Twelfth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy

Adelaide 10–13 March 2002

The Edible City: Ideas For Urban Gastronomy

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The Edible City: Ideas For Urban Gastronomy

Edited by Gay Bilson, Jennifer Hillier and Barbara Santich

Contents

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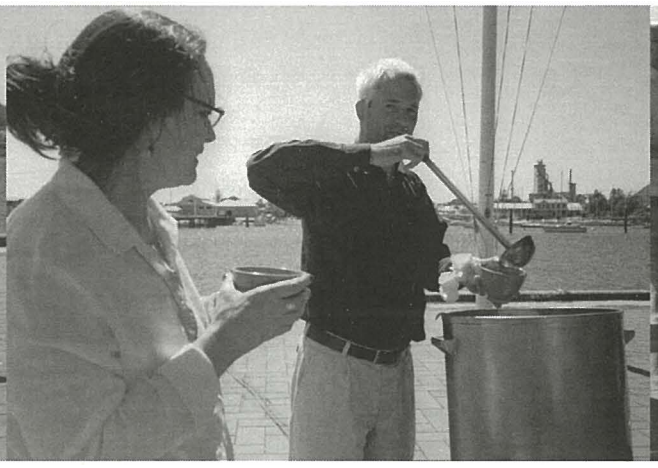
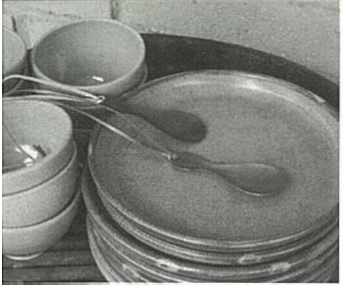


Symposium Program

SUNDAY 10 March	**Largs Bay Sailing Club**
5.00pm	Registration with Barbara Santich Form collection – Alison Keal Book sales – Michael Treloar Antiquarian Booksellers
7.00pm	Welcome Festivals and community – Peter Sellars
7.30pm	Supper – Brigita Turniski Irish bagpipes, played by Dicky Deegan

MONDAY 11 March	**Douglas Mawson Institute of TAFE, Port Adelaide**
9.00am onwards	Coffee (Rio)
9.30am – 11.00am	**Locating the City** Chair: Alan Saunders John Fitzpatrick – 'Locating the City' John Coveney – 'City: Parasite or Symbiont?'
11.00 – 11.15am	Break for biscuits and coffee
11.15 – 12.45pm	**Thinking the City I** Chair: Gae Pincus Jean Duruz – 'Haunted Kitchens: Cooking and Remembering' Paul van Reyk – 'Utopias and Dystopias, Upepsia and Dyspepsia' Lunch introduced by Salvatore Pepe
12.45 – 2.30pm	**RIVERSIDE LUNCH I** – Salvatore Pepe
2.30 – 3.00pm	**My Favourite Edible City** Chair: Colin Sheringham
3.00 – 5.00pm	**[The Art of] Living the City I** Chair: Jennifer Hillier 'Show and Tell' in which Symposium contributors present objects reflecting their gastronomic experiences in the city – with Symposium Limoncello Dinner Service by Cath Kerry
5.00 – 6.30pm	**Feeding the City** (Lecture Theatre) Chair: Barbara Santich Dr Jane Lomax Smith Stephanie Alexander – 'A Work in Progress: The Kitchen Garden at Collingwood College' (gardening, cooking and eating together for 130 children aged 8–12 in an inner-suburban school) Contributing: Jane Adams, Jill Stone, Pam Gillespie
8.00pm	**BEACH DINNER I** (Largs Bay Sailing Club) – Cheong Liew and Pangming Chiu

TUESDAY 12 March	**Douglas Mawson Institute of TAFE, Port Adelaide**
9.00am onwards	Coffee (Rio)
10.00 – 11.00am	**Thinking the City II** Gay Bilson 'Trust, Conviviality and the Size of the Table' Contributing: Alicia Rios
11.00 – 11.15am	Break for biscuits and coffee
11.15 – 12.30pm	**Living the City** Chair: Stephanie Alexander Bob MacLennan – 'Good Food, Good Wine, Good Fellowship – Beefsteak and Burgundy and other Dining Associations' Contributors – Anthony Walsh, Barbara Santich Lunch introduced by Russell Jeavons
12.30 – 2.30pm	**RIVERSIDE LUNCH II** – Russell Jeavons
2.30 – 3.00pm	**My Favourite Edible Street** Chair: Colin Sheringham
3.00 – 4.45pm	**[The Art of] Living the City II** Chair: Jennifer Hillier 'Show and Tell': Artists and curators from across town talk about how food is 'shown' in galleries and museums in the city – with Symposium Limoncello Andrew Welch Damon Moon Janice Lally Angus Trumble Cath Kerry Barbara Santich
4.45 – 5.00pm	Break for Coffee
5.00 – 6.00pm	**Tasting the City – The Foodie Flâneur** (Lecture Theatre) Chair: Paul van Reyk Angus Trumble 'The Evolution of the Flâneur in French Painting – Inhabitant, Consumer and Ruler of the Modern City' Contributing: Scott Minervini
8.00pm	**BEACH DINNER II** (Largs Bay Sailing Club) – Tania Cavaiuolo
WEDNESDAY 13 March	**Art Gallery Café, North Terrace, Adelaide**
9.30am	**BREAKFAST** – Cath Kerry Chairs: Gay Bilson, Jennifer Hillier, Cath Kerry, Barbara Santich Summing Up – Where Do We Go From Here



Twelfth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, Adelaide 10–13 March 2002

The Edible City: Ideas For Urban Gastronomy

Report by Jennifer Hillier[1]

Adelaide's belated summer provided perfect March weather for the Twelfth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy. The theme 'The Edible City: Ideas for Urban Gastronomy' meshed with the Adelaide Festival 2002, when committee member (and associate Festival director) Gay Bilson provided the city with 'edible leis', an 'edible library' and 'edible' hospital food.

The day sessions were in an airy room at the Mawson Institute of TAFE overlooking the once vibrant Port River, warehouses and tugs. With the bulk of the shipping moved to container terminals at Outer Harbor, the rundown historic urban landscape is an eloquent reminder of the fate of many city ports. Urban 'renewal' and cultural regeneration is happening. However, the Port Adelaide basin will soon be a parking lot for power boats, but the boatbuilders and tugs will be gone. (Postscript: As of December 2007 the local community is still battling proposed generic high rise dormitories on the banks of the Port River.)

This said the quay outside our seminar room proved to be a great location for all the lunches. The prevailing ethos was one of simplicity, coherence and hospitality. The tradition of the banquet on the last night was inverted, the most elaborate of our meals being presented on the first night. The purpose of the meals was not to show off chefs. Each cook worked with the limits of the same bowl and the same plate – created especially for the Symposium by Damon Moon – and a spoon and a splayd. The spoons were of anodised aluminium and crafted by Andrew Welch of the JamFactory. They dipped into bowls of lemon gelato, fresh bean curd with ginger syrup, garlic mayonnaise and even balanced eggs in a race to revive us after our last lunch. They were carried on thongs like totemic leis around our necks. Mine is claret red and already my favourite piece of jewellery.

Evening meals were a ten minutes drive across the peninsula at the Largs Bay Sailing Club. While nothing to write home about architecturally, it offered two large club rooms, two bars, an adequate kitchen and stunning views of the Gulf of St Vincent and the jetties of both Semaphore and Largs Bay. The first evening of welcome featured a return of bookseller Michael Treloar, jigs before and laments after supper played on the Irish bagpipes by Dicky Deegan, and a talk by original Festival director Peter Sellars.

The table of superb *mezze* was prepared by Brigita Turniski and Adelaide TAFE students. On the second night Cheong Liew and Pangming Chiu cooked the comforting dish of Hainan chicken rice, followed by a gentle bowl of tender fresh bean curd with ginger syrup, fried pastries and red date tea – sustaining simplicity indeed! Our last 'Beach Dinner' consisted of Le Grand Aioli. Finding inspiration again in the simple yet refined festive tradition of the South of France, Cath Kerry guided her chef from the Art Gallery Café, Tania Cavaiuolo, who was helped by Jodie Polkinghorne. The meal concluded with Camembert made for the Symposium by Woodside Cheesewrights, fresh grapes and Gay Bilson's Pamelas.

Our menu of 'Riverside Lunches' featured on the first day: McLaren Vale olives, *pesce in saor* with tommy ruff fillets, *pesce gratinato* with garfish, rocket, pink grapefruit and witloof salad,

1 Published in the Newsletter of the Research Centre for the History of Food and Drink

Parmigiano-Reggiano, taralli, Willunga almonds and *gelato al limone*. It was the perfect lunch: the fish was meltingly fresh, the parmesan delicious, the new season almonds a revelation. Thanks to Salvatore Pepe from Cibo Ristorante. On the second day, Russell Jeavons barbecued local blue swimmer crabs with vegetable salad and his wood oven wholemeal bread. For those willing, the picked crab shells didn't got to waste, providing the flavour for a full bowl of broth.

Wines throughout the Symposium were mostly from Chain of Ponds, selected by Zar Brooks, with a contribution from Possums Vineyard, McLaren Vale for the final dinner.

The food for thought took the form of extended conversations introduced by discussion papers. John Fitzpatrick and John Coveney led off with contributions on the relationships between cities and their broad environments. Jean Duruz described how contemporary urban kitchens are 'haunted' by the romanticised past, and Paul van Reyk described food and sex in his utopias and dystopias. Stephanie Alexander explained her school garden and kitchen project at Collingwood College in Melbourne. These kids are also discovering how to dine together. Jill Stone gave an impressive account of her life growing herbs for an increasingly bureaucratised market place. Jane Adams described her experiences as a consultant working with local groups trying to establish farmers markets. Bob MacLennan explored the history of Beefsteak and Burgundy clubs in Brisbane. Former Lord Mayor and new Labor MP, Dr Jane Lomax Smith, outlined her vision for Adelaide, the gastronomic city. A session on the 'Foodie Flâneur' attracted a curator of European Art, Angus Trumble, a restaurateur, Scott Minervini, and an academic, Colin Sheringham.

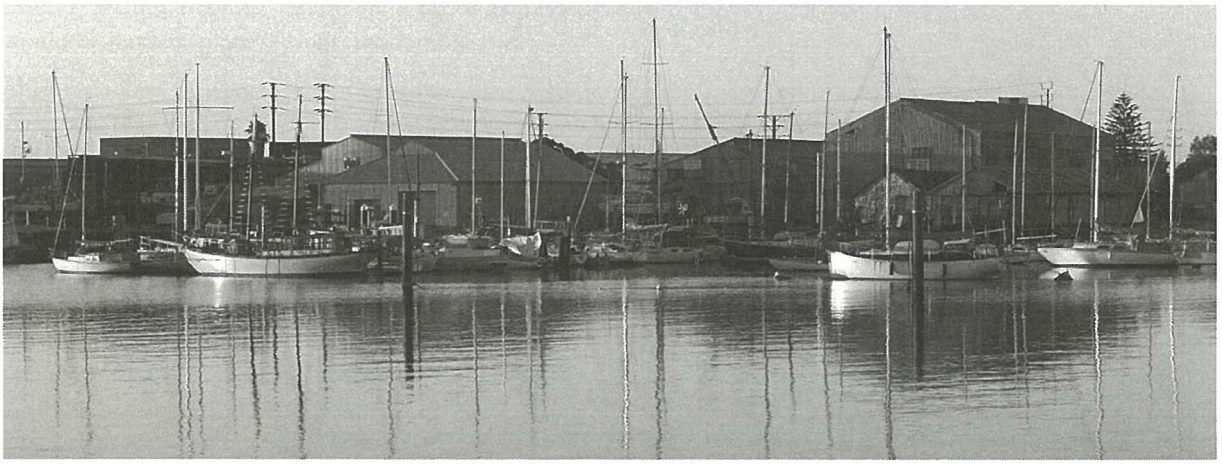
Each day we heard stories of favourite 'edible cities' and 'edible streets' and each day participants described culinary objects brought for our 'Show and Tells'. Many of these short statements were highlights of the Symposium. Having inspired the 'Show and Tells' by agreeing to show her dinner sets, Cath Kerry capped off the session with an erudite talk on her fine collection. The counterpoint to the 'private Show and Tell' session on the first day was the 'public Show and Tell' on the second. This included Angus Trumble from the Art Gallery, Andrew Welch from the JamFactory and Janice Lally, curator of the recent JamFactory exhibition, *Ritual of Tea*.

Sessions were punctuated by our predictably excellent contributor's biscuits and Rio Coffee. During the afternoon tiny glasses of Gay's limoncello were handed around.

Our summing-up breakfast was catered by Cath Kerry at the Art Gallery Café – watermelon juice with mint, fresh fruit, ***brik***, *galette* with goats curd, honey and dates. The ***brik*** was a revelation. Adapted from a Tunisian recipe, it consisted of breakfast eggs cooked to perfection totally enclosed in a fried pastry.

The next symposium is to be held in New South Wales in about 18 months.

Thanks to the Adelaide Symposium Committee: Gay Bilson, Jennifer Hillier, Cath Kerry, and Barbara Santich.



View from the Mawson Institute of TAFE across the Port Adelaide River to the boatyards and sailing club

Meals

Sunday 10 March

WELCOMING SUPPER – Brigita Turniski
Largs Bay Sailing Club
Breads: yufka and pide
Spinach and haloumi cheese fritters
Adana kebab with olive braised vegetables
Ajvar
Carrot and sheep yogurt dip
Sigara Böreki
Salmon kibbe naye
Tommy ruff fillets wrapped in vine leaves
Chicken marinated in hilbeh (coriander, fenugreek, chili)
Muhallebi with pistachios, semolina halva

Monday 11 March

RIVERSIDE LUNCH I – Salvatore Pepe, Cibo Ristorante
Douglas Mawson Institute
McLaren Vale olives
Pesce in saor with tommy ruff fillets
Pesce gratinato with garfish
Rocket, pink grapefruit and witloof salad
Parmigiano-Reggiano, taralli, Willunga almonds
Granita al limone

BEACH DINNER I – Cheong Liew and Pangming Chiu
Largs Bay Sailing Club
Hainan chicken rice
Fresh bean curd and ginger syrup
Fried pastries, red date tea

Tuesday 12 March

RIVERSIDE LUNCH II – Russell Jeavons
Douglas Mawson Institute
Charcoal-grilled blue swimmer crabs with potato rouille
The crabs' own broth
Vegetable salad
Russell's wood oven wholemeal bread

BEACH DINNER II – Tania Cavaiuolo and Jodie Polkinghorne
Largs Bay Sailing Club
Le Grand Aiöli
Camembert made for the Symposium by Woodside Cheesewrights
Fresh grapes, Gay Bilson's Pamelas

Wednesday 13 March

BREAKFAST – Cath Kerry and her kitchen
Art Gallery Café
Watermelon juice with mint, fresh fruit
Brik
Galette with goats curd, honey and dates
Coffee and tea

Plates and bowls by Damon Moon, spoons by Andrew Welch
Wines selected by Zar Brooks
Chain of Ponds Purple Patch Riesling 2001 (Eden Valley, Adelaide Hills)
Grave's Gate Shiraz 1999 (McLaren Vale)
Chain of Ponds Novello Rosso Sangiovese Grenache 2001 (Adelaide Hills)
Courtesy of John Possingham and Carol Summers
Possums Vineyard McLaren Vale Shiraz 2000
Possums Vineyard McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon 2000

One Plate, One Bowl and a Pendant Spoon

Gay Bilson

Every symposium, from the first in 1984, has aimed at excellence not only in its papers and discussions but in the meals offered. When Barbara Santich said, when we were planning this one, 'one perfect pear is as good as a cupful of caviar,' she was voicing the agreement on the part of the convenors of *The Edible City* Symposium for a gathering which would eschew the dramatic and theatrical and instead aim for something much more modest.

From the first symposium through to this one in 2002, there has also been a tradition of making much of the last meal, the banquet. In 1984, Phillip Searle, with the help of Cheong Liew, produced a meal which was as much splendid, exhilarating, and even shocking theatre as it was filling for the stomach, and differently to most good meals, it was far, far more than 'passingly excellent'. It was unforgettable.

The final symposium meal has always presented a challenge to the cooks invited to prepare it. That challenge has always included the memory of the first banquet, although after over 20 years, there are only a few of us (including the four convenors of this symposium) who were there. It took place a generation ago. No banquet has come anywhere near the brilliance of that first one, but a few have been memorable: Berowra Waters Inn's dinner in homage to the body in Canberra in 1993, Phillip Searle and Cheong Liew's remarkable *hangi* in the Grampians in 1996, Chris Manfield's ode to power in Sydney in 1998 are the ones that come to mind, and as I am writing this addendum to the proceedings after the last symposium in Tasmania (2007), their banquet, where we grazed on a raised, verdant paddock, should join the short list.

Breakfasts, lunches and dinners have included some fine meals too. Often they have addressed an idea, a theme, a cuisine, local produce or simply a belief in the cook herself. So why did we choose to make so little of the meals in 2002?

We didn't, or not exactly. What we were in complete agreement about was that all the food, even the 'banquet', would be cooked into meals which didn't go on and on, which were modest in motive, and which might be served using only the one plate, one bowl and the 'pendant spoon' (useful jewellery) which we had commissioned for each symposiast. It wasn't that having only this one setting, the food should conform to its modesty, but that everything about the meals would be modest: place settings, food, indeed wine too.

The meals were very good indeed and one of the most interesting and satisfying things about them was that the cooks who had been asked to do each one took their brief with equanimity and produced exactly what they had been asked to do. Not one of them, not even Cheong Liew, whose imagination and talent might easily have caused him to overstep the brief and produce surprise after surprise, felt any need to show off, to show us that they could do more. He and Pangming Chiu were asked to cook Hainan Chicken Rice and that they did.

By its title, the banquet might be seen to have stretched the rules of our serious game, but Le Grand Aiöli is at heart a simple meal with lashings of garlic in the mayonnaise. No one seemed to miss the drama of expectation that previous banquets had always held. Somehow, gastronomic life is more airy now.

Participants

Jane Adams
Potts Point
New South Wales

Lilian Alden
Sandhurst East
Victoria

Stephanie Alexander
Hawthorn
Victoria

Jennifer Bain
North Adelaide
South Australia

Maggie Beer
Tanunda
South Australia

Gay Bilson
Willunga
South Australia

Robyn Black
Hobart
Tasmania

Mary Brander
Ainslie
ACT

Rick Burford
North Adelaide
South Australia

Lois Butt
Kew
Victoria

John Coveney
Bedford Park
South Australia

Liz Crosby
East Melbourne
Victoria

Jean Duruz
Mile End
South Australia

Margaret Emery
Gunning
New South Wales

John Fitzpatrick
Largs Bay
South Australia

Zannie Flanagan
Willunga
South Australia

Jeanette Fry
Richmond
Victoria

Pam Gillespie
North Epping
New South Wales

Margaret Gregory
Parkside
South Australia

Jennifer Hillier
Largs Bay
South Australia

Siu Ling Hui
Hawksburn
Victoria

Ross and Maria Kelly
Paddington
New South Wales

Nola Kenny
Glen Osmond
South Australia

Catherine Kerry
Fitzroy
South Australia

Elizabeth Love
Eleebana
New South Wales

Bob MacLennan
Mount Glorious
Queensland

Lynn Martin
Adelaide
South Australia

Bernard McCarthy
Melbourne
Victoria

Andrew McConnell
Fitzroy
Victoria

Scott Minervini
New Town
Tasmania

Delia Nicholls
Hobart
Tasmania

Gae Pincus
Glebe
New South Wales

Karen Pridham
North Hobart
Tasmania

Alicia Rios
Madrid
Spain

Anne Ripper
Hobart
Tasmania

Barbara Santich
Brighton
South Australia

Alan Saunders
Paddington
New South Wales

Marilyn Shady
Barwon Heads
Victoria

Andrea and Bill Sharp
Sandy Bay
Tasmania

Colin Sheringham
Richmond
New South Wales

Anita Stewart
Elora, Ontario
Canada

Fiona Stewart
Potts Point
New South Wales

Jill Stone
Torrens Park
South Australia

Carol Summers
Unley Park
South Australia

Paul van Reyk
Petersham
New South Wales

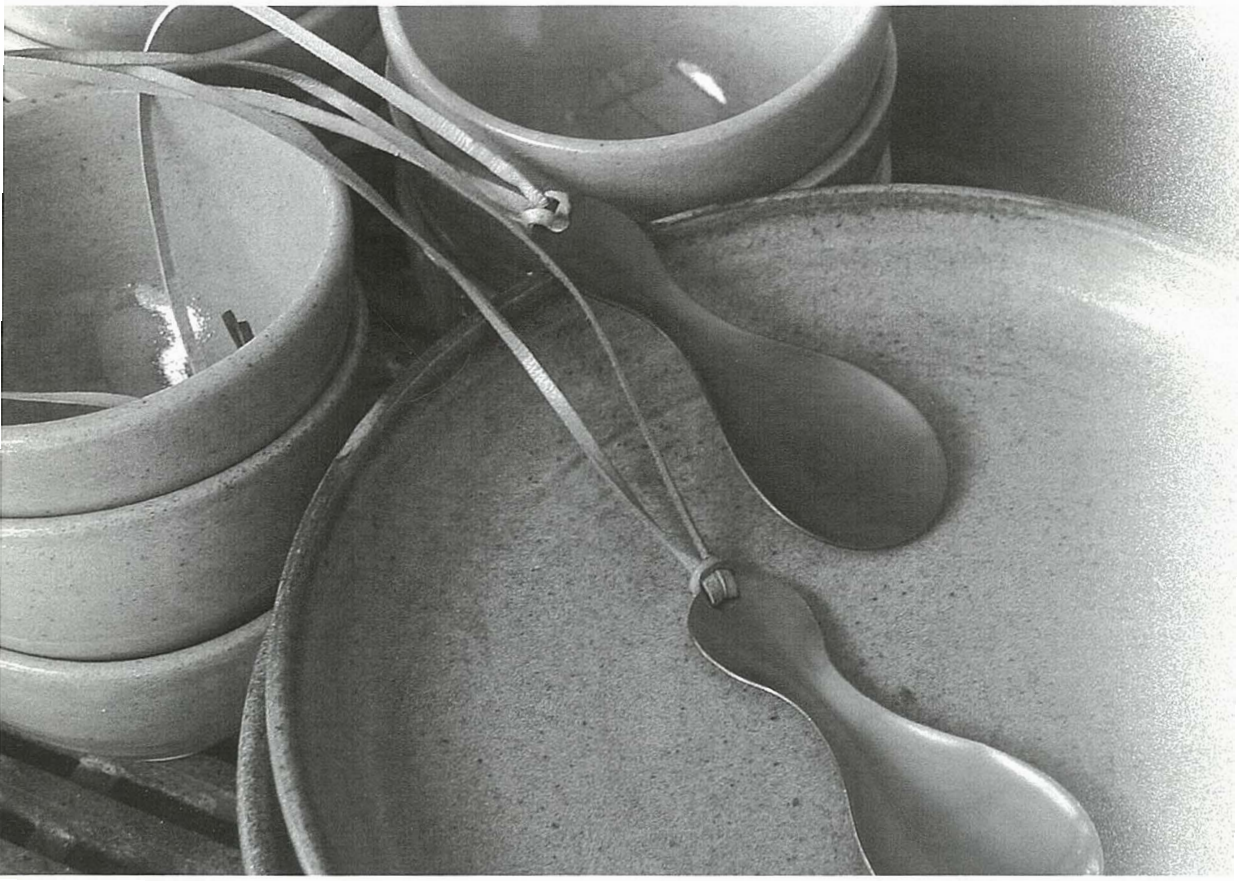
Anthony Walsh
Millswood
South Australia

Andrew Wood
Fitzroy North
Victoria

Sue Zweep
Austinmer
New South Wales

Sunday 10 March

Day One



Menu

Sunday 10 March

WELCOMING SUPPER

Brigita Turniski

at Largs Bay Sailing Club

Breads: yufka and pide

Spinach and haloumi cheese fritters

Adana kebab with olive braised vegetables

Ajvar

Carrot and sheep yogurt dip

Sigara Böreki

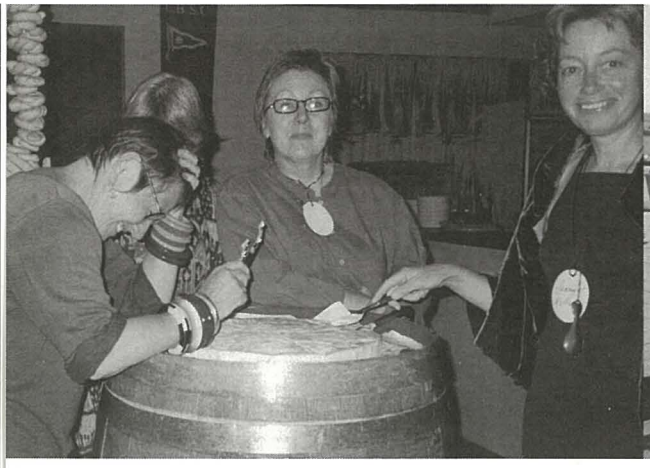
Salmon kibbe naye

Tommy ruff fillets wrapped in vine leaves

Chicken marinated in hilbeh (coriander, fenugreek, chili)

Muhallebi with pistachios, semolina halva

In Loving Memory of
Brigita Turniski (Whiting) 1959–2008

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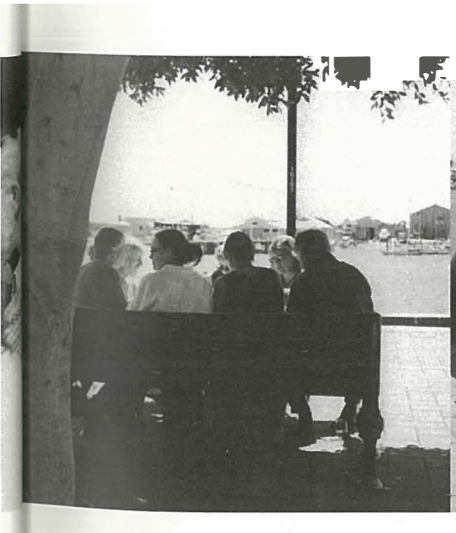
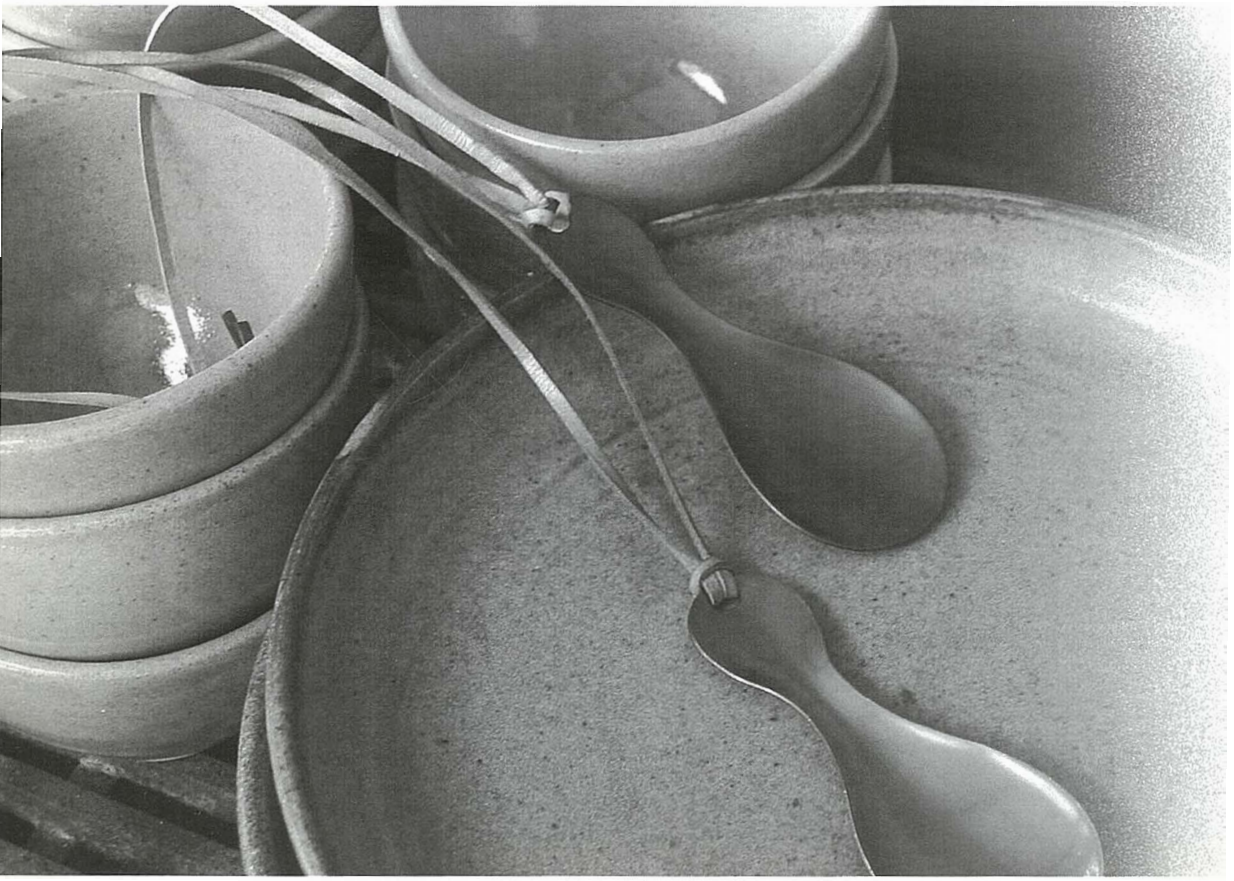


Monday 11 March

Day Two



Menu

Monday 11 March

RIVERSIDE LUNCH I

Salvatore Pepe, Cibo Ristorante

at Douglas Mawson Institute

McLaren Vale olives

Pesce in saor with tommy ruff fillets

Pesce gratinato with garfish

Rocket, pink grapefruit and witloof salad

Parmigiano-Reggiano, taralli, Willunga almonds

Granita al limone

BEACH DINNER I

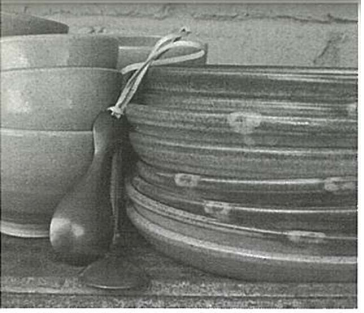
Cheong Liew and Pangming Chiu

at Largs Bay Sailing Club

Hainan chicken rice

Fresh bean curd and ginger syrup

Fried pastries, red date tea



Locating the City[1]

John Fitzpatrick

The title of my paper is 'Locating the City', with 'locating' being used in two inter-related senses: first, a fairly straightforward geographical sense, and second in a broadly functional sense, relating to the impact of cities – as markets, sources of capital and technology, etc – on predominantly rural regions, both nearby and distant. Most of what I say is fairly general and comparative, and relies heavily on two analytical models, proposed by Jane Jacobs and Johann von Thünen respectively, dealing with functional aspects of the urban-rural relationship. Both models represent notable examples of 'urbanist' theoretical perspectives on these issues, in the sense that they give analytical priority to the impact of cities in accounting for economic and social outcomes in rural regions. Neither is exclusively concerned with food: but members of this symposium will hardly need convincing about the importance of the relationship between food and power; and both these models, I believe, can offer valuable insights into the critical urban-rural dimension of this relationship.

Jacobs' Model: Cities and cities' own regions

Jane Jacobs' argument about the contrasting relationship between major cities and both 'their own' and 'distant' regions is expounded at length in her 1984 work *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*.[2] Jacobs starts from the problem of 'stagflation' – the persistent combination of high levels of unemployment (or 'rural underemployment') with high prices (relative to local purchasing power). She argues that this combination has been the normal condition for most of the world for most of history, and that the primary cause of this condition, in regions which suffer from it, is the absence of an integrated regional relationship to a dynamic 'import replacing' city. I will examine these two dimensions in turn.

Import replacement by cities, she argues, occurs when cities begin to produce locally goods and services formerly imported from other cities. In dynamic city economies, this occurs in great bursts presumably associated with broader shifts in technology and demand: it also happens across a very wide range of commodities and processes, some very small and quite specific to the needs of that locality. Such bursts of import-replacement generate 'new work' which may spread outside the city to 'its own' region, and in time they also generate new exports to other cities. This notion of import-replacing cities is very different from that involved in arguments for 'import substitution' to build up 'infant industries' in late-industrialising *states*. First, it is not a matter of centralised state policy but the result of multiple, market-driven decisions at local level. Second, the important issue is not the capacity of the 'national' economy to replace imports but that of *the local city economy*. Jacobs says it doesn't matter, for the health of the local economy, whether a city is heavily import-dependent on other cities in its own state or on cities outside that state.

There were problems with the transcript of this talk. The recording had failed for a substantial section and much of the rest of the text was fairly garbled. I have therefore not tried to reproduce what I actually said on the day but instead have 'written up' the two main models of urban-rural relations on which the talk was based. I've taken the opportunity to include substantial quotes from two important sources for the argument, to give some flavour of the original.

Turning to the second main dimension of the argument – *the impact of cities on rural regions* – Jacobs identifies 'five mighty forces' shaping urban-rural interactions during major bursts of import-replacing expansion by dynamic cities:

- New jobs, associated with 'new work', in the city itself
- Urban-rural 'transplants' of established industries, in search of cheaper land, labour, etc
- Urban-rural capital outflows
- Urban-rural transmission of labour-saving technologies, transforming traditional rural production methods
- Expanded (and diversified) urban markets for food, raw materials, etc.

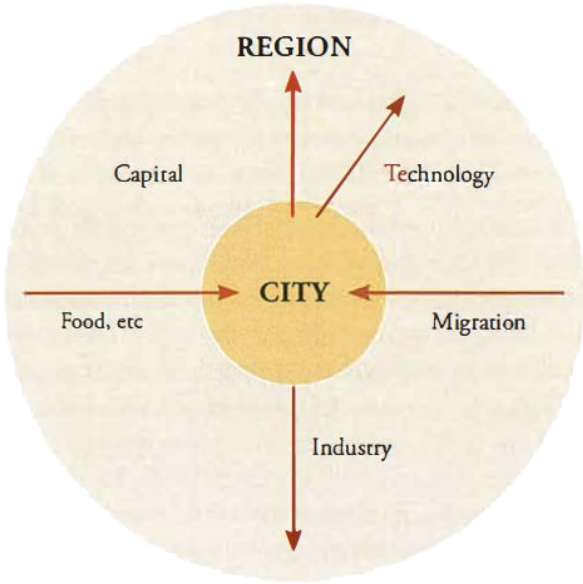


Figure 1: City and 'its own region': Jacobs' model
Source: My own representation of Jacobs' model

For Jacobs, the key to beneficial development is a direct, integrated relationship between an import-replacing city and what she calls the city's 'own region'. Dynamic city regions are typically regions beginning 'just beyond their suburbs [where] rural, industrial and commercial work places are all mixed up together' Such regions often attract the negative designation 'urban sprawl': but for Jacobs, they represent the 'richest, densest and most intricate of all types of economies except for cities themselves'.

Between a dynamic city and its own region Jacobs argues, the 'five mighty forces' listed above act together and in a mutually-reinforcing beneficial dynamic, as represented in Figure 1: Outflows of new technology and capital in isolation could create mass rural unemployment, but their impact is balanced both by jobs created in the city itself and by transplants of city industries into the countryside. Rural workers migrate to the city in search of new jobs and better incomes, but since the distances are not too great and communications reasonably good, they can maintain regular contact with family and friends in the rural region. Finally, on the question of most interest to this symposium, in a city's own region its demand for food and other rural products encourages complexity, not uniformity in the rural economy. Writing over 20 years ago, Jacobs celebrates the range of local (and seasonal) produce available in the 'huge and splendid farmers' market' operating each Saturday in downtown Toronto, her own city. For example 'apples are among the rural cash crops of the Toronto city region', but apple exports to distant cities are confined a few standard varieties. At the farmers' market, by contrast, one can find almost 20 other varieties, 'which seldom leave the region'. The farmers market represents 'only a tiny percentage of the city's purchases of food and other rural goods, and even only a tiny percentage of the fraction of those purchases the city buys from its own region': but it symbolises a far-reaching contrast between 'the diversity of rural goods a city buys from its own region, as compared with the sparse assortment of cash crops destined for markets other than a regional city or cities'. [3]

For Jacobs, the most striking example of a dynamic city region is the expansion of greater Tokyo after World War II, and her discussion of the experience of a specific rural village, across the mountains from Tokyo proper, is worth quoting at some length. (Her discussion draws heavily on Ronald Dore's anthropological study *Shinohata: A Portrait of a Japanese Village*[4], itself based on many visits from the mid-50s to the mid-70s).

Shinohata had a long history of mainly subsistence agriculture, supplemented by selling 'a few cash crops' to merchants who intermittently visited from Edo (former name of Tokyo). The two chief cash crops were rice and silk cocoons, along with 'a little timber, small quantities of forest mushrooms, and charcoal'. To get 'the last three products, as well as firewood for themselves', the village people 'diligently combed and recombed the forested mountain. In hard years they combed it in desperation'. Between 1900 and 1955 'improved methods and tools increased rice yields considerably' and more time could be devoted to 'the fussy and demanding work of cocoon production'. However, 'as far as Shinohata was concerned, the returns were small ...the hamlet stayed poor and life was an endless round of drudgery and anxiety, or so it seems in retrospect to those who endured it, and they ought to know'.

After 1955, the village was effectively pulled into the expanding Tokyo region and 'all the five forces of expansion came to bear on it, each interplaying with the others'. The following quotation deals with the most directly food-related developments.

> Tokyo's expanding solvent markets for new and different imports opened up, in its own city region, practical possibilities of crop diversification. Beginning in the late 1950s, people in Shinohata found they could make good money from things never in demand from them before: table peaches, grapes, tomatoes, ornamental shrubs and trees for city gardens, and oak mushrooms, a delicacy commanding a very high price in the city, while experiments with hops, tobacco, and canning peaches were failures, soon dropped. Diversification had a side effect on local diets. Shinohatans now also grow eggplant, chestnuts, Irish potatoes, radishes, carrots, strawberries, squash, lettuce and cabbage, not as significant cash crops but for their own use and gifts to one another ...Since horses are now no longer necessary, some households have taken to raising beef cattle instead, and cattle manure has taken the place of horse manure for fertiliser. Only 20 of the 49 households were still nurturing silk cocoons in 1975 and even in those households dependence on them had much decreased. But 48 of 49 households were still farming seriously, and all of these continue to grow rice. Indeed, rice yields actually increased stupendously, alongside the new cash crops...
>
> The example of soaring rural production and productivity that most astonishes me in Dore's descriptions concerns oak mushrooms. In the mid-1960s three farmers began experimenting with a new method of production. They bought logs from contractors, drilled holes in them, and inserted plugs of sawdust containing mushroom spores. Then they left the stacked logs for a year and a half. After this maturing period the logs were soaked; in a few days mushroom sprouted, and after they were harvested the logs were dried out and the cycle repeated. By 1975 these farmers each had forty to fifty thousand logs and were making daily shipments of mushrooms to Tokyo all year round, using heated greenhouses in the winter. 'Great piles of logs are moved in metal frames from truck to dousing tank and back again by electric overhead lifters running on steel girders,' Dore reports. By 1975 imitators, at smaller scale, were emerging in nearby hamlets as well. Mushrooms in huge quantities are among many items Tokyo can now afford to import, in place of former imports it produces for itself.
>
> Owing to labour-saving equipment, some Shinohatan farmers became able to run their operations part-time, combining agriculture with wage earning jobs in Shinohata or its vicinity ... but more commonly some members of the family farmed while others brought in wages and helped out part-time in the busiest seasons. In some families the older members took primary responsibilities for the land while the young took the jobs. Several elderly women who were living alone in 1975 were successfully running farms by themselves, a feat impossible to either man or woman before the hamlet began drawing extensively on labour-saving equipment. In some cases purchase of equipment for farming parents was financed by their children who had taken jobs in Tokyo.[4]

Jacobs argues that the reverse of this beneficial development pattern occurs when rural regions without dynamic cities in their vicinity experience one or other of her 'five mighty forces' *at long distance*, as one part of the wide-ranging impact of 'distant cities'. In this sort of situation, the development forces typically act in isolation, not in concert, and reshape the rural economy in narrow and distorted ways. When urban outflows of capital and technology greatly reduce the demand for agricultural labour, but no new city (or city-fringe) jobs are created nearby, people have to leave the region completely and travel long distances to find other work. Such rural regions developed a hollowed-out age structure, with many people of prime working age in more-or-less permanent

migration elsewhere, and increasingly develop the characteristics of a 'remittances economy'. Where industry 'transplants' do enter the rural region, often in response to major economic incentives provided by governments, they tend to produce a 'company town' phenomenon. They typically involve large, isolated plants, which are offshoots of great corporations with headquarters elsewhere; there is little effective transfer of higher-level technical or management skills; and at some point the whole operation may well move on to another 'backward' rural region with even cheaper labour and even more attractive government inducements.

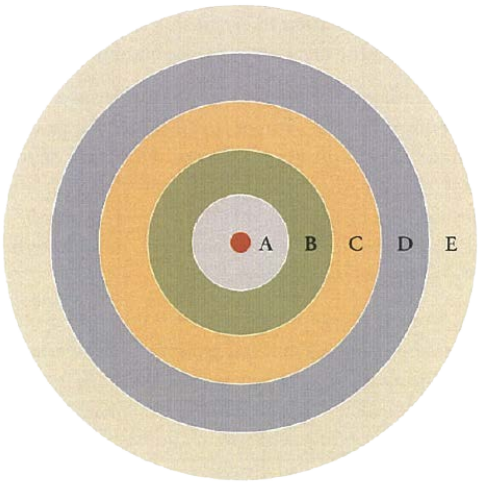
Perhaps the most pervasive historical phenomenon is the reshaping of rural regions as specialised 'supply regions' catering to the demand of distant cities for food-stuffs and other agricultural and pastoral commodities. Again this represents a direct reversal of the beneficial patterns Jacobs identifies in the impact of a dynamic city's demand for such products from its own region. In the latter pattern, a single city makes multiple and diverse demands upon its immediate hinterland. In the former, the concerted demand of many distant cities for one commodity 'comes to bear upon a region as a single force, unmediated by other city forces, [and] is irresistible as the shaper of narrower economic specialisation'.

