

FOOD FOR TO-DAY AND TOMORROW (1951)

John Robert (Rob) Midgley
September 2026

The first edition of Janet's book *Food for To-day in the Land of Tomorrow* (1941, reprinted 1942) was well-received and sold out. In the meantime, the Midgleys had fallen on hard times and in 1942 Janet's husband Percy took on a governmental position in Serowe, Bechuanaland. Janet followed him. After the war, in 1946, they moved to Queenstown. All the while, to supplement their meagre income, their family encouraged her to produce another edition of the book.

Janet duly contacted the Mazenod Institute and in June 1949 signed the first of three agreements, two of which I have in my possession. The third one was in fact signed after the book had been published.



Janet Midgley at her son John Hector Conyers's wedding, 15 December 1951

PHONE NO. 6 MAZENOD
TELEGRAM: MAZENOD NATAL
MAIL ORDER: 01
PRINTING
CARPENTRY
BOOK DEPOT
STATIONERY

Mazenod Institute
(THE ORLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE)
MASERU • SOUTH AFRICA • BASUTOLAND

EDITORS OF
"Mazeno" in English
PUBLISHERS

AGREEMENT BETWEEN MRS. P.R. MIDGLEY AND MAZENOD INSTITUTE FOR RE-PRINTING OF THE BOOK "FOOD FOR TO-DAY IN THE LAND OF TOMORROW."

- 1- The Book will remain the property of Mrs. P.R. Midgley.
- 2- The Mazenod Institute will make a new Edition of 5000 copies of the Book, print, publish, and distribute it at its own expenses.
- 3- The new Edition will be similar to the previous one with a new and more complete Index to be supplied by the Owner.
- 4- The retail selling price of the book will be 5/- per copy, but may be altered at the discretion of the publishers according to unforeseen changes of circumstances.
- 5- Mazenod Institute will pay the Owner a Royalty of 12½ per cent of the retail price on 5000 copies payable in four instalments at intervals of three months commencing three months after the book is first put on sale and extending over a period of one year.
- 6- The Book will contain as many advertisements as may be obtained at £3-3-0 per full page and £2-2-0 per half page. One fourth of the amount hence accrued will be paid to the owner and the balance will be used to cover the extra printing expenses incurred by the advertisements.
- 7- The present agreement will be valid for the third Edition only of the Book.

Date June 21st 1949

Janet P. Midgley
OWNER

N. Labrecque
MANAGER
for
MAZENOD INSTITUTE.

Agreement dated 21 June 1949

AGREEMENT BETWEEN MRS. J. MIDGLEY AND MAZENOD INSTITUTE FOR RE-PRINTING OF THE BOOK "FOOD FOR TO-DAY AND TOMORROW"

- 1- This Agreement cancels the previous agreement for the re-printing of the book "Food for To-day and Tomorrow" signed on the 28th August 1950. by Mrs. Janet Midgley and the Rev. Father H. Labrecque, O.S.I.
- 2- The Book will remain the property of the Mrs. J. Midgley.
- 3- The Mazenod Institute will make a new Edition of 5000 copies of the Book, print, publish, and distribute it at its own expenses.
- 4- The new Edition will be similar to the previous one with a new and more complete Index to be supplied by the Owner.
- 5- The retail selling price of the book will be 7/8 per copy including postage and packing, but may be altered at the discretion of the publishers according to unforeseen changes of circumstances.
- 6- Mazenod Institute will pay the Owner a Royalty of 10 per cent of the net price of 7/- per copy on 5000 copies in instalments of £17.14.3 payable immediately after the sale of each lot of 500 copies has been completed.
- 7- The Book will contain as many advertisements as may be obtained at £3-3-0 per full page and £2-2-0 per half page. One fourth of the amount hence accrued will be paid to the Owner and the balance will be used to cover the extra printing expenses incurred by the advertisements.
- 8- Under equally satisfactory terms offered for the printing of future editions of "Food for To-day and Tomorrow" the Owner binds herself to give preference for the re-printing of the said Cookery book to Mazenod Institute over all other printing establishments.
- 9- The present agreement will be valid for the 1951 Edition only of the Book.

Date 21st Sept. 1951

J. Midgley
OWNER

N. Labrecque
MANAGER
for
MAZENOD INSTITUTE.

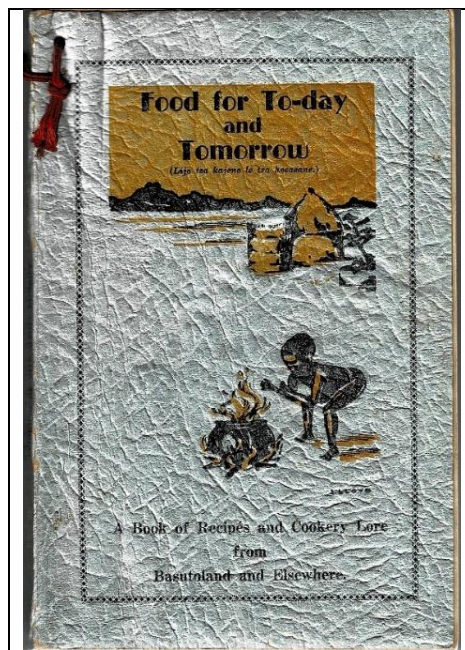
Agreement dated 21 September 1951

The terms were straightforward. Janet would retain copyright. The Institute would produce and distribute 5,000 copies at its expense at 7/- plus 6d postage, with a trade discount of 25%.¹ Janet's royalty was 10%, to be paid in instalments of £17.14.2 upon sale of a lot of 500 copies. Advertisements would cost £3.3.02 per full page and £2.2.0 per half page, with Janet receiving a quarter of such funds raised.

