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†JANE DAVIDSON

It is with much regret that I announce the death in June of one of the founders of Prospect Books, Jane Davidson. Our sympathies go to her daughters and grandchildren. A full notice of her life and achievements will be written for the next issue and readers might like to know that a memorial service will be held in the coming months. The best point of contact is through Caroline Davidson's website, <www.cdla.co.uk>.

MEMORY IN THE FOOD BUSINESS, II

This might become a serial publication. As one gets older, the urge to write letters to the editor becomes stronger. In families, it might even be competitive. My wife has had some success with short contributions to the *Guardian*, even making their annual compilation of letters in 2008. I lag far behind, rejects outnumbering acceptances. A recent spousal triumph was comment on a remark by Jeanette Winterson that Fanny Cradock invented the prawn cocktail in the 1970s (a claim reinforced a month or two later by Nigel Slater who described it as having been around 'for a good thirty years'). It dates, of course, from much earlier than that and Mrs Jaine was able to cite Alan Davidson, *Gourmet Traveller* and Marguerite Patten to push its origins as a standard item of fare back to the 1950s, with American antecedents between the wars. Nigel Slater caused a collective raising of eyebrows *à propos* carrot and coriander soup. He adverted to the Covent Garden Soup Company's assertion that they invented the recipe in 1987. We knew that this was too late, for I had published a recipe (using only the spice, not the fresh green leaf) in 1986 and we had certainly been cooking the soup thus in the 1970s at the Carved Angel. None of us, including Joyce Molyneux, can quite recall whence came the idea. One thought was that it could have been from Colin Spencer's vegetarian recipes that he used to publish in the *Guardian* (they were often very good). But memories are frail. Anther avenue, possibly more fruitful, was broached when we remembered that the chef Michael Waterfield (who once worked at the Hole in the Wall in Bath and then ran his own very successful restaurant in Wye in Kent called The Wife of Bath) introduced us to the dish Chicken (or on his case, I seem to recall, Turkey) *aux trois épices*, the spices being cumin, coriander and cardamom. Perhaps carrot and coriander soup was another from his spicy repertoire. Michael is the great-nephew of Janet Ross,

author of *Leaves from our Tuscan Kitchen*, and it is his edition of this book that is currently available in the shops (Grub Street). If you look up her recipe for carrot soup, first written in 1903, you find that she does include coriander (though not so much as we used to add) in her seasonings. Two little instances of myth-making: the prawn assertion seems to be based on a Wikipedia entry and a TV episode of *Hairy Bikers*.

THE OLD CULINARY TEXT PROJECT

In the 1980s, when Alan and Jane Davidson were building up Prospect Books and *PPC*, as well as Alan researching and reading for the *Oxford Companion*, he conceived the plan of collecting photocopies of early cookery books. This would be a useful reference for himself and a helpful resource for people who found such texts difficult to locate, or access to the national libraries too complicated and inconvenient. Now that so much is available through the Internet, the exercise might seem supererogatory, but the deed was done and we have the texts.

When Alan finished the *Companion*, he tidied up his library, if only to make room for materials for his new preoccupation with Hollywood. The culinary texts were generously given house-room by Fiona Lucraft in Cambridgeshire. She felt that they might be more accessible through the good offices of *PPC*, so I have taken them over and they were the first things to be moved to the new library built on the top floor of one of our small barns.

I give below a short catalogue of the collection. It may still be true that people will find reference to one text or another really helpful in their research, so anyone is welcome to ask for one to be sent to them. My suggestion is that if a returnable deposit of £50 is made with each request, it will keep such transactions honest. The only cost will be postage.

Pre-17th century European cookery books and essays

1. Essay on and some recipes from a 13th-C. north European cookbook (unbound).
2. Arnald of Villanova's *Book on Wine*. Translation from the German version: ed. 1478 (unbound). Essay and translation.
3. *Le Livre de Taillevent* (14th C.), published 1615 (unbound).
4. *Libre de totes maneres de confits* (14th C.) (unbound). Essay and some recipes.

5. *Das buch von guter spise* (14th C.) (unbound). Essay and recipes.
6. *Kuchenmeisterei* (1490) (unbound). Introduction only, with illustrations.
7. *Platine en franccys...* (French text of ?*De Honesta Voluptate*, 1474) (comb-bound), published 1519.
8. *Le Grand Cuisinier de toutes cuisines*, by Pierre Pidoulx, published (?) 1540 (comb-bound).
9. *Menu de la maison de la Reyne faict par Mons. Pinguillon*, published 1562 (unbound).
10. *Epulario, or, The Italian Banquet*, published 1598 (comb-bound), translated from the Italian.
11. (Essay) *Un Petit Traité de Cuisine* (14th C.).
12. (Essay) *Deux Traités inédits d'art culinaire mediéval*, by Marianne Mulon.
13. (Article) *Aliments et Recettes Culinaires des Byzantines*, by E. Jeanselme and L. Oeconomus (1923).
14. (Essay) A *Medieval Sauce-Book*, by Lynn Thorndike.
15. Anonymous French thesis [?] on 15th-16th C. French cookery books.

17th and 18th century cookery books and essays in French

16. *Le Cuisinier François*, by La Varenne, published 1651 (unbound).
17. *Le Nouveau Cuisinier*, by Pierre de Lune, published 1662 (comb-bound, 3 copies).
18. *Maistre d'Hostel Royal*, by Pierre de Lune, published 1662 (comb-bound).
19. *Le Cuisinier Moderne*, by Vincent La Chapelle, published 1742 (comb-bound).
20. French essay on 17th-18th century cookery books by Alain Girard.
21. Paper given by Mons. Herbodeau to Oxford University (concerns food history).

French cookery books translated into English

22. *The French Cook*, by La Varenne, translated by I.D.G., published 1653 (unbound, 2 copies).
23. *A Perfect School of Instructions for Officers of the Mouth*, by Giles Rose, 1653 (unbound).

24. *The Art of Modern Cookery Displayed*, by Menon, translated by a foreigner, 1767 (unbound).
25. *The Professed Cook*, by Menon, translated by B. Clermont, 1776 (unbound).
26. *The Royal Parisian Pastrycook*, by Carême, translated by John Porter, 1834 (comb-bound).

