

Slow Food

UK News

January 2010

Dear Members and Friends,

As everyone emerges from the snow, we dare to dream of green shoots. And indeed, we are feeling like it's already spring as new funding has enabled us to kick-start our educational programming. We will up the ante by gearing up in three core areas: food education, edible biodiversity and strengthening local food communities. We'll be telling you more about this in future newsletters. In the meantime do check out the [opportunities](#) to join our growing team.

We've also decided to make a change in our communications to you. We will produce a monthly e-newsletter and each quarter produce a printed version. We always welcome feedback on newsletter articles - so if you'd like us to feature something, just let us know by emailing us at info@slowfood.org.uk.

The pleasures of good food can help build a community, celebrating culture and regional diversity. A great movement can only grow from local roots, together with community action. I hope you will get involved in some of our new educational activities working with the food communities on your doorstep.

It's been a very exciting first few weeks of 2010 and I would like your views and suggestions as the movement grows. I am meeting up with our new groups in the upcoming months. If I have not met you yet, do come out even though it's still a little cold out there. I really do hope to meet you soon.

Not so slow regards ;)

Catherine Gazzoli
CEO Slow Food UK

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Producer Interview: Graham Head

Slow Diary

On The Balvenie Trail

Groups all around the country are booking up their own tasting of The Balvenie single malt whiskies. Next month we'll have a full report of the events

[28 January](#)
Brighton & Lewes

[2 February](#)
Glasgow

[3 February](#)
Ayrshire

[10 February](#)
West Yorkshire

[11 February](#)
North Yorkshire

[15 February](#)
Berkshire & Wiltshire

[16 February](#)
Ludlow Marches & Worcestershire

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.



Slow Food Berwick-Upon-Tweed has a newly appointed leader, Graham Head. On a trip to London, Graham popped into the office in Neal's Yard and revealed to us how he became involved in breeding rare Middle White pigs...

Tell us a little about your background?

I am an Ecologist by education, having studied biological Sciences at Sussex University in the 60s, and have always been interested in animals, whether farmyard or otherwise. Having subsequently spent several years in Belgium, Holland and France working for ESSO, I really started to appreciate a food culture that seemed more closely tied into the agriculture and landscape that supported it.

When BSE broke out in 1995, my wife and I became a little suspicious of mass produced beef and burgers, so we decided to rear and feed the only meat animals that we could accommodate - 2 pigs in our back garden. We chose Middle Whites as rather cute looking, endangered rare breed pig. They're white with short snouts, a cross between large whites and small white show pigs bred at the turn of the nineteenth century. After five months we took the pigs to the abattoir and were bowled over by the taste. It was like nothing else available from the supermarket - a really great pork pig, which has been ignored by commercial breeders because they are too small and mature too slowly. This carried on as a hobby and so the breeding began!

How did you become an established breeder and where do you sell your pork?

After moving up to Berwick Upon Tweed in 1997 with my job in Edinburgh, we brought our eight or nine pigs with us, selling our pork to family and friends, and one or two restaurants. When my wife passed away, I wanted a change of direction and decided to try and develop our hobby into a business, particularly when in 2001 I entered my sausages into Smithfields' Rare Breed Sausage Competition...and won! A year later some friends and I started Berwick farmers' market, and in 2004 I attended the first Terra Madre event as a delegate. Thanks largely to that, I was later contacted by the BBC who were researching "perfect pork" for Heston Blumenthal's first television series and have now been supplying his Fat Duck restaurant in Bray for several years.

How important is it to protect and preserve rare breeds around the UK?

We should not lose the right to choose the generally superior taste of rare breeds, even if they are more expensive. Mass production of foods at cheaper prices is necessary, but it should not be allowed to overwhelm niche markets for high quality, traditional food production. Annually, we produce 250-300 pigs and sell at markets, food events and Christmas mail order. This is a fair enough size for me. Our pigs are fed on natural grain and we get our seasonings from Wiltshire.

How do you view the Slow Food and Terra Madre networks?

The Terra Madre network gives small-scale producers throughout the world a sense of fellowship, common cause and greater presence on a global stage. Hence farmers in the Shetland Islands realise they share common issues with African or Far Eastern producers. And I see Slow

Food as the WWF for food - preserving foods that are endangered and all the steps in the chain of producing that product. I hope SF becomes an effective voice for small producers and a natural partner with the government for consultation on food issues in the UK.

Making Local Food Work



Slow Food UK is always seeking to partner with and work alongside like-minded organisations and the Plunkett Foundation with its *Making Local Food Work* is supporting social enterprise in rural communities. Our partnerships team met up with the folks from Making Local Food Work to learn more about the work they do to specifically help support with local food networks. We thought that this programme could be really helpful to some of our Slow Food community members and friends. Here is a little bit about what we learned.

Making Local Food Work is a programme which supports and promotes access to locally produced, healthy, affordable food. The programme supports social enterprises, food coops, buying groups, and community supported agriculture. *Look for Local* works with small, local retailers and community-owned shops to encourage the sale of local produce, to benefit the local producers, retailers and customers. A range of advice and support on governance and legal structures around setting-up a food enterprise is also available at www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk

Group Spotlight: Warwickshire



Slow Food UK's newest regional group was officially launched in Shakespeare's County on a cold mid-January evening by longtime Slow Food member Alex Chambers. Local bakers, brewers and like-minded enthusiasts for all things slow gathered around in Monks Kirby to unanimously elect Alex as the leader of Slow Food Warwickshire. This energetic group plans to raise the profile of local foods and flavours by celebrating and educating the public about the area's stunning diversity and traditions. "We really respect our food... you can tell by my stomach!" joked Alex Chambers as he opened the meeting greeting guests and mapping out a year's worth of plans. He also insisted that "Warwickshire will be a practical group" with early 2010 slated full of activities, with an artisan sausage making demonstration, a slow bread baking day, a Sausage & Salami Making trip in Tuscany with Slow Food Master of Salami, Giancarlo Russo, a beer tasting & brewing workshop and plans of a Slow Food Christmas market in Warwick to celebrate the end of their first year.

