

## A GRIEVOUS ERROR

In the last issue, I published a rejoinder to A.R.T. Kemasang's piece 'The Egg in European Diet' which appeared in *PPC* 115. I stated there that the rejoinder's author was Barbara Santich. It was not. It was Gilly Lehmann. I apologize to both of them for this misattribution. However, I note Barbara Santich commented that she agreed with everything it contained. Dr Kemasang's response will be printed in the next issue.

## I.E.H.C.A., JUNE and DECEMBER 2021

I have received the following announcement: 'Due to the unfolding Covid-19 epidemic the IEHCA informs that, quite exceptionally, the Sixth International Convention on Food and Drink Studies will be hosted exclusively in an online mode and will be held the week of 31 May to 4 June, 2021. In an equally exceptional way the call for contributions will be limited to fully developed panels and roundtables. This time around individual papers will not be allowed. Please consider the present message as a "save the date" call. It will be followed shortly by a proper call for contributions.'

I have also received an announcement of a forthcoming conference in December: 'Dietary choices, instructions, and precepts – A multidisciplinary approach', Tours, 2–4 December 2021. The call for papers expires in mid-November, but full details may be obtained from their website or by contacting Loïc Bienassis <[loic.bienassis@iehca.eu](mailto:loic.bienassis@iehca.eu)>.

## OXFORD SYMPOSIUM, 2021

The call for papers and announcement of registration will take place sometime before Christmas 2020, but meanwhile, I post this message from the Symposium website just so you can keep your diaries up to date. 'As Trustees and organizers of the Oxford Food Symposium, we're aiming to be back in Oxford for our usual high-octane weekend at St Catz in 2021, our 40th anniversary, if circumstances allow. Meanwhile, we're delighted to report on an astonishingly creative and invigorating 2020 V-Symp, memories of which can be found at <<https://www.oxfordsymposium.org.uk/2020-herbs-and-spices/>>. So while it may be possible to hold a physical Symposium on the subject of Food & Imagination July 9–11 next year, at the time of writing (Aug. 2020), we can but imagine what form this will take.'

## SOPHIE COE PRIZE, 2020 and 2021

Another date for your diaries is the schedule for next year's Sophie Coe Prize. Full details can be found at <<https://sophiecoeprize.wordpress.com/>>. The winners of the 2020 Prize have been announced and I give the summary report

posted on the Internet below. I am pleased that we are able to publish Vicky Hayward's specially commended essay in this issue and that we are going to have Susanne Belovari's winning contribution in the next. Both are peerless examples of the form.

The Committee's report reads as follows: 'We are delighted to announce that the winner of the 2020 Sophie Coe Prize is Susanne Belovari, for her paper, "The Viennese Cuisine before Hitler – 'One Cuisine in the use of Two Nations'". The judges commented on "the thoroughness, elegance, and originality of Belovari's analysis of *Wiener Küche...*" as well as her extensive use of notes "to keep her narrative clean while at the same time sharing the depth and subtlety of her underlying research." They concluded that "Belovari's essay, twenty years in the making, emerges from its long gestation as a powerful work of culinary history, an extraordinary example of how the study of food can pose fundamental questions about the workings of the human heart." We are delighted to award her this year's prize of £1,500.

'There were seventy (70!) essays entered into the competition this year, a record for the Sophie Coe Prize. The judges commented on several other papers from this year's submissions, and commended them all for different reasons. We heartily congratulate them all.

'First, the Judges commented on the general lack of work on the food of the powerless, and called out for particular attention Markéta Slavková's "Starving Srebrenica and the Recipes for Survival in the Bosnian War (1992–1995)" and Ayfer Erkul's "Food refusal as a protest tool. Hunger strikes in Belgian prisons during the interwar period."

'Next, they commented on the use of archaeobotany and experimental archaeology to solve basic, previously unsatisfactorily answered, questions of culinary history. Adeline Bats' "The Production of Bread in Conical Moulds at the Beginning of the Middle Kingdom. The Contribution of Experimental Archaeology" and Mennat-Allah El Dorry's "Forbidden, Sprouted, Stewed: An Archaeobotanical and Historical Overview of Fava Beans in Ancient Egypt" were singled out for particular praise on this front.

