

MICHAEL POLLAN

In the book reviews you will find Tim Harris's enthusiastic notice of Michael Pollan's new book *Cooked*. We were amused to read in the *Guardian* round-up of media reviews of Giles Coren's slightly heterodox opinion of this year's great guru of food. Michael Pollan is a professor of journalism. His books are part of that great American tradition of non-fiction writing that steers a course between investigation, populism and speculative thought. For many of us, our first encounter with it as teenagers was possibly Vance Packard's *Hidden Persuaders*. Another example I remember fondly is Tracy Kidder's *House*. What marks most of these books is a certain prolixity, as well as a thoroughness in their wanderings around their chosen subject. When it's well done, it is astonishingly instructive, and I for one take my hat off to Pollan's exposé of corn and corn syrup in American processed foods as a great example of a clear objective masterfully executed. However, although Coren is wrong to imply that Pollan is turgid (although I would agree he's somewhat long-winded), he is absolutely bang on the money that Pollan's conclusions are banal in the extreme and if anyone found them arresting or novel, then they must never ever have thought about food or eating before in their lives. From the day you were born it was self-evident that most processed food was filth, and that most food processors were only in it for the money. It was also pretty obvious to anyone with half a brain that if you wished to eat with sense, you ate in moderation and across the full palette of foods available. It really doesn't need five hundred pages.

TWELFTH-CENTURY RECIPES FROM POITOU

I expect quite a few of you will have read in the press about the discovery by researchers from Durham University of a very early group of manuscript recipes in a document once in the hands of the monks of Durham, but now in the library of Sydney Sussex College Cambridge. I give below the text of the communication from Dr Giles Gasper of Durham which describes the material in question. I hope that Prospect Books may be connected with the next stage of this exciting development.

A sequence of culinary recipes from the late twelfth century has been discovered in a manuscript originally from Durham Cathedral Priory,

now part of the collection at Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge (Manuscript 51). Professor Faith Wallis (McGill University, Montreal) made the discovery and has been working on the collection subsequently with Dr Giles Gasper (Durham University). The recipes are sauces for various meats, which the author or compiler states are from the Poitou region. Some ten sauces are included, for meats ranging from chicken, 'hen in winter', beef, duck, pork, ram (presumably a 'wether' or castrated male sheep), lamb, sausage and 'tiny little fish minuti pisculi'. There is also a recipe for conserved ginger, with detailed instructions for preparation: soaking in water, cutting into slices, cooking down with honey, rubbing honey in by hand, and continuing the process with other flavourings including spikenard.

The sauces and conserve emerge (fols. 39r–v) in a section of the manuscript dedicated to medical recipes (fols. 27r–46v) written by a single scribe. The medical recipes preceding the culinary recipes are in broadly head-to-toe order, while those that follow are largely for compound medicines for internal or whole-body disorders. The recipe collection ends half way down fol. 44v, but the same scribe seems to have intended to start a new collection on fol. 45r, with a recipe 'ad uocem clarificandam' (for clearing the voice). There is no indication that the sauces are anything other than culinary in intention. The ginger conserve has culinary relations in later medieval cooking, but bears close resemblance also to medicinal recipes for digestifs and aphrodisiacs recorded in contemporary later twelfth-century collections such as *Cirac instans* and the *Antidotarium Nicolai*.

The manuscript as a whole is a composite of four distinct booklets, all roughly coeval but separately copied. They appear to have been bound together in the twelfth or perhaps the thirteenth century, as there is a table of contents for the entire volume in a hand of this period on the flyleaf. The first two booklets concern the sacraments comprising poems on the Mass and on baptism, and a tract defending the real Presence composed of extracts from patristic and early medieval theologians. In between this part of the volume and the closing section (a gloss on the Psalter and Canticles), is the collection of medical and culinary recipes. This section dates to the third quarter of the twelfth century. The manuscript is recorded in the Durham Cathedral Priory library catalogue of 1391; by the late sixteenth century

it was in the possession of John Pilkington, Archdeacon of Durham.

Who collected and copied these recipes remain open questions. It may be tentatively proposed that the collection was not created by the scriptorium of Durham Cathedral Priory. Rather, it was assembled for private study and reference, possibly by a physician like Master Herebertus or Master Gervasius, both of whom donated medical books to the Priory in the twelfth century, as earlier catalogues from Durham show. The Priory's surviving booklists from the twelfth century indicate that it accumulated a sizeable and up-to-date medical collection, but how and when the Sidney Sussex volume came to the community of St Cuthbert is still to be established.

