

THE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE HISTORY OF FOOD AND DRINK



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What's Happening

Send us your news, announcements, musings, and short articles for inclusion in the newsletter.

Research Centre Seminar

Peter Barham

Molecular Gastronomy and the Science of Taste and Flavour

The Research Centre is hosting Peter Barham, physicist and molecular gastronomer, in a seminar at 6:00 pm on 11 September at the University of Adelaide in Napier Lecture Theatre G03. For further details see the attached flyer.

Australian Symposium of Gastronomy, 1984-the Present

The Research Centre's website is to house an archive of the Australian Symposium of Gastronomy, 1984-the present. Any member with memorabilia or photographs from any of these events is welcome to forward them for inclusion. Check the website for more details. The archive is already up and running!

What's Happened

Fifteenth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy
See the report by Roger Haden at the end of the Newsletter.

Bill Whit Prize

Joanne Hocking won the Bill Whit Prize of the Association for the Study of Food and Society for her essay entitled "From the Top of the Tree: Fruit, the Aristocracy and Class Distinction in Early Modern Western European Paintings." The prize is for the best undergraduate essay dealing with food. Joanne wrote the essay for Lynn Martin's honours seminar on Food and Drink in the Art of the Renaissance. The president of the Association, Fabio Parasecoli, announced the prize at the Association's annual conference in Victoria, British Columbia. Had Joanne been able to attend the conference the prize also included free registration and a free banquet ticket. She also received free membership for 2008. Since finishing her honours degree last year, Joanne is now enrolled as a postgraduate student, but unfortunately her PhD topic is not on food.

A Research Centre of the
Faculty of Humanities
and Social Sciences



Dr. Tina Kalivas

Tina recently heard good news from the examiners of her PhD thesis, *Recipes for Cypriot Tradition: Greek-Cypriot Immigrants' Domestic Food Cultures in Melbourne, c. 1947-2003*, written at Latrobe University. The thesis is a social and cultural history of how a group of Cypriot immigrants in Melbourne adapted, created, and maintained their food cultures in Melbourne between 1947 and 2003. It addresses how immigrants food cultures operated on a multifaceted level, as not only a set of symbols and meanings but also the various material manifestations and arenas of food production, acquisition, preparation, consumption, and where, how, and by whom they were performed. The research was based on a series of oral history interviews with a sample of Greek (and two Turkish) Cypriot immigrants and their families residing in Melbourne, supplemented with a range of other primary and secondary data that informed the political, economic, social, and cultural contexts which facilitated and constrained the development of these Cypriots' food cultures in Melbourne and Cyprus.

Greek Cypriot immigrants' memories of their homeland and links to family and community helped maintain and create a sense of tradition and continuity with their Cypriot culture, while the migration process, structures, and cultures in Melbourne impacted on various aspects of their food cultures in distinctive and uneven ways. While food availability, work commitments, and relationships constrained various aspects of these immigrants' food and food practices, immigrants felt that elements of their Cypriot culture, based on values, religion, and sociability, allowed them to maintain and recreate other aspects of their food cultures. Immigrants' food and their associated practices and relationships were created in Melbourne but in specific ways that became expressions of something that was recognisable to them as traditional and Greek Cypriot.

One of the examiners wrote that the "thesis is an excellent piece of work" that is "definitely original in scope;" it "rescues food history from the trivialization it has too often suffered, and demonstrates the fresh insights it can offer to the social and cultural history of modern international migration." Another examiner also found the thesis to be "an original and scholarly piece of research

on an understudied topic: the material, social and symbolic aspects of migrant culture. . . . The candidate shows a mastery of a number of different literatures relevant to her topic. . . in anthropology, food studies, migration and material culture studies" and "does an excellent job of showing how contemporary Cypriot migrant food practices reflect mixtures of traditional aspects with changed technology and the influence of the wider Australian society."

Gaudeamus igitur!

