

†JOOP WITTEVEEN

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Joop Witteveen, a distinguished contributor to *PPC* in its early years, perhaps best remembered for his articles on swans, cranes and herons in issues 24 and 25. Cathy Salzman has very kindly translated the obituary by Janneke Vreugdenhil published in the *NRC Handelsblad* on 2 July 2016: ‘When studying culinary history, the most important thing according to Joop Witteveen, was to have the correct perspective. Cookbooks were written for the élite. You seldom found in them what normal people ate. Take for example the potato. It was introduced in our country in the middle of the eighteenth century and in élite circles adopted as a delicacy. But before the end of the century the very same potato had replaced rye as staple for farmers and workers. They boiled them in their skins until they were almost cooked through, after which they peeled them and continued cooking them in milk and water with mace until there was a kind of sludge.

‘Those were the kinds of things that Witteveen liked to find out about. The culinary historian passed away on 13 June at the age of 88. His nickname became Mr. Potato after he gave a talk about potatoes at the Oxford Symposium on Food in 1982. The size of his collection of cookbooks and gastronomic literature was only equalled by that of his friend Johannes van Dam. In addition to his library, which has more than 4000 books, he left countless boxes with things having to do with cookery: articles, brochures, newspaper cuttings, recipes. When his partner Bart Cuperus passes away all this will become the property of the Special Collections of the University of Amsterdam. “Joop was a conscientious collector,” Cuperus says. He and Witteveen met in the spring of 1952 and within six months they were living together. For something like that you needed to have a thick skin. For two men living together the rent was cold-bloodedly doubled. “We had to save the whole year in order to be able to travel around France by motorcycle with a little tent. Everything had to be as cheap as possible, but we did eat well. Joop knew exactly where we had to be.”

‘For example, when the two of them arrived at Troisgros in Roanne, they stopped just before arriving at the parking area to put on nice shirts. “We didn’t only go to restaurants with Michelin stars. Joop knew you should always try the places where you saw students or soldiers going in.” Joop was also a good cook. Never, despite his immense collection, did he cook from a book. Cuperus: “He made things up himself. ‘I’m not crazy about other people’s recipes’, he always said.”

‘Witteveen’s interest in food began in the hunger winter of 1944–5. Every day they needed food for father, mother, eight children and a large number of people hiding from the German authorities. The school in the Frisian village of Bleuhus was closed. There was plenty of time to help in the kitchen. After the war he started collecting cookbooks. From 1953 he worked for the antiquarian bookshop Asher & Company, where he could buy them inexpensively. In the 1970s he started his own reprint publisher, Linneaus Press.

‘In the early ’80s he started participating in the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, organized by food writer Alan Davidson. He gave presentations on the potato, on table decorations in sugar, on stockfish, rye and other subjects. Many of his articles were published in Davidson’s journal *Petits Propos Culinaires*, including a series on the culinary aspects of large birds, like the swan, the peacock, the heron and the crane.

‘At about that time he met Johannes van Dam. In that culinary journalist he discovered a kindred spirit. “The first person who really knew something on the subject.” This resulted in a friendship and collaboration that lasted many years. They put together an exhibit of cookbooks at the Royal Library in The Hague. There was a big exhibition at the University of Amsterdam called *Cooks and Kitchen-maids*. And they set up the Foundation Gastronomic Library, in which their cookbooks and other culinary publications were concentrated.

‘Garrelt Verhoeven, the former chief conservator of Special Collections at the University of Amsterdam: “It was clear that this collection should be made available for scientific study.” In 2006, after extensive negotiations, he got the agreement of “the gentlemen” that their legacy would go to the Special Collections. Verhoeven: “We had to promise to see to it that in the Netherlands there would be serious attention for culinary history. An international symposium like that in Oxford seemed like a good idea.” And that symposium was held, in 2012. Just as the Joop Witteveen Prize, awarded every year to an author who had made an important contribution to the culinary historiography of the Low Countries. Witteveen himself probably made the most important contribution, the *Bibliotheca Gastronomica* (Library of Gastronomy): two big red volumes in which he put on record and described 6500 gastronomic publications. Whoever wants to find out about the potato only has to open it to find the correct sources.’