What is becoming clear is that these recipes are amongst the earliest, if not the earliest, to survive from the western medieval tradition; they are to this extent unusual. Written in Latin, there are a few parallels with the fourteenth-century Latin cookbooks which are known, the *Tractatus de modo praeparandi et condiendi omnia cibaria*, *Doctrina preparationis ciborum*, *Liber de coquina et Modus viaticorum preparandorum et salsarum*. However, the taste combinations for the twelfth-century recipes appear to be different to the later traditions: the emphasis is on herb-flavourings, garlic and vinegar; the only spices used are pepper, along with some use of coriander, cost and spikenard. There are some interesting parallel descriptions of Poitevin sauces from the 1160s in the chronicler Ralph Diceto, and also in the *De nominibus utensilium* of Alexander Neckam from c.1180. These descriptions are not presented as recipes in the same way as those in Sidney Sussex 51, but do provide useful confirmation of the early date and palate. The recipes formed the basis of a cookery workshop for History, English and Archaeology MA students from Durham University, which took place on April 25th at Blackfriars Restaurant in Newcastle, led by Caroline Yeldham and Blackfriars' proprietor, Andy Hook. They were then recreated by Blackfriars chefs for lunch the following Saturday, 27 April, to accompany a lunchtime lecture in the banquet hall of the restaurant by Professor Chris Woolgar entitled 'Food in Medieval England.' This was the third lecture in a collaboration between the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Durham University and Blackfriars Restaurant. The collaboration will continue with further exposition, and an eventual cookbook to include the sauces

from Poitou in their original form and as interpreted by Caroline Yeldham, and the Blackfriars staff. Faith Wallis and Giles Gasper will be organizing an international workshop in July 2014, to be held at Durham, to investigate the circumstances of the manuscript, its content, production and context, and will be leading a full-scale scholarly treatment.

Giles Gasper and Faith Wallis (with thanks to Caroline Yeldham, Bruno Laurioux and Greti Dinkova-Bruun)

WOOD-FIRED OVENS

For those of you who pursue this activity, I have found a new website full of anguished discussion about how to do it and 'What I've done'. Its address is: <<http://ukwoodfiredovenforum.proboards.com/index.cgi>>.

†ROSEMARY DAVIDSON

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Rosemary Davidson on 20 November 2012. Rosemary was a founding director of Prospect Books in company with her brother, Alan and sister-in-law, Jane. She had herself a distinguished career in educational publishing with Longman and the Cambridge University Press (of which she was the first woman on its executive board). When living in Cambridge she opened the Broughton House gallery at her home in King Street. Here she showed (and published) many of the woodcuts by the artist and author Gwen Raverat. She also used to buy a parcel of Prospect Books every Christmas for the gallery's festive show. I found the similarities between brother and sister very marked. The same willingness to see the amusing side of life, the same openness to other people, and their preoccupations, hobby-horses, or quirks.

†HUGO DUNN-MEYNELL

It's with equal regret that I report the passing of Hugo on 6 February 2013. An excellent obituary was printed in the Guardian, written by his friend Roger Owen. We all knew Hugo as the secretary and chief executive of the *International Wine & Food Society* which, it might be argued, he awoke from years of quiescence and injected with new vigour and purpose. I had dealings with him over some years as editor of the revived journal of the *IWFS*. Hugo had a long and pioneering career in PR and advertising, but belied his spare

frame with an enthusiasm for good food. In this he was abetted, in the years that I knew him, by his wife Alice Woolledge-Salmon whose career as a distinguished food writer he in turn encouraged and supported.

†JOCASTA INNES

I was very sad to read of the death of Jocasta Innes on 20 April 2013. We exchanged a few letters and hers were always memorable. My own were those of a slaving fan. We have always thought her *Country Kitchen* a work of astonishing utility as it gives clear and simple instruction on the basic activities that might result from living in the country, having the odd animal, and tending the untidy garden. For us it has never been improved upon. There were some informative obituaries in the national press which can be retrieved on the Internet.

†NICOLE FENOSA

It is with sadness that we record the death of Nicole Fenosa whose fine illustrations adorn the text of *A Catalan Cookery Book* by Irving Davis which we re-published in 1999.

†CAROLE LAMBERT (1949–2012)

It is our sad task to announce, albeit months after the fact, that one of the most important, and perhaps the most discreet, of the culinary historians active in the Flandrin Group during the 1980s, passed away in July. Carole Lambert began her career as a medievalist in the late 1970s in her native Montréal. She did ground-breaking research into the culinary manuscript traditions of south-central and south-western France at a time when research into French regional culinary cultures was in its infancy. Two manuscripts from the Auvergne, one a cookbook, the other about the grafting of fruit trees, were published in 1987: *Le Recueil de Riom et La maniere de benter soutillement.... (Le Moyen français, n° 20, Montréal, Editions CERES)*. The results of further research formed the basis for her dissertation which was completed in 1989 under the title: ‘Trois réceptaires culinaires médiévaux: “Les Enseignemenz”, les “Doctrine” et le “Modus.”’ The first is a critical edition of what is arguably the oldest collection of culinary recipes in French, which dated from the early fourteenth century; the second a previously unknown Latin translation of that text; and the third a hitherto