In the global food economy built on the bulk transport revolution of the past couple of centuries, this phenomenon has become so common that it has added the term ' banana republic' to the standard lexicon of political debate about 'under-development'. However, as Jacobs points out, variants of the pattern can be identified long before the industrial era.

> In late mediaeval times, for instance, Sardinia was exporting cheese to all the cities of Europe: nothing *but* cheese … In Renaissance times, various rural supply regions of Poland were supplying wheat, rye and forest products to cities throughout western and northern Europe, but nothing else of moment. The Canary Islands at the same time were supplying cane sugar to all the European cities, but nothing else. They were the prototype for the later one-crop sugar islands of the West Indies.[5]

Von Thünen's model

Though questions about relative distance – about whether rural regions are close to or far from dynamic cities – are central to Jacobs argument, she shows relatively little interest in how transport costs and logistics are affected by distance. She is primarily concerned with broader social relationships – and perhaps above all with *information* relationships – between cities and rural regions. Between nearby cities and 'their own regions', there is a complex and diverse understanding in both environments about the economic resources and potentials of the other. Between cities and distant 'supply' or immigrant-sending regions, this kind of complex and diverse understanding is absent on both sides. However, questions about the relationships between distance, transport costs, and the location of different types of food-producing regions in relation to cities, have understandably been core themes in much of the literature on food history (along with the ancillary question about the relationships between distance, transport *times* and the production and marketing of particularly perishable foodstuffs). These questions lie at the centre of von Thünen's model.



- ● Central market
- A Horticulture and dairying
- B Forestry
- C Intensive arable
- D Less intensive arable
- E Ranching

Figure 2

Source: Morley, *Metropolis and Hinterland*, p 62

Johann von Thünen was a gentleman farmer in 19th-century north Germany, who published his theoretical argument about the economic geography of agriculture, under the title *The Isolated State,* in 1826. He spelled out the parameters of his model as follows:

> Imagine a very large town, at the centre of fertile plain which is crossed by no navigable river or canal. Throughout the plain the soil is capable of cultivation and of the same fertility. Far from the town, the plain turns into an uncultivated wilderness which cuts off all communication between this State and the outside world. There are no other towns on the plain. The central town must therefore supply the rural areas with all manufactured products, and in return it will obtain all its provisions from the surrounding countryside.[6]

The more a city's relationship with nearby and distant rural regions conformed to the limits spelled out in his model, von Thünen argued, the more the pattern of economic activity in the various regions would be determined by the single criterion of land transport costs. He postulated a series of concentric agricultural and pastoral zones reaching outwards from the central city market, as illustrated in Figure 2. 'Nearest the town would be a zone producing crops so heavy, bulky, or perishable that no farmer living further away could afford to ship them to market. Orchards, vegetable gardens and dairies would dominate in this first zone and raise the price of land – its 'rent' – so high that less valuable crops would not be profitable there'. Next would come intensive forestry 'supplying the town with lumber and fuel', then more intensive and less intensive forms of agriculture.

> Finally, distance from the city would raise transport costs so high that no grain crop could pay for its movement to market. Beyond that point, landowners would use their property for raising cattle and other livestock, thereby creating a zone of even more extensive land use, with still lower inputs of labour and capital. Land rents would steadily fall as one moved out from the urban market until they theoretically reached zero, where no one would buy land for any price, because nothing it might produce could pay the prohibitive cost of getting to market.[7]

Von Thünen's argument was an early source of what today is usually called 'central place theory', and though he wrote in a pre-industrial context and explicitly excluded water transport logistics from his analysis, his model has enjoyed considerable vogue in recent years. To take two particularly interesting examples of 'von Thünen' scholarship, Neville Morley has applied the model to the impact of ancient Rome on the Italian peninsula, during the centuries of its rise to a population of around one million as the capital of an all-Mediterranean empire; and William Cronin has applied it to the impact of 19th- and early 20th-century Chicago on the economic geography of the American west.[8] These two studies deal with radically different historical eras and geographical contexts, but each offers a powerful analysis of the way in which influences emanating from a dominant city can shape social and economic conditions in rural regions, both nearby and far away.

Cronin is the source of the capsule summaries of von Thünen's argument quoted above, and I should like to end with his discussion of the way in which an 'urbanist' bias in regard to questions of rural development – a bias common to both Jacobs and von Thünen despite their differences in other respects – can creatively reconfigure 'common-sense' understandings of these questions. This discussion comes in an early theoretical chapter of Cronin's book, in a sub-section called 'Reading Turner Backwards'. Turner is Frederick Jackson Turner, the famous American 'frontier' historian, who tried to establish the social dynamics of the frontier as the key to the development of a distinctive individualist democracy in the United States.

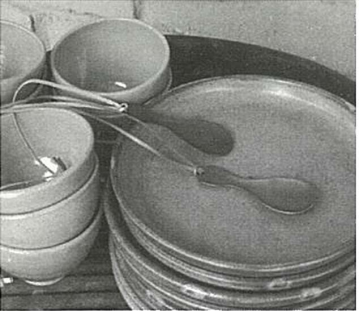
As Cronin points out, 'Turner consistently chose to see the frontier as a rural place, the very isolation of which created its special role in [American] history'. Trappers and hunters appeared first, followed in time by cattle ranchers, then farmers and finally the beginnings of cities. This kind of romantic frontier history has been influential in Australia as well, though Australian authors sometimes highlight the environmental constraints making for a 'big man's frontier' here in contrast to a 'small man's frontier' in the United States. (An iconic Australian image encapsulating a Turner-like frontier narrative, though without the hunter and rancher phases, is Frederick McCubbin's 1904 triptych *The Pioneer*).

'For Turner and his followers, frontier development had been slow and evolutionary', Cronin notes, 'with cities appearing only after a long period of rural agricultural growth. Cities marked the *end* of the frontier'. By contrast, he suggests, it may be more illuminating to see the creation and rapid growth of Chicago as a major causal factor in the creation of the US western frontier. The new US city of Chicago appeared almost overnight in the 1830s, replacing an earlier French and Indian trading settlement, and within a few decades its success in establishing itself as *the* central place in the American midwest had created a pattern of concentric economic zones which presented an impressive real-world correspondence to those predicted in von Thünen's model.

Von Thünen's idealised geography suggests a new way of understanding the history of colonisation in the Great West and elsewhere. One has only to imagine his central city in a 19th-century American setting – Chicago in 1870, for instance – and then travel outward through the surrounding rural countryside, to experience an odd sense of déjà vu... To read von Thünen in this way is suddenly to realise that one is reading Turner backwards, and that Turner's 'frontier', far from being an isolated rural society, was in fact the expanding edge of [Chicago's] urban empire. Seen from the midst of the city, Turner's frontier stages – hunters, traders, cattle raisers, extensive grain farmers, intensive truck gardeners, and urban manufacturers – look like nothing so much as the zones of von Thünen's Isolated State. Frontier and metropolis turn out to be two sides of the coin. [9]

Endnotes

2 Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*, pp 56-57
3 London: Allen Lane, 1978
4 Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*, pp 49-51
5 Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*, pp 63-64
6 Cited in Hermann Schwartz, *States Versus Markets*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1994, p 3
7 William Cronin, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1991, pp 48-50
8 Neville Morley, *Metropolis and Hinterland: The City of Rome and the Italian Economy 200 BC – AD 200*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; Cronin, *Nature's Metropolis*, 1991
9 William Cronin, *Nature's Metropolis*, p 51



City: Parasite or Symbiont?

John Coveney

Conversations: intercourse, talk or a familiar discourse.

In keeping with this format I've designed my conversation to be fairly informal, in terms of content and delivery. I have divided my conversation up into three bite-size chunks and there will be opportunities for us to chew over the ideas after each bite.

The first bite will raise general issues about the relationship between the city and the countryside.

The second bite will look more closely at the gastronomic implications of these relationships.

The last bite will look at some predictions for the future feeding relationship between the city and countryside.

As an opener I would say that my choice of topic – City: Parasite or Symbiont – needs some clarification. Terms like 'parasite' and 'symbiont' are taken from the field of biology. A parasite is something that takes from its host, while a symbiont is something that lives in harmony with its host contributing to the general benefits of both. They live in symbiosis.

These terms refer to the way things behave as living organisms. To me the representation the city as an organic entity is perfectly appropriate. We talk as if cities themselves live and have lives, without necessarily directly referring to the people or living things that inhabit them. We say New York is a city that never sleeps, or Sydney has a very cocky character, or Adelaide is a very sedate kind of place. We also say things like we did or did not like the feel of a city, as if we are talking about something we can touch. So cities live.

It was in a book by Neville Morley, *The Metropolis and the Hinterland*, that I came across the quote by George Orwell about Charles Dickens: 'It is no coincidence that Dickens never writes about agriculture. He was a Cockney and London is the centre of the earth in rather the same sense that the belly is the centre of the body'. In the book Morley expands on this to say, 'whether or not Orwell believed that a body could survive without a digestive tract the implications of his simile are clear: the body would be better off without one'.

So picking up on this I was interested in a conversation about the nature of the relationships cities had with the structures and the systems that obviously support them – the digestive tract, if you like – and in particular the relationship cities have with the countryside. A parasitic role would be one where a city sucks in what it needs without producing anything that makes a contribution to support that relationship. This role would highlight a selfish almost arrogant aspect of the city.

A city that is a symbiont has a more harmonious relationship, taking what it needed but also being able to produce something that gave back to the countryside something that was of mutual benefit. I'm thinking of the giving back as something that goes beyond the mere market. Of course, cities provide a demand for what the countryside has to offer. But does it go beyond that?

In order to highlight the relationship between the city and the countryside I want to reflect on a visit I made to the UK last year where I had a sabbatical term at a university in the north-east of England. I was there from January to July, just in time to witness the outbreak and subsequent course of the foot-and-mouth epidemic. (We are not allowed to say 'epidemic' apparently because epidemics affect people; foot-and-mouth affects animals and so, strictly speaking, the outbreak was an 'epizootic'.)

Briefly, the outbreak started about this time last year and quickly spread across the country eventually affecting almost all regions in England and many in Wales and Scotland. You, too, no doubt saw media images showing the bonfires of cattle, sheep and pigs, often filmed at night to give this eerie demonic glow of flesh being consumed by flames. You may also have heard or read about the stories of farming families having their livelihoods incinerated, literally overnight. Some of the footage was extremely confronting.

There was as you can imagine across the UK a great deal of sympathy for rural families affected by the disease. But as well as the sympathy there was I felt a great deal of ill-feeling from citysiders towards the countryside. An article in the *Guardian Magazine* by Robert Elms summed up this feeling very well. His piece was titled 'Why I hate the countryside' and in it he says:

> People in towns are saying [to farmers] enough is enough. We've given you one job to do, and huge subsidies to do it, and you've given us mad cow disease, E coli salmonella and now foot-and-mouth. ... I'm sure that many agricultural souls are genuinely suffering, but for years too many cried wolf while hunting foxes, driving Range Rovers and sending their kids to private schools on the proceeds of turning fields into featureless factories. ... But do you ever hear one of them say sorry, we were wrong? No.

The piece continues in a tone that can only be described as incandescent.

I believe Elms captures perfectly the lack of trust, respect and understanding the city has for the countryside in the UK, not only in times of crisis but the mood in general.

Perhaps you can't expect the city to know, understand and be aware of pressures on food systems and the issues involved when trying to feed a country with the population the size of the UK. Food production is invisible to most city people in that country and truly, out of sight, out of mind. They probably only hear about the countryside when there is a crisis, when farmers are asking for more assistance and when things are really awful.

But it goes further than that. Cities are places that breed and nurture arrogance and self-importance. I was born and raised in a large city and I can identify with this. As a Londoner, I certainly felt superior. And it never occurred to me, or the people I grew up with, to even ask where our food came from. Agriculture? – Give me a break. The nearest we ever got to something called agriculture was the occasional holiday in the Kent hop fields picking hops for the big beer breweries.

No, the countryside was strictly for the yokels and as such one's attitude to it was full of contempt. It's an attitude that I think many in the city share and to emphasis this point I'm going to use another example, again informed by my visit to the UK last year.

The relationship between the city and the countryside in the UK can be readily assessed through that metaphor or English rural bliss, *The Archers*. *The Archers* is a vintage BBC radio serial which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year and is designed to depict daily life in a fictitious rural community called Ambridge, about 20 miles from the regional centre called Borchester. Most people know it is actually a citysider's view of what the countryside should be like.

When I was an undergraduate in Leeds in the '70s I lived in a student house where listening to *The Archers* – it comes on at 6.15pm every weekday evening – was *de rigueur*. My housemates would howl with laughter throughout and thought it was nearly as funny as *Monty Python*. Of course, *The Archers* was not written as a comedy. What made it so amusing, what tickled my housemates was the way rural folk were depicted. It was only when I returned to the UK last year that I realised how funny the programme is. In its effort to be seriously rural it ends up being seriously patronising and very amusing.

A week's worth of events in Ambridge last December, with references to farms, cheeses and village halls, does give it a rural ambience. But what is really supposed to make *The Archers* come alive is the way the characters are portrayed. And their accents, which appear to come from the four corners of rural England, and beyond, as if someone from BBC executive rushed into casting one day and said, 'We need plenty of regional voices, any will do'. So crammed into tiny Ambridge vicinity are folk with Northumberland accents, Lancanster accents, and West Country local yokel accents.

Of course the accents are very important to the characterisations of the players in *The Archers*. They are what distinguish it as rural, or as what city folk think is rural, how the rural should sound. During one series of episodes last year someone's daughter came home after living for some years in South Africa and brought her South African fiancé to meet the family. Of course you could not tell from his accent what kind of South African he was, which caused a great deal of latent unrest for some weeks until someone broke cover and asked the BBC publicly "Is he Black?"

So to summarise my first bite, I would say that there is a real tension between the city and the countryside in the UK, and a clear division of loyalties. This division is less like a line in the sand and more like another three storeys going on top of the Great Wall of China. I would like to know whether cities in Australia have a similar ambivalence or even hostility to the countryside?

I now want to talk about the gastronomic implications of city countryside relationships. In his book, *The Metropolis and the Hinterland*, Neville Morley summarised two extreme types of city, consumer cities and producer cities. Consumer cities are those that import everything and return nothing, other than indifferent government and administration. Producer cities pay for their keep through trade, manufacturing and the provisions of services to the countryside of which the cities are part. While Morley is quick to say that no real city conforms to these extreme types, he believes that such characterisations allow us to understand the relationship, agricultural, political, economic, between city and countryside.

Some have argued that ancient Rome was the archetypal consumer city. It exported little and consumed a great deal, paid for directly or indirectly by the taxes and rents of the empire. Adam Smith held the belief that Paris was a consumer city, noting that "Paris is the principal market of all the manufactures established in Paris, and its own consumption is the principal object of all the trade which it carries on". So Paris relies on no one but itself and in gastronomic terms a consuming city consumes whatever it wants from wherever it wants. It does not worry if the local region cannot supply. It is quite independent of its region. Indeed, this is often seen as an advantage of consuming cities because it is not anchored to any particular cuisine and can source whatever its consuming populations so desire.

How about producing cities? In her book, *French Provincial Cookery*, Elizabeth David spends the first 20 to 30 pages describing the various regions of France and their gastronomic distinctiveness. Throughout these descriptions she constantly refers to the cities of the regions highlighting the ways in which these cities capture and crystalise out the cuisines of the region. In this way, cities celebrate the countryside in which they find themselves. They amplify the local foods and provide for them a city context. In this way, the city harmonises with the countryside, each shaping and sharpening its own identity and that of the other cooperatively. Would Rouen be Rouen without Normandy? And would Normandy be Normandy without Rouen?

In Australia today, to what extent do cities like Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney relate gastronomically to their regions? Adelaide might be more of a producing city, more of a symbiont, than larger cities like Sydney or Melbourne. Adelaide connects with the Hills area, the Vales area and especially the Barossa region. I'm not sure about the extent to which larger cities do this, except for an appearance in Sydney of Sydney Rock Oysters or Balmain Bugs.

My last bite will, as promised, look at some predictions for the future feeding relationship between the city and countryside. I want to consider the gastronomic implications of a city that does away with its countryside.

One of the problems the city has with the countryside is the unpredictability of life and events in rural areas. Even in highly mechanised agricultural systems there is still a great deal of uncertainty created by the weather, seasons and so on. The city has no real appreciation of these potential influences except, of course, through the fluctuations in supply, price and quality of food. Everyone knew we had one of the coolest summers on record this year in South Australia, yet people still wanted their peaches and nectarines just after Christmas and they complained at the market when they had to pay a little more for them or when the quality was a little suspect.

The need for certainty and security, especially with sources of food, has made cities increasingly less dependent on their countrysides or immediate surroundings and much more flexible in accessing foods from further abroad. In the UK for example, supermarket food comes from all over the world: potatoes from South America, vegetables from Africa, meat from Australia and New Zealand. And cities can access different sources incredibly rapidly. During the foot-and-mouth outbreak I mentioned earlier there was a real chance, early in the outbreak, that the UK would experience a meat famine because the movement of animals around the country had been halted, abattoirs closed and there were even some episodes of panic buying by consumers. Within a matter of days, however, supermarket chains had sourced meat from Southern Ireland and parts of the continent that were unaffected. Even produce from New Zealand and Australia appeared quite quickly. No major price hikes, no halt

in sales; in fact, in the shops you would hardly have noticed there was a rural crisis. The point is that cities do not need their countrysides. Indeed, the countryside can be anywhere.

And here is a thought, it is probably the case that cities do not even need the food products that come from the countryside. For many years now there has been speculation about the possibility of countryside being less a source of various seasonal foods and more a source of the basic building blocks of food which would then be put together within the city.

Nearly 20 years ago two biotechnologists, Martin Rogoff and Stephen Rawlins, published a paper in the journal *BioScience* in which they outlined an alternative food production system where growing food on a seasonal basis in the countryside was unnecessary. Instead the countryside would be a source of one or two grasses or trees, the prime function of which would be to produce a continuous supply of cellulose. This would be broken down into glucose syrups to be then pumped via a network of pipes into city production sites. The syrups would be used as growth media for the production of cell cultures. In other words, food would be grown *in vitro*, that is, in the test tube.

What kinds of food would be grown in this way? At the time of writing the paper Rogoff and Rawlins believed that the *in vitro* production of animal organs was more possible because our knowledge of animal biochemistry and physiology was more advanced than for plants. Presumably, 20 years on we have much more knowledge about how to grow things from animals and plants in the lab. I do not know what in 2002 are the biotechnology capabilities to produce food in the lab. But it would be surprising to anyone if the technology is available now to grow different vegetables, fruits, meats and dairy foods directly from cell or stem cultures.

Taken to this level the city can have it all. It can manufacture on its doorstep the food it wants and when it wants it. Cities can have clean food, not the yukky stuff they get from farms and fields. Food production sites will be factory-style and are therefore able to produce food which is clean to the point of laboratory purity. Anyone who has been through a modern food factory will know how high standards can be. In other words, the city can overcome the unpredictability of the countryside and food production processes can be controlled within very strict limits.

To sum up, is the city a parasite or a symbiont? It depends. Clearly some cities are able to link very well with the surrounding environment and indeed glorify the bountiful produce which they enjoy. Some, however, ignore the fact that they exist in a geographical and gastronomic space, downplaying their role in supporting rural cultures and economies. The consequence of this is what we will no doubt discuss during the symposium.

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Haunted Kitchens: Cooking and Remembering

Jean Duruz

ABSTRACT: Framed by de Certeau's haunted spaces and Giard's kitchens resonating with 'the dull thud of the kneading hand', this paper traces nostalgic journeys of North American and Australian food writers through their childhood kitchens of the 1940s and beyond. These New World narratives perform their differences (in class, ethnicity, gender, geography, generation) yet 'answer back', collectively, tendencies in the post-industrial West to romanticise the kitchen and its presiding goddesses (and monsters). The paper argues for complex political engagements with everyday hauntings – their tensions and contradictions – to produce multiple, contingent meanings of cultural belonging.

> Begin with one cup of raisins. …
>
> Then imagine the San Joaquin Valley of California where your raisins might have grown. …
>
> Brush the egg white over the surface of each round, using a pastry brush that has a rich and varied history …
>
> Spread a clean, starched cloth over the table … Arrange a handsome cup and saucer, a plate, and silverware in an attractive display. Grind coffee beans grown in Jamaica or Columbia or Kenya, and brew a strong coffee. Heat milk for the coffee and pour it into an old, heavy pitcher that once belonged to your great-grandmother. … Imagine her in your midst, her hair drawn back in a bun as in her photographs … She asks how you came to own the pitcher. Imagine your explanation as you turn to the oven to withdraw the scones. They have turned a golden brown and their aroma has penetrated every corner of your abode (Sarver, 1999, pp 100, 101, 103).
>
> Now that is what I call shortcake … But even though the berries are fresh, the biscuits are hot, and the cream is cold, this may not be your idea of shortcake. It's not, because your mother, or your grandma, or whoever made you shortcake as a child didn't do it this way, and they were never wrong about these things. …
>
> Then you'd best consider passing on my recipe altogether. Or at least consume it without expecting an iota of comfort from it, for it will not satisfy your spirit's hunger for that state of bliss you last felt while clinging to your mother's skirts. For the hunger is in the memory, not in the biscuit … (Lust, 1998, pp 174-175).

To begin with recipes: scones and shortcake. For Western imaginaries shaped by Anglo-Celtic histories and food cultures, 'golden brown' scones and strawberry shortcake are substantial items of nurturance. (Santich, 1996, pp 108-109; for shortcake recipes in Australia, Britain: Cox, 1963, p 163; Lawson, 2000, p 69). These are icons of traditional comfort, with their tastes, textures and the almost-magical shapes and smells produced in their baking redolent of the warmth and sensual activity of country kitchens, of recipes passed from grandmothers to mothers to daughters in secret, almost liturgical, rituals. In fact, for Nigella Lawson, British celebrity television chef and author of *How to Be a Domestic Goddess*, baking itself becomes both 'a useful metaphor for the familial warmth of the kitchen we fondly imagine used to exist, and as a way of reclaiming our lost Eden'. Furthermore, continues Lawson, baking offers women (particularly, 'the post-modern, post-feminist, overstretched woman') possibilities for playful performance: the pleasures of feeling like 'a domestic goddess, trailing nutmeggy fumes of baking pie in … [her] languorous wake' (2000, p vii).

In both of the 'recipes' quoted above, as well as in Lawson's eulogy to baking, there are glimpses of the kitchen as an imaginary space for dreaming and remembering. Through Sarver's instructions to 'Begin ... imagine ... Spread ... Arrange ... Grind ... brew ... Heat ... pour ... Imagine', the reader is not only required to follow the steps of baking, brewing and consuming, but also to return to the spaces of the kitchen, to retrace its gestures of caring femininity and careful housewifery and to note the provenance of specific ingredients – of raisins or of coffee – or the symbolic meanings attached to cooking and dining's artefacts – to a pastry brush or pitcher, to china, linen and silverware. And ultimately, through Sarver's mantra of begin/grind/heat/pour, we sense the shadowy figures that inhabit this domain.

Meanwhile, Lust (albeit with some irony), inscribes strawberry shortcake with the ghost of past childhoods, with our own nostalgic longings for 'that state of bliss' and, once again, with the comforting presence of the kitchen's defining figure. In these examples then, the remembrance of kitchens past is densely peopled with goddesses ... their hair, perhaps, 'in a bun' ... their skirts ready for protection ... their 'nutmeggy fumes' and languor hinting at the sleepy sensuality of 'slower times'. These are figures to whom we perpetually return, in search of solace, perhaps, or beguiling moments for re-enactment.

The purpose of this paper is to reflect further on such returns and their meanings for the post-industrial West in an age of globalisation, new technologies (and here, the microwave serves as a convenient image for changes in both food and information production) and 'time-space compression' (Harvey, 1989, p 240; Massey, 1994, p 146). Elsewhere, I have discussed recent moral panics in Australia about the so-called death of home cooking and the domestic kitchen and concerns about young people not learning to cook (Duruz, 2001, pp 23-24). Symptomatic of these concerns is the comment from Lyndey Milan, Sydney journalist and food writer, in regard to survey results that signal a dramatic increase in the purchase of takeaway (fast) food during the 1990s: Australia, claims Milan, has now produced a generation of young people who are 'cyber literate but food illiterate' (Milan quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 12, 1998, p 24). A slightly different take on some of the same issues emerges in Eric Schlosser's recent account of America as a nation of fast food and fat:

> [F]ast food is one form of American culture that foreign consumers literally consume. By eating like Americans, people all over the world are beginning to look like Americans, at least in one respect. The United States now has the highest obesity rate of any industrialised nation in the world... According to James O. Hill, a prominent nutritionist at the University of Colorado, 'We've got the fattest, least fit generation of kids ever.' ...
>
> As people *eat more meals outside the home*, they consume more calories, less fiber, and more fat (2001, pp 240-241, my emphasis).

Historically, such debates about the quality and significance of home cooking are not new ones (Duruz, 1999, pp 231-232, 236-242; Holmes Smith, 2001, pp 176-180; Inness, 2001, pp 143-150). Likewise, when traditional meanings of 'home' seem most under threat, it is not unusual to resort to 'comfort' foods as embodiment of these meanings. For example, Donna Gabaccia, observes that in America, prior to the emergence of the 'new ethnicity' (with its increasing commodification of the 'past', the 'authentic') during the 1970s:

> The descendants of enclave eaters ... [associated] certain foods with the comfort, security and love of their childhood homes. People turn to such comfort foods when they must cope with stress, and there was plenty of that in the culturally liminal, and changing, lives of immigrants, their children, and grandchildren (1998, p 179).

Furthermore, Gabaccia argues, the association of comfort, food and women is critical, with tales of immigrants and their children told 'in words that emphasise the warm sensuality that linked food to maternal love' (p 180).

Obviously, there is scope for interesting comparative work on the distinctly different forms that food fears and comforts occupy in 21st century post-industrial urban imaginaries. However, this is not primarily my purpose here. Instead, I want to extend Gabaccia's connections of food, warmth, love and storytelling to the sacred spaces of the kitchen itself, examining these through the medium of a particular genre of writing and form of remembering – the culinary biography, and drawing on both North American and Australian examples. And, here, though I come to this task as a stranger in some respects – as a non-American, as an Australian – it seems to me there are useful possibilities in entering 'other kitchens' – in kitchens 'made strange', rendered 'uncanny' (Jacobs citing Kristeva, 1996, p 130), indeed, 'haunted' by the ghosts of one's own spatial and cultural geographies, and vice versa.

The remainder of the paper focuses primarily on this task, trailing ghosts that dodge through the pages of several biographies. The following analysis (for reasons of space) will select simply a few moments and their leading figures to produce a micro-mosaic of remembering and storytelling ... and here I'm indebted to Anne-Marie Fortier (2000, p 137) for her conception of an argument shaped as a textual 'collage' rather than a 'plot'. My intention is to reflect on ways these narrative moments perform their differences (in class, ethnicity, gender, geography, nation, generation) yet 'answer back', both collectively and partially, tendencies in the post-industrial West to romanticise the kitchen and its presiding goddesses (and monsters). And for a Congress concerned with building (and re-building) meanings of 'community', it would seem important to engage with shared understandings of everyday life, including its fears and dreamings, as well as to acknowledge the productive possibilities of different understandings. So now, with this project in mind, I want to follow a trail of 'good' and 'bad' mothers – a trail of nostalgic storytelling and myth-making and disruptive moments that challenge our seemingly overwhelming wanting that women cook, indeed exist, exclusively for us. Before proceeding, however, we need to make a brief theoretical glance at the kitchen as a particularly haunted space, and select a couple of useful tools for our analysis.

Livable Kitchens

Much recent writing about the city has explored the city as an imaginary space, occupied and structured by fragments of memories, fears, dreams and longings. In the tradition of Freud (1985) and Benjamin (1973), of de Certeau (1984) and Lefebvre (1991), cultural theorists, such as James Donald (1999), Elizabeth Wilson (2001), Jane M. Jacobs (1996) and Steve Pile (2000), set out on journeys through the spaces of 'invisible cities' (the evocative title of the 1970s novel by Italo Calvino) to trace not only cities' archaeologies of dreaming but also their 'transformative possibilities' (Steve Pile, 2000, p 60). It is these 'hauntings' that intrigue me, with all their shadows of desire and loss. These are the ghosts, perhaps, of those 'other' stories attached to the spaces of the city – everyday stories told against the dominant ones of urban planning or corporate management – and of the figures and activities that give form to these 'other' stories (de Certeau, 1984, pp 92-93). In fact, according to de Certeau, 'Haunted places are the only ones people can live in' (1984, p 108).

Furthermore, in the continual, imaginative renewal of everyday spaces – of making space livable – the kitchen becomes central. In a later work, de Certeau and Giard elaborate on the tenacity of its presence in Western imaginaries:

> Our successive living spaces never disappear completely; we leave them without leaving them because they live in turn, invisible and present, in our memories and in our dreams. They journey with us. In the center of these dreams, there is often the kitchen ... (de Certeau and Giard, 1998, p 148).

Here, possibly, are echoes of Bachelard's poignant image of the 'house' – the birthplace, the original site of nurturing – as a source of later dreaming and remembering (Bachelard, 1969, pp 5-7). The conception of an original house, a 'house' of belonging, says David Harvey, commenting on Bachelard's place poetics, is one that is subject to perpetual negotiation in Western understandings of 'home' and 'place', and is critical for charting their nostalgic geographies (1989, pp 217-218). Meanwhile, the hearth, the stove, the kitchen table – this '"warm room"' (de Certeau and Giard, 1998, p 148) with its presiding maternal figure – lies at the core of the 'house' and, with it, takes on qualities of myth.

It is myth that proves to have some flexibility, however. These livable kitchens are dynamic ones, not simply to be consigned to the recesses of remembered 'pasts' but structured anew to meet the challenge of different social exigencies. For example, with the diversity of food products, 'styles' and cuisines available for purchase in global cities of the post-industrial West (Gabaccia, 1998, pp 225-232; Cook and Crang, 1996, pp 131-137; Hage, 1997, pp 118-124), a recent review of a Vietnamese restaurant in Sydney states: 'All in all, a great night out in a buzzy, busy, yet strangely comforting restaurant. It's food your mum would cook if she were Vietnamese' (Keith Austin, 2001, p 7). So, paradoxically, it seems that homeliness is to be found amongst the 'strange', the 'exotic', and comfort can exist alongside the 'buzzy' cosmopolitanism of the marketplace. However, this is only as long as 'your mum's' shadow (in a new guise) intervenes, domesticating the kitchen and transforming 'eating out' to 'eating in' (Duruz, 2001, pp 24-27).

The comforts of appropriations of myth, then, are compelling ones. However, according to Giard, such comforts are based in women's actual work in kitchens – ritualised yet creative work, captured in 'the dull thud of the kneading hand' (1998, p 153). This is work that represents a highly charged landscape of cultural significance, its details re-inscribed on a daily basis:

> Provisions, preparation, cooking and compatibility rules may very well change from one generation to another, or from one society to another. But the everyday work in kitchens remains a way of unifying matter and memory, life and tenderness, the present moment and the abolished past, invention and necessity,

> imagination and tradition – tastes, smells, colors, flavors, shapes, consistencies, actions, gestures, movements, people and things, heat, savorings, spices and condiments. Good cooks are never sad or idle – they work at fashioning the world … . Women's gestures and women's voices that make the world livable (p 222).

Such celebrations of 'doing-cooking' – Giard's own term for body rhythms, techniques, repetitive gestures, 'certain tastes, smells and colors … all the sounds' and daydreaming associated with food preparation (pp 153-154) – deserve closer scrutiny. If gestures and voices haunt these livable kitchens, it is worth crossing their remembered thresholds in search of these 'hauntings'. In particular, I want to engage with the romance of Cooking Woman who makes not only kitchens but, indeed, the world 'livable'. Equally, I want to trace her phantom Other who, presumably, renders the world unbearable. In following trails of these mythic figures, I hope to disturb some of the goddesses and monsters of our collective culinary consciousness and, instead, to unravel more fragmented, contradictory stories than myth implies – political stories which hint at multiple, contingent meanings of cultural belonging, together with the 'tactics' of this meaning-making (de Certeau, 1984, pp xviii-xx).

Where the Ordinary Becomes the Extraordinary

One of the kitchens of Ruth Reichl's childhood during the 1950s and 1960s was in 'a modest apartment in Greenwich Village', New York City (Reichl, 2000, p 3). Here, according to the title of the opening chapter of *Tender at the Bone*, the first volume of Reichl's culinary memoir, her mother reigned as the 'Queen of Mold'. In contrast to the writer's father, whom Reichl describes as bookish, unworldly, an 'intellectual' who had fled to America from a 'wealthy German-Jewish family' (p 10), Reichl's mother is memorable for her eccentricity, erratic behaviour and, primarily, her extraordinary culinary feats:

> It was just the way she was.
> Which was taste-blind and unafraid of rot. 'Oh, it's just a little mold,' I can remember her saying on the many occasions she scraped the fuzzy blue stuff off some concoction before serving what was left for dinner. She had an iron stomach and was incapable of understanding that other people did not.
>
> This taught me many things. The first was that food could be dangerous, especially to those who loved it. … My mission was to keep Mom from killing anybody who came to dinner (pp 4-5).

The chapters that follow outline (in frank, sometimes nauseating, detail) moments of culinary invention that disrupt conventional meanings of middle-class domesticity and culinary propriety. These moments include, for example, the sudden appearance of a suckling pig in the refrigerator after Reichl's mother walks through Manhattan in the early hours of the morning (p 8); the serving of 'Everything Stew' to dinner guests, its ingredients ranging from the remains of a two-week old turkey and half an apple pie to 'leftover pâté, some cheese ends, a few squishy tomatoes' drawn from the depths of the refrigerator (p 5); the catering for an engagement party (incongruously, it is also a benefit for UNICEF) at the Reichl's summer house with large quantities of chicken legs of questionable freshness and soup, a mixture of canned tomato soup and canned split-pea soup and deteriorating crabmeat, sherry added to mask its pungent odour (pp 17-19).

Unlike the comforting recipes for scones and shortcake mentioned earlier in this paper, food now becomes a site of anxiety, danger, putrefaction and decay. It has the capacity to disgust, repel, induce illness and to kill. The image of Cooking Woman here is one of recklessness, of triumphant transgressiveness, an image in direct contradiction to Cooking Woman as nurturer and life-giving sensualist – Lawson's goddess, with her almost-magical powers and nutmeggy aura. Admittedly, it is not unusual for writers about kitchens and cooking to call on discourses of magic or miracle. Akiko Busch (1999, p 50) for example, marvels at 'small, ordinary miracles' that occur in kitchens – the alchemy of egg whites beaten to produce a soufflé or sugar 'spun to construct a city of flowers' – and declares '[t]he kitchen is the place in the house where the ordinary becomes the extraordinary'. However, surely Busch does not mean an 'extraordinary' that subsumes the dark side of cooks, cooking and domestic kitchens – mythic meanings of the witch, who is 'associated with a range of abject things: filth, decay … brews, potions, even cannibalism' or of the monstrous feminine, a dangerous anti-maternal figure, capable of either devouring her children or 'swallowing' them up in ways 'posing a threat of psychic obliteration' (Creed, 1993, pp 76, 109)?

In a crucial culinary moment in Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* (1993, pp 30-31, 39-40), Tita prepares the batter for a cake to be eaten at the feast celebrating the marriage of her sister, Rosaura and Pedro, Tita's true love. Tita's tears of sorrow invade the cake causing guests to sink into states of melancholy and nausea. The serving of food here is emblematic of despair as it performs the romance of true love thwarted. The cake's bitter qualities also hint at subversive challenges to authority and the seizing of opportunities for 'pay-back' (Gunders, 2001, p 132). So, is this the appearance of the legendary anti-cook, the 'poisoning' feminine, whose kitchen 'hauntings' are spiced with a certain degree of menace (Sanders, 1995, pp 24-25)? Is this a bleak reverse-portrait of Giard's

beguiling Shiva goddess with a hundred arms who, in the name of the 'nourishing arts', is able to perform multiple everyday tasks and movements, from whipping egg whites to kneading pastry dough 'with ... a sort of restrained tenderness' (Giard, 1998, pp 151, 157)? Furthermore, is the kitchen now re-ordered by a different, more frightening, set of 'gestures, objects and words', rendering the 'ordinary nature of the simple kitchen' (p 213), less ordinary, less livable, less simple and, above all, less comfortable for nostalgic remembering?

Fortunately, the figure of Tita offers us alternatives to love's counter-romance of despair and loss, danger and discomfort. Through her preparation of an ambrosial dish of quails in rose-petal sauce, Tita ('hot, voluptuous, totally sensuous') (Esquivel, 1993, p 49) gains symbolic entry to Pedro's body, re-enacting mythical connections of food, the body, identity and desire (Probyn, 2000, p 31-32). Likewise, Reichl, presents a range of 'other' mother-figures for our discursive consumption: 'good' cooks and 'good' mothers available to 'haunt' the kitchen when the figure of the 'real' mother is absent or when, as the 'bad' mother, this mother-figure suggests elements of threat.

Here, we should note that Reichl's account of childhood contains not only the phantom of a 'risky' cook but also shadows of women who do not cook at all. She elaborates, recalling a time probably in the mid-1950s when she was about six years old:

> My mother's mother did not cook because she had better things to do...
>
> My father's mother did not cook because she was, until Hitler intervened, a very rich woman.
>
> And Aunt Birdie did not cook because she had Alice (2000, p 20).

Class relations intersecting with those of gender and ethnicity frame the political economies of these remembered kitchens, and, accordingly, the specific presences or absences dominating these spaces. The subtle hints are there. Reichl's maternal grandmother does not cook, but knows Rubenstein and Menhuen. For Reichl's other grandmother, the memory of wealth is sufficient to dictate an absence from the kitchen that requires no further explanation. Meanwhile, 'Aunt' Birdie (the mother of Reichl's father's first wife) has lost her money in a stock market crash but lives in a 'splendid' apartment, 'surrounded by beautiful objects of better times'. In contrast, Alice, Aunt Birdie's cook, who had left Barbados as a young woman, is remembered as 'a handsome old woman with brown skin, short black hair, and a deeply wrinkled face. She smelt like starch, lemons ... cinnamon'. In other words, while class positioning and cultural capital demand these other 'mothers', regardless of their current financial means, exclude themselves from the kitchen, Alice is in her rightful place. Like the kitchen itself, she even smells of good housewifery – a goddess of fresh laundry and baking (pp 21, 24).

It is Alice who becomes the 'real' cook, in a sense the 'real' mother for the child Ruth. In contrast to the 'dangerous' and 'unlivable' kitchen of home where Reichl is obliged to function as an early warning system for guests, Alice's kitchen becomes a haven of appetising tastes and smells, of nostalgic ingredients and recipes. Together, this incarnation of the 'real' mother and the child perform the hypnotic actions of 'doing-cooking':

> I loved helping her, loved the fresh buttery pastry beneath my hands, loved the clean way the core came out of the apple. I loved carefully wrapping each apple in a square of pastry and pinching the top shut, just so. We'd arrange the dumplings on a baking sheet, Alice would put them in the oven, and we'd both go into the living room to watch *The Perry Como Show* (p 21).

Here is order instead of disorder, baking according to traditional recipes instead of experimenting with eccentric combinations of ingredients, the ritual pleasures of repetitive and precise movements and the feel, smell and look of fresh ingredients in contrast to chaos and decay. And in the centre of this kitchen is the figure of the Afro-Caribbean woman – the black servant who cares for the children of white women, a romantic figure who is exotic, mysteriously 'other' and yet familiar: wholesome, asexual and nurturing (hooks, 1982, pp 83-85).

Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, commenting on the comforting properties of myth, discuss psychological processes of idealisation and denigration as two sides of the same coin (1990, pp 15-16). So, while celebrating the 'good' mother of childhood, we return to that lost Eden of baking to which Lawson refers or to Bachelard's 'bosom of the house' as the original source of childhood nurturance. On the other hand, demonising the 'bad' mother allows a narrative of escape, of progress – one of 'reassurance that we are not so bad as that' (Samuel and Thompson, 1990, p 16). Reichl herself supports the position of survivor: 'Like a hearing child born to deaf parents I was shaped by my mother's handicap, discovering that food could be a way of making sense of the world' (2000, p 6). Reichl's home kitchens, then, are ones with rich pickings, filled as they are with demons of the 'bad', 'out-of-control' mother – the mother who offends both traditional and post-industrial ideas of 'freshness' (*Ripe*, 1999, pp 1-10), while challenging meanings of 'style' through unorthodox combinations (particularly those involving 'convenience' foods). In the presence of these demons, the child 'learns against' the grain. At the same time as these demons encourage (contradictorily, subversively) the child to be a 'better' cook, the child's 'true' education begins in a kitchen in which conservative class and gender relations and meanings of colonialism appear unruffled.

Forget Froot Loops

Annette Shun Wah, Australian born and of Cantonese descent, remembers spending her childhood years during the 1960s, firstly in an archetypal wooden house in the suburbs of Brisbane, Queensland's capital city, and later on her parents' poultry farm on the outskirts of that city. Shun Wah's recent book *Banquet* (co-authored by Greg Aitken) (1999) is not so much a personal culinary biography but one that focuses on specific Australian communities and their cultures. The book itself is a banquet of voices, places, foods, rituals and practices, its themed chapters representing particular courses, its deliberately loose organisation and coffee-table format encouraging a certain amount of judicious 'tasting': images, recipes, historical facts and fragments of remembering offer multiple meanings of 'Chineseness' and 'difference' in, and for, Australia. The book's final statement, however, is explicit in celebrating this project's 'harmonising' purpose:

> The Chinese banquet has been with us almost from the beginning. As we go into the future, working our way through a myriad of textures and flavours, eventually we will find the balance, harmony and nourishment we all seek (p 183).

As such, we could classify *Banquet* as an 'autoethnographic cookbook', a term used by Traci Marie Kelly to include ones 'written by a community or family member, presenting information intended to educate an outside audience about private personal or group activities and values' (Kelly, 2001, p 259). However, for the moment, I want to leave this account's 'educative' function and softly-echoed political mission aside and to focus on some 'hauntings' from a very different kitchen to Reichl's, in the hope that these might help to 'answer back' some of our earlier assumptions and arguments.

