

Slow Food

UK News

December 2009

Dear Members and Friends,

December is an ideal month for reflection, and one in which food plays a particularly strong role in many cultures. This year has been an exciting for Slow Food UK, and has brought well deserved recognition for the dedicated producers and passionate Slow Food supporters who make up our membership. With the results of the BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards, the interest in The Taste Adventure for children and the success of the Slow Food Pavilion for producers at the BBC Good Food Shows, we have strong evidence of the relevance and potential that Slow Food has in the UK. We will be working hard to ensure that we build strongly on these positive foundations in 2010.

One of the first tasks we must tackle is to better define and communicate what Slow Food is and how it is relevant to the average person in the street. With input from leaders at our National Meeting in October and from talking to the public at our events, we have been developing ideas as to how this could best be done. The difficulty comes when our message needs to be defined and understood in the few seconds' window that modern media and attention opens for us.

At a basic level Slow Food is the opposite of fast food. Where fast food values speed, cheapness and uniformity, Slow Food values taste, cultural and regional differences, seasonality, and the health of people and the planet. In the UK and the US especially, where industrial food systems developed and flourished first, Slow Food has to be able to engage even those brought up on fast food diets. For this to happen, our message has to be condensed and simplified so as to have the best chance of awakening interest in exploring the wider world of taste and awareness about food. We need to be open to all, Slow Food is about everyone enjoying food and creating a better food system. It is not about class, elitism or income levels.

As Slow Food reaches the age of 20 on the 10th December, it celebrates with Terra Madre Day. Terra Madre is about making access to good food and a sustainable food system an inherent right for the world and its people. Slow Food has always worked by getting people together to learn, discuss and eat food. Terra Madre is a way to have this happen on a global scale. We will be looking to strengthen the concept of Terra Madre and its integration with our network of Slow Food members.

Season's Greetings.
Catherine Gazzoli
CEO Slow Food UK

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Terra Madre Day 10/12/09

Today Terra Madre communities and SF members around the globe will host a series of convivial events to mark Slow Food's Twentieth Anniversary and to celebrate eating locally. The UK Network is incredibly well-represented, with over 20 events organised nationwide...

SF Saltire Ayrshire - Christmas Puddings & Dessert Wines Tasting

SF Cumbria - Rambling Damsons

SF Fife - Chocolate & Cheer

SF NE Ireland - Slow Food in the Canteen

SF Edinburgh - Farmers' Market Cooking Demo

SF Cornwall - Nurturing a Slow Taste - Festiggia Venti Anni

SF Glasgow - Pot Luck Dinner

SF Glasgow - Bread Making for All

SF Berkshire & Wiltshire - Terra Madre Dinners

SF Daylesford - The Gloucester Cattle Story

SF Linlithgow - Linlithgow Farmers' Market

SF Ludlow - The Green Cafe Terra Madre Social

SF Dyfi Valley - The Learning Lunch

SF Lincolnshire - Go Nowhere Cook In

SF London - Pisces RFR

SF London - Piemonte in Pimlico

SF Jersey - Pot Luck Dinner

SF Berwick-Upon-Tweed - 10 Mile Meal

SF Worcester - Slow Food Hot Buffet



SF Fife's Christmas treats from the bakery

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BBC Food & Farming Awards

The results of the BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards were revealed on Friday November 27, and we are extremely pleased to announce that our Slow Food producers certainly made their mark in the world of food and farming.

Farmer of the Year - Andrew Dennis, Woodlands Farm Organic Farm, Boston (SF Rutland & Lincs member)

Best Food Producer - James Swift, Trealy Farm Charcuterie, Mitchel Troy, Monmouth (SF Bristol member)

Special Judges Award - Julian Temperley, Somerset Cider Brandy Company (SF Somerset member)

Best Retail Initiative - Mark Oughtred, Growfair - Pride of Cornwall, Bodmin (SF Cornwall Treasurer)

On behalf of The Food Ethics Council, Tom MacMillan (SF Brighton) collected the Derek Cooper Award for the organisation doing the most to increase our knowledge and understanding of good food and the vital role it plays in our lives.

A big Congratulations to you all!

