



# A new recipe for the *Roadshow*

As another successful season of the *Antiques Roadshow* draws to a close, **Natasha Goodfellow** goes on location with an exciting new BBC spin-off series

PHOTOGRAPHS MIKE ABRAHAMS

**W**e're talking about pattern, elegance... and sausages,' says Katherine Higgins during a filming break. Since her debut on the *Roadshow's* miscellany table in 2003, we've become used to Katherine waxing lyrical over the style and glamour of any number of decorative objects – but a pound of British bangers? Surely not.

As it turns out, Katherine is enthusing over one of her favourite dishes – a rather natty 1958 recipe for an egg and sausage flan – as part of a short film she is making for the new spin-off programme, *Priceless Antiques Roadshow*. Designed to showcase the highlights of the past 31 years of the *Roadshow* (Paul Atterbury talking about the dog-skin bag at the Castle of Mey springs to mind) as well as discussing recession-proof collectables, the show also unveils hidden sides to some of the best-loved experts.

Jewellery specialist Geoffrey Munn, usually so immaculately turned out, has been filmed mudlarking on the Thames. The irrepressible Andy McConnell reveals his musical adventures with Jefferson Airplane and Captain Beefheart,

while, on a more sombre note, Paul Atterbury travels to the Somme and uncovers the story of a relative who died there. And Katherine, as you may have guessed by now, shares her secret passion for 1950s kitchenalia.

## Cupboard love

Having spent the morning poring over vintage tableware, textiles and women's cookery magazines in one of her favourite haunts, Alfies Antique Market in London (where she couldn't resist snapping up three Pyrex 'jockey cap' bowls – 'perfect for my porridge'), she is now in raptures over Tamara Watts' fabulous 1950s-style kitchen in north London, secured as a location after a member of the *Roadshow* team spotted it in our October 2008 kitchens supplement.

'This is an absolute dream for me; everything you have is perfect,' she tells a glowing Tamara, stroking the jolly red and white pieces of Dominaware by Jessie Tait for Midwinter, the bright yellow Formica table and the beautifully restored English Rose cabinets.

'The 1950s was such an exciting time

**Domestic goddess:** Katherine Higgins rolls out pastry for a sausage and egg flan in her dream kitchen

‘In the 1950s, kitchenalia became both functional and good-looking’







Clockwise from left  
**Filming in progress in Tamara's kitchen; the Sunbeam Mixmaster, still going after all this time; discussing filming with director Emma Fitzmaurice; Midwinter's Saladware range; flantastic; Katherine's vintage Nutbrown rolling pin; cooking gets underway; period cookbooks are an inspiration to Katherine**



**KITCHENALIA AT ALFIES ANTIQUE MARKET**  
 \* Geoffrey Robinson, Units G077-78 & 91-92; 07955 085 723  
 \* Victor Caplin, Unit G079-80; 07947 511 592  
 \* The Manic Attic, Unit S048-49; 020 7723 6105  
 \* Alfies Antiques, 13-25 Church Street, Marylebone NW8 8DT 020 7723 6066

What I love about 1950s kitchenalia is that these are ordinary, humble items – and yet they are all extraordinarily well designed

to be in the kitchen,' she says, clearly enjoying herself. 'The housewife was the lynchpin of the household – she cooked, cleaned, sewed, knitted, looked after the children and entertained – and still had to produce a smile at the end of the day,' she grins, 'and it was the changes in the kitchen that made much of this possible.'

**The kitchen revolution**

'After the restrictions of the war, objects became both functional and good-looking. New materials such as Formica, Pyrex and melamine (originally developed as a plastic for coating wires) all made the housewife's life easier and, importantly, bought a splash of colour and a much greater element of choice into the kitchen. Where once newlyweds would have been limited to traditional, formal dining services, for the first time they could afford modern design – practical, good looking, vibrant – a blast of sunshine in the kitchen,' continues Katherine.

As kitchens and dining rooms began to merge, people not only cooked but also entertained in their kitchens. 'They showed off there,' says Katherine. It wasn't just gadgets that were proudly displayed.

A crop of food writers – Elizabeth David, Constance Spry and Marguerite Patten among others – and the end of rationing in 1954, meant there were exciting new recipes to be cooked and exotic new ingredients to try out, too. 'Enterprising companies such as Midwinter reflected this in their designs,' says Katherine. 'Think Terence Conran's Saladware range with its stylised red peppers, asparagus and almost unheard-of garlic.'

**Cooking up a storm**

To demonstrate the optimism of the era as well as some of the fabulous new gadgets available to the housewife, Katherine is today whipping up the egg and sausage flan concocted in 1958 by TV chef and *Woman's Own* cookery writer Philip Harben. 'With its eight sausages, four eggs and butter ration for a week, this is sheer extravagance,' she says. 'And it must have felt wonderful to make it at the time when those restrictions were lifted. Imagining those feelings is one of the thrills I get out of the Fifties.'

Taking her Nutbrown rolling pin with its nifty yellow handles ('it's so hard to find ceramic centres now – these are

much better for pastry than the rolling pins you can buy today'), she rolls out the pastry crust on the Formica table. 'Its innovative, wipe-clean surface effectively made this an extra work station,' she says. Eggs and a little milk are beaten in her Sunbeam Mixmaster. 'This was a huge revolution in the kitchen,' says Katherine. 'It has 12 settings and is so much quieter than those on the market today. It's also much cheaper – where mixers today can cost hundreds, Katherine picked this up about eight years ago for just £19. Used almost every day, she reckons it's the best money she's ever spent. 'A lot of antiques and collectables just sit on a shelf gathering dust, but what I love about these things is that they are ordinary, humble items that average people would have had in their homes – and yet they are all extraordinarily well designed – and I can, and do, still use them today. It's exciting, bringing them to life and giving them a second chance.'

Priceless Antiques Roadshow runs for three weeks every weekday from 9th March on BBC Two at 6pm. Catch Katherine's film on Wednesday 11th March



**EGG AND SAUSAGE FLAN**

'It is very hard to decide whether the average schoolchild's favourite food is sausages or eggs. With this dish there need be no argument!'

INGREDIENTS: ½lb self-raising flour, 2oz butter, 2oz white vegetable fat, 4 eggs, 8 sausages

- 1 Make some good short pastry in the proportion of ½lb self-raising flour to ¼lb fat. I used butter and white vegetable fat together – an excellent combination.
- 2 Roll this out ¼-inch thick and with it line a greased 8-inch flan tin or ring. In it arrange 8 sausages in the way you see in the picture.
- 3 Beat up 4 eggs with a little salt and pepper and pour them over. If your eggs are very large, 4 may be a little too much – the level should be below the rim of the paste, to allow room for the eggs to rise.
- 4 Bake the flan in a hot oven (Gas Mark 6, 200°C, 400°F) until it looks obviously done, the egg golden and risen, the sausages good and crisp and brown. Probable time (but ovens differ) 30-40 minutes.'

Taken from *Woman's Own*, 6th August 1958, published by IPC Media

