

## A Christmas Story

**As you would expect this issue is about food and Christmas! We have some advice from Prof Nick as to how to survive Christmas and some dates for your diary in 2016. Also, stock up on our Calendars and Christmas cards, see inside. But first, a seasonal story from our Chair.**

**It had been a long clinic. It was already six o'clock and I wanted to go home when the nurse came in and said she was sorry, but I had one more patient to see. I thought I'd seen the last one, I complained, my heart sinking. I'm sorry she said again, but this one's a bit special.**

In truth, he didn't look well. He shuffled in, an elderly man, dressed in a fur coat, red in the face, wheezing and grossly overweight. He deposited his bag on the floor, sat down, leaned on the desk and stared at me with watery eyes.

"Please help me", he said. "This is the busiest time of the year for me and I can't cope any more". I asked him to explain. It turned out he was in the logistics business and there was always a rush before Christmas. Not only did he have to prepare all his packages to individual specifications, but they all needed to be delivered on Christmas Eve. It was true that he had air transport, but all those houses, all those expectant children, how on earth could he cope? And now the National Elf Service were under a lot of pressure too. He was exhausted and his guts were all over the place.

I settled down for a long appointment. I asked about his diet; it was clear that he liked his food. Fruit pudding, mince pies, poultry, gravy, sprouts, parsnips – the lot. I told him about the effects of fat and FODMAPs, but I might as well have been speaking double-dutch. We discussed his life style. Shift work was always associated with IBS, and flying at altitude in an unpressurised vehicle was bound to cause expansion of the gas in his colon and bloating. He was trying to do too much. And then there was the stress of deadlines, the fear of letting people down. It was little wonder that his guts were all twisted up in knots.

"Why do you do it?" I asked him. "You must know you are too old and unfit to carry on like this anymore. All that food, coupled with your stressful life style are bound to play havoc with your insides" and, I took in his red cheeks and nose, "I bet you like a drink or two". He nodded. Then he added, "I just can't let them down. You see, I never had anything when I was young".

"But that was then", I added. "You can't spend your life making up for what happened in the dark ages. It's all changed now. The children that you give all those wooden toys to; they don't want them anymore. They want iPads they can play their games on and mobile phones to Facebook their friends. Besides, they don't believe in you anymore. They think it's all their parents". He looked at me like I was deranged.



"What is a face book?"

"You need to change", I told him. "Get into the 21st century. You shouldn't be rushing around like this at your age. It's a complete waste of your energy and time. Get the elves onto it. Set up a website for mail order. Make some videos. Market the make believe. That's all the kids want these days and you can do all of that in Lapland sitting in your favourite arm chair in front of your wood burning stove."



**Board of Trustees:** James Seccombe, Marianne Williams and Emma Winter, Qasim Aziz, Amandeep Dhillon, Nick Read, (Chair)

**The Team:** Alison Reid, CEO, Julie Thompson, Diet Consultant, Jenny Tyson, Membership Officer and Sam Yardy, Office Manager.

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# Network News

There's been a few changes recently at The IBS Network. At the beginning of October, we welcomed two new members of staff and we moved into unit 1.16, a larger office in SOAR Works.

Alison Reid is our new Chief Executive and Jenny Tyson is our Membership Officer.



Alison Reid



Jenny Tyson

Alison joins the team with a wealth of experience gained in all sectors over 30 years, particularly the voluntary, community and charity sector. Working with the Board of Trustees, Alison will be responsible for the implementation of our future strategy, including all fundraising activity.

After leaving university, Jenny spent some time working in retail, but wanted to move into an area where she felt she was making a difference.



## IBS Blog



Dr Nick Read has introduced a new IBS blog. [www.thesensitivegut.com](http://thesensitivegut.com). With regular informative and at times provocative articles. Nick's aim is to provide you with up to date thinking about IBS to enable you to help yourself better. Recent articles include...