'Finally, there were numerous more traditional essays on culinary history, with the following bringing "valuable insights to their studies" and being a pleasure to read: Rebecca Earle's "Potatoes and the pursuit of Happiness"; Vicky Hayward's "And in the morning the cook... shall go to his kitchen": Juan Altamiras' *New Art of Cookery*, and its Defining Influence on Modern Spanish Cooking"; Fanny Louvier's "Maid in the Kitchen: Female Domestic Servants and Food Businesses in France, 1900–1939"; Helen Pfeifer's "The Gulper and the Slurper: a Lexicon of Mistakes to Avoid While Eating with Ottoman Gentlemen"; and Simon Werrett's "Physics and Fruitcakes: Food Thrift and Experiment in the Early Modern".'

## †PETER GRAHAM

It is with great regret that I report the death of Peter Graham, the author of *Mourjou* which Prospect reissued in 2004, it having been first published by Viking in 1998. Peter was also a contributor to *PPC* for many years (his early essay on stockfish being reworked by him and receiving a prestigious award in Paris only a year or two ago), and we have kept you posted on his most recent foray on to the Internet with his Chez Gram website containing many instructive and enjoyable posts on various aspects of food and cookery, <<https://chez-gram.com/>>. I print here my obituary which was published in the *Guardian*:

‘Peter Graham, who has died at the age of 80, was a writer on film and on food who lived the largest part of his life in France, at first in Paris and its region and then, for the last thirty-odd years, in a small village in the Auvergne. He has been dubbed ‘the thinking-man’s Peter Mayle,’ and certainly his book about his neighbours’ cookery, *Mourjou, the Life and Food of an Auvergne Village* (1998), is every bit as seductive as the works of his more celebrated compatriot. His work on film has also earned many plaudits. He was an eloquent advocate of French *nouvelle vague* cinema in his university days, indeed his first published book was titled *The Abortive Renaissance, Why Are Good British Films So Bad?* (1963). His wide-ranging collection, *The New Wave, Critical Landmarks* (1968), has now undergone two re-editions (with Ginette Vincendeau).

‘*Mourjou* is constructed category by category as a conventional cookery book, but you soon become aware that it is really an account of two decades of living in a shrinking village in the centre of France (down from 1,100 inhabitants in 1850 to 300 today). Peter was soon on visiting terms with many of his neighbours – visiting as in sharing their tables, experiencing quite surprising examples of Auvergnat cooking. “I’ve got something for you,” said Jeanne Chabut as he passed by her door one morning. The “something” was a plate of coagulated blood from a chicken she had just killed, mixed with chopped onions, which was to be fried, flipped over and fried again. “It was very tasty,” he reports, “and had a curious, almost rubbery, texture reminiscent of overcooked crème caramel.”

‘Not all his dishes are as outré, but they are studiously authentic and involved both plenty of local interaction and a determined sampling of virtually every proper restaurant within 20 kilometres. It is a book replete with local colour, served with gentle but consistent scholarship.

‘Peter was proud of his Scottish origins, but was born in Newbury, Berkshire. He grew up in London, where his father, Richard Graham, was a copywriter and his mother, Anne (née Scratchley), had been a ballet dancer. After attending University College school, Hampstead, he went to King’s

College, Cambridge, where he studied classics. He claims to have been offered an academic prospect but he was active in criticism and student journalism and an editor of *Granta* in 1961–2 as well as producing a film about students, *A Shilling Life*, with cameos from Stephen Frears and the late *Guardian* journalist and campaigner Richard Boston.

‘His enthusiasm for film had been sparked by his French godmother, the producer Blulette Christin-Falaize who, when he was only nine years old, had got him to play a juvenile milord in her *Au revoir monsieur Grock*, a biopic of the great clown. And it was to Paris he migrated soon after university. Although he made a film about Edith Piaf in 1968 and a short in 1971 depicting the slaughter of hand-reared pheasants in the Sologne (*Grand Meaulnes* country) filmed by the Polish director Walerian Borowczyk, his career turned to words, not images: teaching English, translating, and journalism about film for English audiences. Early in this period he issued his *Dictionary of the Cinema* (1964).

‘By an insensible shift, his subjects moved from film towards food, his other love. He began writing about food and cookery for the *International Herald Tribune*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Guardian* during the 1970s, eventually editing the *International Herald Tribune Guide to Business Travel and Entertainment* and contributing large chunks of text to the *American Express Pocket Guide to Paris*. For *Guardian Weekly* Peter chose and translated articles from *Le Monde*, and while the emphasis was on political coverage his enthusiasm for pieces about culture and the arts shone through.