15th and 16th century cookery books in English

27. *A Noble Boke of Cokery*, published *c.* 1500.
28. *The Schoolemaster or Teacher of Table Phylosophie*, published 1583 (unbound), first treatise only, dealing with food and manners.
29. *The Widowes Treasure*, published 1585 (unbound).
30. *The Good House-wives Treasurie*, published 1588 (comb-bound).
31. *The Good Huswives Handmaid*, published *c*. 1590 (comb-bound and modern reprint).
32. *Dyets Dry Dinner*, by Henry Buttes, published 1599 (unbound).

17th century cookery books in English

33. *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlemen*, published 1608 (comb-bound), first section only, containing all culinary receipts.
34. *The English Hus-wife*, by Gervase Markham, 1615 (unbound).
35. *Murrel's Two Books of Cookeries and Carving*, by John Murrell, fifth edition with additions of 1638 (pasted-in book).
36. *The Ladies Cabinet Opened*, 1639 (pasted-in book).
37. *A Hermetical Banquet, Drest by a Spagiricall Cook*, published 1652 (comb-bound).
38. *The Ladies Companion*, published 1653/4? (unbound).
39. *A True Gentlewoman's Delight,* by W.J., published 1653 (unbound).
40. *The Art of Cookery Refin'd,* by Jos. Cooper, 1654 (bound, 3 copies).
41. *The Ladies Cabinet Enlarged and Opened,* by Lord Ruthven, published 1654 (comb-bound, 4 copies).
42. *Archimagirus Anglo-Gallicus, copied from a choice manuscript of Sir Theodore Mayerne, physician to the late King Charles*, published 1658 (comb-bound).
43. *The Cook's Guide*, by Hannah Woolley, 1664 (comb-bound).
44. *The Ladies Delight*, by Hannah Woolley, published 1672.
45. *The Gentlewoman's Companion*, by Hannah Woolley, 1675 (comb-bound).

46. *The Queen-like Closet*, by Hannah Woolley, fifth edition, 1684 (comb-bound).
47. *Kitchin Physick*, by [?]Thomas Cocke, 1676 (bound).
48. *The Compleat Cook's Guide*, published 1677 (comb-bound).
49. *The True Way of Preserving and Candying*, published 1681 (unbound).
50. *The True Preserver and Restorer of Health*, by G. Hartman, 1682.
51. *The Accomplished Ladies Rich Closet of Rarities*, by John Shirley, published 1690?/1696? (bound).
52. *A Belfast Cookery Book of Queen Anne's Time*, *c*. 1711. Articles and recipes of Margaret McBride.

18th century cookery books in English

53. *England's Newest Way*, by Henry Howard, third edition, 1710- (pasted-in book and unbound).
54. *England's Newest Way*, by Henry Howard, fifth edition, 1713 (unbound).
55. *The Queen's Royal Cookery*, by T. Hall, second edition, 1719 (unbound).
56. *A Collection of Receipts in Cookery*, by Mary Kettilby, second edition, 1719 (unbound).
57. *Court Cookery*, by R. Smith, 1725 (unbound).
58. *The Industrious Country-Man and Virtuous House-Wife's Companion*, by James Dunbar, published 1737 (unbound).
59. *The Compleat City and Country Cook*, by Charles Carter, second edition with large additions, 1736 (unbound).
60. *The London and Country Cook*, by (the late?) Charles Carter, ?third edition, 1749 (fragile book and photocopy).
61. *The Family Magazine*, by ?Arabella Atkyns, 1741.
62. *The Accomplish'd Servant-maid*, by Eliza Johnston, 1747 (comb-bound).
63. *Bradshaw's Valuable Family Jewel*, by Penelope Bradshaw, 1748 (unbound).
64. *A New and Easy Method of Cookery*, by Elizabeth Cleland, 1755 (pasted-in book).
65. *The British Housewife*, by Martha Bradley, 1756 (bound, second volume only).
66. *A Collection of the most approved receipts in Pastry*, published in

Aberdeen, undated (unbound).

67. *The Art of Confectionary*, by Edward Lambert, *c*. 1744 (comb-bound).
68. *The Compleat Confectioner*, by Hannah Glasse, *c*.1760 (comb-bound, 3 copies).
69. *Art of Cookery or The Compleat-Housewife*, by Alice Smith, published in 1760 (unbound, incomplete).
70. *Primitive Cookery*, 1767 second edition (comb-bound, 2 copies).
71. *Madam Johnson's Present*, by Madam Johnson, 1769 fifth edition (pasted-in book, pages missing).
72. *The Practice of Modern Cookery*, by George Dalrymple, 1781 (comb-bound).
73. *The Universal Cook*, by Mrs Maria Stanhope, 1783 (comb-bound).

19th and 20th century cookery books in English

74. *A New System of Domestic Cookery, by a Lady*, by Mrs Rundell, 1806 (unbound).
75. *Charitable Cookery*, by Alexis Soyer, *c*. 1840 (unbound).
76. *The Whole Art of Curing, Pickling and Smoking Meat and Fish*, by James Robinson, 1847 (comb-bound).
77. *The Gourmet's Guide to Rabbit Cooking*, by an Old Epicure, 1859 (unbound).
78. *A Practical Cookery Book*, by Mrs Haldane, 1936 (unbound).

Cookery books from the rest of the world

79. *The Young Housekeeper*, by William A. Alcott, 1838, Boston (unbound).
80. *The Chemistry of Cooking and Cleaning*, by Ellen H. Richards, 1882, Boston (comb-bound).
81. *Cookery for the Many*, by an Australian Aristologist, 1864 (comb-bound, 2 volumes).
82. *Arte Cisoria o tratado del Arte del Cortar del Cuchillo*, 1766 (unbound, pages 28-53, 122-129 and 196-197).
83. *Yuan Mei*?, ? edition (unbound).
84. *Turkish Cookery Book*, by Turabi Efendi, 1864 (unbound).
85. *Koge-bog*, Anon., 1616, first printed cookbook in Denmark.
86. *Vasa Qver*, by Marta Maria Stephensen, 1800, first printed cookbook in Iceland.