<http://thesensitivegut.com/2015/11/11/sex-and-the-irritable-bowel/>

<http://thesensitivegut.com/2015/11/14/the-irritable-bowel-stigma/>

<http://thesensitivegut.com/2015/11/16/is-your-doctor-your-dietitian-keeping-you-in-ibs/>

## Remember The Date

### IBS - The Patient's Perspective The Ibs Network's 25th Anniversary Conference

**Saturday April 16th 2016**  
**The Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield**

Next year The IBS Network will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary. We are planning to mark the occasion with a unique event that will focus on the experience, opinions and needs of patients with Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

The conference programme will include sessions on Quality of Life; Diagnosis; Working with your Doctor; Research, Diet, Cooking and Eating with IBS, Self-Management and Complementary Therapy. Each topic will be introduced by a patient with a health care professional as respondent and provide ample opportunity for audience participation. Speakers include Professor Peter Whorwell and Dr Anton Emmanuel as well as an expert panel of patients. The conference structure creates an important opportunity to improve understanding between health professionals and patients.

So do come along and help us celebrate our anniversary and make a difference to the way IBS is seen and managed. Tickets are free to members of The IBS Network. However, tickets are limited, so, to make sure you secure your place, book your ticket soon.

To book your place you can email your name and contact details to [info@theibsnetwork.org](mailto:info@theibsnetwork.org), call us on 0114 272 3253 or write to us at The IBS Network, Unit 1.16 SOAR Works, 14 Knutton Road, Sheffield S5 9NU.

We're coming to...

# Glasgow

...who's coming with us?

the **allergy** **free from** show **scotland** **Genius**

Sponsored by Carlsberg Glasgow Free

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SECC, Glasgow

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for you, your family  
and your friends!

Use this page as your ticket or visit this web page get unlimited free tickets:  
[www.allergyshow.co.uk/go/gut](http://www.allergyshow.co.uk/go/gut)



# Support The IBS Network this Christmas

This year, for the first time, we have produced an attractive and useful Calendar. The fabulously photographed A3 Calendar contains 12 easy to make recipes you can create throughout the year. All recipes have been specially developed for The IBS Network by chef and food writer/photographer, Dr Joan Ransley.

Also new this year you will be able to buy your Charity Christmas cards from us! With two attractive designs in packs of eight, the cards include recipes; a very welcome card through the letterbox!

Both the Calendars and Christmas cards are available to purchase on our website – (see the link below), so stock up now! The calendar would be a great present for the foodies in your family and what's more you will be helping to support us grow as a charity. Send out a Christmas card to your friends & family – with the added advantage of a delicious recipe they can keep.

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helping you better...

**Have you started thinking about Christmas yet?**  
**Time is running out!**  
Be organised and buy your charity cards now!

**Only £5.25**

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**Have you started your Christmas shopping yet?**  
**No?!**  
Then why not buy one of our attractive and useful Calendars, the gift that will keep on giving throughout 2016!

**For only £8.95**

When the year is over, cut off the months and keep the useful recipes

**www.theibsnetwork.org**  
**Tel: 0114 272 32 53**

The IBS Network, Unit 1.16 SOAR Works, 14 Knutton Road, Sheffield, S5 9NU  
For details on how to become a member of The IBS Network go to [www.theibsnetwork.org](http://www.theibsnetwork.org)

## Emergency Kit

Another new product for you! Need a toilet quickly when out and about? Then what you need is our emergency toilet kit! The kit contains our Can't Wait Card and translation card (for when you are abroad), an air freshener, a hand sanitiser, a wash cloth and tissues – plus a discreet bag for your spare pants! All available for the bargain price of £9.00. Get yours today; it's also a really useful addition to your holiday travelling kit too!

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helping you better...

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**Tel: 0114 272 32 53**

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## Cooking for the Sensitive Gut, Dr Joan Ransley and Dr Nick Read

**ORDER YOUR DISCOUNTED COPY NOW!**  
**SEE BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS**

### What the experts say:

Cooking for The Sensitive Gut is more than just a compendium of delicious recipes for people with irritable bowel syndrome. The book provides a realistic portrayal of the multifaceted causes of a sensitive gut and a series of delicious recipes. Cooking for The Sensitive Gut should empower people to manage symptoms of a sensitive gut whilst still following a varied and tasty diet.