Shun Wah's family story is a minor thread in the book's 'myriad of textures' – occasional fragments that appear, and then, like ghosts, disappear in the narrative's flow. A poignant example occurs when Shun Wah remembers the comfort foods of her own childhood, particularly of 'a fresh steaming bowl of *jook*, otherwise known as *congee*, or rice porridge' for breakfast (Shun Wah and Aitken, 2000, p 40). She continues:

> Some mornings I would wake up to a strange odour wafting through the bedroom, and I know my mother would have stirred at some ungodly hour to put on a huge pot of rice porridge. The rice would be thrown into some tasty stock … and cooked until it had reached a lovely, creamy consistency. The mixture would be flavoured with peanuts, salted duck eggs, dried bean curd, tiny dried shrimps … or dried oysters. Like the hundred-year-old eggs, these delicacies were an acquired taste. … [T]hey released an aroma that would in no time find its way through the three-bedroom suburban weatherboard house to fill the nostrils of sleeping children, rousing them from their innocent, and previously, odourless dreams. What choice would we have? It was breakfast. I guess you can't have Froot Loops *every* day (p 41, original emphasis).

Furthermore, Shun Wah declares that traditional dishes like *congee* are, for her, 'nursery food' and issues an injunction to forget the currently fashionable European equivalents, such as 'your sausage and mash or your bread-and-butter pudding' (p 40).

Interestingly, Alan Saunders, Australian food journalist born in England, ponders the connections of comfort food and ethnicity, drawing on similar examples, but from the reverse perspective:

> A few years ago I mentioned to a Chinese guy that, for me, comfort food is fish and chips when I'm feeling English and congee when I'm feeling cosmopolitan.
>
> Ah yes, sighed the Chinese guy, congee – and his voice, I thought was warm with a lifetime's memories stretching back to the breakfast congees of childhood. I felt a complete fraud (2001, p 57).

Emerging in both of these stories – Shun Wah's, 'the Chinese guy's' – are the signs of Cooking Woman, variously a 'strange odour wafting through the bedroom' or the warmth of 'a lifetime's memories'. Cooking Woman is not only unseen and 'good' (she labours while others sleep) but she is also 'different', her distinctive skills and ingredients producing 'other' tastes to those of the dominant Anglo-Celtic cultures. At the same time, this image joins with those of other cooking woman – mamas, nonnas, grandmères, grandmothers … across cultures, temporalities, spatial and remembered geographies – in a celebration of peasant cooks, slow cooking and the nostalgic pleasures *of being cooked for*. Cooking Woman functions not only on behalf of her own sleeping children or her own communities in cookshops, street stalls, ethnic cafes and restaurants, but feeds the nostalgic 'cosmopolitan' – literally, figuratively – as well (Hage, 1998, pp 204-205).

It would be easy to align Annette Shun Wah's mother with Aunt Birdie's Alice as women burdened, though differently, by migration, class, colonialism and gender positioning (Shun Wah's mother, or rather stepmother, arrives in Australia from Hong Kong in 1960 and 'had to teach herself to cook in order to feed a ready-made family of five' [Shun Wah and Aitken, 2000, p 189]). However, a more subtle reading of Shun Wah's remembering

goes beyond a celebration of difference in mothering or culinary cultures, or beyond attempts to align with mainstream cultures by displaying the bridging equivalents (such as 'nursery food') in one's own. Returning to the description of congee prepared for the sleeping children, I suggest it is possible to read this as a dialogue between a culinary 'outside' and 'inside' – between an imagined Anglo-Celtic observer whose gaze distances and mystifies 'different' cultural practices and the Australian-Chinese participant whose experiences demand recognition and affirmation.

Shun Wah simultaneously adopts both positions – or rather she shifts rapidly from one to the other – throughout the narrative. As representative of her community and as someone with 'insider' memories, there is pleasure in recalling the processes of making *congee* and recounting its ingredients. However, for Anglo-Celtic observers (and, perhaps, for children who are 'insider' in another sense – that is, they are born in Australia and knowledgeable of its mainstream culinary cultures), Shun Wah uses discourses of 'strange' and 'acquired' smells and tastes in contrast to 'odourless dreams' (presumably of 'normal' Australian children of the dominant culture), while listing 'exotic' ingredients for the interested, but uninitiated. She also stresses the contradictions of the pervasive aromas of salted duck eggs and dried shrimps, for example, in a 'three-bedroom suburban weatherboard house'. Here, I should explain (for North American readers, at least) the latter phrase assumes the status of cliché – a linguistic image of postwar 'ordinariness' that white Australia recognises as iconic in its collective imaginary of home ownership and housing design (Duruz, 1994, pp 19-26).

At the end of the day, it seems that the choice boils down to the congee of memory, tradition and 'elsewhere' or modernity's Froot Loops – Kellogg's ubiquitous product that has been part of the 'fast food' corporate invasion of Australia from the 1920s onwards (Symons, 1982, p 176). However, perhaps this dichotomy is a false one, requiring us, as it does, to endorse the 'exotic' mother with her 'different' breakfast over the 'normal' of Anglo-Australian houses, patterns of domestic labour and (Australian/American) breakfast products? Instead, it may be possible to embrace both identities, both breakfasts, both mothers, recognising that meanings of identity are multiple, shifting and contingent.

Nevertheless, in case this should be seen as a conservative project of 'add-in' multiculturalism (Hage, 1998, pp 118-123), it is worth shifting the gaze to 'queer' the dominant culture – to render it, in turn, 'exotic' and unfamiliar (Lauren Berlant, 1997, p 23). For example, Shun Wah, describing her community's capacity for culinary inventiveness and her own mother's 'great talent for never wasting anything', recalls an occasion when her brothers, during their holiday jobs on a potato farm, were given a couple of sacks of potatoes:

> The whole family pitched in, washing, peeling and cutting. My mother made chips [fries] – partly cooked, then frozen ... But what does one do with bags and bags of chips? My brothers and I often reminisce about those memorable months when we had chips with everything: stir-fried beef and mushrooms in soy sauce with chips, braised pork with red bean paste and chips; in fact, I can't believe there's anything that doesn't go well with chips. The sauces would seep into them, making them soggy with flavour, while those on the outside still had a bit of crunch to them (Shun Wah and Aitken, 1999, p 40)

Furthermore, the joke about 'chips with everything' is carried through to the recipes in *Banquet.* Annette's mother, Susan Shun Wah, contributes a recipe titled 'Red Bean Pork with Bitter Melon ... and Chips/Naarm Yeu Jue Yuk ... toong Chips!', and completes her list of cooking instructions with the following: 'for that unique Shun Wah touch, fry up some fresh chips, spread out on a plate, and pour the pork and bitter melon mixture, along with the delicious gravy, over the top!' (p 41).

While hybridisation of ethnic food cultures, particularly in the mass-market of supermarket production, is of great concern to some food writers, the above example is an intriguing one: here, in a sense, the boot is on the other foot. At the same time food writers bemoan a loss of 'authenticity' in industrial appropriations of artisanal, particularly 'different', cultures, the ethnic 'other' actively engages in a conscious and ironic form of playfulness with the sacred, ancestral food of Anglo-Celtic working class culture. So, despite Alan Saunders feeling both 'cosmopolitan' and guilty for consuming someone else's comfort food and memories, the Shun Wahs (presumably with pleasure, and without guilt) appropriate Saunders' chips for their own statement of inverted cosmopolitanism and 'Australianness' in ways that exoticise and satirise (though mildly, and appreciatively) the culinary imaginary of the dominant culture. The 'toong Chips!' becomes a family joke, a disruptive 'eating back', as well as a refusal of essentialist identity attributions.

So, in Annette Shun Wah's remembering, we have an intriguing moment of intervention, a refusal of passivity. In the gestures and stories of 'eating back' against the mainstream culture, there are traces of kitchens 'haunted' by 'other' cooks who, in moments of parody, 'raid' dominant forms selectively for their own purposes. Implicit in this analysis is Dean Chan's discussion of 'in-betweenness' as a way of conceptualising diasporic identities (2000, p 150). Drawing on Audrey Yue's work, Chan rejects not only the historically conceptualised binary

of 'the dim sum versus the meat pie' as an image for Chinese-Australians (Yue cited in Chan, 2000, p 142) but also essentialist constructions of Chinese-Australian identity where 'Chineseness', in particular, becomes 'an authentic, singular and unchanging referent' (Chan, 2000, p 142). Instead, Chan suggests more complex, more fluid and, critically, more ambivalent identifications. Perhaps, then, such 'raids' as the one I've just described allow spaces to negotiate subtle longings and refusals held in tension – the shifting dynamics of desire, creativity and constraint?

And now to return with these arguments to the congee-cooking mother and her remembering daughter, we could speculate that the harmony of *Banquet* does not require the erasure of difference but the management of (and, perhaps, the finding of pleasure in) its tensions and contradictions. Instead of the mythical 'good' mother versus the 'bad' of Reichl's memories, with the 'bad' an unsettling challenge to the romance of nurture and its underpinnings of appropriated labour and conservative power relations, here we have a playful 'answering back' to Western sensibilities seeking an 'ethnic' mother to re-assure them of their own whiteness and cosmopolitanism. Of course, we should remember that these 'raids', such as dishes with 'the unique Shun Wah touch', are, in de Certeau's words, 'victories of the "weak" over the "strong"' (1984, p xix). Nevertheless, as Giard points out, these are also gestures, deeply embodied, and part of the intricate fabric of everyday life, that constitute 'a way of being-in-the-world and making it one's home' (1998, p 154).

Requiem for the Kitchen Table

More than 15 years after her mother's death, Nora Seton remembers wanting to make a pilgrimage to her childhood home in Massachusetts. Born in 1961, Seton had been the youngest of the five children – four daughters and a son – who grew up in a 17-room house with the kitchen as its *axis mundi*:

> Once, years after she died, I sat in my mother's chair at the old kitchen table … this had been her topography for 30 years, more than half her lifespan, with few changes: the plateau of the pine table, the gully of the bench, the mesa of the bench back we called the Divider, with its litter of skillets, frames, and pencil holders fashioned from cracked casserole pots. In the winters, the coal stove warmed her back. In the summers, the kitchen door was left ajar and breezes would carry in the quarrels of squirrels and robins and cats. The walls were cheek by jowl with museum prints, Baskin etchings, children's school projects, because life was to be gotten through and it was important to find its beauty (2000, p 43).

Here, in the remembered spaces of the kitchen, Seton sketches a geography of childhood, mothering, grief and loss. As her book, *The Kitchen Congregation*, maps an imagined journey (through memories of her mother, of being mothered; through the stories and gestures of her own mothering), Seton enters highly-charged emotional territory. In this domain, she assembles a congregation of ghosts, ranging from her mother, who, after a long illness, died from cancer when Seton was only 20 years old, and Seton's own elder daughter, who was stillborn, to her other children, family members and friends – particularly, women friends (p 210). And it is through such friendship, with its possibilities for intimacy, reciprocity and comfort, that Seton detects 'other' outlines of Cooking Woman (Senta, Ida, Laura) in the absence of the 'true' maternal figure.

It is Cynthia, Seton's mother, however, whose ghostly presence resonates most strongly throughout this book. Here, the 'good' mother not only cooks for a large family but, in the spirit of hospitality and nurturance, welcomes all manner of 'strays' to her kitchen table (pp 28-29). Counselling is available as needed, tears often shed: 'Mothers and daughters share the kitchen in the common knowledge of women passing their lives there. … Our laughter glazes the countertops. … We cry at the sink blotting our tears with the damp dishtowel' (p 57).

The image of the 'good woman' is a palpable presence here, as it is in the memories of the Australian chef, restaurateur and food writer, Stephanie Alexander. Writing of her later childhood years and adolescence (from 1949 and throughout the 1950s) spent on a bush block near the sea, south of Melbourne, Australia, Alexander presents homely portraits of her mother as the countrywoman 'bent in front of the Aga oven scooping baked potatoes into her apron' or setting out to collect honey from the hive (1996, p 1). Like Seton's childhood kitchen, Alexander's remembered one is a hub of activity (of cooking, writing, supervising children's homework, making coffee for friends, offering advice) (1997, Preface, pp 1, 2). Outside the open kitchen door (this time, Alexander's brother recalls) was a bench from which to view 'a deeply shaded gully, a bird bath and an acre or so of tended garden beds', while dreaming or listening to the 'warbling demands' of magpies (1997, p 72). Inside, at the kitchen table, however, Alexander reminds us:

> So much was always happening. I felt that I spent whole days there, helping, watching and listening. I also absorbed how important friendship was to my mother. Sometimes she shooed me away if a friend wanted to pour out troubles considered unsuitable for my adolescent ears. I used to feel excluded and hurt …' (1997, facing p 1).

Despite Seton and Alexander's differences in positioning – most obviously, in geography (Massachusetts, Mornington Peninsula) generation (Seton is now in her early 'forties', Alexander her 'sixties') and cultural background (Seton remembers growing up in a household with middle-class intellectuals as parents, with her mother having a Czechoslovakian-Jewish background; Alexander's father was a senior public servant, her mother connected to a well-known communist family of British descent), their stories have a surprising number of resonances for each other. In both of these accounts, the 'good' woman is positioned in the heart of the kitchen, 'doing-cooking', controlling life's traffic, in touch with the earth, and following the rhythm of the seasons. Perhaps, after all, this is what Luce Giard means by her declaration that '[g]ood cooks are never sad or idle – they work at fashioning the world'...?

Central to both accounts is the positioning of the kitchen table. The table becomes the vortex of activity and therapy ... of nurturance, catharsis and renewal. Angela Goode in *The Advertiser* (the daily newspaper of Adelaide, Australia) captures the romance of the kitchen table (particularly the country one) in a deeply nostalgic celebration of kitchens, their tables and home cooking:

> At one end [of the kitchen table] there may be a pile of newspapers and someone reading. A rose from the garden might be dropping petals in the middle. At the other end, the ancient pinewood has initials etched with knives ... of former [sheep] shearers.
>
> This heroic slab is where apricots are bottled, homework done, bread kneaded, soup vegetables cut, meat carved and where much coffee, wine and tea is drunk. In winter, by the wood stove, it is the only place for a party (2001, p 18).

While Goode's designation of the table as '[t]his heroic slab' is an ironic acknowledgement of the function of myth in remembering, her ghostly assembly of cooks, farmworkers, children and friends gathered around this table serves as a wistful reminder of the pleasures of the senses and the satisfactions of conviviality. 'No wonder', she concludes, 'the city pavements are full of tables and chairs with people jostling to eat the sort of simple meals that every farm woman can knock up without a recipe' (p 18).

Seton and Alexander echo this loss. With the kitchen table figured so strongly in their remembering as icon of emotional sustenance, its removal is a cause for lament. 'Many young people never learn to cook at home. Some have little experience of the family table' says Alexander (1996, p 1), while Seton, defiant in the face of her husband's plans for their remodelled kitchen, declares she needs a table *in* the kitchen '[s]o that my friends can cry here' (2000, p 148). The implication is, of course, that with the disappearance of the monumental, free-standing kitchen table in streamlined kitchens, with the current shakiness of rituals of eating together at that table and, finally, in the absence of *women* 'fashioning the world' from the kitchen's epicentre, we are indeed lost, obliged to look for comfort beyond home's borders and in the cooking of somebody else's mother in the marketplace ('It's food your mum would cook if she were Vietnamese').

It seems that Cooking Woman has been captured at last, to be returned to her rightful place at home, by the hearth. '[N]o matter how far the kitchen goes in becoming a high-tech laboratory, it also remains the hearth, the landscape of sustenance' (Busch, 1999, pp 49-50). Here, Busch refers to late 20th-century North American kitchen 'styles', particularly those that combine sophisticated and highly specialised kitchen appliances – 'oversize mixers and blenders' of a 'heavy duty industrial aesthetic' with the 'cozy symbols of nostalgia' – the AGA, traditional eggbeaters, a Shaker box. Cooking Woman, apparently, does not need to choose between the products of the late industrial era and those of earlier times; conveniently, she can draw on both, for, says Busch, '[w]e want the future in the kitchen, but not at the expense of the past', and the kitchen is 'one of those rare places where we can have it both ways' (pp 48, 50). However, while this appears as a comforting resolution to late modernity's challenge to tradition, these stories – Seton's, Alexander's – do not finish at this point.

In a slender thread throughout her account, Seton reminds us that her Cooking Woman is not only the figure at the table, the bench or the coal stove. She is also a novelist. In fact, just at that moment when we are seduced by the imagery of the laughter of mothers and daughters 'glazing the countertops' of the kitchen, or of a recipe for lemon chess pie evocative of summers at Kitty Hawk (2000, p 23), or of two worn wooden spoons kept as objects for remembering a mother who died too young (2000, pp 6, 23, 57), subversive clues to an 'other' mother appear. Inserted in an account of kitchen table talk between Seton's mother and Molly, her best friend and neighbour, for example, is the following:

> Then my mother might recount a trip to her publisher in New York City, lunch at the Algonquin, a small room at the Carlyle (blue pumps and a Donald Davies dress), a grand adventure for a serious woman in a world of patriarchal and enamoured men; while Molly giggled and murmured 'No!' and 'Did you!' in between sips of hot coffee (p 14).

Cooking Woman, it seems, is permitted to leave the kitchen – to adopt other identities, styles of dress; to enter the milieu of the urban cosmopolitan, with its hotels, restaurants, designer fashion and whiff of risqué possibilities. The condition of her leaving, however, is that of return, all the better equipped to tell tales of her 'grand adventure'. Meanwhile, the rhythms of the kitchen continue unabated; indeed, these are spiced by the knowledge of a 'different' world outside.

Likewise, Alexander's mother was also a writer. The first of her cookbooks, *Through My Kitchen Door*, was published in 1960, and is the one which Alexander, nearly 40 years later, re-presents in annotated facsimile (1997). Glimpses of Mary Burchett, Alexander's mother, persist in its pages to raise questions about the multiple and contingent nature of identity meanings, and the daughter-teller's desire to pin these down firmly. So, although time and time again, Mary Burchett appears in the Alexander's narrative notes as bee-keeper, bread-maker, keeper of home and hearth, there are also hints of an 'other' mother and of a 'different' life. For example, this mother-figure, we are told, is 'skilled at multi-tracking', writing at her typewriter while supervising both her daughter's sewing and the proving of the day's supply of bread. (1997, Preface).

Perhaps this moment of the daughter's remembering simply underlines the capacity of Cooking Woman to take on a multiplicity of tasks – to engage in 'public' as well as 'private' nurturing … to write for other Cooking Women, other kitchens, while cooking in her own? Alternatively, in Burchett's own writing, as well as in her children's remembering, a more complicated narrative emerges, with mythic meanings of Cooking Woman challenged, even, to some extent, transformed. Possessing the cultural capital of an educated, middle-class Australian woman, Alexander's mother quotes Ruskin, Burns and Kipling (Alexander, 1997, pp 65, 132); as a cosmopolitan, she recalls a trip to Japan in the 1930s (pp 25, 58) extols the virtues of travelling to 'foreign parts' (p 17), owned, according to her daughter, 'books on every aspect of Asian cooking' and took pride in her friendships with Austrian and German refugees (pp 40, 50), and is imagined by one of her sons (when he travelled to Austria as an adult) as a habitué of Viennese cafes: '[I] had the distinct feeling Mum had been there before … swapping recipes with the pastry-chef in her never-to-improve, stilted German' (p 49).

These images of difference (Cooking Woman at the Algonquin, Cooking Woman in Viennese cafes) beg questions of our culinary writing and remembering. While spectres of disappearing kitchen tables, as well as women themselves from kitchens, shape generational storytelling in ways that recall times when women were supposedly always there, disruptive fragments like a Donald Davies dress or conversation in stilted German hint at other ghosts – other lives, other meanings for identity and other dreamed-of futures. These are fragments produced within the dynamic tension of women's everyday negotiations with memories of the past, present contingencies and future possibilities, and, if we return to de Certeau, these are 'tactics' for finding pleasure within constraint.

So, from a casual reading of both Alexander and Seton's accounts, we might assume that these daughters choose to represent their mothers as always there, the kitchen as their mothers' world and cooking as central to their mothers' lives. If this is the case, a form of collective mourning can be invoked, with nostalgia the focus of its ritual gaze – the gaze of the remembering child in whose eyes the mother exists solely for the daughter, and that of the remembering culture who desires unproblematic returns to unconditional feminine nurture (that elusive space of Kitchen Women Nation [de Certeau and Giard in de Certeau et al, 1998, p 256]). Either way – as mother of daughter, mother of nation – Cooking Woman remains the object of desire. On the other hand, for all the accounts I've considered in this paper, hints to the contrary suggest there are alternative stories to be sifted from memory – stories of 'seizing' the opportunity (de Certeau, 1984, p xix), of asserting autonomy, of parodying dominant cultures and, sometimes, of *not*-doing-cooking.

Cooking and Embroidering

At the beginning of her biography, Reichl sounds a warning:

> Storytelling, in my family, was highly prized. … This book is absolutely in the family tradition. Everything here is true but it may not be entirely factual. … I have occasionally embroidered.
>
> I learned early that the most important thing in life is a good story (2000, Author's Note, pp ix-x).

Reichl's embroidery is evocative of Barthes' classic account of mass cultural forms and meanings, particularly his analysis of *Elle*'s photographic images of 'ornamental cookery' (1973, pp 85-87). This, in Barthes' words, is 'openly dream-like cookery … totally magical'. Excessive and artificial, it is cookery intended for visual consumption alone by the journal's working class readers. While these readers' eyes greedily gaze upon *Elle*'s fantastic images, says Barthes, at the same time, their incomes preclude the purchase of luxuries spread across this journal's glossy pages. So, perhaps we could reconfigure Reichl's account as a form of 'ornamental' storytelling … storytelling in which decoration and artifice, spectacle, magic and fantasy are skilfully combined in the interests of producing 'a good story' – a parable, a morality tale – rather than a body of factual evidence?

Does this matter? Writing about Reichl's contribution to the genre of culinary biography, Traci Marie Kelly seems, to me, overly-concerned with the inclusion of recipes as signifiers of truth, of veracity – as authorial fingerprints that serve to reassure the reader of the 'truth' of ingredients and methods, and hence of life histories to which these recipes are tied (2001, pp 253-262). On the other hand, for my purposes, Kelly's more useful argument is the one that appears less preoccupied with signs of authentication and more with the power of narrative: '[c]ulinary autobiography can be a site of multiple textual assertions that need to be read beyond the recipes' (p 269). We could speculate that this is Reichl's intention in her claim that everything in the account is 'true but ... not ... entirely factual'. The story Reichl constructs is then a 'true' 'haunting' – a story of those goddesses and monsters who haunt our kitchens, a story of fears, desires and doubts embroidered in the threads of our myth-making. Primarily, this becomes a story of our wanting the story to be told in particular ways.

Kelly's 'multiple textual assertions' serve as a warning to re-examine our analyses of cultural remembering – and to challenge, perhaps, too-ready assumptions that culinary biographies replicate, in an exclusivist fashion, the binary of celebration and demonisation, the opposing phantoms of 'good' and 'bad' Cooking Woman. At least, there is a need to acknowledge that stories might be more complicated than first readings imply, and draw on a tension of competing imperatives. For example, returning to Reichl's mythologised 'bad' mother, there are other, more sombre notes that sound occasionally throughout her account: 'My mother had lots of energy and education and not a lot to do. ... She tried one job, and then another, but they never lasted.' (2000, p 34); ' "They're giving my mother lithium", I said [to Doug, my partner] as we loaded the van for the trip to Connecticut ... "Still, you can't be too careful with her cooking" ' (p 176); 'In his heart my father never truly believed in chemical solutions [like lithium] and he treated my mother's illness as if it were his cross to bear' (p 245). Once again, these hints of mental illness may not be 'factual'. Nevertheless, they serve as a significant narrative device. In the midst of our amusement at an excessive/transgressive femininity disrupting culinary convention, we are warned to look again. This time, more sensitive to the telling's subtleties and nuance, we trace a more sober account, inscribed with moments of sadness, motifs of mental illness and images of dogged survival: '[I]n her own strange way she was the glue that kept us together. Being a family meant dealing with Mom' (p 248).

British feminist, Elizabeth Wilson, reviewing her earlier work in the context of trends within feminist analysis, says:

> [L]ike many writers, I am simply struggling the chasm between what is and what we desire. ... [It] seems as if I have belonged to that beleaguered group of socialists and feminists ... searching for compromise between two incompatible perceptions: the sometimes dour leftist apocalypse of a carceral capitalism from which there is logically no escape, and the alternative, a seemingly rather frivolous insistence on pleasure.
>
> Yet, however difficult, it is essential to hold these incompatible views in tension ... that we might develop a view of something that might be better (2001, p 71).

This approach that centres on the tension between 'what is and what we desire' seems a potentially useful one for re-imagining the 'hauntings' of Cooking Woman in cultural contexts like the kitchens of North America and Australia. While we see-saw between celebrations of scones and shortcake or lament the disappearance of ghostly goddesses (and perhaps too, of the disruptive monsters) at the 'heroic board', moments of 'answering back' – the glamour of blue pumps, a cheeky insistence on chips with everything – re-configure the shifting grounds of pleasure and constraint and indicate imaginative 'tactics' for cooking up consent. According to de Certeau, these 'tactics' are 'the microscopic, multiform, and innumerable connections between *manipulating and enjoying*, the fleeting and massive reality of a social activity at play with the order that contains it' (1984, p xxiv, original emphasis). In other words, more attention given to the 'practice' (p xi) of meanings in pushing the boundaries of pleasure and constraint, to the tension between what we have and want, to the ambivalence of utopic/dystopic kitchen hauntings as 'inherently contradictory experience[s]' (Wilson, 2001, p 100) might indicate productive ways for re-writing and 're-membering' our landscapes of nourishment (Fortier, 2000, pp 159-160).

Finally, we should consider whether, as Lust says, 'the hunger is in the memory', after all. From this vantage point, my account becomes one in which daughters' desires mediate stories of their mothers; one in which stories, supposedly of the 'past', resonate with meanings of 'present' and 'future' too. Who tells the story (whose story it is) is crucial to what is told. And while the stories included in this paper are portraits in differences and distinctiveness, it is also fascinating to note their degree of connectedness, especially through cultures of wanting to be mothered, fears of loss and projects of retrieval of kitchen pleasures. On the other hand, given the impact of globalisation, migration, travel and new technologies in the post-industrial West, such connections are probably not so surprising. Instead, I suggest, the more intriguing political journey is the one that this paper has charted here in a speculative fashion. This is a 're-membering' that challenges Cooking Woman as a figure transcending boundaries of time and space, through everyday stories of multiple, contingent meanings of cultural belonging.

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Utopias and Dystopias, Upepsia and Dyspepsia

Paul van Reyk

There's no getting away from it. Food, sex and politics have been inextricably linked since Adam and Eve dallied with a snake over an apple in the Garden of Eden. In all visions of heavens and hells, earthly and otherwise what we will eat and how we grow and distribute it has a lot to do with who and how we fuck and how we treat each other in the civil, moral and legal spheres. All utopias inevitably are versions of the Garden, and all dystopias are visions of the consequences of our expulsion.

The Garden of Earthly Delights

According to Genesis, vegies came first, with the earth bringing forth grass, herbs that yield seed, and trees that yield fruit on day three of creation. Creatures of the sea and birds came along in day five, and cattle, creeping things and the beasts of the earth came along on day six, as did we carbon-based bipeds. The Koran doesn't tell the creation story itself, it goes along with Genesis.

God got busy again after day seven and 'created a garden Eastward in Eden' for we bipeds, the principal element of which seems to have been fruit trees and the tree 'of the knowledge of good and evil'. Now, Genesis goes a bit quiet here as to what we bipeds lived on, but on the evidence so far, we were fruitarians. The injunction to the first ones was that 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'. In fact, we were naked fruitarians, who had no shame, and happily went about becoming one flesh. Underlying many a Utopia is the desire to get back to this time of simplicity in food, dress and sex.

The Koran similarly has God put Adam and Eve into a garden where they are to eat of it comfortably as they wish, except for the one tree. In the Koran, the tree in question is identified as one from which should Adam and Eve eat, they would become 'abusive tyrants'. That's interesting in that a key idea in dystopian visions is that they are in some way tyrannical. (David Marr, the Australian writer, once commented to me that indeed all utopias were inherently tyrannical.)

Now, we all know how the story goes from here. In the pre-eminent act of dystopian creation, Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the forbidden tree and are cast out of Eden. An angel with a flaming sword is placed at the gates of Eden to keep us out. They 'know they are naked' and sew fig leaves to cover them. Eve is condemned to have painful childbirth and have hubbie rule over her. The earth itself is cursed and Adam is condemned to work in order to eat from it. It will no longer give food to him freely. Did we become carnivores, too, under this curse? Genesis doesn't say. But it is certainly only outside of Eden that we begin to be shown as flesh-eaters.

In the Koran, the reward for those who stay true to God, who do what is good, is a return to the garden in which they will no longer be oppressed. The day of judgement will find them in the content, in the shade, reclining on couches, with every amenity there for them, having whatever they ask for. It is this earthly paradise that becomes the focus of the medieval stories about the land of Cockaigne.

Cockaigne

There is debate whether the medieval texts and tales of the land of Cockaigne are Utopian dream or satire. I want to look at these tales more in the light of the former than the latter.

No one works. Food and drink is ever present and does not have to be cultivated or husbanded. Edible architecture is everywhere. Fences of sausages, beams of butter, windows made of fish, and roofs of custard tarts. The streets of the town are paved with spice and the hedgerows are made of more fish. In some versions you have to eat your way into the city of Cockaigne through a wall of porridge. Pigs walk up to you, knife and fork embedded in them to make it easy for you to cut a hunk, and they then proceed merrily on regenerating themselves for the next diner. It rains eels and meat pies. Beer and wine flow as its rivers. It is always spring, you can have free sex with ever-willing partners.

Cockaigne has been seen as a response to the hunger and the arduousness of agrarian labour during the Middle Ages. Hunger was seen as a continuation of our divine punishment for the stuff up in Eden. Not only did we have to toil to feed ourselves, but we had to cope with the capriciousness of weather. It was a kind of test. Hunger could lead further down the track of sin and depravity. You start by eating whatever comes to hand, unclean animals – toads, snakes, animals associated with foreigners. They end up eating each other – cannibalism. Cannibalism is the ultimate act of social disintegration.

Cockaigne also has class elements. Medieval texts identified foods that are suitable for the peasants – root vegetables, bread and swills. In Cockaigne, everyone has access to the food of the rich – roasted fowls and beef, wine, and spices above all.

Finally, Cockaigne is aligned to the Free Spirit heresies at the end of the first millennium. Free Spiriters believed in the possibility of attaining perfection on earth, In that state, one was no longer capable of sin and so could do whatever one's nature dictated and one's body desired. For some, the path to perfection was through extreme abstinence. For others, however, it was through total indulgence. For some this extended to sexual freedom. Certainly for most it meant believing they were above the moral strictures of the established church. Free Spiriters were millenarianists, those who believed in the imminence of Armageddon and the establishment of the 1000-year reign of the Holy Ghost on earth prior to the Day of Judgement. It was a yearning to get back to the earthly paradise.

Given all of this, it doesn't come as a surprise that, Cockaigne and variations on it featured at Carnival, the annual festival before Lent during which the rules of society were turned upside down for a short time. Cockaigne, then, is arguably a Utopian vision of a queer world.

More's Utopia

The term Utopia comes of course from the title of the book by Thomas More. More's vision of this country has very strong parallels to Eden, and also reflects his strong opposition to the enclosure of cultivable land and the turning over of it to sheep and cattle.

Utopia is a country with both cities and rural areas. Each city, indeed, is surrounded by at least 12 miles of farm land which it's citizens cultivate and from which it gets all its basic food needs. At 'proper intervals' in the countryside are houses furnished with farming equipment and living quarters. Each of these houses holds an average of 40 citizens of all ages and both genders. Each year, 20 citizens from the city and 20 people from the country swap places (shades of trading houses!). The purpose of this is two-fold – so that everyone is skilled in farming and the raising of crops, but also so that the burden of labouring in the field is limited to a period of two years at a time. More clearly thought we got a bad deal out of the expulsion from Eden and didn't want us to have to toil too hard to get our food.

Grain that's grown is only used for bread, not for ale or beer. But he ain't a rechabite – there is wine made from grapes, and there is apple and pear cider, and water flavoured with licorice or honey.

Interestingly, while beasts are slaughtered for meat, it is slaves who have to do it (slaves are permitted, but only those who are captives of war). For free citizens to do it would be to lead them to lose compassion for living creatures, and so turn to murder and war. This is fascinating given the mediaeval ideas about hunger and its ends.

Two other aspects are worth noting. All meals are accompanied by music, incense is burned and perfume scattered (a pre-figuring of the kinds of meals the Futurists were to champion in the early 20th century). Finally, 'no kind of pleasure is forbidden provided no harm comes from it'.

Brave New Worlds

Pleasure, music, food, are central themes in Huxley's *Brave New World*. Huxley said that the book's theme 'is not the advancement of science as such; it is the advancement of science as it affects human individuals'. Under the twin gods of Our Ford and Our Freud, Huxley creates a world where the production line meets eugenics.

Some elements of it approach the territory of the earthly paradise. In the BNW, sex has nothing to do with reproduction and everything to do with pleasure/happiness. Monogamy and the nuclear family are seen as dangerous.

'Our Freud had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life. The whole world was full of fathers – was therefore full of misery; full of mothers – therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts – full of madness and suicide.'

In their place is multi-partnering (all of it heterosexual, at least in adulthood) and the crèche. To want to have only one partner is morally and socially repugnant. Erotic play is seen as normal and encouraged from early childhood. It is implicit that some homosexual activity is expected in childhood, as is autoeroticism. So okay, Adam only had Eve so multipartnering wasn't a real possibility, but some of what Huxley is outlining here about sex without guilt is not too far from Eden.

More than this, if painful child-bearing was Eve's lot for the getting of wisdom, then BNW gets right back to the earthly paradise. Reproduction is via the 'Bokanovsky Process' the production of whole Castes from a single egg. Pills forestall fertilisation as a result of sex, carried around by women in the wonderfully titled Malthusian belts. And as you don't need all that many ova anyway, there's an entire class of women who are born sterile – the freemartins. And given the distaste for the family to want to bear children is also socially repugnant.

The place of food is more contradictory. On the one hand there's bugger all natural about it. Most of it has been technologised down to basic vitamins. But Huxley isn't brave enough to have his populace entirely happy with this. You get bought off first by the look and substance of the vitamins, they come as surrogates – carotene sandwiches, vitamin A pate, surrogate champagne, and even the fetuses in their bottles on the assembly line get fed with blood surrogate. And when you want to remember the smell of rawer product, you can catch a performance from the scent organ at the Feelies, perhaps playing 'a delightfully refreshing Herbal Capriccio – rippling arpeggios of thyme and lavender, of rosemary, basil, myrtle, tarragon; a series of daring modulations through the spice keys into ambergris; and a slow return through sandalwood, camphor, cedar and new-mown hay (with occasional subtle touches of discord – a whiff of kidney pudding, the faintest suspicion of pig's dung'.

But at least in most cases you don't have to bear the post Eden curse of toiling to get your food from an ungrateful earth. Some food does remains unsynthesised. The problem of too much leisure for the labouring classes is solved by having one third of the population at any one time involved in working the land. And there seems to be real chocolate given to kids visiting the home for the dying (yes, you do die, still) are to condition them to associate death with sweetness.

And finally, for those of us who believe that when we finally get to the earthly paradise we will find that god is a DJ, there is soma, the drug that keeps you happy – 'all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects'. Pop some before sex. Pop some when you're a little bit upset. Pop it just for fun with surrogate coffee or a raspberry sundae. Or pass the loving cup of soma at the Solidarity Services, the communal gatherings that have taken the place of church services and which usually end in unrestricted sex.

Huxley, actually believed in a lot of this. He believed the solution to the economic problems of the post WWI was the planned economy and he believed in eugenics to maintain Western stock. The disclosures of the excesses of the Stalinist Soviet did not dissuade him from that view. Writing a new Foreword to the novel in 1946, he still believed that you could have benign totalitarianism. Indeed, it was necessary so that people would learn to love the servitude he believed was essential for an orderly modern society. He believed the major challenge for future governments was to solve the problem of happiness.

The government of Oceania in Orwell's *1984* has found one way. It's thought control. You can't be unhappy if you can't remember that there's anything to be unhappy about. Chocolate ration has to be cut? Easy, re-write every historic record to make it look like what's actually happening is an increase in the ration, then drum it into people at every opportunity. Gather people together every day and give them their chance to express five minutes of hate against whoever is the enemy of the day, and they'll gladly return to the mundanity and drudgery of their day. And after work there's always a public hangings you can attend. (Hmmm, very much the new management – though we haven't got around to the hangings, yet).

The tree of knowledge has been banished and everyday is a carnival of inversion and double-speak. War is peace; freedom is slavery; and ignorance is strength. Party Girls join the Anti-Sex League – a world of 'hockey-fields and cold baths and community hikes and general clean-mindedness'. At the same time, sex with prostitutes is tolerated for Party men, as long as it is joyless and hurried and with prole women. The Party tells you who to marry, and sex in marriage is rarely pleasurable.

It's a drab world. Its food is drab. And its hero, Party member Winston Smith is equally drab. In his tiny kitchen he may have a loaf of 'dark-coloured bread' or he can eat his regulation lunch in the canteen of the Ministry of Information in which he works – a metal panikin of pinkish-grey stew, a hunk of bread, a cube of cheese, a mug of milkless Victory coffee and one saccharine tablet. The class rules around food that existed in the Middle Ages exist here around alcohol. Party members get to drink a colourless liquid called Victory Gin. Proles are only allowed to drink beer.

But Winston is also a criminal, guilty of thought crime. He sits in his canteen and wonders has it always been like this; 'Had food always tasted like this?' Winston is humankind after the fall. When he meets and falls in love with fellow thought criminal Julia, they attempt to create their version of the Garden in a squalid little room above a bookstore. To this room Julia brings precious food she steals from the Party. Real chocolate, 'dark and shiny wrapped in sliver paper', not like the usual stuff available which is dull-brown, crumbly and tastes 'like the smoke of a rubbish fire'. She brings sugar, 'proper white bread', a little pot of jam, a tin of milk and real coffee. 'Dirty of clean' thinks Winston', 'the room was paradise'

But Julia, the woman, has brought knowledge into the Garden. Not only has she confirmed Winston's memory of a time before. She has brought make-up to 'paint her face'. And she has brought sex. 'As soon as they arrive they would sprinkle everything with pepper bought on the black market, tear off their clothes, and make love with sweating bodies…'. The inevitable consequences follow. Within the Garden is the animal that will be Winston's ultimate undoing – a rat. And behind the walls of the room Big Brother, God, has always been watching. One day, as they stand in each others arms, watching from their window a prole woman hang out her clothes, God enters the Garden and they are once again expelled.

The Once Green World

The world of *Soylent Green*, the dystopian sci-fi film with the bizarre subtext of a love story between Edward G Robinson and Charlton Heston, takes us back to the hunger tropes of Cockaigne. The world is in the grip of a year long drought as a result of the greenhouse effect at the same time as its population is spiralling out of control. It's like Calcutta writ large – there's no traffic because it would be ploughing into people who live crowded on the streets, on the stairs, on the footpaths, in the stalled cars. God only knows where anyone has sex, but clearly they do because kids are certainly popping out everywhere. The only tree left in New York is a wretched sapling under a plastic dome in Gramercy Park. (The image of a de-natured Eden is inescapable). And for food there's soylent in its various colours, synthesised from beans. There is a new version, soylent green, that's made form plankton. But the supply of soylent is controlled by ration cards. New batches brought to market inevitable lead to food riots. And food riots lead to street cleaning – garbage trucks edge into the crowds, scooping you up indiscriminately with their front end loaders and dumping you like so much detritus into their skips. Oh, and if you aren't quick enough, you're as likely to get pancaked as the front end loader clangs down on the street.

That's if your poor, of course, which most people are. Class rules on food apply in this new feudalism. If you're rich, you get to live in a condo and get limp vegies and fruit and the occasional piece of beef. Your condo will be air conditioned, there'll be running water and soap and a fridge. Best of all there'll be furniture – sex workers who come with the apartment and are yours to use and abuse until you move out.

The story revolves around the work of a cop, Thorn, (Heston) and his book (a sort of researcher), Sol, (Robinson) who set about investigating the murder of a politician. All the 'books' as they are portrayed in the film can be read as Jewish, which gives an added horror to the secret at the heart of Soylent Green.

The exposition of the secret and the reason for the murder artfully brings together two of the themes of Cockaigne. Sol is so horrified by what he discovers about soylent green that he decides to 'go home', to euthanase. This is now a common practice. People choose to die. They do so at centres that combine the ambience and architecture of hospitals and the churches of new age/neo-Christian cults. You get to die in white robe, sipping poison, while your favourite music is played and you watch wrap around wall screens play images of your dreams or treasured memories. Sol chooses to die in an earthly paradise of sorts. As Beethoven's Pastorale pumps out, the screen blossoms with images of fields of flowers, coursing water, leaping deer, birds in flight.

Thorn arrives at this scene distraught after finding a note from Sol, too late to stop Sol but in time to share his vision of Eden. He then sets about following Sol's body as it is bagged and taken from the euthanasia centre. His journey is an expulsion from Eden into the hell of the hungry envisioned in the medieval texts. For the plankton have also now died, and soylent green, Thorn, discovers, is being stamped out on the factory belts of this brave new world from human bodies. The punishment for our sins of pollution and greed is hunger that leads us to the final act of degradation, cannibalism.

And the subtext? The relationship at the heart of the story is between Thorn and Sol. Sol is clearly in love with Thorn, and says so at one stage. Sure, you could read it as mateship, but there is a scene in the film that gives the lie to this, and it centres around food. Thorn nicks fresh food and vegetables from the condo of the murderee. Sol cooks it up for him, serving it up with all the love that Mrs Brady fed her brood. Thorn gets to eat with Sol's treasured set of red formal cutlery while Sol eats his with a plastic spoon. And at the end of the meal, Sol shows Thorn how to eat an apple.

Hippies and Jonestown

But enough of these fantasies, what happens when real human beings go out there to create utopias? Not surprisingly, the set about creating situations that look a whole lot like earthly paradises.

For the flower children of the sexual revolution, on the one hand the garden turned out to be a mud-covered hillside on a pig farm in upstate New York and on the other it was cakes melting in the rain of Macarthur and electric Kool-Aid acid trips. If you couldn't be with the one you loved then you could love the one you're with. There were geodesic domes, the whole earth catalogue, communes, wholemeal, vegetables and sacred cows. Wage-slavery was out. Self-sufficiency, bartering, community roof raising, dealing were in. Private property was out. Childbirth was back in a big way, unfortunately it still was painful though de-technologised.