MORE ON FRANCE

I received the following comment on my own reflections on our last visit to France from Barbara Santich, after she had stayed in Paris last summer. It shows that not all is lost, to some at least, although to my way of thinking, lip-service is not the same as doing the right thing.

'Whether returning to the family beach house or to a country you've come to know over many years, it's always comforting and reassuring to find things the same as when you last left them. In the 30 or so years I've been visiting, living and working in France, I've always been impressed by how little things change – give or take a few minor variations, such as yellow plastic brooms replacing the traditional straw ones of the street-sweepers.

'French food markets are as captivating as ever and, at first sight, changeless – the same mix of stalls with the same fruits and vegetables, the same cheeses, the same charcuteries. Differences are microscopic; the strawberries might have different names and fish now carry labels to indicate that they've been line-caught and where. More stallholders proclaim organic origins and, in deference to doctors, sausages now come in '*extra-maigre*' or low-fat varieties.

'In the specialist shops, too, change is minimal. Butchers display the same cuts of meat, the only innovation being greater emphasis on quality and provenance. At the *charcuterie*, exotic imported hams – Parma, San Daniele, Iberico – complement the traditional *jambon*, *pâtés*, *terrines* and *rillettes*. Fruiterers today stock fresh ginger as a matter of course, together with a more diverse selection of fresh herbs, while goat and sheep cheeses have a larger presence in *crèmeries*. *Boulangeries*, especially those proclaiming artisan status, now offer the superior '*baguette traditionelle*' as well as the ordinary baguette and their range of rye, wholemeal and multigrain breads is more varied.

'Strolling along the streets and pausing to read the menus of every little café, I'm gratified to find the same dishes: *Epaule d'agneau haricots blancs*; *faux filet sauce au poivre, frites, salade*; *cuisse de canard confit maison, pommes sautées à l'ail*; *filet de sole meunière, épinards à la crème*; *tarte de jour*; *mousse au chocolat*; *crème brulée*. Individuality and ingenuity might reign in restaurants, but these are ordinary establishments with menus for less than A$30.

'Occasionally there's evidence of more contemporary trends – tartares, often of salmon, tuna or other fish, and crumbles, apple or rhubarb.

Surreptiously sneaking in are '*les woks*', the French version of a stir-fry, as in *Wok de volaille aux legumes croquants, spaghetti* – Stir-fry of chicken and vegetables with noodles (the incongruity of the Italian term is disconcerting).

'In general, though, it's a relief to discover that memories will not be challenged and everything is still in its rightful place. The superficial impression is that French eating habits have hardly evolved over thirty years.

'Yet behind this façade of constancy some quite significant changes have taken place, not so much in what the French eat but more but how. Of these, perhaps the most obvious is the enthusiasm for convenience in the form of ready-to-cook, ready-to-heat and ready-to-eat products.

'Indeed, statistics show that between 1974 and 1998 the time women spent on cooking, housework and laundry decreased by almost an hour to about 2.5 hours per day (over the same period men's time on these tasks increased, on average, by 10 minutes). The embrace of convenience is also reflected in ownership of microwave ovens, now standard in over 80 per cent of French households (compared with about 95 per cent in Australia).

'Of course, the option of buying a dish ready-made has always been available in France, at least in the cities where *charcuteries* and *traiteurs* have traditionally offered a selection of freshly cooked dishes. Surfacing from the Métro in Rue de la Roquette, I would be greeted by warm aromas wafting from the strategically situated rôtisserie: roast chickens, pork loin, boned leg of lamb, beef and veal, together with *gratin dauphinois*, *pommes dauphine*, *gratin de courgettes*. But there's a price to pay for this instant gratification – up to A$22 for a roast chicken, about A$3.50 per serving of mashed potato or spinach.

'Supermarkets offer far cheaper alternatives: fresh, frozen, sous-vide and tinned. At a large Carrefour *hypermarché* (58 checkouts!) on the outskirts of Paris I could buy two servings of fresh salmon quiche with broccoli for about A$8.70 while a frozen *Parmentier de canard* – a kind of shepherd's pie made with duck – cost A$10.00 for a double portion. Single-portion dishes cost as little as A$3.50. Those preferring to cook their own can take advantage of an extraordinary array of convenience foods, from rounds of cooked polenta and buckwheat pancakes to frozen vegetables in imaginative combinations, such as a *légumes à la catalane* mix of cauliflower

florets, flat beans, sliced eggplant, strips of red pepper and mushrooms.

'The success of the Picard chain repudiates the stereotype of the French housewife shopping daily for fresh food in local markets. While there are other frozen food supermarkets, Picard dominates. From its first store in Paris in 1974, the chain has today expanded to 766 stores in France and supplies 20 per cent of the French market for frozen foods, including ice-creams. Its catalogue of over one thousand items includes raw ingredients – seafood, meat, fruits and vegetables – but perhaps the largest growth has been in ready-made dishes, including selections of Thai, Vietnamese, Indian, Japanese and Mexican dishes.

'As its preparation becomes more simplified so, too, does the meal. At midday less than 40 per cent of French, mostly in the 50-plus age group, adopt the standard formula of entrée, main course and dessert, with optional cheese course, and even fewer in the evening. The younger generation prefers two courses, typically main course and dessert, though 5 per cent of French are content with a sandwich at lunchtime. Main course-plus-dessert predominates among evening meals as well, and again it's the under-50s who are leading the trend.

'The current crop of French cookbooks seems similarly to have abandoned the traditional meal model. The comprehensive volumes which offered recipes for individual courses and complete meals have given way to specialist publications focusing on particular categories of dishes, often of the quick-and-easy variety. The *Hachette Pratique* series includes books on soups and gaspachos, tians and flans, crumbles and tatins, while Marabout's titles include *Super Salades Gourmandes*, *Cuisine Express et Gourmande*, *Poulet Vite Prêt* and *Wok Facile*.

