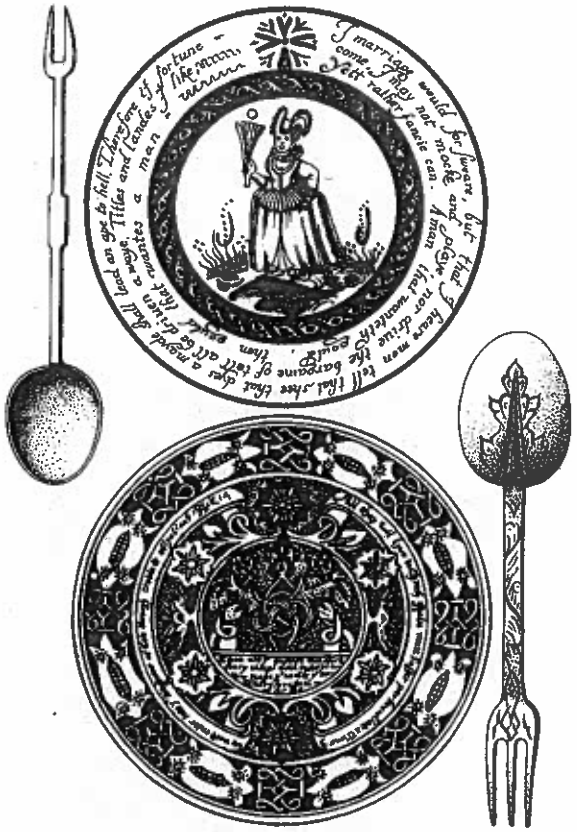
FOOD AND SOCIETY

'BANQUETTING STUFFE'



Edited by C. Anne Wilson

'Banquetting Stuffe'

The fare and social background of the Tudor and Stuart banquet

EDITED BY C. ANNE WILSON

with illustrations by
Peter Brears

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'Sweet Secrets' from Occasional Receipt to Specialised Books: The Growth of a Genre

LYNETTE HUNTER

Sugar and Spice and all things nice
that's what little girls are made of.

Soon after sugar began to be imported into England, its use developed a three-part history as medicine, preserving agent, and decoration.[1] From the thirteenth century onwards the aspects were often combined – sugared-fruits and sweetmeats were part of the delicacies offered at the end of the course or meal as a digestive – but in practice the three areas defined rather different uses of sugar. The emergence of 'banquetting stuffe' during the sixteenth century marks the beginning of an explicit separation between the three, and by the end of the seventeenth century medicinal uses of sugar were quite separate from domestic preserving skills and the emerging confectionery trade. This chapter will first look at the development of the word 'banquet' in the context of sugar, and will then assess three main periods of book publication relevant to the topic: 1575–84; 1602–17; and 1652–70.

The banquet

'Banquet' was a name which, in the 1530s, came to be used for foods that had been current for a considerable time. What prompted the changes was a complex series of events partly to do with the increased quantity of sugar

entering England, partly to do with social changes, and partly to do with the introduction of the banqueting house[2] – a specific and different place for eating these increasingly specialised foods which made necessary a more discrete way of organising the recipes for them and a far more thorough description of their construction. Courses in medieval feasts had ended with a 'soteltie', which was part-pageant, part-entertainment, and often culinary. John Russell's *Boke of Nurture* (*c.* 1450) details the late medieval pattern of courses in which each ends with an increasingly large selection of sweet foods such as jellies, mawmaney, and comfits; more important, the final course consists solely of apples, sugar-candy, ginger, wafers, spiced cakes, and hippocras. It is this final course which yielded 'banquetting stuffe', although it is sometimes included along with the penultimate course of small fowl and sweetened foods. The foods in it had a digestive function. John Russell gives specific directions about which fruits are to be eaten before dinner and which after, and about which foods to avoid unless eaten with either hippocras or that other common digestive, cheese.[3] It is clear that many of the recipes were considered as medical secrets.

The word 'banquet' surfaces in direct relation to sweetmeats in the early 1530s in conjunction with the banqueting house,[4] and stays current until around 1700. Previously 'banquet' had been used for large festive meals, but between 1530 and 1700 the word 'feast' was often used for this purpose. 'Banquet' has now reverted to a large meal, but frequently with connotations of celebration, as in wedding banquet or the meal served at a ball, rather than the more ritual festive meals or feasts at Christmas and New Year. What is particularly intriguing is why the word 'banquet' should have taken over from the earlier 'soteltie'. Indeed the French used the earlier word for much longer – until the mid-seventeenth century, when both La Varenne and Lemery began to use 'sommelerie' instead.

