is thus also easier for any spa town or indeed the mistress of a house to appropriate the recipe for themselves under such a generalized title, rather than acknowledge its origins in Malvern.

Except the origins aren't in Malvern. This berry pudding might well have achieved popularity in Malvern, but it also appears in even earlier recipes under different titles. In the technologically advanced twenty-first century, the ability to search for recipes becomes ever easier, as more and more books are digitized and available online to search from the comfort of your own home. However, this ease is offset, to a large extent, by the fact that it quickly becomes apparent that recipes change titles with frustrating frequency. Recipe hunting thus becomes very much a labour of love, in that with titles to a large extent superfluous, a requirement to read the recipe itself becomes the main method of

identifying whether or not it is relevant to a particular search.

This laborious method brings other considerations, such as how far does one allow the recipe to deviate from the modern incarnation and still be considered part of that recipe's ancestry. Using summer pudding as the example, how should we view the use of sponge, rather than bread? Should a pudding where the bread and fruit are layered, as opposed to filled, be included or not? What if the layers are of breadcrumbs instead of slices? Is temperature a qualifying factor, thus excluding any berry-filled, bread-lined puddings that are served hot? This thorny issue can even go so far as to blur the lines between one well-known recipe and the next. A recipe for 'delicious fruit pudding' (1856) involves sweetened redcurrants and raspberries, and layers of bread, but it is baked in the oven and served hot from the dish it was baked in, and not turned out. It has all the ingredients of a summer pudding, but it is served like a charlotte. The earliest summer pudding-esque recipe I have been able to find dates from 1808. It is very much in the style of a modern 'deconstructed' interpretation – stewed, sweetened fruit with a serving suggestion of bread or to be made into puddings. I find it curious that this pudding is so free-form when Mrs Rundell's charlotte recipe of the previous year is so structured in its method and shape.

As mentioned previously, there is more than a passing resemblance between summer pudding and a fruit charlotte, the only difference being that of temperature at which it is served. However, there is almost fifty years between Mrs Rundell's hot apple charlotte recipe of 1807 and the recipe for its bread-enclosing form being applied to a chilled berry pudding, published in *The Family Economist*, in 1851.

The range of recipes I've tracked down seem to support the notion of a family of recipes, each of which qualifies for inclusion under the title of summer pudding. Some have stronger links than others but each can justify their place on at least one aspect of the modern recipe. I have spent a considerable time trying different ways to display the information I've gathered, in order to clearly and simply maximize the amount of information presented. The

diagram below is the most successful of the several approaches I tried and is intentionally presented as an adaptation of a family tree. Included is a full academic citation for each of the recipes plotted on the diagram and below, an example of the recipe as it appears under different titles. For brevity, I include only one example of each. This three-pronged approach presents a great deal of information in an accessible and straightforward manner and can be easily employed as an approach with other recipes either singly or in groups. This 'recipe genealogy' has potential as a valid approach to studying the development of recipes over time and I welcome any comments or feedback on this approach.

Economical Method of Preparing Fruit for Children.

Put apples, pears, plumbs, or any kind of fruit, into a stone jar, and add Lisbon, or common moist sugar; place the jar in a cool oven, or in a saucepan of boiling water, and let it remain till the fruit is done. It may be eaten with bread, or with boiled rice; or it may be made into puddings.

1808

Fruit Pudding.—In a basin or mould lay the crumb of a two pound loaf, either whole, or rubbed through a colander. Pour over the bread a quart of fruit, prepared as above and quite hot. Immediately cover the basin with a plate, and let it stand some hours, a whole day if it suits; then turn out for eating cold. It will retain the form of the mould, and look like a beautiful jelly. The mould is not to be buttered. Both these articles are much recommended for the use of invalids and children. Red fruits or plums and damsons have the most beautiful appearance.

1851

No. 267.—BREAD AND FRUIT PUDDING.

Line a basin with slices of bread (without crust) about an inch thick, and moisten it with milk. Stew the fruit with sugar, and when boiling, fill the basin with it; lay a large slice of bread on the top; cover the basin with a plate; put a weight upon it, and let it remain all night in a cold place; turn it out of the basin, and serve with cream or custard.