The Amorim-OENOVIDEO Award

Rosario Scarpato's "The Indomitable Spirit," a documentary that introduces the fascinating world of the Peruvian pisco, has been rewarded with the Prix Académie Amorim for the Best Film in English at OENOVIDEO 2007. "The Indomitable Spirit" is a journey through the world of pisco, one of the world's finest spirits, which in Peru is a 450 year-old tradition. As stated by Rosario, "We want to share the good news of this award with the Peruvian pisco producers, who are mainly small-scale artisans. It's only thanks to these strong-minded women and men, who had to struggle over the centuries to overcome all sorts of hardships, abuses, and unfair competition to keep alive the great pisco-making tradition." The movie was produced by Food and Travel Communications of Australia. For further information on the festival: www.oenovideo.oeno.tm.fr
For further information on Rosario Scarpato: www.rosarioscarpato.com

Mary Douglas

25 March 1921-16 May 2007

Dame Mary Douglas, an anthropologist whose influence ranged beyond the traditional questions of her field to examine areas as diverse as kosher diets, consumer behavior, environmentalism, and humor as she described how humans work together to find shared meaning, died in London.

In the provocative 1982 book *Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technical and Environmental Dangers* she and Aaron Wildavsky argued that environmentalists' complaints reflected an antipathy toward dominant social hierarchies.

The authors compared environmentalists to religious cults and superstitious groups of the past. This train of thought reflects that of one of Dame Mary's most discussed books, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966). She explored the relationships between dirt and holiness, impurity and hygiene, as means of defining one's own group as distinct from other groups. She said foods were banned as unkosher because they did not fit into any definite category: pigs seemed ambiguous because they shared the cloven hoof of ungulates but did not chew cud. Once made, such choices were a way to define Jews as different, she wrote.

Rituals in the Roman Catholic Church, of which she was a lifelong member, similarly bind people together, she wrote. Therefore, she regarded the abolition of Friday abstinence from meat as a threat to people's sense of solidarity with God and fellow Catholics. She found proof for her belief that collective interaction defined and governed personal behavior in the fact that people use a knife and fork even when eating alone.

From the obituary by Jonathan Player for *The New York Times*

Publications

Un aliment sain dans un corps sain

The proceedings of the conference on "Un aliment sain dans un corps sain" that took place at Tours in December 2002 have been published by the Presses Universitaires François Rabelais. For details contact Christophe Marion: christophe.marion@iehca.eu.

Food and the City in Europe since 1800

The proceedings of the IXth Symposium of the International Commission for Research on European Food History are now available, edited by Peter Atkins, Peter Lummel and Derek J. Oddy: *Food and the City in Europe since 1800*, published by Ashgate.

Journal of Wine Economics

The American Association of Wine Economists has joined forces with the newly established Society for Quantitative Gastronomy. As a result

the Association's *Journal of Wine Economics* will host an annual symposium on gastronomy in one of its issues. The most recent edition contains the following articles

Gastronomy Symposium:

George E. Johnson, "Petit Déjeuner Compris:" Is It Really Free? Evidence from French and Italian Hotels

Olivier Gergaud, Linett Montano Guzman, and Vincenzo Verardi, Stardust over Paris

Pierre Combris, Christine Lange, and Sylvie Issanchou, Product Information, Hedonic

Evaluation, and Purchase Decision: An Experimental Study of Orange Juice

Wine Papers:

Orley Ashenfelter, Stephen Ciccarella, and Howard J. Shatz, French Wine and the U.S. Boycott of 2003: Does Politics Really Affect Commerce?

Jan Bentzen and Valdemar Smith, The Military Action in Iraq 2003: Did the US Consumer Boycott of French Wines Have any Economic Effects?

Peter W. Roberts and Ray Reagans, Critical Exposure and Price-Quality Relationships for New World Wines in the U.S. Market

Richard E. Quandt, A Note on a Test for the Sum of Ranks

Food, Culture and Society

The Summer 2007 issue of *Food, Culture and Society* was a special issue on Food and War. The articles include the following:

Helen Zoe Veit, "We Were a Soft People:"

Asceticism, Self-Discipline, and American Food Conservation in World War I

Jooy Santlofer, "Hard as the Hubs of Hell:"

Crackers in War

John Fitzpatrick, The Columbian Exchange and the

Two Colonizations of Aotearoa New Zealand

Jeremy Rich, Hunger and Consumer Protest in

Colonial Africa during World War I: The Case of the Gabon Estuary, 1914-1920

Kenneth Moure and Paula Schwartz, On vit mal:

Food Shortages and Popular Culture in Occupied France, 1940-1944

Ellen Messer and Marc J. Cohen, Conflict, Food Insecurity, and Globalization

Mustafa Koc, Rupen Das, and Carey Jernigan, Food Security and Food Sovereignty in Iraq: The Impact of War

What follows are the introductory comments by the editor, Warren Belasco:

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower

“War is a beastly business, it is true, but one proof that we are human is our ability to learn, even from it, how better to exist.”