'So where does this leave the French claim to have its gastronomic heritage recognized by UNESCO as part of the world's intangible cultural heritage, especially as this is based not so much on the attributes of French cuisine as on the norms associated with eating: mealtimes, the structure of meals, the role of bread, the importance of the table as a site of sociability and pleasure. If successful – and the application is endorsed by President Sarkozy – France will be the first country where gastronomy is officially acknowledged as an expression of culture comparable to architecture, theatre and cinema.

'Despite all the changes of the last thirty years, it seems the French still believe in and respect their eating traditions, many more than actually

practise them on any one day. And one of the strengths of the French model is its capacity to accept change and incorporate variation. Whether simmered over grandma's stove or purchased from Picard, a *sauté de lapin* still belongs to the traditional repertoire. Exotic cuisines can be accepted without renouncing French, and simplified meals can be adopted without challenging the primacy of the formal entrée-main dish-cheese-dessert pattern.

'In its definition, UNESCO recognizes that intangible cultural heritage is constantly recreated – in response to changes in the environment, for example – while still providing communities and groups with a sense of identity and continuity. Can France satisfy these criteria? With its application due this month, it should not be too long to wait for the verdict.'

...AND THEN ON SPAIN

Our youngest daughter Frances spent the last academic year teaching infants in Pamplona as part of her degree studies at Leeds University. We went over to see her in the spring and delighted in the unlimited supplies of wine from the Rioja. Alas, we have now drunk the last bottle. I was very interested by her tales of domestic life in the apartment she shared with three Spanish girls and she has kindly written a short note about their kitchen activities for our enlightenment. Names have been changed.

'My past visits to Spain have only consisted of the sunny and ever tourist-invaded Barcelona, and a camping tour of the south-east coast. So before I moved there for eight months last September, my mind was awash with romantic images of outdoor café life, eating local tomatoes soaked with extra virgin olive oil and drinking a fine Rioja.

'However, I was going to Pamplona, Navarre. Deep in land-locked northern Spain, it boasts an altogether heartier version of Spanish cuisine. Navarre itself produces some delicious (and fantastically cheap) wines, but my sunny streets were replaced by low-lit bars, as the icy cold Navarran winter descended on the city.

'I liked the food, but in a disinterested way that perhaps comes of being the daughter of an enthusiast. However, in Spain it is impossible to avoid the issue and most introductions to natives were quickly followed with a comparison between the food of Britain and Navarre, the latter always being the better, of course.

'My main insight into domestic Spanish cuisine was through the three girls I shared a flat with during my time there. We each cooked and ate differently, and to begin with most of my efforts induced a wrinkled nose and exclamations of "¿Que es? Ughhh..." Being someone who generally eats meat only when it is cooked for me, I was scorned within the kitchen; my food was very much alien to them, and I often had to explain the origins and ingredients of things such as porridge, just so they did not think I had entirely made it up.

'My documentation of Isabella's, Conchita's and Consuelo's eating habits is just that; I hold no superior knowledge of northern Spanish gastronomy and all that I do know was through simple observation.

'Consuelo, a scientist, rarely cooked for herself and brought most of her meals from her family home, neatly stacked in little Tupperware boxes. This initially surprised me at her age of 28, and here I could surely digress into comments on the Spanish family: I think this habit is more relevant to that than to the food. *Puré de verdures* (a thick soup of puréed vegetables) was a staple of her diet. She was also the most culinarily adventurous; the only one who would try a curry I cooked or the hummus I triumphantly bought home one day after finding it on the top shelf of 'El Corte Inglés' (Spain's largest department store), and actually her eating habits differed little from my own.

'All three girls ate a large lunch and smaller supper, something that I adopted myself after a few weeks there. It seems in Spain somehow impossible to start cooking an evening meal before nine o'clock, and Consuelo used to sup on the most delightful little plates of *puré* followed by one chicken wing and a pot of fresh cheese and honey.

'Conchita, on the other hand, cooked all her meals in the flat. It was real food, and she spent long periods meticulously chopping mushrooms and prawns into tiny pieces, generally to mix them into a béchamel sauce and pour over an awaiting piece of fish. She cooked well, as her mother would, I assume. (Although I had to physically remove myself from the kitchen when I saw her vegetables still happily boiling away after twenty minutes.) Her midday meal was one she spent time and care preparing. But healthy eating is not something that preoccupied them in a way that it does many educated Britons, and I have seen Conchita eat her way through a long sausage of rich, sweet *morcilla* (black pudding), carefully topping each piece with an individual slice of Laughing Cow cheese. In the evening she

would drink a glass of Cola Cao, into which she poured piles of cereal over and over again. Cola Cao is a powdered hot chocolate drink, guzzled by children and adults alike across Spain. It has reached almost the same levels of popularity as tea over here, and when visiting friends' houses I would invariably be offered a cup of the sweet milky drink.

'Isabella interested me the most with her eating habits. Being a nurse, one might misguidedly have expected her to be the healthiest eater in the flat. However, a great dislike for vegetables, added to an addiction to Diet Coke, made this a challenge. Most of Isabella's food met the deep-fat fryer before landing on her plate and generally her meals were varying themes on meat and potatoes. She sweetly used to worry about my lack of protein intake, while I would worry back about her vitamin deficiencies, offering her vegetables, always to be rebuffed with a untrusting "No, gracias." Her attitude was echoed in the cafés and bars of Pamplona, where the *pintxos* (Basque for tapas) came fried with a side order of mayonnaise. At the four dinner parties that I attended during my time there the menus varied little, all serving the obligatory *tortilla*, *jamón* and *croquetas*. The food at these moments was passed around amid exclamations of "¡Qué rico!" and "¡Qué bueno!", and eaten with lots of wine and conversation. It was made to be enjoyed, and it was.

'Isabella and Conchita did not worry as I did about getting enough vitamin C or eating their five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Although in Spain packaged food has taken a similar place in the kitchen as it has in the UK, in many ways cooking has changed little over the decades. In more traditional areas such as Pamplona, the great influx of ethnic cuisine has not happened, and the population is confident in the richness of their own gastronomic heritage. This ethos is upheld by all: from the most expensive restaurants to the cheapest bars, right down to my own flat.'