The title of the first edition had elicited some criticism: Basutoland was a land of today, not tomorrow, and so the new edition, published in June 1951, was called *Food for Today and Tomorrow*:²

Basutoland is no longer quite so much the "Land of Tomorrow" as it used to be, but there are still many remote parts of this country, and of South Africa too, where modern civilization has not penetrated. ... This book has been specially designed to assist the European housewife who find herself thrown upon her own resources in some lonely outpost, where it is still impossible to obtain foods other than the district can produce, owing to the difficulties of transport.

Janet wrote that much of the "New and improved version" remained unaltered, save for a few minor changes, including the addition of new recipes and new methods.³ The general index near the front of the book was an obvious improvement; and interestingly, perhaps because the book's focus was on assisting "the present day housewife", the absence of the previous appendix is also noticeable.



Front cover of the Second Edition,
1951

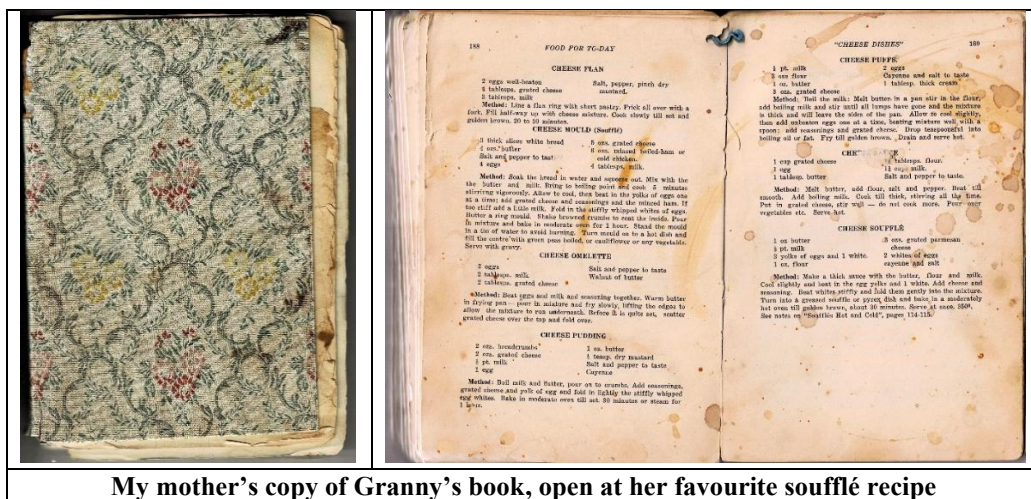
The Content

I have a forlorn copy of the second edition of 'Granny's book' which my family used on a regular basis. My mother liked Granny's curry recipe, raved over her cheese soufflé and the egg recipes in general, while Dad was fond of making her Welsh rarebit on toast. I continue that tradition when I cook soufflé and Welsh rarebit and used to lean on the book in the days when I made marmalade. I remember our Sunday meals with Yorkshire Pudding ("Granny came from there so she knew how that should be done") and I now also see ticks against her curry sauce and macaroni cheese.

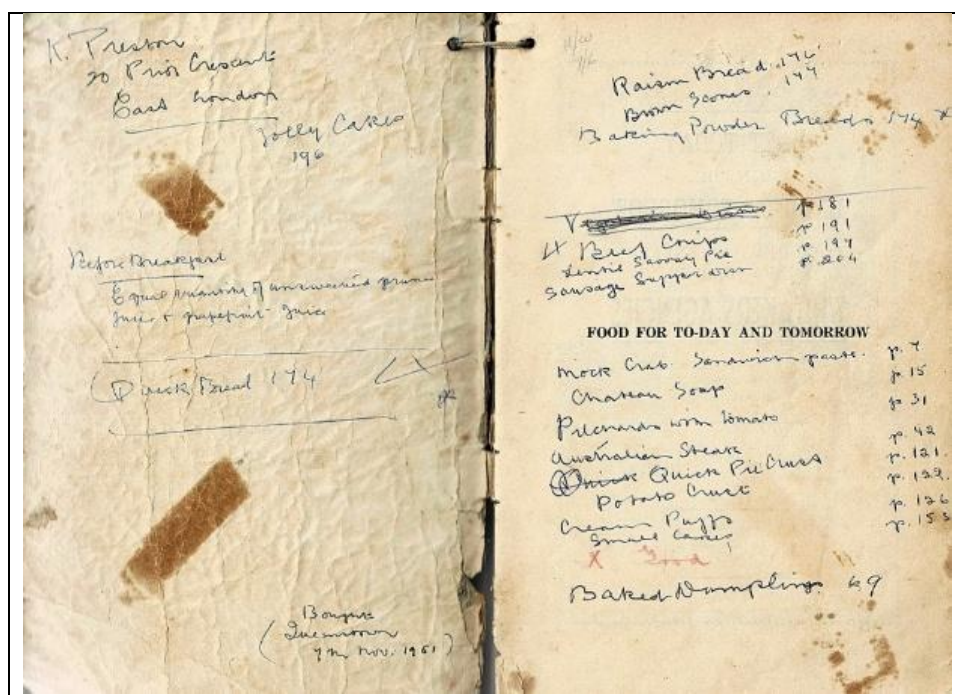
¹ One of the books I own is marked 8/-. It must have been bought later.