Joni Mitchell 'came upon a child of god, walking along the road' and asked him where he was going. 'He said, I'm going down to Yasgar's farm, going to join in a rock and roll band, got to get back to the land, and I'm gonna set my soul free. We are stardust, we are golden, we are billion year old carbon, and we've got to get ourselves back to the Garden'. She and half a million others went along with him to 'lose the smog'. They were 'cogs in something turning'. From the stage, Max Yasgar himself exhorted the crowd to remember that the man next to them was their brother. Babies were born in the mud. They chanted away the rain, beating tin cans. And Jimi shredded the *Star-Spangled Banner* for breakfast. All over the country they packed up and went looking for a cause. Jim Kantner and David Crosby saw them as survivors of some holocaust eating purple berries and setting sail in 'wooden ships on the water, very free and easy, easy, the way you know it's supposed to be' to where 'silver people on the shoreline let us be'. Neil Young saw silver, too, but for him, after the gold rush were 'silver spaceships flying in the yellow haze of the sun' 'flying mother Nature's silver seed to a new home in the sun'. And the Jefferson Airplane turned in Jefferson Starship, hijacked a rocket and sent 7000 people, hydroponic gardens and baby trees across the sky to wander through the planets of the universe, talking 'about free minds, free bodies, free dope, free music….'

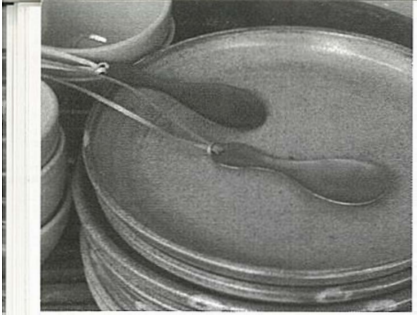
The tree of knowledge now had a five fingered leaf, or blood red flowers. It grew from spores underground or like little buttons on cacti. And the greatest source of all was a fungus that a millennium ago brought visions to the Lenten starving.

But, the road through Yasgar's farm led to places less benign than the vinyl worlds of the San Francisco singer-songwriters. The Garden would become the clearing in the Guyanese jungles to which Jim Jones and over 1000 members of the People Temple would flee as the cult's US operations came increasingly under scrutiny by the press, politicians like Leo Ryan and the family and friends of cult members.

Jones' church had promised a world where racial boundaries were demolished; where the homeless would find shelter and family; where poverty and hunger would be eliminated through a return self-sufficiency from agrarian effort. Sex was kinda snarly, though. Jones himself was apparently obsessively bisexual but punished homosexuality among his followers. He boasted of having up to 20 fucks a day but the sex life of followers was strictly patrolled. There was no private wealth, except for Jones'.

By the time the press got onto it, the utopian vision peddled by Jones for his communards had begun to go sour. The tree of knowledge in this case was growing outside the Garden and starting to attract defectors. But god was in no mood to let anyone out of Eden this time. And it was raspberry Kool-Aid mixed with tranquilisers and cyanide that ended it all.

Next time kids, stick to the apple juice.



My Favourite Edible City

Anita Stewart, Rick Burford and Alicia Rios

Chair: Colin Sheringham

This afternoon we have three quite diverse people talking about notion of an edible city. The first is Anita Stewart. Anita and I shared a seat going out to a winery once and had coffee and we had I thought a really quite fascinating chat. She's a Canadian food and travel journalist and she says she's down here to be recharged. Having read some of her books, I find that she hardly needs to go anywhere to be recharged – her books quite exciting to read. She's going to talk about Quebec City. Rick Burford has been to several symposiums and found himself quite inspired by the whole thing. He is passionate about food and would like to talk about the whole concept of an edible city. The final speaker is Alicia Rios. I had the great pleasure in Sydney to go and look at one of Alicia's installations. I asked her how she wanted to be introduced and she told me an overt expert food historian but probably for me she will always be one of the most wonderful food artists. I think it's rare to be able to step outside all the preconceptions that you have and look at a topic that you've been passionate about for a number of years in a new light and you certainly did that for me. I have to thank you for that.

Anita Stewart

I do come here to be recharged there is no question about it. There is nothing like this event in Canada and it is an absolute pleasure to be here. To share the privilege of thinking about food is rare – pretty much unknown in my country. Although we do good food it's just starting to be intellectualised now. Margaret Visser unfortunately has left. Hopefully by my coming here I will be able to bring ideas and ideals back to Canada.

Quebec City is the edible city of my dreams. I don't speak French – if I spoke French I would live there. And now is the time to go, it is winter. It is a deep snowy wonderful place at this time of year – with ice sculptures and icicles hanging from the ramparts (it's the only walled city in North America). Quebec City is at the southern edge of the Laurentian Mountains, which is part of the Canadian Shield, the oldest rock formation on earth. Quebec City is an extraordinary place and Quebecois love food – they absolutely adore it.

This morning I was listening to why a city is positioned in a particular location. Originally Quebec City was an Indian settlement. When Jacques Cartier came in about 1535, he saw a great native settlement on the banks of the St Lawrence River where the river finally narrows. The St Lawrence drains much of the eastern part of North America into the Atlantic Ocean. There is an island called now Île d'Orléans but he called it the Island of Bacchus because of the wild grapes that grew there. A little bit later, 1608 roughly, Samuel de Champlain came and claimed Quebec City…then French settlement began. As an aside, Champlain founded The Order of Good Cheer, North America's first feasting society, down in Nova Scotia at the Habitation in 1606.

Quebec City was where the battle of The Plains of Abraham occurred. British General Wolfe faced off against French General Montcalm and because of that particular battle Canada is now English. I like to fantasize about what would have happened if the French had won. We'd have great cheese, we'd have fashion, we'd have wonderful restaurants. Quebec is a region that I go to often because I love the people and their culture.

Quebec City, the capital of the province, is my edible city for many reasons but primarily because the foods of the region are there. They do harvest the region, particularly on L'Île d'Orléans. It is the market garden for Quebec City. The people who lived there once were called *les poireaux,* the leek pickers, but they have orchards and on one small acreage a farmer harvests black currants to make cassis that is used in restaurants of the city.

The foods of old Quebec, the belly warming foods of winter, can be found in the restaurant, Aux Anciens Canadiens. Located in the oldest building in the city which was built in 1675-76 by François Jacquet on land granted by the Ursuline Convent. Aux Anciens Canadiens looks much like the steeped roof gingerbread house that sits on our Christmas table, complete with a thickly frosted snowy roof rimmed with icicles and rippled glass windows. The main dining room is lined with wooden murals carved by the Bourgault family from St Jean Port Joli. Upstairs, under the gables, are cases of muskets and hunting rifles harking back to the days when fresh meat was best available to those with a quick shot and a good eye.

To thaw frozen fingertips and send warmth trickling into even the most remote exhausted muscle, there's 'caribou' the fiery drink of rural Quebec. You replace numb fingers with weak knees. Basically white alcohol and red wine, the slightly refined but no less potent version at Aux Anciens Canadiens blends two parts sherry with one part vodka.

After that comes a tureen of traditional pea soup spiced with savoury. In autumn, fresh *gourganes*, the special beans from the Charlevoix, are substituted for the yellow dried peas. Here the *tourtière* is of the ground meat variety...again using medieval spices, cinnamon, cloves and black pepper.

Since many of the early settlements in Quebec depended upon the river, it is to the St Lawrence that the menu often turns. Eel is hot smoked and served thinly sliced on a bed of butter lettuce; sometimes there's even sturgeon, the favoured fish of the Kamouraska region which is now exceedingly rare. A *cipaille*, or pastry lined casserole from the Gaspé is full of cooked shrimps, scallops, Atlantic salmon and halibut then topped with more pastry and baked. For dessert the maple syrup pie is a real *tarte au sucre* or sugar pie with the added decadence of maple syrup and thick cream.

Watch for fresh blueberries from Lac St Jean and sorrel from the fields of the L'Îles d'Orléans and game from the far north; lamb and apples from the Eastern Townships and several newly produced liqueurs, Dubleuet, a blueberry aperitif from Dolbeau and an *Eau de Vie à l'érable*.

If you want to go for upscale food, foods of the new Quebec, I would go to the Château Frontenac, named after the Governor of New France. The hotel itself is an icon and if we ever think of Quebec we think of this magnificent hotel. The Château Frontenac sits high at the very top of the cliffs overlooking the St Lawrence. It commands the St Lawrence, there's just no question about it. The chef there is John Soulard, one of my favourite people in the country. He has a television show on TV 5 which is broadcast through the French-speaking world. Chefs have to keep in shape so he trains for the ironman triathlon. Part of his training has been to bike out into the countryside to St Basile de Portneuf to visit his favourite cheese-maker. He has explored the countryside on his bike on training. When you have a hotel of that size and that reputation blessing the products of the area, all of a sudden new businesses spring up. There are over a hundred cheeses now in Quebec, many of them are un-pasteurised which is a tremendous thing for Canada. It's hard to get them in Ontario but nonetheless in Quebec and in Quebec City, you can eat them. You find them at the markets in Montreal and the fine restaurants across the province. Soulard is an extraordinary man. Because of his influence, his ability to talk to the media and through his television appearances, people really appreciate the products of the La Cuisine Régionale de Quebec.

Rick Burford

When Jennifer asked me to speak about my favourite edible city, I started to reflect on what really makes an edible city for me. When I moved to Chicago some years ago, it seemed to confirm all my prejudices about the home of deep dish pizza and McDonald's. It was a quite horrendous gastronomic wasteland of chain restaurants. In fact, just to go food shopping was a negative experience. However, we discovered that life in Chicago is all about making connections, discovering relationships with like-minded people. Once you do this you soon realise that even a city like Chicago is an edible city. When we discovered like-minded people, we then discovered farmers' markets, and a restaurant in the suburbs which had its own garden. It was fantastic, an absolutely wonderful restaurant. The chef would make bread and take it to the neighbours as a small act of kindness. It really was just a revelation. Montreal, too, is a wonderful city when you meet a local who can introduce you to the markets, etc. I love to discover cities through their markets and food-related events. Fundamentally, when you scratch the surface most people have a very strong connection with food, even though they may not on first appearances seem to. Once you start talking with people you soon discover that food is an extremely important part of their lives. It is an obvious statement but people tend to take their food culture for granted.

Being invited into people's homes and tasting their regional foods is a joy for me. When I visit China, when I visit Italy, when I visit India, I find that cuisine permeates their whole life. So for me an edible city is one with a real sense of place. It provides a meaningful culture. So even if the city is Amsterdam, Athens or Albury the same thing applies. For example, I very recently visited Albury for a look at some interesting work they do there in IT training and it turns out that they've got a whole regional cuisine and regional food movement. (I see a few people nodding.) They are building a regional cuisine area in the triangle of Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Here, too, they are establishing a meaningful sense of place and culture for that population. People are establishing new identities through food. It is improving their lives and the lives of others.

Alicia Rios

I will talk about Valencia, that's my edible town. And first I will sing the hymn of Valencia, it mentions rice, and the food, and the women in San Carlos.

To me what makes Valencia an edible city are the Valencianos, the people living there since the Phoenician and Roman times. First they were baking, roasting and grilling local vegetables then using olive oil and cultivating and planting olive trees and almond trees. In the 8th century the Arabs started transforming the landscape into terraces. They brought the orange and lemon trees and rice so they transformed the landscape from being more or less dry into one of extravagance. From these ancient times, the people have inherited a pride in wearing silver and gold and beautiful dresses. And they have the biggest number of feasts per year in the whole world. Always, every festivity is related to different foods and ways of celebrating so that no culinary or eating tradition has been lost.

It is a more Italian town than other Spanish towns because there are lots of places for tapas, squares and beautiful galleries, so you go from one tapas to another and there you meet. The weather is so wonderful that you can eat outdoors all year. There are the famous festivities, the fires in every square with a gigantic statue that is burnt, and it is all accompanied, always, with food. This is very important, being the exhibitionists they are, the men even more than women. So they will always cook the rice outdoors, the men, so paella is something that belongs to men when it is cooked outdoors. Indoors there are the women cooking the same rice and other types of food.

They have more beautiful orchards, the coast provides fresh fish. There's a great debate because the city wants to expand but these orchards are so rich and wonderful as a cultural showing that they don't want to wreck them at the expense of the growing city. You can already imagine this type of city where men are so proud to cook outside and there are fishermen and agricultural workers and the biggest number of artists come from Valencia. There are musicians, painters, artisans so this is really a place to go and enjoy because you can eat very good tapas and wonderful vegetables everywhere, inexpensively. One of the characteristics of Valencia is that they carry chariots where they offer lots of different roast vegetables, sausages, fishes, all sorts of things; they will ask what type of sandwich you want and then you can choose just a bit of this, just a bit of this, and they will respect your choices. Even if you want to try a bit of everything, they will. They are very patient and they will never get angry. So there is not a standard list of sandwiches, bocadillos we say, but it's up to the customers. So it is an edible town.

Discussion

It seems that history and the climates all add up and that people have become so passionate about food. Looking outwards and caring.

Zannie Flanagan: I agree about Alicia's comment about the orchards being a barrier between the urban and the rural area. It actually happened where I come from, the Southern Vales where the price of vineyard land has actually stopped the urban crawl because the developers now can't afford to buy large patches of land to develop. I think the other thing about Adelaide that reminds me or twigs my memory in terms of what Alicia said is that Adelaide has quite a large culture base and that mix between art and the rural economy, food, all seems to bring about a compactness.

Alicia Rios: We could try to get them to be sisters. Most cities have a sister somewhere else so that Adelaide and Valencia could be ideal ones. In Valencia the micro-climate is very special so that we get the first oranges, even before Moroccan ones.

Zannie Flanagan: I think when the city is small enough and compact enough, I often have thought this about Adelaide, that area directly surrounding the city space becomes a playground for the city. So it is as important for the city folk to preserve that as it is for the country folk to support the city. Once that balance is broken, obviously things break down. I think that attitude of a playground, easy access is an important thing to provide that balance.

Alicia Rios: In a strange way, when we go to any city or a small village we tend to look at the people and the ones that look like they're happy and looking like they're enjoying life you ask them. The first is the experimental case, the second is the confirming one and the third is just to check. In Valencia you can ask anybody, everybody looks happy.

Paul van Reyk: I guess my question is edible in what way? I think of some work I was doing in Sydney and one of my proven performers are taxi drivers because they have this amazing understanding of where to eat in the city particularly at really odd hours. A lot of them are Afghani or Pakistani. And you get a very different notion of an edible city when you talk with them. About where they go to eat and what constitutes edibility for them. There are different issues for them, might be accessibility but also about the speed of the delivery of the food. All those other kinds of issues so different sorts of cities have different notions of edibility.

Gae Pincus: I can tell you another story about a taxi driver in Sydney. I was going with Sri and Roger Owen from London to MG Garage and the taxi driver was just fascinated to hear us talk about Janni Kyritsis and his restaurant. He was so envious about us going there. He wanted to go.

Gay Bilson: I want to say one last thing. I want to extend the definition of an edible city. I would say an edible city is one which is nourishing in all respects and I think Alicia touched on this. So when I coined this phrase for the title of the symposium it was edible in all senses. A city that was healthy politically, healthy in terms of social activism, healthy in terms of your stomach, your brain, all your senses. Which is not to denigrate talking about cities in terms of their produce and eating.

Rick Burford: If I can take that one step further, because everybody has been talking about the edible city, a lot of the work that I've been doing is actually in cities which have in fact been pulled from the region. I think in this discussion we've been thinking cities as in big metropolitan cities, that's where the conversation has been going. I just wanted to highlight that there are regional cities and there is an enormous amount of energy in Australian regional cities at the moment in the food area. Which comes back to Albury.

[The Art of] Living the City I

'Show and Tell'

in which Symposium contributors present objects reflecting their gastronomic experiences in the city – with Symposium Limoncello

Introduced by Jennifer Hillier

> As time goes on you accumulate your personal gadgets, things which graft themselves on to your life; an ancient thin-pronged fork for the testing of meat, a broken knife for scraping mussels, a battered little copper saucepan in which your sauces have always turned out well, an oyster knife which you can no longer afford to use for its intended purpose but which turns out to be just the thing for breaking off hunks of Parmesan cheese … an earthenware bean-pot of such charm that nothing cooked in it could possibly go wrong.
>
> (Elizabeth David, *French Country Cooking).*

In keeping with the theme of the city, we have organised an exhibition or a 'Show and Tell' of meaningful culinary objects. Throughout history the city has been a place where culture is put on show. Cities provide a dynamic context for display, exhibition and exchange.

We also thought a Show and Tell might be a good way of encouraging contributions from lots of people.

When choosing my culinary object for the Show and Tell, I was tempted to select something from my kitchen. I thought I might bring along my Tuscan green and white glazed mixing bowl for bread dough or my typical beech chopping board also from Tuscany. I have seen old ones hanging up on kitchen walls, hollowed out and worn into holes in the centre by years of the rocking/chopping action of the *mezza luna*. Over the years, I've tended to collect more rustic, peasanty things.

Perhaps I could have shown you my Atomic coffee maker – that icon of modernist Italian design. Certainly, coffee, espresso machines and bars are synonymous with the city. Also an Alessi cocktail shaker might have demonstrated a certain urban taste.

However, for today I want to show objects which might bring out, in a more particular way, the theme of the city. In his book *The Measure of Reality*, Alfred Crosby talks about the way concepts of time change from city to country. He says:

> For peasants schedules were approximate: weather, dawn, and sunset dictated their tempi. But hours were of central significance to city dwellers, for whom buying and selling had already been initiated into the vogue of quantification. Their time was already, what Benjamin Franklin, a man they prefigured, would call it: money (Alfred Crosby, *The Measure of Reality*).

Elizabeth David also comments on the modern vogue for quantifying everything. She says modern recipes, especially American magazine ones, offer too many weights and measures, calling for 'one half-cup or one quarter-teaspoon of everything but the washing-up water'.

I've therefore borrowed two machines which, to my mind, evoke the way the city needs to speed up time. First is a quirky Teasmade (borrowed from Cath Kerry), which sits by the bed and combines an alarm clock with an automatic tea maker. I thought it might be a nice contrast to the fine 'ritual' tea ware of the JamFactory exhibition curated by Janice Lally. Just as the 'tea-break' structures our time at work, the Teasmade makes sure we start the day on time. The second object is a rather compact Salter digital kitchen timer (borrowed from Gay Bilson). With these machines I was hoping to allude to the modern city's dependence on the precise calculation of time. Whether it is clocking-on at work, transport timetables or the ping of the microwave, our city lives and our city kitchens are governed by clocks, measurement and calculation.

Cath Kerry, Jean Duruz and Maria Kelly will act as guides, facilitators and curators for this afternoon's Show and Tell. And to accompany the session we have Limoncello and Pink Pamelas made by Gay Bilson.[1]

Rotary grater – Paul van Reyk

I found it while travelling through the Flinders Ranges at Laura, which has a couple of the best antique shops I have ever been in and it was $14. Its meaning lies in its combination of utility and beauty and mostly the sheer surprise of its creation. It's the kind of thing which I never knew I needed till I saw it. I have never in my life seen a rotary grater before. I have about five different types of graters at home, so this is an addition to my grater collection. It was just too beautiful to pass by really.

Sandwich board – Lizzie Crosby

This is a sandwich cutter. It has a history because of my background as a teacher. I work in a school for multiple disabled children. It is actually used for people with a physical disability. It is a sandwich board for someone who perhaps has mild cerebral palsy. We work towards the children becoming independent in their living skills. It is constructed in such a way that the slices are held in place while it is spread. It is about 15 years old. It's made by a volunteer at our school called Bert, that's why it's got 'B B B' on it. He's 83 now and he's still a volunteer. It is very special to me.

Egg prick – Sue Zweep

I really had a lovely thing put aside to bring. I got as far as Gunning, to Margaret's house and realised I had left it behind. It actually belongs to Margaret's mother-in-law. I said 'For God's sake, Marg, quick, have you got an old drawer somewhere?' She pulled out the drawer and it was full of the most wonderful things, absolutely brilliant and you are going to find one of them here. It is used to prick the end of the egg so that it doesn't crack when you cook it. Perhaps it is for drinking raw eggs or it could be used to prepare eggs for decorating at Easter.

Jean Duruz on the exhibition so far

I've been really interested so far in the comments that people have made. For example: 'I felt I had to bring something', or 'I searched through drawers'. I'm interested in the process of making something significant when you're asked. Like when you are asked to bring a plate. What would you bring? How would you look when it goes on the table? So far we've had all sorts of different ways that people have arrived at things. They've raided friend's mother's drawers, they've gone serendipitously into antique shops in Laura and rummaged around and managed to find a bargain. However, now I think we should look at an authentic object, a genuine article where somebody hasn't just raided someone else's collection or bought something just out of the blue, but kept and cherished and loved and had it in the family for a long time. I'm going to call on Maria to talk about her cheese molds.

Myzíthra cheese mold – Maria Kelly

I thought very carefully about what I should bring. My mother gave me this when she graduated to the stainless steel, more sterile version. It is made of reeds in the centuries old, traditional manner. She procured this cheese mold in the '50s. They were still making them in Greece probably until the '70s. Myzíthra is a soft cheese like Italian ricotta. Diane Kochilas in her book about Cretan food mentions that the Minoans in the 15th century BC made a soft curd cheese using reed baskets. I also found a reference to Mistra. Mistra is the city next to Sparta which has a crusader castle that was built in about 1250. Mistra used to be known as Myzíthra because the shape of the hill was like the shape of a Myzíthra mold. What I thought was really interesting was this object that has its roots in history and has been used for centuries and centuries and which was still used by my family in the '50s, '60s, I now use.

Myzíthra was originally made as a whey cheese. It was made by the shepherds after they'd made their hard cheeses. After they'd made Kefalotíri or féta cheese they would then throw in some sheep's milk and they would break

While we have attempted to at least list all of the objects on show, we apologise for gaps in the transcript due to recording failure.

a fig twig and let the sap of the fig go into the boiled milk and stir it, which formed the curds. My family, friends and my Greek family and friends still make Myzíthra but they've adapted it to the city. Now they can't get non-homogenised milk so they've adapted. They add cream or they might add powdered milk and instead of the sap of the figs, they might use rennet tablets or epsom salts. Epsom salts is really popular. Fortunately, the epsom salts goes into the whey so it doesn't taint the cheese. But you can't use the whey for something else; you have to throw it away. So there is this.

The other thing is that people have adapted the cheese grater as a mold because it is the same shape and looks like the modern molds in Greece. So I guess there was a sense of continuum, a sense of history. An object that is now two and a half thousand years old is still being used. We've adapted the same concept. In Sydney, Australia, where I come from, and I'm sure Melbourne and Adelaide it would be the same, they are still making it in the same manner.

Photocopy of hands – Lillian Alden

My hands have taught me more about food then many other culinary objects. They have been my first and lasting food implements. My hands are a real link with every object on display. My hands can judge the touch of food, the texture of food, the weight of food when I haven't got scales and they're always there. I don't need to unpack them from a suitcase, but I do tend to wash them every now and then because everybody is so mad about hygiene and hands today, but I use them. I hadn't realised quite how critical they were. They are part of me, so take it or leave it.

I can't help but think about Jennifer's quote from Elizabeth David about the exactness of some of the recipes that she was talking about – against when you just used your hands for measuring, you know a 'handful', a 'fistful' or whatever. I think that connection is very poignant. And also for taking us out of our narrow scope, I think that's wonderful.

Caviar pots – Anne Ripper

I have a passion for things that are miniatures so I was immediately attracted by the caviar pots. They were purchased at a stage in life when there was hardly enough money for rice. We were working in restaurants in Melbourne. My ex-husband and myself, found out that we were about to have a baby. Instead of spending every cent that we earned on going out and eating at other people's restaurants, we thought we'd save money and purchase a house. Every cent that we had was going into this. He rang me up one day and said 'I haven't got time to come home for lunch; I'll just go for a walk'. Later he rang me up and said 'I had to buy these caviar pots' he had discovered on the walk, because they were 'just gorgeous'. He thought I just had to have them and that they were beautiful. And I thought they were, too, with their hand-made glass inserts. I said 'that's really nice, we can have bubble and squeak for dinner tonight and they will make very good pinch pots for salt'. Actually, we have had caviar in them also. But, of course, there's a moratorium on it now.

Ethiopean ear wax spoon – Gae Pincus

Well, it's definitely a ring-in and it has to do with the fact that I was going to Perth before I came here and I couldn't think of anything that I'd want to carry but then I thought of this and thought it's a joke because it is a spoon and I'm not exactly sure if it's culinary, unless you've got particular predilections. But basically it's got history. I bought it in Nairobi in 1985. It was my first ever geo-political experience and I was there as part of the Australian delegation at the UN Decade for Women Conference, so it's got a connection. It was before I had anything to do with food other than eating it, so the fact that I was attracted to something with a spoon on it I guess says something. It is a very functional Ethiopian ear wax spoon. I think Colin Sheringham is the only one who wants to try it on his toast for breakfast.

Kunum and swang – John Coveney

This is a *kunum* (mortar) and this is a *swang* (pestle). They come from an island called Kah Kah Island just off the north coast of New Guinea. I was very fortunate in spending two years working in New Guinea in the late '70s and I remember going to Kah Kah. Kah Kah is the archetypal volcanic island – lush jungle, coconut palms, plumes of smoke drifting from the top of the mountain in the centre of the island. As a volcanic island it is very fertile. I was fortunate enough to be able to visit Kah Kah a couple of times when I was working in New Guinea as a nutritionist. In the language of New Guinea there is no such translation of nutritionist so I was known as 'man belong kai kai'. Kai kai is 'food' in Papua New Guinea pidgin so I was 'man belong kai kai' (trans. 'man associated with food'). Wherever I went I was always asking questions about local food. While I was on Kah Kah it was the *galip* nut season. I don't know if anybody here has ever seen *galip* nuts. They look like almonds and are

the same shape. The texture is a bit fattier. They're more of the texture of a brazil nut and they are a bit skinnier than almonds. And in fact for Kah Kah the *galip* holds huge symbolic, ceremonial and economic significance because there aren't many areas in New Guinea where they grow. This *kunum* and *swang* is particularly for *galip* and only for *galip*. It is used to pound the *galip* into a paste which is then mixed with sweet potato, pit pit, yam and probably cooked in a *mumu* (earth oven) or something like that. The *galip* is perhaps as an alternative to coconut cream. The man who gave me this was a very old man and he thought that I was actually an artefact collector until somebody told him that I was the man belong kai kai and he said I could have this. He told me it had a string on it because, in fact, it won't stand up by itself. He said it has to be hung up like that (upside down) because otherwise animals and insects will make a home inside the mortar.

The meaning of this culinary object for me is very special. I went to New Guinea as a volunteer with a philanthropic organisation called Voluntary Services Overseas that send young hopefuls out to exotic regions of the world so they could share their skills with the local people. Of course, the most meaningful thing I learnt was that the skill sharing was completely in the other direction. I have never felt so ignorant and so completely out of my depth. And the people of New Guinea and this old man gave me so much. He taught me an enormous amount and I use this experience to remind myself of the importance of being humble. So that's why it's meaningful for me. It reminds me of the time when I set out to teach somebody something, but in the process learned more than I could have ever imagined.

Honey beehive tool – Ross Kelly

This is a tool of the city because it's not just *Homo sapiens* who create cities. From a gastronomic point of view, the most exciting animal to create cities is the honey bee. A typical honey bee city would have 50,000 productive inhabitants. A typical hive produces between 40 and 60 kilograms of honey a year. In fact, the world record for honey production is held by an Australian, in South Australia, who in the summer of 1953/1954 across an apiary of 450 hives, produced an average of 365 kilograms of honey per hive. So in a nutshell, the beehive is the ultimate city. The earliest reference I can find to mankind's utilisation of honey is about 12,000 years ago and there is a painting on a wall of a cave in Spain from 12,000 years ago which shows this very daring young man attempting to extract honey from a hive without the benefit of a bee suit and mask. We've in fact eaten honey forever and it is only in recent years that we've been able to make a transition to other sweeteners. Honey was really the only sweetener until Columbus on his second trip to the Americas transported New Guinea sugar cane, which had drifted its way across Asia and the Middle East to the Americas where it really became the source of sugar.

The tool itself has two interesting dimensions to it. The first is the hook for pulling the frames out of the hive. Actually in terms of bee sociology, the word 'ecology' according to the *Macquarie Dictionary* has two meanings. The one that we think of in the environmental sense but apparently it is also a term used by sociologists to explain the study of how people relate to each other in terms of proximity – how close they like to be to each other. Well, bees similarly have this thing called bee space and when they build a hive they keep nine millimetres between each of the layers of honeycomb. This was discovered in 1851 by a fellow in America called Langstroff, who recognised this nine millimetre piece. Prior to that, the hive was killed during honey collection. So you might start the season with ten hives and with swarming by the end of the hive you'd have 15 so you'd kill five of them and collect the honey. So next season you start once again with ten. But Langstroff through this discovery realised that if you could get a little bit of wax on a flat plane and hold it on a piece of timber frame and stick it into boxes and keep the nine millimetres in between each of them, you then didn't need to kill the hive. Because all you did was take one of the frames out and the rest of the hive was there to keep on going. This tool is used to pull the frame out. The other end of the tool is a wedge and that's used to pry the frames apart that are stuck together by propolis. Propolis is the resin the bees collect from, for example, the eucalypt mixed with wax at a ratio of 70 to 30. This resin/wax mix can be molded to seal the hives to keep the weather out. In fact, it makes sure there are no drafts and the hive is kept at the right temperature. Propolis is quite interesting; it has become one of those fashion items in the alternative food culture. I looked up the Internet recently and saw it described as a bactericide, fungicide, etc. It is a cure for coughs, colds, diarrhoea and cancer. People are buying propolis products to cure all sorts of things. I also checked out my beekeepers' manual and it described an interesting characteristic of our modern bee – how he's quite adaptive, or how *she's* quite adaptive. Where they can't find sufficient resin, they've learned that on a hot day the tar on the road melts. And they've also discovered that some paints become very soft and so they pick that up and use it with the wax as another form of propolis. So my final message is just be careful with the claims of propolis, unless you enjoy a tar breakfast.

Knife and fork set – Jane Adams

Okay, it's a knife and fork set that is very old. The reason I brought it was because I thought somebody could tell me more about it. It is from the Golden Triangle at about the time that Kunsa was giving up his role as the major drug lord in Asia. I was actually in the hills with hills' tribe people – actually not in Burma, I was still technically in Thailand. I was in a very remote part of the world and a couple of ladies were picking opium poppies. Without any language in common we sort of started to communicate and I was shown this. Rather than it being presented as a gift, the lady wanted US dollars for it. So it cost me ten US dollars, which is probably all her income for six months or something. But what is very curious is its age and the fact that it is a knife and fork set rather than chopsticks.

Gay Bilson's *Loaves and Fishes* Christmas wreath – Rick Burford

I bought this last year at a Christmas fundraiser for the South Australian Art Gallery. It is an object which illustrates the continuity of symposiums. It relates to the *Loaves and Fishes* feast of the Fifth Symposium of Gastronomy in Adelaide, which was held at the beginning of a special component of Adelaide Festival Writers' Week.

Loaves and Fishes bowl – Gay Bilson

This bowl is one of 1500 bowls made by John Bennett at Bennett's Magill Pottery, which is the oldest pottery in Adelaide, for the *Loaves and Fishes* event we did as the closing of the 1998 Adelaide Festival. 1500 bowls managed to feed 2000 people. For me, the meaning of the parable is that the disciples complained to Jesus, after the loaves and fishes had been distributed, that there was no food for them, but of course there is always enough food for everyone. And if I can just comment on Rick's wreath: It is strung with the first prototype pretzels I made for Sieglinde Karl (the Tasmanian jeweller) as part of the *Edible Lei* project for this Festival of Arts. I was walking with Sieglinde at Port Willunga and the beach was just covered with the cuttlefish bones, so the lei became 'loaves and fishes', of course, baked and collected, so there is the most lovely and accidental connection. John Bennett also made the symposium jugs for the medieval lunch at Rostrevor for the Fifth Symposium. They are unglazed on the outside and glazed on the inside. They are a sort of small pitcher.

Kleftico – Jeanette Fry

This pot came from Cypress 30 years ago. My mother spent a year there with my father (who has been dead for 18 years) was the Commander of the Australian contingent of the Peacekeeping Police Force. It was the happiest year of their life. My mother was free of the burden of three children. She was a painter. She lived in a dowry house with 18 chairs and not much else. My father lived at the barracks and visited her for food and other things. If we had time, I would like to read my mother's story called 'Mimi's Story'. She's 84 and I am hoping she will write a few more stories about food and how she remembers it. In summary, however, the pot was used for cooking stolen goods. It was buried, covered with ashes and the food was cooked in it.

Fish kettle – Jean Duruz

The kettle actually belongs to my friend Liz. It comes from the Bluff family of Haywood Park, who were selling their house and clearing it out. Every Saturday morning Liz's English father poached a whole fish in it for breakfast. The cat would always get the tail and play with it for the rest of the week. When I look at it, I find it very evocative for all that enamelware. I can remember my mother making jam tarts on white enamel plates with plum jam in the middle, so I associate somehow just the colour and the texture of the fish kettle with my mother, even though that story is not mine. Marion Halligan said she often borrows stories or just steals them. She said she borrowed stories from her fiction to put into her biography, the stories having actually come from her life in the first place.

Traditional Russian barbecue skewers – Tony Walsh

I was very frustrated over many years having skewers that when you turn the skewers the meat falls off. I finally met this Russian guy called Paul, who was a boilermaker/welder, who had a little cottage industry in his back shed. He made these and barbecues for the Russian community.

Barbecue sticks – Craig Willis

These ones a friend of mine made in Shanghai copied from ones we'd seen at a street stall. They are similar to the Russian ones. They are flat and have a really wonderful flexible feel. There is a lot of food in the streets of Shanghai. I think my favourite food is the Uighurs' barbecue. Their barbecues are as long as a bicycle with a chimney at one end, where the coal is kept. It is really tasty food flavoured with cumin and chilli and it's great for a snack at two o'clock in the morning.

Jar opener – Carol Summers

This opener has constantly been in use and has never failed since 1938. It was bought at Macy's New York. It is the only culinary object my mother has in her possession at the Nursing Home. She uses it to open Sherry!

Mortar and lang lang chopsticks – Alicia Rios

I've got two mortars for different purposes, one for garlic and a metallic one for spices and nuts. The chopsticks are used for everything – frying, mixing, beating and getting pieces out of the *Olla* etc.

1830s thermometer – Karen Pridham

This was dug out of a ruined kitchen during renovations.

Old night food warmer – Jill Stone

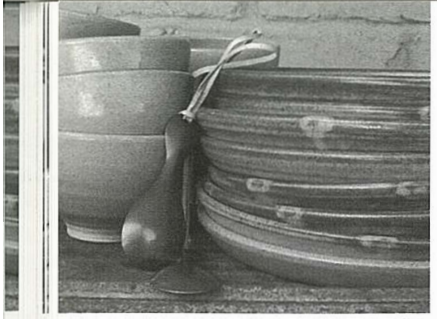
This was probably used for the frail and ill. It could have been the source of lethal food poisoning. It has no modern equivalent and maybe we need something like it.

Old fashioned marmalade rasp – Lois Butt

Mincer and pickled walnut strainer – Margaret Emery

Possums McLaren Vale first vintage shiraz and cabernet – Carol Summers

Ceremonial green tea whisk – Zannie Flanagan



Feeding The City

Introduced by Barbara Santich

Feeding the city was an extremely important responsibility in ancient and medieval times. The yields of cereal crops were so low, sometimes as low as two to one (which means you harvested only twice as much as you planted, which is not a lot). In times of incipient scarcity there were periodic censuses in the village or the town to estimate both stocks and the size of the population, and from the results the town council could estimate how much then had to be bought or see where they could buy it. These were some of the earliest censuses recording how many people were in a village, though it wasn't people but rather fires or hearths that were counted. It was one of the most important tasks of the civic authorities, to feed the population and to feed them adequately, or as best as they could.

We're not in medieval times; compared with the medieval era we're now in a period of relative plenty, in both quantity and in variety. Our needs and our desires are different and the governance of the city is different. We have various levels of government, which means that feeding the city is a much more complex task than it might have been seven hundred years ago.

In this session we are going to be looking at feeding the city in a number of different ways with a number of different aims. Stephanie Alexander is the first speaker. Stephanie is going to be talking about what she calls a 'work in progress', a kitchen garden, a project in inner-city Melbourne for school children aged eight to 12, which is almost exactly the age that the Jacque Puisais thinks is ideal for taste education in schools. Stephanie has been coming to these Symposia for as long as they have been going, since 1984 when she owned Stephanie's Restaurant in Melbourne. She's since moved on to do other things, in particular a lot more writing. Her next book, *Cooking and Travelling in South Western France*, will be published by Penguin Viking next week.

Stephanie Alexander

I think it is a phenomenon of advancing age that I feel the need to focus on really practical things, although I'm still just as passionately involved in thinking about, dreaming about and eating lovely food. But this project is a result of a practical passion to pass on to other people what I believe is a very important part of living. I've written and said these sort of things so often, and I know I'm preaching to the converted, so I'm going to be very quick in the introduction. For the last few years I've found myself becoming more and more concerned about the way children learn about food or probably the way they don't learn about food. And it seems to me for many urban children, there's no way they can relate the food they see in bottles and packets and jars with soil, sunshine, ripeness and satisfying activity. I find that as young adults, many of them are tentative in their efforts to feed themselves and are unable to offer themselves one of life's most accessible joys, sharing delicious food with family and friends. Now there are many, many surveys that are quite well known to show the nutritional paucity of the food choices made by many kids. It's recognised that 20 to 25 per cent of Australian children are considered obese at this stage. Fruit and vegetable intakes are way down and so on.

Of more importance to me, or at least as important, is the cultural deprivation that this represents, which doesn't seem to me to be restricted in socio-economic terms. It crosses class, ethnic and income levels. Alice Waters has written a lot about this. I do think that many families have abandoned the idea of eating together regularly and see nothing wrong with their children's

diets consisting largely of high fat and high sugar snacks. We all know about convenience foods, that family meal times are fragmented, fewer and fewer children have ever dug in the ground or picked fresh apples or green beans or even shopped in a fresh food market as opposed to a supermarket, where almost everything is untouchable, packaged and displayed under unnatural lighting. Not any one of those things is a disaster in itself but collectively they are producing children and young adults who have no connection with the growing cycle of food on this planet and with that goes concern for the way things are grown.

Equally important, without the regular stimulus of meals shared with their siblings and parents, children miss out on discussions and the sharing of ideas and indeed on having their own ideas challenged. Further, without tactile experience of ripeness it seems to me they lose contact with quality and become unquestioning consumers. It is my belief that changes in food choices will not come as a result of cautionary advice, charts or pyramids, but by example and by positive experience. There is an overwhelming number of kids who no longer receive such positive experiences at home, where are they going to get them? The answer, of course, is nowhere. Manufacturers and advertisers want to sell them plenty of things but home-grown and home-prepared food is not amongst them. In the majority of Victorian schools, education about food has become less and less important, and where it exists at all it is heavily biased towards theoretical considerations of food groups and nutritional outcomes.

I wanted to investigate whether by creating and caring for an extensive vegetable garden within a school's grounds and then preparing and cooking the harvested produce, the children could develop greater enjoyment of flavour, awareness of texture, and interest and enjoyment in growing and cooking fresh produce and sharing it with others. I was inspired in this direction by the intense memories of my own very rich food childhood and latterly by reading about Californian chef Alice Waters' collaboration with the Martin Luther King Middle School in Berkeley which has created the now famous edible schoolyard. My assistant, Anna Dollard, went in January of this year and I shall go in April of this year to visit the edible schoolyard. It was actually fascinating for Anna to see that there were some similarities in the two projects but also some quite significant differences. One of the most significant differences was that the children at Martin Luther King are secondary school level and also each child only has nine months in the program whereas the key feature of the program I'm trying to direct is that it should be a four year project, so that any child going to the school at grade three can look forward to four years of exposure to this program, which is very, very ambitious.

I'd like now to show you some slides. This is from the school in Berkeley, which is approximately three times the size of our project. One of the features of the garden in Berkeley is that all the contraptions are made by the children so there aren't nails but rather string and bamboo. The kids have washing tables in the garden so that as they gather the vegetables from the garden, they can wash them and take them straight into the kitchens. They have a temporary kitchen to use while their good kitchen is built; they have a wood-fired oven as well, which again the children built in the garden. That project started in 1994, the school has a population of 900 kids, most of whom are extremely socially and economically advantaged. An important difference compared with the program at Collingwood is that this school employs six full-time staff to manage the project, has 40 volunteers and a budget of $US400,000 per annum.

In order to establish the project I had to find a school that had a bit of land, a school that had a supportive principal interested in developing the idea and convinced that it had valid educational benefits. This person was going to have to argue in favour of the proposal to people from whom we were trying to get money. It was always perceived by me and certainly by the school, but I think even more so by me, as a way of establishing a model that could be adapted by other schools. It seemed to me that the model therefore had to be as large and as successful as possible to make as much noise as possible, to be visible and viewed by as many teachers as possible.

The first person I met was a man by the name of Basil Natoli who is a manager of community gardens for the Department of Human services. This department is very much in favour of community gardens and Basil has worked with Turkish and Vietnamese migrants to create edible garden around their flats. Although they might only have three square metres, they turn it into a productive vegetable garden and he is passionate about it. I met him by a series of coincidences and spoke to him about my project, to which he replied, 'You have to meet Frances Laurino, the Principal of Collingwood'. That was in April 2001, which is not a long time ago, so I think our achievements (or lack of them) and our progress must be seen in the light of the fact that the project has only been going for nine months, and this included the long school summer vacation.

The first of the key factors that have brought the project to the point it's at now is Frances, the Principal – that's the Principal on the left wielding a spade. Because schools these days have much greater autonomy as regards budgets, Frances was prepared to say 'The school can finance two days a week, that's all we can do but we are happy to do that'. So that was a very good start. In the school itself, the energy is fantastic. There is fantastic artwork all over the walls, wonderful sculpture. The classroom teachers are young and enthusiastic. The school council was supportive and we had a small group of parent volunteers. Within this school there is a Steiner

group with, as might be expected, the most vocal, articulate, middle-class parents of whom there are about five, and those parents have been absolutely fantastic. We also have two amazing members of staff. This is the garden manager, Peta Christensen, and by extraordinary coincidence the young woman in front in charge of the kitchen is also called Peta, which is tricky. So we have garden Peta and we have kitchen Peta. They were wonderful choices, both are very passionate and very committed to the philosophy behind the project and seem to understand straight away why it's important and how to approach it. The school has employed a part-time gardener to do maintenance work and he also has been very important in doing a lot of muscle work.

