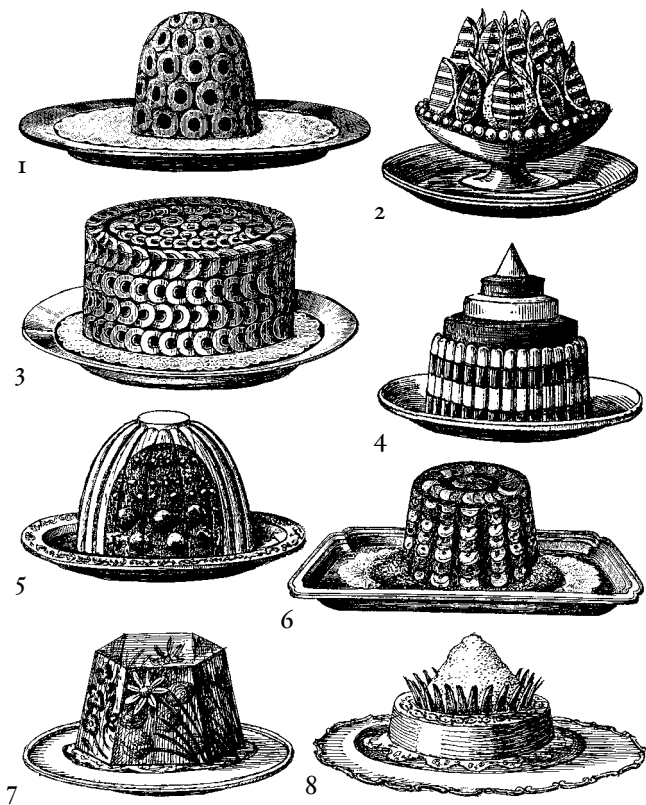


THE ENGLISH KITCHEN

JELLIES & THEIR MOULDS



Frontispiece. Classic jellies of the Victorian period: (1) Mosaic of lemon jelly and custard, 1891; (2) Oranges à la Bellevue, 1855; (3) Timbale à la Versailles, 1891; (4) Ribbon jelly, 1855; (5) Macédoine jelly, 1855; (6) Bavaroise à la Impériale, 1891; (7) Jelly à l'Andalouse, c. 1900; (8) Rice à la Parisienne, 1888.

THE ENGLISH KITCHEN

JELLIES
&
THEIR MOULDS

PETER BREARS



PROSPECT BOOKS

2010

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*Peter Brears,
Leeds 2010*

INTRODUCTION

Today's jellies tend to fall into the cheap and cheerful category of food. You can buy a basic pack of soluble flavoured jelly squares for 9p in some supermarkets, and it only takes a couple of minutes to dissolve them in hot water, pour them into a bowl and leave them to set to provide a treat for the kids. This approach is economical, trouble-free and efficient, but it completely undervalues and underplays the true potential of probably our most versatile and exciting of foodstuffs.

Jellies are unique in their range of physical properties. Although they are virtually tasteless, they can instantly absorb any chosen flavour drawn from fruits and spices, as well as readily dissolving sugars, wines and spirits throughout their mass. Having no texture of their own, they can take on those of creams, cereals, fruit purées, ground nuts and many other things, or they can be whipped up into foams. They can also be used to embed fresh, preserved or candied fruits, or stiff custards and other jellies of contrasting flavour and colour. Being colourless at the outset, they immediately take on the widest variety of tones, tinctures and degrees of opacity as imparted by all manner of edible liquids and colourings. They have no shape of their own, but take on the shape of any mould or vessel into which they are poured. This list of attributes is already impressive, but has yet to include their final most important and unique characteristics. The first of these is perfect transparency. No other food is so capable of allowing light to pass through it, reflected and refracted by the facets of its outer surfaces. The second is dynamic movement, the wobble factor, always a delight to the eye. The third, just as important, is their capacity

to slowly release their flavours and textures into the mouth, prolonging the pleasure and appreciation of ingredients which otherwise would be much more rapidly swallowed.

Over the last seven hundred years generations of cooks have laboured hard and long to convert the most unpromising of waste animal products into the finest luxurious, succulent, attractive and delicious high-status jellies. In the courts of medieval and Tudor England, they were only served at the tables of kings, queens, princes and nobles, so great was their prestige. Their use then slowly percolated to the gentry class below, before entering into general use with the introduction of prepared gelatins in the mid-nineteenth century.

My first detailed study of early jellies started in 1995 with a 'phone call from Beverley Wigg of Team Saatchi, who had been commissioned by the Gelatine Manufacturers of Europe to promote jelly-making in the home. The approach was to be historical, restoring the lost status of jellies by recreating the most impressive examples in the kitchens of great country houses. Unfortunately, it seemed no-one knew anything about early jellies, and no country-house owners were interested in the project. Having myself researched, trialled and published some initial studies of jellies, as well as being involved in the restoration of some large country-house kitchens, I was asked to meet the clients and see what could be done. The result was Britain's first Jelly Festival, which took place at Petworth House, Sussex, in the first week of August 1995.

Living and working in the original servants' quarters, we spent a few days recreating the most interesting jellies made between the 1390s and 1930s, only to discover that virtually none had set sufficiently to be turned out, since this was one of the hottest summers on record. Much re-melting and re-moulding with stronger gelatins followed, so that there were approaching a hundred jellies ranged along the great kitchen table and dressers on the first morning. As soon as the doors opened and members of the public began to flow through, it

was obvious that it was going to be a great success. Everyone looked remarkably happy, grandparents seeing jellies which brought back memories of past events which had involved jellies, and children looking in wide-eyed wonder at the jelly lions or bunny-rabbits feasting on jelly grass and carrots. There was also great conversation between the generations, and lots of repartee between visitors and cooks. The message was clear, English people still love a good jelly. So do the press.

Both national and local media were 'All of a Quiver!' with these 'Jelly Japes', 'Shaking all over' as we were 'Breaking the Mould', explaining 'The Shape of Things to Come' in this 'Perfect Setting'. The festival was 'Jelly Good Fun' and we were all 'Jelly Good Fellows', going 'Great Shakes' and even 'Throwing a Wobbly!' Such raucous reportage was just what was needed. Jelly was back in the news. This event lasted a week, and was enjoyed by many hundreds of visitors, similar crowds coming to subsequent festivals at Harewood House near Leeds over Easter 1996, and at Syon House over Easter 1997. In the meantime *Country Life* informed me that I was now one of their 'Living National Treasures' as a 'Traditional English Jelly-maker', later, thankfully, modified to 'Food Historian'.

About this time, late one evening, someone with a deep and strong Northern Irish accent 'phoned to ask, 'Are you the jelly person?' This sent a shiver down my spine. In the mid-1970s I had stood in my museum and watched the minutes tick by the deadline for an IRA bomb threat, which the British security forces had informed me was probably real; did the man want 'jelly' or 'gelli'? On asking who was calling, I was told it was Chivers of Ireland: 'Could you do for the Irish jelly what you've done for the English jelly?' The result was one of the most enjoyable of all jelly experiences. It was arranged for me to do a week of historic jelly demonstrations in an elegant Georgian town-house hotel in Dublin in July 1996, with full media coverage. Just before departing, Chivers rang to confirm the arrangements, then announcing that the venue had been changed.

‘Why?’

‘The orang-utan!’ Apparently this recently-born primate had been rejected by its parents and was being nurtured by the keepers. ‘It’s in bed with them, wearing nappies, feeding from the bottle, and loads of folk are going to see it, so we’ve cancelled your place at the hotel, and put you in the Zoo with the monkeys.’

Although unexpected, this was good promotional policy. Over the next week, the staff at Dublin Zoo’s kitchens gave me a great welcome, a bench to myself, and full access to their fine refrigerated larder. It was hard work, but enormous fun; punctuated by demonstration sessions for the food-writers of Ireland and the nation’s media, the most delightfully enthusiastic and intelligent of audiences. The long tables of jellies, both English and Irish, created much interest and conversation, ‘Why had I adopted such an injellyectual approach?’

The television reporter from RTE couldn’t understand why a foaming pint of Guinness stood amid the jellies.

‘What’s the black stuff doing there?’

‘It’s a jelly.’

‘No it isn’t – its the Black Stuff – I should know.’

‘It’s a jelly.’

‘Prove it.’

At this point the glass was turned upside down, the Guinness and its foam remaining firmly in place.

‘Dear God! The Englishman has jellified the Guinness! Why, on earth would anyone want to do a thing like that?’

Its potential for being consumed while lying helplessly horizontal at the end of a night of social inebriation was then explained, the point taken, the new product sampled, and pronounced good.

Surely no other foodstuff could ever create such careless happiness, frivolity and enjoyment. However, jelly has its serious side too. I published the first outline study of its seven-hundred year history as ‘Transparent Pleasures – The Story of

the Jelly' in *Petits Propos Culinaires*, volumes 53 and 54, in 1996–7. This went on to win the Oxford Symposium on Food and Food History's Sophie Coe Prize in 1997. The present book extends the story and provides greater detail. In order to be as practical as possible, the majority of the historic recipes have been re-written in modern form, but follow closely the working methods and proportions of ingredients in the original texts. Where gelatin was specified, the same proportions have been retained, although they may need to be adapted to meet the setting qualities of modern gelatin, or particular temperature conditions when serving. Where the earlier recipes start off with calf's feet, hart's horn, ivory dust or isinglass, however, their place has been taken by an appropriate quantity of gelatin as a workable alternative.

The recipes are arranged in approximate date order, convenient for those who wish to make jellies to form part of a recreated meal of any chosen period. The same approach is taken for the moulds. Reproductions of pages from manufacturers' and retailers' catalogues also offer a substantial amount of new information for all those who collect them as a hobby. Where moulds are known to have been made for the production of a particular jelly, the associated recipe is also given, thus uniting the frequently disparate worlds of the cook and the collector.

CHAPTER ONE



By Her Majesty's Royal Letters Patent.
 NO. 11975, A.D. 1847.

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 ISINGLASS.**
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 PURPOSES.

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DIRECTIONS FOR USE AND RECIPES ENCLOSED.

1 oz. Packet, 1s.

Each Genuine Packet bears the
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By Her Majesty's Royal
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NO. 11975, A.D. 1847.

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 For making Jelly.

1 Q^t. Packet, 6^d.

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Made in the following flavours:—**Calf's Foot, Lemon, Orange, Vanilla, Raspberry, Cherry** and Pineapple
 OR

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In **Pink and Quard** Packets.

Will be found perfectly pure and wholesome, and the flavour excellent, while their exceeding cheapness brings them within the reach of all classes.

NELSON'S SPECIALITIES

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Letters Patent.