² Compiler's note, Second Edition.

³ Compiler's note, Second Edition.



I obtained a copy of the second edition which A Preston of East London had bought in Queenstown on 7 November 1951. It was clearly also a well-used book, with annotations next to commonly used recipes. The inside cover of this copy shows other recipes which might be worth exploring.



Advertising and Promotion

In July 1951 Janet wrote to Mr Ensor of Dower & Ensor, Queenstown, enquiring about the ins and outs of protecting her copyright in the book. He must have followed up on her instructions for there is further correspondence in July 1951 from MacRoberts, a well-known intellectual property firm in Pretoria, setting out the law; as well as an article on the topic which appeared in the local Queenstown newspaper in August 1951.⁴ The lawyers pointed out that copyright vests naturally in a person on publication of material and registration was optional and served merely as proof of a publication's existence. It seems she decided not to proceed further.

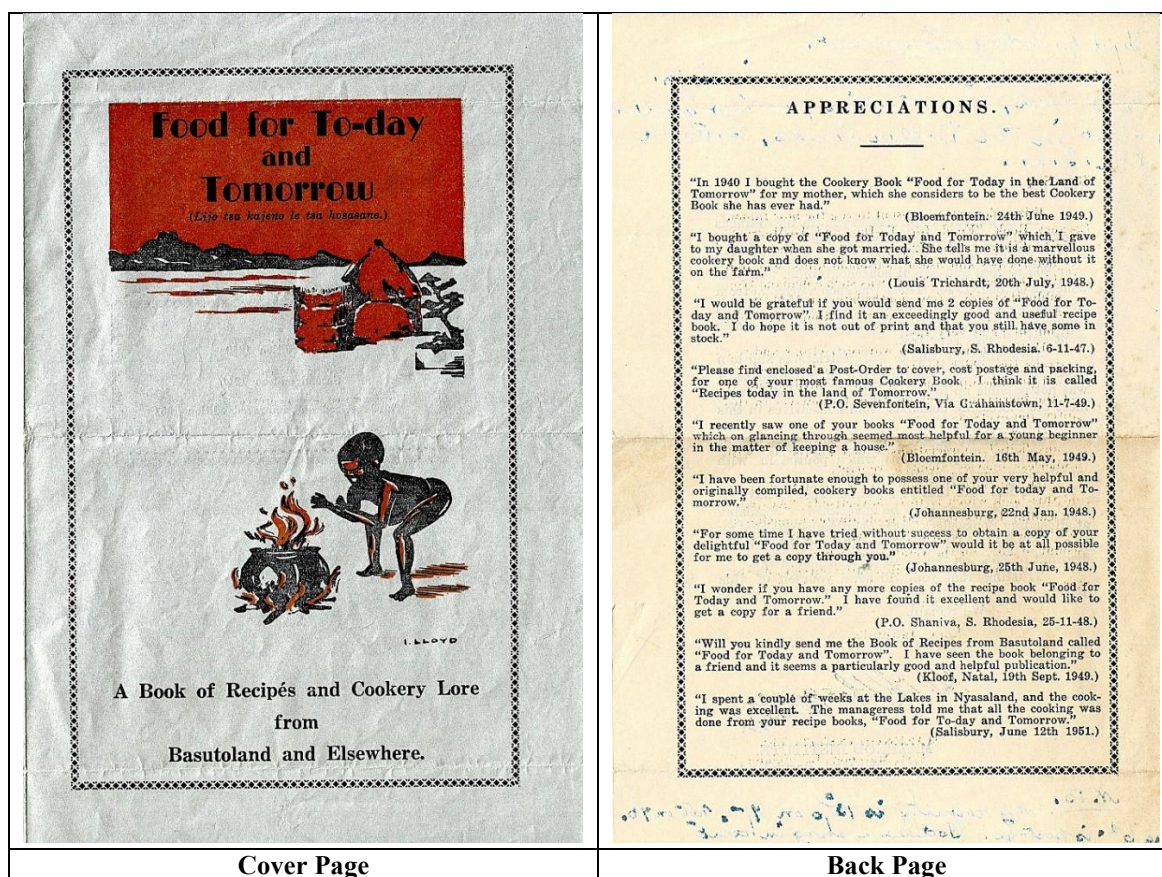
⁴ *The Daily Representative* 31 August 1951.

