



# The Old Rectory: Escape to a Country Kitchen

*Julia Ibbotson*

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## **The Old Rectory: Escape to a Country Kitchen** Julia Ibbotson

When author Julia Ibbotson and her husband first saw the old Victorian rectory in dire need of renovation, a mile out of the nearest village in the midst of the English moorlands, they fell in love with it and the lifestyle it represented, with its farmhouse kitchen range at its heart. This delightful memoir describes the trials and tribulations of their quest to make their vision come true. They hoped they could make the sad, neglected house glow again and that they could integrate themselves into the small traditional village, with its cottages, hall and outlying farms. The Old Rectory focuses on the centrality of the kitchen as the pulse of the family and home, and shows the importance of food and cooking throughout the changing seasons, history and moods of the countryside as the couple strive to live the dream. Award winning memoir, with five stars on Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk Praise for The Old Rectory "the book is a wonderful blend of personal story (one so many of us can identify with), enchantingly told, with recipes...It all spreads happiness. Lovely!" Bel Mooney, author and journalist "destined to become a classic...I adored this book and think you will too..." Rebecca Johnson "what a jewel this book is...truly a delight...a great writer...a delightful read, all the way to the end...loved it!" Peggy Fellouris "a most talented writer...a charming story written by a writer with a wonderful voice" Nancy Mills "a beautiful tale ...delightful" Vicky DeCoster "an inspirational tale that offers many surprises..." Carol Hoenig

## **The Old Rectory: Escape to a Country Kitchen Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Old Rectory: Escape to a Country Kitchen for online ebook**

### **Lisa says**

This is an unusual concept for a book. Tales of the Authors renovation of her new home, interspersed with recipes of good home cooking.

I found the authors description of the rectory before, during and after the renovations, very well written and I would have just loved to have seen some photos of it. I also loved how she delved into the history of the rectory and uncovered it's previous residents and the things they did to the rectory too. I could just imagine ghosts of former residents watching over the changes being made to the rectory.

I enjoyed the tales of village life and how the author immersed herself into life with the locals, hosting parties and joining in with local activities. I did however feel that at times the author came over as if she was in a completely different class to me, and that sometimes put me off as some things made her sound a bit boastful, although I'm sure she didn't mean it so come across that way and it was just the way it made me feel. She seems a friendly person who everyone in the village warmed to.

I loved some of the recipes the author included in the book which often related to the events she had been talking about in the chapter, and at the beginning of each chapter she would mention which recipes would follow. However, I would have preferred them to be at the end of the book. I tended to just flip past them and read them when I finished the book. I found they got in the way of the story that was being told about the rectory.

All in all an interesting read. Not sure I would have enjoyed it so much without the recipes, as I found that added substance to the book. The two together though made it a nice read.

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### **Voirrey says**

This is a gentle, short, read as the author and her husband set about buying and restoring a large Victorian country house which had been, for some years, the village vicarage.

She talks about the meals they eat, and includes the recipes for a lot of lovely traditional fare as she move from season to season. Many of her favourites are also mine and it was fun to see where we used almost identical recipes and where they differed a little.

Sadly I read the kindle version which doesn't include the drawings, by the author's daughter, that I gather are chapter headings in the paper version.

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### **Gayle Pace says**

REVIEW:

This book is not only the story of how a couple realize their dream but a wonderful cookbook. She and her husband found a white-walled, black timbered house that would give them the much needed freedom from city life that they needed. The author wanted to move to the country since she had a longing to live in a rural setting. Ms. Ibbotson and her husband bought the 150 year old rectory and started to bring back it's wonderful charm along with a soothing of their hearts. She wanted her home to be inviting and comfortable. It didn't come without struggles, many struggles. The kind that make a person want to throw in the towel, but they didn't. They kept on going. Their love for THE OLD RECTORY made it all worthwhile. Ms. Ibbotson spent time researching the history of the rectory and some of its inhabitants. She puts a recipe at the end of each chapter which shows her love of cooking. Some of the recipes she makes sound so scrumptious it makes your mouth water and your tummy rumble. She loves to cook. You can almost smell the Roast Leg of Lamb and the Hot Oranges in Vanilla Caramel Syrup. The book is full of love and warmth. You can almost picture her and her husband sitting in front of the fireplace on a cold winter night. Kind of makes you wish you were there. If you love historical places, renovations to bring back their charm and we can't leave out the wonderful recipes, then you will love this book. It will warm your heart to know there are those who still love the past and the history that goes with it. This book is not only a renovation of THE OLD RECTORY but of Ms. Ibbotson and her family. Lovely book. To be cherished.