UNBOUND BOOKS AND CROWD-FUNDING

I recently received an invitation to contribute towards the crowd-funding of a new book by Rowley Leigh called *A Long and Messy Business*, drawing on his columns in the *Financial Times* over the last five years, offering 120 recipes as well as essays on ingredients and techniques. All this to be illustrated by photographs from Andy Sewell. The people who put the proposal together, who are indeed the publishers, are Unbound Books (<https://unbound.com/>) an arm of United Authors Publishing Ltd, founded in 2010 by the founder of the TV quiz *QI* John Mitchison, historian (pre-eminently for TV and film) Justin Pollard, and former deputy editor of *The Idler* Dan Kieran. In terms of fame and fortune, their most celebrated title so far has been Paul Kingsnorth’s novel *The Wake*. Among their current food-related schemes are Nicholas Lander’s book about menus *On the Menu* (which appears in November), Matthew

Fort's next book of Italian travels, this time on the islands off Italy, an 'anti-cookbook' from Jonathan Meades, and two books from Tamasin Day-Lewis. People subscribe, getting a carefully graded goody depending on the size of contribution, the total is reached, the book appears. Now, it would seem, Penguin have agreed to distribute the books in the United Kingdom. So, if you have an impossible dream, hie yourselves to Unbound.

FOUNDLING HOSPITAL

This autumn and winter sees an exhibition on the food given to children in the care of the Foundling Hospital in Brunswick Square, London (until 8 January, 2017). The curator of the show is Jane Levi. To quote the publicity, '*Feeding the 400* explodes myths and misconceptions around eating at the Hospital, demonstrating how the institution's food choices were far more than just questions of economy, nutrition and health. Working with historians, scientists and cultural practitioners, the exhibition brings alive the connections between what, when, where and why the foundlings ate what they ate; the beliefs and science that underpinned these decisions; and their physiological and psychological effects.' Her research has already uncovered a 'great milk scandal' where the Hospital was paying for full-cream but getting only skimmed for at least fifty years. Thomas Coram's foundation has always been a place to visit for its art, now pay homage to its feeding arrangements.

OXFORD SYMPOSIUM ON FOOD & COOKERY 2017

A reminder that details of next year's Symposium are now available online. I quote from a recent circular from the chairman, Bee Wilson: 'If you're thinking about next year already, a reminder that the topic is Food and Landscape. "Through foods, we imagine we are consuming places; such is the poetry of terroir...The foods we choose to eat do not merely reflect landscape but shape it." Read more about 2017's topic here: <http://www.oxfordsymposium.org.uk/this-year/topic/>.' Booking opens in December, and the dates to note are 7–9 July 2017. Landscape promises to be an extremely rich topic and we anticipate that it will be oversubscribed.

MENU FRETIN

This is a small French publishing house, founded in Chartres by Anne-Claire and Laurent Seminel in 2006, which specializes in food history. Laurent Seminel was the co-founder of the review *Omnivore*. Their website is <http://www.menufretin.fr/la-maison-dedition/>. Their list includes republications of Grimod de la Reynière, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Alexandre Dumas, Balzac, Escoffier, Carême, Suzanne (on English puddings), Pomiane (*Radio Cuisine*), and Victor Borie; a series of short texts drawn from people like Gauthier,

Cadet de Vaux, Monselet and Parmentier; as well as some modern works such as conversations with Anne-Sophie Pic, a study of the Michelin guide and gastronomic guides to London and Tokyo. Well worth supporting.