unknown collection of recipes from the late fourteenth century written in Latin but clearly Occitan in origin, the *Modus preparandorum viaticorum et salsarum*. To Carole's credit she provides the reader not only with the original texts but, in the case of the 'Modus', a French translation as well, coupled with a careful analysis of the ingredients and linguistic quirks that indicate its southern roots. Her invaluable eighty-page glossary of medieval cooking terms and comprehensive indexes also permit the reader to compare these recipes with the same recipes found in other medieval texts, with an indication of the degree of similarity or divergence between the different versions.

In addition to pursuing her own research, Carole took it upon herself to publicize and diffuse the work of others, most notably by organizing a symposium held in May of 1990 in Montreal. All the scholars who were then doing seminal work into medieval and Renaissance European texts presented papers that were collected and published in 1992, under Carole's supervision, as *Du Manuscrit à la Table* (Presses de l'Université de Montréal, and Champion-Slatkine, Paris). Several years later, Carole also co-authored, with Jean-Louis Flandrin, a beautifully produced and impressively researched volume devoted to medieval recipes, *Fêtes gourmandes au Moyen Age* (Imp. Nationale, Paris, 1998).

Unfortunately, Carole's most important work, her critical edition and translation of the *Modus*, has yet to be published. Nevertheless, we are happy to report that it is currently scheduled to be published – along with the *Manuscrit de Riom* and the *Maniere de benter soutillement* – by Honoré Champion in a series of texts devoted to various aspects of medieval life. With this publication, Carole's unique contribution to medieval culinary studies will at last be given the recognition it deserves and made available to scholars heretofore unaware of her work.

PHILIP & MARY HYMAN

DUTCH GASTRONOMIC COLLECTION

Claudia Roden very kindly sent us this information about developments in Holland: 'The University of Amsterdam has become, since 2012, a centre of gastronomy that will be of value to researchers as well as to chefs, restaurateurs, food producers and artisans. Joke Mammen, who is in charge, came to last year's Oxford Symposium and will be coming again this year.'

‘Their Special Collections library, which has cookbooks dating back to the Middle Ages, now also houses an increasing part of the immense collections of the scholar-gastronome Johannes van Dam and the food historian Joop Witteveen. For more information and a PDF-file of the folder on the ‘history of food collection’ see: <http://www.bijzonderecollecties.uva.nl/en/the-special-collections/collection-profile/collection-profile-2/collection-profile-2/content/folder/modern-period.html>

‘The University will be awarding two annual prizes: the international Johannes van Dam prize for gastronomy (I was the very thrilled recipient this year) and the Joop Witteveen prize for culinary history of the Low Countries. On 18 January 2013 a gala event and an exhibition of the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards 2012 collection donated by Edouard Cointreau – were held to celebrate the inauguration of the awards and the newest addition to the university cookbook collection.

‘The Special Collections, together with the University of Amsterdam’s Institute for Culture and History and the Vrije University of Brussels, will hold an annual Symposium on the history of food in the Low Countries. The first will be held on 17 January 2014. For the theme this year and the call for papers visit : <http://www.bijzonderecollecties.uva.nl/en>

‘For all information contact Joke Mammen <j.j.mammen@uva.nl>.’

SALEP AND COFFEE-HOUSES

I have been contacted by Chris Elliott on this subject, in the hope that informed readers can assist him. His e-mail is <c.elliott@dsl.pipex.com>.

‘I am hoping that you can suggest sources of information on a fairly specialized area of food history. For a number of years now, I have been researching what can broadly be summarized as the cultural impact of Egypt (particularly Ancient Egypt) on Britain, and English Heritage have recently published my book *Egypt in England*, which deals with Egyptian-style architecture and interiors. Initially, my research focused on London’s Egyptian connections, and in *The Insight Guide to Cairo* I came across the following passage: “The clientele of coffee houses or chocolate houses in eighteenth-century London, for example, drank many of the same decoctions – made of cinnamon (*qirfa*, pronounced “erfa” in Cairo), ginger (*ganzabil*), aniseed (*yanssun*) or licorice-root (*erq-sus*), that are still commonly ordered in any good coffee house in twentieth-century Cairo. Popular in eighteenth-century Paris, Madrid and London was sahlep, a hot drink made

from the farinaceous root of *Orchis mascula*. The word sahlep, identical in French, Spanish and English, derives by way of Turkish from *sahlab*, the usual Arabic name for both the drink and the plant, but is in fact a polite euphemism for the plant's proper Arabic botanic name, which literally means 'fox testicles'."