This is possible because in France the medicinal value of these foods was emphasised for a longer period of time. During the sixteenth century in France, the word *'subtil'* applied both to the *aperitif* and the *attenuant*, although the *attenuants* specifically *'subtilient les grosses humeurs'*, cleaned out viscousness and opened the passages. The *Conservation de Santé*, a 1572 translation of an earlier Latin medical work, also emphasises that *'subtils'* are digestive, not nourishing.[5] And even now a French rather than an English meal will include a 'digestif'.

Entangled in the English use of 'soteltie' is the idea of a skilled piece of craft work, as well as an interlude or *entremet* within a meal included for the purpose of entertainment, and specifically allied with the tradition of disguise or mumming that accompanied the pageants which interspersed the feasts of great occasions throughout the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries.[6] There is a curious cross between the pageant and the sugar-work aspects in an account of a feast given by the Duke of Burgundy in February 1454. The soteltie devised partly consisted of a huge pie within which were placed twenty-eight musicians; these struck up in response to the arrival of guests who entered following their meal in another room.[7] Although this element of pageant never completely deserted the soteltie, towards the sixteenth century the word came to refer more frequently to the magnificent sugar-work architecture created for the end of each course.

With the shift in place for eating foods at the turn of the fifteenth century, there came a shift in the role of sugar-works and sweetmeats. This also coincided with the publication in the vernacular of Plato's *Symposium*, not to mention those of Xenophon and Plutarch – *symposia* being banquets.[8] Dante's *Convivio*, also a 'banquet', was printed a number of times in the late 1520s[9] and would probably have been known to those English educationists such as Thomas Elyot and later, Roger Ascham, for its

defence of the vernacular. Indeed, it was closely followed by Elyot's *Banquet of Sapience* of wit, aphorism, and subtle sayings: small delicate morsels to stimulate the mind, very much allied with the earlier idea of a digestive.[10] The use was appropriate not only to the foods of the banquet meal but also to the idea of engaging after-dinner conversation, in contrast to another word which appears at the same time 'rere-supper'. A rere-supper seems to have been more specifically for men alone, during which they simply became very drunk. One was clearly supposed to function coherently throughout a banquet. Even a century later J. Starkey (1678) translates from the French a curious treatise against gluttony,[11] inveighing against 'prologues of breakfasts; interludes of banquets; epilogues of rere-suppers', and notes the dramatic and literary associations of the description. The qualities of wit and wisdom associated with the literary banquet appear to metamorphose 'sotil' into the more modern sense of 'subtle' through association with the sweetmeat course. In England the role of banqueting food is not only medicinal, but from the start specifically for pleasure and entertainment, although none the less secret. As the books reveal, the secrets of the table are as important to social status as those of medicine to physical health.

The emergence of cookery-books

The emergence of the banquet as a social event ran concurrently with a number of other developments pertinent to its growth and popularity. The early sixteenth century saw the beginnings of the printed book in England, an enormous scale of social and economic change, as well as a growing specialisation of knowledge as the arts and sciences separated and fragmented. Each of these developments had substantial bearing on the way in which 'banquetting stuffe' was portrayed in the media.

With the invention of moveable type during the late fifteenth century, and the inauguration of Caxton's press, books in England became increasingly available, if

expensive and restricted to standard works. It was, however, unusual to have the considerable amount of vernacular printing that Caxton encouraged, a trend quite unlike the continental practice from which England was isolated. Even so, there were relatively few books relating to cookery until the latter part of the sixteenth century. Not only was it a less respectable written form, having been denigrated from Plato onwards, but also people did not need cookery-books. Those who had to cook knew how to do so, having learnt from oral tradition. Not that cookery- books are simply to do with recording past recipes and teaching new ones—they are part of a far more complex picture of changing supplies in foodstuffs, publishing history, and the shifting social, political, and economic structures. But in contrast to everyday cookery, the kinds of food made for banquets were not only part of a recognised tradition in medical literature but their preparation was not widely practised. They would have been made by cooks in large aristocratic households; yet with increasing supplies of sugar and an increasing moneyed class emulating the aristocratic social events, more people needed to know how to make these foods. There was a need for books to help them do so, and the gentry were precisely the people who could afford books. Indeed, the result of these factors is that sugar-work and sweetmeats made up the earliest printed cookery-books in the English language.