As the group is most enthusiastic about promoting Britain's edible biodiversity, they are committed to reinstating the heirloom Warwickshire Drooper Plum by fundraising to purchase approximately 220 trees. These stunning beauties will then be planted in every parish in Warwickshire for posterity with a view to seeking producers of traditional Warwickshire Plum Jerkum plum cider. "I grew up here, and this is about getting back the things we have lost. The heirloom Warwickshire Drooper Plum deserves a comeback" said Alex who was eagerly supported by fellow committee members Susan, Countess of Denbigh, and Geoff, writer of *The Slow Food Story: Politics and Pleasure*. Alex's wife Sara said "We are going to open a nursery school, in a Victorian convent where the pots and pans will be flying in order to cook for up to 80 children and do activities with toddlers about the five senses. There is a lovely back garden and I plan to take the children there and plant or keep animals". Alex of course will have the other side of the kitchen to make his famous salami. "In the end, it's all about making good food available to everyone, even that stomach of mine!" More details on the Warwickshire group's diary is on their facebook profile.

Slow Food Ark Corner: Somerset Cider Brandy



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

At the recent BBC Food & Farming Awards Slow Food member Julian Timperley from the Somerset Cider Brandy Company won the Special Judges Award. **Somerset Cider Brandy** has been included in the UK's Ark of Taste since 2008 and currently Julian and his colleague Tim Stoddart are the only producers. Somerset Cider Brandy is distilled from the fermented juice of a blend of cider apples. The spirit is then aged in oak barrels, which impart both colour and flavour, until at a minimum of 3 years it can be called brandy.

Cider apples have been grown in the West of England for centuries, but they are most strongly associated with Somerset. The art of distilling was probably first practiced in the monasteries and abbeys, certainly there are records of their presses and stills being sold when Henry VIII ordered their dissolution in 1536. The first written record of cider brandy being distilled in Somerset is in 1676 and, noting the success of Dutch Gin and Brandy in France, some experimentation with distilling cider certainly took place toward the end of the 17th century. The exact extent of historic production is unknown, since most of it was done illegally in order to avoid taxes, but it never became popular in the way that it had in France. However, the ancient skills were revived in 1989 when the first full cider-distilling license in the recorded history of Somerset was granted.

Burrow Hill is the home of the Somerset Cider Brandy Company where apples have been grown and cider pressed for at least 150 years. It is the soil climate and the apple varieties which give the cider and cider brandy their unique quality. The blending of the different types of fruit is the key to the craft of cider making. Julian has a few specialties such as *The Kingston Black Apple Aperitif*, made by blending the famed juice from the legendary Kingston Black apple with Somerset Cider Brandy, and *The Somerset Pomona*, a blend of apples and cider brandy aged for two years in oak. If you are interested to learn more, please contact:
Somerset Cider Brandy Company, E-mail:
apples@ciderbrandy.co.uk

Job Opportunities

Slow Food UK is growing! Recent announcements about the new funders we are bringing on board means that we are recruiting for the following posts in the London office. This is an exciting time to join us, so please take a look at [our website](#) for details on all of these positions:

- Operations Director
- Programmes Director
- Project Coordinator - Slow Food Baby
- Business Intern

Recipe: Mark Lloyd's Faggot Mix

Mark has worked with Slow Food over the last two years as the chef for the Taste Workshops at the BBC Good Food Shows. He uses the products from within the Slow Food Producer Pavilion to help showcase our amazing producers. This winter credit crunch special is a reworking of the fantastic Jane Grigson recipe. You will make about 20 good sized faggots that freeze well but are good to eat hot with mash and peas or cold and sliced like pate with some chutney and a wedge of bread

Ingredients

- 2lb of fresh pigs liver, finely minced
- 2lbs of mixed offal (lungs, hearts, tongues etc...) finely minced
- 1lb of pork shoulder, finely minced
- 8 oz pork flair fat, finely minced
- 2 lemon zests, very fine
- 2 garlic cloves crushed to a paste
- 200g fresh Thyme, finely picked
- 120g Sage, finely chopped
- 1 tsp ground mace
- 12 oz breadcrumbs
- 3 white onions, finely diced
- 4 large free range eggs, beaten
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 litre of brown chicken stock
- Pigs caul fat for wrapping the Faggots

Method

In a heavy bottomed frying pan, sauté the onion, garlic and herbs until the onions are opaque and without colour. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Transfer the onions to a large mixing bowl, add the lemon zest, breadcrumbs, all the meat and fat and slowly incorporate a little of the egg mixture. (you may not need all of it, depending on how wet the mix is) season well and fry a teaspoon of the mixture in a little oil to check for seasoning. Once you are happy, place in the fridge for an hour to firm up and allow the flavours to mingle.

Take the caul and place in a bowl under cold, running water for 5-10 minutes, cut into 6" squares (easily cut with scissors). Divide the meat into 4-5 oz (150g) balls and wrap in the caul. Lay in an ovenproof dish with smooth side up, cover the faggots 2/3rds the way up with the stock and bake at 180c for 45-50 minutes. Once cooked strain the stock into a sauce pan, skim off any fat, then reduce over a high heat, checking that it is not becoming too salty.

If you prefer not to use caul you can pack the mixture into a loaf tin or other oven proof dish and bake in the same way.