'Mrs Grieve's *Herbal* has information on Salep, as it was also spelled: "Before coffee supplanted it, it used to be sold at stalls in the streets of London, and was held in great repute in herbal medicine, being largely employed as a strengthening and demulcent [soothing] agent. The best English Salep came from Oxfordshire, but the tubers were chiefly imported from the East."

'Charles Lamb refers to a "Salopian shop" in Fleet Street, and says that to many tastes it has "a delicacy beyond the China luxury," and adds that a basin of it at three-halfpence, accompanied by a slice of bread-and-butter at a halfpenny, is an ideal breakfast for a chimney-sweep. Though Salep is no longer a popular London beverage, before the war it was regularly sold by street merchants in Constantinople as a hot drink during the winter.

'Despite trying books on London's coffee-houses, however, I haven't been able to confirm that the other drinks were routinely or commonly available. I'd like to be able to do this, as I suspect that the presence of drinks from Cairo in London goes back further than the eighteenth century, and reflects long-standing links through trading and pilgrimage. I did try contacting Max Rodenbeck, whose father, now deceased, wrote the original version of the guide, but he was unable to trace the source of the passage quoted above.'

BOUILLIE

You may think that you know what this is, a pottage of grain and vegetables or even just a simple porridge. We think of it as the staple of French peasants. Breton *bouillie* is particularly famous. So there we were, in a Breton supermarket, when we spied some clear plastic packets labelled *Yod kerc'h*. They were filled with a coffee-coloured set jelly (of sorts). *Yod* is Breton for *bouillie*, *kerc'h* is Breton for oats, so this was oat porridge, but that's not what it looked like. The way they used to make this porridge was to soak the oats for a day in cold water and skim off the bran and chaff leaving the starch-laden mass at the bottom, which can then be cooked with more water. This is reminiscent of making sowans. Come the Industrial

Revolution and the processing of the oats gets mechanized and much, much finer. So rather than the flakes that we see in porridge oats, it is a flour, or meal. Once they have separated out the rubbish, and boiled up the remainder so that it sets, you do indeed have a jelly-like substance. This you can remove from the packet, cut into dainty slices and fry in butter or lard. It then becomes a bit like polenta and it's rather tasty (though the processors have put in quite a lot of salt). End of lesson.

A SRI LANKAN COOKERY BOOK

Paul van Reyk has told me of his production of a sort of facsimile edition of the recipe book of his grandmother, Ada de la Harpe (b. 1883), a Sri Lankan Dutch burgher (an employee of the Dutch East India Company who remained in Ceylon after the British had taken over). He has designed it so that an image of each page is accompanied by a transcription. There is also a glossary of some less common terms. The book can be viewed online at <http://issuu.com/foodwriter/docs/the_recipe_book_of_ad_de_la_harpe_first_edition_20> and downloaded at <http://www.paulvanreyk.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/The-Recipe-Book-of-Ad-de-la-Harpe_First-edition_2013.pdf>. Email: <pvanreyk@optusnet.com.au>.

GRIMOD DE LA REYNIÈRE

The redoubtable Carolin Young has (as far as we are concerned) resurfaced after a few months off the scene with a blog retracing the steps of the sainted Grimod across modern Paris, as well as printing his *Almanach* and her translation thereof alongside her account of present-day shops and shopping. <<http://www.almanachdesgourmands.com>>.

KRISPY KREME

I expect most of you will have picked up the news about the opening of the Edinburgh branch of Krispy Kreme. In the light of the government's stance on our dietary intake, I find it fascinating. I did a little bit more research in the *Guardian* archive and on Google and found that Krispy Kremes excite a similar devotion across the world, be it Bangkok, Sydney or Cardiff. I am perplexed.

From the *Guardian* 15 February 2013: 'Edinburgh police have had to marshal hundreds of cars and pedestrians to prevent a third day of traffic

chaos at a newly opened Krispy Kreme doughnut store in the city. Seventy-two hours after the US chain's first Scottish outlet opened, drivers were still queueing for up to an hour to get their fill on Friday. The day before Lothian and Borders police urged motorists to avoid the western side of Edinburgh altogether due to the chaos. Patrol cars were sent to Hermiston Gait retail park to try to stop Krispy Kreme customers causing gridlock when a mile-long tailback began backing on to the M8. *Edinburgh Evening News* reported that pedestrians were queueing in wintry conditions for up to an hour, but the delays caused by banked-up cars had been worse, with motorists waiting in line for the drive-through service for up to two hours. Napier University students Melinda Garrott and Elise Setter told the paper they took public transport to reach the store after getting free samples in the city centre. Garrott said: "We got the bus. It's about 25 to 30 minutes, but we had no idea where the store was so we got lost. It was raining – we had to get a taxi. We then waited about 40 minutes in the queue, but they gave us free doughnuts so it was OK." Health campaigners said they were appalled at the number of people prepared to wait in their cars to buy the cholesterol-packed snacks. Tam Fry, for the National Obesity Forum, said: "If Edinburgh is overweight today then it will certainly be obese by tomorrow."