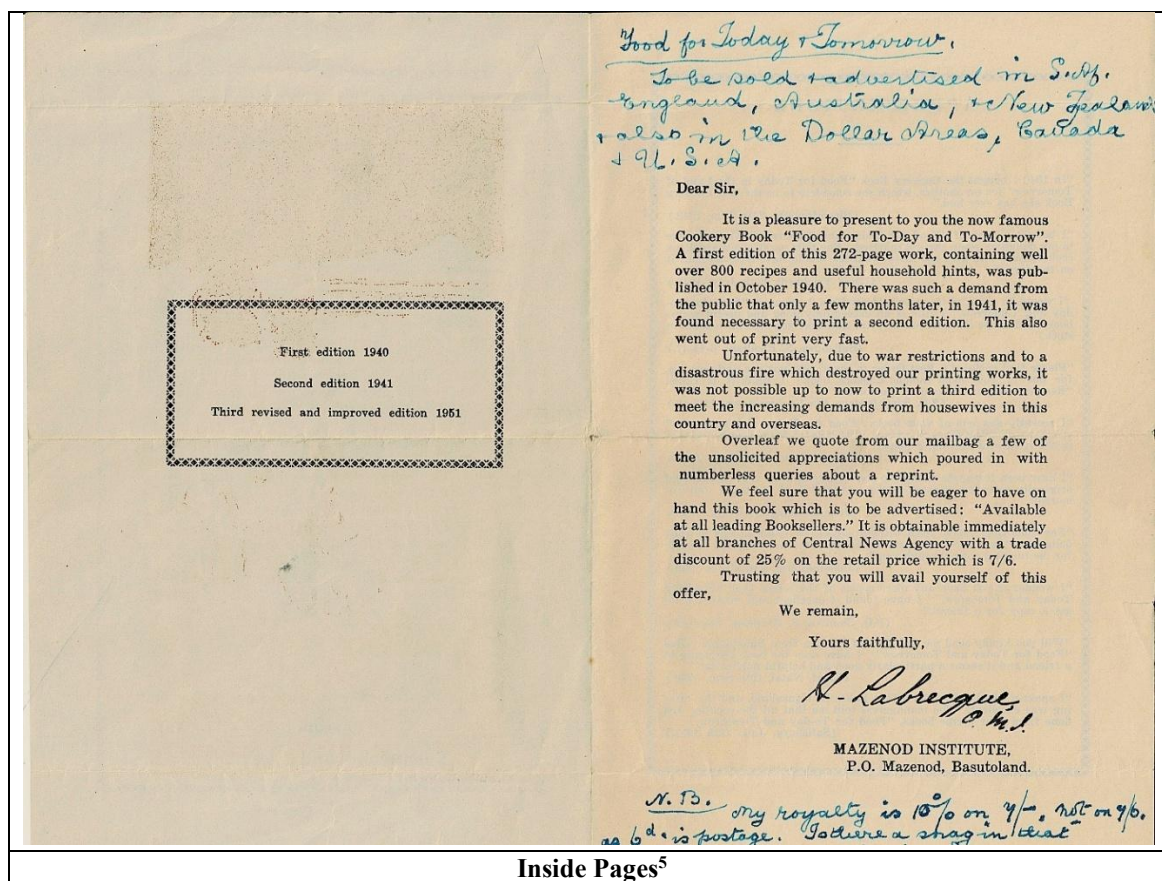
Janet's intention was clearly to take sole ownership of the work. Gone was any reference in the foreword to the book's original purpose to raise war funds, or any link to the Victoria League. And whereas in the first edition the recipe contributors had been acknowledged next to their recipes, their names no longer appeared in the second edition. The book was hers and she was not shy in promoting her role and ensuring that she was a focus of attention.

In a letter to Mazenod Institute dated 16 July 1951 Janet wrote:

"Re Sample Cover, Appreciations etc. These are very nice indeed, and I am very pleased to know that the leaflet is to be inserted in every book sold from Mazenod. I am rather disappointed to find that "compiled by Janet Midgley" has been omitted from the circulars. My name is well-known as the compiler of previous books, and the mention of it, would no doubt have helped the sales. I trust you will include my name in any future circulars or advertisements."

This was the leaflet she referred to:





Marketing

Mazenod had taken charge of marketing of the first edition, and although their contract was silent on the issue, it seems they had agreed that Janet could be more involved in marketing the second. She referred to such an agreement in correspondence:⁶

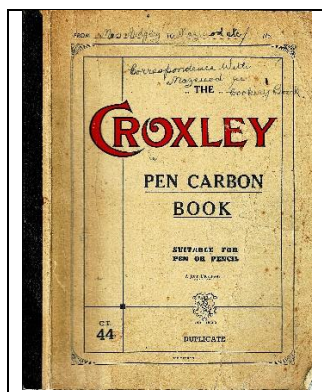
Mazenod placed the previous advertising of the book in my hands and allowed me to spend the sum of £50 on their behalf. This amount has been used & my letter of Oct. 2nd was intended as a request for authority to spend a little more money on advertising for Xmas, as previously promised by Mazenod.

Janet was certainly active in promoting her book among friends and acquaintances and in contacting people she knew in the media. It is also clear that material she had prepared was sent to various newspapers around the country and abroad.

Mazenod appears to have adopted a passive marketing role. It sent complimentary copies to various newspapers and left it to the Central News Agency (C.N.A.) to promote sales.

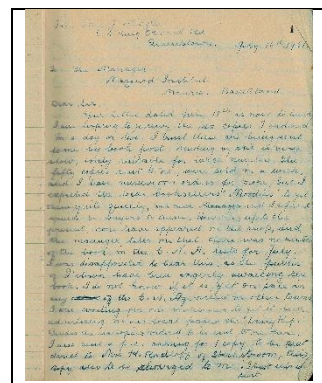
⁵ I suspect, from the reference to 'Mr Banker', that this copy of the leaflet might have been sent to my father who worked in Standard Bank.

⁶ Letter Janet to Mazenod, 5 December 1951.



Janet was a busybody author and by all accounts, a pain in Mazenod's neck. She kept record of her correspondence with Mazenod in a Croxley carbon copy book. I transcribed around 27 letters written between 1951 and 1958;⁷ all bar one, containing suggestions (some quite detailed) on how and where to advertise and around 11 also dealing with royalties.

