

Good Cooking Magazine (1958) published by Maura and Ian O'Casey



Maura and Ian O'Casey were the publishers of a short-lived monthly magazine, *Good Cooking*, launched in Dublin in January 1958 and became *Good Food and Better Cooking* in July 1958. The final issue was December 1958. Maura Casey contacted Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire after hearing him look for information for his PhD research on Dublin restaurants on the Marion Finucane Radio Show in November 2004. She sent him the Magazines by registered post and he photocopied them and returned them by registered post. In 2016, Máirtín contacted Maura's son Garish and daughter Gay and they agreed to donate the magazines to the DIT Gastronomy Archive on condition that they would be digitised and freely available online. Where gaps appear in the magazines from 2004, the photocopies taken have been scanned to complete the archive. The biographical information on Maura and Ian Casey below was provided by their children.

Maura was born Mary Holmes in Newcastle West in 1921, to Johanna (nee Cussen) and Mark Holmes, and Ian (Eoin) was born in Thurles in 1924 to Daisy and Jack Casey. Maura spent her childhood in London, Castleforbes Road in Dublin (her father was a tea-taster and manager with the Joy of Home Tea Company) and Clontarf. She did Celtic Studies in UCD, trained as a teacher and taught for a while in Bray. She and Ian married in 1950, had children and after a few years in England returned to Dublin and launched *Good Cooking*. Throughout her life Maura was an avid reader of cookery books, was always interested in food and loved entertaining. Her repertoire in the 1950s and 1960s included risotto, spaghetti bolognese, liver and bacon pie, Russian salad, chicken liver pate, and meringues and cream. She always made her own brown bread and enjoyed baking and, in later life, making ice-cream. She ran some cookery classes in The Hibernian Hotel, Dawson Street (demolished in 1984 to become the Hibernian Way) in Dublin in the late 1950s and again, after many house moves, in the 1980s in Mountcashel Castle outside Sixmilebridge in Co. Clare which she and Ian ran as a restaurant and bed and breakfast. She also ran cookery classes in Abbeyleix for a short while in the early 1980s when they were living near Monasterevin and again in a local hotel in Killaloe in 1984 after they had moved to the area.

Ian was born in 1924 in Thurles and married Maura in Limerick 1950. They lived in Springfield House outside Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare before moving to the UK in 1953/4 and then returning to Dublin in 1956/7. As far as her daughter, Gay, remembers the family were living in a basement in Fitzwilliam Place when they launched *Good Cooking* in 1958. Ian was interested in publishing (and involved in other publishing ventures throughout his life), so he obtained the adverts and organised the printing, while Maura supplied the recipes. Gay doesn't remember how the magazine was distributed but does remember sticking cheese labels into the centre pages. In a telephone conversation with Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire in 2004, Maura explained that the first few issues of the magazine were distributed by controlled circulation, which was a very novel method at that time

particularly in Ireland. What this meant is that Maura had a list of 'foodies' who had done the cookery classes with her in Royal Hibernian Hotel and elsewhere, and they were the targeted audience and readers of the magazine initially. This gave advertisers a targeted audience for their products. From July 1958, however, the magazine was rebranded from '*Good Cooking*' to '*Good Food and Better Cooking*' and as sold at a price of one shilling. In 1960 Maura and Ian then moved back to the UK with their three children and Ian worked with a newspaper in Oswestry in Shropshire. He launched another magazine in Co. Down and later made handmade paper and published a few books in Devon and Yorkshire. Maura supported the family by teaching during their years in the UK until they returned to Clare in the mid-1970s.

Ian died in 1992 and Maura passed away in 2012 after many years of declining health. Both are buried in Killaloe, Co. Clare.