

Slow Food

UK News

February 2010

Dear Members and Friends,

Spring will inject a youthful touch to our mission with the imminent launch of Slow Food on Campus (SFOC). SFOC is a programme that offers students the opportunity to actively participate in our movement. Its core value is to encourage students to take the reins to influence and affect positive change on the food system of their respective campuses.

I believe these formative years of early adulthood are key to shaping the responsible and ethical adult. SFOC has seen great results in Slow Food USA, where teams of students and faculty are proactively bringing about our vision of 'good, clean and fair food' by engaging with the web of local food producers in the surrounding communities and bringing their stories to campus.

On a social level, SFOC is also about fostering a positive and healthy relationship with food and those you can enjoy it with by developing the life skill of cooking. I find it personally very satisfying to have SFOC take flight just at the time when the pioneering woman, who my own university and the area associated with it, just won the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur for her passionate campaigning work for local, sustainable and seasonal food. Alice Waters is an inspiration to any University of California, Berkeley student who cooks Chez Panisse recipes for her student study groups to make sure she gets the best of everyone's notes! I had no idea that ten years later I would be taking to Britain lessons learned from someone who is now also Slow Food International's Vice President.

Lastly, in this fast-paced life it is essential that we take the time to get to know each and so as your support team continues to grow, we have added a new section in our newsletter – 'meet the team', highlighting a member of SFUK.

In the meantime, I may go test a couple of my old college day Alice recipes...

Catherine Gazzoli
CEO Slow Food UK

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Slow Diary

27 March

Local group press release and social media training workshop



Terra Madre Newsletter

To read the latest Terra Madre newsletter please click [this link](#)

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](#).



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

Group Profile: Oxon

Slow Food Oxon was initially founded on a bright sunny day in summer 2004 and officially launched in January 2005 with a series of events aiming at bringing SF members closer to local food producers. Ever since, they have been spreading the word about "good, clean and fair" and have been discovering new places to eat and to learn about food in a search for the essence of "slow food". Like any group, Oxon has had its ups and downs and changes in leadership, but ever since Tamara Schiopu took up the leadership reins again, she has started to breathe new life into the group.

"It is our primary task now to regain the popularity we once had and attract more people into our network" declares Tamara, for whom "slow food" is about tradition, knowledge, pleasure and networking. "Terra Madre is something that no one else is doing in the world - bringing together small producers and food communities under one roof, and making it possible to feel, to smell and to taste indigenous products of so many countries". Tamara would like the group to be developed into a popular and enjoyable network, and in this age of digitalised socialization, many volunteers help with their website, the greatest tool to promote events and manage the bookings.

"We like to look into all possible slow avenues - books, films, fine dining, debates, tours and of course - tastings. We have always had a strong student connection and The Taste Adventure which we were instrumental in launching at The Children's Food Festival in 2009, has now become a highlight of SFUK's educational programming."

Tamara is therefore working on many things for a burgeoning 2010: reading and speaking events, farm shop visits, wine tastings and a workshop on preserving. Oxon's boldest plan is a Slow Food tour to rural Poland in the summer. This follows a Polish friend's campaign to preserve traditional ways of farming in Poland which won a Goldman "Nobel" Prize. All events are posted and can be signed up for at www.slowfood-oxon.org.uk.

Launch of Slow Food on Campus

We will be shortly launching Slow Food on Campus at Winchester University and Oxford Brookes. This initiative has already aroused interest in several other universities and colleges around the country and we're planning for more to join us very soon including vocational, community and catering colleges.

Ria Jackson, recently appointed SFOC Coordinator is spearheading our plans, and we are immensely grateful for the funding secured jointly from Winchester University and the Higher Education Funding Council for England, which has enabled us to bring Ria on to our permanent staff. Slow Food UK will support students by supplying resources, contact details of producers and by visiting them on a regular basis. This will enable the groups to arrange demonstrations, run events and investigate local produce and producers.

In the United States, the Slow Food on Campus programme has been gaining momentum, appearing on more campuses every year, with passionate leaders creating innovative events and campaigns to raise awareness and change attitudes towards food. Julia Middleton, from Slow Food USA's funky office located just off the great Brooklyn Bridge in Dumbo, Brooklyn told us:

"We are really excited to see Slow Food on Campus take off in the United Kingdom. Our network of students and the teaching faculty that support the programme are eager to connect with other young people around the world who also want to encourage their universities and colleges to consider the story behind, and consequences of, their food purchasing decisions."

The Balvenie and Slow Food Tastings



Last year we reported that we had secured valuable support from the "Consorzio Tutela Grana Padano" (Consortium for the Protection of Grana Padano Cheese). The Consortium operates as a non-profit organisation of the 160 or so cheese producers who range from small farms to large dairies. The cheese is the best selling PDO cheese in Italy with retail sales worth around €2 billion. This gives the Consortium considerable resources while being totally committed to the well-being of the producers. The structure of the Consortium also allows them a longer-term perspective than many businesses and this has allowed them to see the long-term benefit of strengthening Slow Food's work in the UK. Grana Padano have been a key supporter of Slow Food in Italy since its early days.