**Prof Kevin Whelan, Professor of Dietetics, King's College London**

Eating is one of the great personal and social pleasures of life. Restricting food choice can severely compromise such enjoyment and nutritional adequacy. Ransley and Read clearly outline the tools needed to effectively and safely control symptoms of IBS by choosing food wisely, but show how this can be done without losing the sheer fun and pleasure of eating. For those who think diets for IBS are boring, look no further!

**Professor Peter Gibson, Director of Gastroenterology at The Royal Alfred Hospital and Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.**

# Can Sulphites cause IBS diarrhoea?



**Dr Brian Grech**  
PhD, President of  
the Irritable Bowel  
Information and  
Support (IBIS)

Association of Australia Inc [contact@ibis-australia.org](mailto:contact@ibis-australia.org) sent us the following intriguing case history and investigation of the available literature.

Sulphites are a group of compounds containing sulphur, that can be added to food, beverages and medication to extend the shelf life of these products. They may also occur naturally in some foods and beverages as a result of fermentation and can be an intermediate compound in the breakdown of metabolic waste in humans. Sulphites are toxic to humans. The most common adverse reaction is breathing difficulties in asthmatics. If the reaction is severe, diarrhoea and other non-respiratory symptoms can ensue. Adverse reactions to sulphites in non-asthmatics are considered extremely rare [1].

About six months ago, an IBIS member, who was not asthmatic, but had suffered chronic diarrhoea for which he had been taking Imodium for 15 years, noticed a sudden improvement in his health a few days after adding a mineral supplement called molybdenum glycinate to his diet. Molybdenum is a trace element that is needed in minute quantities in humans. It plays a role in activating sulphite oxidase, which converts toxic sulphite into harmless sulphate [2]. After taking molybdenum, he no longer needed to take his Imodium. However, a puzzling observation that coincided with the health benefits is that his flatulence and stools have a foul odour.

So what is going on here? Unfortunately, these observations have not been reported in the medical literature and consequently I can only make suggestions based on current medical knowledge. This man could be sensitive to sulphites and this sensitivity could be caused by inadequate activity of sulphite oxidases due to a deficiency of molybdenum. If so, sulphites could have accumulated in his body and could be triggering diarrhoea by stimulating nerves controlling his bowel. The putative increased activity of sulphite oxidases could have converted the accumulated sulphites to sulphate.

Sulphate can be used to make mucus, which can lubricate the bowel contents as they pass through [3]. This mucus can induce an overgrowth of sulphate-reducing bacteria, generating foul smelling hydrogen sulphide gas [4].

A search of the medical literature revealed that sensitivity to sulphite can be induced in humans by feeding an intravenous solution containing no molybdenum for prolonged periods. This can be reversed by supplementing the solution with molybdenum [2].

## References

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- Willis C., Cummings J., Neale G. and Gibson G.; *In Vitro Effects of Mucin Fermentation of the Growth of Human Colonic Sulphate-Reducing Bacteria*; *Anaerobe*, 1996, 2, 117-22
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## My IBS Journey



Hello, my name is Jenish and I live in the United States. I have been suffering from discomfort and irritating pain

in the left abdomen since April 2013. I was in Belfast at that time, studying for my PhD. It took about six to seven months of tests for the NHS to diagnose IBS.

Now, the journey started! Initially I was given the Spasmanol tablets, which didn't help me. Colpermin, which contains peppermint oil helped more, but I was not satisfied, so I started searching online and came across very useful book, called Listen to Your Gut. This guided me to some treatments that I found very helpful; Healthy Trinity probiotics, and Absorb Plus powder, a natural nutritious, high protein elemental liquid diet, which I take as part of my regular breakfast.

I know that my IBS is greatly affected by stress, so I follow Sudarshan Kriya (also known as SKY breathing), which is a natural rhythmic breathing technique. It works very well on both the body and the mind. I went through the three-day training course and have practiced this technique for about 20-25 min every day. Ever since then, I have felt a genuine improvement in my stress level and my IBS. I bow down to peppermint oil, Healthy Trinity, Absorb Plus and SKY breathing technique. They have transformed my life.

