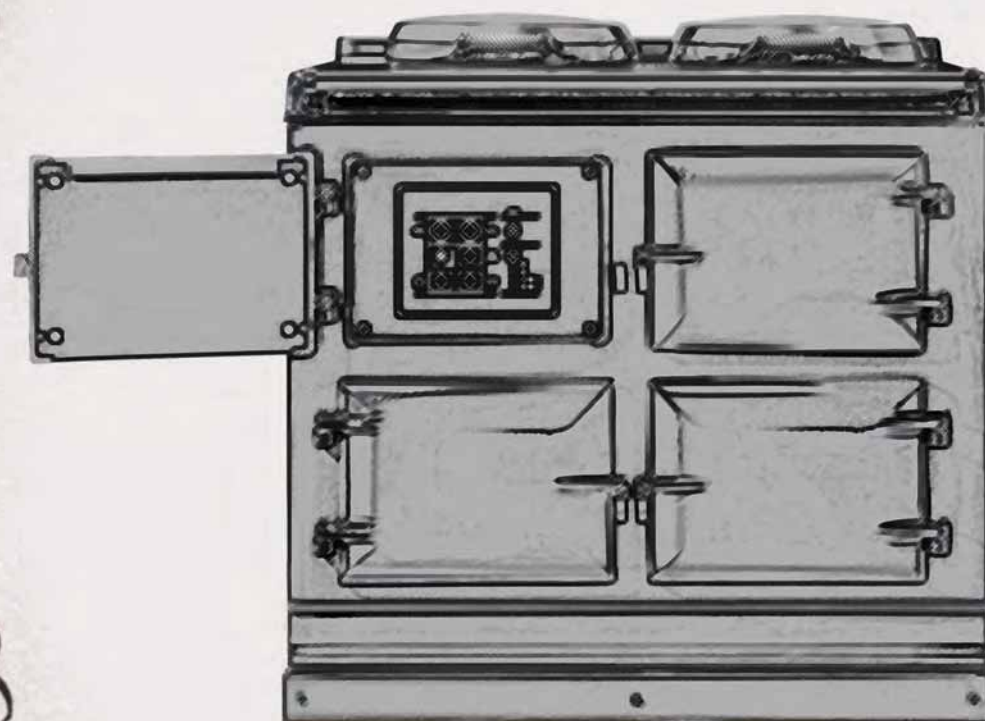


HOW THE AGA COOKER BECAME AN ICON



The story of the *talented individuals*
who helped shape the future
of *life in the British home*

PLUS *why the modern AGA is
perfect for 21st century living*



TEN DECADES OF HERITAGE *and still at the cutting edge today*

When the AGA cooker was introduced to the UK in 1929, seven years after its invention, it was an instant success. It is now in its tenth decade and it continues to innovate. The very latest technology has been employed to continue the kitchen revolution. There is the ultra-modern **AGA Total Control**. From the outside, the AGA Total Control looks exactly like a classic AGA cooker. But beneath its cast-iron exterior lies a state-of-the-art touchscreen control panel that enables owners to operate the cooker in a way that suits them. The **AGA iTotal Control** takes this a stage further, with oven programmability made possible by remote control, even via the web or a smartphone. The AGA, then, is not resting on its laurels. It remains steeped in heritage, but keen to continue to innovate to ensure it is as relevant for the 21st century as it was in the 1930s when a team of brilliance made it a British icon.



FOREWORD

The AGA cooker is a way of life. It commands levels of adulation more often associated with the latest boy band and generates similar loyalties. One woman taking part in an AGA demonstration went so far as to insist it was warmer, more reliable and infinitely better looking than most men and that, given the choice between her husband and her AGA, she'd waste no time packing his bags!

The inventor of the AGA cooker in 1922 was Dr Gustaf Dalén, could have imagined the heady heights of fame that his creation would go on to reach. Dalén, an entrepreneur and a Nobel Prize-winning engineer and devoted husband. Intellectually and commercially, he wanted to create an efficient stove that would free his wife from domestic drudgery and address the engineering question of how best to get heat from its source into the food. Radiant heat from the cast-iron walls of the AGA cooker's ovens provided the answer.

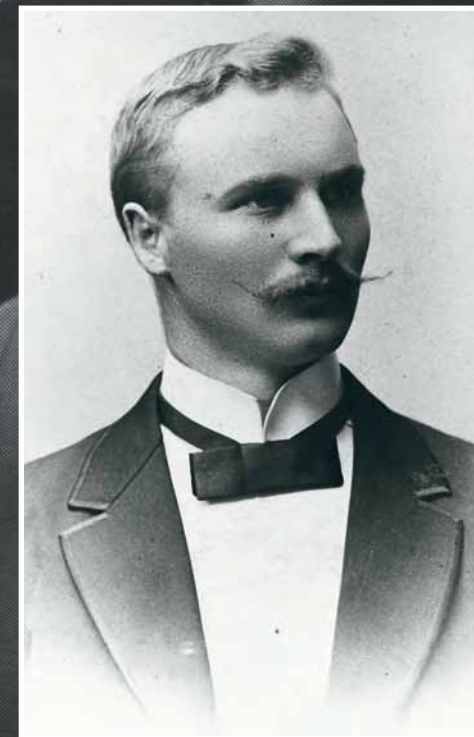
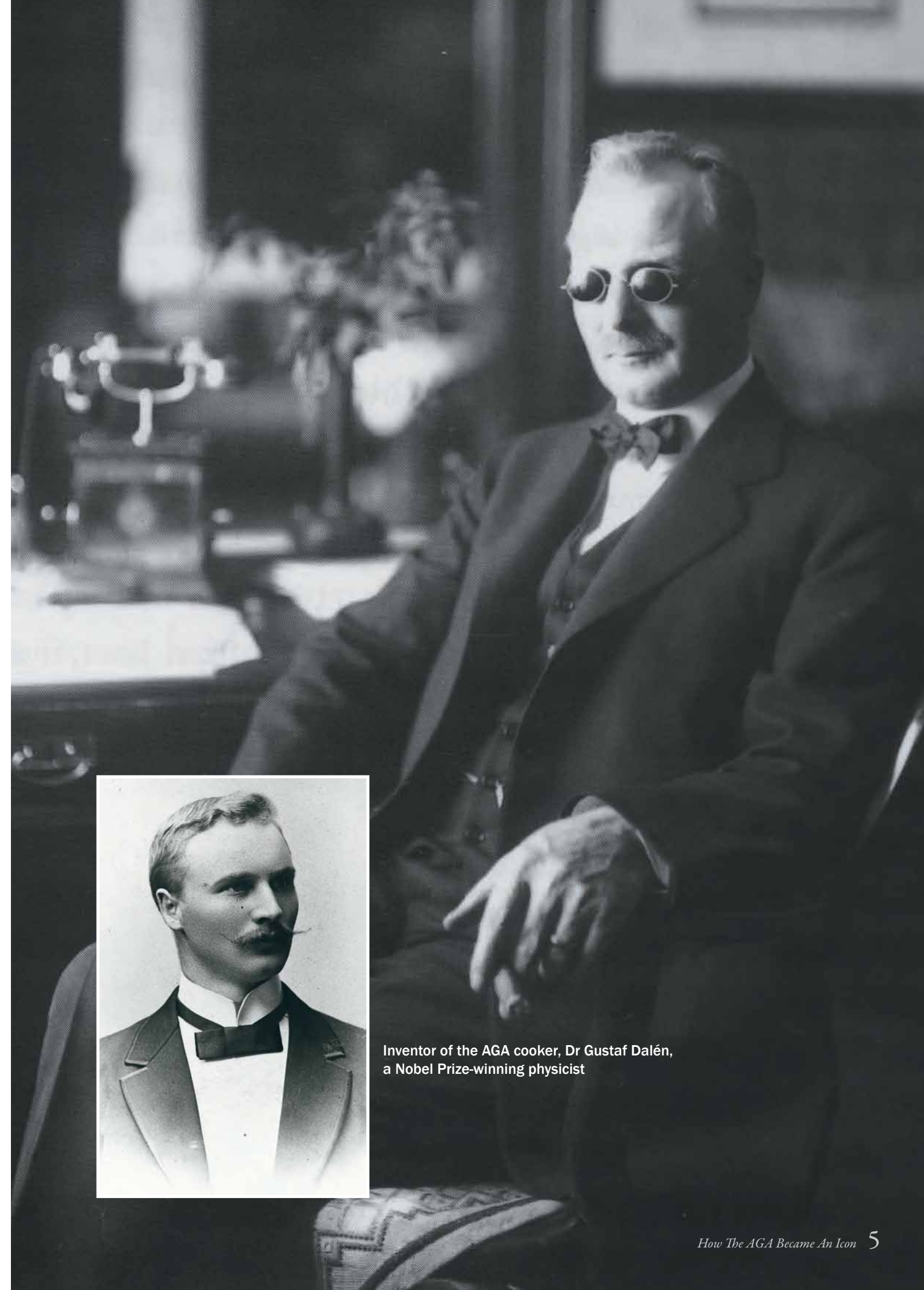
Now, the AGA cooker once most associated with rambling country piles and farmhouse kitchens complete with orphan lambs and sodden spaniels is

just at home in an über-hip metropolitan environment. The modern version is setting out to be a world class cooker, able to take on all cookery styles whatever their origins.

For the world's most famous cooker is now also the globe's coolest cooker. Its enduring good looks are seducing yet another new audience. Today, it finds itself dancing chic-to-chic with a more independently minded, more metropolitan consumer and wherever you are in the world you can have an AGA cooker that works for you.

The AGA boasts a peerless pedigree and is today cast in iron at the historic Coalbrookdale foundry in the Shropshire hills that is a World Heritage Site and was at the very birthplace of the Industrial Revolution when, in 1709, Abraham Darby first smelted iron ore with coke to make cooking pots.

Its design has been allowed to evolve with care to the point where the cooker's look has now achieved icon status. The special place it occupies in the hearts and minds of owners is unique and undeniable. □



Inventor of the AGA cooker, Dr Gustaf Dalén, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist

SALUTING the individuals whose vision created one of the world's most respected brands...

Mention the word AGA to anyone and you'll get an immediate and emotional response. It is quite simply the most famous cooker and one that is loved by millions the world over.

While the AGA is well-known for its brilliant cooking performance and iconic good looks, there is also a remarkable story behind the emergence of the AGA cooker as an icon.

Between 1933 and 1946 an extraordinary team of people came together and had a lasting impact on the way we cook and the way we live.

When we launched the AGA Total Control in 2011, themes from the 1930s still resonated today. We investigated further.