AUSTRALIAN SYMPOSIUM OF GASTRONOMY

Too late for an advance notice, but worth recording in case you need to follow up on the topic, I quote the release: ‘The 21st Symposium of Australian Gastronomy will be celebrated in Melbourne, Australia, from Friday 2 to Monday 5 December 2016. At this coming-of-age gathering of gastronomic scholars, writers and practitioners, we are looking with hope towards bright food futures with our guiding theme of “Utopian Appetites”. The year 2016 also marks five centuries since the publication of Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516). With its founding principles of desire, order, justice and hope, utopia offers a framework to think about gastronomy as both an imaginary ideal and a realizable goal for the future.

‘In true symposium tradition, chefs and cooks, writers, fishermen, sommeliers, winemakers, artists and scholars come together to explore the real, ideal and imagined contexts of utopian appetites – considered from historical, cultural, aesthetic, political, ideological, social, nutritional, environmental, religious, agricultural and philosophical perspectives. ... Confirmed keynote speakers include: Darra Goldstein, Robert Appelbaum, Barbara Santich, David Szanto, Stephanie Alexander, Claude Fischler, and Jane Levi. Follow the links on <http://www.gastronomers.net/>.

JANE GRIGSON AWARD 2017

I think that we failed to alert you to the expiry of the deadline for the 2017 Award which was 31 October. However, this may be an opportunity to mark in your diaries for 2017 that the deadline for the next year after that will be on that day too. The judges for the 2017 Award are Geraldene Holt, Henrietta Green, Felicity Cloake, Matthew Fort and Diana Henry.

THE MUMMY!

I have been reading *Letters of a Dead Man*, the translation of the original German text of the reports home of Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau to his divorced wife while he was on an expedition to Britain in 1826–9 fishing for a new spouse who would contribute her wealth to their tottering finances. The divorce was a cunning ruse but an essential preliminary to the venture, which ended in failure. However, the literary consequence, these letters, was a fantastic success which allowed the now-reunited couple to carry on regardless. The present book is handsomely illustrated, clearly translated and edited by Linda B. Parshall, and weightily published by Harvard as one of the Dumbarton Oaks Texts in Garden and Landscape Studies (£59.95; the Prince was a wizard

landscape gardener). Inspecting this volume in bed will cause physical injury: it requires a lectern. Many of you will be familiar with a single-volume digest of his writing on English society, replete with excellent descriptions of dining, dancing and the season. This complete edition will supply much description of parks and landscapes, and not a little contemplation of life in general – which may or may not be to your taste. Certainly, the over-arching message that Britain in the 1820s was to a Prussian much as the expansive and arising United States was to become to the relatively impoverished inhabitants of Europe provokes much thought today.

But this is by way of marginal comment, included only because it was in these pages that I found reference to a novel appearing at the time, *The Mummy!: Or a Tale of the Twenty-Second Century* (1827), by Jane Webb (later Jane C. Loudon, 1807–1858). It's a cracker. Borrowing a little from *Frankenstein* (but the mummy galvanized into life is that of the pharaoh Cheops), it is chiefly good value for its projections of life in the future. Although she was young, her imaginative proposals were brilliant. My favourite is her suggestion for air travel. Everyone went by balloon. If they wanted to go a long way, then they whooshed up beyond the upper atmosphere, waited for the earth to turn on its axis, then plummeted down to their destination. One of her other suggestions concerned a steam plough. This attracted the notice of the gardening writer John Claudius Loudon who first interviewed, then married her. The result was that she too became a major horticultural writer, inspiring, I am sure, the work of my French lady Cora Millet-Robinet whose own horticultural pages depend greatly on J.C. Loudon's encyclopaedias. Again, all this is marginal comment before the main course, which is her idea of diet in the year 2200. It could be suggested that her social reversal of the liking for plain or fancy food anticipates our middle classes' embrace of wholemeal bread and country cooking. But perhaps one should not strain the sinews of interpretation too far and merely delight in the conceit. I quote from Chapter 8 of the novel. Mrs Russel is the duke's housekeeper, Mr Abelard, the steward.