HRH The Prince of Wales addressed the audience, stating *'The truth is that by treating food as an easy commodity, rather than a precious gift from Nature, we have started playing games with our health and with the environment, from which humanity can only stand to lose...if we lose the knowledge, skills and traditions of our food culture, and we fail to give back to the soil and to Nature what we take from them, we will lose the wherewithal to look after ourselves and our planet'*.

Fisherman Profile

Supper

SF North Yorkshire & SF West Yorkshire - Festive Eat-In Dinner

SF Brighton & Lewes - Local Breeds - Local Taste



International Year of Biodiversity

Slow Food UK is part of the world-wide celebrations of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. The diversity of life on earth is crucial for human well-being and now is the time to act to preserve it. At the Natural History Museum website launch event in November, we pledged to encourage the public to 'Seek out a rare British food crop or breed, like Scottish Beremeal or Manx Loaghtan Lamb and "support biodiversity by eating it"!'. Slow Food events for 2010 will be themed on our work to promote biodiversity through the UK Ark of Taste and Presidia program. For information on 2010IYB events, initiatives and exhibitions across the UK visit www.biodiversityislife.net

Cumbrian Flood Appeal

Cumbrian chef and Slow Food member Peter Sidwell has launched an initiative to raise funds for Cumbrian flood victims. He is producing a calendar and has donated twelve images to accompany a selection of local, and also his own, recipes. Costs have been covered other than the printing and apart from these all proceeds will go to the Flood Relief Appeal. Slow Food Cumbria is assisting Peter in this project and we would welcome the support of members nationwide. Calendars are available on-line at www.simplygoodtaste.co.uk for a minimum donation of £5 plus p&p. Please help!

Social Media



Do you Tweet? So we can communicate with new audiences and promote our message of good, clean and fair food to the masses, Slow Food UK has a Twitter page. Twitter serves as a great way of linking with other like minded organisations and groups so that we can share ideas about our work. Follow us at: [@slowfooduk](https://twitter.com/slowfooduk).



Find us on Facebook - Slow Food UK- and follow the orange snail.



Slow Diary

19-22 Dec - SF London
Southbank Market

SF Hastings member Paul Joy is Chairman of Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society and fiercely passionate about bringing back traditional, sustainable fishing methods to our local coastal communities after the introduction of the Fixed Quota Allocation in 2006. We took a trip to see Paul at work and asked him some questions...

Paul, how did you get into fishing?

My family has been fishing here in Hastings since 1000. When I was younger my father wouldn't let me go fishing, and I was told I had to get a more secure job with a guaranteed income, so I studied horticulture at Hastings College. After a year in landscaping, someone bought my father out of his business and I quickly decided to go into partnership with the new owner. We had nothing when we started out - no fish market, no rights, no running water, or electricity - but thanks to the Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society (HFPS) there have been so many changes since.

Although the HFPS was already established when I started out in the industry, we wanted to give it a strong financial footing, as many local fishermen were unaware of their rights resulting from the 1947 deed of compromise. This deed gives Hastings' fishermen irrevocable license to the ground, the classified blue stade (landing place). We also wanted to form a closer relationship with the council and emphasise the importance of tourism in the area and collaborating with the fishermen. We have grown in strength, with the Fisherman's Institute and Society and Fish Market enterprises under the umbrella of HFPS, and we are now involved in new local developments, like seafood training kitchens.

What is your view on the state of fish stocks?

At present, the perception is that fish stocks are dwindling, however the reality is that some stocks are very healthy, but we have no quota to fish them. All our quota is being given to the big boys in the industry and we are being wiped out. In Hastings, fish stocks of Sole are stronger and Cod stocks are the strongest they have been in 40 years, but we are still not allowed to land one fish and are forced to throw them back dead into the sea. The new 2006 government legislation demands we count every fish we land, whereas before we only had to estimate our catch and this means it becomes very hard to continue practicing sustainable methods of fishing. The government must realise that by wiping out traditional fishing practices, there are far reaching consequences. Look at Somalia and the resulting piracy because their local fishing industry has been destroyed.

IUU illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a serious global problem, how is regulation here in the UK?