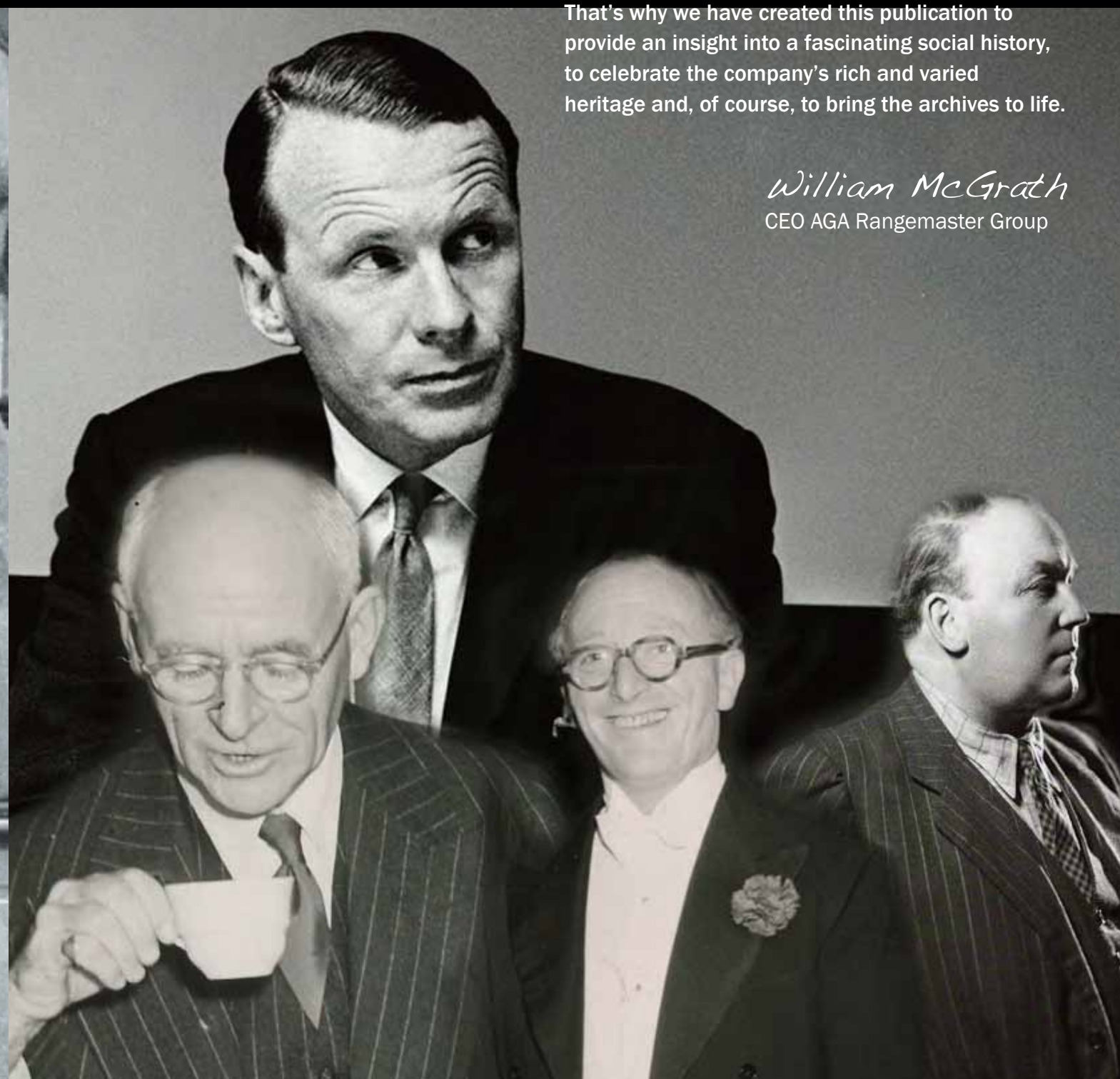
A role such as mine within AGA is many faceted, with one distinct element being that of brand custodian. It was with this in mind that we took on a project to research and collate our archives with a view to understanding the origins of the power and unique appeal of the AGA cooker.

Over the course of our investigations it became clear that one man, W.T. Wren, was responsible for bringing together a team of such talent and prescience that they quite simply changed the way Britain lived.

These changes, which centered on the launch of the New Standard AGA, were not short lived and even now the impact that they had on the shape of our homes and our lives remain.

That's why we have created this publication to provide an insight into a fascinating social history, to celebrate the company's rich and varied heritage and, of course, to bring the archives to life.

William McGrath
CEO AGA Rangemaster Group



12 visionaries

The individuals who made it all happen



W. T. Wren

- Head of AGA Heat and Allied Ironfounders
- Innovator
- Visionary
- Second World War spy

Sometimes, when a group of people gell, there is an alchemy that ensures something extraordinary will happen. This was the case when the team below came together to ensure the AGA

cooker was to become an icon. They showed the world the importance of great design, perfectly cooked food, economy and ergonomics – all within the kind of modern kitchen setting that had never been seen before. In fact, from 1935 – in developing and launching the New Standard AGA cooker – they shaped the future and changed the way people lived. It was their influence that made the kitchen the most important room in the house and made good food and cooking a new national interest...



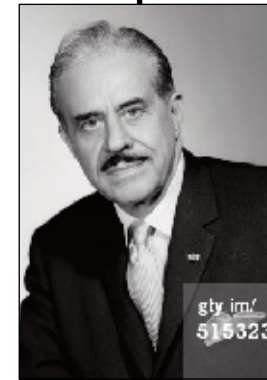
David Ogilvy

- First AGA salesman and marketing consultant
- Advertising genius
- The inspiration for TV's Mad Men
- Second World War spy



Ambrose Heath

- Gastronome
- Food writer
- First celebrity cook
- Author of the early AGA cookbooks



Raymond Loewy

- US industrial design guru
- Head of Raymond Loewy Associates
- Oversaw re-design of the AGA cooker through London offices
- Styled the Rayburn



Douglas Scott

- Industrial designer
- Re-designed the AGA cooker
- Introduced the Standard Model C AGA cooker
- Designed the Rayburn



Francis Ogilvy

- Head of ad agency Mather & Crowther
- Second World War writer for Prime Minister Winston Churchill



Dorothy Braddell

- Redefined how Britain saw the kitchen
- Designed AGA kitchen roomsets in 1930s and 40s



Charles Ludovic Scott

- AGA Heat Ltd's Technical Research Officer
- Responsible for the technology behind the new Standard Model C AGA cooker

Lawrence Wright

- Pioneering perspective artist
- Illustrated AGA Heat's roomset designs

Mabel Collins

- 1935, head of AGA Heat Ltd's new Cookery Advisory Department



Carl Otto

- Industrial designer
- Designer of the Otto stove
- Head of the London office of Raymond Loewy Associates

Edward Bawden

- Artist and illustrator
- Illustrated many iconic AGA brochures and recipe sheets

W T WREN

AGA Heat Ltd
managing director

Leader and innovator

Second World War
agent

Managing Director of AGA Heat Ltd from early 1930s to 1950s, also becoming Managing Director and Chairman of parent company Allied Ironfounders. Through the 1930s W.T. Wren pushed the AGA cooker, recognising its potential impact. He said: "Owners come to talk about and regard their AGA as though it were almost a member of the household – a fond personality which has won their affection. Servants love it...so do I!" He felt so passionately about the AGA that he formed one of the greatest cross-disciplinary teams in UK industrial history and expanded across the country by building a strong group of registered distributors, largely family concerns and some with long and important histories of their own.



Every now and then someone captures the zeitgeist so perfectly they become the centre of something truly extraordinary. **W. T. Wren** – or ‘Freckles’ as he was known – was one such man...

SHAPING THE FUTURE

W. T. WREN's ability to see how the future was shaping up and his skill in spotting talent was so finely honed that he quite simply changed the way people lived and – perhaps even more surprisingly – the effect can still be felt today.

Wren was born at the turn of the century into a poor, working class family, a fact he never forgot. He joined the Chubb & Sons Lock and Safe Company as an office boy, but graduated to act as a representative in India. From Chubb he went to Bell's Engineering Supplies where, in 1929, he was put in charge of selling the first AGA cookers in Britain.

Such was his success that in 1932, when Bell's became AGA Heat Ltd, Wren was its MD, a role he still held in the 1950s. By then, via a time as sales director, he had become Managing Director and later Chairman of the parent company, Allied Ironfounders Ltd.

He was a member of the Council of Industrial Design (later to become the Design Council) and his obituarist noted his unusual ability to see the importance of design: "He was a man who saw the value of high standards of industrial design linked to expert salesmanship and social purpose at a time when such attitudes were rarely held, let alone applied to a large commercial undertaking." ¹

As well as realising the importance of great design, Wren also understood the value of approaching marketing from an entirely new angle and this, combined with his ability to bring together interesting people, really were at the forefront of the success of the AGA cooker, turning it from a simple domestic appliance

into the icon it remains today.

In a strategy paper from 1933, Wren demonstrates his innovative approach to marketing. He wrote... *"Words are sickeningly inept instruments of enthusiasm. But perhaps, helped out by the photographs, I have given you a fairly complete picture of this crafty cooker."*

"If you visit an AGA Showroom anywhere you will find out a lot more and, more important still, you will get what I cannot give you, the spirit of the AGA."

Fifteen years after the introduction of the AGA to Britain, Wren – who would be driven everywhere in his Rolls-Royce with the licence plate AGA 1 – was clearly aware he and his team had achieved something special and significant. He recognised that the cooker had achieved a "unique place in the sun" and had become a household name, an eponym for all range cookers.

Wren returned from the war in 1945. In a report written for the Executive Board, *A Wider Base for AGA*, he described the progress the AGA cooker had made during his time at the helm:

"It is now 15 years since the AGA was first introduced to this country...it has gained a unique place in the sun and, in a certain field, is a household word. No other domestic appliance in the generation has achieved so well a foothold. Those engaged in launching it were...of the 'traditional' trade approach for a product of this type; and probably just as well, for had they followed the traditional line, it is doubtful if AGA would have survived the course. But it did survive and made so serious an

impression on the trade that [others] have followed AGA almost slavishly in marketing methods.

“All this, to my mind, shows that there is something new in the AGA way of marketing a domestic appliance which is regarded as both successful and necessary by our competitors.”

In Wren’s obituary in *Design*, the journal of the Council of Industrial Design, Richard Carr wrote: “He [Wren] already believed in the value of selling an appliance which used only 3 1/2 tons of coke a year instead of the 24 tons of coal consumed by the average kitchen boiler.

“A meeting with Francis Ogilvy of Mather and Crowther encouraged him to improve the AGA still further by calling in Raymond Loewy as the company’s design consultant [see page 18]. This led to the development of a complete range of well designed appliances, including the Otto stove, named after Carl Otto who worked in Loewy’s office, the Rayburn and the AGAmatic domestic water heater.

“The association with Mather and Crowther also led to the adoption of outstandingly high standards of writing, illustration and printing for the company’s literature, while Wren followed his own clear policy on salesmanship, cutting down retail outlets and appointing as agents only those builders’ merchants, ironmongers and even individuals whom he could rely on to give expert service.

“He also introduced such ideas as a circular on AGAs in Latin, and then in Greek, for distribution to schools, and an exhibition in two air conditioned railway coaches which toured Britain in the 1950s to display the company products.”

Wren also became an animated commentator on social issues and, in combination with organising travelling exhibitions, he commissioned films during the 1950s to make local authorities aware of the need to modernise Victorian slums and war-damaged properties.

But perhaps Wren’s lasting legacy stemmed from a remarkable ability to see design, marketing and engineering ability and to then assemble the right team for the times. He knew by the late 1930s that the original AGA cooker – introduced to Britain in the late 1920s – needed to be re-designed and updated.

For this, he called in renowned American industrial designer Raymond Loewy, who was to go on to design the interiors of Concorde for Air France and Air Force One for the US government.

Wren was aware that the AGA cooker’s unique selling points needed a unique sales force. For this job, he turned to David Ogilvy, who was to go on to revolutionise advertising as the so-called King of Madison Avenue and later to be the inspiration for TV’s *Mad Men*.

He was aware the times were changing and, as domestic service in Britain declined, he asked designer and domestic planning advocate Dorothy Braddell to come up with a functional new look for British kitchens. He commissioned a series of cookbooks from the celebrity chef of the day, Ambrose Heath, which were illustrated by Edward Bawden, who was to go on to become an artist of major repute.

Over the coming pages we look at the visionaries who made up Wren’s team, talented individuals who succeeded in embedding the AGA cooker in the British psyche. □



W. T. Wren frequently hosted lavish dinners at the Dorchester for AGA distributors (above). The famous London hotel was also used for company meetings, as illustrated by the extract (left) of the minutes from a board meeting in 1945, when it was agreed the discussion should be “adjourned for lunch and the meeting continued at the Dorchester Hotel”

Styling. In regard to the restyling of our Models, Mr. Wren suggested that the functions of the Central Research and Development Department on new Models should cease at the final test stage and that the matter of styling should be left to the Departments more concerned in the presentation of the Cooker to the public. Mr. Wren produced some drawings by Mr. Raymond Loewy, who was expected in this country on the 17th June. He was of the opinion that our restyling should proceed along the lines of the drawings produced, and it was agreed that the Managing Director should go into consultation with Mr. Bateman and Mr. Sykes and agree as to the restyling, reporting to the Board in due course.

AT THIS STAGE, THE BOARD ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH AND THE MEETING CONTINUED AT THE DORCHESTER HOTEL.

AGA, as a product, initiated an entirely new form of marketing – so far as domestic cooking stoves are concerned. Those engaged in launching it were without knowledge or comprehension of the “traditional” trade approach for a product of this type; and possibly just as well, for had they followed the traditional line, it is doubtful if AGA would have survived the course.