I would give this book 5 STARS.

I received a complimentary copy of THE OLD RECTORY from the author, Dr. Julia Helene Ibbotson for this unbiased review.

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### **Melissa T says**

This is an interesting mix of history, personal anecdotes and recipes. \*I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.\* Full review to come.

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### **D. says**

This was a lovely book. Perfect for a winter day. My only regret about it is that I am a terrible cook. I would have loved to do justice to the recipes!

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### **TAMMY CUEVAS says**

When author Julia Ibbotson and her husband found themselves in the "empty nester" phase, they sold their house and went in search of their dream home. After spotting a Victorian-era rectory outside a quaint English village, they began the herculean task of renovating and restoring the old rectory.

Ms. Ibbotson's memoir of the renovation process is the non-fiction equivalent of a nice English cozy novel. With the story broken down into the seasons of the year, the author tells of the journey of renovating a historic home in Great Britain. Along with the usual problems incurred, she explains the British red tape associated with historic homes. Her descriptions of the countryside, the village and its inhabitants make for a fascinating story. Within each chapter, she discusses meals cooked in the home, and at the end of the chapter,

the author has included the recipes, complete with the US conversion on measurements.

As an Anglophile, I enjoyed the setting of the story, and as a food blogger, I absolutely loved the recipes. And as someone who a year ago thought it would be an adventure to purchase and renovate an older home in the country, I not only enjoyed the story, but found myself smiling and often commiserating with their situations.

5 stars

I received this book from Pump Up Your Book Blog Tours to read and review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 55.

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### **T. Beasley says**

Having a dream and seeing it come true is how this couple felt in *The Old Rectory: Escape to a Country Kitchen* by Helene J. Ibbotson. This husband and wife team transformed an old home into a place of warmth, love and a place to get a home cooked meal. *The Old Rectory* expresses everything that goes with remodeling a home while studying its history.

This book also provides wonderful recipes to tantalize any taste bud. I loved the way the chapters include the seasons. This was a unique way to have a cookbook within a story book.

This book was provided by the author for review purposes.

Teresa Beasley  
A&RBC Reviews

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### **Sandie says**

As Julia Ibbotson and her husband took stock once the children were gone, they decided that they wanted a change. They decided what they really wanted as their lifestyle was to move to a more rural setting in England, one where they could be close to the land and its rhythms, where life was slower and easier to savor. After an extensive search, they found what they thought was the perfect house. A former rectory, it had been built in the late 1800's and offered the space and location they wanted.

*The Old Rectory* details the Ibbotson's acquisition and renovation of their dream house. As one might expect, the house had significant flaws that had to be fixed; dampness and mold as well as antiquated wiring. The couple wanted to not only modernize the house, but restore it to its original Georgian style. They also wanted to restore the grounds to their former glory.

Julia is a woman who adores cooking, and each chapter details various traditional English dishes appropriate to the season in which the chapter is written. The reader will learn how to make such dishes as the traditional English roast, lamb with mint jelly, lots of various fruit puddings, and other wonderful meals.

As the couple worked on the house, they also became part of village life. Soon they were involved in various village functions such as choirs, craft classes, a walking group and a group that went on outings. They made new friends who shared their love of English culture and thought it worth fighting for.

Ibbotson has written a charming account of how life can be changed as one moves into the later stages of one's life. The renovation and research into the house's history are interesting, and the recipes are enticing. American readers need to take extra care with details such as oven temperature and measurements and be sure they have correctly translated the measurements into their American equivalents. This book is recommended for readers who enjoy cooking as well as those interested in history or how to enrich one's life after the work of raising children is over.

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## **Heidi says**

I wasn't quite sure what to expect from the book when I first started to read it. All I knew, was that the author was writing about the purchase of an Old Rectory.

After the first few sentences, I discovered that the book was so much more than just a simple recollection of facts. Julia's writing style is so warm and engaging! Once I started the Old Rectory, I found it hard to peel myself away from the pages.