During the course of my IBS journey, I have observed that food restriction often don't satisfy the sense of taste, which produces restlessness in the mind and increases stress levels. The stress in turn affects the guts, increasing IBS, which might lead to food restriction, producing a vicious circle.

If you want to talk to me about IBS you can drop me an email on [jenishpatel87@gmail.com](mailto:jenishpatel87@gmail.com)

*Stay happy and healthy*  
Jenish



# Most 'Shop-Bought' Chicken Positive for Campylobacter. Could it be the same for your Christmas turkey?

A recent report by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has revealed that 73 per cent of 4,000 fresh, 'shop-bought' chickens tested positive for campylobacter – the most common form of food poisoning in the UK, with potentially serious long-term consequences for victims. These include severe Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Gastroenteritis is the main specific risk factor for IBS and a further bout can make your existing IBS much worse.

The report found that all major retailers failed to reach industry targets to reduce the presence of the campylobacter in chickens over the period of the study, but noted some supermarket chains, such as Marks & Spencer, Waitrose, the Co-op and Morrisons have since begun reducing levels.



Amandeep Dhillon, public health lawyer for Irwin Mitchell LLP, and a trustee of The IBS Network, commented. "Consumers place their faith in food manufacturers and retailers and expect that the products they are picking off the shelves are suitable for consumption. It is absolutely imperative retailers take food hygiene regulations and guidance seriously and follow them

as closely as possible to reduce the presence of campylobacter and other potentially harmful bacteria.

"The importance of addressing the issue of campylobacter in chickens should not be downplayed and it is vital that every possible step is taken to prevent consumers from being exposed to serious risk."

If campylobacter is found in chickens, can it be found in turkeys? Do make sure that you are obeying strict hygiene precautions when cooking your turkey this Christmas.

- Make friends with your fridge. Keep the temperature below five degrees C – cold enough to stop food poisoning bugs from multiplying – and don't overfill it. Store your turkey on the bottom fridge shelf in a tray or deep plate, so no drips can fall on other foods.
- Wash your hands before and after you handle food. Remember there may be some nasty bugs in the giblets of the turkey. Be careful with raw meat. Don't wash your turkey before cooking because you risk spreading food poisoning bugs around your kitchen.
- Use separate chopping boards for raw foods and ready to eat foods like cooked hams.
- Work out how long the turkey needs to thaw. Allow ten to 12 hours per kg if you are thawing in a fridge, or two hours per kg at room temperature. Don't put it in the oven until you're sure there are no ice crystals in the cavity and the meat is soft when you insert a fork.
- Add the weight of the stuffing to the cooking time, or better still, cook it separately. Ovens vary, so as well as following cooking instructions, check the bird is cooked by sticking a skewer into the thickest part (often the thigh). The juices should run clear.
- Be careful with leftovers. You need to cool them down and get them in the fridge as soon as possible. Pull leftover meat off the carcass as soon as possible (otherwise it will retain its heat). Place left-over meat in a shallow dish and stand the dish in cold water aiming to refrigerate within two hours. Even when refrigerated, it is best to eat leftovers within 48 hours.
- Avoid smelly wet cloth syndrome. Using a dirty cloth spreads bacteria. Mop up any spills promptly using soap and hot water and if in doubt, throw the disposable cloth away. Be particularly careful about meat spillages. Have plenty of tea towels ready so you can change them if they're damp. Wash worktops before and after preparing food (and don't dry them with the tea towel).





# Ask Prof Nick



It's the silly season again! We will all be tempted to eat far too much, drink ourselves daft and collapse in front of the telly. And then there's the relatives. They come bearing gifts we don't want and stay for too long. Oh I know, it's not like that in your house. But the fact of the matter is, this is the time of the year that plays havoc with your IBS. Too much food and too much emotion can easily churn up sensitive guts. Who wants to spend Christmas on the loo? So please look after yourself and your sensitive gut this Christmas.

Every Christmas we receive lots of your letters asking how you will cope. Here is a selection.



## What can I eat?

I've had IBS ever since I was a teenager. We always go to my parents for Christmas and mum always cooks a big Christmas meal and gets upset if we don't eat it all and ask for seconds! But it always gives me tummy ache and then I have to go to the loo. What can I do to eat sensibly and not upset her?