For **First-Class Jellies**

**NELSON'S OPAQUE, BRILLIANT,
 OR POWDERED GELATINE
 SHOULD ALWAYS BE USED.**

Figure 1. Advertisements such as these promoted the use of improved 'patent' gelatines in the mid-nineteenth century.

The substance which is the basis of the jellies into which certain animal tissues (skin, tendons, ligaments, the matrix of bones, etc.) are converted when treated by hot water for some time. It is amorphous, brittle, without taste or smell, transparent, and of a faint yellow tint; and is composed of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, and sulphur.

This definition provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary* covers all the essential characteristics of this remarkable substance.¹ It is based on collagen, a stiff fibrous protein found in all animal skin and connective tissue. Instead of being a single molecule it has three separate molecules twisted around each other like strands in a rope to form a triple helix structure, tough and almost inedible. Only by heating the collagen above some 70°C does the helix unwind, its separate strand-like molecules interacting with each other to form a random three-dimensional network. This holds the surrounding water in place, making it behave more like a solid than a liquid, in other words, a jelly. This process is closely governed by temperature, the molecules separating every time they exceed about 30°C, and re-connecting when they fall beneath about 15°C, phenomena we know as melting and setting.² If raw egg-whites, for instance, are mixed into the melted jelly and then heated, they form permanent molecular links with the gelatin strands and so form a jelly which cannot be re-melted. Similarly the addition of certain enzymes, such as those in fresh pineapple or kiwi fruit, can break down the links in the gelatin structure, causing it to become unsettable.

(1) *O.E.D.* *sv* Gelatin.

(2) Barham, 22–23.

Medieval cooks were certainly ignorant of the scientific explanation behind the formation of jelly, but this did not prevent them from developing considerable skill in its preparation. When any of their meats and fishes with a high collagen content had been boiled to tenderness and then allowed to cool, they could not fail to have noticed how they set to firmness, the fats rising to the surface and the sediment dropping to the bottom. Once tasted, they would appreciate the pleasure of feeling it melt on their tongues, the flavours it released and the satisfying glutinous smoothness it left in the mouth. From this stage it would take little ingenuity to start to make jelly not as a by-product, but as a dish in its own right.

Probably the earliest English recipe for ‘jelly’ comes from a manuscript written in the first quarter of the fourteenth century:³

Gelee. Vihs isodeen in win & water & saffron & paudre of
gynger & kanele, galingal, & beo idon in a vessel ywryen
clanlicke; ye colour quyte.

Experience shows that this method of just cooking fish in white wine, saffron, ginger, cinnamon and galingal only produces a spicy fish stew, nothing remotely resembling anything we could ever describe as a jelly. A further recipe of about 1381 is similarly unpromising:⁴

For to make mete gelee that it be wel chariaunt, tak
wyte wyn & a perty of water & saffroun & gode spicis
& flesh of piggys or of hennys, or fresch fisch, & boyle
tham togedere; & after, wan yt ys boylid & cold, dres yt
in dischis & serve forthe.

This thick pork or chicken stew might just hold itself together in a serving dish, if the weather was cold, but again lacks sufficient gelatin to produce a good jelly. However, the same manuscript also contains the following:⁵

(3) Hiatt & Butler,
I 26.

(4) *ibid.*, II 36.

(5) *ibid.*, I 56.

For to make a gely, tak hoggys fet other pyggys, other erys, other pertrichys, othere chiconys, & do hem togedere & seth hem in a pot; & do in hem flowre of canel and clowys hole or grounde. Do thereto vinegere, & tak & do the broth in a clere vessel of all thys, & tak the flesch & kerf yt in smale morselys & do yt therein. Tak powder of gelyngale & cast above & lat yt kele. Tak bronchys of ye lorere tre & styk over it, & kep yt al so longe as thou wilt & serve yt forth.

This is an excellent recipe, one which any traditional farmer's wife or pork butcher would immediately recognize as a stiff, jellied brawn. The feet and ears or porkers and suckling pigs were among the best sources of gelatin, giving a rich, glutinous stock. Proof of how successful this recipe would be is provided by the following version published almost six hundred years later in *The Farmer's Weekly*. It was sent in by Mrs H.M. Diamond of Worcestershire.⁶

2 pig's feet, 1lb of shoulder steak, ham scraps ... pepper, salt. Stew the ... pig's feet very slowly with the shoulder steak and ham scraps. Season with pepper and salt. When thoroughly cooked cut up the meat into small pieces, and pour with the liquor into a mould which has been well rinsed in cold water, then leave to set and turn out next day.. This dish is economical and easily prepared – which is what we require in these days when, as farmers' wives, it is necessary to consider expenses and our time.

The first evidence of care being taken to ensure that jelly stock was being filtered and reduced separately to ensure good clarity and firmness comes from recipes such as the following of around 1390. After being well boiled with the meat or fish, the stock was to be passed:⁷

thurgh a cloth in to an erthen panne ... Lat it seeth [boil or simmer] & skym it wel. Whan it is ysode [boiled], dof

(6) Hargreaves, 244.

(7) Hieatt & Butler, IV 104.

TO MOULD A JELLY

Metal moulds such as those of copper, aluminium and tinplate require no preparation.

Moulds of glass, pottery and plastic tend to stick to the jelly, even if freshly-rinsed before use.

Their interiors should therefore be given the thinnest possible coating of vegetable or walnut oil, or of butter, just before being filled with the cold but unset jelly liquid. If this is still warm, it melts the oil or butter, and absorbs it, rather than leaving it in place as a separator.

TO LINE A MOULD

For a number of recipes, particularly those of the Victorian period, it is necessary to line metal moulds with a $\frac{1}{8} - \frac{1}{4}$ in. / 3 – 7 mm all-over layer of clear jelly. To do this, embed the mould in iced water, pour in about $\frac{1}{4}$ pt / 150 ml jelly (made with at least 5 tsp / 8 leaves of gelatin to the pint), when just about to set, then rotate the mould at an angle, to coat both the walls and the base. If the first coat is too thin, apply another in the same way.

TO UNMOULD A JELLY

1. If using a metal mould, dip it briefly into warm water, or rapidly revolve its exterior under the flow of warm water from a tap.
2. For every mould, hold it open-side up in one hand, using the other hand to wet both the flat surface of the jelly and also the plate it is to be turned out on.
3. Tilting the mould slightly to one side, use the fingers of the free hand to ease the edges of the jelly from the mould, all round.
4. Slowly rotate the mould while tilting it further towards the

horizontal, holding it in place with the free hand, until it has fully separated, and its full weight can be felt.

5. Tilt the mould until almost upside down, still holding the jelly in place. Put part of the rim of the mould onto the plate, and slide away the fingers of the free hand, leaving the jelly to fall free onto the plate.
6. Slide the jelly into position, holding it there if necessary for about one minute for it to absorb the water beneath it, and so set itself neatly in place.
7. Other methods, such as covering with a plate, inverting, and shaking vigorously, or blasting the exterior with the flame of a blowtorch, as seen practised on television by Michelin chefs, are not to be recommended.
8. Use a straw to suck up any surplus water or liquid jelly from around its base, leaving a clean line between the jelly and the plate.

When working with gelatin, the following points should always be considered:

1. Never sprinkle gelatin into hot water, or it will form lumps which are very difficult to dissolve.
2. Never pour hot, melted gelatin into cold liquid as it may form 'strings', always mix when tepid.
3. Never use fresh kiwi fruit, figs or pineapple in jellies, since their enzymes will prevent them from setting. There is no problem if they are in the form of tinned fruit or pasteurized juice.
4. Never heat gelatin in milk over around 70°C, or it will cause it to curdle.
5. Never bring gelatin to the boil, as this weakens its gelling properties.
6. Unmould jellies just before serving.
7. Never allow a moulded jelly to fall below the freezing point, since the long ice crystals slice through the jelly, causing it to break up and collapse.

8. Jellies are best stored in cool, relatively humid conditions and eaten within a day of unmoulding. Dry conditions or a draught can cause their surfaces to dry out and become tough. Jellies also provide an ideal environment for the growth of infectious cultures, and must always be kept in clean conditions. If they are to be stored in refrigerators or larders, or transported to a venue, it is best to stretch a piece of clingfilm across the top of the mould to prevent the absorption of odours, dust, etc., or drying out.

Using these instructions it is easy to produce reliable, clear jellies. However, it is always best to try a small batch of any manufactured brand of gelatin before making larger quantities. Some have a yellowish tint, for example, and others, especially the leaf gelatines, are usually crystal clear. Some are made from bovine, and some from porcine bones or hides. In 1996 both the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee and The World Health Organization issued reports which confirmed that manufactured gelatins were all considered safe for human consumption. They are filtered, concentrated and sterilized at approximately 140°C before drying to maintain this standard.

In addition to the major forms of gelatin considered in this chapter, there were others of lesser importance, such as hart's-horn and ivory gelatins, along with other starches and gums which were used to create moulded desserts. Their brief histories and methods of preparation will now follow.

CHAPTER TWO

OF JELLIES,
GUMS &
STARCHES



Jellies and blancmanges were not only reliant on calf, pig or fish gelatins, for similar rather than identical results could be obtained from a wide variety of other ingredients. Some, such as ivory and deer antlers, were animal products, but the majority were vegetable starches and gums. The flummeries thickened with fine starches extracted from oatmeal or bran which were made in Wales, the West Country and Welsh border counties for centuries were more of subsistence food than a delicacy. As one Merioneth couplet stated:¹

Llymru llwyd da i ddim
Ond i lenwi bol rhag isho bwyd

[Pale flummery, good for nothing
But to fill the belly and suppress hunger]

From the early eighteenth century the expansion of seaborne trade with every part of the known world introduced new starches which had formed the staple diets of their distant communities. Instead of adopting their original methods of preparation, English cooks developed fresh recipes in order to produce a whole series of sweet, luscious desserts. In this way the sweet white-meat and almond blancmanges of earlier times were transformed into the moulded mixtures of starch, milk, sugar and flavourings which we recognize as blancmange today. However, not all of such dishes were to be eaten for pleasure. Some were intended for the sickroom, being considered both nutritive and easy of digestion to those with impaired appetites. The shape and enduring hardness of the elephant tusks used to

(1) Tibbott, 53-4.

make ivory jelly, as well as the deer antlers used for hartshorn jelly, were further believed to transfer their properties to gentlemen who lacked such characteristics.

The following paragraphs describe all the major gelling agents of the last 400 years, providing each with a typical recipe for its conversion into a jelly or blancmange. Quite a few are unsuitable for modern use, either because their principal ingredients are no longer available, or that, like biscuit or bread jellies, they are not required to sustain the sick. The remainder are all worth reviving, offering a range of economical, easily made and frequently vegetarian or vegan desserts. The oatmeal flummery should certainly be tried, its yoghurt-like acidity and smooth texture being an excellent foil for honey, fortified wines or thick creams.