All the way through, I could immediately empathise with Julia. I know how easy it is, to fall in love with a house at first sight. After all, we only ever looked at one house and we knew straight away that this was the house for us (as soon as I discovered the built in wardrobe in our house, I was sold :-)). Luckily for us, we didn't have to undertake any huge renovations unlike Julia. I admire her for having the strength and endurance to cope with builders and dirt/dust for such a long time! But it seems to be so worth it – your rectory sounds lovely, Julia!!

This book is so personally written. It felt as if I was talking to a friend and not like reading a book from a person I had never met before. I loved discovering new facts and the history of the rectory “together” with Julia. The recipes that are included at the end of each chapter add hugely to the “homely feel” of the book. The chocolate fudge cake one is my favourite (I've tried it already :-)). The next recipe I want to give a go is the Baked Chicken – in – a – Brick.

I am a huge fan of Julia's writing and I sincerely hope, that she will write more books!!

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## **Darlene says**

Like the author, Julia Ibbotson, I love books about buying and restoring properties especially in quaint little villages or countrysides so her novel *The Old Rectory: Escape to a Country Kitchen* was really an enjoyable read for me. This is a shorter book at a little under two hundred pages and it just flew by as Julia related she and her husband's journey towards getting the old Victorian rectory restored to its former glory.

Julia and her husband buy a property that is in the middle of the moors in the midlands of England. The rectory is in need of major restoration and they debate on whether they are up for it and can afford it but

ultimately they know that this is the place for them. As the restorations are going forward they begin to learn that the rectory has a very rich history and this fascinates them even more. However as with all things they most definitely have their struggles in getting the rectory to where they want it and many times they are very frustrated but they keep on and eventually it all pays off. With beautiful gardens and an abundance of fresh veggies and herbs, the rectory has become the home they always wanted.

In reading any memoir it always helps when the main person is one that you can see yourself sitting at the kitchen table having a coffee or an English tea with and Julia is just that sort of person. She had worked hard all of her life and really wanted to get away from the craziness of the world and do something meaningful to her and her family. She is also someone who loves to cook and views it as a way of showing her love for her family and friends. It brings her joy to see them enjoy the bounty she prepares and I can't tell you how many times I wished I was a part of her family and able to enjoy what is obviously a close knit and happy family.

While I enjoyed the sections of the book dealing with the restoration of the rectory I have to say that I really loved the mouth watering recipes that Julia included in the book that reflect the four seasons. As she said in her book "food seems to reflect the moods of life; it follows the seasons and creates your memories". Most of us can relate to that as many of our fondest memories are related to sharing or cooking food with a loved one. There are so many recipes I plan on trying but I'll just name a few here: Hot Oranges in Vanilla Caramel Syrup, Potato Dauphinoise de Loire which is a creamy cheesy dish -yum!, Traditional Lemon Syllabub, and Potato Pete Soup. This is just to name a few as there are many others that sound so scrumptious.

The Old Rectory: Escape to a Country Kitchen was a comforting read for me. Between the restoration, the recipes, and the obvious love that the author has for her family I found that the novel warmed my heart. The only thing missing was that I would have liked to see photos of the before and after of the restoration. The author did include pencil sketches at the beginning of each chapter though that were done by her daughter and they really added a touch of charm. This is a memoir that falls into a few categories so if you like books about restorations and you're a foodie then The Old Rectory is certainly a book you'll enjoy!

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## **Holly (2 Kids and Tired) says**

An engaging book that evokes similar feelings to Under the Tuscan Sun. Like Frances Mayes in Italy, Julia Ibbotson and her husband purchase an English property that needs serious restoration. As they begin that restoration, they discover the rectory's rich history, as well as a delightful village and neighbors. In researching the home's history, Julia also researches and discovers new Victorian era recipes that become part of her cooking repertoire as she imagines they could have been prepared years past in the old rectory's kitchen.

As the author and her husband became part of the community, the tales of the villagers, both past and present were charming. The book follows the natural progression of the renovation and the author has divided it into seasons, with the recipes corresponding.

I loved the Englishness of the book; the language, the descriptions, the recipes. I appreciate that the recipes contain U.S. measurement conversions. While the book contains some lovely sketches, I found myself longing to see what the house itself looks like. There are no photos in the book or on the author's website and I would love to see a before and after.

A lovely memoir and quick enjoyable read. Perfect for curling up in front of your fireplace with a cup of cocoa or tea!

