

IT'S WEDNESDAY SO IT'S MEAT & POTATO PIE.

Being involved in the 1960's project it suddenly occurred to me that as a school girl coming home on the bus , every day irrespective of it being summer or winter, I knew what I would be having for my tea - as we called it.

Monday very much depended on what meat we had on Sunday. If we had leftover chicken it would be a casserole, leftover lamb would mean " hash " but if it had been beef (rare occasion) it would have been a stew. Monday was always wash - day so my Mum would prepare tea in the morning and let it cook all day on the stove. Whatever it was we would have carrots , onions, and turnips to bulk it out and even be encouraged to dip a slice of bread in the gravy. When we were lucky enough to have stew it would always have crispy dumplings bubbling on the top - light as a feather . She would always make six. Two for Dad and one each for herself, my sister Judith and I so there was always a fight as to who should have the spare.

In the Beaumont household Tuesday was ironing day and for tea - sausage and mash. I cannot say it was a favourite of mine but the dog loved it.

Wednesday - the best day of the week - food-wise. Meat and potato pie with a thick crust, mushy peas and of course Henderson's Relish ; the oomph! in any meal. She always made a big pie so we were guaranteed seconds. Another treat was there would usually left - over pastry so we had " afters " sometimes apple or rhubarb pie with thick custard. If we were really lucky Mum would have put kidney in the stew and I'd poke around till I found a piece. This was a day when the dog was sad.

Thursday was a makeshift day , she would warn us at breakfast if there was a crisis - no money till your Dad gets paid tomorrow . I was happy if it turned out to be liver with thick onion gravy but dejected when the smell of bacon floated down the entry to greet me. On occasion it was tripe which I hate to admit I quite liked. Dad would have it boiled in milk- but I took it straight, uncooked and with lashing of vinegar and salt.

Friday normality returned and it was fish. Sometimes fried, or sometimes in a pie but never with chips we always had mash. This is why a bag of chips was a treat for me and I always had one on the way home from Girl Guides .

Saturday was Mum's day off as she went to town and depending what she felt like when she got home as to what we had to eat. Dad loved finney haddock or perhaps boiled ham with home - grown tomatoes and large jars of home - cooked pickles such as onions, red cabbage or beetroot covered the table.

My Mum had thirteen siblings, six of them her sisters and they would take it in turns to have the whole family to Sunday tea. Wherever you went, Auntie Alice's, Auntie Hilda's or Auntie Vera's house we always had the same. Tin salmon with white bread and butter, and tin pears or peaches with Carnation milk. There was always a home baked cake and unending cups of tea - best china of course.

Mum was not a baker. She rarely supplied buns, cakes or biscuits. However she was a good home cook and made the best of what we as a family could afford. Whatever day of the week it was I always knew that the tea would be made and served with love.

Denise West.