AGAR-AGAR

In Japan the red *Gelidium* algae was gathered on marine shores and dried before being processed. Following a method reputedly developed in 1658, it was then beaten, washed, boiled, frozen and thawed, the impurities running off with the melt-water to leave the purified gum called kanten. When dried it would keep indefinitely, its use spreading from south-east Asia into Europe by the mid-nineteenth century. In England, where it was known by its Malay name of agar-agar, it was used as a domestic gelling agent up to the 1940s, when the War cut off supplies. This led to the development of alginates from other sources. The following is a typical version of the 1920s:²

$\frac{1}{4}$ oz / 6 g agar-agar

1 pt / 600 ml liquid

Soak the agar-agar in $\frac{1}{4}$ pt / 150 ml cold water for 2 hours, then cut up, return to the water, and place over a low heat, stirring frequently, until it has dissolved. Stir in the remaining liquid, pour into a mould, and leave for about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours in a cold place to set. Turn out of mould just before serving.

(2) Beeton, (c. 1920),
no. 1189.

ALGINATES

These gums are extracted from seaweeds, such as *Macrocystis pyrifera*, the Californian kelp, the genus *Laminaria* from the British coast, and various *Ascophylum* wracks. When processed, their gums are used in a wide variety of industrially-processed foods, only being used domestically as an ingredient in the squares and crystals sold for making vegetarian jellies.

AMYDON

In 1600 Richard Surfleet's *Maison Rustique, or the countrie farme* described amydon as 'the best wheat meal, put into water several times so that all the bran etc. may float to the top and be skimmed off, the heavy meal being dried in the sun, broken into gobbets, and so made into fine meal.'³ Similar instructions survive in early fifteenth-century recipe books.⁴

For to make amydon

Nym whete at midsomer & salt, & do it in a faire vessel,
do water therto, that thy whete be yheled, let it stonde
ix days & ix nyght, & everyday whess wel thy whete &
at ye ix daye ende bray hit well in a mortar & drie hit
togenst ye sonne, do it in a faire vessel & kevere hit fort,
than will it note.

Amydon

To mak amydon take whet and step it in water x dais
and change the water evry daye then bet yt smalle in
a mortair and sethe it with water and mylk and sye it
throughe a cloth and let yt stond and setelle and pour
out the water and lay it on a clothe and turn it till it be
drye.

The result was a very fine starch, for which cornflour may be substituted for modern versions of early recipes.

(3) Surfleet (1616 ed.),
572.

(4) Austin, 112;
Napier, 101.

ARROWROOT

This West Indian plant, *Maranta arundinacea* produces tubers which would absorb poison from wounds, especially those of poisoned arrows, as Sir Hans Sloane noted in 1696. When a year old, they were also dug up, washed and peeled, rasped or beaten to a pulp, strained with rainwater to extract the fibrous elements, and then left for their starch to settle. Having poured off the clear water, the starch was washed and drained two or three times, spread on white cloths and set in the sun to dry.⁵ The best came from the islands of Jamaica, Bermuda, St Vincent and St Kitts, retailing at up to 2s. 6d. a pound in the 1860s.⁶ It had excellent gelling properties, its high reputation and price causing a number of lesser starches to be sold as ‘arrowroot’ during the nineteenth century. These included:

East Indian arrowroot

Brazilian arrowroot

Tabiti arrowroot

Portland arrowroot

English arrowroot

curcuma starch

cassava starch or tapioca

tacca starch or salop

from the wild herb Arum

maculatum, ‘Wake Robin’

or ‘Lords and Ladies’

found in many English

hedgerows

potato starch, for which

Eliza Acton gave

instructions in her Modern

Cookery of 1855.⁷

All those cooking with ‘arrowroot’ in the nineteenth century must have experienced jellies and blancmanges which were either rubbery or irretrievably liquid according to which ‘arrowroot’ they had purchased. Only with the passing of Acts of Parliament governing adulteration was it possible to achieve good, predictable results. This arrowroot ‘shape’ recipe is typical of those made in the nineteenth century:⁸

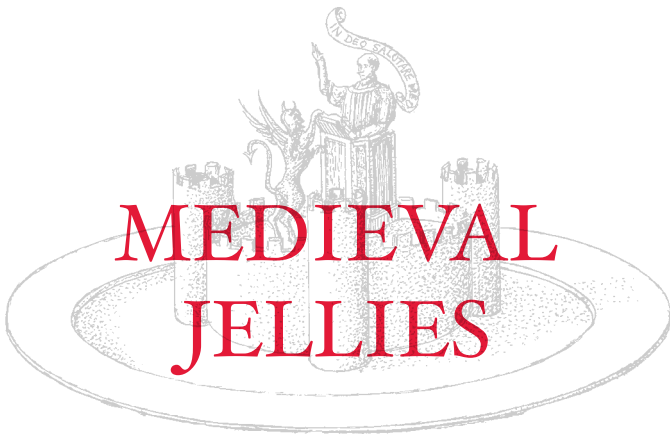
(5) *O.E.D. sv*
Arrowroot’,
Garrett, I 45.

(6) Walsh, 123.

(7) Acton, 154.

(8) Garrett, I 47.

CHAPTER THREE



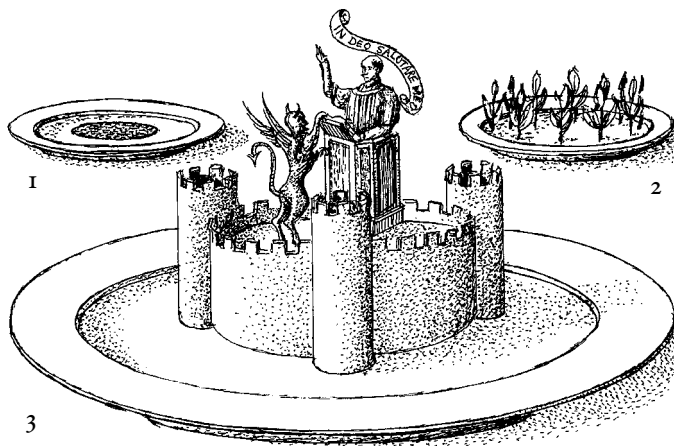


Figure 2. Medieval jellies. (1) a 'partie jelly of two colours'; (2) a jelly garnished with laurel sprigs; (3) Bishop Clifford's 'brod custard with a castell, ther in with a stuff in the castelle of gille', bearing a demon debating with a priest defended with the text 'In Deo salutare meo' (In God I have the advantage/benefit).

Since the conversion of raw materials into clear, flavoursome and attractive jellies demanded great investment in time, labour and skill, it is not surprising that they were considered a royal and noble delicacy. In the fourteenth century the finest foods cooked ‘for the kynge at home for his owne table’ featured a ‘potage callyd gele’ served at the start of the second of his three courses.¹ Other recommended menus of the period included ‘gele’ as a second-course dish on Eastertime flesh-days, and as a first-course dish on fish days.² The ‘Sotelteys’ which terminated each course at the King’s table were elaborate presentations of the finest foods, each being designed both to impress and to deliver a particular message through its symbolism or inscription. *The Forme of Cury*, the cookery manuscript compiled by Richard II’s cooks about 1390, gave instructions for making them, in various forms. The installation feast of Bishop Clifford of London in 1407 featured one with a demon and a doctor of divinity on a jelly-filled castle amid a custard moat, for example.³

Jellies continued to appear as second-course pottages in the fifteenth century, John Russell’s *Boke of Nurture* considering that ‘Jely red and white ... is good dewynge’ for fish days.⁴ They were also to be found during the remainder of the meal, his menus including an amber jelly at the end of the second course and perch in jelly in the third.⁵ Unfortunately there are no descriptions of the second-course jelly which Henry IV provided for his French guests and the heralds after jousting at Smithfield, or for those served in 1403 at his marriage to Joan of Navarre.⁶ However, much more is known of those made for his successors. For the coronation of Henry V in 1413, for example,

(1) Hicatt & Butler, 39.

(2) *ibid.*, 40 (4), 41 (8).

(3) Warner, 4; Napier, 6.

(4) Furnival, 49, 51.

(5) *ibid.*, 49–50.

(6) Napier, 4; Warner, XXXIV.

the second-course pottage was a ‘gilly with swannys of braun [meat] ther in for the king and ffor other Estates’.⁷ The swans on this jelly lake were one of his father’s badges, a tribute which all the diners would have clearly recognized.⁸ When a feast was held to celebrate the coronation of his new wife Catherine of Valois in 1421 the second-course pottage was a ‘Gely coloured with columbyne floures’.⁹ The inverted flowers of the *Aqualegia vulgaris* resembled five doves clustered together, hence its ‘columbine’ name, meaning dove-like. Their appearance here therefore celebrated Catherine’s dove-like qualities of maidenly innocence and gentleness. Henry VI also had a second-course jelly at his coronation feast in 1429, his being a ‘Gely party wrytlen and noted with “Te Deum Laudamus” [Thee, God, we praise]’.¹⁰

Evidence of the importance of jellies at medieval feasts is provided by the accounts of the food served at the 1466 enthronement celebrations for George Neville, Archbishop of York and Chancellor of England, in his palace just to the north of York Minster. The menus for the various tables list tench in jelly, ling in jelly, ‘Jelly, and parted raying to pottage’ and great jellies. Probably in addition to these there were a thousand dishes of plain jelly and a further three thousand ‘parted’ or multi-colour jellies, perhaps over five thousand jellies in all for a single feast.¹¹

The earlier recipes for jelly are for an uncleared, meaty dish we would now recognize as a brawn. The following example dating from around 1381, could also be made with pig’s ears, partridges or chickens.

(7) *ibid.*, 7.

(8) Hasler 8.

(9) Warner, XXXVI.

(10) Strutt II 103.

(11) Warner, 97–9.

TO MAKE A JELLY¹²

[see fig. 2.2]

<i>4 pig's feet</i>	<i>½ pt / 300 ml white wine vinegar</i>
<i>½ tsp ground cinnamon</i>	<i>½ tsp ground galingal [or ginger]</i>
<i>½ tsp ground cloves</i>	<i>large sprigs of laurel or bay</i>

Soak the feet in cold water for a few hours, scrub clean, rinse, and chop coarsely. Cover with water, cinnamon, clove and vinegar, cover, and simmer slowly for 4–5 hours until the flesh falls off the bone. Pour the stock off into a clean pan, remove all the flesh from the bones, carve it in small pieces, return to the stock, briefly re-heat it and pour into a deep serving dish. Sprinkle the galingal over the surface, leave in a cool place to set, and finally stick with ‘branches’ of the laurel or bay (do not forget that other laurels than bay laurel are poisonous if eaten).

