

THOUGHTS FROM THE KITCHEN



Photo: Pixabay

Enriched and renewed



'Have a lovely time – hope it all goes even better than you planned!' So says auntie's text message on the eve of our family weekend on the occasion of 'Dad's' (Andy's) 70th birthday.

Yes, plans had been made, food, flowers, cake, bedrooms ready, Sunday lunch booked, and, oh – a special present organised. As Dad was still not well from a long-standing illness, the younger generation had conspired to organise a surprise: a four-legged friend of the canine variety, carefully selected as a good match and intended as a therapeutic hobby. Yes, there

Andy and Uli Yeomans share a recipe for Pumpkin Soup made from a smiley pumpkin!

was a risk the gift might be rejected, but hopefully Dad would see the value and quickly bond with his new pet. It was well worth a try, and Mum was on board too.

Sons, daughters-in-law and the grandchild had made the trip from all corners of the country, treated the parents to a delicious meal and everyone enjoyed a lovely family celebration. But when Silver, the six-month-old Labradoodle finally appeared on the scene, alarm bells started ringing. The bonding exercise was pursued for two days, but to no avail. Dad would not allow himself to become emotionally attached to his present. Though deeply

saddened to be causing disappointment, he was quite clear that given his circumstances it was too great a commitment. The poor rejected pet was – lovingly and tenderly – returned to the breeder, where she was enthusiastically welcomed back by her mother and brother!

And yet, arising from the barely concealed tears there was still a truly great gift awaiting all. In the following days a succession of emails flew back and forth – an unexpected outpouring of genuine emotion and honest views shared, profound insights gained, enhanced love and understanding. And whilst the young ones achieved a fuller appreciation of their father's health issues, he found their support and esteem overwhelming, as he said: 'When all is said and done it's the love of all of you that remains...'

As a family we had emerged enriched and renewed. The process had not been painless, far from it. But perhaps things really had gone better than planned or hoped for: being supported and sustained by unconditional love makes for a great healing experience. That's a comforting thing to know, and not only at the milestone of a big birthday. 🍂

Pumpkin Soup

On Halloween last year we substituted the customary pumpkin face with a smiley. To make good use of the carved out pumpkin flesh, here is a tasty recipe.

Ingredients:

- ▶ 1 onion chopped up small
- ▶ olive oil
- ▶ 3 tbsp grated ginger
- ▶ 3 garlic cloves pressed
- ▶ juice of one lemon
- ▶ 3 chicken stock cubes
- ▶ 1 tin coconut milk
- ▶ water
- ▶ pumpkin flesh
- ▶ coriander chopped

Method

Soften the onion in the oil, add the ginger, then garlic, frying gently before stirring in the lemon juice. Add the pumpkin flesh (pre-roasted if you like), combine well and add the remaining ingredients. Simmer till soft, blend or mash, season to taste and garnish with coriander.