CHARLES CAMPION

Following our notice of his most recent book (*Eat Up!*, published by Kyle Cathie), I had a spirited response from Mr Campion which I print here: 'The review was a very sloppy piece of work which suggested that I dined with 20 of my friends. If the writer had bothered to read the introduction, or indeed any chapter from start to finish, she would have learnt that the cooks that I visited were 16 strangers, and that dining with strangers was

the premise of the book. I would be interested to know whether Ms Field tried any of the recipes before condemning them? She would have been hard pressed to have made, matured and tried the blackberry vodka she dismisses given the time of year. I may be relentlessly upbeat; I may need to be described as a "critic" – I don't suppose a decade or so reviewing restaurants and writing about food and drink in the newspapers counts in the world of criticism hence the inverted commas – but I do make a point of visiting restaurants and trying the dishes before I write about them. Perhaps "reviewers" should read the books before committing their opinions to print?'

THOSE JURA WINES

We have had a good to-and-fro between William Woys Weaver and Gilly Lehmann on the medieval connections between Savoy and Cyprus and their impact on the grapes grown in that region of France and I shall print no more on the topic than a short communication from Gilly Lehmann on recent work relating to the origins of grape varieties in the Jura and Savoie.

'On the Cyprus-Savoie connection and the grape variety Altesse, the website Vin de Savoie, I think basing its remarks on an unpublished paper given at the first general assembly of the Centre d'Ampélographie Alpine Pierre Galet by José Vouillamoz on 8 December 2007, says: "Origine: les traditions sont multiples. Elles rapportent que les premiers plants auraient été ramenés de Byzance en 1367 par Amédée VI, ou en 1432 dans la dot d'Anne de Chypre mariée à Louis II [sic] de Savoie. La légende est belle, mais l'analyse de l'ADN de l'Altesse prouve qu'elle n'a pas une origine orientale, pas plus qu'elle n'est apparentée au Furmin [sic] (Tokay de Hongrie) cher à Pierre Galet. Des analyses plus poussées confirmeront (ou non) une parentée [sic] avec le Chasselas." Source: the page is available by using the left-hand link to "cépages" at: http://www.vin-de-savoie.org/

'This site was last updated in December 2009, and publication of Vouillamoz's work is stated to be forthcoming. Vouillamoz's presentation apparently caused considerable surprise to Pierre Galet, who was in the audience as the honorary president of the Centre, to which he has donated his archives.

'A document from the CAAPG gives a full list of "Alpine" grape varieties, established by Vouillamoz, dated 28 November 2008. Included in the list is 'Savagnin Blanc', with the comment that it is a variety from Franche-

Comté, not of Alpine origin although attested as being grown in the Valais by 1540.

'On the genetic profiling of the Savagnin grape, José Vouillamoz of the University of Neuchâtel (and his team) is responsible for the SVMD (Swiss *Vitis* Microsatellite Database). The Swiss research centre has been investigating the origins of the 'Chasselas' grape, and concludes that it probably originated in the Lausanne area, this opinion being based on genetic profiling and analysis of historical references. In the course of the investigation, the authors examined a large number of potential parents. They refute the legend that the grape originated in Egypt (where it is now known as "Fayoumi") or in Turkey, and more generally emphasize the separation between Western European grapes and Near Eastern ones. DNA profiling shows that grape varieties from France "cover" all German varieties and some Italian varieties. Swiss grape varieties are shared with France and Italy. Hungarian grape varieties are totally distinct from other European varieties, with the exception of "Gouais Blanc", a very old variety which is the parent of many others, including "Furmint". French varieties may be divided into two groups: the oldest varieties ("Altesse" and "Gringet" from Savoie, "Marsanne" and "Roussanne" from the northern reaches of the Rhône valley, "Sauvignon Blanc" from the Bordeaux area, "Savagnin Blanc" or "Traminer" from the Jura, "Pinot" from Burgundy, "Syrah" from the Rhône, and "Mondeuse Noire" from Savoie), and a group composed of "Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains", "Melon" and "Gamay" from Burgundy, "Petit Meslier" from Champagne, "Jacquère" from Savoie, etc. The last 4 named are all the result of spontaneous hybridization between varieties from the first group and "Gouais Blanc". Source: J.F. Vouillamoz, C. Arnold, *Etude historico-génétique de l'origine du 'Chasselas'*, available at: http://www.ovv.ch/download/Vouillamoz__Arnold_Chasselas_Paper.pdf. The SVMD and the profile for Traminer and other grapes can be accessed at: http://www1.unine.ch/svmd.

'On the uniqueness of the *voile* of *vin jaune,* genetic analysis of the yeasts in the *voile* of *vin jaune* shows that they belong to a specific family of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, which is different from the yeasts in the *voile* of Spanish sherries. The three strains of *Saccharomyces* were found in *voiles* of ages varying between 1 and 6 years, taken from 9 different cellars. They are: *S. beticus*, *S. montuliensis*, *S. cheresiensis*. The first two are responsible for the production of sotolon. Source: C. Charpentier & J.L. Legras, "Les

levures de voile du Jura: diversité génotypique et technologique", poster presented by INRA researchers at the 8th International Symposium of Œnology at Bordeaux, 25-27 June 2007 - PDF document, available at: http://www.oenologie.u-bordeaux2.fr/sympo/poster/fichiers/2-15.pdf/'

A DIALOGUE WITH THE DEAD

Dialogues of the Dead was published in 1760. The author was George, Lord Lyttelton (although some of the book was composed by the bluestocking Mrs Montagu). Dialogue XIX is between Apicius and Darteneuf. This Darteneuf (see *DNB*) was otherwise known as Charles Dartiquenave (1664–1737), an epicure and wit and friend of Swift and the *Tatler* set.