M. F. K. Fisher

Historically, war has been both an agent of destruction and a catalyst for innovation. To be sure, at the moment the destruction seems more apparent than the innovation. In 2005 Project Ploughshares—an ecumenical agency of the Canadian Council of Churches—counted thirty-two “significant armed conflicts” raging throughout the world, with another thirty-two classified as “recently ended.” The world spent over \$1 trillion to fight these wars and prepare for others; of this amount just \$5 billion were spent for United Nations “peacekeeping.” And that was generous compared to the \$2.8 billion allocated that year by the United Nations World Food Programme to feed 100 million of the world’s hungriest people—many of them victims of those very wars. Meanwhile, in 2005, while the U.S. Department of Agriculture allotted a little over \$405 million to feed the world’s hungry, the U.S. Department of Defense spent about \$6.5 billion to feed its own troops.

Anxious for scholarly perspectives on such contradictions and ironies, we invited essays that would look at the myriad ways that war has affected food production, distribution, and consumption. Specifically, we were interested in topics such as: how military personnel and civilian war workers are provisioned; the agro-ecological effects of warfare; government food policies during wartime; how military needs have affected food technologies; civilian adaptations to wartime deprivation; inequities in wartime food consumption, and the impact of occupying armies on local foodways (and vice versa).

In *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, journalist Chris Hedges writes, “The enduring attraction is this: Even with its destruction and carnage it can give us what we long for in life. It can give us purpose, meaning, a reason for living. Only when we are in the midst of conflict does the shallowness and vapidity of much of our lives become apparent.” While Hedges writes mainly

of the psycho-religious appeal of warfare, our first three papers show how these collateral “benefits” may apply to food and diet as well. Examining food austerity policies and messages promulgated by the United States government during the First World War, Helen Zoe Veit demonstrates how homefront food consumption can become a means to promote government control and moralistic domestic reform. Diet thus becomes a vehicle of political and cultural profiteering by elites. For a history of more straightforward economic opportunism, Joy Santlofer relates how military needs stimulated the development and growth of the cracker industry—a classic example of the military-industrial food complex. And in a surprising take on the inadvertent side benefits of colonial warfare, John Fitzpatrick argues that, in New Zealand at least, the Columbian Exchange—the dietary component of European colonisation—may actually have strengthened initial Maori resistance to British conquest and settlement.

To be sure, in a second wave of colonisation, the Maori eventually did give way to the more familiar imperial weapons of guns, germs, and steel. In a careful case study of that familiar pattern, Jeremy Rich examines the struggle over food supplies in the French colony of Gabon during World War I and shows how metropolitan European political conflict, local consumer resistance, and climatic fluctuation interacted to produce devastating hardships, both immediate and long run. In a dramatic and ironic turn the colonizers became colonized themselves in 1940, when Germany occupied France. Kenneth Mouré and Paula Schwartz offer an in depth look at how the citizens of an affluent imperial power with a glorious culinary heritage struggled to alter their eating habits, develop new social relationships, and reorganize their lives to survive the shortages of the 1940s. Taking us into the postcolonial era, Ellen Messer and Marc Cohen then analyze the complex causes and contexts of more recent conflicts in the developing world—particularly the problematic mix of export cropping, globalisation, local social inequality, and bad government. And bringing us up to the moment—and to the original rationale for this issue—Mustafa Koc, Rupen Das, and Carey Jernigan detail how two U.S.-led wars had disastrous health and nutritional effects on the Iraqi population between 1990 and 2006.