This is a schematic drawing of the garden done by one of the Steiner parents who happens to be an architect, and this was the original plan drawn up which we all thought looked incredibly beautiful on paper. This was the beginning, that's the school and this is the beginning of the garden; there is a channel, which has now become a path. This was a working bee; the kids have been involved at every point although obviously bobcats had to come in at one point and we had to have pole diggers. And this was the garden last week, which is pretty fantastic for the efforts of these kids. As I said, they are all primary school and very young. We have had some huge drainage problems because the garden was built on terrible clay, so in a way that was a very harsh learning experience for those kids. We lost a lot of plants and they learned that not everything works; we had to put in 'aggie' pipes and replant some of the beds.

The garden is about 300 square metres, 15 garden beds, a fruit tree orchard, composting area, a worm farm and, as of last week, a chook run. It's very comprehensive; the kids have planted beetroot, lettuce, bok choy, spinach, silverbeet, corn, strawberries, zucchini, pumpkin, eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, parsley, chives, thyme and other herbs. It has a mosaic wall. Frieda, one of the parents, did the actual structure of the wall and the children have done all the mosaics in art class and randomly put them on. Each child is responsible for one of those round things; it has a design that they've selected and done and put his or her name on the bottom of it. In this slide you can see that some of the kids who have picked salad and seem to be quite pleased with the idea. And that little boy there, I'll talk about him again, the one on the left, is a social isolate, being an obese child. He's actually a delightful little boy and he just loves the garden and the kitchen, he likes to stay in there because he says he doesn't have much to do but he's showing so much interest in what's going on. There's kids with yellow tomatoes and some with potatoes.

Just before Christmas I started to agitate and say it's all very well but we need more space. We need rows of things; the children have chosen the design of this garden and they chose to make one bed like a star and one bed like a zig zag, which limits the growing of vegetables – you can have three plants here and one there. So they planted an additional bed with plenty of basil, and two days ago they were making pesto because we are having an open day on Thursday and so we're going to sell the pesto that the kids have made. This slide shows the Steiner parents who are helping fit the little panels in the wall, and that was the day that we actually picked some of the vegetables. To the right of the slide is now the compost area and the worm farm. In the garden there's great potential for injury because they are small, they all want to dig and they all want to carry wheelbarrows so we have to be very careful. When it really is terrible weather they make scarecrows. In the next slide you can see more kids watering, putting up a tree frame. That man on the left is my second chef who is a volunteer there once a week.

Our cooking classroom is not really that exciting, it's an old home economics room. The cooking part of it only started in October though the first sod of the garden was turned in July. Anyone who knows anything about gardening knows there wouldn't have been much to eat so we've had fantastic support from outside, for example the Queen Victoria Markets has been prepared to underwrite additional produce. Kitchen Peta goes once a week to the Queen Vic Markets and gets what she thinks she needs, having discussed with garden Peta what might be available so she can plan her menu. The tables always have cloths on them, there's always flowers in the middle of every table with herbs in most of them and water jugs which the children are learning to pass around. One of the most important things is that when the meal is prepared the children sit down together. It's just extraordinary because so many of these kids have never sat at a table with anybody else, and they have no concept of passing a jug of water or a salad bowl but they are intrigued and there's quite a lot of willingness to try. We have games where we say, now you pass this to the person on the right and then the person on the left. Some of the kids are really fantastic at chopping. Some of them obviously cook at home, most of them do not. These are some of the dishes that we've cooked – dolmades made with silverbeet, since we had a bumper crop of silverbeet. We had a bumper crop of beetroot, too, so we had warm beetroot salad, we've had a beetroot dip, and they even made beetroot muffins which were the most glorious colour but they were rather leaden. Other dishes include broad bean dip with mint, hand-made pasta with pesto, tomato salad with mint and spring onions, sang choy bow or lettuce cups with minced chicken, lemon delicious pudding and ricotta pancakes with strawberries. Obviously we don't have a lemon tree producing lemons, we do have strawberries but not many, so when we did strawberries we had to buy in strawberries. But the ideas are all there. There's me helping them make pasta and some shelling beans; sushi, which was actually a bit of a mistake, it didn't work terribly well.

One of the reasons this recipe didn't work very well was because we don't have enough volunteers. It's really quite stressful having 25 little kids in a room with only four supervisors – the classroom teacher, kitchen Peta, me and probably one other volunteer. And that's about at the moment what we've got. So there's 120 children involved, each one of those kids is currently spending over two hours a week with the project – that's a double period in the kitchen and a single period in the garden. Rather than every child keeping a diary, the class keeps one. At the end of the day, at the end of the cooking session we ask kids if they want to say anything about what they've eaten; often they don't want to say anything that you'd want to record but we try. So far the classroom teachers have felt they wanted to supplement this by incorporating in the curriculum a whole lot of things about food and history and so on. I didn't see this as being a core part of the program; essentially I just want to give them this experience of growing and tasting, etc.

As well as the benefits I want to talk about what I see is a problem. It would have been wonderful if the education department had leapt at this idea. I had several sessions with the Education Department and they eventually gave us some money but they certainly haven't rushed to get behind the project. They seem to work on the principle that if they give $5 to one school they have to give $5 to every other school; so the concept of a model hasn't really worked. Our initial budget was $52,000 and we think that we probably need $36,000 to continue the program, and that's mostly salaries, we've had a lot of help in kind. As for an evaluation – it would be ridiculous to claim any meaningful evaluation at this stage, since the project is planned to continue for four years, but there are some observable changes. The teachers report that the project is enthusiastically embraced by the children and they talk about it a lot. They also report that they feel that there is some improvement in general co-operation and teamwork with the kids. The making of the diaries in the classroom is a very exciting project for the kids. The principal reports that truancy is way down on Wednesday and Thursday, and attributes some of that to Wednesday and Thursday being the kitchen garden days. I certainly notice that in the kitchen classroom, more kids are prepared to try new things, not all of them but most of them.

It's been very important to try to validate this program to people and get the school community to understand what it is we're trying to do, and it's very hard to do this without the support of a classroom teacher. If the individual teacher that comes with the class thinks it's a waste of time or a bit of nonsense and wants to sit down the back and do correction, our job becomes a lot harder. Personally, I have found discipline a huge problem, because I have felt that I'm there to spread sweetness and light and enthusiasm about food, which is very hard when you feel that you're spending too much of your time with feral children. In many ways it's similar to a remedial teaching situation, like English as a second language. We are in a situation where none of the usual skills are familiar to most of the children. They don't know how to hold a knife, they're not sure about lighting a stove, they're very frightened of burning themselves, and at the same time they are prepared to thump the child next to them who might also have a knife in his or her hand. Volunteers are vital. The ethnic mix in the class is fantastic because it's very rare that we show anything to a kid in the way of food that somebody isn't familiar with. We did grilled quail one week and we bought in a quail asked if anyone knew what it was; one kid said a frog. We next asked how many children had eaten quail and all the Vietnamese kids put their hands up straight away. So that was very helpful to the rest of the class. Similarly when we were making dolmades, the Turkish and Greek kids knew all about it. There is a lovely mix of different experiences and the open-mindedness of the kids is fantastic.

Probably the most important conclusion I've come to, other than the reality of the funding, is that for this kind of project to continue you need someone to drive it, not necessarily from within the school. Somebody has to guide it, the school can't, they don't have the resources; it is important to involve the community because the community is there to help you and look after the garden in the holidays etc. It does help if the staff have the right philosophy. I'm hoping that at the end of another six months, if we get funding and are funded until the end of June, that I will probably retreat from this particular school as far as hands-on contributions and try and set up some sort of larger foundation that can help other schools tap into a resource if they want to apply for some funding or specialised help. Finally, if anyone's really interested I can show you the budgets because I think that it's a bit of a shock when people realise just how much this costs and where the money came from. For our finances we had to go to about twelve different people. From the Education Foundation we received $5,000 towards a learning network which we put into the creation of the website. The Millennium Schools Fund, gave a non-specific grant of $10,000, the local Rotary Club $5,000, ANZ Trustees $5,000, City of Yarra $5,000 and the Pratt Foundation $2,000. The Education Department, after never returning letters or anything else, eventually and suddenly injected $12,000 into the bank account, an extraordinary way to handle their funds. In addition there were the in-kind donations of food from the market, individual donations and tools from people were smaller donations. As you can see it's a big commitment, a big program, but I hope it will make big changes.

For further detail go to: www.stephaniealexander.com.au

Postscript August 2004

The project is still continuing successfully. Budgets and funding continue to be a big consideration. We are financially secure until the end of 2005 largely due to the generosity of one of our volunteers through her philanthropic foundation KAFF (Kids and Families Foundation). I have established the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation and have applied to the Australian Taxation Office for tax deductibility to facilitate fund-raising. The intention of the Foundation is to plan for an expansion of the program into a selected number of additional schools, to develop a training program for the kitchen and garden managers , to publish a 'how-to' book that can be a useful tool for schools wishing to have a go themselves and to attempt some sort of evaluation. (The very nature of the project means that it does not lend itself readily to quantitative evaluation)

Our kitchen has had a makeover, thanks to Channel 9. The garden goes from strength to strength. Volunteers are priceless and whilst we have a faithful core we always need more.

The children continue to be eager for these kitchen and classroom sessions and they LOVE to eat the food. Their skill levels, both practical and social, have definitely improved.

I am somewhat hopeful that with the present emphasis on the problems facing the country due to rising levels of childhood obesity, coupled with the Victorian government's statements about new directions in education, we may get a better hearing from the Education Department in the future. The project was selected by the Victorian Schools Innovation Commission as one of nine innovative projects (selected from 400 applicants) worth studying to investigate what sustains innovation. The report of this study is due by the end of 2005.

Barbara Santich

Your list of sponsors shows the extent to which this is a community project, not just a school project. I will now invite Jane Adams to talk. Jane is well known as wine consultant but what I think she finds more interesting, and I find more interesting, is her work with farmers' markets. Jane won the Geoffrey Roberts Award and used it to study farmers markets in America in 1998. She was enthused by farmers' markets before she left but even more enthused when she came back. She has since facilitated about 20 farmers' markets in Australia and New Zealand and has been retained as an advisor by the New South Wales Farmers' Association to advise them on farmers' markets. Although many of these farmers' markets have not been established for very long, a reasonable number have a respectable history so she has a fairly good resource base for analysing problems and results and benefits.

Jane Adams

I've been working a lot in regional Australia which is why I made a comment earlier in the discussion about provisioning the city; everybody has talked very much about the metropolitan city and I've been doing a lot of work in the regions. Today, I want to cast for you a couple of scenarios. First, a big city San Francisco, Sunday morning down in the Tenderloin district. This is a very poor and dangerous part of San Francisco.

In fact, it's a place where I was told a single woman should not walk alone. On Sunday morning, however, this really dangerous place comes alive. There is a market there called the Heart of City Market, run by one of the most wonderful earth mothers and sponsored by the Quakers. What you see there on a Sunday morning is the city's down-and-outs pushing trolleys with crates of fresh vegetables. These people are given jobs to help set up the market on Sunday morning. At the end of the market they are allowed to take with them some of the food that is left over, the rest of it is collected and goes off to food banks and other outlets.

The next scenario is Union Square in Manhattan, on a Saturday morning, where over 90 stallholders assemble on a regular weekly basis – actually bi-weekly – with the most amazing diversity of produce brought into the city from a huge radius. The reason this can happen – and I learned this running farmers' market workshops – is that farmers will travel a long distance if they know they're going to go home with lots of money in their pockets. If you're coming into the centre of Manhattan you will drive a long way to get there. One of the stallholders is an apple grower who grows over 60 different varieties of apples; he goes to the market with his apples, depending on what's in season, as do 90 odd other vendors. It's a very vibrant place, it is like a garden in the middle of highly densely populated Manhattan and it is a most fantastic sight. The chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten buys all his fresh produce for his five restaurants on a regular basis in that market.

Scenario three – Wauchope Showground. Two Saturdays ago they had their first-ever farmers' market. This is one that I've been integrally involved with, working with the Hastings Shire Council and their Economic Development Officer. I ran a workshop at Wauchope towards the end of last year, the council having just become aware of what a farmers' market was, and they pulled that market together in about eight weeks. Three weeks before the market, the Economic Development Officer rang me and said, 'Jane I feel so down, I don't know who

to talk to, so I've got to talk to you, I can't let anybody else know how depressed I feel about this. They're all so apathetic, I'm not going to get it together, it's not going to happen.'

I said, 'Trevor, give me a break. Have you done this...have you done that, have you spoken to this person? I gave him a whole list of things he needed to do. A week before the market I rang back and asked Trevor how he was going. 'It's great, we're going to do it, we have 25 vendors.' The market featured on the front page of the Port Macquarie paper the following Monday morning. It attracted over 5,000 people and there was a traffic jam from Wauchope, which is ten minutes outside Port Macquarie, back to Port Macquarie. For the next market they had 35 vendors and the tomato seller sold 650 kg in 90 minutes. Trevor rang me again. 'Jane you won't believe what happened.' 'I know you had traffic management problems, didn't you.' This market has already changed the lives of people in Port Macquarie.

I've worked with market groups across Australia including with Zannie Flanagan at the Willunga Farmers' Market in the Fleurieu Peninsula. I have seen the power of farmers' markets, what they can do for a community. I gave my first workshop early 1999 and have now facilitated about 20 markets. I've gone in and galvanised people and then held their hands and guided them. They're all community-based groups, and none is privately run. I work with communities and groups of individuals within a community or, in the case of Wauchope, the local council and the Economic Development Officer who was enlightened enough to see the potential. In Port Macquarie he's now a hero and very happy with the outcome.

Among the other markets I've initiated is one at Margaret River and another is about to start in Albany, WA. In South Australia there's the Willunga Market, and the Barossa is starting to talk about developing a market. There is one in the Yarra Valley and a very good one in the Gippsland region. Tasmania has one operating in Hobart, and in New South Wales there are markets in Dubbo, Armidale, Cowra, Orange (which started last week), Port Macquarie, and three in Sydney. These latter three are not true to the farmers' market model but any market in Sydney is better than no market at all. There are a couple in Brisbane, on the Gold Coast as well. In New Zealand there's one in Hawke's Bay and Blenheim that I helped facilitate. Having worked with markets actively for several years, I recognise that there are issues common to all, though every market has a completely different atmosphere, taking on the flavour of the host community.

The first observation to make is that the regions that have led what is essentially a grassroots movement have been the wine regions. Markets are not city-driven, a point to note in the context of the Symposium focus on provisioning the city and country-city connections. The impetus has come from wine regions where there is often an active food group.

Rick talked about Albury. This region does have a food group and also a mobile farmers' market which moves around the region from week-to-week. The metropolitan cities are lagging behind the regions in adopting the whole notion of farmers markets, which is not unexpected since it's easier to set up a market if you're in a country region than to bring the farmers to the city. Nevertheless, the New South Wales Farmers Association has recently committed to a strategic plan for the establishment of farmers' markets in New South Wales over the next three years. The first market will be in Western Sydney. They are absolutely committed to establishing a market which provides a lot of food for a lot of people, one that is non-elitist, not a foodie-gastro-wank where you pay five dollars for one tomato, which happens in some of the markets in Sydney. If you think about it, there's a huge potential population draw in Western Sydney. If the guy in Wauchope can sell 650 kilos of tomatoes in 90 minutes, imagine what you can sell if you're in Penrith or Parramatta.

One of the other trends that I've noticed is that there is alert local government, like the Hastings Shire Council. I have been surprised at the foresight in local government, though there are plenty of blind people, too. One of the other motivators for the pace of development has been dairy deregulation providing funding to dairy farmers, who now have to work out what they're going to do if they're not milking cows. A lot are going into horticulture but they don't know what to grow. When I run workshops I often find retired dairy farmers looking to diversify.

Increasingly, in Australia there is a will to actually adopt what I call 'model' farmers' markets. At the outset I was frustrated by what I saw happening in Sydney. The Fox Market is run by the developer Lend Lease and the produce is not necessarily sold by the producers themselves. There is now a growing understanding of what a real farmers' market is. It has to be authentic – the food has to come from the farm.

There are obvious benefits both to the city and the country in the whole construct of a farmers' market. Firstly, there's the tasty-healthy connection – you're bringing fresh food to people whether they live in the country or the city. You're reducing the number of food miles that that food has travelled.

In one of my workshops I used the scenario of the lime orchard outside Dubbo. I gave two limes to everybody at the workshop. One came directly from the orchard that morning and one that came from Dubbo Woolworths, which actually had come from the same lime grower but it travelled to the Flemington wholesale market in Sydney and then back to Woolworth's in Dubbo, and was at least three weeks old. These limes had no gloss and no longer smelled of lime. They were the thousands-of-kilometres limes, compared with the five-kilometre lime. This emotive connection is very powerful. Trevor Sargent from the Hastings Shire Council has never been as excited about a project as his market, and he's worried it will take over his life!

Farmers' markets are very powerful in developing relationships between people, generally between the farmer and the consumer, but also among farmers themselves, between farmers and chefs, between farmers and food buyers, between local supermarkets and farmers because the supermarket buyers suddenly work out they can get fresher food if they buy it direct from the farmer.

There are obviously pecuniary connections which are very important. The farmers are actually making money and maximising their profit margins. They're developing their brands, they're starting to grow their businesses.

I can tell you the story about the free-range egg producer in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, who came to my workshop and then he took his eggs to the market. He is now the largest free-range egg producer in New Zealand, and this has happened in one year. He sold more eggs at the market, he also sold more because people saw them in the local supermarket and recognised them. His involvement in the market gave him more confidence. He therefore picked up the phone and rang egg merchants in Auckland and Wellington to tell them about his eggs. He's now selling his eggs in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. What's more, he now has 13,000 chooks and has run out of space! Amazing things can happen, including people's personal growth, recognition and a feeling of pride in their produce.

Farmers' markets also offer important opportunities for regionally branding and showcasing the produce of a region. There are lots of positive lessons. Stephanie talked about needing a driver. It's the same for farmers' markets. You need a driver, you need the community to be behind it, farmers' markets need to be a community-owned thing. If that happens, it can be a very powerful stimulant to the local economy and will develop businesses. The people who participate in markets are regularly telling me about their life-changing experiences. Farmers' markets have the real potential to produce very powerful grassroots social change.

I thought it was appropriate to finish by reading a quote from David Suzuki, because it's relevant and because David Suzuki opened the Willunga Farmers' Market last Saturday. It comes from the introduction of his new book, *Good News for a Change* (Allen & Unwin).

> 'No matter where people live on earth, when they focus on the vision of community, equality and long term sustainability rather than on wealth or personal financial security, they evolve similar management methods and attitudes that create a much healthier and more stable society. The new precepts for living not only increase our chance of survival but they are helping us discover very deep forms of satisfaction and joy.'

This is why I'm involved in farmers' markets.

Barbara Santich

Thank you Jane. I think that it will be very interesting to re-evaluate the market movement in, say, five years time, questioning the producers, questioning the consumers, questioning the community and looking at the longer term picture to assess the kinds of changes that might have occurred and whether those changes can be sustained for the even longer term. It's interesting that there's a kind of myth about French markets; people think that markets in France are fabulous because you meet the producers, but you don't. You meet the man who goes down to the wholesale market and buys his produce. Nevertheless, there are also in France the fairly new Marchés Paysans, the country markets which work on the same principle as farmers' markets; their charter says that you have to produce what you sell, whether you're a fisherman or an egg producer or a cheese maker or whether you grow lettuces. It has to be your own produce. This is not the case with normal French markets.

We're now going to hear from Pam Gillespie who I think is going to bring together some of these issues and some of the ideas we were talking about this morning with *The Archers*. Pam started off in catering; I first met her when she was at the Canberra symposium about ten years ago. At that stage she had just started in the wine industry in the Harden-Young area, but she's now back in Sydney as a Catering Manager. She brings experiences of both city and country.

Pam Gillespie

When I heard the topic of Feeding the City, I was reminded of one of the questions that was continually debated in my region: Are we actually farming our land or are we mining it? In other words, are we forced to treat it in such a way that it's not sustainable, will what we do to our soils and our water non-sustainable. I came to that conclusion in my first year pruning, thinking this is the real world and thinking about the world by which we're all controlled, the stockmarket. In the eight months I'd been there I had to start to become a part of the community. I couldn't just go out and grow grapes, make wine. I had to become part of that community, realising that unless I did our developing wine region would never survive. I found myself going to tourism meetings, being involved in the vineyards association but more importantly, being part of community groups as well – Rotary, the fire service, all of these things because when you live in the country you have to live together. What I found was that everybody there who was a farmer was as passionate about what he or she did as I was. They had often been brought up in the country and didn't realise what a resource they had, what quality of life. What was really sad was these people were living on the poverty line; they didn't have enough money to even buy themselves renewable items like new fridges, they drove around in very old cars, they put all their money that they could back into what they were farming.

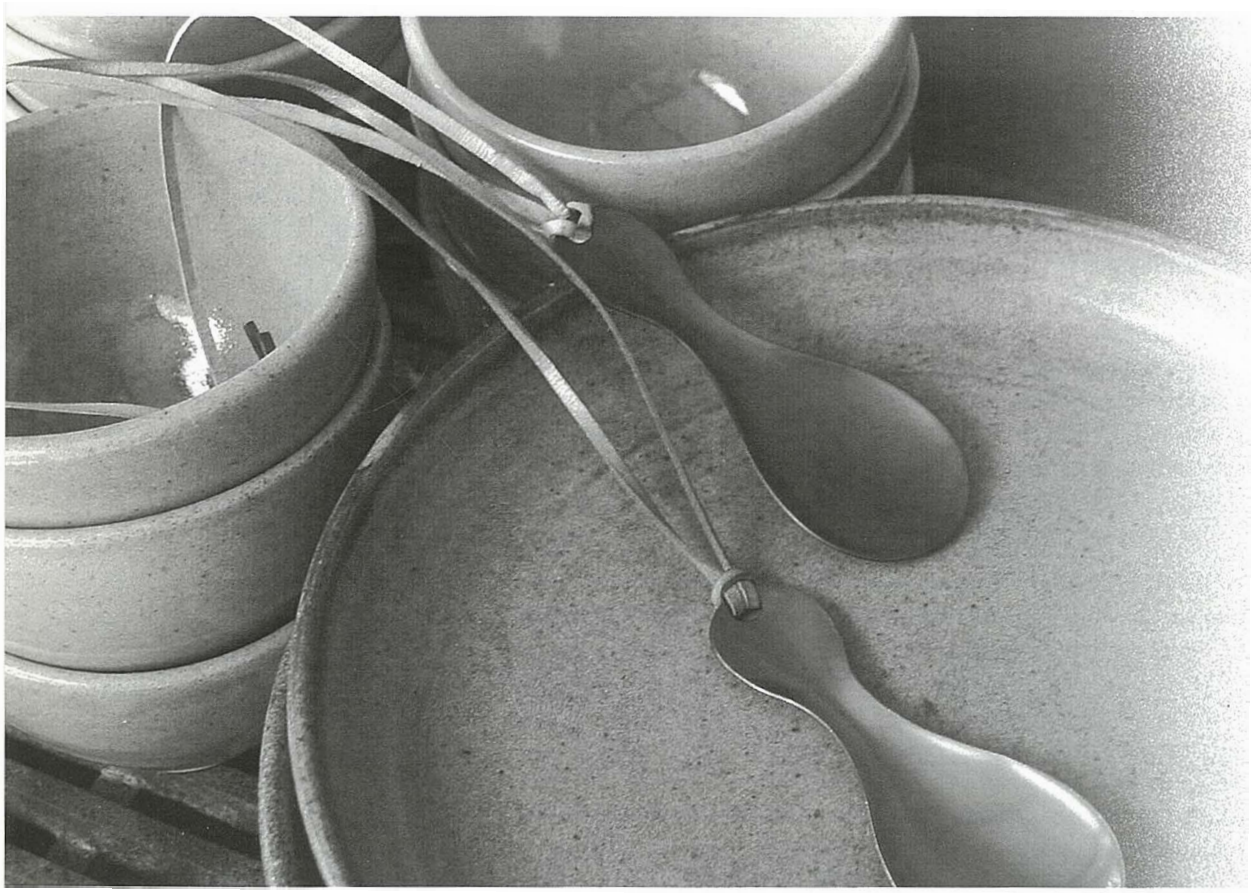
Even that, however, wasn't enough; because of the things that had happened to our land over the years we needed to put more back into it. What they were lamenting was that they were not going to be able to put enough into this property even to keep it farmed by small groups. Somewhere along the line things had got very much out of skew; people in the city were earning six figure salaries, but the people producing this food didn't really have enough money to live on. At a Landcare meeting at Harden I became aware of quite an amazing scenario, that we're actually mining our land. At that stage the cherries in the Young region had had eight bad seasons where virtually no cherries were picked. The issue of subsidies kept coming up, subsidies, subsidies, subsidies. In situations like that I don't think there is any solution but at times to hand out subsidies. What happened in Young, at a time when the economic pressure was on and the council did not have enough money to run council, they didn't have enough money to fund their schools, keep their roads, so what they did was they took out their 50 acre policy. An area of 50 acres could not be subdivided, yet the council allowed subdivision because they needed the money coming in so people in the cities came down, built their properties, but on our prime farming land. This forced the farms even further out and the money involved in keeping them is even higher. Nevertheless, I believe subsidies have only a very short term effect, and I think we need to change our values systems.

I don't know how this is done but I have seen two wonderful examples, one of which is Stephanie Alexander's food project. I just can't believe what an amazing task it was to take that on, because even taking it into a TAFE institution would have been too dangerous. You'd have needed three trained teachers with you if you're dealing with heat, knives, let alone with an eight year old. Her project is not just educating children, it's educating the teachers – which is one way of changing our value system. Another example, of course, is Jane's farmers' markets. These are two fantastic examples I had experience of while I was in the Hilltops wine region. I knew we needed to have original identity in order to survive but what astounded me was that I ended up having not just a vineyard and a winery making the wines but having a restaurant as well. There was all this food around me and somebody had to show it somewhere, so I started creating recipes from our local produce that would match the wines so that people would come in. Nevertheless, this in itself is not enough. You have to take the concept to a bigger audience, so we did a food and wine festival and had a market day.

The hardest thing for me in that first year was that over several months I probably spent at least three hours on the phone for each of the 25 storeowners in our region just convincing them to say yes, let alone the hours I spent coordinating and organising the market. I'm very pleased that on the day Lyndey Milan and Peter Howard came down and were such an attraction that we had in excess of three and a half thousand people in our small town of Young. I had to leave recently but am very happy to have left behind a legacy where that wine and food festival has been carried on because people recognise how important it is to create image and a region identity, as Jane said. For me, what was so important was that it made the farmers believe in themselves again.

Tuesday 12 March

Day Three



Menu

Tuesday 12 March

RIVERSIDE LUNCH II

Russell Jeavons

at Douglas Mawson Institute

Charcoal-grilled blue swimmer crabs
with potato rouille

The crabs' own broth

Vegetable salad

Russell's wood oven wholemeal bread

BEACH DINNER II

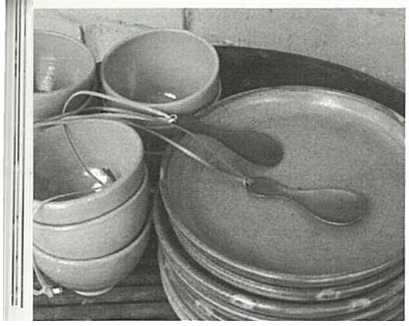
Tania Cavaiuolo and Jodie Polkinghorne

at Largs Bay Sailing Club

Le Grand Aiöli

Camembert made for the Symposium
by Woodside Cheesewrights

Fresh grapes, Gay Bilson's Pamelas



Living the City: Dining Clubs

Introduced by Tony Walsh

The main speaker for this session is going to be Bob MacLennan and the topic is Beefsteak and Burgundy, the role of dining clubs in the second half of the 20th century. Bob MacLennan is a cancer epidemiologist with the Queensland Institute of Medical Research; he has also lived in New Guinea, New Orleans, Columbia, in France for eight years with the World Health Organisation doing field work in the studies of diet and cancer, in Denmark and Finland, Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong. He now spends several months each year in Papua New Guinea completing studies of cancer of the mouth, and documenting his collections of music and movie film.

Bob MacLennan

Good Food, Good Wine, Good Fellowship – Beefsteak and Burgundy and Other Dining Associations

World War II profoundly changed Australia which faced imminent non-European invasion for the first time. After the war, many Australians were keen to loosen their Anglo-Celtic roots. With increased affluence and substantial migration from Europe, the post-war years were for many Australians a time of discovery in many aspects of living. In the 1950s we discovered previously unfamiliar music such as Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and the new (to us) full range of exhilarating sounds of Bach's orchestration displaced pipe organs. Exhibitions of modern painters including Picasso toured the capitals. Although Chinese, Greek and Italian restaurants and cafes were widespread, reflecting pre-war immigration, there was increasing discovery of the food of other immigrant cultures (John Newton: *Wog Food*, 1996). The new migrant cuisines may have been only one factor because insignificant French migration accompanied the increased prestige post-war of French cooking (Prince's restaurant in Martin Place, Sydney, and the book by Ted Moloney and Deke Coleman, *Oh, for a French Wife!*, published in 1952, with illustrations by George Molnar).

As part of our discovery of the wider world, wine and food societies developed, the largest group being Beefsteak and Burgundy clubs (B&B). These may have played a not insignificant role in the evolution of dining cultures in Australia. There are now around 160 B&B clubs affiliated with the original Adelaide club. This club was founded in 1954 by 20 members of the wine trade who lunched together on Fridays at the Imperial Hotel. Their aims were, *inter alia,* to 'further the education of its members and the community in the appreciation and understanding of good food and wines, especially those produced locally'.

Beefsteak and Burgundy Clubs in Brisbane

The Kingsford Smith Beefsteak and Burgundy Club was formed in Brisbane in 1967 and was the eighty-first branch in Australia. The name was chosen because many of the founding members were associated in some way with the eponymous Brisbane airport. Like other affiliated B&B clubs, membership is limited to 30, in keeping with the educational aims which

are facilitated by group discussion. Initially Kingsford Smith B&B's monthly dinners were held in major hotels because there were few restaurants and other venues in Brisbane suitable for free flowing discussion of the food courses and accompanying wines.

The Kingsford Smith club has few rituals other than an initial toast, proposed by the president, to 'Good food, good wine, good fellowship'. Some clubs, for example the founding Adelaide club, continue to toast the Queen, some toast only Australia, while others toast both. In hot weather in Brisbane the president may then invite men to remove their coats. Menus are organised in consultation with the chef by the club's wine-master and food-master. The last position rotates among the members approximately once every two years. Some ten days before the dinner, the food-master finalises the menu in consultation with the venue's chef and the club's wine-master, keeping within the total budget. The club for many years had a private cellar of several hundred wines, those used being charged at original cost.

In 1995 and 1997 I organised two dinners at Two Small Rooms restaurant in consultation with chef David Pugh, manager Michael Conrad and the club's wine-master John Christopherson. Most dinners have neither beef nor burgundy, the B&B name being merely symbolic of the food and wine aims, so exceptionally the second menu had beef.

Appetisers with wine are consumed standing. At this time payment is collected (approximately $50 in 1997) and name badges are distributed. The mizuna in the mixed greens salad (1995 menu) astonished my Japanese guest who said that it is now rare in Japan as a traditional accompaniment to whale meat. This 1995 menu had no beef, rather the burgundy classic *coq au vin*. We supplied additional wine to the chef – intended strictly for the birds. The 1997 menu also has a burgundy classic – again we supplied wine for the marinade. The liaison of the beef and the wine is described in the notes: '*Sauté de boeuf a la Bourguignonne* (Beef Burgundy) is probably the most widely known of all French preparations. Since their marriage yesterday the beef (from Lee Pratt, Casino, Northern NSW) and the cabernet sauvignon-based sauce have been intimately sharing flavours'.

The notes to the menus show the importance given by the chef to sourcing quality local and regional ingredients wherever feasible. Such detailed notes on menus were uncommon but illustrate the importance the restaurant attached to sourcing quality ingredients from a network of producers and suppliers. Further information about individual dishes, such as herbs used, was given, when asked, by chef David Pugh at the conclusion of the meal. It is usual at B&B dinners for chefs to participate briefly in discussion after a dinner. A prize (usually a good bottle from the club's cellar) is given to the food-master considered by the committee to have organised the best dinner of the year. In 1995 it was awarded to the Two Small Rooms menu and in 1997 the Two Small Rooms menu was runner-up.

Influence of Beef and Burgundy Clubs on Brisbane Gastronomy

Have the B&Bs had an educational effect? Certainly they have among members, and possibly beyond. The food and wine critic David Bray estimates that in the 1960s through 1980s he would have done a thousand restaurant reviews for the Brisbane *Courier Mail*. While he is uncertain of the influence his reviews may have had on gastronomy in Brisbane, he says that the Beef and Burgundy clubs may have had a disproportionately large effect because they had the more adventurous people in them, and the members went to chefs who would do new things, or at least things which were new to club members. Styles of food were changing. Bray was a founding member of the Fortitude B&B in 1973. This was a strongly wine oriented club, focused on the wine and how it matched the food.

In the early 1970s in Brisbane, wine companies were not strongly represented by sales staff, although Bray was a member of the Wine Press Club which had visits from southern winemakers. He says that he is sure chefs liked doing B&B functions very much. They could try new things. Quite often the Fortitude B&B would select wines and then consult with the chef as to what could be prepared to go with them. He thinks that the run of cooks learned from such functions.

Women were not members of the Fortitude club, in common with most others, but Bray took female guests to luncheons if he wished. In most clubs, ladies nights are mainly for wives, and are less serious affairs in terms of the general discussion of the food and wine. Friday lunch meetings were prolonged affairs, and wrecked the rest of the day as far as work was concerned.

Club Wine Cellars

Most B&B clubs in Australia have a wine cellar. The founding Adelaide club rents space from a wine merchant. The B&B at Cobram, Victoria, is said to have a good relationship with Seppelts for storing wines. At the start of each year, members pay a high percentage of the cost of dinners for the year with no refunds if they do not attend. The club is able to buy dozens of each year's release of wines, including Grange in the past. The Kingsford B&B cellar has some 600 bottles purchased at an average $12.59. Only the purchase price is recovered for wine consumed at dinners. With steep increases in wine prices in the past five years, the cellar has been depleted, and a wine levy on members has been necessary to replenish the cellar.

B&B and Other Wine and Food Societies

The table included at the end of this paper gives the number of B&B clubs and members of the Federation of Wine and Food Societies by State, together with approximate total membership in 2001. South Australia has the largest number of B&B clubs, including the founding club. Clubs are predominantly male, although gender is not specified in the B&B constitution. The small number of B&B clubs in ACT and WA is difficult to understand. WA has excellent restaurants which have won *Gourmet Traveller* awards, and Canberra has a stable population with generally high disposable income and many restaurants. Victoria has 50 per cent more clubs than NSW, perhaps an indication of a greater general interest in food and wine. The large number of B&Bs in SA is consistent with a long interest in gastronomy. But this might not have been expected in Queensland which ranks second. Nationally there are around ten all-female B&B clubs.

The Federation of Wine and Food Societies of Australia has affiliated societies in most States. The Wine and Food Society of New South Wales was launched in Sydney in 1939, and now has 200 members, all male. Its primary objective is 'to encourage and facilitate the association of people interested in fine wine and food'. Functions are 'directed towards the attainment of a high level of understanding and appreciation of the preparation of food and wine and their relationship to each other'. The 25 branches in Victoria do not include the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club Wine and Food Society. More are female or mixed than B&B clubs. The South Australian society's newsletter records, *inter alia*, a black tie trophy dinner at Charlick's Restaurant and Wine Bar in October 2000.

The founding NSW Society began in Johnnie Walker's Rhinecastle Cellars and has had many wine judges as members. Food was prepared there initially. Neville Baker was the Society's food-master from 1960 to 1970, and also wrote a weekly food column for *The Australian*. A brief history of the first 50 years of the society is given in *www.wineandfood.com*.

Confrerie de la Chaine des Rotisseurs

Re-established in France in 1950, it is self-claimed to be the largest gastronomic organisation in the world (a website claims 24,000 members). Membership is by invitation. It has numerous chapters (bailliages or English bailiwicks) internationally. It is devoted to 'promoting gastronomy and preserving the camaraderie and pleasures of the table' and is in its 20th year in Brisbane. Members have been senior chefs from large hotels and restaurants, members of the hospitality industry, and food writers. Initially their dinners were subsidised by various establishments, but now this occurs less frequently as restaurant management has changed, or are allowed less discretion by their accountants. Men and women make up the 50 or so members. Despite the origins of La Chaine, I suspect that they rarely, if ever, spit-roast a goose as did their predecessors in Paris in 1248 when the Royal Guild of Oyers Rotisseurs was founded, with membership limited to 'masters' in the art of roasting geese. Along with other guilds in France, this Guild was disbanded in 1791 after the Revolution, and when there was no longer a need to roast meats for the royal table. In Brisbane, a committee of three has a trial dinner before selecting a venue. Menus with wine are planned in advance, all supplied by the restaurant. There is no group discussion of wine and food during the meal, nor group interaction with the chef at its conclusion.

Slow Food International

Slow Food is an international organisation, rapidly growing internationally and in Australia where there are, at the date of publication of these Proceedings (2007), over 2,000 members in some 35 branches or convivia. The Brisbane convivium has over 230 members (as of 2007). Since 1989 Slow Food has become the largest international organisation devoted to taste and convivial enjoyment of high quality local and regional food and wine. It links ethics with pleasure, ecology with gastronomy. It seeks to maintain local food traditions and varieties of plant and animal foods that have been locally adapted by generations of farmers, and which are threatened by global corporations, more concerned with profit than with the taste and enjoyment of food. Food and wine are to be enjoyed socially for their taste and not be seen merely as fuel. Slow Food resists the industrialisation of the food supply with its monocultures and loss of biodiversity. It promotes local and regional sustainable production and close links between producers and the population.

Conclusion

The Adelaide Beefsteak and Burgundy club has succeeded in its aim to better educate the community in the appreciation and understanding of good food and wine. The influence of the organisation on gastronomy in general in Australia is difficult to measure, but undoubtedly it has, together with other factors, been influential. The educational aim is achieved by open discussion among members, and through interaction with chefs. Although it requires courage for some less experienced members to commit themselves in public about food and wine, attitudes are tolerant, and the total experience is rewarding.

Two menus illustrating dinners of the Kingsford Smith B&B Club follow. They were held in 1995 and 1997, and illustrate the use of local and regional produce, substantially but by no means exclusively. The chef David Pugh has since become a member of Slow Food Brisbane.

Acknowledgment

Tony Davidson, past president of the founding Adelaide B&B club, and David Bray of the Fortitude B&B club, Brisbane provided information on B&B clubs.

warmly welcomes

Kingsford Smith Beefsteak & Burgundy Club Members and Guests

to

the September 1995 dinner
to celebrate Spring

on Friday 8 September

Chef: David Pugh Host: Michael Conrad

Cellar: John Christopherson Food: Bob MacLennan

President: Gary Mulcahy

Menu and Wine List

Appetisers

Kir Royale

*

Prawn Quiche

1994 Lindemans Coonawarra Vineyard Chardonnay

*

Coq au Vin

Steamed Southern Gold Potatoes

1990 Wynns Coonawarra Hermitage

*

Salad of Mixed Greens

*

Cheeses

1980 Tyrrell's Vat 5 Hunter River Dry Red

*

Tarte au Pomme

Cinnamon Ice-cream

1991 Botolobar Budgee Budgee

*

Clarence River Bourbon Coffee

Bailey's Founder Liqueur Muscat

Notes on the Food and Wine

Appetisers
Smoked salmon, Springs, Adelaide (smoked in traditional Scottish manner, and never frozen);
Salmon caviar, Canada; Venison, Texas, Queensland (on NSW border); Gungel, NSW Pork wonton.

Kir Royale
Massenez Creme de Cassis de Dijon with Yalumba Angus Brut non-vintage Cuvée, Angaston, South Australia. Named after Felix Kir, former mayor of Dijon, and promoted for its health giving properties.

Prawn Quiche
Black tiger prawns, Moreton Bay

1994 Lindemans Coonawarra Vineyard Chardonnay
This wine is said to have ripe fig and melon Chardonnay aromas abundant in the bouquet. Extended contact with yeast lees and barrel fermentation have afforded complexity to this medium full-bodied wine. Said to be soft and creamy, with an intense long palate.

Coq au Vin
The essential ingredients of this classic from Burgundy are free-range cockerels (from Kingaroy) and good wine (here the Coonawarra).

Southern Gold Potatoes
The former name 'pink eyes' has been copyrighted in Victoria. They have gold skin and flesh, and tend to be "waxy"; also excellent cold in salads.

1990 Wynns Coonawarra Estate Hermitage
Jeremy Oliver, writing about Wynns Coonawarra Estate in *The Australian Wine Handbook*, says that the 1990 is perhaps the best vintage for decades.

Salad of Mixed Greens
Watercress, rocket (nutty, peppery) and mizuna (mild, spiky leaves). Grown by Doug Kesterven, Toowoomba. Victorian markets take most of his produce.

Cheese
Tarago River Brie (South-East Victoria) and Gorgonzola (Italy). In the French tradition, served with walnut bread (made by Two Small Rooms).

1980 Tyrrell's Vat 5 Hunter River Dry Red
From Hermitage grapes picked midway through the vintage from the NVC vineyard (more recent vintages are from the HVD vineyard bought from Penfolds). The slightly higher acid has assisted maturity to a traditional Hunter River 'Burgundy' style.

Tarte au Pomme
A simple French classic (newly released Granny Smiths, Stanthorpe)

1991 Botolobar Budgee Budgee
A mixture of crouchen and traminer grapes from Gil Wahlquist's vineyard at Mudgee on the Great Dividing Range. Botolobar has an ecologically sustainable vineyard, and uses no insecticides or irrigation. Exceptionally for Botolobar, some sulphur dioxide was used to preserve the wine.