At the same meeting, the board reviewed how the AGA cooker had been launched in the UK and concluded (left) that it would not have been the immediate success it had been if those behind the project had been prejudiced by accepted selling practices of the time

A silver inkwell fashioned in the form of an AGA cooker and presented to W. T. Wren by his colleagues in 1937

DAVID OGILVY

AGA Heat Ltd's first salesman

Advertising genius

Inspiration for TV's *Mad Men*

Second World War spy

David Mackenzie Ogilvy was born on 23 June 1911 at West Horsley, Surrey in England. Ogilvy attended Fettes College, in Edinburgh. In 1929, he again won a scholarship, this time in history to Christ Church, Oxford. He left Oxford for Paris in 1931, where he became an apprentice chef in the Majestic Hotel. After a year, he returned to Scotland and started selling AGA cookers door-to-door. His success at this marked him out to his employer, who asked him to write an instruction manual, *The Theory and Practice of Selling the AGA Cooker*. Thirty years later, *Fortune* magazine editors called it the finest sales instruction manual ever written and Ogilvy went on to become a giant of advertising.

GETTY
IMAGES

In 1935, AGA Heat Ltd managing director W.T. Wren appointed his Scottish sales rep to update how the cooker was being sold and marketed. Showing impressive prescience, he had given international advertising legend **David Ogilvy** his first big break...

THE TENACITY OF A BULLDOG, THE MANNERS OF A SPANIEL...

By 1935, marketing of the AGA cooker had become big business and the summer launch of the New Standard AGA – a twin-oven model in cream aimed at smaller households without domestic staff – saw AGA Heat Ltd embark on a nationwide publicity campaign to raise awareness of the brand within a much broader audience.

modernity. It wasn't a fad, a passing fancy. It looked solid, it was solid. It was the Rolls-Royce of the kitchen and people realised that very quickly."

Ogilvy was the first AGA cooker salesman in Scotland and rapidly established himself as a formidable salesman. He was introduced to W.T. ►

For that launch, he used Mather & Crowther as the advertising agents and specifically the talented Ogilvy brothers, David and Francis. The decision proved to be game-changing.

For Wren had again shown incredible prescience. David Ogilvy's guide to selling the AGA cooker – *The Theory and Practice of Selling the AGA Cooker* – became the company's sales 'bible' and was lauded by *Fortune* magazine as 'the best sales manual ever written'.

Ogilvy himself proved to be an advertising genius who went on to found one of the world's biggest advertising agencies, Ogilvy & Mather. By the end of his career he was known as the King of Madison Avenue and he was the inspiration for the hit television series, *Mad Men*.

Ogilvy, who occupied an office in the AGA Heat building, was driven by a passion for the AGA cooker. Later in his career, he said: "It was a special kind of



David Ogilvy pictured in 1938 on board a ship bound for his new home in America

David Ogilvy devised AGA cooker advertising and provided an explosive critique of the marketing of the parent company, Allied Ironfounders. Revisiting the report in 1962, he wrote: "It proves two things: a) At 25 I was brilliantly clever; and b) I have learnt nothing new in the subsequent 27 years." ²

Wren by his brother, Francis, and earned his spurs by using his chef's uniform from his stint in a Paris restaurant to persuade a London club to keep their AGA cookers. It was with the 1935 launch of the New Standard AGA that Ogilvy produced some quite exceptional work in preparing the company and its dealers for the launch and then providing the required consumer literature.

In *The Theory and Practice of Selling the AGA Cooker*

– setting out the argument on the attack and on the defence when winning over a sales prospect – he concluded that the successful salesman “needs the tenacity of the bulldog and the manners of the spaniel.

“If you have any charm,” he wrote, “ooze it.” □

Francis Ogilvy (pictured left with his family, c 1950) introduced his younger brother to W. T. Wren. Francis – the leading player at advertising agency Mather & Crowther and the force behind its regaining the AGA Heat Ltd account in 1946 – was also a talented copywriter in his own right and went on to become one of Prime Minister Winston Churchill's speechwriters during the Second World War.

BOARD MINUTES, June 1945

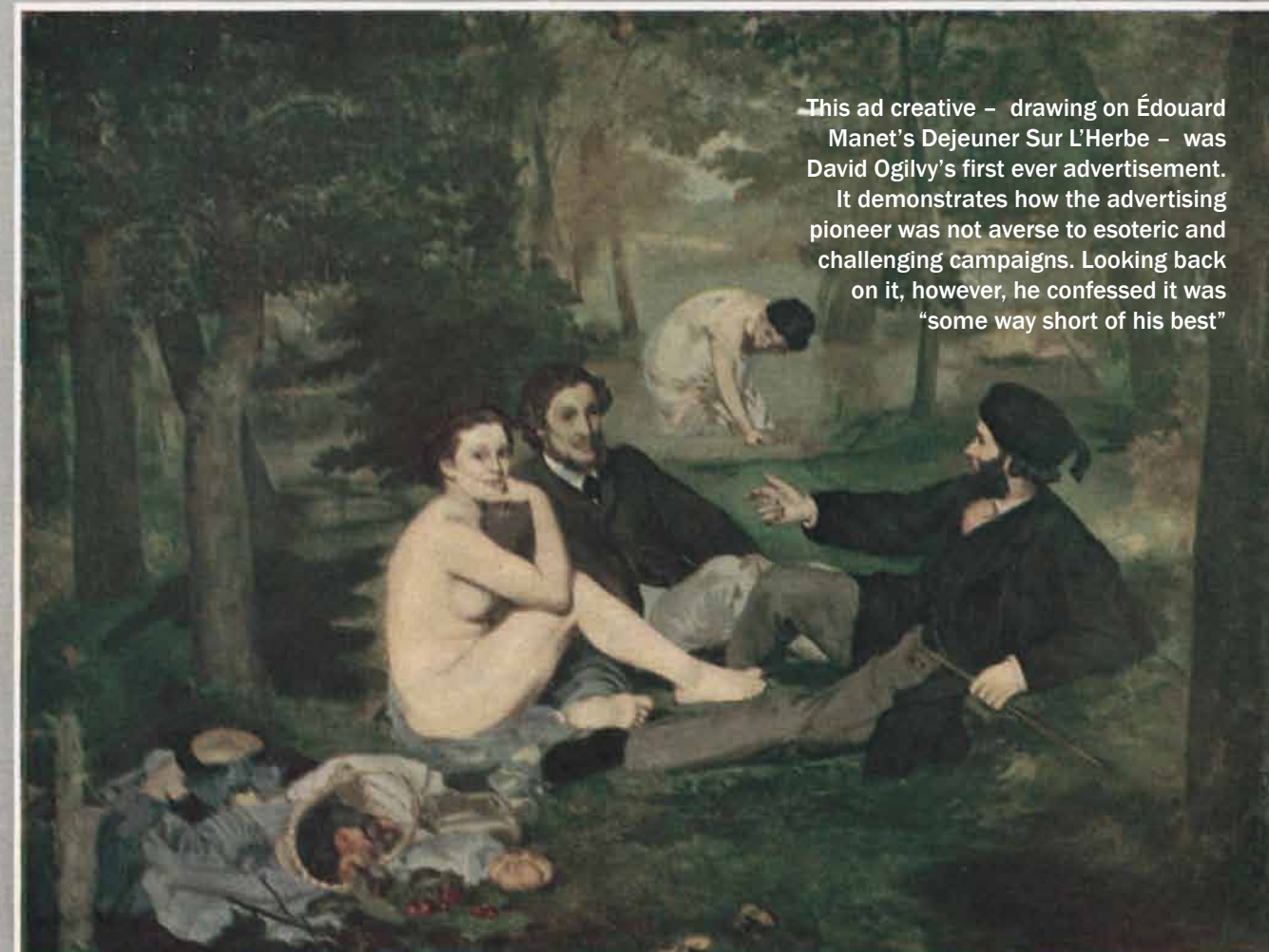
In these minutes (below) of a meeting of the board of AGA Heat Ltd, a resolution is passed to “recapture the old originality” of previous AGA advertising. Previous advertisements had worked, the board agreed, because the company had made liaison with their ad agency more of a “personal affair”. The new campaigns would focus on three main messages: the ease of using the AGA (lack of servants); fuel economy (national lack of solid fuel); and better cooking. With modern AGA advertising campaigns focusing on the launch of new programmable models, their improved fuel efficiency and the wonderful cooking results that can be achieved, it would seem the AGA legacy very much continues today



ADVERTISING POLICY.
The first thing to be done is to recapture the old originality in the “presentation of our case”. I think we all realise now that AGA advertising and the Company's contact with the public, was on a plane, if not unique, then at least exceptional. This was not achieved by the simple process of telling an Advertising Agent to get busy; it was indeed a much more personal affair than that.

I suggest it is a matter for consideration whether we revert to our original Agents, or spend a good deal of time in trying to inculcate our present Agents into the spirit of the past. We are at the beginning of a new and vigorous selling era for AGA, and it is perhaps logical to consider capitalising the knowledge of the past. I myself do not find it easy to discount the human element in business. A new and much greater task is before us. It will require every ounce of experience we have. Can we afford to pass up some of the accumulated knowledge gained from mistakes and successes?

We have three main themes to exploit in presenting the case to the market. One, the ease of operating AGA (lack of servants) fuel economy (national lack of solid fuel) and better cooking. During the War thousands of AGA owners have gained first-hand knowledge of our products, and it is a priceless field to exploit. Our task will be to see that we encourage these thousands of “owner drivers” (by advertising what they know to be facts) to tell their friends what they think of AGA. I doubt if any other domestic product has so rich and varied a propaganda field as AGA. We have more than forty thousand users – Salesmen waiting to be gently steered into action on our behalf. An important feature of our “campaign” should be the monthly cooking recipes to AGA Owners, and the revival in all Departments of the Company, of the personal touch for which we were once not without distinction.

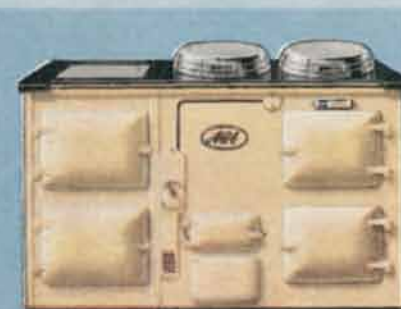


This ad creative – drawing on Édouard Manet's *Déjeuner Sur L'Herbe* – was David Ogilvy's first ever advertisement. It demonstrates how the advertising pioneer was not averse to esoteric and challenging campaigns. Looking back on it, however, he confessed it was “some way short of his best”

DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE by ÉDOUARD MANET (1824-1883). Manet was born in Paris and entered Couture's studio at the age of 19. Though his independence infuriated his master and his pictures were constantly rejected by the Salon, he soon gathered a group of painters round him, Whistler and Fantin-Latour among them. In 1865, when Napoleon III ordered the establishment of a Salon des Refusés, Manet's “*Déjeuner sur l'herbe*,” which afterwards exercised a tremendous influence on Cézanne, was its scandal and success. It is reproduced, by permission, from the painting in the Louvre.

THIS picture caused a public scandal in 1865. Manet's subject was shocking, people complained: though actually, of course, it was their conservatism that was outraged – not their moral sensibilities. The real offence of the picture was that it stood for something new: and at that time whatever was new was certain to be opposed. Later in the century scientific innovations, such as the first telephones and motor cars, were attacked with the same conservative fury. Nowadays, fortunately, we are better tuned to progress. Eight years ago, for instance, when the revolutionary Aga Cooker was introduced, people were quick to appreciate its advantages: its cream and chromium cleanliness; guaranteed maximum fuel consumption; readiness for work by day and night and gift of meeting cooks three-quarters of the way. Already this cooker has brought a new reign of comfort and good temper to more than 20,000 kitchens.

AGA HEAT LIMITED, 20 NORTH AUDLEY STREET, W.1.
(Proprietors: Allied Ironfounders Ltd.)



AGA COOKER

AFRICA—AGA Heat (Africa) (Pty.) Ltd., P.O. Box 7058, JOHANNESBURG, also at DURBAN and CAPE TOWN. BRITISH WEST INDIES—Bermuda Engineering Co. Ltd., HAMILTON, BERMUDA. CANADA—AGA (Canada) Ltd., 431, King Street West, TORONTO. CEYLON—Walker & Oreg, Ltd., COLOMBO. INDIA—Wm. Jacks & Co., BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, KARACHI, MADRAS, DELHI, LAHORE, and RANGOON. NEW ZEALAND—Levin & Co., Ltd., Corner of Featherston and Ballance Streets, WELLINGTON.