Conferences

3-5 September 2007, Culina Mutata—The Changing Kitchen, Uppsala, Sweden

The year 2007 marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of Carl Linnaeus, the extraordinary and world-renowned Swedish scientist. Like many of his contemporaries Linnaeus did not restrict himself to one discipline but directed his inquiring mind to many aspects of the natural sciences. He took a particular interest in diet and its effects on human health and wrote several treatises on food and health. These publications will form the basis for the scientific program of the conference.

Six sessions on various food-related themes will contain lectures given by internationally well-known authorities on relevant subjects. This is intended to provide a thorough insight into both the cultural and historic aspects of the subject, with special emphasis on Linnaeus and 18th-century ideas on diet and health, as well as an overview of modern knowledge in the area of food science and nutrition.

To complement the scientific program an elaborate social program will offer authentic food, beverages and entertainment from the days of Carl Linnaeus, in co-operation with expertise in the field of 18th-century cooking provided by Gunilla Lindell and Gunilla Englund and with master chef Örjan Klein. Also included will be opportunities for study visits to the world of Linnaeus, including his home and research botanical gardens.

For details: <http://www-ulc.slu.se/> and <http://www-conference.slu.se/culinamutata/>

20-22 September 2007, History of the Language and History of Cuisine: Language and Food, Two Languages for the History of Italian Society, Modena

The VI Convegno Internazionale dell'Associazione per la Storia della Lingua Italiana will take place at the University of Modena with the theme of "Storia della lingua e storia della cucina: Lingua e cibo, due linguaggi per la storia della società italiana."

Further information at www.asli2007.unimore.it

30 November-1 December 2007, Forum on Food and Culture, Tours

The European Institute of the History of Cultures

and Food will host this forum that confronts the question, "Does the good product exist?" For more information:

contact@iehca.eu

www.iehca.eu

21-23 February 2008, The 5th Interdisciplinary Conference on Food Representation in Literature, Film and the Other Arts, San Antonio

The objective of this interdisciplinary, multicultural conference is to examine, to celebrate, and to enjoy the variety of ways in which food has been represented in literature and the other arts throughout time and throughout the planet. The conveners will consider papers on any aspect of the general theme and written in any of the several languages taught at The University of Texas at San Antonio (English, Spanish, French, German, Russian, Italian, and Japanese). The deadline for proposals is 15 September. Contact Professor Santiago Daydi-Tolson, convivium@utsa.edu For more detailed and updated information, including previous Conference Programs, and Convivium Artium, the electronic journal on food representation in literature and the arts, visit the conference web page: <http://flan.utsa.edu/foodconf>, and/or the conference blog: <http://foodinlitart.blogspot.com>

Publishing Opportunities

Sows' Ears to Silk Purses

Ethnology: An International Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology welcomes papers for a special issue on the creative use of trash foods; that is, provisions used by poor people and enhanced by them and not food taken from garbage cans and city dumps.

The proposed issue is about stratified societies having institutionalised differences of wealth and power, whose populations have unequal access to quantities and varieties of food because of the organisation of commodity distribution. This results in ranking food and food ingredients based on their desirability, and encourages the emergence of haute cuisine as a culinary art. Admiration of artistic creativity is extended to chefs (men), and the cooks (women) are not appreciated for their innovations

with “low” cuisine, although they can turn trash into treasure. Poor people can create what become popular dishes from rejected foods and ingredients, such as the parts of a butchered animal that are despised, considered inedible, or garbage. The focus here is on culinary creativity with limited resources. Examples include scrapple, sausages (wursts), chitlins in various forms around the world, French toast, head cheese, and aspic. Ideas about preferred foods and dishes move not only from the top down, but also trickle up.

Contact the editor-in-chief, Leonard Plotnicov, at ETHNOLOG@pitt.edu

Women and Agriculture

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society is seeking papers for a special issue on the theme of women and agriculture. As agriculture becomes increasingly globalised, feminist concerns about women and agriculture revolve around issues of food security, social justice, and sustainability. Women across the globe have always played major roles in agricultural production, contributing substantially to food production and food security, but they often work in difficult conditions with low pay and inadequate access to land and capital. Despite women’s considerable role in agricultural production, they are markedly absent at the policy level in multinational corporations, international institutions, and national and state governments that determine directions for agriculture.

