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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

to early-modern French *haute cuisine*. He goes on to detail the astonishing modern recipes with attractive illustrations in colour. From deconstructed *foie gras* 'shooters' to ice-cream, crisps and chewing gum, the mind boggles as each concoction becomes more absurd. The chapter on appearances in literature and art is perhaps a little unconvincing – Kolpas can only conjecture its inclusion in Monet's lesser-known version of *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* for instance. The book's support for *foie gras* is evident in the following descriptions of the different ethical and humane modern production methods, and the final chapter on the best methods of choosing and preparing the liver. Kolpas ends by including a selection of recipes, an indication that we are to be convinced by his favourable arguments. This is an engaging and well-researched book, but there is no doubt on which side of the debate it falls.

Matilda Mills

Michael J. Rochford: *Georgian Recipes and Remedies. A Country Lady's Household Handbook*: Pen and Sword History, 2020: 216 pp., paperback, £15.99.

The genealogist and local historian Michael Rochford has previously brought us an account of the family and contents of Nostell Priory, that matchless Georgian pile designed by James Paine not far from Pontefract, in his *Tales from the Big House: Nostell Priory* of two or three years ago. Here, helped along by the pleasing and informative drawings and decorations of Peter Brears and Caroline Rochford, he reproduces the manuscript recipe book of Lady Sabine Winn (1734–1798), the Swiss wife of the fifth baronet, Sir Rowland (they were all Rowlands). Sabine was a feisty lady whose life and correspondence has been mined with interest by various historians (not least Julie Day, whose thesis *Elite Women's Household Management: Yorkshire, 1680–1810* is available for free on the Internet if that enthuses you). This, though, is her receipt book, culinary and medical, with extra input on the medical side from a prized possession of the Rochfords: *The Family Receipt-Book; or, Universal Repository of Useful Knowledge* published in two editions, 1807 and 1815. The recipes are not messed up by modern intrusion, save that the ingredients have been rationalized and tabulated, and there is plenty to whet the whistle or quell stomachic yearnings. Mr Rochford has not gone into the sources of the recipes, i.e. the relationship of the giver to the recorder, although this is often obvious. The Swiss–French background of Lady Sabine leaves a few, but not innumerable marks. The only printed source that figures repeatedly is Mrs Mary Eales. Her little book of preserving and sugarwork may have dated originally from 1718, but there was a much later edition nearer to the time that Lady Winn was making her notes. There is a strong medical showing, perhaps because her ladyship was especially keen on the mountebank Dr Gustavus Katterfelto (see *Wikipedia*), but should you need Mrs Hunter's egg salve for boils or how to use a dry bean to draw a splinter or thorn from any part of the body (there used to be an excellent