The word AGA is the Registered Trade Mark of Aga Heat Ltd.

A VERY SECRET SERVICE

Called away from their work at the outbreak of the Second World War, **W. T. Wren**, **David Ogilvy** and his elder brother **Francis Ogilvy** found themselves volunteering for the murky world of counter-espionage...

W. T. Wren

The first documentary evidence of W. T. Wren having left AGA Heat Ltd to play his part in the Second World War comes in an executive minute in which it is agreed that his salary and bonus would – reassuringly – be paid on the same basis as if he were still carrying out his duties with the company.

Upon Wren's return to the company in 1945 he is referred to as Colonel Wren. Sources then mention him being involved in different ways during the war, most often as an MI6 section V officer (counter-espionage) and eventually as Head of the Security Branch in London of British Security Coordination (BSC).

While Wren seems to have ended the War based in London, he is recorded as having lived in Trinidad for several years in the early 1940s as MI6 head of station there. He travelled a lot, and is recorded as having been in New York often, as well as in Sweden (1939 and 1940), Canada (1942), and was in charge of operations in Spain by 1943.

David Ogilvy

According to his biographer, Kenneth Roman, David Ogilvy also worked for British Security Coordination (BSC). In his book, *The King of Madison Avenue: David Ogilvy and the Making of Modern Advertising*, he writes that Ogilvy had been moonlighting since 1939 as an adviser to the British government on American public opinion. In 1942, with the United States now embroiled in the Second World War, he went to work full time in British

military intelligence, initially in New York. His new boss in the spy business was Sir William Stephenson, head of BSC and the central figure in covert operations involving Britain and the United States in the years leading up to the war. BSC was to represent all British intelligence services in the Western Hemisphere. A compelling personality, Stephenson became a model for Ian Fleming's famous secret agent, James Bond 007.

Kenneth Roman writes: "A small man with piercing blue eyes, the strong-willed Stephenson – Ogilvy described him as "quiet, ruthless, and loyal" – took on the difficult task of combining propaganda for the British cause with intelligence work and counterespionage and carving out a working arrangement with American intelligence within the limits of the Neutrality Act.

"Stephenson was not a professional spy, nor were many of the people he recruited. His unlikely team was largely comprised of enthusiastic amateurs whose names and faces were not known to enemy intelligence agencies. The team included actors Leslie Howard, David Niven and Cary Grant, the movie director Alexander Korda, author Roald Dahl (who would later assist on a history of BSC) and Noel Coward."

"[David] Ogilvy was perhaps the most remarkable of the younger men to join Stephenson's BSC," wrote the man who recruited him, Harford Montgomery Hyde in his insider's book *Room 3603*.

He started his new job by attending a course for spies

and saboteurs at Camp X, officially Special Training School 103, a top secret British training school on the north shore of Lake Ontario in Canada. There, he said, he was taught the tricks of the trade: how to follow people without being observed, how to blow up bridges and how to kill a man with his bare hands.

Instead of being parachuted behind enemy lines, as he expected (or, more likely, feared), Ogilvy was placed in charge of collecting economic information from Latin America, to assist BSC agents in foiling businessmen known to be working against the Allies by supplying Hitler with strategic materials.

Ogilvy's basic job, according to intelligence expert Richard Spence, was to spin polling information considered harmful (or helpful) to British interests. BSC wanted results that would steer opinion toward support of Britain and the war – front-page stories that showed people were more interested in defeating Hitler than staying out of war.

Spymaster Stephenson put on record his high regard for Ogilvy's abilities – "literary skill, very keen analytical powers, initiative and special aptitude for handling problems of extreme delicacy," adding that "David not only made a good intelligence officer, but he was a brilliant one".

Francis Ogilvy

David Ogilvy was not alone. While he was at BSC, his elder brother, Francis, was working in British intelligence. He made a memorable impression on one assignment in Scotland. Hyde talks about Francis arriving "complete with black hat and striped trousers, in a remote Scottish village, and, on asking the postmaster if he would accept two parcels of stores, was promptly handed over to the police."

Safely extricated from police custody, he went on to serve in a less conspicuous but more influential role.

When Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940, he defined one of the requirements for his staff as the ability to write well, listing among several candidates a professor of English at Oxford and "that man who's writing the bombing reports".

It was Francis Ogilvy's reports that Churchill had been reading. For most of the Second World War, Squadron Leader F. F. Ogilvy lived in the Cabinet War Rooms, where he was on watch every night.

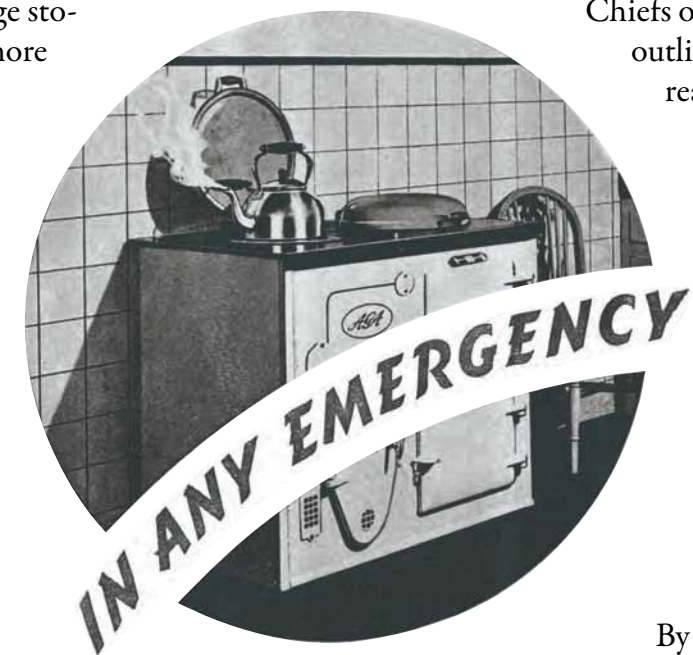
Kenneth Roman adds: "As he described it, you'd get to sleep at some unearthly hour, the Old Man would come down, shake you and dictate – not verbatim as one would to a secretary, but in broad general terms, outlining what he wanted to say, leaving it to the transcriber to do the actual writing, in Churchillian style. I want a cable to Roosevelt, Churchill might say. Copy to Stalin, copy to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Then he would outline his ideas. 'And have it ready for me at breakfast.'"

Francis Ogilvy believed, when he started the job, that he had some talent as a writer. He later said: "I realised I couldn't. But by the time he [Churchill] finished shouting at me and educating me, by the end I thought perhaps I could."

By 1945 he was back with W. T. Wren working on launches of the AGA cooker and Rayburn cooker and helping his brother set up the New York branch of the advertising agency.

The brothers remained close, with David writing to Francis almost weekly to discuss personal and business issues, including a paper proposing *Thirty-Nine Rules* for advertising copywriters.

Kenneth Roman writes: "With his paper, [David] Ogilvy took credit for reorienting Francis's agency away from "poetry, typography and nonsense" and "an opportunity to patronize fine writers, modern writers and typographers." □



RAYMOND LOEWY

Designer

Innovator

Head of Raymond
Loewy Associates

Raymond Loewy (1893–1986) was an acclaimed industrial designer and reputed to have been the first to be featured on the cover of Time magazine (1949). Born in France, he spent most of his professional career in the United States. Among his most notable designs were the Shell and BP logos, the Greyhound bus, Coca-Cola vending machines and the Air Force One livery. His career spanned seven decades and included important design work in the UK overseeing the launch of the New Standard AGA cooker. Between 1936 and 1941 this team launched and updated the New Standard AGA cooker, leading to the production of a formidable portfolio of technical innovations. modern AGA cooker. He was also responsible for the look of the Rayburn cooker.

GETTY
IMAGES

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50471369

Collection
TIME & LIFE Images

In 1936, the acclaimed industrial designer **Raymond Loewy** was recruited by W. T. Wren to re-design the AGA cooker. It was a master stroke with the new model launched in 1941 and still in production three decades later. Here, we profile the influential American designer and the talented design team he assembled...

DESIGNS ON THE FUTURE

The concept of industrial design, recognised as a separate discipline, was introduced to Britain from the United States prior to the First World War. During the 1930s it was encouraging interest and criticism in almost equal measure.

But by the 1930s – with industrial design and production efficiency becoming mainstream subjects – W.T. Wren saw there was further progress to be made with the AGA cooker and decided the future of the AGA cooker's look should be shaped by a man with an international reputation.

Wren decided on Raymond Loewy, widely acknowledged since as one of the leading designers of the 20th century. The work on the future design of the AGA cooker would be carried out under the auspices of the newly founded London office of Raymond Loewy Associates.

In the broader field of industrial design, Raymond Loewy Associates had contracts with 140 clients in America and 60 in Europe. Loewy maintained design studios in New York, Chicago, London and Paris and for years the name Raymond Loewy Associates was synonymous with outstanding product and package design, with its portfolio spanning the design of aircraft interiors, luxury ocean liners, buses, department stores, architecture and supermarkets.

An expression was coined to describe the scope of work of the Loewy organisation: "... in design, everything from lipsticks to locomotives."

The London office of Raymond Loewy Associates was unique in Britain as the only purely professional industrial design office in the country. It opened in 1936 and the extraordinary relationship with Mayfair-based AGA Heat Ltd began with the appointment of Carl Otto and Douglas Scott as stylists for the company [see page 23]. Loewy continued to work with AGA Heat and its parent company – Allied Ironfounders – until at least the 1950s.

Wren briefed Loewy to produce a new version of the original AGA cooker, one which would endure and become a kitchen icon. That vision was fully realised in 1941 with the advent of the Standard Model C AGA Cooker, a model which would go on to remain in production until 1972.

Among the principal design changes were:

- A restyled front plate
- The top and bottom oven doors were reconfigured to be the same size
- The rectangular grill over the auxiliary air inlet and ash-pit door was styled for the first time to echo the size and shape of the two oven doors
- The door hinges and handles were modified
- The heat gauge was placed centrally
- The overall design was made significantly more efficient.

Wren's vision – and skill in seeing real talent – had again paid dividends, with the creation of a brand new AGA cooker with the design and engineering values to endure for three decades. □

The
"New Standard"
AGA COOKER
gives you
better cooking, more leisure . .
a Guaranteed maximum fuel cost
of less than £4 a year



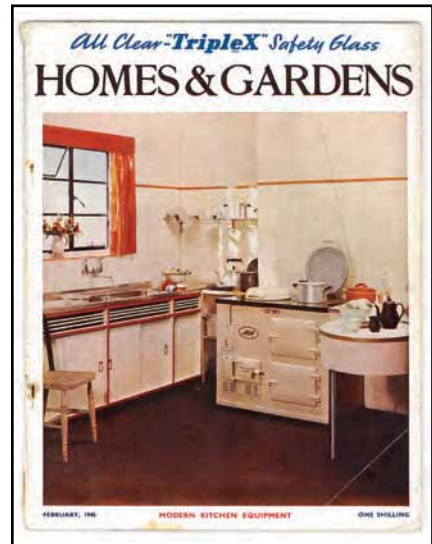
**Some points of the
 "New Standard"
 AGA Cooker:**

- The most economical in the world.
- Independent of gas or electricity.
- Burns day and night.
- No morning fires to light.
- Easy to clean, simple to manage.
- Always ready for immediate use.
- No fumes, or cooking smells.
- Extremely rapid boiling, safe simmering.
- All cooking temperatures automatically controlled.
- Two big ovens, two large hot-plates.
- Unusually even heat in the ovens.
- Fuelling and riddling only twice a day.
- Absolutely safe and fool-proof.
- Guaranteed fixed fuel cost.
- Easy to install.
- Width 3 ft. 3 ins.