Clarence River Bourbon Coffee
Hand picked by local growers and processed by Joy Phelps and Joan Dibden of Wombah Coffee (near Iluka at the mouth of the Clarence River). Aged for six months prior to roasting. Bourbon refers to the French king whose priests obtained coffee from Arabia. The CRB variety is descended from coffee brought to the area in the 19th century. A gold medal was awarded in London in the 1880s. A mild coffee with good aroma and acidity, and low in caffeine. Essentially organically grown.

Bailey's Founder Liqueur Muscat
A Rutherglen classic

Discussion

Tony Walsh: Before Barbara and Stephanie talk I'd like to say a few things and mention my contact with wine and food societies. I've been involved in three clubs in Adelaide, one is a beer club which I was a member of for a very short time because they spent most of their time having beers at lunch time and I couldn't cope with that. Another, as Bob has mentioned, was one of the original clubs in Australia and that was the Bacchus Club which in 1999 had its 60th anniversary. Now the Bacchus Club is a small group of about 30 members but at its peak it had over 300 members in the early 1970s; perhaps that drop in numbers might be associated with many changes in lifestyle including the abolition of the tax-free or taxable lunch and perhaps a tendency to become more efficient and hardworking.

The third was the Wine and Food Society which is a group that has branched away from the Bacchus Club in order to try and have more peak food and wine experiences. Thankfully we have had several of the people involved in this symposium cook for us, including Jennifer and Cath. In fact my first experience of Cath was at the Orlando dining room where she was working back in the early 1980s; after the meal she came out looking rather agitated and proceeded to give us a very, very strong lecture on the balance between our interest in wine and food, given that we had about 12 glasses in front of us and one plate. She said, you've got it all wrong, and jumped up and down. I remember going into the kitchen afterwards, giving her a very good round of applause and asking for some advice on how to understand better what the food was about, because at that stage I really didn't have very much knowledge at all.

We've also had Rosa Matto, and Russell Jeavons who is cooking for us at lunch time today. We've had Cheong Liew and also Brigita Turniski cook meals for us, some of them on a couple of occasions. Those societies really give people an opportunity of having an experience very similar to the symposium fellowship, food, wine – though perhaps a little less involved in the sociology and philosophy and politics, but certainly there's an awful lot of fun to be had.

Barbara Santich

I was going to talk briefly about different sorts of dining clubs and in particular the sort of dining clubs that could be found in England in the 18th and 19th centuries. One of the most important of these was the Royal Society Dining Club which was an offshoot of the Royal Society. I think it started as a place where people who went to the Royal Society meetings to hear about some new discovery in science or in geography or biology or botany or whatever, after which some of them would then go off to a particular inn and have a meal, having organised with the innkeeper to have a particular meal at a particular price. A lot of these menus, together with the prices of the meals, have been recorded and can be consulted.

Some of the interesting characters involved in the Royal Society Dining Club were Sir Joseph Banks and Charles Darwin; they were there for the fellowship, as you said, and for discussing these scientific advances and also for a little bit of political talk. But the clubs were very important and several books have been written about these dining clubs.

That was in the 18th century, but also in the 18th century there were the clubs in London which served as the city residences of people who lived in the country but didn't necessarily have London residences, so if they came to the city for what was called the 'season' they might stay at the clubs and would have their meals at the clubs. In a way the clubs were a home away from home. In the 19th century when restaurants were flourishing in Paris (and really nowhere else in France), London had the dining clubs instead, so the dining clubs served as restaurants even though they were not for everyone. And although the dining clubs were more English than French there were also clubs in France, perhaps only a few and in Paris, but there were some, based on the English model. Anyone who has read Proust's *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu* will remember in Book One the upstart stockbroker, Swann, who belongs to the Jockey Club as a way to get into the levels of society he wants desperately to reach.

The English club tradition came to Australia; in Adelaide there are the Adelaide Club and the Queen Adelaide Club, and there are similar clubs in Sydney. Many of them still keep quite good dining rooms for members and for guests. It's a place where people who have similar backgrounds, similar interests, share some sort of fellowship because they belong to the club, where they can come to eat in a way that is semi-public, semi-private.

(**Comment**)

The one comment about those sort of clubs, usually the purpose of the meal there is to transact business or politics or whatever. The primary purpose of the meal is not the enjoyment of the food or wine *per se*.

Cath Kerry: I've done some dinners at the Adelaide Club. They still had Stilton wrapped in a napkin with a Stilton spoon, they had the long style, not the round; they have the long-style soup spoons and the plates have a crest. The current chef wants to get rid of those nasty thick plates and bring in large white plates. The Adelaide Club also has a very lovely room where you can smoke, although the lovely holders for the matches have been removed and that's been turned into just a general sitting room. The dining room operates mainly at lunchtime and at night time it's mainly Thursday night, Friday night and Saturday night. I've also eaten there a few times and also been taken there as a special treat.

(**audience member**): I can confirm that the clubs in Melbourne organise, on a regular basis, wine and food evenings. They'll get a guest winemaker or guest chef to come in. The focus will be purely wine and food. When I cooked I was asked to do something a bit out of the ordinary (and I must say, Beef and Burgundy clubs have been the bane of many a chef's life – we can talk about that later) and I must say these people were very open-minded and so to work there was wonderful. Also to go there was interesting. And then to go to the Queen Adelaide Club where they still have sherry and they still offer fairy bread or Melba Toast with the soup – it's interesting to see many of the old traditions of dining still being upheld there. And I wonder how much longer the Queen Adelaide Club can last. They do have lovely little rooms where you can stay the night. But down with privilege, of course!

Stephanie Alexander

I'm just going to offer these observations as somebody who, over a period of 20 odd years, has hopefully given pleasure to a lot of members of a lot of dining clubs. I have to say it wasn't an altogether wonderful experience on many occasions, and it seems to me that by the end of my career as a restaurateur there were fewer of the very large functions. We probably catered for most of the clubs that existed in Melbourne, including the Beef and Burgundy Club, the Wine and Food Society and lots of others. From the restaurateur's point of view – and this might be a bit controversial but I think it should be said – there was always an argument about money, always. The initial discussions usually required that you gave a gratis meal to two or three members of the committee who felt perfectly justified in saying that none of this was suitable. Frequently the chef wasn't given any opportunity to actually taste the wine, even though it was seen as an exercise in food and wine matching so that you did your best theoretically. The other thing that used to fascinate me was that these people obviously knew an incredible amount about wine – the wines that were brought to such functions were usually quite extraordinary, or frequently quite extraordinary – but the direction in which the chef was asked to go, as far as the food was concerned, was usually extremely conservative. If it was not beef or lamb you were lucky. You tried to mention squab, or something to do with pork, something with sweetbreads, the answer was usually 'I don't think so'. And that used to make you feel a bit frustrated because you thought, well, they've got such exquisite, beautiful wines one would have assumed they might also be interested in experiencing something quite different in the food line. In my experience that was rarely the case, I'm not saying it was never the case but it was rarely the case.

From the point of view of club organisation, the other thing that is rarely understood is that for functions such as these you are usually required to produce about 15 glasses, at a minimum. Often the clubs provide the glasses but they still have to be serviced, washed, polished, put on the table. There is a tremendous amount of extra service, so it is usually a very costly exercise for the restaurant. It makes you feel mean and grasping and dreadful and you have to continually chisel away at the organisers to say, really, this shouldn't be a bargain price, you are not doing us a favour, you should be paying a premium for this sort of eating because we have to put ourselves out in the best possible way and we really want to give you pleasure, because that's what we are here for.

Tony Walsh: As a person who has been food master for the Wine and Food Society, that is exactly the response that I was looking for. I've been on the committee for a long time and I've never had a free meal, so that certainly hasn't happened in my experience.

Gay Bilson: I think the societies are wonderful and it's really important that you've said something about them but we've kind of left out Sydney in a way. I grew up as a restaurateur feeding people like Len Evans and James Halliday who brought extraordinary wines and asked us to do things for Wine and Food Society events. In fact, in the very early days, pivotal people such as Neville Baker brought experts like Andre Simon out to Sydney and gave special dinners, though we didn't ever do one for him. But I'd back everything up that Stephanie says except that Len, despite his appalling male chauvinism, was and is an extremely generous man.

Can I tell a story about Len, a very quick story? Tony and I won one of those silly awards way back in the early '80s, and a letter came to the restaurant that there was to be a dinner to award us a certificate. It came to Tony and he humbly asked if he could bring his wife with him. I was actually livid. It was at Len Evan's Bulletin Place Cellars, which is a place of history now, and the time must have been mid-1970s. Tony was asked to say something and I, who had never ever spoken in public in my life, was shaking like a leaf as I moved to the microphone and told the story of having been invited – you know it's okay if I come as Tony's wife having been

working my arse off in the kitchen for years, and a cheer came from the kitchen and all the women came out of the kitchen. Geraldine Pascall, who was part of that history and reviewing restaurants at the time and the odd opera, was at that dinner. I had always thought of this woman, who was very décolletage, smoked long cigarillos and wore dark glasses at night, as lightweight but she came up afterwards and said, it was marvellous that you did that, and I thought she was a deeply feminist woman.

Alicia Rios: In the Basque country there are also men-only dining clubs called '*txokos*', which means hamlets or huts, a group of up to 20 or 30 men who are excellent cooks because they have learnt the tradition through their mothers at home. They gather at one of these huts, *txokos*, that they own, meeting at least twice or three times a month to cook, all are really excellent cooks. They depend on the local markets that are held outdoors in squares and buy special food or even send the fisherman to special places far away to bring the desired fishes for their feasts. These clubs or societies are very relevant in the Basque country. There are very many all through the Basque country, they are mostly only for men, and they have kept alive lots of traditions, though they are also innovative so they combine both.

I would also like to pay homage to the Buckland Club, have you ever heard of the Buckland Club in London?

Barbara Santich: William Buckland was a geologist, an eccentric who did set up this club. The main thing that I know about him, apart from the fact that he set up the club, is that when he wanted to identify a stone, he put it in his mouth. I once visited a house where there was a little cupboard of Buckland relics, including a little reddish kind of pebble with a little ticket underneath it which said: this is a piece of the heart of Louis XIV. What happened, apparently, was that during the Revolution somebody sneaked into the Louvre, stole the heart, by then petrified, and took it back to England. William Buckland thought it was a stone so he put it in his mouth. That's about all I know about William Buckland but there is a Buckland Club which organises lunches or dinners with either a special theme or a special cook. So far as I know they are all male but Alicia has done dinners for them so perhaps she can tell more about them now.

Alicia Rios: It's so British, so eccentric. They all wear the uniforms that they bought in earlier times in India so when I cooked for them and I didn't dare look like a woman so I dressed as a man. For serving the dishes I changed to a woman's traditional dress from the region and they were so polite, saying, 'Oh, we thought you were a man!' Twice a year they have these really eccentric dinners in homage to little descriptions of banquets or to the most exotic culinary traditions. I know they are in autumn and spring. For the next banquet they are organising they are planning to bring camel to England, and they are having lots of difficulties but they still keep trying to import camel and eat it. And I imagine they will wear the most eccentric dresses to look like real camel eaters.

(audience member): In terms of male dining, there is a tripe club of New South Wales.

(response): There's one in Melbourne as well.

(audience member): Okay, there's one in Melbourne too, and I was invited as a journalist to attend the tripe club. They have their meals at different venues and obviously the menu has to be a tripe-led menu but what was interesting to me was, not realising this until I got there, that it was, by default, an all-male dining club. I was actually the only woman amongst about 45 or 50 men at lunch and this is a regular occurrence in Sydney. The tripe club meets every couple of months. I don't know about the one in Melbourne.

Is it an all-male domain?

(audience member): No it's not all male but it's more default, you don't want to keep women out but it seems to be that men attend and there are very few women members. They are happy to have women come along.

(response): I asked if I could become a permanent member, I wasn't encouraged.

(audience member): That's probably because you asked, you didn't wait to be invited.

(audience member): I worked at the Australian Club for seven years. It was actually one of my first jobs in catering and everything that Cath described is still there. When I started working there, it was only two years before that women were actually allowed through the front door; previously, they had to come in the servants' entrance. They weren't allowed on certain floors, they were not (and still aren't) allowed to wear pants, they had to wear skirts. Cath, you would love to go there, the original spoons, solid silver spoons, the Royal Doulton gold-leaf glazed, Waterford crystal glasses, the original cedar tables that came out on the boats, and the candelabra. You can't smoke because of the paintings, the painting are too valuable and it's just the elephant's leg in the downstairs drawing room, the members' table where they all sit, queens service at lunchtime. They're not served by queens. And I have to say I learnt so much about classic menus because they still used the classic Escoffier menus and the

descriptions. It was the only place that I could put my Woods cookery book into practice and I just learnt so much. I felt very privileged, I learnt so much, but it is a bastion, it really is. I don't think it's changed.

No women were allowed anywhere except on the third floor unless accompanied by a male so the first floor, which is the members' floor, you just weren't allowed in. And the only reason I was privileged was because I worked there, I was a slave. We even turned down the beds in the evening and it was so embarrassing because the average age of members is 80 and you knock on the door and they don't hear. And people like Sir Daniel Arons, number one member, he had lived there for ten years. He's amazingly interesting man but servants weren't meant to engage in conversation, though it was a good experience to start with.

Lunch: Russell Jeavons

Tony Walsh: I'd like to introduce Russell Jeavons who's going to do our lunch. As you know Russell normally makes pizzas at his restaurant at Willunga.

Russell Jeavons

Hi, thank you Cath and Gay and all of you for inviting me and drawing me out of my place of safety, down by the river. It's a fairly brief brief I received for this lunch and I decided to stick to it and have a brief lunch. I haven't really elaborated on the plan except perhaps in one area, the sauce for the crab, which has a vegetable base rather than an oil, egg yolk, emulsion base like you'd find in a mayonnaise.

The crabs I've been negotiating for several weeks because the season is in full swing but they haven't been good this year and they've had very little weight in them. These have all been hand-picked off the back of a truck that was actually going into Melbourne. When you pick up a crab you can feel by its weight whether it's a worthy crab or not. Whether you are worthy of the crab I don't know. The crabs are worthy.

The bread I made myself. I made a heavier bread, I'm not sure what we're going to do with it. Trying to make it fit in, there are two parts to the meal. There's the crab off the barbecue with the rouille and there is a bit of broth afterwards – there will be a pot there where you can chuck the pieces of crab that you don't actually suck on because I'm not comfortable with too much intimacy of that nature. The spore form of the various creatures that lives in your orifices resists boiling easily.

[It's no problem to us, no problem to me someone else having sucked on, true. You can divide us into those who do and don't worry. We are covered by public liability insurance.]

But I'm not. It's funny you should say that because food is about risk. You can't have anything to do with food without risk because food is about active involvement in life which is all about risk and pain. And standing next to those things to cook these crabs is going to cause me a lot of pain. In fact, I'm already in pain. I personally think it's worth it.

Gay Bilson: I've got one more thing to say about the barbecues, they're the barbecues that were made for the *Plenty* events of the 2000 Adelaide Festival which were in Kangaroo Island, Streaky Bay – the wonderful Streaky Bay – Burra, and Beachport. Streaky Bay was where the barbecues were made. So they were transported, made by a man who's a boilermaker, abalone fisherman, who became an artist (and you should notice his beautiful decoration for the airholes around the level where the charcoal is). These barbecues have been sitting at Country Arts ever since March 2000. Country Arts keeps telling me they're all sold; I don't believe they are or they wouldn't be there. So if anyone wants to come to me and say they want one of these barbecues – I think Russell's going to take one and Craig's going to take one – I'm very happy to make a list. And thirdly, just to show you that I have a sense of humour, after lunch today there is going to be an egg and spoon race.

My Favourite Edible Street

Karen Pridham, Andrew McConnell, Robin Black and Alan Saunders

Chair: Colin Sheringham

Yesterday in this session we had a look at some edible cities. Today we are having smaller portions because I know people have eaten. More numerous tastes of these portions. Yesterday we also discussed the idea that it would be good, and I think a very wonderful idea, to hear from people who have never had an opportunity to talk at symposiums before, so to that end we've asked a couple of people for whom this is their first opportunity. The first one is Karen. When I asked people how they wanted to be introduced today they said my name is Karen, my name's Andrew, it's Robin. Robin went a bit further and said it's Robin with an 'i'. And the other person needs no introduction and he's not going to get one either. So Karen, thank you.

Karen Pridham

First of all I have to tell you about my job. What I do is I work in a food shop, this food shop is very interesting and sells an enormous variety of different foods and my job, amongst other things, is to taste things that come in so that we can say, 'Oh, awful give it the flick', or we can say 'Oh, what a great product, we can sell that, that's wonderful'. And that's my job. So during the space of a day I might have half a dozen or ten things to taste. It's very, very interesting. Some are absolutely awful but some are absolutely fantastic. And so, in effect, I am the static point, I am the street, and the actual food is passed by me, they are the pedestrians. So it's a turnaround from the other things, but I'm just there and I do my job.

So as an example of one day, I've written down the kind of people who might come and see me – I only remember the good things. So there's the waterhouse asparagus, that's grown in the north of the state and it's beautifully big, green asparagus. We don't really sell vegetables unless they are exceptional, and this is an exceptional product. People don't like to buy thick asparagus because they think it's going to be tough but it is actually the best asparagus and it's not tough. So then you go to the stage where you have to convince them that's the best thing to buy. Then we've got Terry O'Neill, he grows tomatoes and basil, and Lebanese cucumbers. Now Terry saves all the seeds and he grows them on his organic farm and they're absolutely magnificent. Tiny little tomatoes, picked perfectly ripe and when they come to us, they're absolutely fresh so they last a long time, they last a week in perfect condition. Then we've got people like Pyengana Cheese in the north of the state. They make cheese in the time honoured, very traditional ways and they even make unpasteurised cheese which we do actually sell – quite illegal, but we call it special and we hope people don't think that means cheap. We've got a wonderful herb grower, fantastic herbs, so luminous, again organic so we buy those and we use those. Then we've got another person who comes in and says, I've got these wonderful organic spatchcock, free-range spatchcock, buy these, taste these, cook these, so we do; it happens all the time. There's another person that comes in with pink-eye potatoes that he grows in beach sand and they are really, really wonderful, the best. And then there are all sorts of other crazy people.

I write a monthly newsletter and in the newsletter one of the segments is the producer of the month. I interview these producers once a month and I can't believe how crazy they are. There are really mad, mad people out there doing the most amazing things. One that comes to mind is Annie Ashbolt. Annie Ashbolt has a full-time public service job, she has three teenage

children, her husband has a two thousand acre farm where they farm beef and they do some crops. She has I don't know how many olive trees, I think it was five thousand olive trees and they produce the most fantastic olive oil, Alicia will attest to that. She also makes elderflower bubbly, a sparkling non-alcoholic drink which is fantastic. On the property there is an old sandstone quarry so they're shifting a whole lot of subsoil from the river flats to grow lemons there because the sandstone quarry creates some kind of a heat trap and will ripen the lemons – that's how they ripen lemons in Tasmania. They also keep bees and all sorts of things. How does she do this with a full-time job and teenage children, I have no idea.

But the craziest person of all that I can think of is a woman called Janet Reid. Janet Reid was a Canberra public servant, she used to write speeches for Paul Keating, and her husband was also a public servant. They moved to Tasmania, to Ringarooma which is in the centre of the north-east, bought 50 acres, not very much land, and decided they wanted to grow veal. So on this 50 acres they grow grass for hay and turnips, all to feed 20 jersey cows all year around. They put all their efforts into this, and then get semen from a particular breed of cattle, the Russian blue. The Russian blue is a particular European breed that makes very good veal. It's a very, very big calf but still has all the attributes of baby veal, though being much, much bigger it's a much more saleable product. With this semen they go around all the neighbouring farmers and they inseminate their big Friesian cows, because the Russian blue cow is actually not big enough to have its own calf naturally. It has to be assisted. So they inseminate the Friesian cows and then they take these calves, and they've been milking all these jersey cows, feeding them all year just so that they've got enough milk to feed these calves so they never, ever have grass. Now how crazy is that? But how passionate is that? And the meat is absolutely fantastic. So I guess my edible street is following me, coming past me rather than me going past the street.

Colin Sheringham: The next guest told me what he is going to talk about but I have to share something with you before. He works in Brunswick Street in Melbourne. Brunswick Street – and if you know anything about Sydney and Melbourne, it's hard to believe that the *Sydney Morning Herald* actually said that Brunswick Street was the most bohemian street in Australia, far better than King Street, Newtown. Andrew, however, is <u>not</u> going to talk about Brunswick Street where he works.

Andrew McConnell

I thought Brunswick Street was just a little too obvious. I have just returned to Australia after a good nine years of being away. In that time I was lucky enough to live in five different cities in the world. One of them was Hong Kong, which made a huge impact on my life and on how I lived and how I now live and eat and think. Anyway, I'd like to just take everyone on a small walk through my neighbourhood and my street where I lived in Hong Kong which was in Central. I took a position in a small restaurant in Hong Kong in 1996 and stayed for three years. I was living in a small apartment, shoebox, above a street market which at the time was fine. It was pretty much not what I was used to but I thought, just do as the locals do and get used to it. I was working ten minutes away and I took the same route to work everyday, through the market and along a street called Bahfagite. Bahfagite is quite a famous street and is an old flower street. It's no longer a flower street, just a bit of a thoroughfare that weaves its way from the heart of central Hong Kong up to the mid levels. So I'd like to start in the heart of Central where Bahfagite actually starts, at Lyndhurst Terrace. At Lyndhurst Terrace there is a small restaurant, or rather a collection of restaurants, I used to frequent and I also used to take visiting guests and friends. The first restaurant I'd like to talk about at the start of this route belongs to an ex-pat association called the Ning Po Residents Association; this Shanghainese ex-pat group opened up a small restaurant which is open to the public. There are a few Shanghainese clubs within Hong Kong, only one of which is open to the public. I've been lucky enough to be invited to another one through a Chinese friend but never to return, unfortunately. This, for me, was a great experience, being exposed to a different type of Chinese cuisine, especially prior to moving to Shanghai and opening up another restaurant in Shanghai – it was a good start to the language and the food and the people of Shanghai.

Moving along from there is quite a famous restaurant called the Yung Kee Restaurant which I think most people who have been to Hong Kong may have heard of it and most may have been to, it's quite a large restaurant which seems to me to be a model for a lot of Chinese or Cantonese restaurants around the world. It's pretty much the quintessential restaurant in Hong Kong in many ways, mainly in the way it's run and its format, its menu and its interior. There have been lots of copies around the world but there's nothing quite like this. It's spread over five levels and is famed for goose, which they breed themselves, which is pretty special, quite memorable.

But along this street, travelling everyday, I just developed different relationships with store holders and people and actually felt a sense of community which I hadn't felt in quite a long time. I think that, after travelling for so many years, to actually stop in one place for three years was lifesaving. I think it was good for my sanity and good to feel a sense of community. It didn't happen quickly but with time I felt very comfortable and could actually stop and strike a conversation and feel as though I was at home at last.

It was quite interesting eating yesterday the dessert Cheong served, since it was something I used to eat everyday in Hong Kong; it was sold on the Bahfagite at a cigarette store which was between an antique shop and a conveyor, it's a human conveyor basically which runs from central all the way up and between this conveyor, which is suspended, and the antique restaurant, they sell cigarettes. And beside the cigarette store is a small wooden bucket of fresh bean curd. It is similar to what we ate last night, and it's just scooped then the ginger syrup is poured over. I've only ever had it served cold so I was quite surprised to eat it warm last night. It was nothing that I hadn't had before but it was quite an interesting concept. I'm sure it's done in the winter time but I've never been exposed to it. For me, this experience, and also the very famous congee shop and being introduced to congee and bean curd, and being completely immersed in this new culture everyday for three years, meant my comfort food factor has evolved and slightly changed to the point where, now that I'm living in Melbourne, if I feel ill I don't crave a hot chicken soup, I'll get up and put on a pot of congee and go back to bed for three hours, with the pot of congee next to my bed so I can just sip on that for the day. I miss it very much but it's been great that I can actually take this home and feel as though I have taken part of that community and that experience and that lifestyle. So that was my edible street for quite a few years.

Colin Sheringham: The third person is Robin, she is going to talk about Salamanca Place and for those that were in Hobart, I think one of the most amazing dinners I have ever been to in my life was in Salamanca Place. It's very hard to go home and, when people ask what did you eat, say well, there was goat, you sort of ripped it apart, you sat at the table and pulled off morsels with your fingers.

Robin Black

It's interesting what you say about being part of a community. Salamanca is my community. I live six blocks from Salamanca Place and part of living in Hobart for me is the nourishment of going to Salamanca every Saturday. This confirms that it's a good place to live. And one of the things that I've been struck by here – and we all have, those of us who live in Tasmania – is that people identify you as Tasmanian first. That's fine, but there is more to it than that. So this is what nourishes me on Saturdays. I do this every Saturday and I realise, having been to the Torrens Island market, how privileged we are and how much we take it for granted.

My day will start with a walk because I need to build an appetite. The first place I will stop is at So's Store – Hobart has a big Hmong community from Laos. They have set up quite a separate part of the market, though they are still an integral part. So's language is not as good as it could be but we now have a really good relationship. She knows my name after a long time and I know hers. She knows what we like to buy and she will always include an extra bunch of something for you, 'for you, you good custom'. So she makes my day good. The second stall I'll go to at Salamanca is owned by Eric and Yetta Philips who are winemakers and flower growers so part of the joy of Salamanca is that these people come from the country to the city and they bring their produce and these people are very active, an interesting way of talking about retirement. They had a plan several years ago, when they had a vineyard called 'Elsewhere' – some of you may have heard of it or been there; it produced an award-winning Pinot – and they decided that they needed to retire, so they sold Elsewhere and kept a small vineyard that they call 'No Regrets'. And they truly don't have any. So as well as their wine at the stall, they sell flowers, not lots of them but just enough, always the freshest things so I always buy a bunch of flowers. In winter they don't come to the markets but at this time of the year you can always buy bulbs from the store.

The next place I go to is a café called Machine. This is in Salamanca Square, which is a new development behind the Place. The woman who owns it always says she runs a community service, she doesn't actually make any money; she's the woman who brought Tropfest to Hobart. The first year that the festival was there, there would have been 20 people and I think this year there was something like 3000 people on the lawns at Salamanca. So she and her café, it's called Machine because it is not just a café it's a laundry as well, bring a whole other part of artistic life to that square and that's fantastic. She also sells Vespa motorcycles, she's the agent for Vespa, so on the menu you can buy a coffee and a Vespa. One of the delightful things about Salamanca is the eclectic mix of people, all sorts of people, so I can sit at Machine next to the ferals with their dogs and a man who owns Strahan Village; economically they are at two ends of the spectrum but it's the sort of place where everybody feels welcome and all sorts of people are part of that life.

And the last thing I'll do at Salamanca on Saturday for my essential nourishment is to go to the Hobart Bookshop. I have a relationship there that I've developed over a long time, and I'm sure they cringe every time I walk in because often, although I have more time now, I would just walk in and say I need a book to read. I would buy a book every Saturday and I'd read it and need another one next Saturday. That's my edible street and I cherish it. I developed those relationships over a long period and it's my community.

Colin Sheringham: Yesterday when I asked people to talk today, some said they were a bit nervous about talking in front of a group like this, some said they weren't used to talking in public, the last person to talk is no exception to that. I would just ask you to be kind and gentle to Alan, he's a bit nervous and he's not used to talking to large numbers of people like this. He's one previous experience was on Radio National, which certainly doesn't have an audience this large.

Alan Saunders

I actually wanted to come last because I thought I'd be an anti-climax and I think I'm going to be. The reason I'm going to be an anti-climax is that I thought that if you talk about your favourite edible street it can't be somewhere that you haven't spent a long period of time, it's got to be somewhere which, for at least some period of your life, was home or close to home. Considering where I live that is fairly anti-climactic. I would love to talk about a street full of shops, restaurants, bars and cafes. The actual truth is that I've never really been, I'd love to be a café person, but I think if you are going to be a café person you've got to have time to hang out and I never do have time. If I want coffee I have it at home and I think this is a tribute not to the fact that I live an incredibly busy life but to the fact that I can't organise my time very well.

I used to live in Oxford Street in Paddington in Sydney and when I lived there it was never anybody's idea of a great edible street but it's actually got worse. It used to be that at the Paddington end of it there were two really fine restaurants – Claude's and Oasis Seros, but Oasis Seros isn't there anymore. More to the point, as we go back from there towards where I used to live, at the rather less posh end of Oxford Street, there was a quite nice shop called the Game Kitchen, where you could buy ready-made but very acceptable and useable stocks, breads and so on. Well that's no longer there, it's been replaced by a delicatessen of much less quality, much less good quality. There used to be good vegetable shops there; Barry McDonald, who's a very good Sydney provedore, used to have a place there but he hasn't anymore. Then there was a place called Paddington Pear, well that now sells black frocks. Essentially almost anywhere in Oxford Street that used to sell food now sells black frocks. This is because black frock shops can pay the rent and food shops can't.

Now I need a black frock as much as anybody. I have to go out in the evenings, I need something to wear but the fact is that the needs of local inhabitants were gradually being eased out by the high price of the rents. So now my local edible street – I no longer live in Oxford Street, I live around the corner in South Dowling Street – is Victoria Street, Darlinghurst (I turn right from where I live, walk straight ahead, and cross Oxford Street). This is now my edible street and the point that I want to make to you is that this is not the most wonderful edible street in the world. It doesn't sound at all as interesting as Salamanca Place and certainly not as interesting as the Chinese streets we've heard about, but it's within walking distance of where I live and it's the best I've got so it's my favourite street now. If we go to the Kings Cross end of it, there are restaurants – quite a good Mauritian restaurant, a Middle Eastern restaurant, a good Indian restaurant, and a Chinese restaurant called Fu Man Chu. I find it very odd that anybody should call a Chinese restaurant Fu Man Chu, I think it's like having a kosher restaurant and calling it Shylock or Fabian but nonetheless perhaps there are subtleties here that I don't understand but are known to the Chinese Malay who run the place. It does great take-away and does wonderful congee. And there is a sort of French restaurant around the corner that every corner ought to have, called Ce La Quave, which is a very good middle range Sydney restaurant. I was talking to Colin last night about how one of the things that we don't have in Sydney are reasonably priced middle range restaurants and the middle range is where most of us live most of the time and we ought to be able to get quality there, quality and value for money, and very often we can't.

A street like this ought to have good shops, well there are about three that I use. There used to be a convenience store which, before all the disasters that have happened in the former Yugoslavia, sold Yugoslavian food and where you could buy cans full of pork and beans, which are really lovely. I love them but I assume that somebody has bombed the hell out of the factories that made them and what we have now is a very good bakery at one end of the street selling a good sourdough bread, there's an extremely good bottle shop, both with the sort of wines I can afford and the sort of wines I would like to be able to afford, which in my view is what a good bottle shop should be. And there is also a deli, a rather expensive deli, but nonetheless a place where I can get a reasonable range of vegetables, a reasonable range of potatoes, which is something I always look for, and a reasonable range of smallgoods. There is no butcher, there is no fish shop. If I buy raw meat or raw fish from the deli I will spend an enormous premium for something wrapped in plastic. So this is not an ideal state of affairs, but it's my state of affairs. It's what's within walking distance, and I live in the inner city because I want places to be within walking distance of where I live and so these are my compromises. I compromise on having Victoria Street, Darlinghurst as my favourite edible street. That's the sort of compromise you have to make in life.

Discussion

(audience member): I'd just like to point out Oxford Street 1966 was full of butchers, grocers, greengrocers from the Italian migration into that area. I was teaching at the local school which now, of course, raises a fortune through its market. I think Oxford Street, together with King Street in Newtown, are streets that originally had sort of small businesses but now have been taken over by the black dress shops. What used to be an artist's precinct is losing that quality because people can't afford the rent.

Jennifer Hillier: This relates to the comments about Hong Kong. As we know, with high density, people are living in small apartments, so it's terrific just having a lot of your needs met in the street. You know if you're hot and thirsty from traipsing around a city like Hong Kong and just there on the street is a refreshing glass of something in a little kind of perfectly clean stainless steel street stall. You don't get that with urban sprawl. It was the same living in and near Siena – the life was in the street.

(audience member): King Street is my main street, I go up there at least two or three times a day. I think it's interesting that, since the time I've lived there, as in Alan's case, food providers have disappeared. There used to be a continental butcher and an Australian kind of butcher, both have gone. There used to be a fish shop, it became a café and both the butcher shops became cafés. There used to be a small deli, naturally of course it is now a Woolies competing directly with one of the nicest grocer shops in Sydney which gets the most astonishing different kinds of products – it's the place where I first had dates still on the stem that ripened as I kept them. But instead of black frocks we get the latte shops and that's about all they are, they just sell latte and a few bits of fairly indifferent food. But at the same time what it's also doing is entirely displacing the population that was there, the working class people that still do live around Newtown and the students that live around Newtown. They no longer have a place to go to shop for everyday things. They're now forced to go down to Broadway, which is quite a way away and buy at the big supermarkets because there isn't any longer that capacity for them to do local shopping I think some of the main street projects that I've seen around Australia really need to take that kind of sense on board, a lot of the main street projects I've seen also convert a whole heap of stuff into cafes just to be like tourist main streets and not living main streets. I think the big fall-down of Newtown is that it's rapidly going that way, not being any longer a living main street but a tourist main street.

Much of what has been said already is what I wanted to say, that the growth of the suburbs and the vineyards growing is taking over raw land and taking over orchards. It's purely economic practice which is causing this and unfortunately we're probably not going to be able to stand in the way at all. One of the only exceptions was where the value of the orchards was beginning to be realised before the last of them had been pulled down because of the farmers' market movement. All we're seeing in the streets is exactly the same economic practice that we're seeing in the suburbs and nearby rural areas.

(audience member): One of the reasons that your butchers and your little fresh vegetable places are disappearing in your street is because of the supermarkets. I think we all have to boycott them.

These days you can sell to a local council the idea of pavement cafes, they love pavement cafes. If you look at any plan of renewal of an urban area, they always have architectural drawings with pavement cafes on them. I don't know whether that is economically driven or whether it's simply that this is some kind of cute idea that they've got in their heads. I think that possibly we should try and get another cute idea in their heads, which is that we want corner shops in urban areas as well. I think there's a real problem. I do not have the strength of character to boycott my local supermarkets, which is partly because my local supermarkets are open when I'm likely to be shopping at them, which is sort of ten o'clock at night or something like that. It's a difficult call I think.

(audience member): I think it's slightly different in Melbourne, there seems to be more food shops popping up within stretches and I don't know whether it's because there is more demand.

(audience member): But they're a very specific type of food shop, and we're talking Simon Johnson, Jones the Grocer (Jones the robber!), those types of food shops that charge extraordinarily high prices for products from Europe. The Europeans come over here and they look at the prices being charged and they are disgusted.

(audience member): Talking about the depersonalisation, where my business is it's a nice little area, there is a very good little fish market there, there's a lovely person making good fresh pasta. Across the road from me was a row of derelict shops. Aldi came and bought the area and we all thought this is going to be really great, it's really going to bring a lot of life blood back into this area. I was actually considering extending my business in the hope that we'd get a lot of people coming in. Aldi has built now, it takes up the best part of the block, but it has turned its back on the main road and has made its entrance so that you can only go along a side street, up a laneway and into their one and only entrance and exit. It's completely and utterly killed off all the foot traffic and half of the life blood of a little town like that.

(audience member): I just want to ask a question about Salamanca Market because there it was so exciting on the one hand but then I heard rumours that the Hmong were not actually growing the stuff, they were just doing the packaging and making those cute little packages of things. And I wonder how many markets are just becoming tourist things and we go along, we think this is living, well actually they're selling astronomical bead charts for hippy bedrooms and they're all the same. I think that that sort of absolute crap that people call arts and crafts is killing off markets as being genuine places and therefore warm and real living places. When I went to Salamanca I loved the food but then I got so depressed by all the crap. No one needs any of that, a bomb under it would be the best thing that could've happened to the world aesthetically and therefore more room.

(audience member): The answer about the Hmong is really interesting. Yes, they do grow a lot of their product but they also buy it in. What happened is that when they were relocated from Laos, they came to Tasmania, but about 50 per cent have left the state because of the unsuitability of the climate. They've gone to Queensland. Those who stayed have realised, like the rest of us, that you have to make a living. So in their little blocks in Moona and out the road to Norfolk they grow bok choy, coriander, pak choy, etc. When I owned a café they would grow things for you specifically. But they also go to Stokes and Hammond and they take the beans out of the box and they package them attractively. And yes, we might criticise that but perhaps if they couldn't do that, they wouldn't be there at all. And I know what you are saying about the craft thing, but for all criticisms we have for the Hobart City Council, they have decided that you cannot buy and sell a stall at Salamanca and change its essential character so if you buy a store that sells handicraft you have to go on doing that. So it provides a mix. And yes, some of it might be questionable tourist crap, but the thing I like about Salamanca is when you aren't all there. When it's my place in the middle of winter and it's about all of us as locals supporting the good things and it isn't overrun by tourists. So it's a balance, isn't it.

Maria Kelly: I also can understand, following on from Alan and Jean, what they are talking about because I also live in the vicinity. One thing that we haven't discussed, and I don't know if it exists in other states but certainly does in Sydney, one of the disturbing things I'm finding in the inner city is the emergence of what is known as the convenience store or the 7-Elevens. There seems to be a pattern, there's this emergence that's only happened in the last five years and they're springing up everywhere.

(audience member): You know that everything's $4.99. Virtually everything you buy in those shops, when you ask the price, whether its orange juice, whatever it is, it all comes in seemingly remarkably at $4.99. It's actually a franchise run by Lebanese interest, that's as much as I've actually worked out. Alan, it's something for you to investigate further. As far as I understand it, there appear to be essentially two companies which both franchise. And the franchisees are predominantly Lebanese. More than that I haven't been able to establish. I assume that some of them are going to have to go to the wall because there are so many of them in Sydney at the moment. If you need a couple of AA batteries late at night, as some people do, they're quite useful. I actually saw a convenience store recently that was supposed to be open 24/7 and it had a sign on it: 'closed, sorry for the inconvenience'.

(audience member): Can I just say a word of defence for Salamanca. One of the things that I've heard from a lot of people today is that what's happened to some of the edible street is that they're becoming very monotype, they're all little-black-dress shops with a couple of little latte serving cafes with very little else to offer. Salamanca has developed in a very holistic way and the fact that it still has those crappy little dehydrated apples made into faces is part of its charm actually. And there are also, apart from the Hmong community, people like Yetta producing her fantastic wine and the flowers, there are the breads, there are wholemeal and organic pastas, Heidi Farm cheeses are there with their cheeses every week. There's a lot of fantastic other food items and some excellent craftwork as well as the crappy little things. And the fact that it's got all those different layers means it attracts a lot of different people, which makes it a much more valuable place because of its variety. One of my very favourite edible streets is Acland Street in St Kilda. Most people would be familiar with Acland Street.

Colin Sheringham: I have to say that it's interesting that we've bagged our supermarkets and have gone down to convenience stores. Although, interestingly enough, the males from Sydney do tend to have a thing about little-black-dress shops. I'm not sure what that says. But it is also interesting to look at the undercurrents; people talk about the fact that these streets have a sense of human scale about them, that you can actually walk down the street rather than drive down the street, they're full of people that they know and can relate to. I think that's what's important, the fact that people have chosen to talk about what they considered to be home. I'd just like to thank Karen, Robin, Alan and Andrew for your contributions and thanks to everyone else that spoke.

Barbara Santich: I'd like to present Colin Sheringham with the egg-and-spoon race prize. It's all from Dhyan Marga McKenzie who was one of the cooks who worked on the hospital project. It's all from her garden and the chook and quail and the passionfruit come from her garden too, the limes from her garden and a beautiful piece of fresh ginger from the organic shop on St Bernards Road in Rostrevor.

[The Art of] Living the City II

'Show and Tell'

Artists and curators from across town talk about how food is 'shown' in galleries and museums in the city – with Symposium Limoncello

Chair: Jennifer Hillier

This is the public part of the Show and Tell. As I said yesterday the city has through time been a place where culture is put on show. The Great Exhibitions of the 19th century come to mind. I think I've heard of cities being referred to as living museums.

In this session I'd like to introduce you to Andrew Welch who made the spoons for our symposium and he is the head of the Jewellery and Metal Studio at the South Australian School of Art at the University of South Australia. Damon Moon the potter who made our plates and bowls could not be here, so Gay Bilson has some notes which he sent instead.

I'll now ask Andrew to talk about the spoon.

Andrew Welch

As Jennifer said, I'm the studio head in jewellery and metal at the South Australian School of Art at the University of South Australia so in a way my day job is teaching jewellery but for all the people who work at the South Australian School of Art their own practice is very important and I've been through an interesting period of my life and have been in a way re-establishing what I do as a craftsperson and it's really very exciting to make a connection with a group of people who are excited about food. As you can probably tell I'm very interested in food myself and as a jeweller seeing people wearing something you've made (even though the idea behind this thing is that it's a spoon) is very exciting. One of the things that I'm interested in is the wearability of objects and while this spoon obviously functions as a spoon it also functions as a piece of jewellery as a signifier, so to make that connection is really nice, so thank you.

When I first started out making jewellery I was very interested in silversmithing and one of the objects which I never made but I always thought now that's a thing that a silversmith should make, is a *tastevin*.

I understand that the *sommelier* pours a bit of wine into the *tastevin* and because of the shape of it he or she can see the colour and then I assume they then taste it as well and smell it, I'm out of my depth here completely. I understand that they also used to be made with a little handle. Traditionally it was used in the cellar.

The thing that appeals to me is that you hang it around your neck and while it's a functional, utilitarian object it also shows that this is the person who knows about wine so here you are the people who know about food. Doctors wear stethoscopes, and waitresses as Susan Cohn would point out wear their pens behind their ear. Susan Cohn is a craftsperson from Melbourne who made a whole series of these things that you wore behind your ear but they weren't actually functional pencils so that's where I'm coming from. As well as these things, if you go back to medieval times you would've taken your own utensils to dinner. You would carry your own knife. Breugel's paintings show people with spoons tucked in their hats. In the past rather

than going to a kitchen drawer for a utensil, it was a much more personal thing, and I have to say one of the most useful items I ever owned in my life was a set of camping cutlery that stacked and clipped together. Often when you get something that is supposed to do everything it often won't do anything. Splayds are of course an exception. They do work.