Darteneuf. — Alas! poor Apicius, I pity thee from my heart for not having lived in my age and in my country. How many good dishes, unknown at Rome in thy days, have I feasted upon in England! *Apicius*. — Keep your pity for yourself. How many good dishes have I feasted upon in Rome which England does not produce, or of which the knowledge has been lost, with other treasures of antiquity, in these degenerate days! The fat paps of a sow, the livers of *scari*, the brains of phoenicopters, and the *tripotanum*, which consisted of three excellent sorts of fish, for which you English have no names, the *lupus marinus*, the *myxo*, and the *muraena*. *Darteneuf*. — I thought the *muraena* had been our lamprey. We have delicate ones in the Severn. *Apicius*. — No; the *muraena*, so respected by the ancient Roman senators, was a salt-water fish, and kept by our nobles in ponds, into which the sea was admitted. *Darteneuf*. — Why, then, I dare say our Severn lampreys are better. Did you ever eat any of them stewed or potted? *Apicius*. — I was never in Britain. Your country then was too barbarous for me to go thither. I should have been afraid that the Britons would have eaten me. *Darteneuf*. — I am sorry for you, very sorry; for if you never were in Britain you never ate the best oysters. *Apicius*. — Pardon me, sir, your Sandwich oysters were brought to Rome in my time. *Darteneuf*. — They could not be fresh; they were good for nothing there. You should have come to Sandwich to eat them. It is a shame for you that you did not. An epicure talk of danger when he is in search of a dainty! Did not Leander swim over the Hellespont in a tempest to get to his mistress? And what is a wench to a barrel of exquisite oysters? *Apicius*. — Nay; I am sure you can't blame me for any want of alertness in seeking fine fishes. I sailed to

the coast of Africa, from Minturnae in Campania, only to taste of one species, which I heard was larger there than it was on our coast; and finding that I had received a false information, I returned immediately, without even deigning to land. *Darteneuf*. — There was some sense in that. But why did not you also make a voyage to Sandwich? Had you once tasted those oysters in their highest perfection, you would never have come back; you would have eaten till you burst. *Apicius*. — I wish I had. It would have been better than poisoning myself, as I did at Rome, because I found, upon the balance of my accounts, I had only the pitiful sum of fourscore thousand pounds left, which would not afford me a table to keep me from starving. *Darteneuf*. — A sum of fourscore thousand pounds not keep you from starving! Would I had had it! I should have been twenty years in spending it, with the best table in London. *Apicius*. — Alas, poor man! This shows that you English have no idea of the luxury that reigned in our tables. Before I died I had spent in my kitchen 807,291 pounds 13s. 4d. *Darteneuf*. — I don't believe a word of it. There is certainly an error in the account. *Apicius*. — Why, the establishment of Lucullus for his suppers in the Apollo — I mean for every supper he sat down to in the room which he called by that name — was 5,000 drachms, which is in your money 1,614 pounds 11s. 8d. *Darteneuf*. — Would I had supped with him there! But are you sure there is no blunder in these calculations? *Apicius*. — Ask your learned men that. I reckon as they tell me. But you may think that these feasts were made only by great men, by triumphant generals, like Lucullus, who had plundered all Asia to help him in his housekeeping. What will you say when I tell you that the player Æsopus had one dish that cost him 6,000 sestertia — that is, 4,843 pounds 10s. English? *Darteneuf*. — What will I say? Why, that I pity my worthy friend Mr. Gibber, and that, if I had known this when alive, I should have hanged myself for vexation that I did not live in those days. *Apicius*. — Well you might, well you might. You don't know what eating is. You never could know it. Nothing less than the wealth of the Roman Empire is sufficient to enable a man of taste to keep a good table. Our players were infinitely richer than your princes. *Darteneuf*. — Oh that I had but lived in the blessed reign of Caligula, or of Vitellius, or of Heliogabalus, and had been admitted to the honour of dining with their slaves! *Apicius*. — Ay, there you touch me. I am miserable that I died before their good times. They carried the glories of their table much farther than the best eaters of the age in which I lived. Vitellius spent in feasting, within

the compass of one year, what would amount in your money to above 7,200,000 pounds. He told me so himself in a conversation I had with him not long ago. And the two others you mentioned did not fall very short of his royal magnificence. *Darteneuf*. — These, indeed, were great princes. But what most affects me is the luxury of that upstart fellow Æsopus. Pray, of what ingredients might the dish he paid so much for consist? *Apicius*. — Chiefly of singing birds. It was that which so greatly enhanced the price. *Darteneuf*. — Of singing birds! Choke him! I never ate but one, which I stole out of its cage from a lady of my acquaintance, and all London was in an uproar, as if I had stolen and roasted an only child. But, upon recollection, I doubt whether I have really so much cause to envy Æsopus. For the singing bird which I ate was not so good as a wheat-ear or becafigue. And therefore I suspect that all the luxury you have bragged of was nothing but vanity. It was like the foolish extravagance of the son of Æsopus, who dissolved pearls in vinegar and drank them at supper. I will stake my credit that a haunch of good buck venison and my favourite ham pie were much better dishes than any at the table of Vitellius himself. It does not appear that you ancients ever had any good soups, without which a man of taste cannot possibly dine. The rabbits in Italy are detestable. But what is better than the wing of one of our English wild rabbits? I have been told you had no turkeys. The mutton in Italy is ill-flavoured. And as for your boars roasted whole, they were only fit to be served up at a corporation feast or election dinner. A small barbecued hog is worth a hundred of them. And a good collar of Canterbury or Shrewsbury brawn is a much better dish. *Apicius*. — If you had some meats that we wanted, yet our cookery must have been greatly superior to yours. Our cooks were so excellent that they could give to hog's flesh the taste of all other meats. *Darteneuf*. — I should never have endured their imitations. You might as easily have imposed on a good connoisseur in painting the copy of a fine picture for the original. Our cooks, on the contrary, give to all other meats, and even to some kinds of fish, a rich flavour of bacon without destroying that which makes the distinction of one from another. It does not appear to me that essence of hams was ever known to the ancients. We have a hundred ragouts, the composition of which surpasses all description. Had yours been as good, you could not have lain indolently lolling upon couches while you were eating. They would have made you sit up and mind your business. Then you had a strange custom of hearing things read to you while you were at