DOUGLAS SCOTT

Scott was particularly proud of his 1938 redesign of the AGA cooker and his development of the Rayburn. It was a design that was to endure for the next 40 years. Scott's influence during this period led to the development of greater standardisation of the AGA cooker, a theme which ran through all of Loewy's work and which was later echoed in Scott's design of London's iconic and much-loved Routemaster bus, which was engineered to be mass-produced in a sustainable way. The eventual Standard Model C AGA cooker, illustrated on the cover of Homes & Gardens magazine in 1940 (right) went even further than before in its simplification and definition of the cooker's design. The AGA was also proving robust in operation. The Antarctic expedition team of 1934 took an AGA cooker with them – a model SBD. All existing models – both domestic and heavy duty – were withdrawn in 1941 and in their place a range of units were introduced with standardised parts which were, to a much greater extent, fully interchangeable. Scott's vision of uniformity had been achieved.



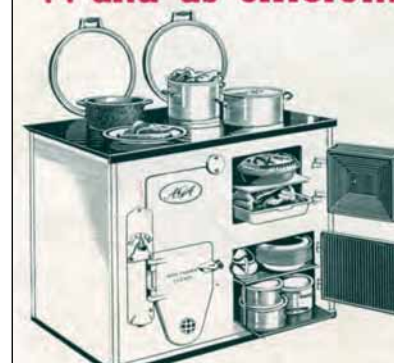
**CHARLES
 LUDOVIC SCOTT**

Charles Ludovic Scott was the Technical research Officer for AGA Heat Ltd from 1929 until the late 1950s. With the task of styling the AGA cooker having been

assigned to renowned industrial designers, it was Scott's role to ensure the engineering of the cooker received similar close attention. During the 1930s more than 20 patents were filed for technical and design innovations related to the AGA cooker and other products, mainly by Scott, under the changing company names of Bell's Engineering, Bell's Heat Appliances, AGA Heat and Allied Ironfounders. Scott is often featured in brochures of the time advocating research and development and explaining why they make the AGA cooker a market leader. Board minutes highlight this determined work to ensure quality and reliability.



**Kitchen contemporary with the Aga Cooker
 .. and as efficient**



And now the kitchen—that Cinderella of architecture—is coming into its own. The 20th Century planned kitchen with the modern Aga Cooker as the heart of the design gives you a kitchen as clean and as efficient as a dairy, but as pleasant and as comfortable as your own sitting room. Saving time, saving energy, saving money. Producing more appetising, more healthy food more easily than before. No fumes or cooking smells—no dust or dirt. The Aga is the neatest, cleanest cooker ever invented. Always ready for use, it burns day and night—but the fuel cost is guaranteed less than £1 a quarter (coke). There is an Aga model from £47 10s. for any size of household.

Write for Free Kitchen Plans and the Aga Catalogue
 Mrs. Darcy Braddell has planned this kitchen with no dark corners, for cleanliness and easy management. See how commonsense positioning of sink, draining board and table can save time and energy by reducing unnecessary movement. And off the kitchen is a sunny breakfast-room or sitting-room that the modern servant will appreciate. Let this well-known woman designer help you. Write to the address below for the folders which give you full details, plans and elevations of these contemporary kitchens. They are free and so is the beautiful

Vintage advertising campaigns for the AGA cooker (left and opposite page) illustrate how – now as then – the emphasis has always been on the AGA cooker's economy, design, engineering and reliability.

DESIGN GENIUS THAT CHANGED THE BRITISH KITCHEN FOR EVER



After the First World War, life in the British kitchen began to change. As domestic service declined, the kitchen was no longer the domain of servants, but of the housewife herself. AGA Heat placed its trust in the design ethos for the kitchen in the hands of three visionaries – **Dorothy Braddell, Lawrence Wright and Mabel Collins**

The kitchen changed during the early 20th century from a prosaic workspace to an area which embodied modernist principles. Modernity “crept in through the back door, via the kitchen”³ German time-and-motion studies created the utilitarian Frankfurt kitchen, while in Britain the AGA kitchen was to be as modern but more user-friendly.

Rationally planned and industrially produced, the emphasis of the ‘New’ Kitchen was placed on the economic use of labour and resources. As the household centred on a more self-sufficient kind of family life, the footprint of the home changed in response. The kitchen was the first area impacted by social change.

Until the 1930s the kitchen was most often a space separate from family living. The homes of the more affluent households in Victorian England had kitchens run by cooks as part of a team of domestic staff. Middle-class Edwardian homes were still built with a presumption that there would be a maid in the house whose tasks would include cooking.

Although domestic service declined in the inter-war years, it still represented the largest occupation for women until the mid-1930s, when service went into an irreversible decline. A 2004 study for London’s Science Museum summarised the impact this was to bring to the kitchen.⁴

“In the space of about 25 years, the kitchen was transformed from a transient place for the preparation of food to the new heart of the home. By the end of the 1950s it was a multi-functional living space, as well as the powerhouse and nerve centre of family life.

“The availability of new materials and finishes, as well as modern electric appliances came together in the fitted

kitchen, changing the look and layout of a space which was now clearly to be enjoyed rather than merely endured. The 1930s kitchen was smaller but lighter than its Edwardian counterpart. It was now no longer the domain of employees but of the housewife herself.”

Designing the modern kitchen

A pioneer of domestic design, Dorothy Braddell [Dorothy ‘Darcy’ Adelaide Braddell née Busse, 1889-1981] can be seen as the mother of the modern kitchen. She studied at the Regent Street Polytechnic and the Byam Shaw School of Art and became a designer and critic of interior design and domestic planning. She often worked under her husband’s name as Mrs Darcy Braddell.

Her work was included in pre- and post-war exhibitions of British industrial art; she was on the advisory committee of the Council for Art and Industry; and she wrote essays and material for trade publications such as *The Gas Journal*. She was also a member of the Council of Scientific Management in the Home, which formed in 1931, and she became a design expert for the Ideal Home Exhibitions.

Her innovative kitchen designs for AGA Heat Ltd were constructed for display at exhibitions throughout the 1930s and 1940s and she was specially commissioned to design the AGA Cookery Advisory Department’s kitchen at the company’s showrooms at 20 North Audley Street, London W1, a building which, until the 1990s, retained the name ‘AGA House’ in certain circles.

One of the early exhibitions was the British Industries Fair of March 1936. Contemporary minutes describe the event as a huge success... *“The AGA Exhibit proved a very great attraction and their new models were enthusiastically received by Merchants generally.”* ►

**DOROTHY BRADDELL
LAURENCE WRIGHT
MABEL COLLINS**

Their sales exceeded expectations, and Mr Wren [Managing Director of AGA Heat Ltd] is very well satisfied."

The success of Braddell's kitchen displays led to her being given a wider role. A minute of the time read: *"An arrangement is being made with Mrs Braddell which will make her services available to Allied Ironfounders in connection with designing of goods and of Exhibition Stands."* ⁵

In the 1930s, Braddell redesigned a traditional farmhouse kitchen for AGA Heat Ltd, both versions of which were exhibited on behalf of the company and tied into marketing initiatives advocating the importance of a planned kitchen, and how well the AGA cooker would fit into such an environment.

Braddell was impartial in her designs, creating kitchens which used solid fuel, gas and electricity. Her philosophy was functionalist, based on commonsense and practicality rather than any particular affiliation.

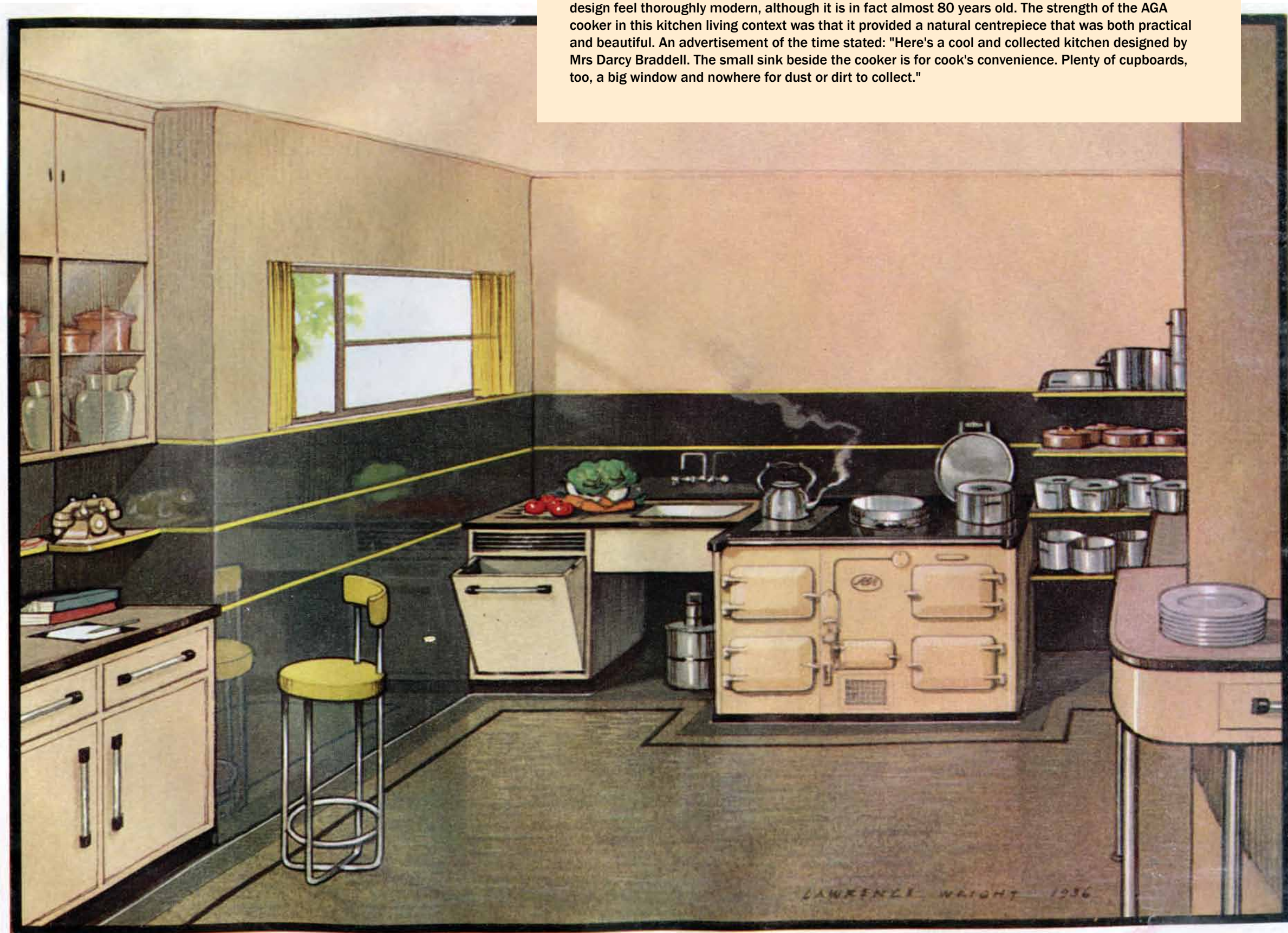
She was, however, vocal in her support for the AGA cooker.

"Solid fuel cookers have recently taken on a new lease of life – or rather there has been a renaissance in their design and conception, thanks largely to the introduction of a cooker of foreign inspiration.

"This has set an equally high standard in cooking performance and economy of upkeep which remains difficult to beat." □

Painting a picture of the future of modern kitchens

Dorothy Braddell's kitchen designs were painted – rather than simply photographed – by Lawrence Wright (1906-1983), an author, perspective artist and major commentator on the home. He painted kitchen images for AGA Heat Ltd from 1936 and (as illustrated here) they show that changes to the styling of the AGA cooker were being introduced in the second half of the 1930s. The freestanding AGA cooker, along with the black glass reflective walls and yellow curtains and piping make this kitchen design feel thoroughly modern, although it is in fact almost 80 years old. The strength of the AGA cooker in this kitchen living context was that it provided a natural centrepiece that was both practical and beautiful. An advertisement of the time stated: "Here's a cool and collected kitchen designed by Mrs Darcy Braddell. The small sink beside the cooker is for cook's convenience. Plenty of cupboards, too, a big window and nowhere for dust or dirt to collect."



**DOROTHY BRADDELL
LAURENCE WRIGHT
MABEL COLLINS**

SERVING UP A NEW APPROACH TO CONTEMPORARY KITCHEN LIVING

On 9 May 1873, the reclusive Queen Victoria made a rare public appearance. She attended a cooking lecture held at the exhibition grounds close to London's Albert Hall. The Queen and princesses were ushered into the exhibition's School of Cookery to observe the preparation of a savoury omelette by a male chef and four kitchen maids.