The intersections of gender, race, class, ethnicity, and nationality are, and have been historically, central to the politics of agriculture, structuring who produces food, who benefits from this global food system, and who eats. Women agriculturalists in the Global South are particularly vulnerable to free trade agreements that advantage agribusiness in Western nations. Women are nonetheless active in resisting the increasing globalisation and corporatisation of food. Scholarship on women farmers raises fascinating theoretical debates on women’s bodies, multiple identities, and technologies. Feminist science studies address issues of genetically engineered food and women’s agricultural knowledge and seed saving.

For this special issue the editors invite international, transnational, and comparative studies that engage theoretical and historical analyses of women and agriculture; and analyses of racial, ethnic, and gendered dimensions of agriculture. They seek

manuscripts on women and sustainable agriculture, on women in leadership and decision-making positions, and in feminist science studies pertaining to women’s knowledge and changing agricultural practices.

The deadline for submissions is 1 May 2008.

Guidelines for submission are available at <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/Signs/instruct.html>.

Food and Culture

ABC-CLIO is in the process of developing a comprehensive 21-volume Encyclopedia of World History. The editors are looking for interested scholars to prepare 500-1500 word articles with a global perspective in the areas of Food and Culture. Compensation: contributors will have their names associated with the entries they contribute and will receive access to the e-book version of the entire encyclopedia (list price \$1,800) for personal use. Contributors assigned 3,000 words or more will also receive a credit of \$300 towards purchase of ABC-CLIO books.

If you are interested in writing one or more of the entries listed below, send a cv to Fred Nadis: FNadis@abc-clio.com and/or Monique Vallance: MVallance@abc-clio.com

Era 9 (1945 to present):

Globalization of Fast Food (including McDonaldisation debates), 800 words

The Global Spread of Ethnic Food/Restaurants, 700
CAFTA and US Food Exports, 300

Era 7 (1750-1914):

New Techniques of Food Preservation: Canning and Freezing, 600

Working Class Diet in Nineteenth-Century Europe, 600

The “Cooking Revolution” in the West: Cooking Ranges and Cook Books, 600

Food and Health: Dealing with Adulterated Food, 600

Vegetarianism, 600

Music Halls and Beer Gardens, 600

Era 6 (1450-1770)

Food Production and Population Change in Central Africa, 750

The Age of Buckwheat: Climate, Food, and Famine in Early Modern Europe, 750

Manioc Comes to Africa, 200

Maize in Egypt: The 17th-Century Staple, 200

Maize Comes to India: The 17th-Century Staple, 200
Maize, Peanuts and Manioc, 200
The Potato Comes to Ireland, 200
Creative Destruction: Sugar Cane in the Caribbean, 200
Effects of the Mollusk Trade, 200

Prizes and Awards

The Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition (SAFN) seeks submissions for its annual Christine Wilson Awards given for outstanding undergraduate and graduate research papers on a topic that combines perspectives in nutrition or food studies and anthropology. Winners will be recognized and presented with an award at the 2007 AAA meeting in Washington DC and receive a year's membership in SAFN. Papers may report on research undertaken in whole or in part by the author. Papers must have as their primary focus an anthropological approach to the study of food and/or nutrition and must present original research. Contact Mark Jenike: mark.jenike@lawrence.edu. Deadline: 15 October 2007.

Word of the Day

Terroirism (Noun)

Pronunciation: ter-wah-ri-zêm

Definition: No, we didn't misspell today's word. Terroirism is the conviction that the "taste of the soil" (*goût de terroir*) plays the dominant role in determining the flavor and bouquet of a wine rather than the yeast and fermentation.

Usage: A terroir (*ter-wahr*) is the microclimate of the vineyard—the type of soil, the drainage, the inclination vis-à-vis the sun—that influences the taste of the grape. Everyone agrees that the terroir influences the taste of at least some types of wine but the terroirist is convinced it is the dominant factor in determining the taste of wine in general. Suggested Usage: Admittedly, the range of application for today's word is a bit narrow unless you are involved in the esoteric discussions of the origins of the tastes in wine. The terroirist, of course, believes the soil holds the answer while the anti-terroirist holds it to be the yeast, fermentation, and casks.