The journey of the duke and his party to London had nothing in it to distinguish it from hundreds of other journeys, they did not meet with a single adventure worthy of being recorded; and they arrived in perfect safety at the palace of the duke, which was situated in the Strand, (that being, as we have before stated, in those days the most fashionable part of London,) and had beautiful gardens shelving down to the Thames.

The duke had brought all his establishment to town; and it would be difficult to conceive any one in a greater bustle than the worthy Mrs. Russel for several days after their arrival. The tender Abelard could not find her at liberty for a single moment, to listen to his poetical effusions.

One day, however, having been, as he conceived, particularly happy, he determined to make himself heard. He accordingly waited upon the fair Eloisa, whom he found busily employed in giving directions to the servants.

“Mrs. Russel!” sighed he, in love’s softest cadence; but Mrs. Russel heard him not; she was talking to the cook. “You must quite alter your style, Angelina,” said she, “remember, nothing can be too plain for great people. Fricasees and ragouts are only devoured by the *canaille*.”

“I am instructed of that, Ma’am,” replied Angelina, a great, fat, bonny-looking cook, – “but I flatter myself I know how to concoct dishes – –”

“That is the very thing you must avoid,” interrupted Mrs. Russel, “any thing did for the country, but here the case is different: the duke’s rank requires a certain degree of style, for it is the fashion now for great people to have only one dish, and that as plainly cooked as possible. I have been told by a friend of mine, who got a peep at the great dinner the Queen gave the other day to the foreign ambassadors, that there was nothing in the world upon the table, but a huge round of boiled beef, and a great dish of smoking potatoes, with their jackets on.”

“Well, Ma’am,” returned Angelina, “I will rally both my physical and mental energies to afford you all the satisfaction in my power; notwithstanding which, I am free to confess, that, in my opinion, the gastronomic science is now cruelly neglected, and that I do not think the digestive powers of the stomach can be properly excited from their dormant state by such unstimulating food as that you mention. Besides, the muscular force of the stomach must be strained to decompose such solid viands, and I should think the diaphragm seriously injured – –”

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“Mrs. Russel!” cried Abelard, venturing to sigh a little louder.

“Oh, Mr. Abelard!” exclaimed the fair Eloisa, with a pretty affectation of confusion, “how you startled me! I declare you made me raise the adnatae of my visual organs, like one of the anas genus when the clouds are charged with electric fluid, whilst my heart leaped from its transverse position on my diaphragm, and seemed to stick like a great bone right across my oesophagus.”

“How wretched I am to have occasioned fears in that lovely bosom. Hem, hem! might I hope to be indulged with a short interview.”

“In a moment, dear Mr. Abelard! I will attend to you; I will but just finish my directions. The duke, you know, gives a grand dinner today, and my heart palpitates in my bosom with fear lest I should commit some error. These town-bred people are so particular.”

“*You* need not fear any scrutiny.”

“La, Mr. Abelard! Eustace!” addressing the butler, “mind you must take care not to bring any variety of wines to the table: nothing is drunk now but port and sherry, and even they are going out of fashion. Have plenty of strong ale, however, and porter, for they are now reckoned the most elegant liquors for the ladies.”

“I shall do my utmost endeavour to obey your injunctions, Madam,” said Eustace, bowing respectfully, “but I cannot imagine that any species of corn, even if it have undergone the vinous fermentation, can produce a liquid so agreeable to the palate, as well as conducive to the sanity of the body, as the juice of the grape.”