It was one of the very first cookery demonstrations and years later AGA recognised its value to customers.

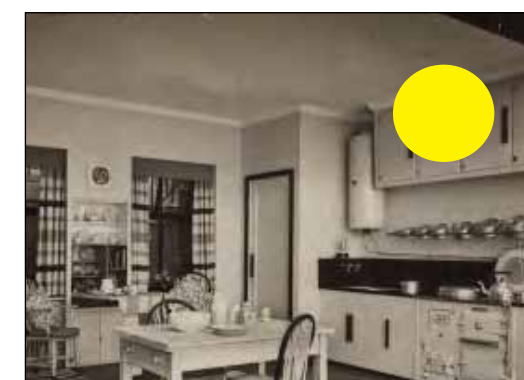
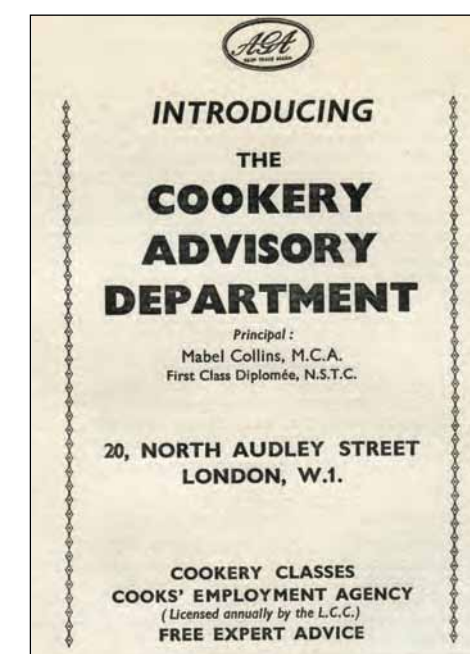
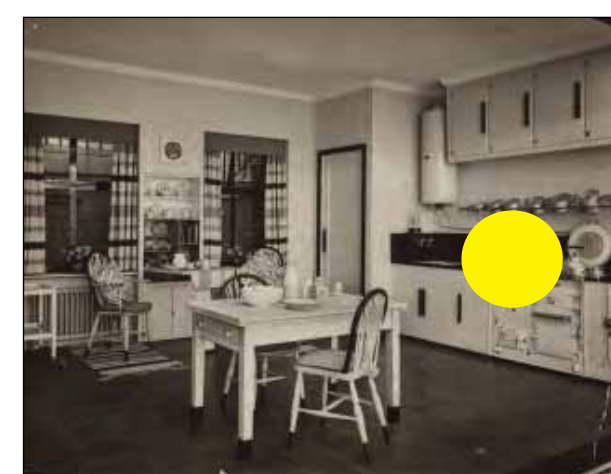
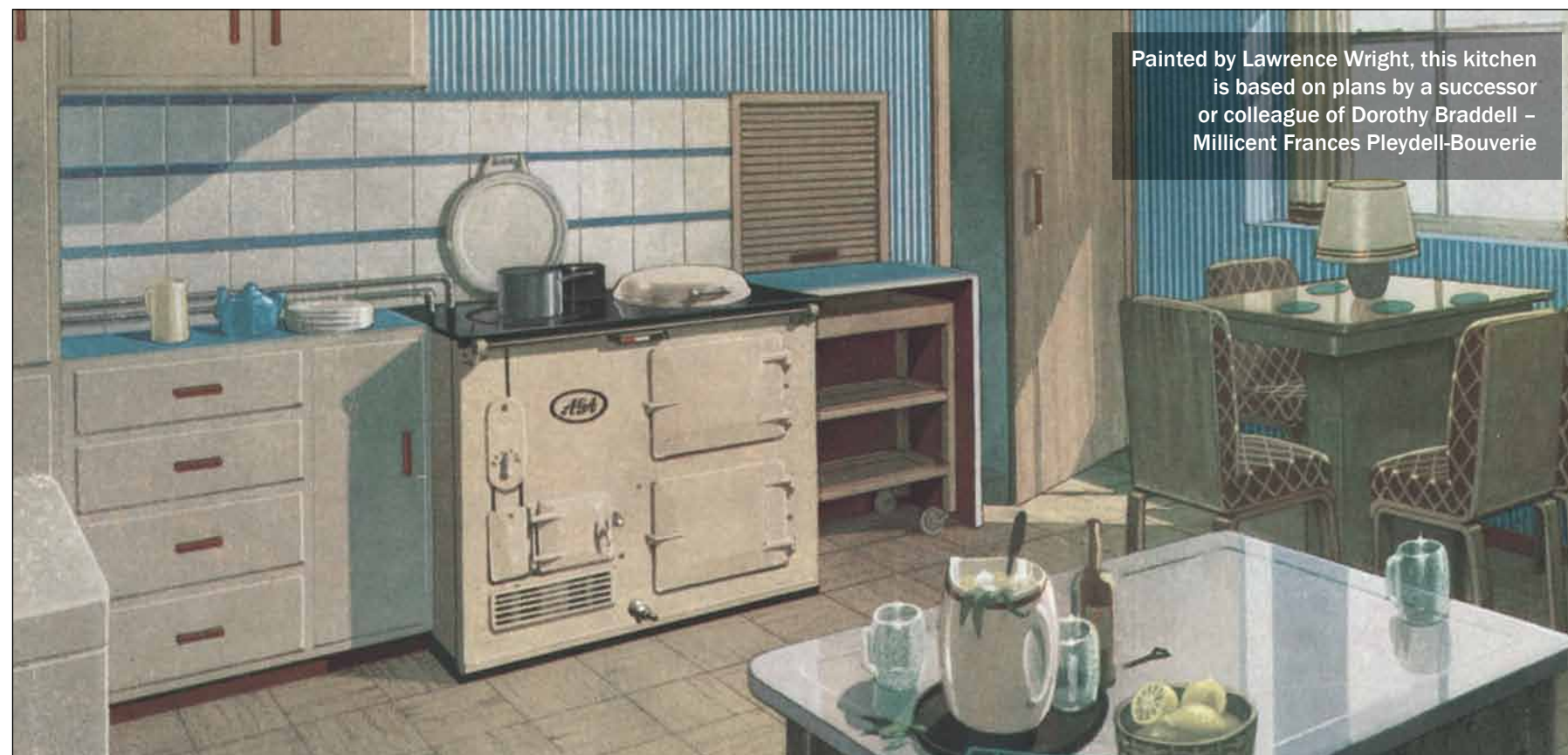
Today, thousands every year enjoy cookery demonstrations at AGA shops throughout the UK. Back in the 1930s it was a new idea and it was Mabel Collins – as head of the new AGA Cookery Advisory Department – who was charged with changing Britain's view on food and cooking.

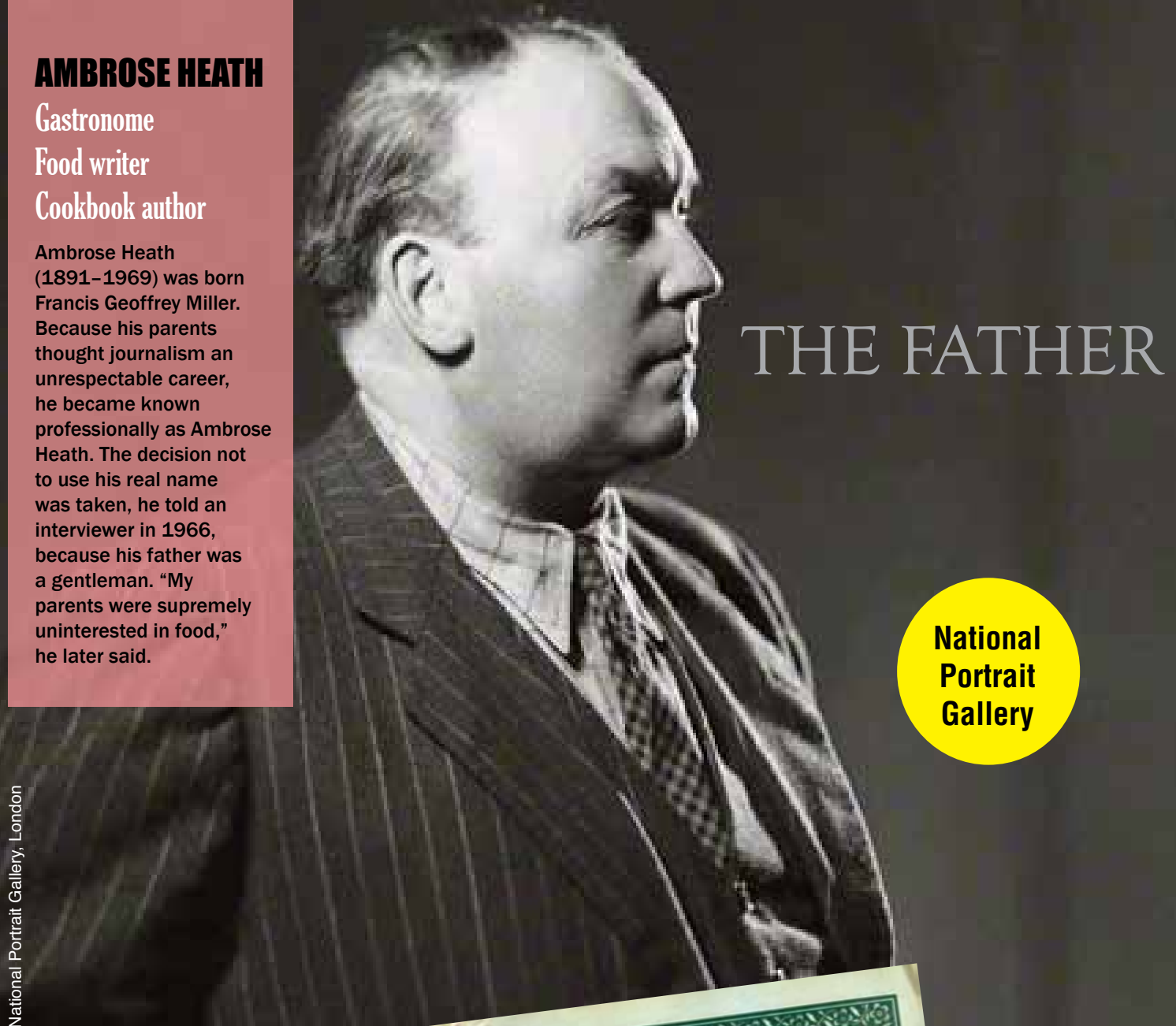
The Cookery Advisory Department was formally introduced in 1935 in AGA Heat Ltd's North Audley Street, London, kitchen appliance showroom. A contemporary brochure states: "This is the test and demonstration kitchen at London. The head of the department (Mabel Collins) moved her desk from her private office into the kitchen 'because it was less stuffy'."

With the housewife now doing the cooking the onus was on providing achievable recipes for practical everyday living and for entertaining and that tradition continues today through the AGA demonstration kitchens in London's Marylebone High Street and Brompton Road.

Through Mabel Collins, AGA Heat Ltd provided practical cooking information to its customers. AGA Heat Ltd viewed the provision of information for the housewife as a major new avenue for sales and owners of AGA cookers received monthly or quarterly recipes to reflect the time of year, with some of these pictured (right)... □

Today, thousands learn more about the AGA cooker through instore demonstrations. It is a tradition begun in the 1930s with the launch of the AGA Cookery Advisory Department with renowned food writer Ambrose Heath retained as its Gastronomical Adviser.



