

# Food, Embodiment and the Limits of the Archive

Dr. Polly Russell

Head of the Eccles Institute at the British Library

[Polly.russell@bl.uk](mailto:Polly.russell@bl.uk)

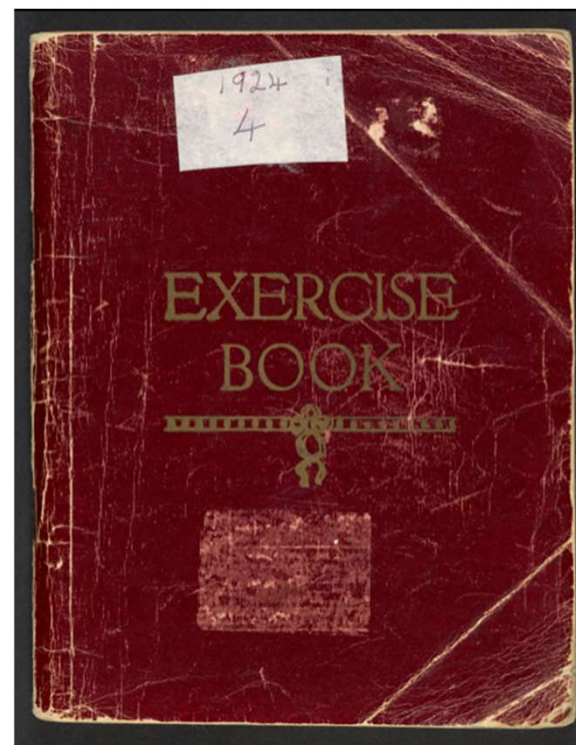
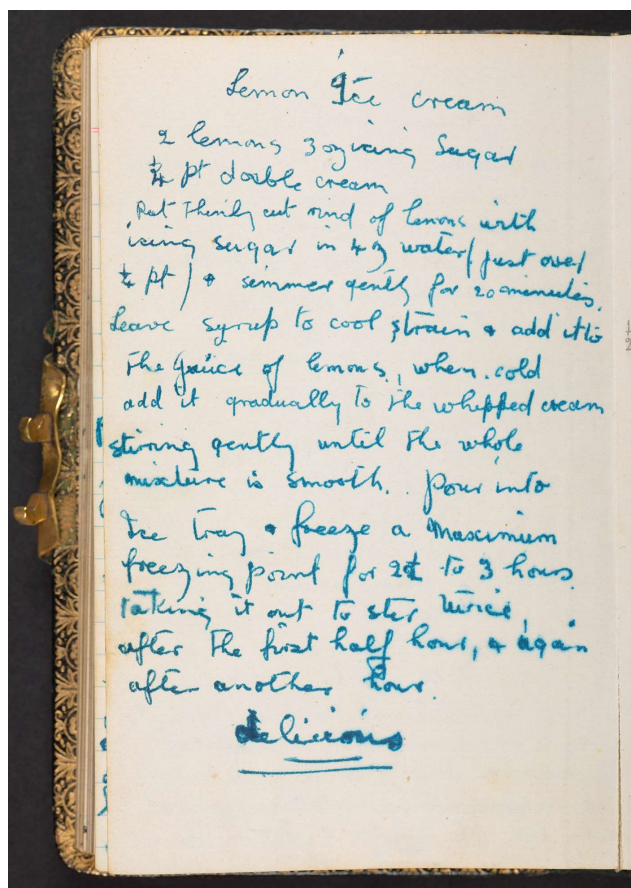
[@the\\_history\\_cook](#)