In September we had the opportunity to visit their headquarters in Lombardia, northern Italy. For cheese lovers in this country, the first hurdle in understanding Grana Padano is to appreciate the relationship between it and its compatriot Parmigiano Reggiano. The history of both these hard, aged cheeses stretches back more than 900 years. The modern versions and distinctions between these cheeses were formalised between the 1930s and '50s when the consortiums for the two cheeses were established. The first difference between the cheeses is that they are produced in geographically separate areas - Grana Padano is produced in a number of regions across the northern part of the River Po in Italy, from Piemonte in the west to Trentino-Alto Adige in the east whilst Parmigiano Reggiano is south of the River Po, mostly in Emilia Romagna. Both cheeses have to be made with unpasteurised milk but Grana Padano's milk has more of the cream skimmed off, leading to a lower fat content and texture/taste differences. The production and ageing methods for both cheeses are very similar, the production starts with the milk being curdled and "cooked" in giant copper cauldrons/vats. Two twin wheels of cheese are made per cauldron/vats from around 1,100 litres of milk. After forming, the cheeses are salted in brine for a few weeks before starting their long ageing in storage rooms. Grana Padano tends to be eaten at a younger stage because it is less fatty. Minimum ageing is 9 months but as the cheese ages, more complex flavours and grainy texture develop.

Grana Padano has been keeping company with Slow Food UK on our stands at the BBC Good Food Shows where comparative tastings of their "over 16 months" and "Riserva over 20 months" vintages have been enticing members of the public to find out more about taste, food and Slow Food.

First outing for The Taste Adventure in 2010



Photo © 2010 Guy Hudson

Slow Food Brighton & Lewes hosted The Taste Adventure at a local event, Seedy Sunday in Hove, on Sunday 7th February. There was a great turn out with approximately 60 children (95% of the children at the event) being guided through the 'sensory journey'. The TTA kit is fully adaptable to different venues and locations and on this occasion TTA was allocated an ideal spot in the community hall. Group leader Ursula Hudson, with a team of volunteers, managed to get everyone, including parents and grandparents, talking about food and the enjoyment it brings when the different senses are involved. For many it was their first time distinguishing between sour and bitter, for example, and it was inspiring to see the enthusiasm and enjoyment resulting from performing these simple sensory tasks.

We already have a busy TTA schedule for the coming months and right into the summer with various festivals across the country. For more background on TTA visit our [website](#) or contact Alice Dickie at a.dickie@slowfood.org.uk if you wish to hire out the kit - the diary is getting booked up!

Slow Food Ark Corner: Dorset Blue Vinny Cheese



The Ark of Taste is one of the ways in which Slow Food works to support greater biodiversity, ensuring products in danger of disappearing are revived and supported. Our approach of 'Eat it or Lose it' has never been more relevant.

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

Dorset Blue Vinny is a particularly interesting example of the skimmed-milk cheeses which used to be made virtually throughout Britain. The skimmed milk was left over from butter-making. Many of these cheeses, including Blue Vinny, apparently, were so hard that jokes were made about them being suitable for use as the soles of

shoes. Today, Michael Davies's version, however, is crumbly rather than hard and does not come across as a particularly low-fat cheese: this is partly because the milk is skimmed by hand, as is traditional, which means that it retains a small but significant proportion of the milk's fat (Michael reckons about three per cent). Despite the fact that the cheese is sometimes very blue, it is not overwhelmingly strong, since the mould gives a relatively mild herbal taste.

Dorset Blue Vinny is not only very good on the cheeseboard with a glass of red wine and some fruit, but it can also be enjoyed toasted or used in cooking. The cheese is made from raw milk from the producer's own herd of Friesian cows. Since the Second World War, this cheese has only been made in very small quantities on one or two farms and now Michael Davies (a member of the 'Specialist Cheesemakers' Association) is the sole producer. His output is 500-600 kg per week and the cheese is fairly widely distributed throughout the country.

For more information on the Dorset Blue Vinny Cheese, please contact Michael Davies on +44 (0)1963 23216 or via email info@dorsetblue.com

Recipe: Purple Sprouting Broccoli with Dorset Blue Vinny Cheese Soup

In this period of lingering cold and snow, we naturally turn to hot dishes and soups are a big favourite to keep us going (along with moonboots obviously). This month, we decided to incorporate our Ark of Taste special cheese with a seasonal treasure, the body loving purple sprouting broccoli. It contains the phytochemical sulphoraphane (thought to help prevent cancer) and may provide resistance against heart disease, osteoporosis and diabetes. On top of being packed with vitamin C, iron, folic acid, calcium and fibre, it can be found on our markets from mid-February to mid-March. Mother Nature knows her ways.

Serves 4

Ingredients

400g fresh Purple Sprouting Broccoli
50g salted butter
1 x medium onion (approx 150g) finely chopped
1 x small potato (approx 120g), diced
600ml vegetable stock
400ml full fat milk
50g Dorset Blue Vinny Cheese, crumbled

Method

Prepare the broccoli by trimming the bottom centimetre to discard the tough ends.

Melt the butter in a large saucepan and add the onion. Cook gently for 5 - 10 minutes until soft but not coloured.

Stir in the broccoli pieces and the diced potato. Sweat for a further 5 - 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the vegetable stock, place the lid on the saucepan and allow boiling gently for 20 minutes until soft.

Remove the pan from the heat and allow to cool a little. Add the Dorset Blue Vinny Cheese and stir in well until completely melted.

Add the milk and blend the soup until it is smooth.

Return to a clean pan to reheat. Season accordingly.

Pour into individual bowls and garnish with either double cream or crème fraiche and if you prefer with some more Dorset Blue Vinny crumbled on top!