‘After a long period of travelling and tasting, he decided to change the rhythm of his life by moving away from Paris and into deepest France. In 1978 he bought a former café and grocer’s shop in Mourjou with a large-enough room for his grand piano, harpsichord and euphonium (he was a talented musician as familiar with Scarlatti as Fats Waller). From that base, and with the support of a welcoming host community, he soon settled in and pursued larger projects. The first was a translation of Jacques Médecin’s recipe book, issued as *Cuisine Niçoise: Recipes from a Mediterranean Kitchen* in 1983. He followed it with *Classic Cheese Cookery* in 1988, winning the André Simon Memorial Prize for the best food book of the year. It was then ten years before he produced his final work, on Mourjou itself. His writing was again acknowledged in 2019 when he won first prize for the best article on a gastronomic subject (written in a language other than French) organized by the state-funded tourist agency, Atout France. The subject was stockfish, unsalted wind-dried cod.

‘All this work shows limitless enthusiasm for eating, a sensitive and intelligent palate, a wide base of reading and an enlightened curiosity about the meaning of words – and there are none more confusing than names of dishes, particularly when dealing with French dialect, Occitan, Provençal and Ligurian Italian. His recipes, too, are eminently do-able.

‘Mourjou is surrounded by groves of sweet chestnuts, an important source

of food when Auvergne was dirt poor and overpopulated. Now, they are the focus of green tourism and the October chestnut festival brings thousands to the village. It is a measure of Peter's integration in the village, and the respect and affection in which he was held, that he was nominated Grand Master of the Chestnut Confraternity and that a chestnut museum – the Maison de la Châtaigne – has been created in a barn that once belonged to him.

'He remained in the village for all his days, his life enlivened by a stream of friends from Britain and the wider world, the *Amicale de Mourjou* they called themselves, who found a welcome table, an inexhaustible cellar, much splendid music and long walks, and a perceptive host.

'He is survived by his sister Elizabeth, a niece, Sarah, and two nephews, Adrian and Siy.

'Peter John Graham, author, born 8 December 1939; died 6 July 2020.'

Peter was a most persuasive and successful agent for his own work, ensuring his three enduring cookery books remained in print until the end, Grub Street doing the honours for his cheese book and his translation of Jacques Médecin. I could, of course, have never written even the short obituary notice printed above, had I not had the help of Peter's friends in Britain, many of whom had shared time and experiences with him in France and many of whom, too, dated back to his days in Cambridge. The whole process of winding down from a death, usually concentrated in the funeral and the wake, was extended and in a sense universalized thanks to Covid-19. Although myself knowing Peter but fleetingly, I was thus allowed to read a whole series of emails, with accompanying photographs, revisiting Peter's life, his delight in his dwelling-place, his boundless hospitality, his various ups and downs. It has been a tantalizing experience. Amateurs of film are urged to have a look at Peter's two short films available on the Internet. The first about students at Cambridge, *A Shilling Life*, can be found on the University of East Anglia's East Anglian Film Archive website (<<http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/1733>>). The annotations are very helpful. It is a grand measure of the impact of new-wave European cinema on English sensibilities. The second, about shooting pheasants in the Sologne, can be viewed at this address: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F A6PwkRDDUA&feature=youtu.be>>. This film was made at Ligny-le-Ribault, Peter's first country bolthole south of Orléans where he occupied a former gamekeeper's cottage. One of his friends commented that 'locals took offence at his satire on the weekend shooters from Paris who killed for pleasure the pheasants and partridges reared for the purpose. The local economy was at stake. And it was then that the burglaries of Peter's house started when he was away from home. His wine especially seemed to be a target of the thefts. To frustrate this, Peter took to burying his best bottles in the sandy floor of the lean-to garage beneath his awesomely wide Citroën Familiale. This did the trick.'

## HONEY FROM A WEED

They always say that the old ones are the good ones and further evidence of this is that the manager of the London Review Bookshop (after John Sandoe, one of London's best) has described Patience Gray's masterpiece in his latest general circular as 'The best cookery book in the shop.' A man of discrimination.