By the fifteenth century rather more elegant and delicate jellies of meat were being made by cooking calf’s feet separately in the stock in order to extract their gelatin. This may still be done today, but in the recipe below modern gelatin has been used to obtain exactly the same result.

JELLY OF FLESH¹³

<i>1 rabbit, prepared for cooking</i>	<i>1 bottle [sweet] red wine</i>
<i>1 small ‘oven-ready’ chicken</i>	<i>gelatin</i>
<i>1 lb / 600 g lean pork</i>	<i>salt</i>
<i>1 lb / 600 g kid [or lamb]</i>	<i>[red] wine vinegar</i>

Joint the rabbit and chicken, and cut the other meats as for a stew, put into a pan with the wine, adding sufficient water to cover the meat, cover, and simmer gently for about 1 hour until tender. Pour the stock off [through a strainer] into a clean pan, and set aside. Dry the meat on a cloth [or paper kitchen towel]

(12) Heiatt & Butler,
I 56.

(13) Heiatt 74 no.
100.

CHAPTER FOUR



TUDOR JELLIES

In July, 1517, Henry VIII entertained the newly arrived embassy from Spain with a joust followed by a great feast which lasted seven hours. It impressed Francesco Chiericati, the Apostolic Nuncio, with its lavish magnificence, 'but the jellies, of some twenty sorts perhaps, surpassed everything; they were made in the shape of castles and animals of various descriptions, as beautiful as can be imagined.'¹

The cooks of the royal household were expert in the art of jellymaking, for, as stated in the Eltham Ordinances of 1526, King Henry and Queen Catherine's second course at dinner always commenced with a jelly hippocras costing *8d.* as its pottage.²

JELLYHIPPOCRAS³

<i>½ pt / 300 ml claret</i>	<i>6 cloves</i>
<i>4 oz / 100 g sugar</i>	<i>¼ tsp coriander seeds</i>
<i>2–3 pieces root ginger</i>	<i>pinch of salt</i>
<i>2 in. / 5 cm stick of cinnamon</i>	<i>4 tsp / 5 leaves gelatin</i>
<i>¼ nutmeg, crushed</i>	<i>(for calf's feet & isinglass)</i>

Lightly bruise the spices and gently simmer with the salt and ½ pt water for 10 minutes. Pour the claret into a pan, stir in the gelatin, and leave to soak for 10 min. Strain the spiced water through a fine cloth [or coffee filter paper] into the pan, stir in the sugar and the gelatin mixture, and gently heat while stirring until fully dissolved, then pour into a dish and leave to set.

(1) *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, II 918.

(2) *Household Ordinances*, 174.

(3) A.W., 31.

In addition to continuing its role as a second-course dish, jelly now became a feature of a new high-status, exclusive entertainment called a banquet. This was not merely a large communal dinner, as we use that word today, but a select gathering of the wealthy and great designed to impress through its display of costly dress, entertainment, tableware, food and drink. Frequently held in a separate room, in specially-constructed tents or leafy bowers, or in the open air, its tables were heaped with sweetmeats and sweet, spiced wines, the most expensive, aspirational and fashionable of fare. Such banquets and their ‘banqueting stuff’ had developed out of the ‘void’ of digestive sweet spices served at the end of medieval dinners, but had now become a major, competitive social display among the aristocracy and gentry. Their banquets could cost vast amounts in time, energy and materials, especially when entertaining Elizabeth I on her progresses around the country.

In 1591, when the Earl of Hertford entertained the Queen at Elvetham, for example, ‘there was a banquet served, all in glass and silver, into the low gallery in the garden ... by two hundred of my Lord of Hertford’s gentlemen, every one carrying so many dishes, that the whole number amounted to a thousand [led by] a hundred torch bearers.’⁴ Their sweetmeats included the most elaborate of sugarwork, as well as jellies and leaches, probably made by the army of professional cooks hired for the event. In many major houses the making of banqueting stuff became an interesting and rewarding hobby for their ladies, giving them a welcome opportunity to display their confectionery skills to their peers. In the latter part of Elizabeth’s reign the London book-trade began to publish books such as *The Good Huswife’s Jewell* of 1596 or *Delightes for Ladies* of 1600, which included recipes for all kinds of ‘banqueting stuff’, including the following for jellies and leaches. The original gelling agents of calf’s feet, knuckles of veal and isinglass have here been replaced with gelatin, and the scented musk omitted.

(4) Nichols, II 20.

[AMBER] CRYSTAL JELLY⁵

<i>4 tsp/5 leaves gelatin</i>	<i>6 cloves</i>
<i>½ oz/12 g root ginger</i>	<i>2 oz/50 g sugar</i>
<i>½ tsp white peppercorns</i>	<i>1 tbs rosewater</i>
<i>⅛ nutmeg</i>	

Bruise the spices in a mortar and simmer them in 1 pt/600 ml water in a covered pan for 15 minutes. Meanwhile soak the gelatin in ¼ pt/150 ml cold water in a jug. Strain the spiced water through a fine cloth [or coffee filter paper] onto the gelatin, stir in the sugar and rosewater until all is dissolved, then pour into a dish and leave to set.

STRAWBERRY, MULBERRY OR RASPBERRY JELLY⁶

<i>1 lb/450 g soft fruit</i>	<i>4 oz/100 g sugar</i>
<i>¼ pt/150 ml rosewater</i>	<i>5 tsp/7 leaves gelatin</i>

Grind or liquidize the fruit with the rosewater and sugar, bring to the boil, and strain through a piece of fine cloth or muslin into a clean pan. Add the gelatin which has been pre-soaked in ¼ pt/150 ml water for 10 minutes, gently heat and stir until it has dissolved, then pour into a dish.

(5) Platt.
(6) *ibid.*

CHAPTER FIVE

STUART JELLIES

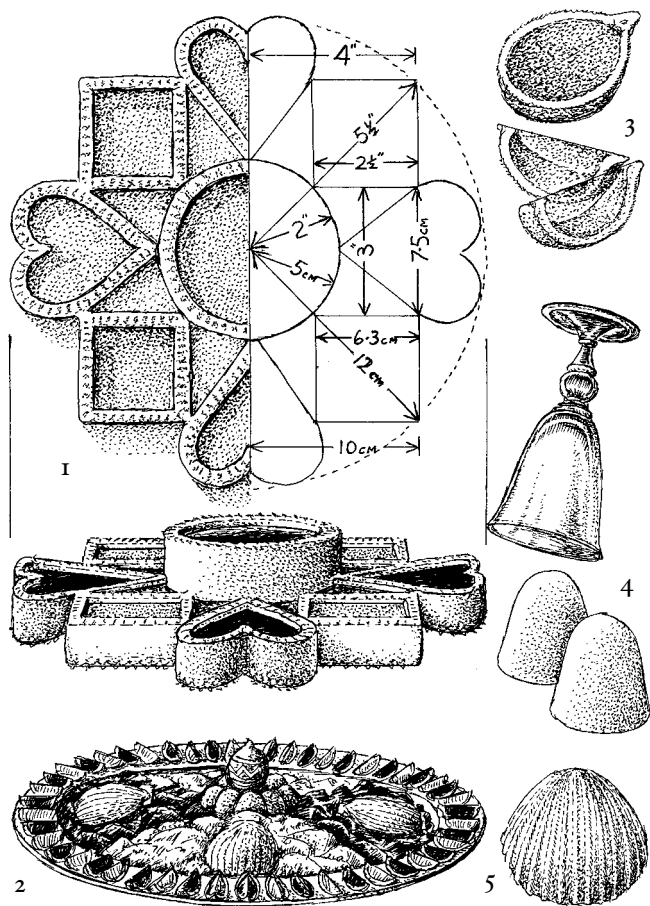


Figure 3. Stuart jellies. (1) William Rabisha's laid tart of jelly, 1661; (2) Robert May's great dish of jelly, 1660; (3) bis orange and lemon jelly quarters; (4) Queen Henrietta Maria's pyramidis creams of 1655; (5) jelly moulded in a scallop shell.

The court of Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen, had been one of regal, stately and dignified magnificence. For over forty years she had maintained her power throughout numerous political and military crises by means of commanding enormous respect. The arrival of James VI of Scotland as James I of England in 1603 therefore was something of a shock to the upper levels of English society. Though shrewd and learned, his laddish appetites and lack of personal dignity came as a complete revelation. He loved fruit and sweet wines, however, with the result that his reign saw sweetmeat banquets flourish as never before.¹ Frequently they accompanied one of Ben Jonson's masques, when this poet's incomparable verse, combined with lavish costume and awesome scenery, acted as a prelude to even more action around the banquet table. Just a few months after his accession, James visited Apethorpe in Northamptonshire, where the tables were:²

covered with costly banquets, wherein every thing that was most delicious for taste, proved more delicate by the arte that made it seeme beauteous to the eye; the Lady of the house being one of the most excellent Confectioners in England, though I confess many honourable women very expert.

Three years later, when holding a banquet for King Christian of Denmark at the great mansion of Theobalds, James and all his guests fully indulged themselves, even to excess. As the 'Queen of Sheba' approached the kings, she tripped over the steps of the dais, tipping her caskets of wine, cream, jelly and

(1) Nichols, IV 554.

(2) *ibid.*, I 97.

other good things into his Danish majesty's lap, then fell on top of him, both ending up on the floor. As Sir John Harington reported to Mr Secretary Barlow, all ended in a drunken sprawl: 'never did I see such lack of good order, discretion, and sobriety, as I have now done.'³ Given this great boost to banqueting, it is hardly surprising to find that jellies became even more popular in the years leading up to the Civil War.

Even though more jelly recipes were both published and noted down in manuscript cookery books, most of them followed exactly the same methods as described by their Tudor predecessors. The only major introductions were cream, white wine, orange or lemon juice, along with hartshorn and ivory for gelatin. Robert May, one of the leading country-house cooks of the period, made his jellies with calf's feet, knuckle of veal and capon (here replaced by gelatin) and a large quantity of sugar:

ROBERT MAY'S COLOURED JELLIES⁴

4 tbs / 6 leaves gelatin

juice of 1 lemon

1 pt / 1.2 l white wine

12 oz / 325 g sugar

4 sprigs rosemary

Stir the gelatin into $\frac{1}{2}$ pt / 300 ml water in a pan and leave to soak for 10 minutes, then add the wine, lemon juice, sugar, and 1 pt / 600 ml warm water, and heat gently while stirring until all is dissolved. Divide into four pans for:⁵

CLEAR: 1 piece root ginger, sliced, 2 blades mace;

RED: red food colour (for alkanet), 1 nutmeg and 1 in. / 2.5 cm cinnamon stick, 1 piece root ginger, all bruised;

PURPLE: purple food colour (for Turnsole), as for red, plus 4 cloves;

YELLOW: yellow food colour or saffron, spiced as for purple.