1852

(7) DELICIOUS FRUIT PUDDING.—Mix two and a half pounds of red currants and raspberries with one and a quarter pound of raw sugar, then fill a pudding-dish with sliced bread (without crust), and layers of the fruit alternately, leaving a thick layer of the fruit at the top. Bake it in the bachelor's oven for nearly an hour before it is served, and serve it in the same dish, which may be improved in appearance by a knitted cover tied over the edges.

1852

Malvern Pudding.

Time, ten or twelve minutes.

2015. Some slices of stale bread; one pint and a half of currants; half a pint of raspberries; four ounces of sugar; some whipped cream.

Dip a pudding-basin into cold water, and line it with rounds of rather stale bread; stew the currants and raspberries with the sugar for ten or twelve minutes after they are hot, fill the basin with the fruit, and cover it over with rounds of bread, put a plate on it with a weight, and set it in a cold place until the next day. Then turn it very carefully out, cover it with whipped cream, and pour round it a little of the currant and raspberry juice.

1868

Cottager's Pudding.

Take a basin or any earthenware mould, the size you wish your pudding to be ; line it entirely with moderately thin slices of bread, cutting off the crust ; sweeten and boil tender a quart or more of blackberries (or any juicy garden fruit will do) ; pour the fruit boiling hot on the bread ; put a layer of crumb of bread on the top, and quickly cover it over with a plate or saucer to shut in the steam. When quite cold this will turn out a firm pudding. Sift a little white sugar over the top.

1877

Monte Rosa.

Line a quart basin with thin slices of bread (baked in a tin and spongy), a very thin layer of red currants, slightly boiled up with sugar and plenty of juice ; alternate layers of bread and currants till the basin is full ; make it over night, and put a saucer with a weight upon it all night to ensure the juice penetrating to the bread. Turn it out of the basin, and it is ready for eating cold. No cooking required ; wholesome and very good. A custard poured over is an improvement.

1877

Hydropathic pudding may be made with any kind of juicy fruit. Pick the fruit and stew it with a little water and sugar till the juice flows freely. Take an ordinary pudding basin, put a round of stale bread about the size of half-a-crown at the bottom, and place fingers all round it in an upright position, leaving about an inch between each finger. Fill the bowl with the hot stewed fruit, and put this in gently by spoonfuls so as not to displace the bread. The solid portion of the fruit should be put in first, in order that its weight may keep the fingers in position, afterwards the juice may be added. Cover the top of the pudding entirely with stale bread cut into dice, lay a small plate on and press this closely down with a weight, until the juice flows over the plate. Leave the fruit until quite cold, turn upon a glass dish and serve with or without milk, custard, or cream. Any kind of fruit may be used, but red fruits have the best appearance. This pudding is inexpensive, delicious, easily made, and by no means common.

1883

16.—BOMBAY PUDDING.

Order.	Ingredients.	Quantities.	Method.
1...	Stale bread ...	... ..	Cut in slices about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick without any crust.
2...	... ..	... ..	Put a round piece of bread at the bottom of a pudding basin, and line the sides of the basin with fingers of bread placed close together.
3...	Stewed fruit ...	1 quart ...	Stew the fruit, any summer fruit will do, with sugar, and pour it hot on to the bread, till the basin is full.
4...	... ..	... ..	Cover the fruit with large slices of bread, fitting the basin.
5...	... ..	... ..	Put a plate on the top with a weight to keep it down.
6...	... ..	... ..	When perfectly cold, turn the pudding on to a dish.
7...	Custard ...	1 pint ...	Pour over and serve.

NOTE.—This pudding should be made the day before it is eaten. Raspberries, currants, cherries, plums, damsons, and greengages are the best fruits to use.

1890

DR. JOHNSON'S PUDDING.

Ingredients:—Stale bread (that can be sliced).
1 lb. rhubarb, or any juicy fruit.
1 pint cold water.
 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. sugar, or to taste.

Method:—Wipe and cut up the rhubarb, or pick the fruit used, and stew it with the water and sugar until it is quite soft. Slice the bread very thinly, pare off the crust from a few pieces to line a mould or basin, putting it on a large plate or dish, then fill up the mould with layers of bread and fruit (while hot), using up the crusts which have been cut off and all pieces and crumbs. Put a plate on the top and press it well down, leaving it until cold with a heavy weight upon it; remove the plate a few times to pour the syrup in which has been pressed from it. When quite cold, turn it out and serve with milk or custard.