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

The expansion of food studies continues apace. This can't be a bad thing, even if its velocity in England does not yet match that of the United States, Australia or parts of Europe. It is also, I hope, a good thing for publishers of relevant books (see the latest output from Berg as an example), although I note that the sort of food studies espoused by Prospect are not quite the same thing as food studies pursued by sociologists and the like. Anyway, I have been contacted by Dr Bryce Evans of Liverpool Hope with the news that there is a new undergraduate course at Liverpool Hope entitled 'The Taste of War'. Students explore the role of food in conflict from Alexander the Great to Afghanistan. In the near future students will also be taking part in an innovative 'learning through cooking, eating, smelling and tasting' session where they experience multisensory learning through cooking dishes from different eras at a local cookery school. More details are available from <evansbr@hope.ac.uk>.

QUEEN VICTORIA

I have been contacted by Mary Williamson from Toronto with the following enquiry: ‘Over ten years ago I became intrigued by the contents of a paragraph in Roy Shipperbottom’s introduction to the reissue of Elizabeth Raffald’s *The Experienced English Housekeeper* (Southover Press, 1997). “Such were the quality and popularity of the instructions in this extraordinary book, written by a working confectioner and containing trade secrets of the day, that they were widely copied, and recipes from it are found in many family manuscript recipe books – not least one compiled by Princess (later Queen) Victoria. She entered several Raffald recipes in her own handwriting including King Solomon’s Temple in Flummery, signing it Victoria.” Shipperbottom doesn’t give the source of his information, and because he had died before his reprint was published I inquired with the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. I was told that no such manuscript exists there.

‘Just the other day I picked up my copy of *Court Favourites* by Elizabeth Craig (Andre Deutsch, 1953) and it seems that her collection was based on recipes in the same elusive manuscript together with another recipe manuscript that belonged to Princess, then Queen, Victoria. In her introduction Craig tells us how she acquired the recipes. It would have been around 1933 that she became acquainted with an Irishwoman who regularly dined with an “English princess.” At some point the Princess showed the Irishwoman “an old scrap-book which had been given to Queen Victoria when she was a young girl.” It had originally belonged to Princess Charlotte, daughter of George IV. “Hand-bound in vellum, with a crown stamped on every page, it was one of the most interesting volumes I have ever perused.” She estimated the recipes ranged over fifty to eighty years. Another book was produced. Bound in Russian leather it contained “many recipes cut from old books and papers, alongside recipes evidently copied by Princess Victoria from some ancient, perhaps forgotten, books on domestic subjects. On the first page someone had penned ‘Given to Victoria on her birthday – 1831’. The entries in the book date from 1831 to 1887.”

‘I have written about, and given lectures on Mrs Dalgairns and Mrs Rundell, and like many researchers would be fascinated to know whether Princess Victoria copied the recipes of my culinary heroines. Does anyone know where these two manuscript collections might be, and whether there

is any likelihood that they have been digitized and made accessible? If we knew the identity of the “English princess” of 1933 it would help.’

Mary Williamson: <mfw@yorku.ca>

ANOTHER COMIC FOOD SONG: THE IRISH JUBILEE

Following the success of the last poetic contribution from Dr Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire of Dublin, I have pleasure in offering his next instalment, which he introduces thus: ‘When I first heard this song in Hughes Pub on the final session of Sean-Nós Cois Life over ten years ago sung by one of the Góilín singers, I knew straight away I would have to learn it due to its rich food theme. It has been recorded by Barry Gleeson on his album *Path across the Ocean*, and is found in print in John Wyse Jackson and Hector McDonnell’s book *Ireland’s Other Poetry: Anonymous to Zozimus*. I have recited this classic food-related song/ballad/poem on a number of occasions at the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery. It tells of a famous banquet that took place on the election of an Irish-American Senator Doherty in thanks to his constituents. It is a robust nineteenth-century view of Irish political shenanigans in America. The song might relate to the election of John Doherty (1826–1859) to the New York State Senate for the 7th District in 1858. John was the son of Patrick Doherty (1794–1849) who came to New York from Ireland c. 1811 and fought in the 1812 War. John Doherty had been alderman for the 19th ward in New York from 1852 and 1853 and seems to have died on the day that the legislature adjourned on 19 April 1859. A report in the *New York Times* on the 22 April 1859 on the late Senator Doherty notes that “he left his mark, if not on the legislation of the past two years, certainly on the memory of all his colleagues. He was a bachelor, eminently genial, good natured and disposed to be merry under all circumstances... When entirely sober his address must have been very pleasing. Whatever his condition, he never forgot to be gentlemanly, courteous and merry.” The report continues to outline how he was hijacked by the various lobby groups and nearly killed with hospitality. There are a number of versions of this song available but the one below is my favourite and the version performed in Oxford.