### Comment

*I think you need to have a quiet word with your mum before Christmas. Tell her that you still have the tummy trouble you had as a teenager. It has been diagnosed as Irritable Bowel Syndrome and it means that your stomach is very sensitive to certain foods and you can't eat a lot. Try to get her to understand that if you don't manage everything she gives you, it's not that you don't like it; it's just that you want to have enough space to try everything and don't want to be ill. Finally, ask her kindly not to make a big deal about it. You can manage to eat enough and have a good time. That will not only mean that you will be able to eat what and how much you want, you will not feel under pressure. If your mum sees it that way, it's a win-win!*

## It's all too much

Christmas is such a big deal in our house. My hubby always likes all the family round for a big meal and guess who's got to do it all? All the men go to the pub for a lunch time drink and then come back and expect the meal to be ready and on the table. And my daughters are too busy keeping their children under control. I hate Christmas and end up getting so cross, my IBS flares up and I can't eat a thing. Do you think I should take more Imodium?

### Comment

*Well, if you know you're going to an attack of diarrhoea over Christmas, then taking an Imodium the night before or on Christmas morning may help you survive the day. But it really shouldn't be like that. You could*

*always go on strike and tell your husband you want to have Christmas away this year. Or you could make it very clear to everybody that you need them all to muck*

*in and share the load. For example, one of your daughters could make the Christmas pudding this year, another the cake or the mince pies. And surely everybody can help peeling sprouts and parsnips, making the bread sauce, and preparing the turkey the night before. You might also consider turkey crowns from the supermarket to save effort. Who knows, if they get involved, they may find it fun? I've always found that kids love being involved as long as you don't mind a bit of mess!*

*What I would ask though is why do you need to make yourself a martyr to your family and your IBS? What does it say about you? If you can rethink that, then perhaps you can keep your IBS quiet too. Finally if your IBS is threatening, do watch what you eat. Go easy on the gravy, the bread sauce, just have a spoonful of cranberry sauce and don't have quite so many sprouts. But above all, make sure you make Christmas something you can enjoy too.*

## He gets too excited

My little boy gets so excited about getting all his presents on Christmas Day, he ends up with tummy ache. How can I prevent that?

### Comment

*So much is invested in Christmas. It's the one day in the year we want our children to have a good time that we can easily overdo it. Nobody can sustain that level of excitement for too long. If your kids are still bouncing off the walls when you are all trying to eat your Christmas meal, then it's bound to end in tears and upset their tummy. Kids can't regulate their excitement. They are too controlled by their emotional brain (their inner chimp – see <http://thesensitivegut.com/2015/10/09/feeling-ill-again-is-it-your-diet-or-might-it-be-your-chimp/>).*

*They need their parents to engage their cognitive (human) brain and do it for them. So set some boundaries: No waking up before half past seven, then they can come in and get their stockings; eat breakfast before giving out presents, regulate the presentations; unwrap presents one at a time and then move on to the next. And don't give them too many presents. Have a quiet word with grandma and aunts and uncles and try to give them what they need rather than what they want. Make sure you take them out for a runabout before Christmas dinner. Get all the family to share the preparation of Christmas meal. And don't have too much to drink. Your children will also get drunk on the atmosphere and it could end in disaster. But you know all this and you know it makes sense!*

## My mum died just before Christmas

Five years ago, just a few days before Christmas, my mum died. She was old and had begun to lose the plot, but it was still a shock and we didn't have Christmas that year; there was so much to do before the funeral which occurred the day after New Year's Day. Ever since then, as all the build up to Christmas occurs, I get increasingly constipated and the bloating is awful. My doctor sent me to a dietitian who started me on a low FODMAP diet, but that just seemed to make the constipation worse. But if I took Fybogel for the constipation, I got more bloated. I know it's IBS, but cannot seem to control it. When we get into February and it starts getting lighter, then it all gets a bit easier.