supper. This demonstrates that you were not so well entertained as we are with our meat. When I was at table, I neither heard, nor saw, nor spoke; I only tasted. But the worst of all is that, in the utmost perfection of your luxury, you had no wine to be named with claret, Burgundy, champagne, old hock, or Tokay. You boasted much of your Falernum, but I have tasted the Lachrymae Christi and other wines of that coast, not one of which would I have drunk above a glass or two of if you would have given me the Kingdom of Naples. I have read that you boiled your wines and mixed water with them, which is sufficient evidence that in themselves they were not fit to drink. *Apicius*. — I am afraid you do really excel us in wines; not to mention your beer, your cider, and your perry, of all which I have heard great fame from your countrymen, and their report has been confirmed by the testimony of their neighbours who have travelled into England. Wonderful things have been also said to me of an English liquor called punch. *Darteneuf*. — Ay, to have died without tasting that is miserable indeed! There is rum punch and arrack punch! It is difficult to say which is best, but Jupiter would have given his nectar for either of them, upon my word and honour. *Apicius*. — The thought of them puts me into a fever with thirst. *Darteneuf*. — Those incomparable liquors are brought to us from the East and West Indies, of the first of which you knew little, and of the latter nothing. This alone is sufficient to determine the dispute. What a new world of good things for eating and drinking has Columbus opened to us! Think of that, and despair. *Apicius*. — I cannot indeed but exceedingly lament my ill fate that America was not discovered before I was born. It tortures me when I hear of chocolate, pineapples, and a number of other fine fruits, or delicious meats, produced there which I have never tasted. *Darteneuf*. — The single advantage of having sugar to sweeten everything with, instead of honey, which you, for want of the other, were obliged to make use of, is inestimable. *Apicius*. — I confess your superiority in that important article. But what grieves me most is that I never ate a turtle. They tell me that it is absolutely the best of all foods. *Darteneuf*. — Yes, I have heard the Americans say so, but I never ate any; for in my time they were not brought over to England. *Apicius*. — Never ate any turtle! How couldst thou dare to accuse me of not going to Sandwich to eat oysters, and didst not thyself take a trip to America to riot on turtles? But know, wretched man, I am credibly informed that they are now as plentiful in England as sturgeons. There are turtle-boats that go regularly

to London and Bristol from the West Indies. I have just received this information from a fat alderman, who died in London last week of a surfeit he got at a turtle feast in that city. *Darteneuf*. — What does he say? Does he affirm to you that turtle is better than venison? *Apicius*. — He says, there was a haunch of the fattest venison untouched, while every mouth was employed on the turtle alone. *Darteneuf*. — Alas! how imperfect is human felicity! I lived in an age when the noble science of eating was supposed to have been carried to its highest perfection in England and France. And yet a turtle feast is a novelty to me! Would it be impossible, do you think, to obtain leave from Pluto of going back for one day to my own table at London just to taste of that food? I would promise to kill myself by the quantity of it I would eat before the next morning. *Apicius*. — You have forgot you have no body. That which you had has long been rotten, and you can never return to the earth with another, unless Pythagoras should send you thither to animate a hog. But comfort yourself that, as you have eaten dainties which I never tasted, so the next age will eat some unknown to this. New discoveries will be made, and new delicacies brought from other parts of the world. But see; who comes hither? I think it is Mercury. *Mercury*. — Gentlemen, I must tell you that I have stood near you invisible, and heard your discourse — a privilege which, you know, we deities use as often as we please. Attend, therefore, to what I shall communicate to you, relating to the subject upon which you have been talking. I know two men, one of whom lived in ancient, and the other in modern times, who had much more pleasure in eating than either of you through the whole course of your lives. *Apicius*. — One of these happy epicures, I presume, was a Sybarite, and the other a French gentleman settled in the West Indies. *Mercury*. — No; one was a Spartan soldier, and the other an English farmer. I see you both look astonished. But what I tell you is truth. Labour and hunger gave a relish to the black broth of the former, and the salt beef of the latter, beyond what you ever found in the *tripotanums* or ham pies, that vainly stimulated your forced and languid appetites, which perpetual indolence weakened, and constant luxury overcharged. *Darteneuf*. — This, Apicius, is more mortifying than not to have shared a turtle feast. *Apicius*. — I wish, Mercury, you had taught me your art of cookery in my lifetime; but it is a sad thing not to know what good living is till after one is dead.

DRINKS

I had an enjoyable day during the summer introducing various cookery people at the Dartington Literary Festival, Ways with Words. Chief among them were Rose Prince and Sarah Raven. Both have produced eminently usable general recipe collections of the sort that fill cooks and carers with joy. The instructions can be relied upon and the ideas are applicable to whatever is in the shops. Diana Henry's latest book is another of that ilk. I did notice, particularly in *Sarah Raven's Food for Friends and Family*, that plenty of space was given to drinks and potions. A chapter on drinks was a general feature of Victorian manuals but less frequently found, I think, in the books produced in my youth. We have got quite keen on the things. A shortcut to pain relief, of course, but also a great way to use gluts or oversupply of garden and hedgerow fruits. We have made a satisfying blackcurrant rum this year, out of Anne Cobbett's *The English Housekeeper* (a lovely book). Astonishingly, it has jellied in the bottles, something we experienced last season when we made a redcurrant sauce or syrup (also out of Cobbett), yet this was without boiling or jam-making in the English manner – I guess it is the same process as described by Jane Grigson in her recipe (taken from Joseph Favre) for uncooked redcurrant jelly (there is also a description of a similar process in a food blog by Carol Egbert). Another addition to our drinks cupboard, thanks to neighbours Paul and George Crisell, is blackberry whisky, made in the same fashion as sloe gin. When we finally harvest our morello cherries in sufficient quantity (perhaps never), we will embark on cherry brandy.

