Gurnard with Nettle Butter

This is a little curiosity I came up with in Cornwall where the gurnard (red or grey, it matters not) are usually excellent. We've taken to travelling to Cornwall in the spring when the stinging nettles are at their prime, too. The taste of stinging nettles with a touch of good ol' garlic compliments the gurnard very well indeed. For complete Cornish authenticity, if you are lucky enough to have a local supply, use Cornish wild garlic.

A 1 kg gurnard (weighed whole) will serve two admirably. (There's quite a bit of wasted weight 'cos gurnards have a large head.) If the fish are smaller, use one each.

(Maybe I should commend this recipe to Mr. Stein.)

Planning

serves:	2
prep time:	10 mins
cooking time:	10 mins

Ingredients

- 2 (gloved!) handfuls nettle tops
- 2 large or 4 smaller gurnard fillets
- salt & pepper
- 75g butter
- 1 small clove garlic, finely chopped

Method

First, with a gloved hand, pick only the fresh, young tops of the nettles. Remove the leaves from the stems and wash them. Blanch the leaves in boiling water for 10 - 15 seconds then drain and refresh them in cold water to arrest their cooking. They are now safe to handle without the gloves. Drain the leaves once again, gently squeeze out excess moisture and dry them as best you can in a clean kitchen towel. Roughly chop the leaves and set them aside.

Season the fillets well with salt and pepper. Melt the butter over medium heat in a frying pan large enough to hold the gurnard fillets and, when the foam subsides, add the fillets to the frying pan. Cook them for 2 - 3 minutes on each side, depending upon their thickness, turning once. Remove the gurnard fillets to warmed serving plates while you finish the nettle butter.

Stir the chopped garlic and nettles into the butter and cooking juices. Fry gently for a minute or two before spooning the mixture over and around the gurnard fillets.

(Some boiled new potatoes - though it's probably a bit too early for Jersey Royals - and tenderstem broccoli would be perfect accompaniments.)