Well, the UK is the most heavily regulated fishery in the world. For example, in Hastings when we go out to sea, our regulation process is as follows: Sussex Sea Fisheries board us and check the catch, then the Royal Navy board and check too. A spotter plane would usually fly over and photograph us from the air, and once we are on the beach a Marine and Fisheries Agency officer checks the catch. We then go to market, where the fish is checked again, and we follow up by electronically sending all the data from our catches to DEFRA. If

anything is transported by road this too can be checked at any time.

How does your fishing philosophy tie in with Slow Food?

The concept of Slow Food is closely linked to what we believe needs to happen if we are to achieve and maintain sustainable fishing communities - being treated in a fair and proportionate way. It is through our networks and public awareness that we can take our issues to government and lobby against the Fixed Quota Allocation and for a fair representation for the inshore coastal communities of this country. We need to forge links with sustainable communities in the EU, and build bridges with groups like WWF, Oceans 2012 and Greenpeace. The way forward is to learn how to manage our fisheries properly and move away from the quota system and onto sustainable fishing methods, which are practised by many of our small coastal communities.

The leader of SF Hastings, Craig Sams, and Paul are available to organise member visits to see The Stade and Paul's boat. For more information, please email Craig at craig@craigsams.com.

Group Spotlight: SF Rutland & Lincolnshire



Alex James and Andrew Dennis at the Food & Farming Awards (BBC/Jon Furniss)

Slow Food Rutland and Lincolnshire is led by food writer Sarah Lyon. After a triumphant success at the BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming awards, we asked Sarah her thoughts on the awards and Farmer of the Year, Andrew Dennis of Woodlands Farm...

As a SF group leader I feel very strongly about promoting our local producers, and because I am the Food and Farming writer for our Local Living magazines in Lincolnshire I have the privilege of being able to raise their profile generally. I started writing for the Local Living group when they began 6 years ago, and Woodlands Farm was the first farm I wrote about and I have been supporting it ever since. Andrew has been a member of SF Rutland and Lincolnshire from the beginning, and has been an enormous support to the group. In fact, one of our first visits was to Woodlands Farm, where Andrew took us on a guided walk around the farm and Poetry Trail, followed by a potluck lunch in the farmhouse orchard.

When Andrew accepted the Food and Farming award for Farmer of the Year, Sheila Dillon asked him what it was he wanted people to leave the farm with. Andrew's reply was "A sense of wonder for the growing capacity of the miracle of the land". Andrew wanted to farm in such a way as to bring himself and the farm closer to the public. He

has done this by introducing a Box Scheme of Fruit & Vegetables, Lincolnshire Buff eggs and farming Lincolnshire rare breeds. Sheila Dillon described it as "mixed farming on a grand scale with a social purpose", and this is what the farm provides, with its demonstrations for school children and guided walks as well as the farming of the land.

Are you thinking of submitting any local foods into the Ark of Taste?
Andrew farms rare breeds indigenous to Lincolnshire. His commitment to the integrity of this farming venture is unmatched. SF Rutland and Lincolnshire recently nominated Andrew's Lincolnshire Longwool Lamb for the Ark of Taste and we are hoping to finalise this very soon.

Why is Lincolnshire a great place for a Slow Food Group?
It has been an amazing journey being a SF group leader. My first experience of Slow Food was visiting Cheese in Bra about 6 years ago. I was impressed then by the movement -the outstanding success of the event, the professionalism of how it was run and the seriousness of purpose- and it made me realise that I needed to become involved. Our group has moved from strength to strength over the years, and I am more encouraged and more positive than ever about the future of our local group. Last year we concentrated our events around the theme of Foraging. In the New Year we will concentrate our group's activities on the Campaign for Real Bread in support of the Farmers, Millers and Bakers who are trying to produce good, clean and fair flour and bread.

Slow Food friends and members can order Andrew's organic rare breed turkeys for Christmas. Tel: 01205 724778 or go to www.woodlandsfarm.co.uk

Slow Food Ark Corner: The Manx Loaghtan Sheep



Manx Ram, Bobby Dazzler (? Diana Steriopulos)

The Ark of Taste is a catalogue of exceptional gastronomic products in danger of disappearing due to current food production and distribution systems. Thanks to the contribution of experts and collaborators around the world the Ark currently includes more than 700 products from 30 countries. Presidia are an extension of the Slow Food Ark. A presidium is a local project which focuses on a group of producers of a single product. They work together to develop production and marketing techniques to allow their work to be economically viable.