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### **Stacie says**

This is the memoir of Julia and her husband who found a lovely old Victorian rectory and wanted to make it theirs. Through many ups and downs, their perfect little hideaway in the English moorlands eventually becomes theirs. After many years of being neglected, the author and her husband have a lot of work ahead of them. Especially after finding out their home was built in 1860. Through the process of renovating, many historical stories emerge. Julia revels in cooking for her family and friends, sharing their experiences, and "living the dream" in their quaint country home.

While reading, you will have to put your mindset in the language of the British. Words like "chum" and "vicar" will put you in the true setting of the book. As the author discusses the meals she fixed for her family, your mouth will water. Each chapter then closes with recipes of the meals described that will delight your senses. I would expect that you would want to run to the store and get these meals on your dinner table.

The story is full of detail and charm and makes you want to visit an English village in your future. I feel like I could be sitting with Julia having tea and relishing in their story of finding their dream home.

If you like memoirs of historical significance and charming stories that will bring a smile to your face, check out *THE OLD RECTORY*, brew yourself a cup of English tea and settle in for a enchanting journey.

I read this on my Kindle, but it is also available in paperback.

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### **Lindsay says**

I was a little dubious about offering to read and review this as cooking and baking really isn't my thing - I like to avoid the kitchen if I can! However, we all need to step out of our comfort zones once in a while and experience new things or genres.

Julia takes us through the ups and downs of the renovation of her 'dream home to be' which is intermingled with her recipes. These recipes being linked to times of the year and to what ingredients are in season or she had available. Good old fashioned English cooking is what she seems to love!

This is a short book and easy to read but from very early on Julia's obvious love of cooking shows through her writing - you'll be salivating at all the lovely recipes!

I actually had a go at making one of Julia's recipes - the Zingy Zest Lemon Pud (which was more of a sponge cake). Now, I'm not a baker or cook of any nature, but it was a very easy recipe to follow and actually, it turned out quite well - tasted delicious!

Minor point but I did notice a couple of errors but this is still an enjoyable memoir and would be a perfect read for those who like *Escape to the Country*, *Grand Designs* or *The Great British Bake Off*.



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## **Michelle (True Book Addict) Miller says**

The Old Rectory is a very charming book...and it's a book that will make people want to add to their bucket list. What do I mean by this? Well, who hasn't dreamed of owning and renovating an old Victorian era (or older) house, especially in the English countryside? Maybe not everyone, but I sure have. Julie Ibbotson has recounted the story of her quest to find the perfect home and, upon finding the old rectory, the journey of the renovation. Intertwined in the story, her love of cooking shines through. She breaks the book up into seasons and includes recipes that fit within those seasons. I can't wait to try out her recipes and the beauty of it is she includes the U.S. measurements too in the ingredients. This book will have a permanent place among my cookbooks and it will be nice to pull it out from time to time to dream of someday owning my own "old rectory" or its equivalent.

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## **Mason Canyon says**

This book could fall under so many genres - memoir, cookbook, how-to, and inspirational to list a few.

THE OLD RECTORY: Escape to a Country Kitchen chronicles author Julia Helene Ibbotson and her husband, Clive, as they search for their dream home, purchase it and begin restoring it back to its original grandeur. Their discovery was an old Victorian rectory in the midst of the English moorlands just outside a charming village.

Ibbotson has broken the story into seasons describing the events of the family's life, as well as the progress of the renovation. In addition, she has included a menu suited to the season complete with recipes. While these are English inspired recipes, the author includes American conversions for the measurements.

Pencil sketches by the author's daughter, Mel Adams, highlights the beginning of each chapter. The drawings enhance the charm of this delightful book.

THE OLD RECTORY is a quick read that flows smoothly. The trials and triumphs of the renovation, as well as the family, pull you in making you feel a part of the process.

Ibbotson's detailed descriptions of the setting and landscape adds depth to the story. Her love of cooking, family and friends comes through her writing. She also includes bits of history about the rectory and the surrounding community to give a sense of her fondness for the place.

THE OLD RECTORY will make you long for a picnic lunch with Lord Woolten Pie in the garden to enjoy the summer breeze and a cup of Spiced Mulled Wine by the fireplace on a cold afternoon in the fall.

FTC Full Disclosure - A digital copy of this book was sent to me by the tour promoter as part of the author's virtual blog tour in hopes I would review it. However, receiving the complimentary copy did not influence my review.

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