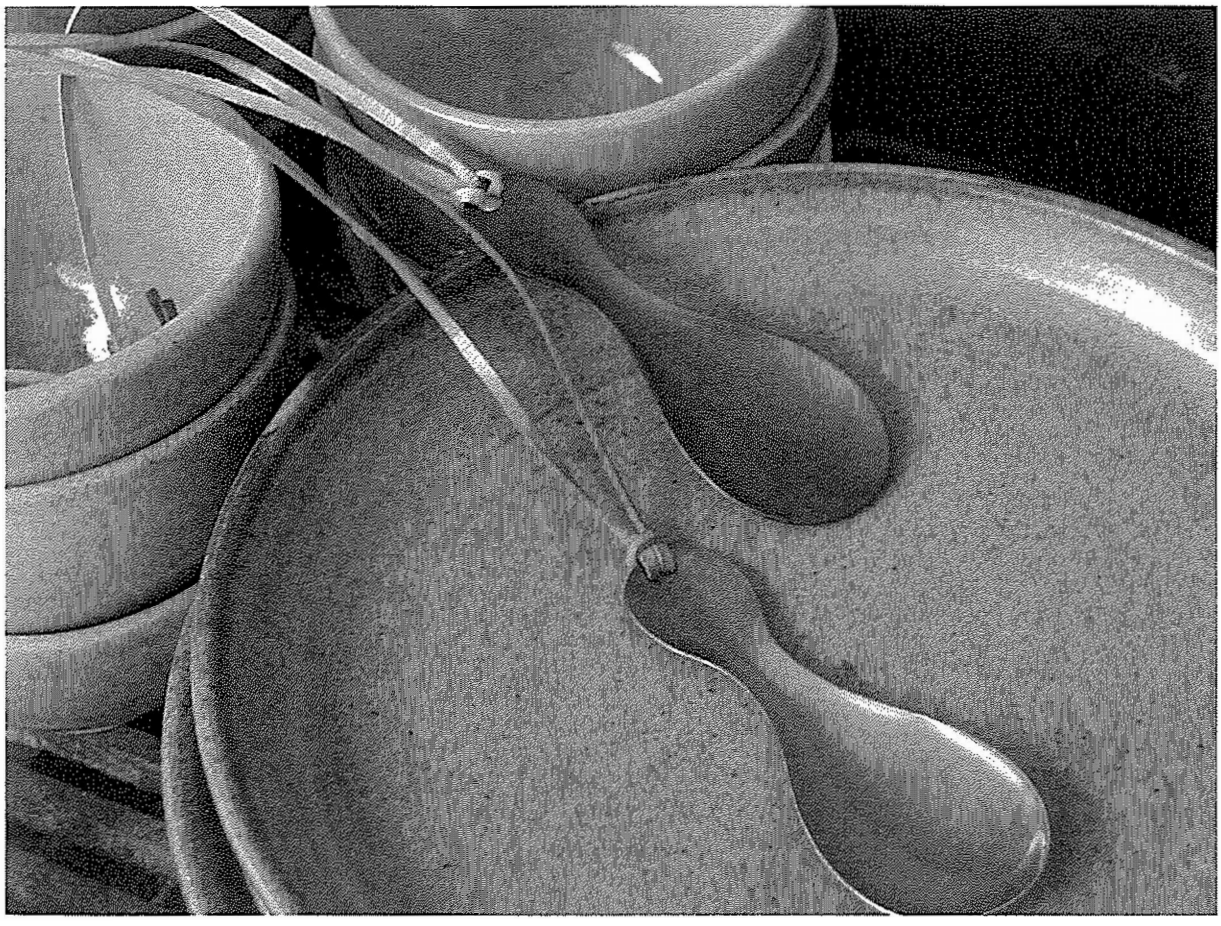
The last thing that I'd like to tell you about this spoon is that it's quite a challenge to make a piece of cutlery for something like this where you are only going to make 50. You work to a budget, you work to a certain time frame, when cutlery generally is made with a huge drop forging press with steel tooling, things that take a long time to make, very expensive, very complicated, so it's quite a challenge, which to me is great, it's a challenge to make something like this and I was able to do it because of a technique called hydraulic die forming, which has really taken off in Australia. It's actually been popularised in America and if you know what you're looking for, if you look at jewellery at the moment, you will see that there is a lot of it about. Because this is a Show and Tell I'll pass this around. This is what it looks like when I press them out, and I did the two together in order to help me save a little bit of time, so I would only have to sit there and press this out 25 times rather than 50, but it's also interesting to see that it's quite a different process from a tool that acts on the piece of metal that becomes a spoon – in this case the tool if you like is the hole that this form presses into, which has its advantages as well.

I'm hoping people might ask me questions, now or later on.

(Comment from a symposiast:)

I'd just like to say that it is a beautiful thing in itself and I can see a very good use for it when you boil some eggs and just want to cool them off for a minute.

Thank you. For me, I'm hoping to take this idea on, it would be nice to make it as a silver spoon but also I'm interested in what you could actually do with this form in other forms of jewellery.



The Symposium spoons made by Andrew Welch

Gay Bilson for Damon Moon

I asked Damon to write something out for me. I shall read it first then I'll tell you a little of how the bowls and especially the plates were made on the run. This is what Damon wrote:

> 'These are slow pots, organic, variable and sometimes not perfect. They are also regional, made with local ingredients.
>
> The clay comes from the foothills to the north east of the city. This area has produced clay for bricks, roofing tiles and pottery since the early days of the city. It is processed from its raw state by Bennett's Pottery at Magill.
>
> All the rocks I use in the glazes are also South Australian. The granite and rhyolite which are the main ingredients in the darker glaze come from a quarry between Murray Bridge and Monarto. Other ingredients include talc from Mt Fitton in the northern Flinders Ranges and hand-ground copper in the form of malachite, azurite and chalcopyrite from Burra, north of Adelaide and Moonta on the Yorke Peninsula.
>
> It is very unusual now for glazes to be made in this way. More often they are bought pre-packaged: "just add water and stir".'

Damon justifiably and wittily calls his pots 'slow' but 11 of the 70 or so plates were the fastest and latest plates you might have ever eaten from. The Symposium started late Sunday afternoon at Largs Bay. I came from Willunga, Damon lives near Brighton, on the way to Largs Bay, and he said, I think the kiln will be cool enough to open if you pass at 2 o'clock. I got there at half past one and he said, okay let's give it a go, he hadn't even opened it, he didn't know whether they were going to work. The last 11 were perfect and the plates are, like the bowls, fired with a glaze which he knew could work on a very low biscuited base, a ruse to make many bowls and plates fast. So although they are indeed slow pots, which is what being handmade and sociable makes them, there were some very, very fast pots. He had to grind the bottom a little bit to get any of the chalkiness off and wash them to cool them down while Craig and I watched.

Damon Moon's bowls and plates

I've always been interested in pottery – Damon would say that 'ceramics' is the wrong and pretentious word. I have a lovely large platter made by Milton Moon, one of the grand old men of Australian pottery. It was given to me by Michael Symons and Jennifer Hillier in 1986 at the close of the Berowra Waters Out 'tour' my restaurant Berowra Waters Inn did in Adelaide for that Arts Festival. I had never met Milton, just admired him from afar. I wrote him a letter, a fan letter really, and was invited to his house where I found he was painting more than potting these days. Milton suggested that perhaps his son would like to make them so I contacted Damon. Damon, a skilled potter, is writing a PhD on the influence of Japan in the '60s on Australian potters because that was the period when Australian potters first started going to Japan. You'll notice that on the base of the small bowl there's a beautiful little spiral and it's a very traditional way for a Japanese potter to cut the pot off the base, off the plate on the wheel. I tell this story because we keep on finding connections and memories at this symposium – the Symposium of Australian Gastronomy was, way back in the early '80s, Michael's idea. He and Jennifer lived close to the Moons and gave me the beautiful platter in 1986. Now here we are in 2002 eating from Milton's son Damon's bowls and plates.

Jennifer Hillier: I would like to introduce Janice Lally now. Janice is the exhibitions' curator at the JamFactory and has a sometime relationship with us because she's been to a few of the Adelaide Symposiettes. Janice has recently curated a fantastic exhibition around the accoutrements and utensils for tea.

Janice Lally

I really am grateful and appreciative for being invited today. As Jennifer said, I am interested in this group's interests as well as craft and design which brings me here to talk with you and certainly with Gay mentioning Damon Moon's 'slow pots' I think you get the sense of the personal that can be the extra layer of joy that comes from knowing a bit more about particular objects. *Ritual of Tea* is a show that JamFactory Contemporary Craft and Design has on at the moment, in particular for the time of the Adelaide Festival and, as Jennifer says, there is a catalogue and I'm really delighted that we've got an essay in here by Gay because when I first invited people to participate in the show, the idea was to ask, and I guess this is covering the issues that Jennifer asked me to deal with, how museums can contribute to aesthetic appreciation and cultural awareness and development of food and beverages and so on in the city.

I know that in traditional museums you can go along and see historical pieces that we all value whereas in contemporary museums we have the challenge to present contemporary material and try and not only support contemporary craftspeople but illustrate to the public just how much these things can add value to our contemporary lives. I think *Ritual of Tea* is really gratifying in that we have beautiful ceramic and metal ware, functional items, in Gallery One and also a very humorous and witty installation in Gallery Two, which is a piece called *Chat* by Helen Fuller. She illustrates the way tea is infused in daily life, in family society and community life and she's thrown together all sorts of memorabilia and witty objects that you'd all probably relate to – thermoses and stained tea cups and tea cosies and things like that.

One aspect of the exhibition – and there are 36 ceramicists and metalsmiths in Gallery One – is to show the diversity of approaches to contemporary craft and design. There's very classical silversmithed objects, teapots from people like Johannes Kuhnen who's the head of a goldsmith and silversmith workshop in Canberra, Canberra School of Art, through to a Larsen and Lewers teapot – they are considered national living treasures almost in the sense of the longevity of their production of beautiful hollowware and then. The other component is traditional tea ware with terracotta and woven ware and porcelain and I brought this little one to show you, it is not in the exhibition, just a typical little rustic teapot which we borrowed from Phillip Park who is one of ceramist production workers in the JamFactory studios. I had a family of these little teapots to use during the tea tastings.

One of the dimensions of the exhibition is to illustrate that whilst there are different forms of teapots and tea ware from the very decorative and very expensive silver items through to the rustic, it's the passion and the commitment of the ritual of tea in community and family lives that is common throughout society no matter where you come from. Jaishree Srinivasan from Canberra was born in India and she made for us a whole host of these very simple terracotta cups (a sample shown to the symposiasts) and also some more decorative ones which are still in the exhibition but we commissioned these from her and served *chai* at the opening, the traditional *chai*, milky tea perfumed with spices and we encouraged people, following Jaishree's advice, to smash the cup because along the Bengali railroad, and you would find it too if you were to travel there, people sell *chai* in these disposable terracotta cups and it's one drink then throw it back to the earth – the equivalent to our paper cups.

Neville Assad-Salha, who is the head of our studio, comes from a Lebanese tradition, a Lebanese background, and as a child he went back to Lebanon and this influenced his approach to the piece that he put in the show. It's a vessel, probably about that shape (draws the shape in the air) and it has a silver straw made by one of our metalwork students and some spoons. He made that in memory of the women in villages who shared the *mati*

tea in the central village square and they share it around and there's a vessel for the water, milk and another vessel for water for washing and each person has a cup like this and they take a sip of the strong tea from the central communal bowl, then they have some warm water from this one (shows it to the symposiasts), and this is a little plate that you put the sweetmeats on, the Lebanese sweetmeats and you put the cup a little bit further to the side so you can have it all together.

Another bonus of having Gay share in this project was that she introduced me to Anders Ousback and really I thank you very much Gay for that. He is a fabulous person. I met him when he was here last year for the Food and Wine Festival. He made something himself for our exhibition, three bowls and three little canisters to put the tea in and also a water vessel which is made from clay from his own property. Nevertheless, I'm simply pleased to illustrate the beauty and the consistency of cultural tradition across the centuries and Anders loaned to us his private collection of Asian tea ware which covers pieces from over 400 years ago through to contemporary pieces. We've got that on display as a special extra exhibition and it illustrates the consistency despite changes in glaze and basic elements of form, whether they are a little bit informal or very formal, that there's a consistency in the quality and the beauty of Asian tea ware.

So one of the things that we've been able to illustrate is the whole scope from very refined celadon and porcelain through to rough urban ware. These (shows bowls to symposiasts) are contemporary pieces by Robin Best, who is working in the ceramic studio at the JamFactory at the moment, and the surface decoration is evocative of our local marine environment that she's very committed to dealing with in her own ceramics practice.

It wasn't until we had our tasting events over the last few weekends for the Adelaide Festival in which we had people from Japan, China, the Tartar region in Russia, other Russian people, Greek, Spanish and so on, Anglo-Indian and English people offering tea that the Japanese tea ceremony people told us that it's only within the ceremony that you can tell if the actual basis of the cup is correct, whether it's the right weight and thickness and thinness and so on. They've offered to come back and take our ceramics people through the ceremony, and this is one of the flow-ons from the exhibition.

Jennifer Hillier: Now to Angus Trumble, who later will be talking about the 'foodie *flâneur*. He has very generously agreed to come and do a Show and Tell, and is very well qualified to be doing this. He was, until very recently, the curator of European Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia. Angus will be missed, his moving on is a great loss to the gallery.

Angus Trumble

Thank you very much Jennifer and thank you all too for having me. It's a great thrill to be among such a distinguished group of food people, particularly as a non-food person myself, I'm more of an art person. When Jennifer and I were talking about what I might show you today, I suddenly thought of an object that I had bought for myself out of personal interest and enthusiasm and as a curator in a public art museum that was not often the case of me getting up on my hind legs to say anything about. Usually we have very good and serious highbrow reasons for buying things for public collections and our secret little desires and tastes and enthusiasms tend to be away at home but now that I'm free I can do whatever I like and I wanted to share with you my enthusiasm for the arts of the Song Dynasty in China, it's a subject that I'm interested in purely from a personal point of view. I don't know very much about it at all from a technical point of view.

Just before Christmas I was lucky enough to receive a surprise sum of money from an unexpected source and I decided to do something that I'd never done before and that was to bid at auction on a work of art. And the work of art was this object, it's called, according to the lofty catalogue entry in the Sotheby's catalogue, a qingbai baluster jar and it dates from the mid-13th century and is some 750 years old and it's typical of a particular kind of ceramic object that was made in the southern part of China in the north-east part of the Jiangxi province in the valley of the Chang River where there were clustered a large number of important kilns which produced two distinct varieties of ware that had a profound impact on the entire tradition of making of ceramics and porcelain in the whole world and, in fact, I would go further and say that every single object in this room that's made of white porcelain or porcelain that's glazed in pale shades, is in a very real way descended from this small family of objects made in the southern part of China during the Song dynasty, at least in part.

Those two varieties of ware were called qingbai and yingching and the two terms are very similar. One simply means bluish white and yingching means cloudy blue. The meaning of the term and the colour of the glaze was the distinctive quality of the wares that were produced in this local region and they derived their kind of unctuous pale cool quality from the fact that the potters learnt how to synthesise a particularly white and fine type of porcelain from local clay, from Gao Lin, and mixed with a secret ingredient. Many scholars have spilt ink about what that ingredient was. It was then further mixed with local clay to produce a clay or porcelain of startling

whiteness and together really those two discoveries made it possible for these kilns to prosper over several hundred years. The shape, baluster, the word of course is a Western word, it's derived from the Italian word for each of the members of a stone balustrade, that kind of voluptuous shape that the Italianate balustrade took on from the Renaissance onwards. And that's obviously in Western eyes a defining type for this sort of shape.

Moreover, what dates it more particularly to the mid-13th century is that it's been made out of three molded members, it hasn't been thrown or built in one piece. They were obviously mass produced and the three members are the lip down to the shoulder, the shoulder down to the equator, the midpoint of the rim and you can see when I pass it around, you'll see the join in the halfway mark and each of the three members were made exactly the same, they were exactly the same form and the lip you can see was simply pushed with the thumb inside out and then the vessel finished on the bottom and placed on a little pad and put in the kiln and fired that way. What makes the difference between this object and a real museum piece or an object of supreme quality that one would want to show in a museum and put on display to represent the best quality Song wares, is a piece that doesn't have any of the wobbly, kind of slightly imperfect lines in the undulating lip and the slight variations in the lines of the verticals here.

It's obviously not a very sophisticated piece, it would never have ended up at court, it probably wouldn't have ended up in the house of a distinguished towns person, it was just a day-to-day object of probably domestic use and this is, of course, the thing that's hardest for art museum people to get back and to provide to the object in our care. When we put on displays there is a tremendous tension between making the thing look as gorgeous as it can look and that's often very difficult, though for some things it's easier than others and this is a gorgeous looking thing and then giving people some sense of really what it's original function was, where it fits into the scheme of things and into not only the scheme of a household in the mid-13th century but what an object like this, what kind of dialogue exists between it and porcelain objects down the century that were much influenced by the qingbai wares of Song China.

So it's an object that I'm very passionately fond of and extremely proud of. It couldn't really go on display in a museum because it's got some cracks. The cracks are original and they form part of the object and it probably came out of the kiln with these cracks in it but because of the very sophisticated tradition within China of detailed porcelain connoisseurship, it's probable that a knowledgeable connoisseur of Song china would turn their nose up at this, which is partly how I was able to secure it at auction for myself. Are there any questions that people might have? Let me bring it around because it is important to see it close-up.

(Question from audience)

The question is how much did I pay for it. I'm happy to answer that question. I bought it a while ago. This object carried an estimate of three to four hundred dollars and I thought that that was far too low and then I started to find out how much you would have to pay. I thought a fair price to pay for this object in an antique shop would be maybe four hundred pounds. So I didn't expect to get it. I put on a left bid because I couldn't possibly sit in the room and actually be there in person so I put a left bid in for $900 and I ended up getting it for $700. So that was reassuring. It's nice when the hammer price goes well below the price of the left bid because quite often it doesn't.

(Question about its use from the audience)

I think it's a receptacle for dry things. The quality is not high enough for it to be a precious adornment in a scholars studio for example. It's very rough in a lovely way, and also the bottom is nice and rough.

(Question about handling it from the audience as Angus passes it around)

It's just a piece of porcelain for great sake, be brave! So it's a big problem and one of the nice things about working in a museum with objects, with precious objects, is that we do get to handle things, and I think it's very important to people and that's obviously something we can't offer to the general public because you're talking about thousands and thousands and thousands of people a week but nevertheless for students and particularly for students who are learning about to handle works of art, original works of arts and objects could obviously have behaviour and texture and that's part of their being and it's part of getting to know the object and telling the fake from the real. For example, I saw you Gay putting your hand inside it and that's something that's instinctive and important for students of objects to do to look at the inside, to look at the bottom, handle it and feel the weight of it. That's what ideally students can do when they join the department of a large museum. Unfortunately most museums in Australia are too small and too understaffed to be able to teach students in that exhaustive way. I was fortunate enough to do my study at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and that was precisely how we studied. We studied with the objects in the department, sitting at the elbow of the person who knew all about them and you could in fact pick them up and handle them and they would bring us fakes from the storeroom and we could compare the fake with the original and it was a great education and that's the way to find out all about

them. Any more questions? I'm going to follow my vase... you can see one aspect that is nice about this piece is the way the glaze has actually cooled around the shoulder and it's also formed a little ridge around the inside of the lip. It's obviously been glazed very quickly.

What I find terribly exciting about this pot is that it somehow managed to find itself down to our time and not get broken. The traffic in objects of this kind is very complicated and particularly the taste for Song – within China, Song wares became very esteemed and highly regarded and in fact were much imitated, now one question might be how do we know it's in fact Song and not later. Well we can't really be sure, there's no way of proving it but more or less, you can be fairly satisfied on the basis of the style and technique. And also it's very unusual to find fakes deliberately made to look slightly conjured with an undulating lid. Much more likely to find imperial, top floor, deluxe fakes circulating than day-to-day ware, fakes coming off as something they're not. So they were collected and passed from family and family, and bought and sold antiques since in fact the 10th century.

Question: So you don't know how long it's been in Australia? Do you know its recent history?

No I don't know. It's one of those provenance-less objects and I, of course, immediately bought it not knowing. It's probably been here for a while.

Question: From China?

Possibly.

Question: Is this the white ??

It's *qingbai*, it's the bluish white and the taste for this pale, pale, pale glaze really did flow into Europe through Central Asia, first into India and Persia and back and forth. There was a great exchange of influences but then eventually they reached Europe where the taste for Song objects was extremely specialised by the 18th century and it affected the development of modern porcelain as well.

Thank you very much for letting me bring my baby.

Janice Lally: Les Blakeborough's name has come up, he's in our exhibition, and we have heard about Damon Moon and the Hamada tradition. If you read Les Blakeborough's CV and learn a bit more about him you would see that his work was very much influenced by the Hamada expedition early on but in more recent years he has been investigating the industrial aesthetic of Helsinki, the Arabia industry and the Royal Copenhagen porcelain and as you say, he has developed this beautiful southern ice porcelain clay which is now widely used by a lot of people in Australia and you can really tell when you look at the piece in the exhibition at the JamFactory, this piece is a white icy grey compared to other porcelains which we've seen in this type of work. So do come and have a look if you are interested to follow up that line of thinking.

Jennifer Hillier: Barbara Santich is now going to talk about food and museums. I visited Canberra recently and I went to many restaurants in museums. But some restaurants can themselves be understood as museums. The restaurant that I owned, The Aristologist, just up at Uraidla, was to some extent a museum, we didn't try to embalm and preserve traditions but we tried to show – I guess in a self-conscious way – how traditional food culture works in a contemporary setting. I summed up the philosophy as 'a future for tradition'. Looking at it this way there are many restaurants that we can understand as museums in our culture.

Barbara Santich

When I go travelling I like going to markets, to supermarkets, to restaurants, to farms, in fact anywhere that has anything to do with food. This includes museums and exhibitions that focus on some aspect of food and eating.

In Paris, one of the museums I like is the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires, the Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions. Many of its exhibits focus on producing, procuring, processing and cooking food – for example, there are recreations of old farmhouse kitchens as well as collections of implements used for making particular festive foods.

I also like going to the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris. The museum has fabrics, furniture and other items to do with domestic interiors, but what I look at are the objects made for the table. You can trace the evolution of eating habits and cuisine through the forms that were made to eat from, to eat with, or to display on the table. Before the 16th century, for example, there were no teapots or coffee sets but in the 17th century these began to appear and quickly progressed from gold and silver to china. This museum offers a different understanding of history through the arts of the table.

With the growing interest in food and eating there are many more museums like these. They represent a form of gastronomic tourism, using food or something to do with food or table arts in a museum or in an exhibition to draw people to a place. One of the newer museums, again in France, is La Maison Régionale des Arts de la Table, at Arnay-le-Duc in Burgundy. It exhibitions, usually annual, on specific themes – such as Burgundy cattle and the beef of *boeuf bourguignon*, cutlery, bread and sugar. The museum has been established in an old inn where you can still see the 19th-century kitchen with its vast stove that goes along half the length of the kitchen wall.

But to find out what else might be happening in the museum world relevant to food and eating I looked up Google and I came across a few other current exhibitions. One of them, at the Carnegie Museum of Art, started in July last year and is going to August 2003, is called *What's In Your Tureen – Soup, Stew or Ragout*. This exhibition, where the decorative arts meet the culinary arts, focuses on soup tureens and the delights of dining from 1700 to the present. Ten tureens ranging from an elegant early 18th-century tureen to the utilitarian 1975 crock pot are matched with the soups, stews, chowders and ragouts that might have gone in them. Recipes created for the aristocracy by French master chefs are featured alongside the practical household cookery of England's Hannah Glasse and America's Amelia Simmons. This is a pleasing way of bringing together the material, the foods we eat, and the arts, of combining the edible and the formal table life. In similar vein, the McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montreal had an exhibition, *Dining Traditions in the Victorian Era.*

In Vevey, Switzerland, there is a food museum called the Alimentarium, and in Ireland, The Famine Museum at Strokestown Park, Strokestown, County Roscommon. In New York, the Museum of the City of New York is having an exhibition called Gaelic Gotham, about the Irish in New York, focusing on the food of the Irish. Then there's Copia, the American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts which opened last year in November on a bend of the Napa River, in Napa, California with a zillion dollar budget. That's another new venue for exhibitions about food and things to do with food. Also in America is the Kelsey Museum of Archeology at the University of Michigan, which has an exhibition of food in the ancient world, showing objects from the ancient world and how they related to food.

The most interesting museum I discovered is at Montpellier in France. Called the Agropolis Museum – Food and Agricultures of the World, the website says it's a science centre dealing with topics such as food, nutrition, agriculture with a historical approach and on a world-wide scale. Its current exhibitions include *History of Food and Agriculture*, *Farmers and Farming Over The World* and *The Banquet of Humanity* which illustrates the cultural diversity of eating habits, showing that each person eats according to income, food resources and cultural background.

I discovered an exhibition at the London Sound Museum which looked at genetically modified food, so museums look just not at the food of the past but also to the food of the future. Then, of course, there's the exhibition that Alicia (Rios) was telling us about, the *Utopia* exhibition, in which food again has a large part.

That's just a brief sample of museums and exhibitions related to food. They represent the public face. We've seen the private face and the stories that go with the private objects so we can easily understand that they can be translated to a bigger world and to a bigger sphere, becoming an attraction that can draw people to a town, a city, a venue – and even encourage them to stay there.

Questions

(to Andrew Welch re his spoon) That hydraulic process, is that the same as those anodised, beautiful aluminium ones where they put them in the mold and put the explosive inside?

Andrew Welch: You are probably referring to Robert Foster's Fink! jugs which are formed in a mold using explosives. They are different, that original technique was used to made ship hulls and they do it with dynamite under water so if you think of the polyurethane, which is a rubber like material, as the water, I suppose it's the same. But no, it is a slightly different technique.

And how do you anodise it? And why? What's anodising?

Andrew Welch: Okay, aluminium can be anodised because you can build an oxide on the surface and it's called anodising because you put a current through it so in fact the article being anodised is the anode, as opposed to the cathode. By putting a current through, it creates an oxide on the surface – which is tiny little pores – that you can then dye with aluminium anodising dye and then you have to seal it and the aluminium has this propensity to create something like a ceramic oxide on the surface, it closes over and it holds the dye in there. It's a nightmare doing anodising.

Cath Kerry: We spoke to each other on the phone and Andrew said 'we're still dealing with the anodising, they're all coming out slightly different' and I thought that was rather charming so I hope that helped you.

Andrew Welch: You know those travelling cups, do you know why they're all different colours? Otherwise they'd have to match the colour up. It's a nightmare but it's amazing, I couldn't help but reflect how much it's like cooking in that you've got to follow the recipe and do it exactly right and when you do a large batch with them, more things can go wrong and I feel sorry for a pastry chef who has to (make a large batch the same), I think I could make one of everything. If you said, look Andrew, go and make this, I could make one but I tell you what when you're making 50 or a dozen I think that's a challenge and I've got a lot of respect for people that make lots of things that are virtually one-offs but they do them as a batch.

So fluoro colours, that's a dye is it?

Andrew Welch: Yes, but also it's the nature of the material because it's shiny and you put the dye on top, you're going to get that nice, luminous, anodised quality. Talking about utensils as jewellery reminds me of Peter Tully's tribal ware where he made those amazing bits of jewellery out of plastic forks. Mass-produced urban materials and putting them together to make them into things.

Jennifer Hillier: I really like the way you describe how the utility object then becomes a symbol of the craft or the guild, is that what you were suggesting? For us your spoon is not only abstract and symbolic but useful. Am I right in suggesting that the traditional museum even though it tries to contextualise a collection, tends to focus rather a lot on the symbolic rather than the utility of an object?

Andrew Welch: For me, wearing it *is* the display, that's a kind of museum and that's great but often you take functional objects and put them in a museum and they become something else. I went to London once, went to the Design Museum and it was full of these fantastic Italian design objects, and then I went to Italy and they were all driving them, using them and eating with them.

Gay Bilson: I'd like to think of the spoon as a useful pendant. Architecture is called 'that most useful art' and we've stretched it to jewellery really so thank you Andrew.

Jennifer Hillier: Michael Symons has always been amused by the title 'decorative arts'. He somewhat provocatively suggests we might label painting as 'flat arts' and cups, saucers, plates and things for the table as 'real arts' not just 'decorative'.

Jennifer Hillier: The subtitle for this symposium is 'Ideas for Urban Gastronomy' so it is good to be talking about the non-material as well as the material.

Andrew Wood: I think that there's a lovely parallel in the discussion of taking objects into a museum, objects that have become rarefied. For someone who has a lot to do with wine, particularly when wine is either expensive or old, it takes on another personality and one of the things that I try to do with my publication (*Divine*), is to breakdown that perception. I'm sure any curator at a gallery would be in the same position to make the object accessible to the everyday person so they don't walk into a gallery and look at something and go wow that's something that's on a pedestal that I shouldn't touch, that I can never afford to buy, that I can't really appreciate from a true connoisseurs point of view of actually owning it and consuming/touching/using it. Certainly in my experience, you are better off not actually telling anybody what they're drinking apart from the fact that this is the next wine, it comes from such and such a region and country and it's made out of such and such grapes. And they can make up their own minds whether they like it or not and let's face it there are a lot of wines out there, very expensive wines, that are complete crap. And there are a lot of cheap wines that are very, very good and there's also the reverse of that too. The prejudice that people, the baggage that people bring before they even walk in the door or pick up a glass, can often taint or sway their experience of that particular object to the point where it removes it from being enjoyable to something else.

Janice Lally: You mentioned, Jennifer, that this symposium is about ideas. This is in fact the point of what underpins a lot of the activities in the JamFactory's gallery, it's about providing exhibitions that are of the day, that are contemporary state-of-the-art but also accessible to people to ideally own. There is the old William Morris story too, that when it is arts and crafts and it's beautifully made and so on, it becomes rarefied and expensive, not everybody can afford it. But what we endeavour to do is actually show that quality is affordable and this exhibition does have a spectrum of things like that and we've got a retail shop and a wholesale facility that means that these sorts of things can be disbursed around Australia so we're very much about making those things a part of daily life rather than just rarefied as in a museum.

(audience member): I think you could take that and extrapolate it out to the symposium itself. I mean a symposium has this persona about it, in which it's either for people who have got a vested interest, be it commercial or otherwise, or completely nuts, and I think one of things that I've really enjoyed about this symposium so far is the breadth of ideas and the breadth of conversation that is taking place. It's not just about food, it's not just about wine, and for me, one of the real enjoyments that I get from coming to these gatherings is that it reinforces my belief that you start with gastronomy and then you go out and get together at dinners etc. and talk to people and you realise the breadth of ideas and interests that are out there, where food and gastronomy are used as a catalyst which brings everybody together. Yet it's much, much more than that and I think certainly from an artistic point of view, certainly from a museum or a gallery point of view, I think that's one of the hardest barriers to break, to make people understand that it is not just about putting a painting on the wall or having an object in a glass cabinet.

Angus Trumble: I agree with you, but I must add though that I think one of the things that we have in Australia's great art museums is the glorious tradition based on British precedent, that is that the contents are the property of world citizens, that access is free and everybody owns the work that hangs on the wall or is in the glass cabinet. I'm very troubled by the perception that something that looks grand is in and of itself building a barrier that excludes. So obviously wherever we can, we try to provide people with as much information as will allow them to get the most from the experience of coming face to face with an alien thing and hopefully that should be information that is equally accessible to someone that has driven in from Burra or flown in from Los Angeles or brought in their bicycle from Kent Town.

(audience member): That brings to mind the tours that usually go with education program catalogues and labels.

Angus Trumble: Yes, we do all that. But at the end of the day for myself – I have to tell a story – I remember the first time that I visited the old National Gallery of Victoria, my mother took me, it was in the old gallery which was in the State Library behind an immense colonnade, bronze doors, polished marble, wide staircases – I thought it was great, I loved it. And, in a way, I think the temple of art concept can actually engage kids and take them into this kind of treasure trove of wonderful things that they are excited about, things that are beautiful, things that do bring about a hushed silence. In a sense, I think that's something that new institutions like Te Papa in Wellington, New Zealand, and the National Museum in Canberra have absolutely disregarded the power of objects to be eloquent in and of themselves and to be free of all the crap, the slogans, the experience, that you have to press the button, to have your experience totally shaped and scripted by marketing people and all sorts of interests. And rather than allow the work of art to be eloquent, whatever that may mean, endowed with a label that cries information, make sure there are educational activities but at the end of the day, one must have the confidence in the contents of the museum to speak for themselves. That's something that I think we often don't have the confidence to do and it's a big pity.

Cath Kerry: We see this grandeur, we're really, really worried about having something beautiful, and so we look at the grandness, as you say, of the marble staircases, and say ooh it's a barrier, ooh it's elitist, but you know in a gallery everybody can go in and walk around and have this hush descend and I know a small gallery like Adelaide, and really a very good gallery, suffers financially because it looks so beautiful. People walk in to the highly polished parquet flooring which says we're rich, we're rich, when actually the gallery has no money. But it's lovely to be in there and it's an extension of your lounge room and I am amazed that people don't go to the gallery, just sit on the couch, sit in front of a favourite painting, whether it be Circe or a Joseph Beuys. There's hush and there's awe, what's wrong with awe?!

Janice Lally: Can I add to your experiences – when I asked people to participate in this show (*Ritual of Tea*), I also invited a lot of the ceramists and metalsmiths to offer their own stories about tea and Prue Venables, whose work is one of most beautiful and elegant designs in the exhibition, wrote a little memory that I'd like to read out. It's about the engendering, the value of engendering, of beauty and how it's actually had ramifications for her over her life. She wrote: 'Scattered amongst fragments of childhood memories, I vividly recall Sunday afternoon teas with my granny with her layered cream sponges and her fluted powder blue bone china tea cup. I remember still their perfect weight, the gentle sound they made when placed together, the nervous awe in which I handled them and the way the light touched their delicate rims. Perhaps it was then that the world of beautiful handmade objects began gradually to captivate and entice me.' I think you can't overvalue those simple experiences or pleasures.

Alicia Rios (verbatim, Alicia's first language is Spanish): I could suggest to organise an exhibition of the type I once saw in Barcelona, it was the most wonderful at the Modern Art Museum and it was an exhibition of objects that although they looked like properly designed objects, very beautiful and some were modern and some were old-fashioned, they didn't work at all so you could see what happens when you open a kilo of rice or a sauce,

a brandy sauce, so that it expands itself as pretending to go to the moon, so somebody opened one of these parcels, a beautifully designed box of rice and it expanded so you could see the idea of expansion of the milk, the tea. So what happened to all these beautifully designed objects that don't work properly? There was a toaster and bread, it looked like it was designed to go to the moon because there was the toast and the toaster propelled the toast far away!

(audience member): I like the idea of the toaster, to solve the racial problem, you go in white and you come out brown.

Alan Saunders: I was struck by what Angus was saying. A little while ago I was talking to a curator at the Australian Museum in Sydney and I mentioned to him that I'd been chairing a meeting of museum people and I had said that I missed the museums of my childhood which were not excessively explanatory. They were museums where the past was as it where just left hanging around for you to check up on for yourself and I said that there was dead silence when I said that and he said that was because you had actually touched on a nerve and that he and another relatively recently appointed museum curator, million miles from here, represented a sort of revisionist view of museology where they wanted to abandon the vast amount of explanation that modern museums have to offer. And I, now this is probably not to the main subject of the debate, but is something of interest to me, I remember for example as a kid going to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich in London and it was, I remember, relatively empty galleries with pictures of ships and models of 18th-century ships and I loved it, I was just imbibing a sort of 18th century naval atmosphere. But I suppose that now the National Maritime Museum is one of your heavily explanatory push-button kind of museums, but I suppose the difference is that I knew from 18th-century ships before I got to the museum because I had been taught at school and I'd read books and so on. Well as I assume that your younger museum goer today doesn't know any of this stuff, they haven't encountered it at school, the museum is perhaps the first point of education in these things and you actually do need that level of explanation, you can't just let people wonder around amongst the relics of the past, because the relics won't speak to them in the way that they spoke to me because I was primed for them to speak to me.

Angus Trumble: I think the problem you are talking about is a problem that pertains perhaps more directly to so called museums of natural history. The Australian Museum, the museums of skeletons and stuffed animals in the old format. But I think art museums have the same problem, I agree, it's tricky, I know that it's become very difficult to engage kids who now expect a ride and in fact, Te Papa solution in New Zealand was to provide one and I think it's a woeful experience. If that's the experience they want to give kids of the single narrative that they have to offer about the natural history of New Zealand then I think that's a bad thing. If you've never seen, you knew nothing about an 18th-century ship and you visited the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and you saw a sequence of models with perhaps a little bit of information, you'd learn an awful lot about them. But it would be very hard for you not to be engaged if you were in the slightest bit interested in seafaring or ships in the first place. So I'm not quite sure if the demise of that kind of rather sleepy museum display is because there's a perceived need to provide more information. I think that the curatorial activities of museums have become much more adventurous and pluralistic. They are about temporary displays that consist of newly built partitioning, painted bright colours, lots of text, light effects, a very over-designed quality so that they are not exploiting the permanent parts of the buildings that are there, as it were, ready-made. I don't know what the reason is. I think at their best the new museum displays can be very stimulating and at their worst they can be positively counterproductive and I don't think they necessarily automatically engage kids simply because they provide TV screens and movies.

Jennifer Hillier: Can I just make a comment on Te Papa. I know what you mean about it, I went to the library which is upstairs via a separate way, not the public way, and they kept saying it's underneath the Tiger Moth, the entrance to the library is underneath the Tiger Moth and there was so much clutter and goings on I couldn't even see a Tiger Moth. I was there to research the pavlova. I went to Te Papa because of the big debate between Australia and New Zealand about the origins of the pavlova, and I'd heard at the Wellington Symposium about an extraordinary event that had gone on there. I spoke to a curator who said that Te Papa had done 'nothing serious' on the pavlova although he remembered that the 'marketers may have done something'. In fact the museum had held an exhibition of the pavlova, it was a celebration for the first birthday of Te Papa. They made a giant pavlova which was shared with all the people of Wellington. I know about the 'Disney World' problems with Te Papa and (yet) people in Wellington are very proud of it. The giant 'Pavzilla' was a real happening for the city. It was like the Magic Pudding, everybody went and had a piece sliced and shared by the Prime Minister, Helen Clark. I believe the Pavzilla was a legitimate museum exhibition.

Angus Trumble: You said the 'marketing people'– perhaps you wouldn't be aware that if you are a curator of any part of the national collections of New Zealand at the National Museum or Te Papa, in order to put something out on display you must write a proposal which is then vetted by the marketing and public relations department and you have to justify the specific marketing reasons why you think this object should be put on display, be it a stuffed animal, a painting, a cup and saucer, anything, a piece of machinery, a vintage car, and then from that is extrapolated the whole strategy of selling. This seems to me to be utterly corrupt and wrong. The whole idea of putting something on display because it's sellable is what shops do, not what a cultural institution is in the business of doing.

Jeanette Fry: I want to say two things. I think some of the stuff with art and museums is bullshit because most of it only appeals to one sense and that's the eyes. I go into a museum that is displaying pots and I cannot feel them, I cannot taste them and I cannot smell them so I have no real sense of what it is to feel the entire beauty of that object. It was great that you passed your pot around and people put their hands inside and they're turning it over and they felt it. The major problem for me with the gallery stuff is that it is a visual experience. The second thing that I want to say is that I think there is a brilliant challenge here about how you make food valued, it's about how you make food an object in a gallery without it being associated with the normal notions of beauty. It's about the ephemerality of it and also the possibility of it being a full sensual experience. I would love to see an exhibition, for example, that had whoever is the best provider of Pink Lady apples put, say, 300 Pink Ladies on the table and every person that came got to keep one, eat one.

Audience comment: It would be like a tasting at the Royal Easter Show.

Jeanette Fry: No because it's an exhibition! Or where you had a cake made by whoever made the best cake at the Royal Easter Show and it was there, you walked up to it and you sliced it and you ate it.

Audience comment: What about the logistics?

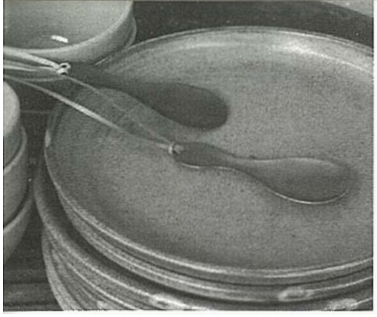
Jeanette Fry: Forget the logistics, have it for the hour, have it for the moment.

Audience comment: It's a lovely idea.

Audience comment: You would be happy if everybody ran their hands over a Kokoschka painting because it's very lumpy.

Jeanette Fry: What I'm saying is that you take objects and stick them up and they become visual things – they're not, they are functional things. You need to feel their functionality. I think there are a lot of people that think art museums as they exist now are a kind of relic of a 19th century way of thinking about visual arts. And I don't share that view but I'm perfectly aware why people feel that. My point is that I don't think we can ever offer the kind of sensual experience that you would like to get from the objects in our care which in the framework of the museum which I worked in until last Christmas was in the business of displaying to the public works of visual art and in that context really for very practical, conservation reasons it's not possible to allow people to pick up an object every time they want to because there wouldn't be many objects 25 years down the track to pick up anymore.

Janice Lally: About your aim to have a whole table full of apples in front of a still life or something similar – the JamFactory is quite a different museum to a state collection. We have a changing display of temporary exhibitions, we don't have a permanent collection in the same way and we don't have conservation responsibilities. By the same token, we have to take care of the items, and not allow people to handle them and damage them etc. but we do have the opportunity to have special events and this is what we did with *Ritual of Tea*. We had tea tastings where people were offered the opportunity to smell and taste and look and see the colour and be involved in all the dimensions of tea.



The Flâneur, A Walk in the Gastronomic City

Colin Sheringham

Can we ask the *flâneur* to stroll out of his 19th century Parisian arcade and walk the streets of our contemporary cities casting his gaze at our society? An outsider in his own time, does he still have a story to present that can offer insight into modern life? Maybe the world has changed too much? I think not, I feel there is still a valuable place for the *flâneur* to offer his view.