N.B.—(1) This is a very cheap wholesome pudding, and is very useful in hot weather (as it can be made the day before) and good for those who cannot take pastry.

(2) When rhubarb is used, a little whole ginger stewed

with it, and then taken out, is an improvement; or a little thin lemon or orange rind can be used. A dark-coloured fruit makes the prettiest pudding, but a few drops of cochineal improve the colour of the rhubarb, or the custard can be poured over it if it looks insipid.

(3) Fresh bread or the slices cut thickly will quite spoil it.

(4) In winter apples and prunes can be used, but the Apple Syrup (page 34) should be made.

No. 195.—BRADENBURG PUDDING

(Made with Blackberries).

Ingredients—

1 lb. blackberries, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. apples, 6 oz. sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint water, 7 or 8 slices bread and butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint cream.

Method—

Wash and pick the blackberries, peel, core, and slice the apples, and put these together in a saucepan with

the sugar and water. Bring to the boil, and then simmer gently until the blackberries are quite tender.

Well butter a pudding-basin, and line it with moderately thin bread and butter, from which cut off all the crust. Fit in the pieces exactly, so as to form a neat case. Take the hot blackberries off the fire, and with a spoon put them carefully into the basin, pressing the fruit very gently against the sides. There should be plenty of rich, thick syrup for the fruit to be very moist.

When the basin is quite full, fit in the bread and butter cover, and press it gently, put a saucer or plate over the basin with a weight on top. Stand it aside for 6 hours. Turn it out carefully into a glass dish. Have the cream ready whipped, and cover the pudding with it.

*Time—*To cook blackberries, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours.

Sufficient for 5 or 6 persons.

1898

56.

Wakefield Pudding.

(Red Currants, Billberries, or Raspberries are best.)

Cut some very thin slices from a stale loaf, trim, cut off the crusts, and line a plain basin with the bread. Stew some fruit with as much sugar as will sweeten it (it should be rather liquid), then pour in some hot fruit, then more bread and so on until the basin is full. Put a plate with a weight on over it, and let it stand until cold. Serve with plain custard or milk.

1900

Summer Pudding.—Line a well-buttered plain china mould, or basin, with bread as for Apple Charlotte, pressing it well into the mould, then pour in sufficient hot stewed fruit of any kind to fill the basin, fit a round of bread on top, turn a plate over it, and let it stand till next day, when it can be turned out and served with cream, or a thin custard. Any rich-coloured fruit does for this, whether of one or many kinds. A variation of this, known as “Dr. Johnson’s pudding,” may be recommended: Slice thinly about 10oz. of bread, and have about a pound of hot stewed rhubarb, then put these in alternate layers into a rather deep dish, finishing with the fruit (mind the dish is only three-quarters full), and put it aside till cold. When served pour on to it from half to three-quarters of a pint of more or less rich custard. These puddings go by many names, such as Hydropathic, Rhode Island, Wakefield, &c.

1904

DRUMLANRIG PUDDING

Ingredients.

