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Shaun Hill: *Salt is Essential, and Other Things I Have Learned from 50 Years at the Stove*: Kyle Books, 2017: 192 pp., hardback, £25.00.
A year or two for this to penetrate south Devon, but a book from the chef Shaun Hill is always welcome, in any kitchen. Recipes there are, but more entertaining are the thoughts dropped off the end of a long spoon of deep thoughts that whirr around chef's head as he knocks out another mouclade or Wiener schnitzel. The commentary is almost more rewarding than the instructions, but these are sound, generally feasible, and appetizing. His restaurant, of course, is the best way to experience the style.

Rowley Leigh: *A Long and Messy Business*: Unbound, 2018: 414 pp., hardback, £25.00.
Rowley Leigh's career has taken in working for the Roux brothers (including as chef at Le Poulbot), a great stint at Kensington Place restaurant, then a time of independence at Le Café Anglais in Whiteley's shopping space on Queensway. Along the way he has had an instructive and readable column in the *Financial Times*. He is one of that generation of intelligent British chefs who have made it a pleasure to eat out over the last 40 years. This is an Unbound book, the classy way to self-publish, underwritten by some 500 subscribers. The production is good, the photography by Andy Sewell eloquent, the one drawback being its astonishing weight – my arthritic wrists were barely able to support it: a candidate for that very bourgeois thing, a kitchen lectern. Certainly the recipes, arranged by calendar or season, supported by commentary and contemplations from his *FT* columns, are worth some time in the kitchen on that lectern. Their range is wide – from lobster to mackerel, lots of pasta, all the vegetables you can think of – and the techniques are within most of our capacities. He is as happy telling us how to roast potatoes as he is talking of langoustines and truffles. Excellent stuff.

Barbara Santich: *Wild Asparagus, Wild Strawberries. Two years in France*: Wakefield Press, 2018: 282 pp., paperback, £20.00.
The subtitle gives the game away. In 1978/80, John and Barbara Santich, together with their eighteen-month-old twins, left Australia for France. John had completed his geological PhD and might, if lucky, land a job with some university of other; Barbara was exploring the possibilities of writing about food and seeking to assuage her affection for and curiosity about the country that was their goal. They had plans to move around, to test several waters, although the intention was to remain on the southern side of the -d'oïl/-d'oc divide. And so, in a series of short chapters – often punctuated by simple French recipes such as she sent back to the readers of the *Epicurean* and *Australian Gourmet* (the first she wrote under a pseudonym so she might ride two horses in the same race) – she gives a close and often matter-of-fact account of how the

whole saga unfolded: the landladies, the cookers, the shops (a lot of shops), the social interaction, the foodstuffs, the language and literature and, on occasion, the politics. In the event, John landed a job in the university at Compiègne, east of Paris, and one of the most interesting aspects of the book is the horror felt by Barbara at the northern mists and frosts, in contrast to the sun-drenched Midi (and, of course, Australia). This penetrating grey was to her reflected in the people too, and sometimes in society, making her impression of the south as infused with the romantic and the yearning as was Philip Oyler's account of the Dordogne some thirty years earlier (or indeed Goethe's tales of Italy in his *Journey*). All, however, was mitigated by the proximity of Paris. The book is affecting and instructive. A profitable read.

Lucy Moore: *Lady Fanshawe's Receipt Book. The Life and Times of a Civil War Heroine*: Atlantic Books, 2017: 416 pp., hardback, £20.00.
Lucy Moore has form as an entertaining and well-informed writer: her exposés of low-life Georgian London a worth a look. In this one, she tells of the life and works of Ann Fanshawe, whose receipt book (now reposing at the Wellcome Institute) has often been the subject of learned discourse in these pages, mostly from the pen of David Potter – she may lay claim to the earliest ice-cream recipe, for example. Her life, and her sufferings, exemplify the troubles of seventeenth-century England. Her husband was a staunch Royalist, eminent as a diplomat, impressive as a linguist, but he (and she) suffered greatly from economic tribulations, political buffetings and lack of royal generosity at the end of the game. It is a stirring story and the receipt book, along with her own memoir, take centre stage, reflecting the friendship circle of the compiler, her culinary (and medical) horizons, the influence of foreign parts and travel (not to mention exile), and the place of women in the domestic and the wider world.

Christopher Kissane: *Food, Religion and Communities in Early Modern Europe*: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018: 226 pp., hardback, £85.00.
It gets boring remarking on the high price of academic titles, so I guess I should refrain. But those who can afford this one will be treated to a very pleasing essay on food and the study of history in the opening pages, and then to three case studies, all in their way, religious, that link food to belief-systems and the meaning of the food of one party as seen by their opponents of the other. First up are the culinary practices of Spanish *conversos* in contrast to those who were Christian by birth, as seen by the late-fifteenth-century Inquisition. Then there are the feasts and fast-breakings of Zurich Protestants in the early sixteenth century and Reformers' views of dietary restrictions imposed by the Catholic church. Finally, and most surprisingly, there is investigation of witches in Shetland, in particular their relationship to milk and the dairy (women's work),