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Cotehele Quay. A mile. All south facing slopes. Much of the fruit ended up in Covent Garden.'

In their small book there are descriptions of old varieties such as Birchenhayes, Burcombe, Rumbullion, Fice, Upright, Halton Black, Smutts, Brandy Mazzard and many more. All recorded from the villages of St Dominic, Botus Fleming, Cargreen and Calstock; and on the Devon side Bere Ferrers, Bere Alston and Slew near Lamerhooe. What is equally gratifying is the replanting of cherry orchards. James Evans is a very skilled grafter and they have two or three mother cherry orchards of their own. Even Cotehele House has it own cherry orchard planted by John Lanyon and Dave Bouch back in 2004. Look out for cherry trees both in blossom and in fruit. If you are very lucky you may even get to taste Tamar cherries this summer.
(This review first appeared in the *Western Morning News*.)

James Crowden

Stephen Skelton: *The Knight who Invented Champagne: How Sir Kenelm Digby developed strong glass bottles – verre anglais – which enabled wine and cider makers to produce bottle-fermented sparkling wines*: S.P. Skelton Ltd., 2021: 168 pp., paperback, £27.50.
Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665), elegant courtier, diplomat, pirate, swordsman and eminently learned food historian is no stranger to *PPC* or Prospect books. You only have to cast your minds back to 1997 when Tom Jaine republished the 1669 version of *The Closed Opened* with a powerful introduction by Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson. Digby, whose father was hung drawn and quartered for taking part in Guy Fawkes's ill-fated attempt to blow up Parliament, struts his stuff between the pages with copious recipes for game, fair and fowl, metheglin and sider, jams, conserves, syllabubs, possets, mead and slip-coat cheeses. Digby was also employed by the Navy.

One of Digby's many skills, apart from courting the beautiful Venetia Stanley, whom he had known since childhood, was to have a hand in glass-making, with his old chum Admiral Sir Robert Mansell. Now Digby, the 'Ornament of all England', is the subject of yet another book, *The Knight who Invented Champagne* by Stephen Skelton. Stephen is a Master of Wine and an expert commentator on English wine. He had his own vineyard at Tenterden in Kent for 22 years, now known as Chapel Down. Stephen also made wine for Lamberhurst. He has written several books on wine and was won the André Simon Food and Drink Award. Sparkling wine is close to his heart.

This latest book is a devoted and well-researched tome all about Sir Kenelm. The key fact (which has been known about for years) is that in a court case in 1662 challenging glassmaking patents, Digby was named by four glassmakers as the 'inventor' of the wine bottle thirty years before, i.e. in 1632. This is supposed to have happened in Newnham on Severn, a wonderful spot close

to the Forest of Dean which had supplies of coal, very useful for glassmaking. But there is no hard proof. The shape and strength of the wine bottle is crucial. *Verre anglais*, as it was known on the Continent, had to be able to withstand the pressure of fizz, i.e. a full-blown secondary fermentation.

However, I do have a real problem with the title and the first chapter on sparkling wine at Newnham in 1632, which Stephen fully admits is a piece of pure 'invention'. Sir Kenelm was very astute and a scientific experimenter at Gresham's College London, but there is absolutely no proof that he invented champagne. The title is therefore misleading to both the general public and the expert, in place and time. To be sure, Skelton is evoking the sentiments of *Gigi*, but this is a serious historical point. To kick off with a novel approach is very dangerous and detracts from the real meat of the book: glassmaking.

To the best of my knowledge all the real hard-core evidence points towards Herefordshire cider makers in 1632, like Lord Scudamore having the edge on pioneering all the sparkling techniques for secondary fermentation, a method now known as *méthode champenoise* or *méthode traditionnelle*. The first recorded additions of sugar to a bottle-fermented cider being in Oxford in *circa* 1653 (Ralph Austen) and then Somerset (Rev. John Beale), as well as many references to mantling in Herefordshire in the 1650s. So, alas, the first chapter belongs to the realms of fiction, which might well throw the casual reader off the scent. As a device in the light of overwhelming evidence from the cider world I am afraid it does not stand up. Having said that, Skelton has produced a fine work about Sir Kenelm with some concise and useful information about the all important art of glassmaking. Make your own mind up. Digby was quite a man. Venetia knew that only too well. Raise a glass to Venetia, painted on her death-bed by Sir Anthony Van Dyk in 1633.

James Crowden

Norman Kolpas : *Foie Gras: A Global History*: Reaktion Books, 2021: 152 pp., hardback, £11.99.

Foie gras enthusiasts will love Norman Kolpas' latest book; its opponents, however, will find it is not as balanced as it sets out to be. The latest in Reaktion Books' Edible Series, *Foie Gras: A Global History* traces the controversial delicacy from its Egyptian origins to its varied uses in modern cuisine. From the French for 'fatty liver', *foie gras* has long been the subject of intense criticism due to the deliberate fattening of the ducks or geese from which it comes. While Kolpas acknowledges the concerns of activists, they are quickly dismissed and the anti-*foie gras* movement is portrayed as Hollywood luvvies and hysterical sensationalists. Nevertheless, the book offers a fascinating insight into the origins and evolution of the food and how its cultural significance has shifted throughout history.

Kolpas begins by tracing the production of *foie gras* from the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece and Rome through the medieval Jewish diaspora