Courtesy of Jeffrey P. Miller

Websites

Ken Albala now has a blog devoted to food. As Ken advises, it is "for those of you who can stomach my sense of humor." <http://www.kenalbala.blogspot.com/>

Silvestro Silvestori traveled by bicycle for a month, from Marsala to Lecce, talking with producers and marketers, asking, in short, why so much of Italy's grape diversity is being ripped out in order to plant French grapes. The answers were surprising and are included in Silvestro's blog.

<http://www.awaitingtable.com/Journal/pedaling-wine.htm>

<http://www.thewvsr.com/adsvsreality.htm> is good for a chuckle. It takes the photos of food from fast-food advertising and contrasts them with photos of the actual food purchased by the photographers.

Fifteenth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy

Roger Haden Reports

"Beyond the supermarket" wasn't a directive to find the car park but the aspirational title given to the most recent Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, the fifteenth, held at Dover, south of Hobart, Tasmania from 29 April to 2 May. The subtitle, "learning to overcome gastronomic poverty," sounded a familiar call to those foodies of academic and lay persuasions who met during three days and four nights to discuss and dine, criticise and enthuse, argue and imbibe at what has become a gastronomic tradition in Australia. Convened by Scott Minervini and Karen Pridham, this symposium focused attention on the locality around Dover, taking in the history of the area to the south, including Recherche Bay, where a French expedition of 1792, led by Bruny D'Entrecasteaux in a ship named *Esperance*, planted a walled garden that has only very recently been rediscovered (2003). Some papers discussed this, and the lunch on the first day of the symposium included local wild foods, like sprue asparagus, that might have been present at the time of the French landing. The customary welcome from the conveners on the eve of the symposia involved a stand-up dinner (pie-cart style) with a choice of three Tasmanian wines in Dover's Grocery and Newsagency, the history

of which would be brought to life in the following days by various community members involved in its operation, including a wonderful account of 10-gallon ice-cream tubs, packed in ice, shipped down the coast from Hobart in the days before electric refrigeration. Some enthralling entertainment came from “The Recherche Baybes,” dressed as eighteenth-century seafarers, who sang uproarious ditties and shanty-style songs that re-created the historic mood of the time of the French landing. “The talking” (as it was billed) began next morning and took place in the local Dover Community Church with Lindsay Neill’s account of the “White Lady,” or pie cart, an ailing tradition (due mostly to hygiene-related regulations and by-laws) in New Zealand; followed by Stephanie Alexander giving an inspiring summary of her work establishing the School Gardens program in Victoria. Margaret Blow gave another account of the French garden at Recherche Bay following morning tea. Attention thus focused on the symposium’s theme from several points of view: history, horticulture, a child’s perspective, or a particular cultural-culinary tradition. Anne Creber would later give an account of her experience tending a perma-culture garden, a process involving a whole community of helpers, travellers, locals, and others. The last panel of the day was on the corner shop, featuring photographs and colourful accounts of the life and times of the Dover corner store. A positive sense of the interplay between foods, traditions, change, and innovation, as well as responses to these, took shape in the discussions of the day and continued over dinner, a paella, made in a metre-wide purpose built pan and cooked outside the Port Esperance Sailing Club in Dover. The dish reflected the mixture of elements that make up any (food) community, and gave some pause for reflection on the European influences that had affected Tasmanian culture and foodways. Tuesday brought forth critical accounts of consumerism by Roger Haden, while Charlene Ong looked at ways to work with the big supermarket chains, for example, to affect positive change in gastronomic culture. Aptly, Jenny Bain screened the moving documentary *Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*, which told the story of Cuba’s struggle to gain self-sufficiency in the wake of the cold war, having been cut off from Soviet, and most other, sources of oil supply. Food production, conventionally so dependent on fossil fuels, was replaced by “urban agriculture.”