But who is this man? What is a *flâneur*? The notion of the *flâneur*, is one of a detached stroller of 19th century Paris, the passionate pedestrian consumer of sights, sounds and smells of the city landscape. A man of the crowd, as opposed to the man in the crowd. The poet at the centre of his own sense of order, aloof, distant, feeding on the paradoxes of the city. Needing the city, the movement, the commotion, he walks, he observes, he studies, he analyses applying a formidable intellect and knowledge he moves though the city leaving the city unchanged. A man of leisure, economically unproductive he exhibits disregard for the commercial yet is aware of the contribution that commerce makes to the spectacle of life.

In part, the *flâneur* is an urban myth, a creation of the pens of the likes of Balzac, Dumas and Baudelaire, a surrogate who can venture on to the streets of modernity alone, anonymous, who can stand apart, to offer comment on the everyday. A tourist in his own time and space, fascinated by the everyday, and ready to communicate his findings in minute detail. However, the picture created must be read with some caution.

What informs the *flâneur*'s reading of the city? After all, the picture has been developed within a frame, a constrained idiosyncratic view built from images by a bricoleur, some images prized, others abhorred, while others remain invisible to the *flâneur*'s direct gaze.

So, let us allow my *flâneur* to step forth into the gastronomic city accompanied by his turtle on a lead. There was a brief moment when it was fashionable for the *flâneur* to take a turtle for a walk, a self styled protest against the increasing pace of life, and cast his gaze around our city.

Food is important to the city. It does more than just feed the hungry. Food changes a city. It shapes inhabitants, provides life, nourishes the soul, provides reason and shapes the city itself, physically. Tell me what the city eats, I will tell you what the city…

But the city is a landscape filled with paradoxes. The street itself displays a sense of ambivalence, is it the stage on which life is lived out, performed, or is it merely a backstage area that one must pass through? It is the haunt of the *flâneur*, a book open waiting to be read and interpreted. Like the street the *flâneur* is also ambivalent about the city. Enjoying a love-hate relationship with the world of consumerism that is the city.

But the *flâneur* must put his own thoughts aside and concentrate, for the street has risks. The notion of the street as a dangerous place has not changed. Commerce will protect us. Sectioned off space, quasi-public space, then the department store now shopping/pleasure centres, safe commodified space. It continues to grow at an increasingly faster pace, public space is sold off to the interests of commerce. Food here provides not only a respite from the rigours of consumption but increasingly is in itself the site of conspicuous consumption. Witness Woolloomooloo Wharf in Sydney, Southbank in Melbourne and Holdfast Shores at Glenelg in Adelaide.

Food is increasingly used to rejuvenate city space injecting new life, a more expensive new life, into old areas, moving on those who can no longer afford to consume at the appropriate level. In Sydney you can sit at a damask-clothed table on one of the rejuvenated timber wharves and watch yachts glide gracefully across the harbour. Enjoying your seared marlin steak, sipping your chardonnay but the young boy or old man can no longer dangle a line off the wharf hoping for a nibble, a small catch of bream for tea. Security guards now move them on; they have become an affront to a genteel sensibility.

Not only is food locked away from the realities of the street but also quickly becomes the mechanism for escape from the tedium of everyday existence a chance to put back according to George Ritzer, some 'enchantment in a disenchanted world'. Dining becomes a vehicle to consume the exotic, eat with the stars in Planet Hollywood, eat 'the other' in an ethnic restaurant, travel the world, a gastronomic tourist from the safety of the ubiquitous foodcourt. You may eat the world but often it is a sanitised version. Even the most intrepid gastronomic tourist who actively seeks out the authentic runs into marketing department created 'authenticity'. Regional cuisine from local produce brought to you by the marketing committee of the Chamber of Commerce and the local tourism industry.

If this gastronomic adventuring sounds dangerous live out your food fantasies vicariously via the television. Start with caution, venturing along the banks of the Murray River with Stefano building up your confidence to tackle a more demanding trip tasting your way around Australia. Maybe throw total caution to the wind and pack a phrase book and journey to the very edge with SBS.

Still the street offers many visual delights. Women are still, despite the inroads of feminism, part of the gaze to be consumed. Their beauty shaped by a society obsessed with body image. Who was it said, 'You can never be too rich or too thin?' Food or lack of it promises, in a paradox of consumption, to deliver beauty, social acceptability and ultimately sex.

But sex in the city has become, in the era of AIDS, far too dangerous. No longer do you curl up in bed with the one you love. Food has become a safe substitute. Fuelled by images of a tight-sweatered Nigella or a pukka young Jamie whipping, beating or licking in titillating episodes of gastro-porn you now sit alone, salivating over photos of impossibly beautiful airbrushed never-to-be-eaten food from the latest hot chef and their publishing company.

Not content to confine their influence to the home the food media wants to take over the street. They want to replace the *flâneur*. Once the knowledge repository of the city's secret, the *flâneur* knew the location of the best coffee, the little place with the exquisite hand made chocolates or the artisan baker. Knowledge accumulated by personal experience was passed only to others judicially, now it is commodified by the food media and sold to just anybody. Food knowledge is social capital, but it appears that this symbol of status is just another commodity to be bought and sold.

The need to know the newest and latest hip place, what is the latest food trend, what is the next must-have ingredient, all helps to fill our newspapers. Whole lift-out sections each week keep us informed. The quest for the next and newest rushes ever forwards not pausing to look back. But some find the drive forward just too hectic.

The tension between the new and old familiar, often-romanticised world still exists, disillusionment with the promise of modernity. Slowed to the proper pace of life by the leashed turtle, the *flâneur* may feel some affinity for those modern gastronomes who choose to march purposely behind the equally 'slow' snail. Started by those who profess to love food and the pleasures of table, they grouped, driven by severe moral indignation at the reality that others may choose to eat out in a restaurant that they disapproved of. They could not condone the fact that dining out could become common. Determined, progressing slowly, these good burghers are keen to preach their convivial doctrine to the world, slow is good – fast is bad.

The rush to recapture the past drives the born again concept of farmers' markets. The large central food markets are being driven out of the city centre by economic and environmental concerns replaced by token markets catering to an urban Kaminski-hatted elite. Held too infrequently too be much use as a major source of produce they provide little but spectacle for those in search of a conspicuous consumption foodie experience.

Just as the *flâneur* can become overwhelmed by the offerings of the city so too the gastronomer can be confronted by the food a city has on offer. Unable to visit the farmer's market until the first Saturday of the month, the gastronomer must look elsewhere for ingredients to cook. How can you not find something to eat in a supermarket? When each day, others, more simple people, can find among the thousands of available items the makings of hospitable meals.

Perhaps the real city does not still exist; perhaps all we are looking at is a ghost of the former city, populated by tourists and a wealthy, self-proclaimed elite. Maybe the real city has moved taking its tableau of life to the suburbs. Suburbs inhabited by families, old and young, recent migrants focused on creating a new life whilst clinging to the traditions of old, ordinary people going about their lives. But perhaps it is unfair to expect our *flâneur* to see this world, a world beyond the footpath, a world where the street is dominated by the automobile. A world that conforms to a different concept of time, space and distance. But still a world that loves food and table. A world of backyard BBQs, lemon trees, vegetable plots, herb gardens, teenagers meeting friends in brightly lit restaurants that cater to their fast paced postmodern lifestyle and people celebrating milestones in their lives with friends brought together by the chance to share a meal. Perhaps this different hidden world, despised by some, is just another one of the paradoxes of the city.

So does the *flâneur* still have a voice that is worth listening too? Endowed with a privileged position, disconnected from social responsibility the *flâneur* can stand on the sidelines of society and make comment. Building a picture, forging links between the different sights that fall under his gaze, like the bricoleur, a new view is created from the old parts. Maybe the new view jars in its juxtaposition against the old familiar view of the world. But maybe it should, maybe this is the very essence of the role of the *flâneur*. To throw up a view that challenges. Aimed squarely at those who cannot or will not step back with a degree of objectivity from their own society, the *flâneur*, part urban myth, offers the safe means to examine, comment, reflect on or criticise the society you are part of. It is after all, difficult to critique that which is the very thing that gives meaning to your own existence.

This is the role I see for our *flâneur*, a foodie *flâneur*, to venture into our gastronomic city, taste the sights on offer, form his idiosyncratic view and report back. The *flâneur* challenges our perceptions of our own world, offers the view from 'the other', questions our presumptions, and leads us to a deeper understanding of our habitus and ourselves.

So who then is the gastronomer? A student of food, standing back observing, passionate and excited by the offering. Building a reasoned understanding of all things that relate to man as an eater? Or are they an evangelical preacher for Master Gaster, bound to a middle class sensibility and an ethic of moderation? Or are they the hedonist, full of spirit, readily embracing the life and death struggle that is food? What is their world? Perhaps the *flâneur* can help us to find some of the answers.

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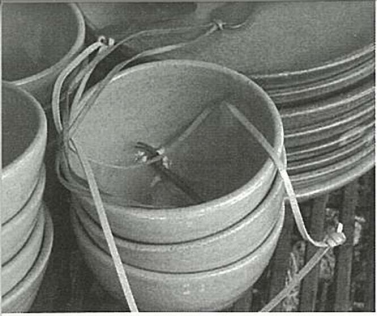


The Flâneur

Scott Minervini

To walk is to vegetate,
To stroll is to live.
Balzac

If you are tempted to leave the city, go to Tuscany, Provence, the Barossa, or have a Tasmanian tree-change, to make a new life for yourself, well, flâneurism is the opposite of that. It is the world of the city and it's on the ascendancy, but I don't think necessarily and always in the space of towns and cities, but on the internet, through magazines, through the flicking of pages where everything is vicarious.

Let's leave that for a moment to find some descriptions that define what a *flâneur* is and then look at what makes a food *flâneur*. *Webster's* dictionary is really quite simplistic and bizarre, it's definition gives us simply 'an idle man about town', but there is more to it than that. The *Collins-Robert* French dictionary defines an idler, a lounger, a loafer. I think that is again far too simple and far too undeveloped. Let us go to Baudelaire, who sees walking the streets as one of the most exciting adventures open to us, giving us sensibility; but he sees its definition as something that the city can only clumsily define.

Moving into last century, we can go to Walter Benjamin and he comes closer again to giving us the taste of what a *flâneur* really is, and perhaps even more what a food *flâneur* is – *an intoxication comes over the man who walks along aimlessly through the streets, with each step the walk takes on greater momentum, temptation of shops, of bistros, of smiling women, even more the irresistible the magnetism of the street corner of distant messy foliage on the street line*. I think there's even more to it than that; it's like looking for the '*opium*'… There is a sense of possibility, intoxication, the pervert, and they use the word pervert, it keeps coming up, to search for the next experience.

So simply put, the food *flâneur* is the *flâneur* that wanders past the restaurants, the food halls of department stores, the markets, past cafes and pubs but nowadays those are not enough, magazines, e-zines, food blogs, websites, facebooks, the whole lot – does everything become depersonalised? The food *flâneur* has a particular sensibility through its grant of food but not as consumption necessarily, they're looking, smelling, tasting but always slowly moving on and the food *flâneur* is not in a hurry and he or she does not want to buy, that's very important, it's this not wanting to buy – just as they want to be *in* the crowd of the city, but not *of* the crowd. Here, I think it's interesting from what Angus said, it stands so much in opposition to capitalism. What I mean is they want to spend time but don't want to consume, they just want to, they don't want to consume, they waste time.

The foodie *flâneur* wants to see and eavesdrop and construct narratives about what others are eating, where, with what, and with whom. Above all, they relish what is novel, up-to-date and trendy, they need to know what rooms people are dining in, they open themselves up to this gastronomic vista to see what life is about because they come to life without particular goals.

An image comes to mind; think of the stainless steel coffee cups or the Alessi kettles of ten years ago as being the food *flâneur*'s apotheosis. I don't know why, it's just something that comes up. The food *flâneur* rediscovers a sense of humanity and knows the city can divide as well as

separate, he or she wants, as Baudelaire puts it, to be away from home and yet to feel everywhere at home. I think that sentiment is something that worries me because it is so selfish, it's a very, very selfish rediscovery of humanity. The food *flâneur* knows that he or she wants the risk of temptation, they know the aroma of the best cup of coffee and observe the kid glove on the timber table next to the paper and the cup…the aromas they cling to, fresh fruit, the scent of strawberries, they might see some delicious oranges or grapes being eaten by just the right person in the right city and they could fall in love briefly, very briefly mind you with, one the eater or with the grapes. This is serious, as Baudelaire says you whom I might have loved could easily be paraphrased as that which I might have tasted.

Essentially though, the food *flâneur* is: isolated, anonymous, aristocratic and melancholic. The food *flâneur* also sees their very being as 'out of time' but critical. This is why this whole idea is so paradoxical.

> 'To go out strolling these days while puffing one's tobacco, while dreaming of eating pleasures, seems centuries behind the times. We are not the sort to refuse all knowledge of the customs of another age; but, in our strolling, let us not forget our rights and our obligations as citizens. The times are necessitous; they demand all our attention, all day long.' That is a quote from *The Flâneur* that was published in 1848.

How to become a food *flâneur*? Well Alain de Botton has suggested to become a *flâneur* we either read Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris* and his art criticisms and in that state of mind start strolling, or buy a turtle, that's a reference to a fad in Paris where the *flâneur* would lead a turtle on a lead to show they had time and money and it reminds me of Carlo Petrini leading a snail. Should we want to be a food *flâneur*? It's a state that I find has an evil fascination, yet is really repulsive. It's full of paradox, self-indulgent, aimless, purposeful, aesthetic and imaginative – to deal with it I've had to internalise the food *flâneur* and see the person and their state as very much part of life's dance.

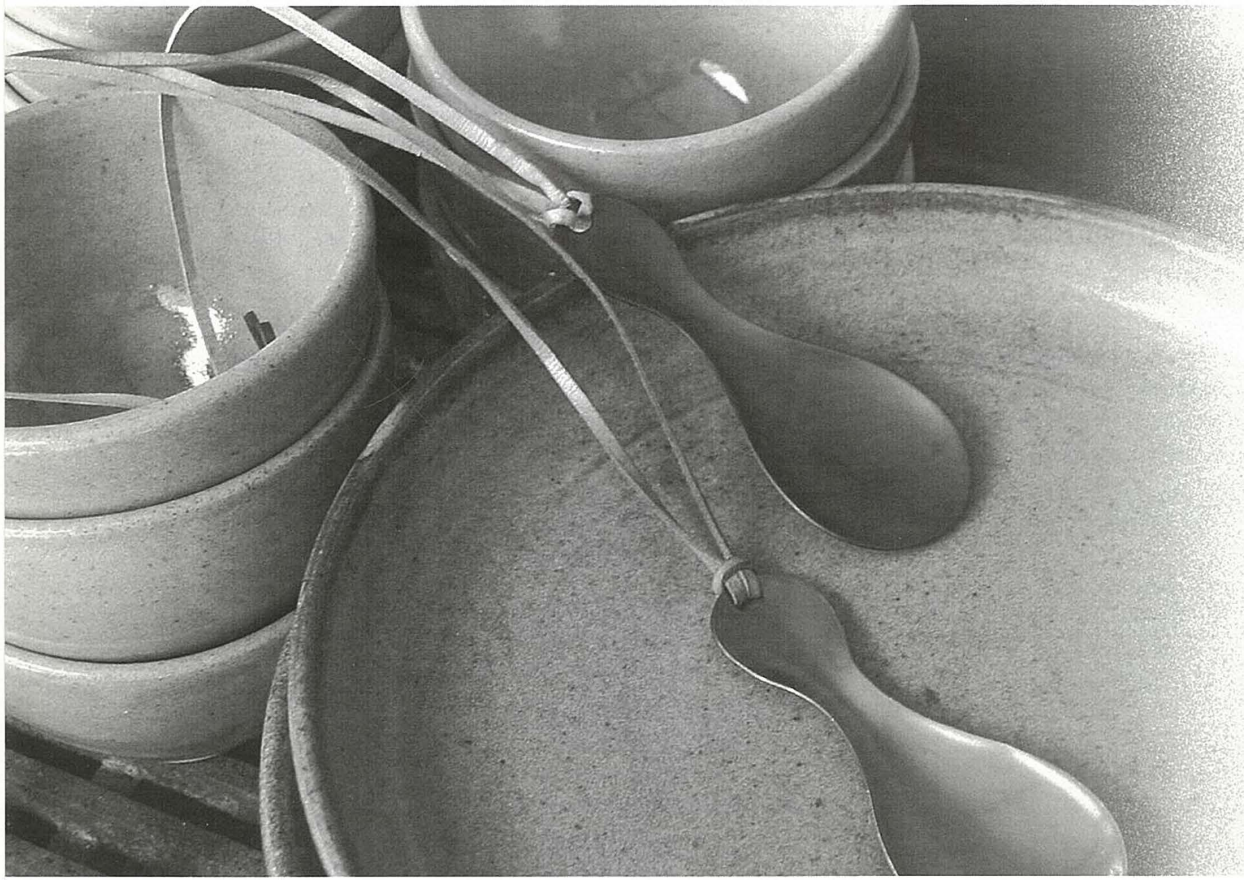
I was going to finish with some music, I don't think I will. I'll finish with something else. There's a part in Stravinsky's ballet *Apollon Musagète* in the second tableau after the naissance of Apollo where he goes to observe the muses and Stravinsky captures the moment, the music is absolutely gorgeous but there's a danger in it and the same time it's so slippery and sinuous. I told my partner that I'd like to talk about it, and he said no, there's no flâneurism as beautiful as that.

So I'm going to finish with the antithesis. I began this little talk with one's going and leaving the city so let's finish with Horace because as so often he puts paid to it all.

> *…Life's short. Even while*
> *We talk Time, hateful, runs a mile.*
> *Don't trust tomorrow's bough*
> *For fruit. Pluck this, here, now.*

Wednesday 13 March

Day Four



Menu

Wednesday 13 March

BREAKFAST

Cath Kerry and her kitchen

at the Art Gallery Café

Watermelon juice with mint, fresh fruit

Brik

Galette with goats curd, honey and dates

Coffee and tea

Plenary Session, Wednesday 13 March

Report by Jennifer Hillier

At the final session agreement was reached that the Sydney group of Ross and Maria Kelly, Gae Pincus, Paul van Reyk, Jane Adams and Colin Sheringham should organise the next Symposium of Gastronomy in New South Wales. Bob MacLennan from Queensland was asked to go ahead and ascertain the feasibility of his Queensland group hosting a symposium possibly following that of Sydney.

The discussion also included some comments on this and past symposiums:

The cost of the event was justified in terms of the group's appreciation that producers and cooks need to be paid in a sustainable way. Jennifer Hillier pointed out that an important aspect of the seemingly high fee is that it has to cover all costs. 'We have a principle of trying to work without sponsorship, and we pay for that privilege'.

It was thought that the collection of symposium proceedings provides a valuable resource when thinking about the identity and philosophy of the symposium more generally and that each symposium informs the next one.

Generally speaking, participants enjoyed the informal, conversational structure of this symposium. It was part of the Festival of Arts programme and given Gay Bilson's broader commitment to the philosophy of the Festival as an associate director, it was envisaged that our event take the form of an open, extended conversation. Rather than sending out calls for formal papers we suggested themes. Discussion panels were created with the participation of many who attended. However, it was suggested that breaking into smaller groups might have facilitated even more participation.

The symposium as table conversation was seen as central to our philosophy. Gay Bilson remarked that 'the symposium would be valid to me even if it were made up of 25 people, if it could be financially viable as well. We are, after all, a group of people who gather around a table to talk and to eat in a slightly formal way. I remember Zannie saying to me after the Wellington Symposium that it was just like a great big party. And, yes, it is but at the same time it is about serious conversation. The formalities require us to make some effort'.

It was suggested that a way of measuring the success of a symposium was to leave feeling inspired by at least one significant thing, for example, Stephanie Alexander's school cooking and gardening project.

Anita Stewart shared her experiences of The Northern Bounty Conference in Canada and suggested that 'feeding the city might turn into feeding the country as a way of honouring primary producers at future symposiums'. Anita also reflected on the conviviality of fully residential symposiums and thought the happening in the Grampians 'must have been extraordinary'.

It was, however, also suggested that a symposium of all producers and restaurateurs would detract from the important and extraordinary intellectual contribution of the Symposium of Australian Gastronomy.

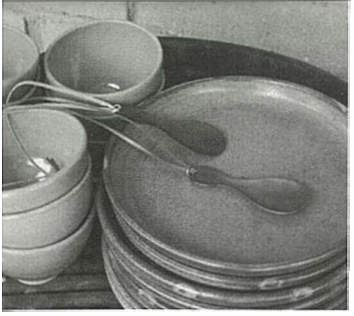
While it was generally agreed that the independence and informality of the symposia be maintained, it was suggested that future convenors might find a set of guiding principles quite useful. In this light Gay Bilson suggested that certain foundational participants might take on the role of mentors. Along with herself she suggested: Barbara Santich, Catherine Kerry, Jennifer Hillier and, of course, Michael Symons. A group of mentors would also help to facilitate generational change.

Michael Symons' letter to the Symposium was noted as offering advice on how we might encourage a more diverse attendance as well as containing his offer of a guiding hand to future convenors.

By way of conclusion, Nola Kenny a stalwart of past Adelaide symposiums offered her thanks:

> Being one of the quieter ones and certainly one of the elders, I've been around a long time and I've been to many of these symposiums. I think that this time one of the highlights has been the diversity. I like to have structured lectures and we've had some of those but we've also had other opportunities where people can join in which really gives that family feeling and the special bonding that goes with it. I'd like to say thank you to Barbara and Cath and Jennifer and Gay. I think you've done a wonderful job and worked hard. Thank you so much for the most historic symposium I have ever attended. Thank you so much.

The convenors would also like to acknowledge and thank the helpers: Craig Willis, Jeremy Rowney, Alison Keal, and everyone who contributed in some way.



Food and the Arts

Barbara Santich

This article was published in the *Australian Financial Review Magazine*, June 2002.

One of the distinctive features of the Adelaide Festival over the past 15 years or so has been the attention paid to food – whether Mark Armstrong and Cheong Liew's collaboration (as Two Masters) in 1988, or director Robyn Archer's translocation from Parachilna of the Prairie Hotel and its feral delights in 1998, or Phillip Searle's inspired dinner, complete with wooden trenchers, following David Wicks' one-man performance of *A Winter's Tale* at the same festival.

But it has always been there as an accessory, an artistic subordinate in a lowly supporting role. Perhaps this is because food is seen as having more in common with popular culture than with the 'high' culture of an arts festival. (The film industry appears much more democratic; when final credits roll, caterers get their names in lights – along with the sound engineers, set carpenters, wig makers and animal trainers who all support and sustain the whole production.)

It's easy, in theory, to justify an art of cuisine and its place in the arts spectrum. We happily concede that food is infinitely more than simple sustenance, and agree with Roland Barthes that it's a medium of communication. It is a vehicle for the expression of ideas and emotions, as when bitter herbs signify bitter tears; it symbolically unites families and cultural groups; it affirms shared values. And like music, food affects our sentiments, calming, healing, inspiring, bringing happiness.

But we – or the committees which administer such things – tend to be apprehensive about the status of food in a festival of arts whose events, exhibitions and performances – the visual arts, drama, dance and music – are apparently legitimised by their potential to satisfy intellectual and spiritual appetites. Food is, all too plainly, material. How, then, to incorporate and do justice to an expression of culture of such equivocal status?

Peter Sellars, whose visions largely shaped the 2002 Adelaide Festival, was bold enough to include former restaurateur Gay Bilson, producer of successful food events at previous festivals, in his team of associate directors. From her food-focused artistic brief resulted three distinctive events: *Edible Harmony*; *The Edible Library*, and *Nourish*, each different in style, conception and intent, but each conveying in its own way the themes of inclusiveness and diversity which Sellars wished this festival to promote.

The first two of these were open to the general public; you bought a ticket, as for any other event. *Nourish*, however, was accessible to a far more restricted audience, patients at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide's western suburbs. While it was part of a varied cultural program at the hospital which included a concert, a Cambodian dance performance and the screening for patients, relatives and staff of films commissioned for the Adelaide Festival, it remains perhaps the most difficult to place in an arts festival perspective.

For this project, three admired chefs – Gay Bilson, Dhyan Marga McKenzie and Genevieve Harris – created a special menu which was not only nutritionally adequate but aesthetically and sensually appealing, designed to nourish both body and soul. The standardised packages which constituted the hospital's basic menu were replaced by variety and colour – the rich crimson of a chilled tomato soup served in a delicate ceramic bowl, the golden glow of a aromatic herbal

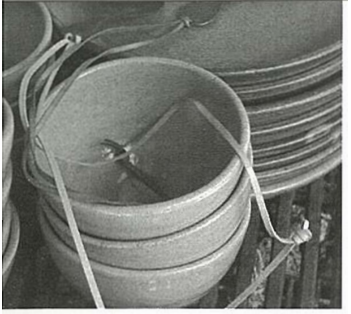
infusion, the green and white contrast of a chicken salad with basil and roasted almonds. And while not all patients had the option of choosing this menu, those who did were warmly appreciative.

Now, the idea of offering an alternative to 'hospital food', and all the sterile joylessness that term implies, is not new. Alexis Soyer made a significant contribution to health and morale when he assisted Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War. In recent years, top-starred French chefs have regularly lent their expertise to improve the lot of the hospitalised. These are commendable acts of public service. Perhaps *Nourish* should be seen in the same way as an act of great generosity – generosity on the part of the cooks and the volunteers who assisted, generosity on the part of the hospital which welcomed them – rather than try to justify it within the context of an arts festival.

It was easier to accept the credentials of *Edible Harmony* and *The Edible Library*, perhaps because both could be seen as representing a 'higher' cuisine with an intellectual component. *Edible Harmony* was a dinner conceived by master chef Cheong Liew at the Grange Restaurant of the Adelaide Hilton, and featured eight exquisitely harmonised courses each demonstrating its own particular unity. One example of this was a warm salad where the soft sweetness of Moreton Bay bugs and the buttery neutrality of avocado were summarily taken under the authority of a scattering of toasted salted fish and elevated to a higher plane. In Cheong's words, the dinner told the story of a diversity of cultures coming together at the same table, in the one meal. Some dishes were eaten with chopsticks, some with fingers, some with spoons; the variety of bowls used for the dish of tofu, eggplant, black beans, oyster, pork rib and seaweed broth – red and black and celadon green, porcelain and lacquerware – similarly symbolised the meeting of cultures at the table.

The creation of Madrid-based writer and performance artist Alicia Rios, *The Edible Library* was a voyage of discovery, a gustatory learning experience in an real library – and credit must also go to Charles Sturt Council Library which reversed the usual prohibitions on eating and drinking in the company of books and actually encouraged it. Alicia's *Edible Library* told the story of Spain and its culture through its food – the food of the occupying Romans in the 1st century, of pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela in the 12th century, of Muslim Spain, of Spanish Jews in the 14th century, of royal palaces at the time of Goya, of the bourgeoisie in the twentieth century, culminating in the postmodern cuisine of the 21st century – this represented by Honey-glazed potatoes with pepper and bacon. As in a proper library, you first consulted the index before retrieving from the shelves the appropriate book – and at first impression it was a book, but instead of pages and words its content was a small dish containing the relevant food: tuna pie for the pilgrims, honey-coated pastries for the mediaeval Jews. More than 1700 'volumes' were painstakingly created for this event by staff and students at the Adelaide TAFE Institute Hospitality School.

As Peter Sellars said, festivals are about bringing people together, and in this respect food is the medium *par excellence*. Further, he said artists work in metaphor; and food is unarguably metaphor. Perhaps the key to its acceptance in arts festivals is to promote its role in social rather than intellectual terms.



'Nourish' – The Hospitable Cooks Project

Gay Bilson

The menu: Dukkah, olives, extra virgin olive oil and sourdough bread; Chilled tomato and cumin soup with basil and roasted almonds; Slow roasted chicken salad with ginger and coconut; Rice; Eggplant chutney and Chilli sambal; Orange and passionfruit trifle; Herbal tea.

The cooks: Genevieve Harris, chef and co-owner of Nediz Restaurant in Adelaide; Dhyan Marga McKenzie, cook and organic gardener; a large group of volunteers who answered our advertisement in the food supplement of an Adelaide newspaper.

The place: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a large public hospital located in Woodville, a few kilometres from Adelaide city centre towards Port Adelaide.

The guests: Patients and staff at the hospital.

The date: Three days in March 2002 during the Adelaide Festival of the Arts.

The funding: The Adelaide Festival 2002 under the artistic direction of Peter Sellars; The Queen Elizabeth Hospital; local produce donated by growers, suppliers, and home gardeners.

It seems to trouble people, not least those in the Arts Industry (whatever that is and whatever its relationship is to whatever the Arts are), that food was introduced by Peter Sellars and myself as a legitimate strand in the 2002 Adelaide Festival alongside architecture and film, each of these three strands making their first major appearance following gestures made during the two festivals before this one and the presence of architecture, but in a very different and exclusive way, in an earlier festival directed by Barry Kosky.

The 2002 Festival was deeply troubled and undermined by resistance to Sellars' visionary shift from box office to inclusive, participatory cultural projects with specific communities, who, it needs be said, would have hardly been aware of the festival's presence, if at all, up until now. Taking the festival to places it had never been before, and to people who had formerly been excluded, while still extending a welcome to the old elites, did not go down well. The regime who had felt they owned the festival generally refused to respond to the invitation and this border control might be seen as one of the symptoms of the current political climate in Australia. Taking some of the festival projects to a public hospital became a mighty battle for our principles of sharing and inclusivity, and in this case, of standing by our statement that if you can't come to the festival then the festival will go to you.

The *Hospitable Cooks Project* might not have been 'the Arts' as defined by the Australia Council, but if festivals give space for new ideas and allow for subversion of the status quo, and surely they do, then this project was as legitimate as any other. If architecture is a 'useful art' then so too is cooking. If festivals are defined by their generous spirit and support of creative projects which otherwise might never see light, then this festival worked as a courageous research and development exercise, not least in this instance because good cooks using good produce created a menu which found its way by trolley and tray to beds in a public hospital desperately in need of funding and support.

Ihab Hassan called Giordano Bruno his 'favourite heteroclite'. Bruno wrote that 'The actual and the possible are not different in eternity.' Sellars had, from the moment he began to plan the festival, made a plea for a permanent record of the ideas which came to the table via participating artists, a national advisory group of artists, and his artistic associates. Ideas generated by a festival based on issues of social justice, and by its focus on Truth and Reconciliation, Cultural Diversity and Ecological Sustainability, were understood to be just as important as those projects which were produced.

Like just about all projects which answer the call of an arts festival, and especially a festival which was doing nothing to bolster the sense of self importance of those who felt they had exclusive ownership, this one began as something much more ambitious and therefore needing much more funding than what was eventually allowed. My first idea had been to ask visual artist Fiona Hall, who had previously created gardens at the National Gallery in Canberra and in Sydney, to make a garden for the hospital which would be given a permanent site. It would be a garden of plants which have been used for their healing and culinary properties in specific cultures for centuries, for instance Indigenous Australian culture, Chinese, Muslim, Sufi, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and many others. The hospital, central to many immigrant cultures and Aboriginal communities, has a multicultural population of patients.

Using as many of the plants as possible in terms of a coherent and palatable meal, a banquet would be prepared and would take place in the garden as one of the events of the festival. After all, the reason to eat is to eat towards health, and the first cookbooks were more medical text than recipes for gourmets. Central to Sellars' vision was a festival which was the culmination of projects which had been under way for some months before the two weeks in March, and which would continue after March. A useful and beautiful garden created by an artist for a hospital made sense. Work began on this project and Hall and I talked about making the garden on old hospital beds so that, alongside the pun, the plants could be shifted later to the permanent site. Gardens are productive, meals the ingested garden.

When, despite the hospital and the architectural firm who were already working on a new wing and garden projects in the grounds welcoming it, this project was cancelled for lack of funds (lack of hospitality towards The Hospitable Garden!), we were determined to keep the presence of food at the hospital as one part of the events there. Collectively the events at the hospital (they included an artist/jeweller making Edible Leis with patients, staff and visitors in the covered area at the hospital's main entrance, a photographer recording a day in the life of the hospital and more) were called *Nourish*. We had always planned to invite patients to the banquet if they were able to leave their beds, so why not take the banquet to them instead.

It was an exercise in diplomacy to ask to be allowed to cook meals for the patients because of profound criticisms of hospital attitudes towards food and menus, while all the time having to couch it in different terms. It was remarkable that the hospital and its kitchen gave us the welcome they did and if we were never less than critical of the quality of their meals, we admired the hospital and the kitchen for almost unreservedly taking us in. If food in a gastronomic sense (that eating well nourishes the body and enhances well being) is ever going to be taken seriously as part of caring for patients then the experiment which The Queen Elizabeth Hospital generously allowed will be called up as primary evidence.

The kitchen's only cruel game was to keep us out while all the time professing support, but we battled this out by finding an outside kitchen, and moving to the hospital the day before the meals were to be served. The hospital kitchen is enormous, probably far too large to be ergonomically efficient. Not a lot of food is actually made on the long empty benches. One can hardly call what is added, subtracted and heated 'cooking'. Much of the food is a combination of re-hydrated dry goods. Much of what is placed on the trays to go to the patients is a sealed single serve portion straight from a factory. The multicultural patient population faces food which is as British/ Australian as can still be. The bread is supple white sliced, packed full of added vitamins and mould inhibitor for sure, but tasteless and textureless.

Another idea worth recording for 'eternity' had come from Lynette Wallworth, one of the associate directors of Sellars' Festival. She proposed that the architect include in his design for the future hospital a kitchen where patients' families and friends might prepare or heat food which gave traditional nourishment to patients: Cambodian food for Cambodians, Vietnamese for Vietnamese, Italian for Italian and so on. This last solution might be the only valid description of feeding patients as 'outsourcing'.

For a public hospital catering department, feeding patients is an exercise in budget control. The successful hospital catering manager (to call this person a chef is absurd) spends as little as possible, ensures that prescribed dietary guidelines are adhered to for specific patients (diabetics for instance) and sees that there is no incidence of food poisoning. The last two guidelines are the legitimate bottom line of course. The criteria for nourishment which all of us share, whether we articulate this or not, is the sight, aroma, taste and texture of food. With little else to give

pleasure when in hospital, food, given a chance, might not only be healthy but excite the senses, give pleasure and be looked forward to. A large proportion of patients spend time in hospital recuperating yet able to eat a normal diet. Nourishment is not the sum of calories, protein and vitamins. Nourishment is the sum of calories, protein, vitamins and the pleasure which food gives. Good health and a sense of well being is not the result of medical intervention but the holistic care of mind and body which sometimes includes medical intervention.

I would go so far as to say that in Australia we children of the colonies are in general embarrassed by the idea of any thought being given to the pleasure which good, fresh food gives. When I spoke at the launch of the Festival and used words like 'nourish' and 'plenty' and quoted lovely lines from Peter Goldsworthy's libretto for Graeme Koehne's *Mass for the Middle Aged* ("At meal-times I will rise from my small exquisite portions, still hungry, just, and mildly restless, forever."), the media response was to berate and belittle the language of food. Yet everything that Peter Sellars had put forward in outline for his festival, and which electrified his first audiences, encouraged the validity of food as metaphor.

When we talked about *The Hospitable Cooks Project* to the press, underlining its generous motives (giving pleasure, the increase of a sense of well being and of nourishment, which is exactly what artists and performers do too), while refraining from making too much of our zeal for reform, the response was to characterise the project as playing the 'foodie' game of producing for the hospital dishes which could not be prepared and cooked without the skills of, and money squandered by 'celebrity chefs'. In fact the entire menu was one which could easily be taken on by hospitals both financially and in terms of the skills needed to make the dishes.

One reporter, in Adelaide's morning newspaper, *The Advertiser*, scornfully dismissed the project as 'food frolics' at the 'hapless venue' of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (*The Advertiser*, 7 January 2002). A letter to the paper in protest at this willful misunderstanding of motive pointed out that the reporter 'ignores the long-established and honourable tradition of chefs collaborating with hospital kitchens to vary and enliven the standard hospital fare. Alexis Soyer worked with Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War; more recently, top French chefs such as Michel Guérard have helped design more appealing hospital menus in France. Certainly, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital events were not conventional festival events, but they were totally consistent with Peter Sellars' vision for the 2002 Adelaide Festival.' The letter was written by Dr Barbara Santich, a lecturer in Gastronomy at the University of Adelaide.

Real and unreal concerns about the risk which fresh food presents lend false validity to food which has already been handled, controlled into portions, canned or dehydrated. The latter, which is 'fast', and defers labour, is seen to have already passed the risk test and the onus is taken off the kitchen which serves it. We are afraid of fresh food because we know it less and less well and are estranged from its production. People like Genevieve Harris and Dhyan Marga McKenzie and their marvellous group of volunteers, who think it logical and sensible to go to the trouble of labour in order to produce food which tastes better and gives pleasure, are seen as fools, hobbyists, crazy and obsessed. Talking to a woman about the glut of broad beans my plants produce every year, she said she had been given some broad beans and peas by a friend of hers but couldn't face podding them. Yet she spends most nights in front of television and her hands are free. We are estranged from the loveliness of the idea of labour.

In the face of the hospital kitchen being out of bounds for preparation, the team used the professional kitchen of a friend for most of the *mise-en-place* (for instance, the slow roasting of the chickens, roasting off the tomatoes for the soup, squeezing the orange juice for the trifle), and completed the preparation in a disused servery in the senior staff canteen at the hospital. This 'kitchen' had everything but stoves. The lunch became, by necessity, a room temperature lunch, the soup a cold soup. Given Adelaide's temperature in March this was more than acceptable. Most of its parts were placed on the trays here, then completed in the main kitchen. This is where the meals were taken to the wards alongside the normal hospital food.

We hired napkins and lined the hospital trays. We used the hand-thrown and glazed bowls which had been commissioned from Damon Moon for the Gastronomy Symposium, *The Edible City*, an umbrella event of the festival, for the soup. We included chopsticks in case a patient was more used to them than knife and fork. The herbal 'tea', a concoction from Dhyan Marga's garden plus donations from Jurlique which grows its own flowers and herbs for commercial skin preparations in the Adelaide Hills was served in a glass so that the colour of the infusion and flowers and leaves might be seen as well as smelled. As much of the produce as possible followed the original guidelines of the idea for the healing garden: food which has been central to different cultures' traditional medicine. We forget that many drugs originally came from natural substances in plants or are synthetic reconstructions of the chemical properties of plants.

Over three lunches and including a separate lunch for staff, the team of cooks fed somewhere over 550 to 600 patients, nurses, doctors, physiotherapists, nutritionists, cleaners, radiographers, office staff and more. Our menu had been given out with the normal hospital menu the day before so that a choice between the two could be made. Whereas the hospital menu is a multiple choice form, if someone chose the festival food they would chose to take the whole menu which was especially printed. Although it was reported in the local press that patients 'volunteered' to take the festival menu, in truth those who ate our food chose to eat it. This, then, by the willful substitution of 'volunteer' for 'choose', was yet another misconstruing of motive and fact. If food is good, the media seems to be implying, then it must be an indulgence or forced upon people or be so expensive that it out of reach to most. At the very least it is seen as abnormal and unexpected that those who have knowledge and skills should want to share their knowledge and skills outside of profit and with no motive of self-advertisement.

If the strength of my feelings about not only the standards of public hospital food but the attitude towards providing food in public hospitals and the meagre funding it receives were the jumping point for the cooking, then the recent news that the main player in the fast food stakes had won the tender to exclusively sell its fast food in the public area of a major public hospital in Melbourne gave added impetus to do something downright pleasurable and subversive. Culinary subversion is not to upset the apple cart so much as to replace the apples with healthier, more tasty ones and shift expectation.

People in hospital, because they are sick, or in need of mending, are vulnerable and disempowered. Especially in public hospitals which serve suburbs with high numbers of low income earners, often a high percentage of unemployed, large and diverse immigrant cultural groups and in this specific case, many Aboriginal people suffering from diabetes, this vulnerability is heightened. To cook a meal which set out to nourish all the senses was a part of the festival's gift to the patients and staff. The cooks, Genevieve and Dhyan Marga, with the unflagging help of their unpaid helpers, were, in their own way, festival artists who worked to make a simple, fresh, tasty meal which abided by the dietary guidelines of the hospital. Nevertheless, as well as offering the food unconditionally, so as to give pleasure, they irritated the long unquestioned status quo of hospital meals.

It isn't only the table (and sometimes the bedside) which is convivial but the work of cooking too. *The Hospitable Cooks Project* caused friendships to be made and nurtured mutual respect within a group of disparate people. They became a cohesive brigade. This is the marvellousness of participatory creative projects. It turns work into an exhilarating, liberating, learning experience, turning the tables on our sometimes artificial separation between work and play. It is projects like this which give depth to an arts festival, blurring the borders which have often been drawn up as a kind of protectorate of exclusivity.

When we spent a long, long day preparing the food for *The Winter Solstice* event for The Performance Space in the mid-'90s, kilo upon kilo of clay needed weighing into portions and then rolled into an outer casing for the food. While the volunteer cooks prepared the filling for the lotus leaves, a group of women, one of whom already had strong arms and was no stranger to clay as she had potting skills, rolled over 400 'casings' for the food. It is a central part of these participatory experiences that certain people become leaders, others like to be lead. The sense of camaraderie in a room which became temporary kitchen and part pottery was remarkable.

It happens every time. It happened when we worked with local people on Kangaroo Island, at Streaky Bay, Burra and Beachport for *Plenty*, one of the regional components of the Adelaide Festival 2000. It happened when Adelaide TAFE students came to help with preparations for the Adelaide Festival 1998 closing event *Loaves and Fishes*. It happened when students of the Hospitality School at Adelaide Institute of TAFE prepared the food to fill the books for Alicia Rios' *The Edible Library*, an Adelaide Festival 2002 performance. And it happened at the hospital and in the kitchen which was loaned so that The Hospitable Cooks Project could take place.

The 20 or so women and a couple of men who worked on the hospital project with Genevieve and Dhyan Marga were generally not young. One of the volunteer cooks wrote a poem of thanks to them. It was read aloud by all the volunteers when the project was over. This might sound corny but so what, emotions were running high. That's when you know something has worked, when those who gave their labour for nothing thank you for asking them to work.

If the kitchen at the hospital did not change overnight then at least it was interrupted for a three day moment. A possibility, an idea had been planted. Overnight change is not what we were expecting. They say there's no such thing as a free lunch but in this case the return just might be the recognition that cooking is, as Michael Symons has written, nutrition, hedonism, social expression, cultural expression and civilising process and more than heating; that to give creative thought and a proper budget to the food offered patients in a hospital is as legitimate a right as the surgeon's knife.