# British Library



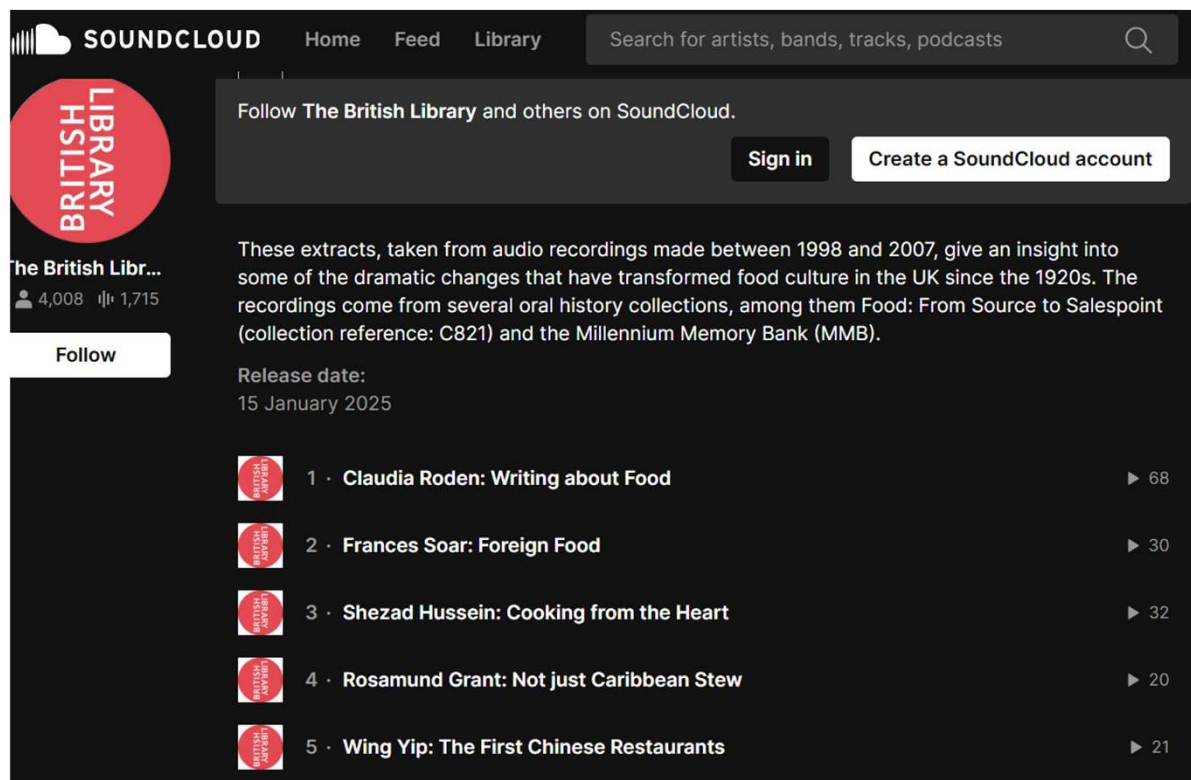


# Grace Higgins' Archive (Add. 83198-83258)



# Oral History Food: From Source to Salespoint

- Butcher's Lives
- Chef's Lives
- Tesco Life Stories
- Horticulture Lives
- Food Publishing
- Poultry Interviews
- Sugar Interviews
- Restaurateur's Lives



<https://soundcloud.com>

# M&S Poultry Buyer

- Um... that's a very interesting question and if you do push me, I would say the following. I think that it is right that we eat flesh, animals, because I think if you think back through tens of thousands of years, that's what we've done. The thing I struggle with – no, struggle's the wrong word – **the thing if I were to think about it too much that I might struggle with is the way that we have exploited it and moved it to such a clinical and efficient way of doing things.**

# Poultry Grower

“Chicken’s chicken, you know. I kept saying chicken is chicken, you know, and we need something different. That’s when we said, well, what does the consumer want? And that’s where we developed the Oakham breed.....You know, if someone said to me well how do you explain it in some very simple strap line, I’d say, ‘Chicken the way it used to be’, yeah? And that’s what it is, **it’s chicken the way it used to be.**”





# Marks & Spencer 'Oakham' chicken



M&S Fresh Poultry Counter circa 1970s

© M&S Archive

Remember when chicken used to taste like chicken?

A *St Michael* fresh chicken still does!

**NOW AT LOWER PRICES!**

If you think that chicken these days tends to lack flavour, you're in for a nice surprise. St Michael chickens and chicken portions are *fresh, not frozen*, really plump and tender. You'll taste the difference immediately. And now, St Michael chickens are at *new lower prices!*

Some examples:

|            |              |                 |              |
|------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Small 56p  | Now only 51p | Large 81p       | Now only 74p |
| Medium 66p | Now only 60p | Extra Large 97p | Now only 88p |

**At all Marks & Spencer stores**

Advert from  
M&S inhouse  
magazine,  
*Sparks*, 1973

© M&S Archive



Wheels of cheddar at  
Westcombe Dairy

© Tommy Sussex



# Thank you!

[Polly.russell@bl.uk](mailto:Polly.russell@bl.uk)  
[@the\\_history\\_cook](https://twitter.com/the_history_cook)