Cover each pan, simmer with sprigs of rosemary for 5 minutes, strain through a fine cloth and leave to cool for use.

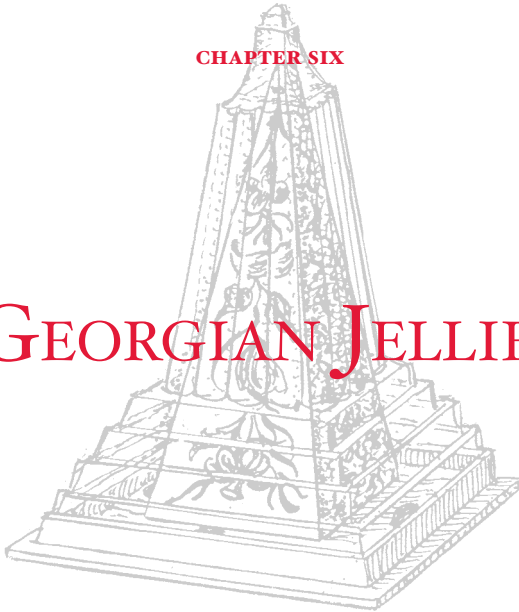
(3) *ibid.*, II 72–3.

(4) May, 202–3.

(5) *ibid.*, 203.

CHAPTER SIX

GEORGIAN JELLIES





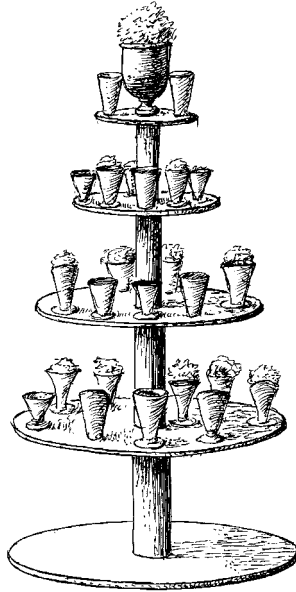
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4



2



3

Figure 4. Georgian jellies. (1) jellies served in glasses on an epergne of c. 1765; (2) a salver bearing jellies in glasses around a sweetmeat dish, c. 1745; (3) an epergne of jelly glasses for a City banquet, after an engraving by J. Williams, 1772; (4) James Gillray's depiction of Captain Birch enjoying a jelly at Kelsey's shop in St James's in 1797.

In the reign of George I (1714–27) most jellies were being served in purpose-made jelly glasses arranged on a dish to form part of the second course at dinner, but their use here was far from universal. As late as the 1730s, professionals such as Charles Carter, cook to the Duke of Argyll, Earl of Pontefract and Lord Cornwallis, rarely included jellies in their dinner menus, preferring fruit, tarts and custards instead. They were still a part of the third ‘Dessert’ courses, however.¹ By the 1740s jellies had become much more popular, even provincial cook-housekeepers preparing them on a regular basis. Mrs Elizabeth Moxon of Pontefract set them in the middle of her symmetrically arranged second courses and suppers, where, catching the light, they would look most attractive.² The pyramids of jellies which had first graced the royal tables were now to be found on those of the gentry and merchant classes. English glassmakers were supplying all that was required. The tiered structures were formed by a number of tall-stemmed glass salvers of diminishing sizes, each set one on top of the other and terminating in a goblet-like sweetmeat glass. Cookson, Jeffreys and Dixon of Newcastle upon Tyne were offering pyramids comprising four salvers, one top glass, five top sweetmeat glasses and up to thirty-two jelly and custard glasses for £2 2s. 6d. in 1746, for example.³

Jelly glasses were also used to serve the products of Georgian jelly-shops, the predecessors of the early twentieth-century ice-cream parlours. Tomlin’s Jelly House, late Oswald’s, stood at the corner of Ryder Street and Bury Street in the fashionable heart of St James’s in London. It must have been founded around 1700, since *The Epicure’s Almanack or Calendar of Good*

(1) Carter, plates 41, 45.

(2) Moxon, monthly menus.

(3) For an excellent introduction to jelly glasses, see Hughes (1982).

Living of 1815 stated that it had already been trading for over a century.⁴ Nearby, at the corner of St James's Street and Blue Bird Yard, James Kelsay opened his fruit and confectioner's shop in 1760. In 1793 his son Francis moved to No. 7 St James's Street, almost opposite the gates of the Palace, an ideal location from which to serve its Guards and Dragoons. The interior of the shop formed the setting for James Gillray's 'Heros recruiting at Kelsays, or Guard-day at St. James's'. This fine satirical print published in 1793 shows Thomas Birch of the 16th Light Dragoons enthusiastically spooning his jelly from a jelly glass (see fig. 4.4).⁵ We know the recipe for the jelly served at the St James's Coffee House, which operated at 87 St James's Street from 1705 to the 1840s. It was noted down in the manuscript recipe book of Sir Walter Ffarington (1730–1781) of Shaw Hall, Worden, Lancashire, as:

THE ST JAMES'S COFFEE HOUSE JELLY⁶

juice and pared zest of 1 ½ lemons, strained

1 oz / 25 g soft brown sugar 4 tsp / 5 leaves gelatin

Sprinkle and stir the gelatin into ¼ pt / 450 ml water and leave to soak for 10 minutes. Simmer the lemon juice and zest in ¾ pt / 450 ml water for 10 minutes, skim, strain, pour onto the gelatin, stir until dissolved, leave to cool, then pour into jelly glasses.

Returning to the domestic table, jellies were also served in glass or china bowls. Mrs Elizabeth Raffald's *Experienced English Housekeeper* of 1769 showed a 'Transparent pudding cover'd with a Silver Web' at the centre of her Grand Table's second course.⁷

(4) Hughes, p.204.

(5) Burford, 157.

(6) Private collection, 60.

(7) Raffald, plate p.195.

CHAPTER SEVEN

VICTORIAN JELLIES
& THEIR MOULDS



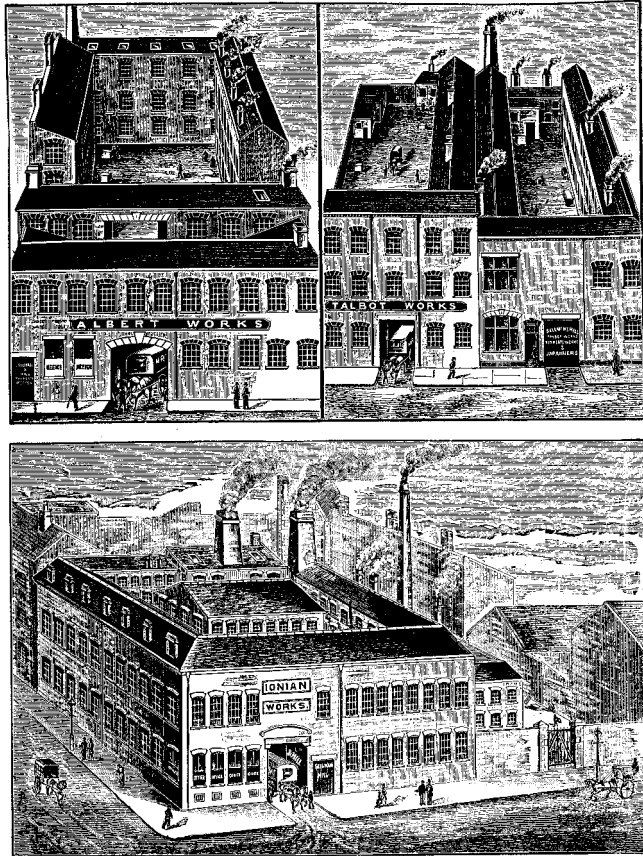


Figure 10. Metal moulds were manufactured in factories centred around London and the West Midlands. Typical of these were the works of Sellman & Hill, founded in Wolverhampton in 1880 as tinsmiths and japanners. Their London showroom was at 71 Queen Street, in the heart of the City.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had seen great changes in English society. This country's natural resources of water, coal, clay, metallic ores, wool and sheer muscle, supplemented by cotton and other imports from across the entire world, were now being exploited as never before. The combination of capital and inventiveness, boosted by the demands and successes of international military campaigns, fostered a spirit of entrepreneurial expansion which was already reaching across the globe. To service its needs, the first great steam and water-powered factories had been built, together with new roads, canals and railways linking them to the mines, to other fast-growing urban centres of trade and industry, and, most importantly, to the ports. The world had never seen anything to compare with this economic, industrial and social phenomenon, but it was soon to realize that it was only the start of things to come. In the long reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901, Britain and its Empire was the greatest ever naval, military and trading power.

All those who experienced British influence through its colonies and protectorates, its diplomatic, military and trading activities, were left in no doubt as to the country's great wealth and might. They believed that all their labour, raw materials and taxes, and the wealth they produced, was going back to Britain to fund the most lavish and luxurious of lifestyles for all its inhabitants. Although most of their descendants still assume this to be true, the majority of the population of England was subject to severe poverty and oppression. They had no vote, worked in industries which frequently killed or maimed them for starvation wages and without any compensation, and

usually lived in squalid, overcrowded and disease-ridden houses, whether in town or countryside. These circumstances explain why the development of Victorian jellies followed two quite different routes, one meeting the needs of the poor, and the other those of the fashionable and wealthy.

In the 1830s jelly was seen as either a sick-room food, or as a delightful and delicate addition to the *entremet* course for middle- and upper-class dinners. To make it still took hours of boiling up raw ingredients, painstakingly filtering them through thick flannel jelly-bags, and flavouring them with expensive almonds, fruits, wines and spirits. Most women had neither the financial resources nor the inherited knowledge to waste their time in this way. They usually had large families to bring up and busy homes to run without any labour-saving devices. Many also had long hours to work as domestic servants, agricultural labourers, factory hands or, like some of my ancestors, as underground mineworkers. The combination of low life-expectancy, poverty, child labour and removal to mushrooming urban centres, meant that most never grew up in homes where they could learn even the most basic of the domestic skills needed to operate an efficient household. These circumstances even affected those who climbed up into pretentious lower-middle classes. They would now be expected to give dinner parties such as they could never previously afford, offering dishes they didn't know how to make.