A short time ago an Irishman named Docherty
Was elected to the Senate by a very large majority
Sure he felt so elected that he went to Denis Cassidy
Who owned a bar room of a very large capacity

Arra, says Docherty go over to the brewer and order
A hundred kegs of lager beer and give it to the poor!
Then go over to the butchers shop and order up a ton of meat
Be sure the boys and girls have got all they want to drink and eat

They made me their senator, to show them all me gratitude
They'll have the finest supper ever given in the latitude
Tell them the music will be furnished by O'Rafferty
Assisted on the bagpipes by Felix Mick M'Cafferty
Sure whatever the expenses are, remember I'll put up the tin
And anyone who doesn't come, be sure and do not let them in

Now Cassidy at once sent out the invitations
And anyone who came was a credit to the nation
Some came on bicycles because they had no fares to pay
And all those that did not come, made up their minds to stay away

Two by three they all rushed in the dining hall
Young men and old men and girls that were not men at all
Blind men and deaf men and men who had the chickenpox
Single men and double men and men who had their glasses on

Well in a few minutes nearly every chair was taken
Till the taprooms and mushroom rooms were packed to suffocation
When everyone was seated and we started to lay out the feast
Cassidy says rise up and give us each a cake apiece
He then said as manager he would try and fill the chair
We then sat down and all looked over the bill of fare

Well there was pigs' heads, goldfish, mocking birds and ostriches
Ice cream, cold cream, Vaseline and sandwiches
Blue fish, green fish, fishhooks and partridges
Fishballs, snowballs, cannonballs and cartridges

We ate oatmeal till we could hardly stirabout
Ketch-up and hurry-up, sweet-kraut and sauer-kraut
Dressed beef and naked beef and beef with all its trousers on

Soda crackers, fire crackers, Cheshire cheese with breeches on
Beefsteaks and mistakes were down upon the bill of fare
Roast ribs and spare ribs and ribs that we couldn't spare
Reindeer, snowdeer and dear me and antelope
The women ate so much melon, the men said they cantaloupe
Red herrings, smoked herrings, herrings from old Erin's Isle
Bangor loaf and fruit cake and sausages a half a mile
Hot corn, cold corn, and corn cake and honey-comb
Red birds and red books, sea bass and sea foam
Fried liver, baked liver, Carter's little liver pills
And everyone was wondering who was going to pay the bill
Well we ate everything that was on the bill of fare
And then we looked on the back to see if any more was there
Well for dessert we had ice picks, tooth picks and a piece of skipping rope
And we washed them all down with a big piece of shaving soap
The band played hornpipes, gaspipes and Irish reels
And we danced to the music of "The wind that shakes the Barley fields"
Then the piper played auld tunes and spittoons so very fine
Then in came fiddler Pat and gave to him a glass of wine
Arra, a finer set of dancers you never set your eyes upon
And anyone who couldn't dance was dancing with their slippers on
Some danced jig steps door steps and highland flings
And Murphy took his penknife out and tried to cut the "Pigeon's wings"
When the dance was over Cassidy told us all to join hands and sing this
good old chorus:
Should Old Acquaintance Be Forgot, whoever you may be
Let's think of the good auld times we had at the Irish Jubilee!

EL BULLI

The El Bulli show that was in Barcelona is coming to London for all of you that are Modernist fans. It will be at Somerset House, 5 July–29 September 2013. On the subject of Modernist cuisine, which I now use as shorthand for molecular gastronomy, avant-garde, etc., I found another use of the phrase by the esteemed authority Rachel Laudan. Readers will know her

as an advocate of our need to embrace modernity and the changes to life that it brings, and her distaste for many forms of nostalgia. Her website is a place that all of us should visit, full of information, opinion and interesting speculative ideas. One of her more inflammatory pieces was a review of Carlo Petrini's book on Slow Food which was published in *Food Culture and Society*. I had occasion to re-read it not long since and I urge you to do the same. Good, fighting stuff. She has put a PDF on her website. The addresses you need are: <<http://www.rachellaudan.com/>>, and for the PDF it's: <<http://www.rachellaudan.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Slow-Food.pdf>>. She uses the phrase 'Culinary Modernism' to encompass not those chefs at the cutting-edge of the world of ponce, but all those strides taken by progressive waves of advocates of improvement to extend the bounty once reserved for the upper crust to the likes of you and me – and far beyond.