Certain themes stood out: her book was the best in the business and sales suffered primarily from poor advertising;⁸ Mazenod made a grave mistake in not fixing into the front of the book a leaflet on how and where to obtain the book, as was done in the first edition;⁹ and, the C.N.A. had lost interest in promoting the book because its price was too low and Mazenod needed to become more active in this regard.¹⁰ She was also not shy in pushing Mazenod to do their bit; and in pointing out instances where they failed to do so.¹¹



Despite her often annoyingly dogged approach, one senses from the material she produced and sent to Mazenod that Janet had a feel for marketing and an inherent sense of where the book would sell. She was exasperated at the slow movement of her book and she understood that only with better advertising would sales improve. For example, I fail to understand why Mazenod failed to take up her suggestion to market the book in Rhodesia – a market not

⁷ Nine letters to Mazenod between July and December 1951; 8 in 1952; 3 in 1953; 4 in 1954; and one each in 1956, 1957 and 1958.

⁸ “The market is flooded with Cookery books – some of them gaily illustrated, and very costly, but none better in substance or value than mine. These will sell because they are well advertised.” (Letter Janet to Mazenod, 5 December 1957.)

⁹ Letters throughout the years contained dressing-downs similar to this one, written on 14 January 1958: “The two previous editions of my book, 1959 “Food for To-day in the Land of Tomorrow”, had an attached notice in every copy giving all the information as to the price of book & how & where to obtain it. This greatly facilitated the rapid sale. In the 1951 edition this information was given on a loose leaflet, slipped inside each copy, but I am afraid the loose leaflet has not always reached the purchaser, & many would-be buyers do not know where to go to get copies. Please look up the leaflet of which you must still have copies & see that all books issued have a copy inside.”

¹⁰ “You do not say whether the C.N.A. are continuing to sell the book. If they are, then I was told by Father Labresque that Mazenod's agreement with them of 40% comm. included advertising by the C.N.A. at their own cost. If this agreement is still in force, it would be necessary for Mazenod to find out what the C.N.A. intend to do exactly, in order for Mazenod to avoid overlapping & extra expense. Mazenod will realize, I am sure, in matters such as these, I am unable to assist.

I am not sure that C.N.A. made very serious efforts to sell my book in large quantities, as I keep hearing that many booksellers have found them very slow in keeping them supplied & in executing orders. I have gained the impression that they prefer to push the more expensive publications. However, Mazenod will no doubt be able to put all this on a satisfactory basis. I do not wish my name to be mentioned in this connection.”

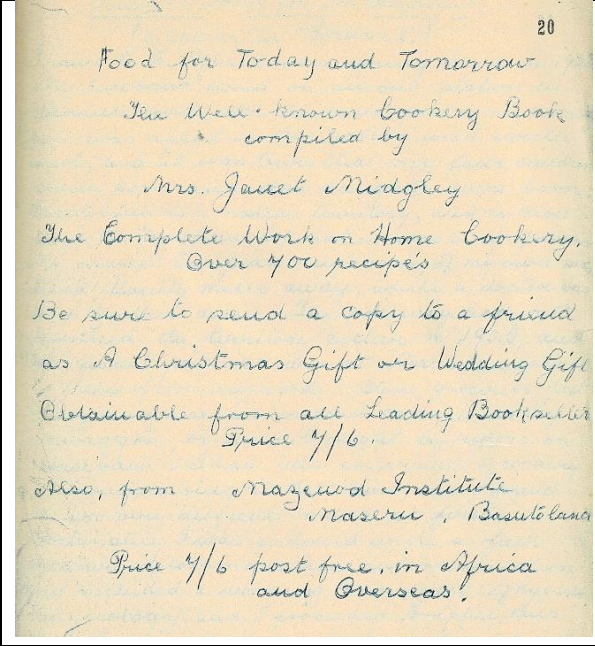
(Letter Janet to Mazenod, 19 September 1952)

¹¹ “Further to my communications dated Oct. 5th, I shall be glad to hear from you as soon as possible, regarding the advertising campaign, and whether you deem to favour my suggestions.

I also beg to remind you not to omit my name as author & compiler from any advertisement which may appear. I mention this because last year my name was omitted from the adverts sent out by Mazenod, & I trust this will not occur again.” (Letter Janet to Mazenod, 12 October 1952)

dissimilar to that of Basutoland. All it required, as Janet suggested, was to send a free copy to the *Salisbury Herald* and request a review.

Like clockwork, each year in October, she would write to Mazenod, urging them to advertise her book in time for Christmas sales, and suggesting suitable publications. It seems, though, that her detailed suggestions were largely ignored.

	Food for To-day and Tomorrow The Well-known Cookery Book compiled by Mrs. Janet Midgley The Complete Work on Home Cookery Over 700 recipe's Be sure to send a copy to a friend as A Christmas Gift or Wedding Gift Obtainable from all Leading Booksellers Price 7/6 Also , from Mazenod Institute Maseru, Basutoland. Price 7/6 post free, in Africa and Overseas.
Draft Advert 2 October 1951	

And a year later, in October 1952, she added a slogan: "Don't Delay, Order To-day!" Unsurprisingly, newspapers carried substantially the same message.