It was to serve this group in particular that the first mass-produced and mass-marketed processed gelatins were manufactured. Swinborne's patent refined isinglass and gelatins were among the most successful, being widely advertised from the 1840s. Alexis Soyer's *Modern Housewife* of 1848 gave instructions for how such prepared products were to be used.¹

GELATINE AND ISINGLASS JELLY is made using one ounce and a half of either, and boil in one quart of water, reduce to half; if not required very clear, as for

(1) Soyer (1848), 350.

lemon jelly, it need not be run through a bag, but merely through a fine sieve.

Much still depended on the quality and purity of the different brands, however, for some retained traces of their boneyard, tanyard, and slaughterhouse origins. To quote ‘Wanderer’, writing in 1885, ‘As to the jelly, with its ancient and fish-like flavour, the less said about it the better. This, with blanc-manges and bread puddings, may be classified under the head of “minor atrocities”, because they can be left alone.’²

By the time Mrs Beeton had compiled her great *Book of Household Management* in 1861, prepared isinglass and gelatin were in regular use. She gives some 26 recipes for using them to make jellies and creams, explaining that:³

Substitutes for calf’s feet are now frequently used in making jellies, which lessen the expense and trouble in preparing this favourite dish; isinglass and gelatine being two of the principal materials employed; but, although they may look as nicely as jellies made from good stock, they are never so delicate, having very often an unpleasant flavour, somewhat resembling glue, particularly when made with gelatine.

For this reason, she and many other cookery writers continued to give recipes for the seven-hour process for transforming calf’s feet into jelly stock.

It is interesting to compare her costings for making jellies from different materials. One pint of calf’s foot jelly required one calf’s foot costing at least 6d., or cow-heel at about 4d.⁴ Most isinglass jellies cost between 2s. 6d. and up to 5s. each in raw materials alone – about £10–15 in modern values – which explains why they were still a luxury even in middle-class homes. Her recipes include the usual fruit jellies, almond-milk and lemon gelatin blancmanges, jaunemanges, rich set creams, macédoines and ribbons (see plate viii), as well as other varieties such as;⁵

(2) D’Avigdor, 76.

(3) Beeton, no. 1411.

(4) *ibid.*, no. 1411.

(5) *ibid.*, no. 1426.

DUTCH FLUMMERY

*1 oz / 25 g gelatin
zest & juice of ½ lemon
sugar to taste*

*2 eggs, beaten
½ pt / 300 ml sherry or
Madeira
½ tbs brandy*

Soak the gelatin in ¼ pt / 150 ml water in a jug for 10 minutes, meanwhile simmering the pared zest in a further ¼ pt / 150 ml of water. Strain the hot lemon-flavoured water on to the gelatin, stir until dissolved, then add the wine and eggs, and sugar to taste. Stand the jug in a pan of simmering water and stir until it has thickened, but not boiled, then stir in the brandy, strain into an oiled mould and leave to set.

LEMON SPONGE⁶

*1 oz / 25 g gelatin
6 oz / 150 g sugar*

*juice and pared zest of 2
lemons
2 large egg-whites*

Stir the gelatin into 1 pt / 600 ml water, leave to soak for 10 minutes, then add the sugar and zest, and stir over a gentle heat until the sugar and gelatin have completely dissolved. Strain into a bowl and leave until just about to set. Beat the eggs to stiffness, then beat them in the jelly until all is a stiff, white froth. Pour into a lightly oiled mould, and leave to set.

[N.B. this recipe should be avoided by anyone liable to experience problems through eating raw eggs.]

Those for whom these recipes were too troublesome, or who had little faith in their culinary skills, could always find acceptable substitutes. One was to buy ready-made bottled jellies from companies such as Crosse and Blackwell who made:

(6) *ibid.*, no. 1448.

JELLIES of unequalled brilliance, consisting of Calf's Feet, Orange, Lemon, Noyeau, Punch, Madeira etc. In pint and quart bottles for the Convenience.

as advertised in Francatelli's *Plain Cookery for the Working Classes* of 1861. Alternatively they could have their jellies delivered directly from a nearby confectioner. These professionals found that ice was more economical than gelatin for keeping their product upright. Ude had known balls where, in spite of the pillage of a pack of footmen, which was enormous, the jellies had melted on all the tables or been heaped up in the kitchen, completely disfigured by the manner in which they had been removed from the serving dishes.⁷ John Jorrocks, Surtees' famous fox-hunting London grocer, experienced similar problems when holding a large dinner party in his own home. He had his jellies delivered fresh from Mr Farrell, the confectioner in Lamb's Conduit Street near Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, only to find that they 'had all melted long before it came their turn to be eaten.' Elsewhere Surtees described how an 'ornamental cake basket of the prize candelabrum makes a grand plateau for the usual group of calves feet jelly-glasses.'⁸ He also perceived how the below-stairs servants, succumbing to temptation and devouring the jellies and creams intended for their master's table, fell back on the barely believable excuses that 'the cat upset the cream – the cat eat the jelly'⁹

Later in the century, tinned jellies were invented as a convenience food. In 1880 T.F. Blackwell patented a tin mould with a hole in the base for inserting molten jelly, this then being soldered to create an airtight seal. A small flap projected from a [deeply scored?] strip around the base, a split ended rod or key slipping over this so that it could be wound up, opening the mould just like a traditional tin of sardines or cooked meat. T.B. Browne came up with a similar tin with an easily removable lid, its interior being formed into 'grooves, corrugations or other means for imparting an ornamental configuration to the jelly'.¹⁰

- (7) Ude, 435.
- (8) Surtees (1838) (1949 ed.), 200, 205.
- (9) Surtees (1859), 430.
- (10) Pat. No. 1880–3018 July 26; & 1891 – 8375 May 15.

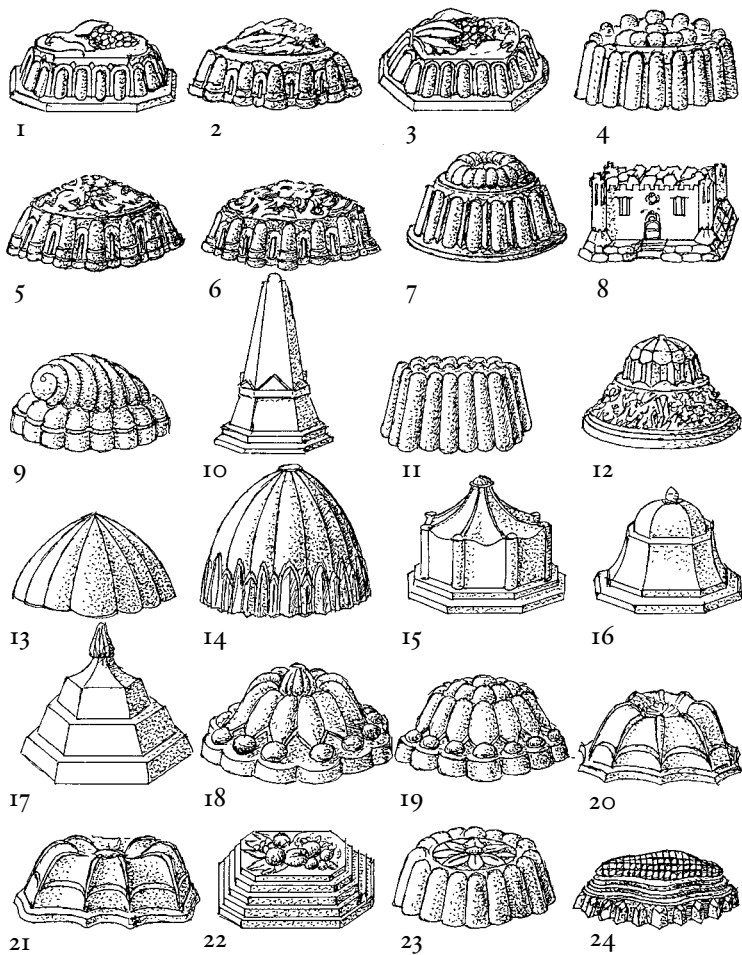


Figure 11. Minton jelly moulds (1), from their shape-book of 1883, with their pattern numbers.

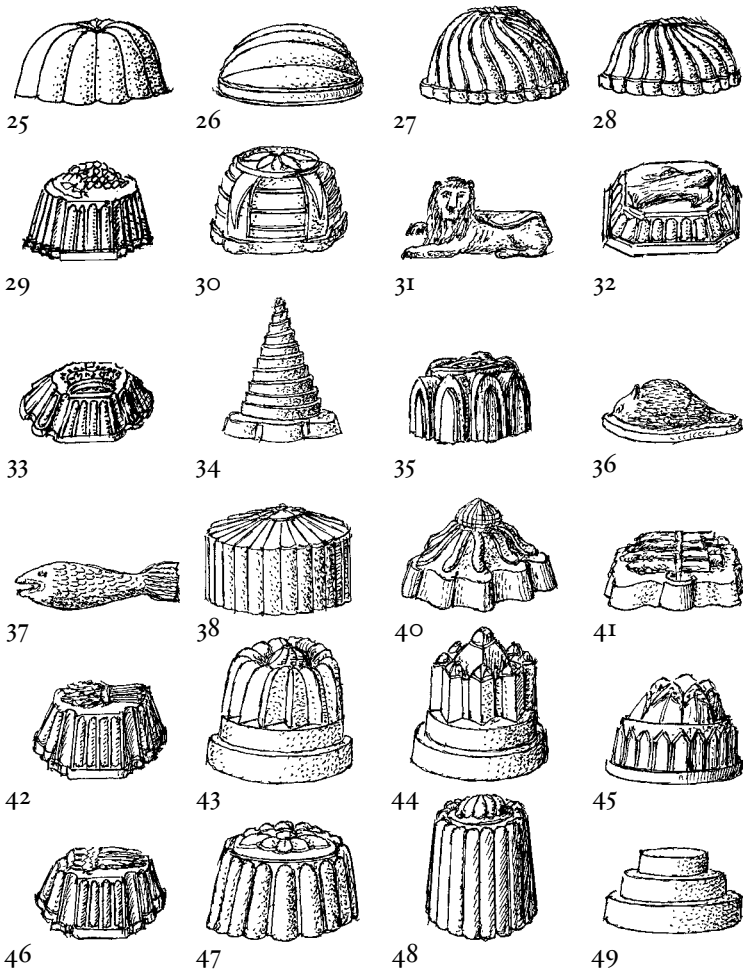


Figure 12. Minton jelly moulds (2), from their shape-book of 1883, with their pattern numbers.