A NEW POLITICAL PROGRAMME

Our neighbours in Allalleigh, the small settlement of eco-warriors that took root in benders and yurts on a hilltop a few hundred yards from the hamlet over the last few years, have come back to the top of teatime discussions with an application for extension to their temporary planning permission. As homework I read Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward's *Arcadia for All*, a history of the plotlands of makeshift housing (Peacehaven is the most famous example) that sprang up in the first half of the last century. I recommend it. It also got me thinking of how we can battle chaos on the one hand and intrusive gigantism on the other. One of the downsides of my lifetime has been the disappearance of local independence as Whitehall

has turned cities, towns and counties into agents, not actors. I have three proposals which might encourage local initiatives. It should be a statutory obligation that each town council provides a covered market for the sale of food. While the perimeters of the building might be let at commercial rates (to fund the core), the market itself would be available rent free to local producers. Each town and parish council should also make available at least five hectares of land for allotments. And finally, each town and parish council should allocate a similar area for occupation by temporary or alternative housing of the sort described by Colin Ward. There is certain need for this form of housing, if only because of the crazy prices in the countryside today, but the need needs channelling more creatively than it is at present.

RACISM AND PIGS

Percy's sad demise left Alice, our sow, without a mate, alone in her barn and field. She is getting on in years so that one solution for keeping her in company – getting her pregnant and then letting her live with one or more of her progeny – was doubtful of success. An alternative was to find a boar of mature years that we could buy for a Darby and Joan resolution, but this is not easy in a world where pigs live short lives before the abattoir. A third route, which we have embraced, was to import some young stock with which she could be persuaded to exist in harmony. That's not so simple with pigs: they can be savage, mindful of their status and their independence. Of course, our anthropomorphic idea that she was lonely may be nonsense. Whatever, we bought two young Berkshire pigs (a male and a female, Ferdinand and Isabella), a breed that is black and on the small side. They have been introduced to the matron and seem to have adjusted to their quarters, as has Alice (on the whole) to her new companions. The bargain was struck with a breeder of Berkshires who was unimpressed by my insouciance about pure bloodlines. The manic pursuit of genetic exceptionalism in animals makes me uneasy. We have been schooled to avoid the attitude in human affairs, indeed to embrace all sorts of interbreeding. We do not worry about the loss of genetic information when we indulge in it ourselves, why then should we worry if animals are subject to it? I often think that these rare-breed enthusiasts might be fascist eugenicists *manqués*.

PRICE OF HAY

The agricultural year has so far been dominated by the long drought through late spring and early summer. While enjoying the sunshine, it was clear more rain was needed for a good crop of hay. We cut our top field again (using both the tiny machine – with a new engine – pictured on the cover of *PPC* 88 and a hired single-axle tractor from the Swiss manufacturer Aebi), but the yield was down from eight giant bales to five. The farm suppliers have reported prices of £14 for a small bale imported from up-country and £8–9 for one from Devon. This compares to £2.50 a couple of years ago, £4 more recently. One can only fear the consequences for horse-keepers and for the retail price of beef and lamb. Many farmers are thinning their herds in anticipation of the rise in feed costs.

A POTTERY WEEKEND

The Taena Pottery of Whitley Court, Upton St Leonards in Gloucestershire is a long-lived and famous workshop specializing in slipware. I have childhood memories of visiting it when it was located in a lay community attached to Prinknash Abbey, and the potters were Margaret Leach and Lou Groves. We used their pots in the early years at the Hole in the Wall. For some time John Edgeler has been organizing annual weekend workshops on traditional pottery and slipware. On 18/19 June 2011 the subject is 'Slow Food and Hot Pots: an Oven and Kilns Weekend of Making and Cooking Traditional Pots and Food'. They are both constructing traditional ovens and kilns, making historic pot forms for cooking and serving foods, eating a chafing-dish banquet and practising using pots over wood fires. Enquiries to John Edgeler, Long Room Gallery, High Street, Winchcombe, Gloucs. GL54 5LJ; telephone 01242 602319 or email: info@cotswoldsliving.co.uk.

A READER'S BLOG

We were touched by a kind mention of *Rhubarbaria* on an Internet blog called 'The Desperate Reader' which can be dialled up on <http://desperatereader.blogspot.com>. I recommend it as an attractive and enjoyable guide to a person's reading and we are grateful for its support of Prospect.

'SHEEP PALARAIX'

Mr Jeremy Field, who is transcribing a set of recipes dating from 1739–65 belonging to one Martha Frewen, has sent me the following and hopes that a reader might be able to explain the name of the little dish of fritters. The note 'Quite obsolete' was added by a later reader of the recipes. You can reply to me and I will forward your suggestions.

> Sheep Palaraix (100)
> Quite obsolete
> Grate a stale white loaf, put in a pint of cream, 4 eggs, beat with sugar, nutmeg & sack. Drop 'em like fritters into a pan with butter. Strew sugar on them. 'Tis pretty for supper or a side dish.

OUR NEW WEBSITE

Our new reconstructed website is up and running at <https://prospectbooks.co.uk>. I am in permanent debt to Andrew Gosling who created and maintained the first version of the site but he has now ceded control to Ben Morrow. There are still a few things to upload (it's astonishing how much dreary labour goes into marshalling the material) but the new site is, I think, clean, clear and handsome, and has the facility to sell books and take money online. Google has been manipulated so that links to the old site are forwarded to the new and links from other sites have been re-engineered so that they pass the brouser to the new address. We join the twenty-first century.

NEW TITLES FROM PROSPECT BOOKS

Two new books have been published since our last issue. The first was *Food and Language* (£30), the proceedings of last year's Oxford Symposium. The second is Malcolm Thick's study, *Sir Hugh Plat. The Search for Useful Knowledge in Early Modern London* (£30). These can be inspected on the new website. I have reprinted Cato's *On Agriculture*, translated by Andrew Dalby (£12.50). I am on the verge of receiving new versions of two familiar titles. C. Anne Wilson's *Book of Marmalade* and Peter Davidson and Jane Stevenson's edition of *The Closet of Sir Kenelm Digby Opened* have both been remodelled to fit the format of 'The English Kitchen' series. We have had a vigorous summer, galvanized by help from students. This means that several titles are

in active preparation. First to arrive will be Andrew Dalby's translation of the Byzantine agricultural treatise, *Geoponika*; next will be the revised and enlarged edition of *Cake Stall* by Geraldene Holt. This is entitled *Geraldene Holt's Cakes* and will give inspiration to cake bakers everywhere.

BOOK REVIEWS

I have used up my allocation of space for this issue so there will be no book reviews, which will be held over to the next issue.