Local community gardens in Havana thereby also saved on the transportation costs of fruit and vegetables. Fertilisers, also based on fossil fuels, were increasingly replaced by organic methods. Cooperation and sharing, as the film suggests, were already part of Cuba’s socialist way of thinking. The system of gardening and the sharing of the foods produced in them, as much as the satisfaction one imagines coming from eating such foods knowing where, how, and by what methods they were produced, presented an image of a food culture being re-built from the ground up. The film showed clearly how gastronomic culture begins with the earth and how it is indeed possible to make changes to the way we, as consumers, live and eat. It also made clear, however, that dire need in this instance was necessary for this “gastronomy” to become the driver of change and so highlighted one essential difference between the first and third worlds. Many of the issues touched on in the film were echoed in papers that described the efforts being made on all levels to increase gastronomic awareness. On the third day speakers highlighted other problems and solutions related to basic food provision in Australasia. Nancy Pollock spoke about the struggles faced by Food Banks and the growing levels of need in New Zealand communities, and Paul van Reyk gave an up-beat account of the successes of Valley Food Inc in New South Wales’ Hunter Valley, which supplies “inexpensive food to financially struggling individuals and families.” “The talking” concluded with accounts from local producers and chefs, including Elaine Reeves, Steve Cumper, Simon West, Stewart Young, John Zito, and Colin Beer, who described the difficulties and triumphs of their working lives, pushing for innovation and change while contending with bureaucratic red tape and restrictive government regulations. The banquet on the final evening (the venue for which is always kept a secret to the last) brought everything back to the land, as we shared a meal prepared solely from cuts of meat from a single steer, raised in the same field in which the meal was served. We were all led into a hundred-odd year-old barn, especially renovated by its owners for the event, and ate from an undulating turf “tablecloth” bedecked with apple “trees” and mushrooms. The meal was wonderful (by chef Simon West, with courses by Scott Minervini and Graeme Phillips),

especially, to my taste, “the boned tail stuffed with tongue,” a sumptuous timbale of tender meats cooked to perfection.

On the following morning the fifteenth symposium was officially closed by veteran symposiast, Gay Bilson. The venue of the next symposium will be the Hunter Valley in 2009, convened by Helen Hughes, Ian and Liz Hemphill, Norma Burri and Elizabeth Love. The mood at the close was positive, perhaps as always, but given the range of possibilities and potentialities both evoked and demonstrated during the three days, there was plenty to feel positive about. While gastronomic poverty, or perhaps just poverty, seems always to be a root problem, much is now being done among children, producers, chefs, and retailers to steer us well clear of that icon of all that is supposedly wrong with consumerism: the supermarket.

The Research Centre for the History of Food and Drink
presents

Peter Barham

Physicist, pioneer of molecular gastronomy,
author of *Science in the Kitchen*, and culinary collaborator with chef Heston Blumenthal (of the famed Fat Duck)

Molecular gastronomy and the science of taste and flavour

Napier Building, University of Adelaide

11th September, 2007

Lecture Theatre G03

5.15 for 6 pm.

“Molecular” Refreshments Provided

RSVP by 31st August to roger.haden@adelaide.edu.au

Abstract: Molecular gastronomy has been interpreted in many different ways, some people think of it as cooking with weird chemicals while others consider it to be mad chefs and scientists thinking up strange combinations of flavours and textures. I disagree with any such interpretations. There are several good definitions of Molecular Gastronomy – amongst the best is that from Harold McGee who defines it simply as “the science of deliciousness”. In my role as visiting Professor of Molecular Gastronomy at the University of Copenhagen, one of my main tasks is to attempt to make Molecular Gastronomy a recognised scientific discipline. Our preferred definition is that Molecular Gastronomy should be considered as the pursuit of a full scientific understanding of what it is that makes us enjoy our food. I will begin this lecture demonstration by elucidating how Molecular Gastronomy arose and outlining some of its achievements to date.

The main thrust of the lecture will be to show how little we really understand about how we actually ascribe “flavour” to food. We will ask questions such as: What gives food its flavour? What makes some foods taste really good while others can be mediocre or even disgusting? We will see how far can science go in answering these (and other) questions that are so important for domestic cooks and chefs alike?

In this short demonstration lecture I will show that we actually use all our senses to assess the food we eat. We use our eyes to see the colour, shape and size, our ears to hear any sizzling, or crackling, etc. we use our hands to feel the texture, we use our tongues to sense the taste, our noses to sense the aroma and all the nerves in our mouths to assess the “mouthfeel”. Once we understand that we integrate all these sensations into what we call the “flavour” and then decide whether or not we like it, we can go on to use such understanding to design novel and interesting dishes to delight the palate.