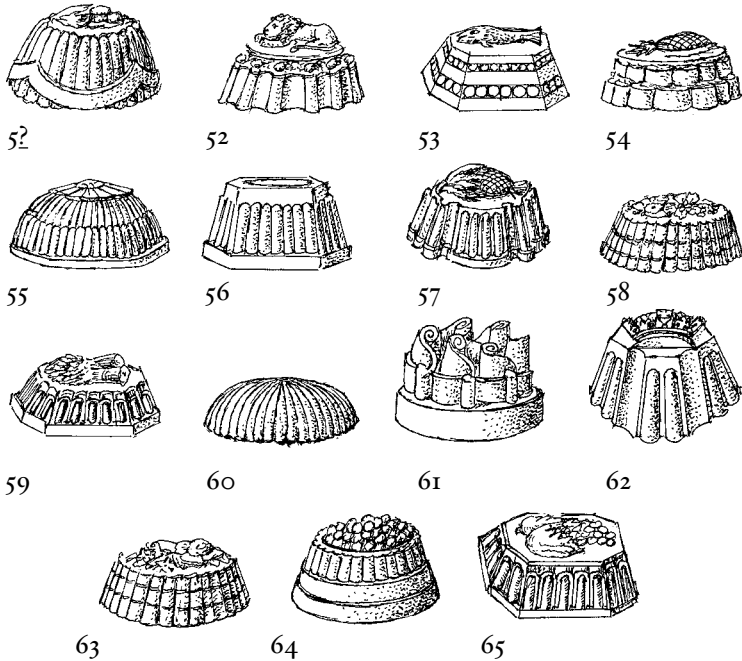


Figure 13. Minton jelly moulds (3), from their shape-book of 1883, with their pattern numbers.

A number of white earthenware moulds are extremely small, usually about 3 in. / 75 mm long. It might be imagined that they were used to make individual portions of jelly, but this is not the case. Throughout the Victorian period the children of prosperous parents learned their table-manners in the nursery. To assist in this process they were often provided with complete one-third scale ceramic dinner services and usable metal cutlery. With everything reduced down to suit child-sized fingers, complete dinner and tea tables were set with small quantities of real food, and the meal eaten with due ceremony. The whole

exercise was both practical and responded ideally to children's love of all things special and miniature. These moulds were made for the *entremet* course of such meals, fitting exactly on the round or oval serving dishes.

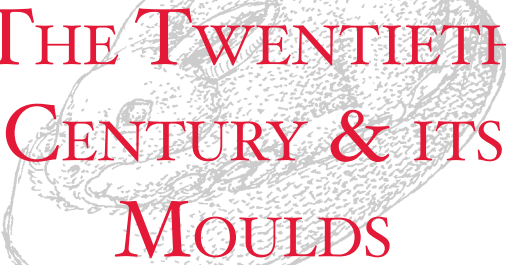
STONEWARE MOULDS

In contrast to the fine white salt-glazed stonewares of the eighteenth century, those of the Victorian period were decidedly coarse, lumpish and heavy. Made in unrefined fireclays and usually salt-glazed to a range of buff, brown and purplish semi-matt finishes, they were cheap to produce, strong, practical, and ideal for making cornflour blancmanges. However, to turn a jelly out of them successfully required a degree of knowledge and skill. Their shapes are usually those of the earthenware potters, either taken from blocks made for that industry, or just as likely pirated from the finished moulds. At this period stoneware moulds were hardly, if ever, stamped with a maker's mark, so that they may only be allocated to a particular pottery or region by their physical appearance. Most of the clear-glazed grey-buff moulds probably originated in the north Derbyshire potteries for example, while many of the dark purplish-brown moulds found in West Yorkshire museum collections probably came from the Eccleshill potteries near Bradford. Stonewares are such relatively similar products, however, that their attribution must always remain uncertain and problematic.

COPPER MOULDS

By the mid-nineteenth century most well-to-do households had a selection of copper jelly moulds for use in their kitchens. They were made by a number of companies, especially in London and the West Midlands. The leading manufacturers had been founded in the Regency. These included A.F. Crook, who took over Temple & Reynolds in the mid-Victorian period to trade as Temple & Crook, suppliers to Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales. Benham & Sons of Wigmore Street, London, had begun

CHAPTER EIGHT



THE TWENTIETH
CENTURY & ITS
MOULDS

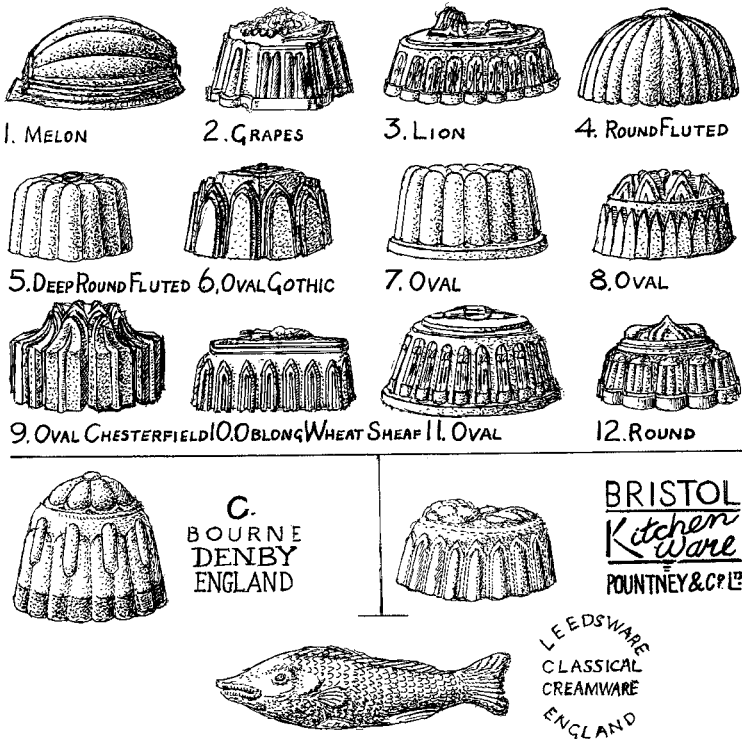


Figure 28. The early twentieth-century catalogue of Pearson & Co. of Chesterfield shows their standard range of twelve stoneware moulds (top). Those made at Joseph Bourne & Sons Denby Pottery from 1912 to the 1930s are attractively glazed in fawn and a rich brown, while those of Pountney & Co. of Bristol in the '30s and '40s are usually in bright yellow and green. The reproduction Leeds creamware fish mould dates from the 1990s.

By 1900 the status of the jelly was changing. In great country houses it still appeared in its most elaborate forms, the pride of the last generation of great domestic chef/cooks, but the world they knew was changing rapidly. Sons and daughters of the nobility, along with many middle-class people, now found it difficult to replace the older generation of resident household servants, since this was no longer a career choice for workers who could earn more and enjoy more freedom in offices and factories. A number of books began to appear, their purpose being to show how families should manage their domestic affairs for and by themselves. Their titles include *A Younger Sons' Cookery Book*, by A Younger Son's Daughter of 1896, *The One Maid Book of Cookery* by A.E. Congreve of 1913 and *Cooking without a Cook* by *Country Life* of 1926.

The first of these manuals states that in the past, 'Jelly-making was naturally looked on as a serious business not to be lightly undertaken ... though, owing to pure and tasteless gelatine being now easily procurable, it has lost its old foundation.'¹ It then goes on to give one of the best descriptions of how to use modern leaf gelatin to make wine, ale and fruit-juice jellies, how to line moulds and decorate them. However, 'excessive or fantastic ornament, or ornament which seems to call special attention to itself, ought always to be avoided.' K. Burrill and A.M. Booth agreed in their *Amateur Cook* of 1905:²

Try not to have too many [sweets], the remains of mushy trifles and half-eaten creams are rather a trial to the spirits and digestions of a small family. Have some good plain jellies in reserve; if they are not wanted they can be

(1) Mallock, 187.
(2) Burrill & Booth, 197, 438–40.

given to a friend who is ill ... or Philomena can take them with some of her pretty flowers to any small hospital that you or she is in the habit of visiting. Never waste jellies; remember there is always some one who will be glad to have them. [However] Jellies seem to present many difficulties, if we judge from the varying results obtained by people who consider themselves fairly good cooks. Jellies stiff as glue, jellies that collapse as they leave the moulds are both unnecessary trials.

There was a growing reaction to late Victorian excess and a demand for greater simplicity in foods in general. Most ordinary Edwardian cookery books give recipes for plain, gelatin-set fruit jellies and creams, along with cornflour blancmanges flavoured with cream, coffee, chocolate, fruit purées and essences.

BANANA CREAM, 1911³

<i>5 bananas, peeled</i>	<i>juice of 2 lemons</i>
<i>5 oz / 125 g sugar</i>	<i>4 tsp / 6 leaves gelatin</i>
<i>½ pt / 300 ml cream whipped to stiffness</i>	

Beat the bananas and sugar until smooth, beat in the juice and the gelatin dissolved in a little hot water, fold in the cream, and leave in a mould overnight to set.

ORANGE BLANCMANGE, 1911⁴

<i>3 tbs cornflour</i>	<i>8 oz / 225 g sugar</i>
<i>juice of 8 oranges and 2 lemons</i>	

Mix the cornflour into ½ pt / 300 ml cold water, add the remaining ingredients and stir while cooking for 10 minutes, then leave overnight in a mould to set.

(3) Selfridge, 172.

(4) *ibid.*, 178.

PRUNE MOULD, 1914⁵

8 oz / 225 g prunes, soaked	1 oz / 25 g gelatin
2 oz / 50 g white sugar	6 tbs claret
zest of ½ lemon	¼ pt / 150 ml cream,
1 in. / 25 mm stick cinnamon	whipped
	1 oz / 25 g flaked almonds

Stew the prunes, sugar, zest and cinnamon in ½ pt / 300 ml water until tender, strain the liquid into one bowl, and rub the prunes through a sieve into another. If the stones are present, crack them and add the kernels to the prunes. Sprinkle and stir the gelatin into the cold prune stock and claret, soak for 5 minutes, then warm and stir until dissolved, before mixing thoroughly into the prune purée. Put into a border mould and leave overnight to set. Turn the border on to a dish, fill the centre with the whipped cream and decorate with the almonds, perhaps with glacé cherries and pistachios too.

During the First World War jellies made a quick, cheap and delicious dessert, especially when using the new squares of ready-flavoured fruit jelly, or packet gelatin used with home-grown gooseberries, strawberries or blackberries. When gelatin began to disappear from the grocer's shelves, however, alternatives had to be found. One reader of *Isabell's Home Cookery* magazine wrote in 1918:⁶

'I used to use a great many jelly squares. The children were so fond of jelly, and it made a nice pudding for them, but now I can't get the squares any more. Will you tell me if there is anything to replace them?'

The editor then suggested;

(5) Jack, 442.
(6) Pearson (1918),
223.