OF INTEREST TO HOUSEWIVES A NEW and Revised Version of the well-known Basutoland Cookery Book, entitled "Food for Today and Tomorrow," compiled by Mrs. Janet Midgley, has now been published in response to a big demand. This helpful and attractive book is unique among South African cookery books. Housewives should order their copies without delay. Obtainable from all branches of Central News Agency Ltd. and from leading booksellers, or direct from Mazenod Institute, P.O. Maseru, Basutoland, price 7/6. Can be sent anywhere in Africa or overseas by Mazenod Institute on receipt of cash with order <i>Cape Argus</i> (LP/45769)	OF INTEREST TO HOUSEWIVES. A new and Revised Version of the well-known Basutoland Cookery Book entitled "Food for Today and Tomorrow," compiled by Mrs Janet Midgley, has now been published in response to a big demand. This helpful and attractive book is unique among South African cookery books. Housewives should order their copies without delay. Obtainable from all branches of Central News Agency Ltd., and from leading booksellers, or direct from Mazenod Institute, P.O. Maseru, Basutoland, price 7/6. Can be sent anywhere in Africa or overseas by Mazenod Institute on receipt of cash with order. (22-29-6-13-20-27)	Of Interest to Housewives A New and Revised Version of the well-known Basutoland Cookery Book entitled "Food for Today and Tomorrow", compiled by Mrs. Janet Midgley, has now been published in response to a big demand. This helpful and attractive book is unique among South African cookery books. Housewives should order their copies without delay. Obtainable from all branches of Central News Agency Ltd. and from leading booksellers, or direct from Mazenod Institute, P.O. Maseru, Basutoland, price 7s. 6d. Can be sent anywhere in Africa or overseas by Mazenod Institute on receipt of cash with order.
The Cape Argus	The Frontier Post & Times	The Basutoland News, 26 June 1951

OF interest to housewives. A new and revised version of the well-known Basutoland Cookery Book, entitled "Food for To-day and To-morrow," compiled by Mrs. Janet Midgley, has now been published in response to a big demand. This helpful and attractive book is unique among South African cookery books. Housewives should order their copies without delay. Obtainable from all branches of Central News Agency, Ltd., and from leading booksellers, or direct from Mazenod Institute, P.O. Maseru, Basutoland, price 7s. 6d. Can be sent anywhere in Africa or overseas by Mazenod Institute on receipt of cash with order.	Cookery Book on Sale Locally Cooks, experienced or inexperienced, have an incomplete repertoire without the 300 recipes given in Mrs. Janet Midgley's well-known handbook on everyday cooking in South Africa. This invaluable book, which is packed with cooking tips, is available at all booksellers at a price of 7s. 6d. per copy. Should anyone be void of ideas for a gift for a bride, they need look no further than this book, which is certain to be appreciated.	Cookery Handbook Mrs. Janet Midgley's well-known handbook on everyday cookery in South Africa, "Food for Today and Tomorrow," is now obtainable at Moodie's and all leading booksellers. Equally useful to experienced and inexperienced cooks, the book contains 800 recipes and abounds with good cookery tips.
Smalls in a Johannesburg Newspaper, 3 July 1951	The Daily Representative, Queenstown	

For housewives A COOKERY book containing some 800 recipes which requires only the most ordinary ingredients is worth a place on any housewife's shelf nowadays. "Food For To-day and To-morrow," by Mrs. Janet Midgley (Mazenod Institute, Maseru, Basutoland) is an improved edition of a book first published in 1941. Mrs. Midgley knows what it means for a housewife to be thrown on her own in some lonely outpost in Basutoland. She knows how to make use of "the next best thing" and so her recipes often mention alternatives. Thrift and economy have been carefully studied. In the 272 pages will be found recipes covering the widest field.	FOOD FOR TODAY and TOMORROW Mrs. Janet Midgley's well-known Handbook on Everyday Cookery in South Africa. DON'T DELAY! BUY IT TODAY! Obtainable at Moodie's and from All Leading Booksellers. Price 7/6 Postage Extra	FOOD FOR TODAY and TOMORROW Mrs. Janet Midgley's well-known Handbook on Everyday Cookery in South Africa. DON'T DELAY! BUY IT TODAY! Obtainable at Moodie's and from All Leading Booksellers. Price 7/6 Postage Extra Also from the Publishers:— MAZENOD INSTITUTE P.O. Maseru, Basutoland Price 7/6. Post free to all Countries and Overseas 3045
The Daily News, Durban	The Daily Representative	The Daily Representative, 19 August 1951

Family members also chipped in. One of her daughter-in-law Olga's news items from Ghanzi read:

Many readers of the Mafeking Mail will be glad to learn that the 3rd Edition of the popular Basutoland Cookery Book 'Food for Today and Tomorrow' is now on sale at most leading Booksellers. It is compiled by Mrs. Janet Midgley late of Serowe, B.P., and formerly of Basutoland,¹²

The big prize was to get the Central News Agency (CAN) to promote and sell the book and she was (annoyingly) impatient in urging Mazenod to involve the Agency. For example,

... the manager [of Moodies, Queenstown] tells me that there was not mention of the book in the C.N.A. lists for July. I was disappointed to hear this, as the public of Q'stown have been eagerly awaiting the book. I do not know if it is yet on sale in any of the C.N. Agencies in other towns. I am waiting for our bookseller to get it before advertising in our local paper the "Daily Rep."¹³

¹² There is no record of a third edition, however, so this might have been an erroneous reference to the second edition.