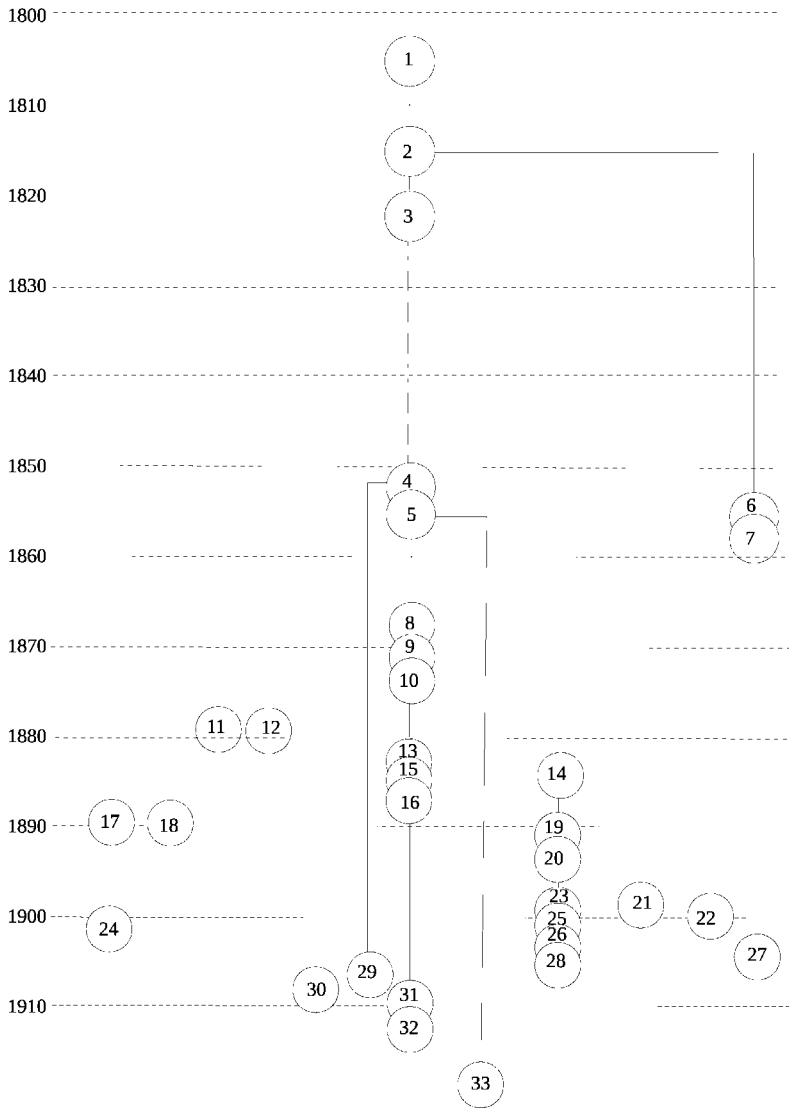
Bread.

Cream.

Stewed fruit.

Line a basin with bread, cut into rather thin fingers; fill it with any stewed fruit, and cover it with a round slice of bread the size of the basin. Let it stand for some hours, till the bread is well soaked with the juice; turn it out, and spread whipped cream all over it—or the bread may be cut in pieces like sponge cakes, and the fruit piled over it in a glass dish, but care must be taken that the bread is thoroughly soaked. Raspberries and currants, stoned cherries, gooseberries, plums, &c., are good done in this way; and Canadian tinned raspberries answer very well when fresh fruit is not to be had.

1909



A century of summer pudding.

LEGEND

1. **Economical method of preparing fruit for children:** *The New London Family Cook: Or, Town and Country Housekeeper's Guide*, Duncan Macdonald (1808), Albion Press, p. 348.
2. **Frugal and wholesome way of preparing fruit for children:** *The New Family Receipt-book: Or Universal Repository of Domestic Economy*, D. Hughson (1817), Printed for W. Pritchard; J. Bysh, London, p. 326.
3. **Fruit for children:** *The Cook and Housekeeper's Complete and Universal Dictionary*, Mary Eaton (1822), J & R. Childs, p. 197.
4. **Fruit pudding:** *The Family Economist*, Volume 4, London: Groombridge & Sons (1851), p. 34.
5. **Bread and fruit pudding:** *Vegetarian Cookery by a lady with an introduction explanatory of the principles of vegetarianism* (1852), London, Fred Pitman, Manchester, William Bremner, 5th edition, p.77.
6. **Delicious fruit pudding (baked):** *A manual of domestic economy: suited to families spending from £100 to £1000 a year. Including directions for the management of the nursery and sick room, and the preparation and administrations of domestic remedies* (1856) John Henry Walsh, G. Routledge & Co. Recipe No. 1069(f) p. 510.
7. **Delicious fruit pudding (baked):** *The English cookery book, receipts collected by a committee of ladies, and ed. by J. H. Walsh* (1859), G. Routledge & Co. Recipe No. 831, p. 226.
8. **Malvern pudding:** *Warne's model cookery and housekeeping book: containing complete instructions in household management*, Mary Jewry (1868), London, Frederick Warne & Co., Recipe No: 2015, p. 511.
9. **Malvern pudding:** *Warne's model cookery and housekeeping book: containing complete instructions in household management*, Mary Jewry (1871), London, Frederick Warne & Co., Recipe No: 556, p. 118.
10. **Malvern pudding:** *Warne's every-day cookery: containing one thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight distinct receipt*, Mary Jewry (1872), London, Frederick Warne & Co., Recipe No: 1098, p. 224.
11. **Cottage's pudding:** *Puddings & sweets, 365 receipts* (1877), Lucy Jones, London, Henry S. King & Co, p. 33.
12. **Monte Rosa Puddings & sweets, 365 receipts (1877), Lucy Jones, London, Henry S. King & Co, p. 68.**
13. **Malvern pudding:** *Wholesome cookery* (1882), Marie de Joncourt, London, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., Recipe No. 368, p. 145.
14. **Hydropathic pudding:** *The Girl's Own Paper* (London, England), Issue 169 (Saturday, March 24 1883); p. 390.
15. **Malvern pudding:** *Wholesome cookery* (1885), Marie de Joncourt, London, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., Recipe No. 368, p. 145.
16. **Malvern pudding:** *Wholesome cookery* (1887), Marie de Joncourt, London, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., Recipe No. 368, p. 145.
17. **Dr Johnson's pudding:** *Cookery book and general axioms for plain cookery*, (1890), Miss Briggs, London, Chas Straker & Sons, p. 83/84.
18. **Bombay pudding:** *Myra's cookery book: being a new and practical method of learning cookery and working out well-tried recipes* (1890), Myra (Editor), London, Goubaud & Sons, p. 300.
19. **Hydropathic pudding:** *A year's cookery*, Phillis Browne (1892), Cassell &