WARTIME RECIPES, 1918⁷

*1 pt / 600 ml juice made by stewing raw fruit or 1 pt
hot water with either 1 tbs black treacle or 2 tbs jam
or marmalade
2 tbs cornflour*

Mix the cornflour with a little cold water, add to the remaining ingredients, stir and cook until thickened, then pour into a mould and leave to set.

A year later, the December edition of the magazine carried a feature on 'Jellies for John and Jane';⁸

'Please, Father Kissmuss' said John before he went to sleep. 'Let's have plenty of jellies tomorrow.' 'Amen' said little Jane. Well, don't you remember when you were a nipper and you went to a party what a quick 'No, thank you,' you said to the bread, and WHAT a 'Yes, please,' to the jellies!

This time gelatin jellies were proposed, made as lemon, orange, coffee, and:

JAM JELLY, 1919⁹

*½ lb / 225 g good jam or marmalade juice of ¼ lemon
1 oz / 25 g gelatin a little more sugar if
3 tbs wine required*

Melt the jam in 18 fl oz / 500 ml hot water, and strain through muslin. Add the lemon juice, sprinkle and stir in the gelatin, and heat while stirring until hot and dissolved. Stir in the wine and additional sugar, pour into a mould, and leave to set.

(7) *ibid.*, 223.

(8) Pearson (1919),
211.

(9) *ibid.*, 211.

After the War was over, the next twenty years were dominated by great economic and social problems; it was a period of strikes, unemployment and low wages for most of the population, and one of uncertainty and low returns on investments for many of the middle class. People wanted foods which must be cheap, but still put some colour and a hint of pleasure, even luxury into their lives. The foods which best met these criteria were jelly and blancmange. As the demand grew, manufacturers responded by producing more and better packs of pre-prepared ingredients which took only a few minutes to cook in the home. At the Devonshire Works in Birmingham, Alfred Bird & Sons made a popular range of flavoured jelly squares which had only to be dissolved in hot water to produce firm-setting, clear and delicious jellies. In York, Rowntrees produced their first packet jellies in 1923, offering ten flavours: raspberry, lemon, pineapple, blackcurrant, strawberry, lime fruit, vanilla, orange, greengage and cherry. These were transformed into cube jellies in 1932, when their promotion took the form of coupons on each carton which could be collected and exchanged for boxes of chocolates:¹⁰

Pocket Money and FREE Chocolates

Bob – ‘I wish my Dad gave me pocket money to buy boxes of chocs.’

Tom – ‘Mine doesn’t! I get these by collecting the coupons from Rowntree’s Cocoa and Rowntree’s Jellies. Get your Mother to buy them if you want free chocs.’

In Brighton, H.J. Green & Co. made both jelly crystals and jelly squares in lemon, orange, raspberry, strawberry, vanilla, pineapple, blackcurrant, wine and tangerine flavours, all ‘Beautifully clear and firm. Nothing finer at any price.’¹¹

The manufacturers of clear gelatin also rose to the demands of the time by commencing an unprecedented promotion of their products. J. & G. Cox of Gorgie Mills, Edinburgh had

(10) Rowntree (1983), 6, 9.

(11) H.J. Green, 37.

converted from shredded gelatin to powdered gelatin in the opening years of the century, employing Bertha Roberts to write *A Manual of Gelatine Cookery* for use with Cox's Sparkling Gelatine around 1900, further editions of the '20s and '30s being of some ninety pages and illustrated with excellent colour plates. Gelatin also began to be imported from the Dominions, Davis Gelatine coming from factories in Sydney, Australia, and Christchurch, New Zealand. The first edition of *Davis Dainty Dishes* was published in Australia in 1922, the first London edition appearing in 1933. One hundred thousand copies were sold here by 1936. The Charles B. Knox Gelatine Co. of Johnstown, New York State, also started to supply gelatin to England, where copies of the attractive forty-one page *Dainty Desserts for Dainty People: Knox Gelatine* booklet of 1924 are still to be found today. The recipes in these, along with those in other popular cookery books of the period, are really excellent for converting relatively straightforward ingredients into dishes which can satisfy the palate, the eye and the pocket. Here are a few examples:

GINGER JELLY, 1939¹²

<i>whites & crushed shells of 2 eggs</i>	<i>4 oz / 100 g Demarara sugar</i>
<i>juice & zest of 1 lemon</i>	<i>1 tsp vinegar</i>
<i>2 cloves</i>	<i>3 fl oz / 90 ml ginger wine</i>
<i>piece of stick cinnamon</i>	<i>5 tsp / 7 leaves gelatin</i>

Whisk the eggs, lemon, cloves, cinnamon, sugar, vinegar and $\frac{3}{4}$ pt / 450 ml water together over a gentle heat, stop whisking, allow to boil up three times, then set aside for 10 minutes before filtering through a fine cloth. Meanwhile sprinkle the gelatin into the wine, stir, and leave to soak. Mix the jelly and gelatin solutions together, heat and stir without boiling until completely dissolved, then pour into a mould and leave overnight to set.

(12) Cox, II.

CRANBERRY & APPLE MOULD, 1939¹³

½ lb / 225 g cranberries *1 oz / 25 g gelatin*
1 lb / 450 g apples *8 oz / 225 g sugar*

Stew the chopped fruits in $\frac{1}{4}$ pt / 150 ml water until tender and press through a sieve to produce 1 pt / 600 ml of juice. Sprinkle the sugar and gelatin into $\frac{1}{4}$ pt / 150 ml water, stir and heat gently until dissolved, mix into the fruit juice, stir occasionally until almost set, then pour into a mould and leave overnight to set.

BROWN BREAD CREAM, 1939¹⁴

2 oz / 50 g grated wholemeal *few drops vanilla essence*
bread *1 oz / 25 g gelatin*
1 pt / 600 ml milk *½ pt / 300 ml whipping*
3 oz / 75 g sugar *cream*

Scald the crumbs with the milk, stir in the sugar, vanilla and the gelatin sprinkled and stirred into $\frac{1}{4}$ pt / 150 ml water, and leave to cool. When starting to thicken, fold in the whipped cream, pour into a mould, and leave overnight to set.

CARRINGTON MOULD, 1939¹⁵

1 oz / 25 g gelatin *juice of 1 lemon*
small tin peaches, apricots, etc. *½ pt / 300 ml milk*
2 tbs sugar *a few drops of vanilla*
 essence & cochineal

Layer 1: Sprinkle two-thirds of the gelatin into $\frac{1}{2}$ pt / 300 ml water and warm until dissolved, add half the sugar, the lemon juice and the juices from the peaches, if necessary making up to 1 pt / 600 ml with more water. Pour a little into a watertight cake tin or charlotte mould, leave to set, arrange the apricot pieces on top, just cover with more jelly and leave to set once more.

(13) *ibid.*, 47.
(14) *ibid.*, 87.
(15) Davis, 33.

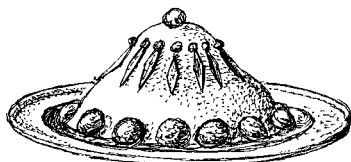
CHAPTER NINE

THE REPERTOIRE

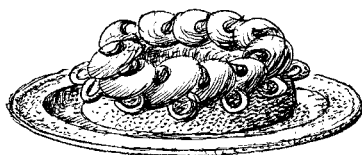




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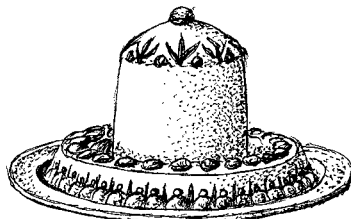
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3



4



5

Figure 41. Moulded rice dishes of around 1900: (1) *Empress style*; (2) *à la Condé*; (3) *Apricots à la Condé*; (4) *Apricots Créole*; (5) *Maltese*.

Over the last two hundred years the authors of many recipe books written in the Anglo-French culinary tradition have given individual names to each of their particular dishes. These range from basic descriptions such as John Nott's 'Chrystal Jelly' of 1726 and Louis Ude's 'Mosaic Jelly' of the 1820s through to Alexis Soyer's use of French titles for his 'Gelée à la Bacchante', etc., of the 1840s. By the time Mrs A.B. Marshall was publishing her recipes in the 1890s, names such as 'Maltoise à la Chantilly' or 'Apples à la Princesse Maude' had become more usual. By way of contrast, more recent years have seen the appearance of the 'Harry Hedgehog' and 'Fizzy Jelly Sea Monster' jellies.

Any attempt to list and define all the jellies of the past would be a virtually impossible task, and one of little real value, since many never entered the mainstream of English cookery. Those which did, made their way into the all-embracing dictionaries of classical recipes including C. Herman Senn's *Practical Gastronomy and Culinary Dictionary* of 1893, Theodore Garrett's *Encyclopaedia of Practical Cookery* of c. 1893 and Richard Hering's *Dictionary of Classical and Modern Cookery* of 1907, regularly up-dated and first published in English in 1958.

The sweet gelatin and starch-based cold desserts listed in the following pages should certainly prove useful for identifying such dishes in historic menus, and enable them to be recreated. Perhaps just as important, however, is their potential for showing what combinations of flavours, textures, colours and visual effects have proved most successful to generations of fine chefs and cooks. Just browsing through them can suggest many avenues to be either revisited or explored into the future.

APPLES

Angelique: halves of small apples compôte arranged on top of a border of vanilla rice, decorated with strips of angelica and sauced with kirsch syrup.

Condé: apples pared, cored, oven-baked with sugar, lemon juice and butter, arranged on a bed of rice decorated with angelica, glacé cherries, raisins and blanched almonds.

Morgan: scooped out apples filled with a chopped jelly of pineapple and Danziger Goldwasser, the lid replaced, the outside glazed with jelly.

Princess of Wales: jellied apple purée, half coloured pink with cochineal and a little cream, a small quantity of each being chilled, sliced, and cut into one-inch discs. When set in alternate colours in lemon jelly around the inside of a charlotte mould, the interior is filled with alternating layers of the remaining purée.

St Albans: apples sliced and cut into discs of equal size, stewed in syrup, without breaking, and half coloured pink with cochineal, then set in chains or circles around the inside of a charlotte mould with a little clear apple jelly. A smaller mould is then put inside, the space between them filled with more apple jelly and, when set, the smaller mould removed and the space filled with a jelly of lemon-flavoured apple purée mixed with cream and a little apricot marmalade.

APRICOTS

Condé: apricot compôte in a border of cooked rice flavoured with cream and vanilla, decorated with angelica and glacé cherries.

Créole: half apricots on a dome of rice cooked with cream, decorated as *Condé*, and coated with kirsch-flavoured apricot sauce.

Imperial: identical to *Créole*.

Suédoise: poached apricots cut into six segments set around the inside of a charlotte mould using clear apricot jelly, a smaller mould placed inside and the space between them filled with

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