¹³ Letter, Janet to The Manager, Mazenod Institute, Maseru, 16 July 1951,

<i>Rand Daily Mail</i> Cooking in the Country 37/1 So practical did housewives find the cookery book "Food for To-day and To-morrow" that it went out of print in 1945, and is now re-issued. The author, Mrs. Janet Midgley, who lives in Basutoland and knows the difficulties of housekeeping in places far from town amenities, gives good advice for the woman thrown on her own resources in some lonely outpost. She advises them on how to plan for "to-morrow" by making the best use of what meats, vegetables and fruit are available to-day. The book covers all aspects of cooking — simple and sophisticated—and has, in addition, tips on knitting, sewing, cleaning and preserving food without benefit of refrigerator. The town dweller, who suffers from meat shortages, will appreciate her advice on making sausages go further: the garden lover will enjoy the recipe in verse for pot-pouri, "that gives a scent so subtle and sweet that it will last for a hundred years." "Food for To-day and To-morrow," published by Mazenod Institute, Maseru, Basutoland.	TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS "FRIEND-BLOEMFONTEIN" <i>The Friend Newspapers, Limited, Bloemfontein.</i> June 22, 1951. <i>A review of "Food for Today and Tomorrow" by Mrs. J. Midgley appeared in today's issue of The Friend and a cutting is enclosed.</i> <i>Mrs. Mazenod Institute, Maseru.</i>	A Thrifty Cookery Book "Food for Today and Tomorrow," a book of recipes and cookery lore from Basutoland and elsewhere, compiled by Janet Midgley (The Mazenod Institute, Basutoland), "Mushrooms Galore," a book of mushroom recipes collected by Andre L. Simon, President of the Wine and Food Society (Newman Neame Ltd., London). "Food for Today and Tomorrow" is a perfect compendium of cookery and general household hints, reasons and recipes so simple, brief and explicit that even the bachelor struggling with housekeeping will be able to convey them to a Native cook. This cookery book was written and compiled by one who has experienced the difficulties of the "early days," and endeavours to help the present-day housewife by giving alternatives in recipes and methods, showing how to make use of "the next best thing" when that which is really wanted is unobtainable. In many remote districts in the Union as well as Basutoland, where Mrs. Midgley lives, modern amenities, such as refrigerators and electricity for cooking do not exist. This book shows how good results may be obtained without these aids. Thrifty and Economy THRIFT and economy have been studied throughout and all those who need help in their homes and kitchens will find what they require in "Food for Today and Tomorrow." This new and improved edition of the well-known "Basutoland Cookery Book," has been published in response to a demand which has continued to increase since 1945. <i>For it can well be said: "Go little book, and wish to all, Flowers in the garden, meet in the hall, A bin of wine, a spice of wit, And a house with love enclosing it."</i>
The Rand Daily Mail, 3 July 1951	The Friend, 22 June 1951	

 "FOOD FOR TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW" A BOOK of recipes, compiled by a woman who has known the difficulties of the "early days," will be of great help to South African housewives in their efforts to make nourishing and satisfying meals for their families from the foods which are obtainable nowadays. <i>Food for To-day and To-morrow</i> is a book which is not merely a collection of recipes, but is a complete work on every-day cookery in the home, even for those who have neither refrigerators nor electricity to help them. It is a book which gives "inspiration" both to the town housewife who is coping with shortages and the woman who, living in some lonely outpost, is expected to produce a tasty meal from the foods which are the only ones obtainable in the district. Modern amenities are not available in the territory from which the book emanates, Basutoland, so the author has a better understanding than the town-living housewife of the secret of producing a meal without the aid of delicatessen shops to "help out." There are more than 700 recipes, including traditional dishes of our country—all tried and found successful—in this book. It costs 7/6 and is obtainable from the Mazenod Institute, Maseru, Basutoland.	Selfhulp In Die Kombuis DIE Central News Agency stuur ons toe 'n nuwe druk van mev. Janet Midgley se gewilde kookboek „Food for To-day and To-morrow." Mev. Midgley is die baas-huishoudster van Basutoland. As sulks het sy al die moeilikhede ondervind van ontoereikende verskeidenheid van voorrade, nog uit die dae voor die yskas. Haar kookkuns is daarby aangepas om desnoods met 'n minder skaarse bestanddeel oor die weg te kom, maar, nodeloos om te sê, nie ten koste van smaaklikheid nie. Dit is 'n boek wat 'n verdiende plek verwerf het veral op die platteland en plase. Die skryfster het 'n moederlike aanslag wat veral vir die beginner baie trane sal bespaar.
The Sunday Times, 1 July 1951	Die Vaderland, 29 June 1951

Overseas reviews of the second edition were similarly complimentary and, probably reliant on the promotional material she had supplied, referred to her as ‘Mrs Beeton of Basutoland’, remarking that ‘from uncompromising beginnings’ with no facilities, nor cookery book to guide her, she had ‘made culinary history’ by writing ‘a cookery book with the idea of assisting others who might be as inexperienced in a strange land as she was in 1905’.¹⁴