### Comment

*The difficulty in treating IBS is that what works for one symptom can make others worse. It's as if the illness has to express itself no matter what we do to treat it. You could of course try Movicol or Dulcolax or some of the newer meds for constipation such as Constella or Resolor. But, I suspect these may be like tinkering round the edges and you have already given the low FODMAP diet a good try.*

*But you know the problem. You don't have to be an expert physician to realise that the memory of your mum is still upsetting you. The emotional stage of grieving often only occurs for a limited time, but if you have not got it out of your system, the bodily consequences can go on for years.*

*Try something different this year. Go away with your partner or a friend to somewhere you've always wanted to go. A change of scene will take your mind off all the negative thoughts about your mum. It'll help you live in the moment and get things in perspective and even look forward to what you might do in the future. And you know, I bet your mum would never have wanted you to stop living just because she did. So go for it. You owe it to yourself and your mum!*

## They always end up fighting.



I am 17 and I have had IBS for the last two years. Most of the time I can cope, but Christmas is a nightmare. Mum and dad start bickering at each other and then when my brothers come round, all hell breaks loose. They always start arguing and the more they drink, the more they shout and then mum and dad join in. My tummy just ties itself in knots and I have to go to the loo, but then someone starts banging on the door. What can I do about it?

### Comment

*It sounds dreadful. You won't be able to stop them arguing especially if they've been drinking. All you can do is try to look after yourself. Tell yourself, 'Christmas day will soon be over and things will get back to normal. In the meantime, I have to try to not let it upset me.'*

*Try to get some space for yourself. Go to your room and read a book or Facebook your friends. Go out for a walk. And if you know how, practice yoga or meditation, get in the zone and reduce the tension. Do something practical like preparing the veg. But whatever you do, try not to let yourself get caught up in all the aggro. You won't have to spend Christmas there forever.*

## Christmas Taste Testing

**We have been testing some Christmas goodies for you, we know - it's such a tough job, but someone has to do it! Have a look at our website for the results.**

Where appropriate the products are labelled as low fodmap. We have also reviewed some treats that do contain fodmaps and to help you decide if they are suitable for you we have detailed which type they contain. They are wheat and gluten free, so might be suitable if you have non coeliac gluten sensitivity or have an intolerance to fructan in wheat. Remember, small amounts of foods containing Fodmaps may be tolerated and not all will be problematic. Most of the foods tested are high in fat, which could prove difficult for some with IBS. Bear in mind, moderation is the key over the Christmas period. And lastly, have a wonderful stress-free time!

**If you have any comments about any content or you have any suggestions as to future articles please contact us at [info@theibsnetwork.org](mailto:info@theibsnetwork.org), or call us on 0114 272 3253.**

## Poetry Corner

**Written in response to a complaint to an IBS research group sharing hospital facilities.**

### YOUR'S, DISGUSTED

Please don't talk about bums  
If you want to be chums  
And share our coffee room  
It's not that we're thick  
We're just a bit sick  
Of impaired defaecation  
And bad constipation  
And talk about bums isn't fun

Try to make it a rule  
Not to talk about stool  
When we're eating our chocolate cake.  
What you find amusing  
Is not of our choosing  
And we'd rather let pass  
Intestinal gas.  
Your obsession with stool makes us ill

We do feel queer  
When you talk diarrhoea  
And we're trying to drink our soup.  
Such crude conversations  
Quite upset our digestions.  
So please do not tease us  
With poorly formed faeces  
Don't discuss diarrhoea in here.

If you don't want to pain us,  
Please, don't mention the anus.  
It's a part of our bodies we'd rather ignore.  
The stomach or spleen  
Are not quite so obscene.  
And even the liver  
Would not make us quiver  
But let's leave the anus behind us.

It's most awfully rude  
When we're eating our food  
To talk about things 'down below'  
And the anal canal is just awf'ly banal.  
We just crave education  
From bright conversation.  
Can't you please change the subject today?



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**Dr Joan Ransley** is a freelance cook, nutritionist, food writer and honorary lecturer in Nutrition at the University of Leeds. She is a member of the Guild of Food Writers and a tutor at the School of Artisan Food and on The Guardian's highly successful Masterclass programme.

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