PROSPECT BOOKS 2016–17

Catheryn Kilgarriff has announced several new titles for the next few seasons. These include Caroline Conran’s latest, this time about the cookery of south-western France and the Spanish Basque country, called *By the Atlantic* (£17.99). This is out now. Coming next is Joanne O’Connell’s collection of vegan recipes from the 1970s and ’80s, set in their counter-cultural context of communal living and so forth. Called *The Homemade Vegan*, it should be out in October and costs £12.00. In spring/summer next year, Emma Kay’s *Celebrated before Celebrity: A Hastiness of Cooks* (15.00) will appear. It is an account of celebrity chefs before they were so called, as well as others who are not so famous: from Ude to Soyer, George Washington’s chef, Amelia Simmons and George Speck, credited with the invention of the potato chip. Josh Sutton, whose *Food Worth Fighting for* has already appeared, is following this up with a book about outdoor ovens across the world, *Outdoor Ovens* will cost £12.00. Jane McMorland-Hunter and Sally Hughes join forces to consider *Nuts, Growing and Cooking* (£9.99), and finally Di Murrell, whose pieces in PPC have been so enjoyed, is doing a book *Barges & Bread: Canals & Grain to Bread & Baking* (£12.00) which may sum up her long experience of narrow-boat cookery in all its glories. It is also hoped that my translation of the first volume of Mme Cora Millet-Robinet’s *Maison rustique des dames* (1859 edition), concerned with domestic economy and cookery, will appear under the title *The French Country Housewife*, at a price yet to be determined.

THE OLDEST HOTEL

The city of Exeter suffered the irrecoverable loss by fire of the Royal Clarence Hotel, a largely eighteenth- and nineteenth-century building (though medieval at its core) opposite the west end of the cathedral at the very heart of the town. Local publisher and historian Todd Gray, the city’s spokesman on matters historical, observed that it was possibly the oldest so-called ‘hotel’ in Britain. Wikipedia has conveniently been updated since the fire, so I can quickly

refer to its account of the original construction as an assembly room in 1769 which was described as an *hôtel* by its French manager Pierre Berton in an advertisement of 1770 and which later called itself 'The Hotel' when trading as an inn in the mid-1770s. It was christened the Royal Clarence Hotel in 1827 after a visit from the Duchess of Clarence. An intrepid *Guardian* reader produced an excellent fact for the letters page a day or two after the fire, observing that possibly the earliest so-called hotel was the Gentlemen's Hotel in St James's, advertised in the *London Evening Post* in 1764. An establishment in Bath was hot on its heels, being recorded in 1765. This was all good stuff, but the amusement came later in a *Guardian* piece a week or two later which asked which was indeed the oldest hotel in England: not inn, tavern, hostel, or pilgrims' rest, but 'hotel'. The answers that came, both above and below the electronic line of the Internet offering, paid no attention at all to the specific word 'hotel', concentrating merely on function, not meaning.

FOOD DESIGN & INNOVATION

Brexit may be upon us, but students preferring to study in Europe may have just enough time to enrol in a new course on this subject being offered at the Scuola Politecnica di Design in Milan. As part of its master's programme it is creating a Food Ideas hub. I have no idea myself what all this means but note a couple of things. First, the course is taught in English; second, the course is the fastest growing programme at the SPD and is backed by a host of large food-processing corporations. This may only go to show that the processing of food is an industrial behemoth that grows infinitely, despite anything right-minded people may say about proper materials and home cookery, and that therefore, we are all on the road to Hell. But what is my small voice? Food technology is good, isn't it? No.

TRANSCRIBATHON II

Far more rewarding was an afternoon spent at the screen in the company of a large body of other enthusiasts (about 128 of them), all participating in the Early Modern Recipe Online Collective (EMROC)'s second annual Transcribathon. EMROC is a group of scholars combining to further the availability online of early modern manuscript recipe resources (in the main the movers and shakers are American, but the point of contact for English people is Lisa Smith, Lecturer in Digital History at the University of Essex). The specialisms of the steering committee are largely to do with medicine and gardening rather than cookery, but the kitchen receives plenty of attention in their activities. Lisa Smith described EMROC thus: it 'aims to provide a corpus of transcribed, text encoded, and fully searchable early modern recipe books. This will allow researchers to search across the texts for topics like people,

