

The 2011 Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery attracted some 220 participants including attendees from more than a dozen countries including China, Japan, Australia and Russia, and the regions of South East Asia, Scandinavia and all the Americas.

Symposiasts assembled in St. Catherine's College on Friday 8th July 2011 to discuss 'Celebrations', a reflection of the Symposium's own 30th anniversary year. The Friday keynote address - delivered this year for the first time in association with The Jane Grigson Trust - was provided by Professor Richard Wrangham, author of *Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human*. The event was followed by a dinner under the supervision of scholar-chef Shaun Hill of the Walnut Tree in Abergavenny. Plenary session highlights of the weekend included Saturday's scene-setting address by Jane Kramer, political correspondent in Europe of the New Yorker, while illuminating and entertaining reflections on the celebratory nature of the original symposia were provided by Dr. Oswyn Murray, author of *The Oxford History of the Classical World*.

To mark our first 30 years and enable us to raise funds for specific projects which cannot be funded through the Symposium subscriptions, a new Friends organisation was formed. 30 of our veteran Symposiasts contributed recipes and stories to *Celebrations*, a publication designed by artist and food-writer Jake Tilson and edited by publisher and original Symposiast Jill Norman. The Golden Bottle Trust donated £1,000 and enough additional sponsorship was made available by the Symposium to cover the print-bill, and the book was sold at the Symposium and afterwards through the website.

Participants were also encouraged to make donations by becoming 'Friends' of the Symposium, an initiative spearheaded by Trustees Elisabeth Luard and William Rubel, which asked Symposiasts to donate at whichever defined tier suited them. This will become an annual effort, and the Symposium is going through the process of registering for Gift Aid in order to make the most of the donations from UK residents (though it should be noted that two of the largest donors are based outside the UK). See the box below for a summary of the tiers and the number of Friends at each level:

Level	Amount	Total Friends at level
<i>Caviar</i>	<i>£5,000.00</i>	0
<i>Truffle</i>	<i>£2,500.00</i>	1
<i>Turbot</i>	<i>£1,000.00</i>	1*
<i>Partridge</i>	<i>£500.00</i>	1
<i>Morel</i>	<i>£250.00</i>	0
<i>Samphire</i>	<i>£100.00</i>	10
<i>Olive Oil</i>	<i>£50.00</i>	8
<i>Salt & Pepper</i>	<i>£25.00</i>	5
<i>Bread & Butter</i>	<i>£10.00</i>	9

* Golden Bottle Trust

The first object of the Friends funds was to digitise (by high quality scanning) the whole set of past Proceedings of the Symposium, and make them available online. The publisher, Tom Jaine of Prospect Books, generously granted rights and permissions to the Symposium to allow this. The Trust has also embarked on a re-design of the website which will facilitate outreach, an important part of our remit, as well as allowing visitors to the site to find out where and how to access past papers and keep in contact with one another through participation on both Facebook and Twitter.

Among the 46 papers presented during the weekend were Andrew Dalby on the feasts and festivals of Ptolemy II of Egypt, Robert Appelbaum on Dining Alone, Jane Levi on Black Banquets and Funerary Feasts, Mairtin Mac Con Iomaire & T. Kellaghan on Vice-regal celebrations in Georgian Dublin, Birgit Ricquier on a Wedding Celebration in Congo-Brazzaville, Priscilla Mary Isin on Celebrating with Sweets in Ottoman Turkey, Alexandra Grigorieva on European Easter Breads, David Sutton on the history of figs as a celebratory fruit, G. Schäfer & S. Weingarten on food and memory in the creation of Jewish identity and Kim Beerden on supernatural celebrations in the ancient Greek world. All papers will, as usual, be published by prospect Books as a set of Proceedings, available in print in mid 2012, with a digital version now made available to the Symposium Trust for upload on to our site for on-line access two years after print publication.

Meals throughout the weekend were designed, as usual, to illuminate the subject under discussion. Saturday included a lunch to mark the anniversary of the Italian Risorgimento and a Mexican feast for the Day of the Dead under the direction of Trustee Caroline Conran. Sunday's lunch,

provided by Aglaia Kremezi and associates in Greece, was a pre-Lenten meal in celebration of the Greek Clean Monday.

The weekend was brought to a conclusion by co-chairs Paul Levy and Claudia Roden, with the last word, reflections on the future, contributed by Theodore Zeldin, one of the original convenors of the gathering. The Oxford Symposium is thus entering its fourth decade with confidence and a renewal of our determination to encourage discussion of the history and meaning of food and cookery through electronic means as well as encouraging new participants in the gathering which lies the heart of our activities, the meeting of minds which takes place throughout the weekend itself.

On the organisational front, the Symposium gave a vote of thanks to its long-term administrator, Patsy Iddison, in tribute to all her work as she retired from the position. We have appointed a new administrator, Priscilla White. We also thanked our Editor, Helen Saberi, who has given up the position (although she will, happily, remain as a Trustee). Associate Professor Mark McWilliams, a US-based English professor, has taken over the editorship, supported by a Trustee committee.