- Company, London p. 225, also *More Tasty Dishes* (1892) James Clarke, London, p. 61.
20. **Hydropathic pudding:** *Diet and cookery for common ailments* (1894), Phillis Browne, London, Cassel & Co., p. 132.
 21. **Brandenburg pudding:** *A practical dictionary of cookery: 1200 tested recipes* (1898), Ethel Meyer, London: J Murray, Recipe No. 194, pp. 51/52.
 22. **Wakefield pudding:** *Plain cookery recipes for use in the York Board schools. Ca.* 1900, York: York School Board, Recipe No. 56, p. 19.
 23. **Hydropathic pudding:** *The art of feeding the invalid: A series of chapters on the nature of certain prevalent diseases and maladies; together with carefully selected recipes for the preparation of food for invalids* (1900), London, The Scientific Press Ltd. p. 187.
 24. **Dr Johnson's pudding:** *Cassell's Universal Cookery Book* (1901), Lizzie Heritage, J.L.W. Thudichum, London ; New York: Cassell, p. 841.
 25. **Hydropathic pudding:** *Cassell's Universal Cookery Book* (1901), Lizzie Heritage, J.L.W. Thudichum, London, New York: Cassell, p. 851.
 26. **Hydropathic pudding:** *The Samaritan cookery book* (1903), E.P. Watson, Glasgow: McNaughtan & Sinclair, p. 103.
 27. **Summer pudding:** *The Queen Cookery Books No 6 "Sweets"* (1904) S. Beaty-Pownall, London: Horace Cox, p. 106.
 28. **Hydropathic Pudding:** *The Apsley cookery book: containing 448 recipes for the uric-acid-free diet* (1906), John J. Webster, F.W. Jessop, Recipe No. 261, p. 130.
 29. **Fruit pudding:** *Mrs. Beeton's Household Management: a guide to cookery in all branches: daily duties, menu making, mistress & servant, home doctor, hostess & guest, sick nursing, marketing, the nursery, trussing & carving, home lawyer* (1907) Mrs (Isabella Mary) Beeton, London: Ward, Lock, p. 1028, Recipe No. 2114.
 30. **Drumlanrig pudding:** *The Ocklye Cookery Book* (1909) by Eleanor L. Jenkinson, Crowborough, Sussex: Wilkins, p. 73.
 31. **Malvern pudding:** *Warne's model cookery and housekeeping book: containing complete instructions in household management*, Mary Jewry (1910), London: Frederick Warne & Co., Recipe No: 2015, p. 511.
 32. **Malvern pudding:** *Middle Class Cookery* (1912), Manchester School of Domestic Economy and Cookery, Macmillan & Co, p. 167.
 33. **Bread and fruit pudding:** *The Healthy Life Cook Book*, Florence Daniel, second edition (1915), p. 31.