ingredients, techniques, places, recipes, or ailments, as well as to display the information in a variety of ways. To ensure accuracy, each text is triple-keyed (which means versions by three different transcribers) and then vetted to create a composite fourth version that incorporates the best parts of the others and adds in a layer of more detailed tagging of information. We are close to being able to publish some of our transcriptions online once we have an interface developed. Our model is entirely collaborative, as the use of “collective” in our name might suggest. Many of our transcriptions have come from students in our classrooms, as well as the general public who participate in events like transcribathons. Crucial to our project are two things: mentorship of junior researchers (training and opportunities) and named credit for every contributor.⁷

This Transcribathon was devoted to the medical and culinary MS recipe book of Lady Grace Castleton (1635–1667) compiled before and after her marriage. She was born Grace Bellasis (Belasyse), daughter of Sir Henry, MP for Thirsk, and married George Saunderson, Viscount Castleton (an Irish title) who became MP for Lincolnshire. The manuscript is in the Folger Library and its image was made easily available to all the transcribers, together with a clever piece of software to make the transcription, affording formatting tools and keyboard shortcuts for seventeenth-century abbreviations. A constantly updated list of folios indicated where each logger-on might best direct his or her efforts. The EMROC site (<https://emroc.hypotheses.org>) gives full information about this and other efforts, as well as containing a blog of some interest. I should thank Anthony Lyman-Dixon for alerting me to this. Everyone should get together, electronically at least, and have a transcription party.

I was also interested by Lisa Smith's job description, summoning up a whole new perspective on historical research. She kindly responded to my enquiries in the following terms: ‘My main research interests are gender and medicine in early modern England and France, for which I use digital tools. For example, I'm a founding co-editor of The Recipes Project (recipes.hypotheses.org), through which we've endeavoured to build a community of people, from Wiccans to chefs to scholars, who are interested in the history of recipes. With EMROC, my interest is in domestic medicine, as well the emotional and sensory details of recipes. My own project, The Sloane Letters Project (sloaneletters.com), is an online database of Sir Hans Sloane's correspondence, which provides insight into the lives of his patients, their domestic medical practices and their bodily experiences. For both projects, digital tools offer the possibilities of (for example) text mining for emotions and pain or visualizing social networks. But the use of digital tools to study history is woven through my teaching. For example, my third-year special subject module, The Digital Recipe Book Project, is involved in transcribing online a manuscript belonging to Margaret Baker (for EMROC), blogging about recipe books, and developing a digital

exhibition. We are working virtually alongside Amy Tigner's students at the University of Texas Arlington and Marissa Nicosia's students at Pennsylvania State University.'

BASQUE CHARCUTERIE

An enjoyable evening was spent in Marylebone celebrating the appearance of Caroline Conran's latest book, on the Basque region (see above). I was pleased to meet Patrick Dear, proprietor of Patriana Ltd., who imports Basque charcuterie among other things from France and Spain (mostly piggy; patriana.com). The standard-bearer of Basque pig farming is Pierre Oteiza who, in collaboration with other farmers, saved the Basque pig (the *pie noir*, also called the Kintoa) from near extinction in the 1980s. Now there is a group of 80 people running some 500 adult pigs on a free-range basis (with nose-rings to stop them digging up the pasture) and producing more than 2000 carcasses every year (see the website at <http://en.pierreoteiza.com/l-entreprise/le-porc-basque>). The product has now gained AOC status and I can vouch for the ham, the *chorizo* (seasoned with *piment d'Espelette*) and the *saucisson sec*. These items can be bought from Fortnum & Mason, or from Patrick's own stall in the Goods Shed in Canterbury.

MORE SHEEP PHOTOGRAPHS

The following pages contain more exhibits from Toby Coulson's visit to Allaleigh when we were shearing: this first was the front cover to the last issue.



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