

### Taste of the times

Although the war had ended nearly eight years before, times were still tough when the Queen was crowned. Rationing did not end until the following year, and I remember the horrified silence that greeted my brother dropping our whole family's weekly egg ration (four eggs in a paper bag) onto a stone floor. My mother scooped them up.

Sweets were rationed too. Once, sorry for some prisoners of war digging a trench in the Edgware Road, I held out my bag of toffees for them each to take one. The first one took the whole bag. Never mind, said my mother, you'll get another bag next month, and they won't.

If the diet was dull, it was healthier than it has ever been since, with plenty of potatoes, bread and vegetables and precious little protein. Our steady progress to fattest nation in Europe began with the end of rationing in 1954.

By the Seventies, supermarkets were ousting local shops with bulk buys and TV dinners. Frozen veg was now more popular than canned. By the Eighties, we'd learnt that olive oil was not just for soothing earache and we could buy ready-washed salad and chilled tiramisu. By the Nineties the supermarkets were selling fresh Indian curries, and by the end of the century the affluent customer did not need to cook at all.

Preparing food had been getting easier if you had the money. Food mixers, pressure cookers, automatic cookers and, above all, freezers made life simpler. By the boom-time Eighties the wealthy boasted designer kitchens, often with machines to make ice-cream, pasta, bread and cappuccino.

*Prue Leith, OBE (chef, restaurateur and author)*

- 1 In what year did the Queen celebrate her Golden Jubilee?  
Mark your answer in your answer booklet.  
  - A 2000
  - B 2002
  - C 2052
  - D 1952
  - E 1992
- 2 Which of the following does not describe where the writer of the first article lives?  
Mark your answer in your answer booklet.  
  - A in the countryside
  - B in a beamed cottage
  - C in a Victorian house
  - D in the Chiltern Hills
  - E in England
- 3 How quickly can an e-mail be sent? Mark your answer in your answer booklet.  
  - A in a minute
  - B in a second
  - C in an hour
  - D in a day
  - E in a week
- 4 How does the writer of the first article check her facts?  
Mark your answer in your answer booklet.  
  - A using e-mail
  - B on the radio
  - C in a book
  - D on the telephone
  - E using the internet

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