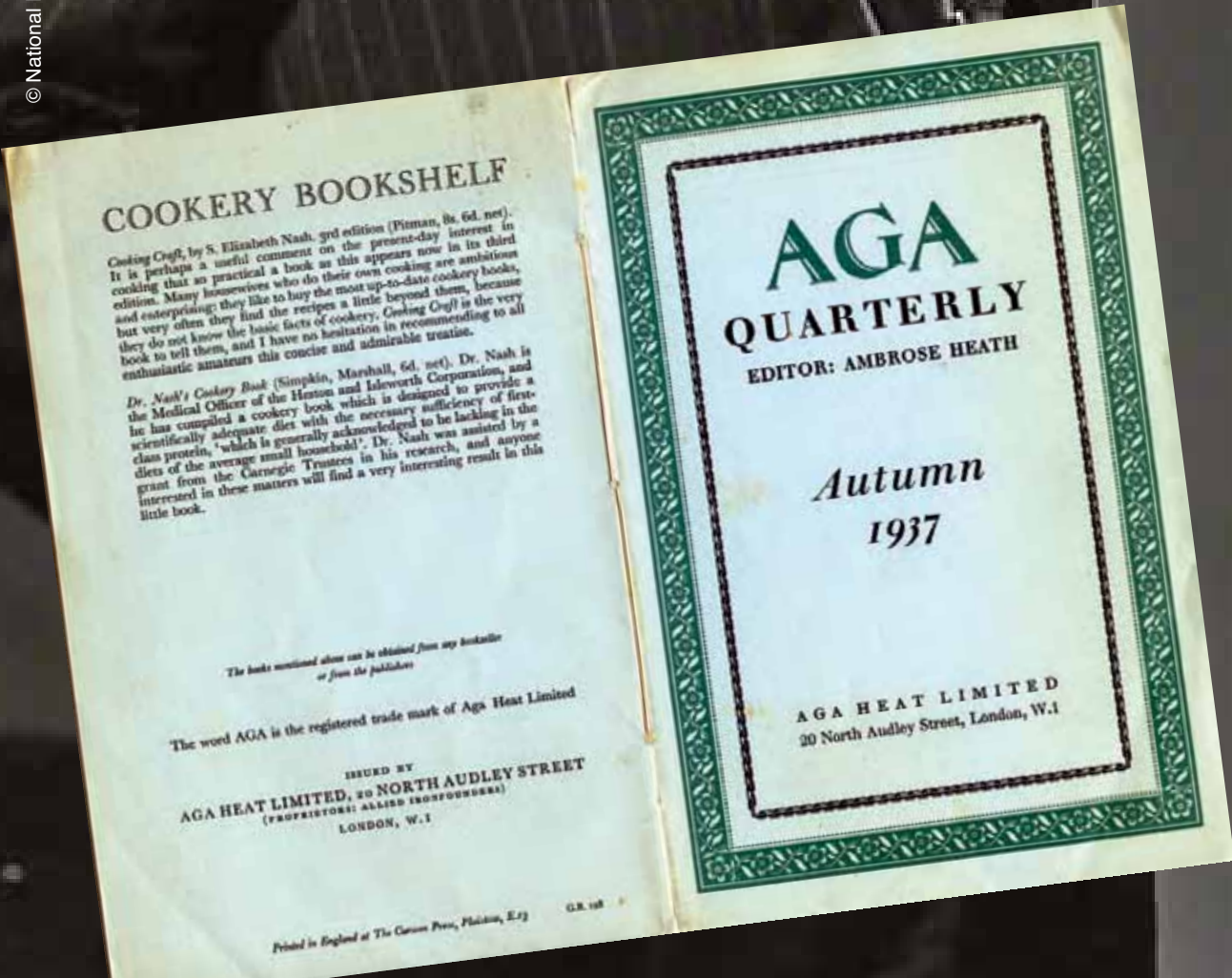


AMBROSE HEATH
Gastronome
Food writer
Cookbook author

Ambrose Heath (1891–1969) was born Francis Geoffrey Miller. Because his parents thought journalism an unrespectable career, he became known professionally as Ambrose Heath. The decision not to use his real name was taken, he told an interviewer in 1966, because his father was a gentleman. “My parents were supremely uninterested in food,” he later said.

National
Portrait
Gallery

© National Portrait Gallery, London



Ambrose Heath was the Mary Berry of his day – a renowned food writer trusted by millions of British cooks. A big fan of the AGA cooker, in the 1930s he joined AGA Heat Ltd’s pioneering Cookery Advisory Department as Gastronomical Advisor...

OF MODERN FOOD WRITING

Today it is tricky to imagine a world without wall-to-wall cookery shows and books by celebrity chefs topping the bestseller lists on a weekly basis. However, it wasn’t always so and without the input of a few notable names it might never have happened...

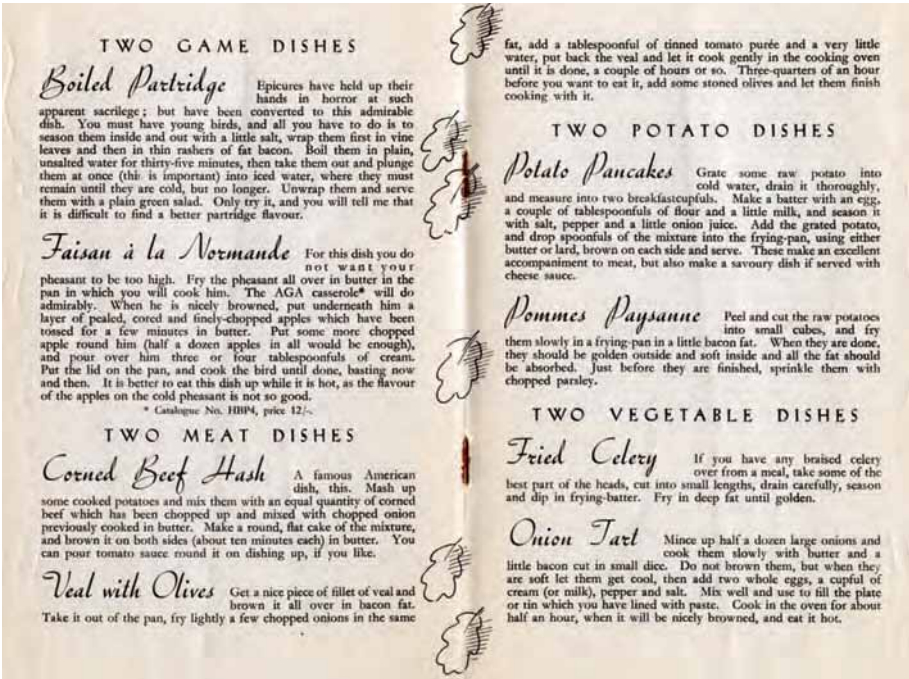
Arguably the first ever celebrity chef, Ambrose Heath quite simply changed the way Britain cooked. He penned more than 100 cookery books, offering up recipes for an extraordinary number of foodstuffs from the prosaic potato to the rather more exotic squirrel and turtle. In 1933 Heath turned his hand to AGA cooking with the publication by Faber & Faber of *Good Food on the AGA*.

Brands appointing ambassadors is not a new phenomenon and AGA Heat Ltd was justifiably proud of its work with Heath, who was in at the start before Bell’s Heat had even been acquired by AGA Heat. The foreword to *Good Food on the AGA*,

attributed simply to Bell’s Heat Appliances Ltd, says: “In writing this book for AGA, Mr Heath has achieved far more than we ourselves visualised when the book was planned, for not only has he written on the best way of securing the greatest use and satisfaction from the cooker, but he tells of many dishes singularly fitted for the preparation on it; dishes which are gathered from the cuisine of many lands and which will help to brighten our table.”

After the publication of the book, Heath’s association with the AGA cooker continued to grow. In 1935 he was appointed The AGA Cookery Advisory Department’s Gastronomical Advisor. In a letter of the time which went out to distributors, Mabel Collins wrote: “Mr Heath will give free advice to owners on their cookery problems”.

Heath enjoyed his schooldays at the progressive Clifton College, though he did say: “I didn’t like the formality of ordinary education. I was interested in special things.” ►





Perhaps this is why he enjoyed such a varied and colourful career, which included working for the Hudson Bay Company, the India Office and co-founding the Wine and Food Society, before a quarrel with the then secretary caused him to resign. His journalism began with a series of 'casual pieces' submitted to, amongst others, *The Times*, *News Chronicle* and the *Yorkshire Post*, before becoming cookery correspondent for the *Morning Post*.

Ambrose Heath didn't just write on the subject of AGA cookery; he was a passionate AGA cook himself. A 1933 AGA brochure stated: "For many months now Mr Ambrose Heath has done his own cooking and tested his professional recipes on an AGA Cooker, and his enthusiasm is unbounded for the AGA cooker's cooking efficiency."

"He explains the various improvements made possible by AGA cooking and the difference in method due to the principle of AGA Heat Storage. He emphasises especially the enormously increased leisure which the AGA affords the Cook."

In a 1939 brochure Heath speaks for himself: "... I can say without exaggeration we have had much better food since it was installed than ever before, the

reason being, I suppose, that it is much easier to cook on. The AGA seems to make one want to cook..."

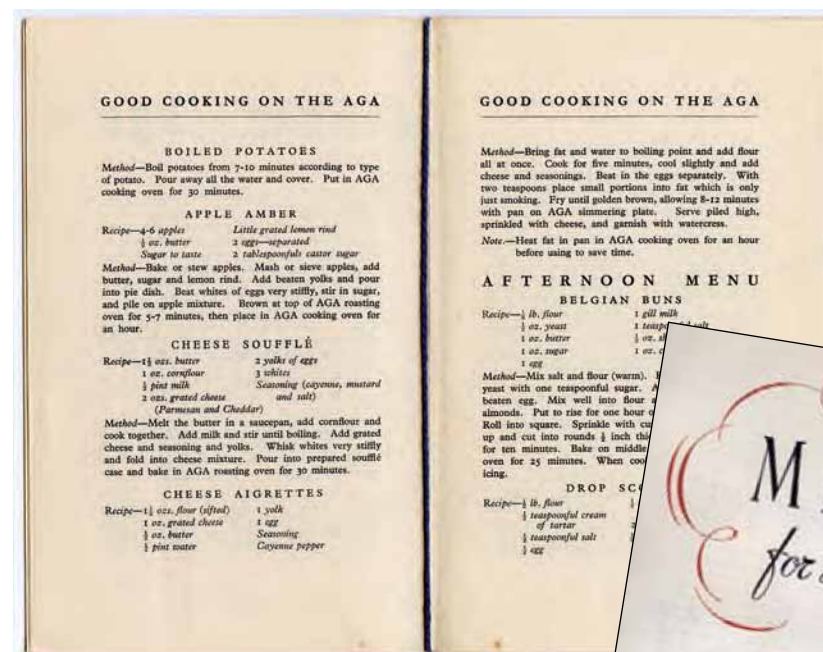
Throughout the war years, Heath was one of the main voices of the BBC's *The Kitchen Front*. A series of talks organised by the Ministry of Food, Heath's role was to encourage frugality and ease the hardship of rationing with recipes, household hints, exhortations from government officials and comedy. The themes re-appear in 1946 in an early Rayburn brochure.

The Kitchen Front was a platform to encourage the population to make the most of meagre resources and to keep healthy and its success lay mainly in its homely and avuncular cast. The programme went out at 8:15am every day and lasted five minutes. The timeslot – widely considered to be a golden one – was chosen as it was 'before the housewife sets out to do her shopping'.

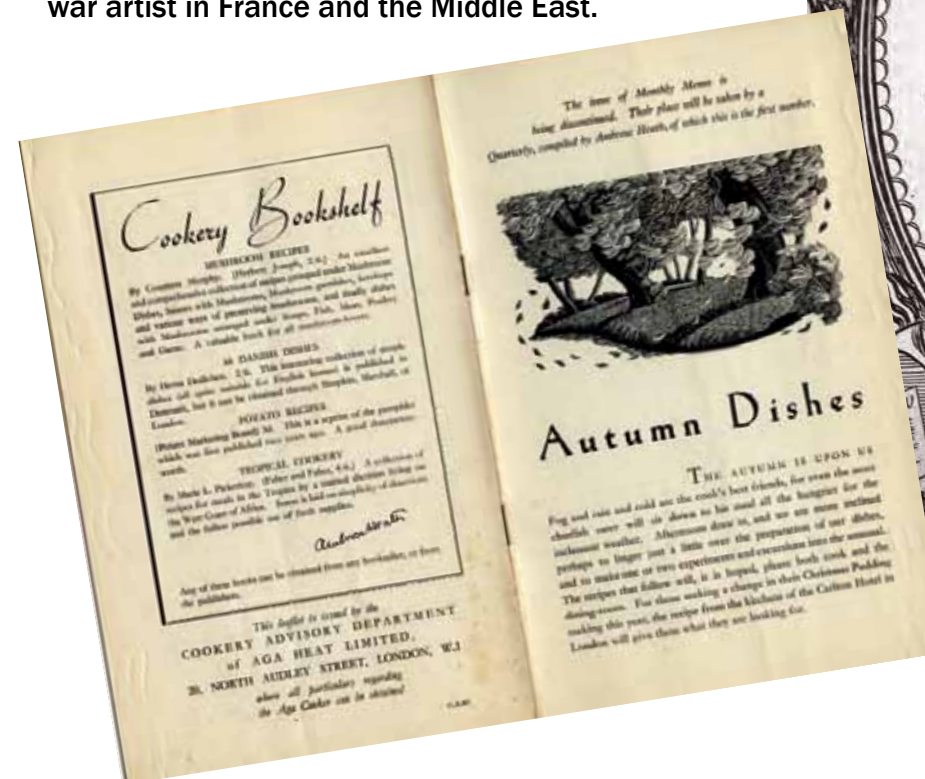
Usually presented by Ambrose Heath and the popular broadcaster Freddie Grisewood (known affectionately as 'Ricepud') and contributed to by many, including Marguerite Patten and Lord Woolton, it attracted up to 14 million listeners, significantly more than any other daytime talk programme.