PPC PRICES

I fear that the back cover of this issue indicates a new subscription price for *PPC*. As the best market traders would have it, I do this with a heavy heart. The new prices imposed by Royal Mail in April this year constitute a significant ramp up from previous levels. If I send a single issue of *PPC* abroad by surface mail, it costs at least £3.25. This is unsustainable without an increase.

THE GLORIES OF PROSPECT BOOKS

It's with real pleasure and bursting pride that I am able to announce that Caroline Conran's book, *Sud de France*, has been chosen as Food Book of the Year not only by the trustees of the André Simon Memorial Fund, but also by the judges of the new prize sponsored and awarded by Messrs. Fortnum & Mason. This is a fantastic achievement on Caroline's part and of course well merited.

Our publishing activity has been in minor key this year as I struggle to fulfil my commitment to the Oxford University Press and the slight revision of Alan Davidson's *Companion*. However, I was really pleased to see through the press John Fitch's translation of the late-Roman agricultural treatise by Palladius. It is an excellent translation and a handsome volume, and I hope it will occupy the shelves of all those classicists who have not yet seen a decent English version. Our books for the second half of the

year number but three. The first is the latest proceedings from the Oxford Symposium, this time on wrapped foods. The second is a translation, edited and introduced by Darra Goldstein, of a Russian book written by the late and great semiotician Yuri Lotman in co-operation with Jelena Pogosjan. This is called *High Society Dinners: Dining in Tsarist Russia*, and is a study of the domestic archive of the Durnovo family in nineteenth-century St Petersburg. Our third book is a posthumous work by Constance Hieatt. We have called it *The Culinary Recipes of Medieval England* and it is a gathering of the best recipe for every dish that figures in medieval English culinary manuscripts, translated by Constance Hieatt. It should be extremely useful.

MARY DOHNE

This autumn Mary Dohne is launching a vintage cookbook shop online: noonecooksalone.com. She writes:

“No one who cooks, cooks alone. Even at her most solitary, a cook in the kitchen is surrounded by generations of cooks past, the advice and menus of cooks present, the wisdom of cookbook writers.” (Laurie Colwin from *Home Cooking*)

‘The collection is highly idiosyncratic with depth in categories like American regional cooking, cookbooks by novelists, painters and poets, British cookery, charmingly illustrated cookbooks and recipe collections inspired by literary works and fictional characters. I am resisting the lure of antiquarian cookbooks and spiral-bound community charity compilations with little success.

‘I am looking to buy vintage hardcover copies of classic British cookery books. I want to do a large consolidated shipment to the US, so collections are preferred. Cookbooks from the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s are my primary target, but earlier books are very welcome. Examples of authors that I’d like to find, but bonus points for new introductions!: Eliza Acton, Mrs Beeton, Arabella Boxer, Margaret Costa, Elizabeth David, Len Deighton, Theodora FitzGibbon, Jane Grigson, Dorothy Hartley, Ambrose Heath, Rosemary Hume, Ruth Lowinsky, Richard Mabey, Alice Martineau, Countess Morphy, Mary Nowak, Marguerite Patten, John Pawson, Constance Spry, Lady Syonsby, Alison Uttley.

‘Or, if you are someone who likes to hunt the shelves at Oxfam bookshops and charity sales and to scout out bookshops that have large

holdings of cookbooks, I would love to talk to you! Ideally I am looking for someone who collects things, but not necessarily cookbooks, and has a discerning eye. Perhaps you would be interested in trading for American vintage cookbooks or kitchen paraphernalia for your own collection in payment for your services!

Contact: marydohne@gmail.com with photographs or call +1-917-301-4647

BARTHOLOMEW THE ENGLISHMAN

This man is known more widely as Bartholomeus Anglicus. He lived from c. 1203 to 1272. He was a Franciscan friar who lived and worked in Europe, both as a teacher in Paris and as a roving ecclesiastic (sometimes Franciscan, sometimes papal) in Germany and points east, hence his sobriquet 'the Englishman'. His chief claim to fame is an encyclopaedic work called De proprietatibus rerum (On the Properties of Things). I started to come across many references to this book, most particularly in Danièle Alexandre-Bidon's archaeological study of medieval pottery that I mentioned in the last issue. It seemed clear that Bartholomew had lots of practical information on the domestic and dining front and perhaps a translation would be in order. I suggested an inspection to the linguistically adept Andrew Dalby and he reported back that my hopes might be dashed. Yes, there may be practical information therein, but the Prospect coffers would have to support a very large sub-structure of useless material in order to extract the gems. I took my medicine. To sweeten the pill, Andrew very kindly translated two paragraphs that are absolutely concerned with dinner. These are pretty hot stuff so I give you them here for your improvement and delectation. Andrew, meanwhile, has gone on a much more exciting voyage – around the inlets and promontories of Pietro de' Crescenzi. More news about that later.