Yorkshire woman becomes the ‘Mrs. Beeton of Basutoland’ From Our Own Correspondent JOHANNESBURG, Wednesday Mrs. Janet Midgley, a former Leeds woman who learned to cook in the wilds of Africa, has made cookery book history in South Africa. She has been called “Basutoland’s Mrs. Beeton.” for it was there she went in the pioneer days of 1905. “Before my marriage I did some social welfare work in Leeds,” she said at her home in Edward Street, Queens-town, Cape Province. “I started a movement for meals for school-children, but of cooking I knew nothing.” Three editions Yet her book, “Food for Today and Tomorrow,” has run into three editions and won the approval of housewives not only in South Africa but also overseas. When Mrs. Midgley first went to Basutoland she found herself, as a new bride, in a country without amenities—no doctor, butcher, baker or garden. “I had an old-fashioned cooking stove,” she said, “but no fuel except ‘liso’ or dried manure for it. Water was scarce and had to be brought from a spring at least half a mile away.” Native servants were plentiful and wages low, but the natives were primitive and entirely untrained in European ways. “It soon became evident that the responsibility of cooking such food as there was could not be left to the raw native without disastrous consequences to the family health,” she added. Thus grew Mrs. Midgley’s cookery genius. “I simply had to teach myself by trial and error, how to make good meals from what sometimes seemed nothing at all in the way of either supplies or facilities,” she said. 800 recipes Her cookery book, which grew from a desire to help others who might be as inexperienced as herself in a foreign land, was compiled from recipes sent to her and from her own experience. When first published in 1940 it had 272 pages, with 800 recipes and useful household hints. There was such a public demand that in 1941 it was necessary to print a second edition. This also quickly went out of print. A third edition, revised and improved, appeared in 1951.	Isabella Beeton wrote a book in 1861, <i>Mrs Beeton’s Book of Household Management</i>, which sold 60,000 copies in its first year and resulted in her being considered an authority on Victorian cooking and home management. [T]he <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> states that by 1891 the term <i>Mrs Beeton</i> had become used as a generic name for a domestic authority. She is also considered a strong influence in the building or shaping of a middle-class identity of the Victorian era. The book has been revised several times and was still in print in 2016.¹⁵
Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, 6 December 1951	

The *Cortland Standard*, Cortland, New York,¹⁶ had this to say in 1952:

RECIPES FROM THE WILDS

Mrs. Janet Midgley is credited with making culinary history since she went out 46 years ago from Leeds, England to Basutoland. She had to look after her family in a territory without a doctor, butcher, baker – or cookbook. Water was scarce. Her only equipment was an old-fashioned cook-stove. Now she is the author of a cookbook with many of her own recipes to help others who may be as inexperienced in a strange land as she was in 1905. It’s a best seller in South Africa, Cape Town reports.

Through the two editions of the book Janet developed a recognisable ‘brand’ in Southern Africa. There appears also to have been pockets of recognition further afield sufficient for her

¹⁴ <http://new.lookandlearn.com/childrens-newspaper/CN520105-001.pdf>; <http://www.mocavo.com/Overseas-Club-and-Patriotic-League-List-of-Subscribing-Members-1918-1919/982945/282>.

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabella_Beeton.

¹⁶

<http://fultonhistory.com/Newspapers%2021/Cortland%20NY%20Standard/Cortland%20NY%20Standard%201952/Cortland%20NY%20Standard%201952%20-%20200354.pdf>, published Thursday, 13 March 1953.

name to feature in an indenture setting out an apprentice scheme in Yorkshire. In that document Samuel Thomas Midgley, a three-time Mayor of Halifax was described as being a relative of Samuel Midgley of Bradford, “the prominent musician and author” and of “Mrs, Janet Midgley, cook book author”.¹⁷

Royalties

After years of financial hardship, the book was Janet’s source of income, and she made every effort to ensure that her royalties would be maximized. She sold copies herself and wrote various (forceful) letters to the Mazenod Institute between 1951 and 1957, urging them to market the book better.

Janet could not understand why sales of her book were so slow and it seems only about two-thirds of the publication run (i.e. 3,000 copies) was eventually sold. She would have received some money for her 40% of the income from advertisements in the book; and, by agreement, £17” 14” 2 for every 500 copies sold. I traced royalty payments totalling £91” 9” 2 between August 1951 and April 1956.¹⁸

The royalties contributed to her income until 1953, when the Mazenod Institute stopped advertising the book, although an amount was again paid in April 1956. On 5 December 1957 she wrote complaining about the lack of recent royalties:

‘This is difficult to understand as the book is a good one, as many letters of appreciation testify. The bookseller here, keeps copies in stock, and has a steady sale for them. I beg to refer you to my previous letters urging you to advertise the book, and to beg you to accede to my request in this matter. Nowadays regular advertising is most essential, otherwise the product is forgotten by the public, – see enclosed cutting. A short advertising campaign, now before Christmas, and if necessary, again before Easter should serve to dispose of the remainder. The market is flooded with cookery books – some of them gaily illustrated, and very costly, but none better in substance or value than mine. These sell because they are well advertised. A cookery book does not go out of date; a new advertising campaign would only give the impression of sound popularity for the book.’

In truth, the book had run its course and sadly, the well-used, beyond-repair copy that had pride of place in my parents’ kitchen no longer features in ours – instead it has been relegated to my memorabilia shelf. Between us, my siblings and I have over the years acquired second-hand versions of both editions, so hopefully, an important chapter in our family history continues to be preserved. Those are our royalties.

¹⁷ <https://www.midgleywebpages.com/halifax.html>.

¹⁸ 31 August 1951 = £17” 14” 2; 22 March 1952 = £17” 14” 2; 20 September 1952 = £20” 10” 4; 3 August 1953 = £17” 15” 3 and 10 April 1956 = £17” 15” 3.