In the first week alone the BBC received 1,000 letters, along with parcels of cake and other gifts from housewives responding to its tips. He had established an AGA cookery tradition still continued today by, amongst many others, Mary Berry, Lucy Young, Amy Willcock and Louise Walker.

Heath's later years were spent, with his much younger wife Violet May, in Holmbury St Mary in Surrey, with an AGA cooker and a flower garden, but no vegetable garden. He died on 31 May 1969. □

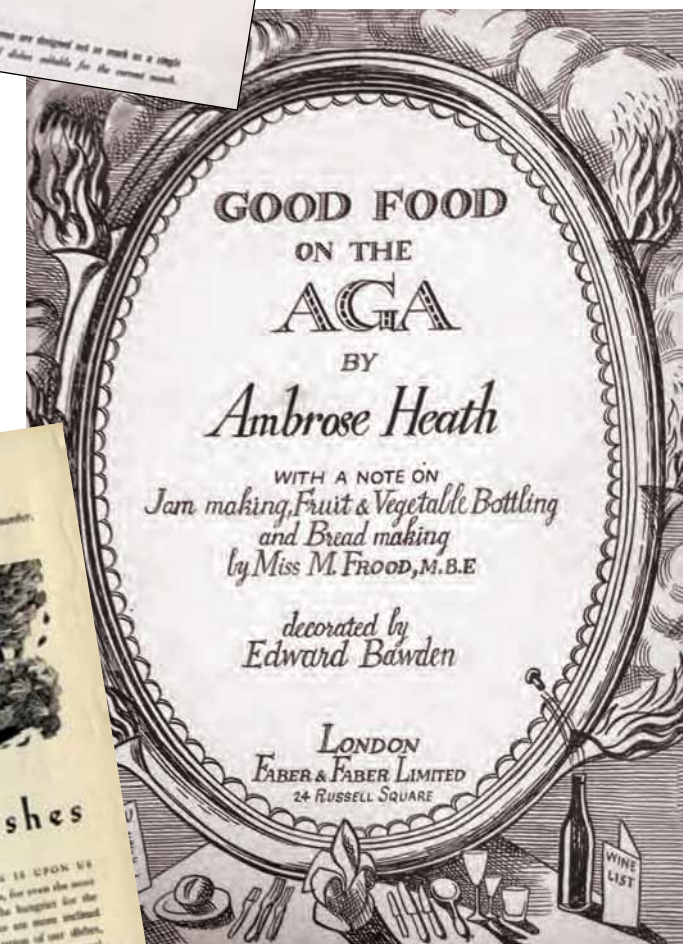


Ambrose Heath's *Good Food on the AGA* (left) featured beautiful illustrations by Edward Bawden, well-known for his work with Twinings, Shell-Mex and Fortnum & Mason, as well as renowned London Transport creatives which included posters during the 1930s and tile motifs for London Underground. One day a week Bawden worked for the Curwen Press, so perhaps he was instrumental in the decision to create menus and recipe cards (below) from *Good Food on the AGA*, which were printed by the same company. During the Second World War, Bawden served as an official war artist in France and the Middle East.



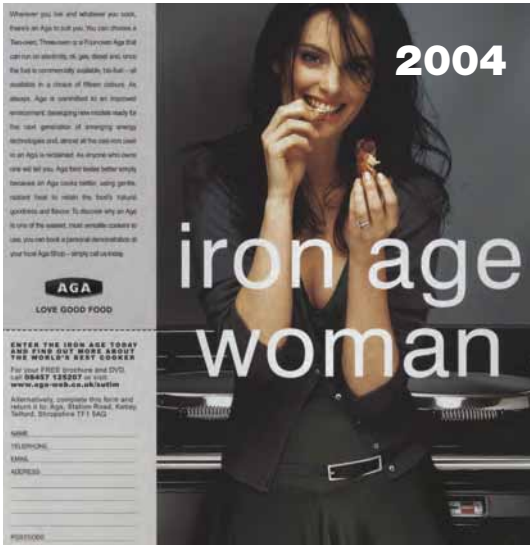
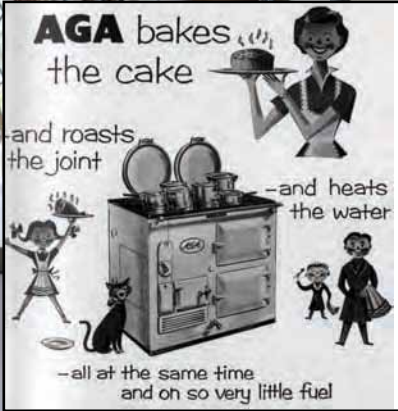
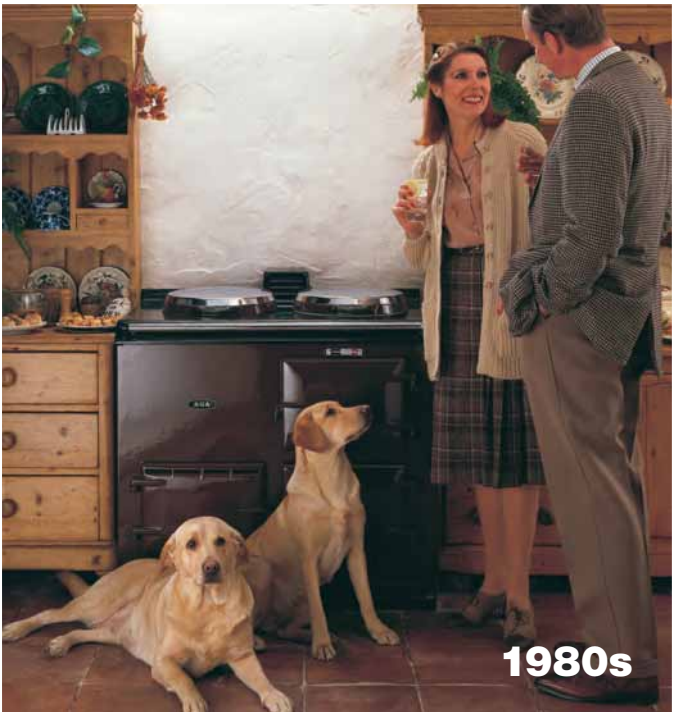
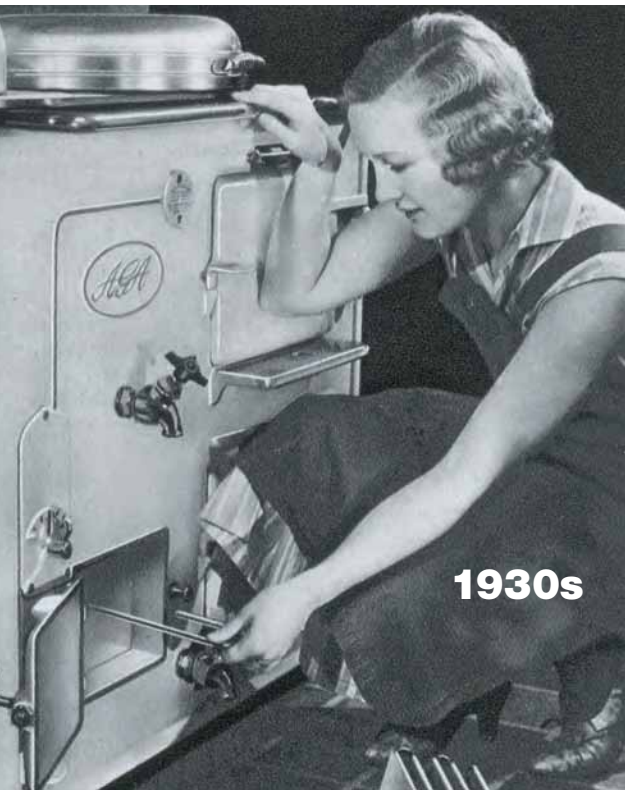
Painter
Designer
AGA cookbook
illustrator

Edward Bawden (1903–1989) was a renowned painter and designer. His design tutor was the artist Paul Nash, while other contemporaries at the Royal College of Art included Barnett Freedman, Henry Moore and Douglas Percy Bliss, who was to be his future biographer. Among Bawden's accolades were his appointment as Royal Designer for Industry (RSA) in 1949 and his election as a Royal Academician in 1956. He was awarded a CBE in 1946.



MARKETING THROUGH THE YEARS

Marketing campaigns through its 10 decades illustrate beautifully how – despite huge changes in the British kitchen – the AGA cooker has remained very much at the heart of the home.



AND THE INNOVATION CONTINUES TODAY...

The main factor that ensures the AGA cooker remains both iconic and popular in its tenth decade is that it has moved with the times and adapted to modern living.

It is easy to implement change for the sake of it or to incorporate technology where it is not needed. This has not been the case with the AGA cooker – each change has been considered and has made a real difference to the lives of AGA owners.

From the introduction of new fuel types to an on/off AGA that can be controlled via a smartphone app, the AGA cooker has evolved to work brilliantly with changes in domestic routine, just as it did in the turbulent 1930s.

Most AGA cookers sold today run on electricity, which allows new markets to open up and for cooks worldwide to enjoy the AGA cooker. China is a perfect example. Until very recently kitchens there were simply work-spaces, but now they are becoming rooms to live in, rather like ours in the UK. It is because of this that the AGA cooker is set to become a huge hit in the East.



Recent launches have included the fully programmable AGA iTotal Control (left) and (main image) the new 5-oven AGA Total Control, the biggest ever manufactured and pictured here in a conservatory kitchen in Wandsworth, London



A 3-oven AGA cooker in Heather pictured in a stunning contemporary Bath home featured on TV's Grand Designs





A 3-oven AGA Total Control in the kitchen at Spring Cottage, Cliveden, which in 1963 was at the heart of the Profumo affair

SOURCES, REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2011, AGA Rangemaster entered into a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Birmingham City University to establish a digital gallery of selected archive material charting the AGA 'look'. It is anticipated that the digital archive will make a valuable contribution to the new Birmingham City Library.

Charlotte Whitehead – appointed as KTP associate and archivist – undertook the principal research for this publication under the supervision of Dawn Roads, cookery writer and head of the AGA demonstrator team (and, as such, a successor to Mabel Collins)..

Charlotte and Dawn co-authored this booklet with Laura James and Tim James, author of 'AGA: The Story of a Kitchen Classic'. The booklet was designed and produced by Mabel Gray.

Most of the images used are from the archives of AGA Rangemaster Group plc. The Board minutes of Allied Ironfounders and AGA Heat from the 1930s and 1940s provided the backcloth to the research project.

AGA Rangemaster would like to thank the National Portrait Gallery; the Design Council Archive (University of Brighton); Transco plc; Getty Images and the Victoria & Albert Museum for permission to use photography and illustrations.

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To bring an icon home, visit **www.agaliving.com**
or call **0845 712 5207** to organise an
AGA cookery demonstration



The AGA cooker is a kitchen icon with a heritage stretching back almost a century. Its fascinating history is well documented.

What is less well known is that the team behind the British redesign of the legendary cooker included design, engineering and marketing visionaries who helped shape the future of life in the British home.

Here their compelling stories are told for the first time...



AGA MARVEL

www.agamarvel.com