## SPITTS AND TREDDDES

I have been in correspondence with Barbara Tearle, the editor of *The Accounts of the Guild of the Holy Trinity, Luton 1526/7–1546/7* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 2012), who seeks help in identifying a piece of cooking equipment used in the Tudor and early Stuart period. This request arises from a project to transcribe probate inventories in Bedfordshire in this period. Inventories were made at the death of a person as part of the probate process. They listed a person's goods and their value and were used to provide a valuation of their estate. Many inventories give a room-by-room listing of the contents of the person's home. The word *tredde* (and variant spellings) occurs in the context of spits, cobirons and other fire-irons usually found in the kitchen or room used for cooking. In this context, it does not figure in the *Oxford English Dictionary* nor any of the standard glossaries and dictionaries. 'Consultation with specialists has reached no conclusive identification of the term,' writes Ms Tearle. 'I am grateful for the interesting correspondence with Professor Sayers of Cornell University about the origin of the word. He has pointed out the similarity with treadles used in looms and the connection with foot-operated mechanisms. The detailed descriptions of cooking apparatus in Peter Brears' *Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Early Stuart England* does not, however, include anything that would fit this bill nor explain the word. Probably it was a local dialect word for a piece of equipment normally known by a different term. My current thinking is that it might be the wheel for a turnspit or turnbroach, and this is supported by the scarcity of those terms in these inventories. Without evidence, any explanation is speculation. Has anyone encountered the term with sufficient surrounding detail for conclusive identification? Help would be much appreciated and acknowledged in the collection of inventories being prepared for publication by the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society.' The contexts in which the word occurs in the 400 inventories Ms Tearle has been working on are given below:

1558: Item In the kechyng a knedyng trought with other Impleme[n]tes and with a spett cobyornes pott hockes and a trede – 5s.

1569: (in the hall and kitchen) Item iij spyttes a payr of CobbeIernes a fryng panne ij Treddes & the potte hangelles – 6s. 8d.

1574: (in the hall) Item ij tredes ij spyttes one peer of tonges one grydyron one peere of pott hangynges – 10s.

- 1580: (in the kitchen) Item iij spittes a paire of cobirons, ij paire of pothookes ij pot hangers a grediron, & a tredde – 5s.
- 1583: (in the kitchen) ...iij speates bellowes a fyre pan pothangyns, a treadde, a chafindyshe an Iron barre, poothockes, grydIron, Cobbelrons ...
- 1594: (in the nether house) Item a spitt a paire of Cobirons a tred, a grydiron, potthoks & the hanging – 5s.
- 1596: (in the kitchen) Item on copper a mashing fatt certaine tubs iij spetes a paire of Rakes iij dripping pan[n]es a tred a gridiron & other implementes – £4.
- 1611: (in the hall) Item twoo stooles a spitte a tredde a paire of pothangers a side table a Cheare and a Forme – 5s.
- 1611: (in the hall) Item the pott hookes & hangers a paire of Andirons a paire of tonges a paire of bellowes a spitt a tredd & a grediron prise – 6s. 8d.
- 1611: (in the kitchen) ... iij Spittes iij dripping pannes A paire of Racks a Tread a Scum[m]er A mouldinge ...
- 1614: (in the kitchen) Imprimis vij pans iij Cettells ix Brasse potts iiij Spitts iij Tredds a Casse ij Troffes & other Implements – £6 13s. 4d.
- 1625: (no room context) Item the Come of iorn and a mattocke a payre of tonges and 2 treads and the pothangles A bile and A hatchatt – 13s.

Ms Tearle may be reached at <barbara@tearle.free-online.co.uk>

## THE SIFTER

This is a new website <<https://thesifter.org>> which is built around Barbara Ketcham Wheaton's legendary database of recipes in early cookery books. The deity shedding light on all she surveys is Barbara Wheaton herself, but she is helped by what is called 'an advisory board of rotating members from the Oxford Symposium' (currently Ursula Heinzelmann, Cathy Kaufman, Katherine McIver and Richard Shepro) as well as her daughter and son (who have made digital sense of Barbara's initial data). I counsel a visit to the site, which is difficult to summarize. There is indeed a searchable database of recipes and authors, but I was unable to discover what happened after you located either of those two datapoints. Perhaps the site will develop as people pitch in with their own contributions.