All Slow Food groups are encouraged to seek out local products which would be suitable for inclusion in the UK Ark of Taste. More information about the Ark and further contact information if you

wish to nominate a product are available on the website
www.slowfoodark.com

The Manx Loaghtan Sheep is native to the Isle of Man and a descendent of the kinds of prehistoric short-tailed breeds found in isolated parts of northwest Europe.

The breed has come close to extinction on a number of occasions, the first during the Industrial Revolution when the demand was for white fleece. The breed was saved by a John Caesar Bacon, but when he died in the early 20th century they were once again forgotten and by the 1950s there were less than 100 sheep left. This time they were rescued by a Manx farmer, Jack Quine who gradually built up their numbers and exported some to be kept in the UK to preserve the line.

At the end of the 80s, George Steriopulos, a business man who had moved to the island 10 years previously realised that the best way to preserve the breed was to create a market for its meat and fleece.

After a long battle with the Manx parliament (the Isle of Man is not governed by the UK, nor is it part of the EU) in 2001, he finally won his battle to market the meat as a distinct product. This required the setting up of a co-operative, with which all must register to market the meat.

These primitive sheep graze on the natural herbage of the island, taking 15-18 months to reach maturity. This results in a dark, lean meat with a slightly gamey flavour. They are very fine looking with 2 or 4 horns and brown in colour. There are currently 14 breeders, with a total of around 2000 breeding ewes.

This year, George was nominated for Farmer of the Year Award for the BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards.

If you would like to have a go at cooking some Manx Loaghtan Lamb please contact:

*George Steriopulos, Manx Loaghtan Sheep Breed Society Ltd,
Ballaloaghtan, Kerrowkeil, Grenaby, Isle of Man, IM9 3BB Tel:
01624 824618 www.manxloaghtan.com*

Edible Biodiversity

One of the best ways of preserving the biodiversity of our food is to eat more of our unusual plant varieties and animal breeds. We need to create a viable and economic future for our Ark products and the most effective way we can do this as 'co-producers' is to buy them, feast on them and tell our friends about them.

SF Worcestershire did exactly this last month. They hosted a UK Ark of Taste Dinner to mark Slow Food's 20th Anniversary.

Menu

Canapes using..

- British Red Grouse
- Morecambe Bay Shrimp
- Jersey Black Butter
- Manx Loaghtan Lamb Loin
- Kirkham's Lancashire Cheese

Main Course

- Old Gloucester Beef and Colchester Oyster Pie
- Vegetarian Pie using locally sourced, seasonal vegetables and Ark cheeses

Followed by

- Keen's Cheddar, Appleby's Cheshire, Lyth Valley Damson preserves
- Somerset Cider Brandy
- Butford Organics Sparkling Aurora Perry local perry, cider, and apple juice

The dinner allowed members to taste as many of the UK Ark products that were possible to fit into a menu during that month. It can be recreated easily and is a fantastic opportunity to bring such fine products to a larger audience. Eat it or lose it!

www.slowfoodark.com

Children's Food Campaign - *Challenging Product Placement*



Aware of the poor quality diet of many children in the UK, the Children's Food Campaign has long been challenging the government to protect children from junk food marketing and ensure that every school serves good food and gives children a real food education.

Recent years have seen many successes, from getting nutritional standards for school meals and practical cooking back on the curriculum to securing some of the toughest legislation in the world to protect children from junk food marketing.

But now a new obstacle has been thrown in the way of improving children's food culture - product placement. Allowing companies to pay to place their products in UK television programmes, a move that is currently being consulted on, would open a back door to junk food marketers. Product placement is particularly concerning because it is integrated into programmes and often unrecognisable, meaning that parents can't protect their children from it in the way that they can with traditional spot advertising.

Still, it's not too late to make your concerns known about this stealthy and unhealthy form of marketing. You can respond via www.childrensfoodcampaign.org.uk, and if you are in London and visiting the Slow Food Christmas market the weekend before Christmas, look out for CFC there, who will be letting food lovers know about the government's plans.

The Children's Food Campaign is supported by over 300 national and

local organisations and 12,000 members of the public. The Campaign is coordinated by Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming and is funded by the British Heart Foundation.

www.childrensfoodcampaign.org.uk

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