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cut into 64 pieces – a guide to its richness. You can bake gingerbread with a variety of sympathetic companions – coconut; honey; maple syrup; marzipan; plum jam or even parsnips! There are firm gingerbread cakes as well as spongy ones, and they keep well. The Parkin Pigs are fun and the Chocolate Orange Gingerbread cookies are delicious – plus I learned that cookie isn't, as I'd presumed, an American word, but from the Dutch 'koekje' meaning 'little cake'.

In conclusion, I spent a very pleasant time with this book. I learned, and enjoyed, a lot. The illustrations are plentiful and the bibliography extensive. Sam Bilton says, 'I hope you will go forth and explore the recipes so that your home can be filled with the comforting waft of sugar and spice.' I did, and it was.

Polly Morrow

Pen Vogler: *Scoff: A History of Food and Class in Britain*: Atlantic Books, 2020: 480 pp., hardback, £20.00.

When I lived and worked in London, it was always good fun to see the locals not know where to place this American on the social ladder. While we definitely have social class structures in the U.S. I never really considered what I called an evening meal, if I ate brown or white bread, or if I hosted a dinner party as a way to tell someone that I was from a middle-class family in Illinois. If I had been able to read *Scoff* before I moved there, it would have helped me to understand a number of oddities, like nut loaf, or my colleagues love of pea and ham soup as well as the entire business of tea.

Vogler's book, *Scoff*, is an in-depth romp through all things food-related, from turkeys and tea through to small plates and almond milk and at times, it reads more like an encyclopedia, compendium or a dictionary, yet, it is grounded in historical research with globules of observation and a few crumbs of personal details thrown in. *Scoff* does several things well. It's thorough and, thankfully, not written by an academic. Vogler's writing feels swift and stripped back and, given the number of topics it covers there is little room for flourish. It is so well researched. She not only uses historical facts as a reference but includes literary ones as well like Charles Dickens and Jane Austen.

There are a couple of issues. First, there is just so much! Some chapters have been reduced to only a few pages and it makes me think that there are entire sections that could be cut altogether. In a book like this, each chapter should push forward the general thesis and support the notion that English food and social class is complex and that it fluctuates. Could we not do without a chapter on Parmentier Potatoes or jelly, then? While the book is definitely a unique and important contribution, I couldn't help but find it all rather dull to read. Good writing isn't necessarily engaging writing, and Vogler is a keen wordsmith, but as someone who has read a number of books about food, society, class and status, few of them stand out as one I want to revisit. *Scoff* is perhaps best utilized as a dinner party guide for when you argue about the origin of the dinner party.

I was reminded of the anthropologist Kate Fox's book *Watching the English*. A good portion of that book covers English food and social structures, class, and

dining. Fox frames her ideas around "rules" based on her own observations and her Englishness. They make a nice duo for anyone who wishes to understand the very complicated social and class structure centred on English food. But what both Vogler's book and Fox's book miss is perhaps an even more fascinating discussion of Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish food. In *Scoff*, Wales is only mentioned twice, both about breakfast - surely there is more to it than that?

To me, the most engaging sections that support the idea of social class centred around food have more to do with etiquette and dining itself. It's in looking closely at etiquette and rituals where we can see how trends passed through social classes. They do more to advance the class particulars than talking about gravy or ice cream (although those are both quite interesting in their own right). For example, who knew that the upper classes served white bread rolls at their dinner parties and that a defining form of etiquette was 'whether you knew to work your way through your roll piece by piece, buttering each piece before eating it, rather than slicing the whole thing before buttering it all, as if you had only encountered slice from a loaf'. It's hard to know how many people still consider these things to be in poor taste or not polite, certainly, there is still a group of upper-class people who rely on the rituals of food and dining to separate themselves. But like a lot of rituals that have been displaced by technology, lack of time or just a mere dis-interest, who knows how long they will last.

Finally, any future immigrant or traveller to the United Kingdom trying to figure out why everyone eats a sandwich at lunch or what to call the evening meal should be handed a copy of this book at their port of entry. It will serve them well.

Jesse Dart

Sally Grainger: *The Story of Garum: Fermented Fish Sauce and Salted Fish in the Ancient World*: Routledge, 2021: 301 pp., hardback, £120.00.
Executive summary: Damned expensive and not really copy-edited. But buy it anyway and start reading. It will be making excellent sense by the time you reach page 60 and, believe me, it will get better and better from then on.

Sally, as Oxford Symposium regulars and *PPC* readers will know, is an ancient Roman cook. She is celebrated for her edition and translation of *Apicius* (jointly with Chris Grocock) which replaces all others and which no scholar or historical cook can afford to ignore. She is equally famous for her work in reconstruction archaeology, specifically the recreation of ancient foods, and for her many Roman banquets, in locations as varied and prestigious as the Institut Bocuse in Lyon and the Getty Villa in Raymond Chandler country.

The Roman fish sauces, to which the two names *garum* and *liquamen* belong, are Sally's life work. Her book examines the evidence for them from all angles: recipes and culinary texts, medical prescriptions, literary references, the rapidly multiplying archaeological finds, and observation and research of the flourishing Southeast Asian fish sauce tradition. Sally can deal with all of this material as, perhaps, no one else can. There is another angle that she certainly does not forget: the experimental recreation of ancient sauces, bringing together all that the