Prandium et convivium: the meal and feast

Thus food and drink find their order and application in meals and feasts. Firstly for meals food is prepared and guests are invited. Seats and benches are set out in the dining room. Tables are ordered; tableware is arranged and adorned. Guests are placed with the lord at the head of the table. They do not sit to table before the guests' hands are washed. The mistress's daughters, apart, and the servants, below, feast likewise. Spoons, knives and saltcellars are distributed to the tables, and loaves and cups are soon added. Many and varied dishes follow. Squires and waiters serve each person diligently. By helping one another all are cheerfully rendered equal. They

are entertained with lutes and harps. Now the wine is replenished, now the dishes; as each dish is served it is portioned and shared. Finally fruits and spices are deserved. When the meal is completed tableware and scraps are cleared, tables are taken off the trestles, and hands are again washed and wiped. Thanks are expressed to God and to the host. For pleasure's sake drinks are offered again and again. When this meal ceremony is completed [guests] either go to bed, to find rest, or take leave and return to their homes.

Cena: the dinner

Cena is so called from *coenon*, meaning 'common',¹ because of the community of diners. The ancients would eat in the open and feast in common lest apartness give rise to luxury. But it may be called *cena* from *cenos*, meaning 'shade', because already to save cost they wanted to eat privately: so says Papensis.² Or from *scynos*, 'dog':³ because of want and the absence of charity each separately would take his food and chew it: *1 Corinthians* 11.⁴ Everything said above about the meal and feast applies to dinner. Several things make dinner more magnificent and noble, and all these things are found in the dinner of Ahasuerus, as seen in *Esther* 1.⁵ The first is temporal appropriateness, because a feast should be held on the appropriate occasion, neither before it nor after it. The second is locational suitability with regard to largeness, pleasantness and safety: it is in large, pleasant and safe places that nobles have their feasts. The third is generosity of welcome as shown in a cheerful demeanour. There is no value in a dinner at which the host has a troubled face: *Esther* 1, 'when he became heated' etc. The fourth is multiplicity of dishes, so that [a guest] who does not like one can immediately taste another: *Esther* 1, 'the food was served in ever-different dishes'. The fifth is variety of wines and drinks, whence *Esther* 1 says, 'even the wine ... royal ... magnificent.' The sixth is the politeness and respectability of the attendants: *Esther* 1, 'to all his princes ...'⁶ The seventh is the pleasant company of the friends who sit down: *Esther* 1, 'he made a feast ... to all the famous Medes and Persians.' The eighth is the pleasure of the singers and musical instruments, because dinners of the nobility are not usually held without lutes or orchestras: *Luke* 15, 'when he heard the sound' etc.⁷ The ninth is the profusion of lights and candles, because it is mean to dine in darkness – and also dangerous because of flies. Hence candles are put in candelabras; lanterns, lamps and tapers are lit at need. The tenth is the tastiness of all that is served, because rough

and common foods are not served at dinners, as they are at [ordinary] meals; instead special, light and tasty things are served to diners, most of all in lords' courts. The eleventh is the length of the dinner. When men are free of labour they prolong their dinner. Food taken too quickly produces illness at night, and it is a cheerless way to dine. Thus the dinner of Ahasuerus lasted a long time, a hundred and fifty days.⁸ The twelfth is liberality, because one who is invited to dinner should not suffer for it: it is improper, after a dinner freely offered, to demand the payment of a contribution. The thirteenth is the pleasantness of rest and sleep: it is right to rest after dinner, because that is when sleep is very sweet. Thus there were beds of ivory and gold laid out on the pavement at the palace of Ahasuerus, as seen *Esther* 1.⁹ As Constantinus tells us,¹⁰ 'when the smoke of food enters our brain we sleep easily.'

1. Greek *koinos* (masc.) *koinon* (neut.) 'common'.
2. Might be Bernard of Pavia ... or someone else ...
3. A confusion of two Greek words, *kyon* (nom.) *kynos* (gen.) 'dog', *skylax* 'puppy'.
4. *1 Corinthians* 11.21: Paul criticizes the Corinthians for lack of true communion.
5. The following references are to the feast of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) at *Esther* 1.12, 1.7, 1.7, 1.3, 1.3. The quotations are not exact: in this translation '...' indicates where words are skipped.
6. The allusion is to the following words, which are not quoted, *et pueris suis* '... and his servants'.
7. *Luke* 15.25: the prodigal son's elder brother hears music as he comes home: it is the feast celebrating his brother's return.
8. 180 days: *Esther* 1.4.
9. The pavement was in the garden court of the palace: *Esther* 1.5–6
10. I suppose Constantinus Africanus.