By the mid-sixteenth century, if not considerably earlier,[12] the housewife of the gentry was expected to know some basic uses of sugar-cookery as part of her medicinal knowledge. For example, Thomas Tusser's *One Hundreth Pointes of Good Husbandrie/Huswiferie* (1557) mentions conserves of barbarie and quince, as well as syrups. And this work, a classic early version of the city–country critique, was intended for the country housewife, not just the fashionable urban gentry. But the first substantial introduction to these foods was the translation into

English of Alexis of Piedmont's *Secretes*, by W. Warde in 1558. This work had originally been written in Latin, and had established a pattern for the transmission of medical receipts followed by many subsequent writers. *Secretes* consists of general remedies, perfumes, sugar-work, including the use of honey and the making of lozenges, pastes, confections, and comfits, and concludes with household receipts and general alchemical science. The book treats sugar-work in the same way as almost all books up to this time, entirely in terms of medicine, and these were indeed medical secrets.

The book which broke the pattern and established a radically new treatment for cookery receipts was John Partridge's *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits and Hidden Secrets* (1573). The title continues:

> The Housewives Closet of Healthful Provision. Mete and necessarie for the profitable use of all estates both men and women: and also pleasant to recreation ... Gathered out of sundrye experiments lately practised by men of great knowledge.

The vocabulary summarises the early Elizabethan period. There is treasurie and profit, for use and for pleasure, hidden secrets but also sundry experiments; there is the housewives' closet versus the knowledge of great men, but also the receipts are for all men and women of all estates. The words provide a fascinating vision of the future Elizabethan and Jacobean world. A world of commerce, of the emerging middle class; a world which splits the factual from the emotional, calling into question the whole basis of value. A world moving men from the secrets of alchemy to the open experiments of science—although it should be noted that one of the benefits of experimental science was supposed to be its private nature[13]—from God's world to humanism and nature. At the same time this world left women with the closet, the closed door on their lives which were filled with events unknown to men, and therefore to be feared; the closet

was a world which was neither God's nor man's, and therefore easily filled with the unnatural secrets of witchcraft. Yet, in 1573, the vision is more balanced, both with men and women, and all estates caught up into this shifting world.

Partridge's *Treasurie* was one of the most influential and long-running books of the period, being published fairly consistently until 1637. The work has many similarities with Master Alexis's *Secretes,* but places the emphasis firmly on the banquet. Beginning with a section on the cooking of small fowl which looks back to the penultimate course of the late medieval feast, the receipts then move into a substantial and representative section on marchpanes (marzipan), tarts, blaunch powder (sugar and spice), the use of quinces, condiates of fruit, conserves of roots and flowers, syrups, Manus Christi (sugar-work with gold leaf), lozenges and hippocras (spiced wine). The book only then moves on to receipts for medicines, perfumes, and household goods in general.

It is clear that Partridge is appealing to a very specific audience, and the extensive forematter indicates this aim. The book begins with a poem by the author which claims 'to Frame/A happy common weale:/And which at large reveals,/That tyme dyd long conceale,/To pleasure everyone'; in other words he is intending to disclose previously restricted secrets to a large public for purposes of pleasure and entertainment. He then goes on in the dedication to expand on the secret nature of these receipts. The dedication is to a Richard Ditton, assistant in the Guild of Barbers and Surgeons, which was established in 1540. In it Partridge speaks of providing receipts of 'hidden secrets' for foods such as conceits and marmalades that have 'not hitherto ben publiquely known'. He adds that he does this despite a possible backlash of jealousy from the rich who have assumed that 'farre fette and deare bought, is good for great Estates' and may now blacklist him or simply refuse to buy the book.

Such an assumption is, he suggests, similar to rejecting the attentions of physicians or surgeons simply because by their constitution into guilds (physicians in 1518) they have become more available to the public.

A significant but concealed undertone to the forematter is concerned with the other set of associated secrets: the culinary secrets of sugar-work were specific neither to the physicians nor to the surgeons, but to the apothecaries. Although not yet constituted as an effective guild, the apothecaries did attempt a form of protectionism over sugar-work, albeit not so tightly controlled as their counterparts in Germany, where the immensely popular products of sugar were almost exclusively bought from apothecaries.[14] Partridge is ensuring here that their skills are made public and available. The dual nature of the secrets as both medical and social is underlined by other poems to the author in the forematter: one noting his concern with revealing the secrets of medicine and another explicitly commenting on the secrets of food preparation. They make clear the curious elision from the disguise and ritual of mumming and pageant from the mystery of alchemy, to the private sign of guild or aristocratic class privilege. Possibly due to criticism, another book produced by John Partridge ten years later, *The Widowes Treasure* (1584), had far more emphasis on the general medicinal and far less on sweetmeats.

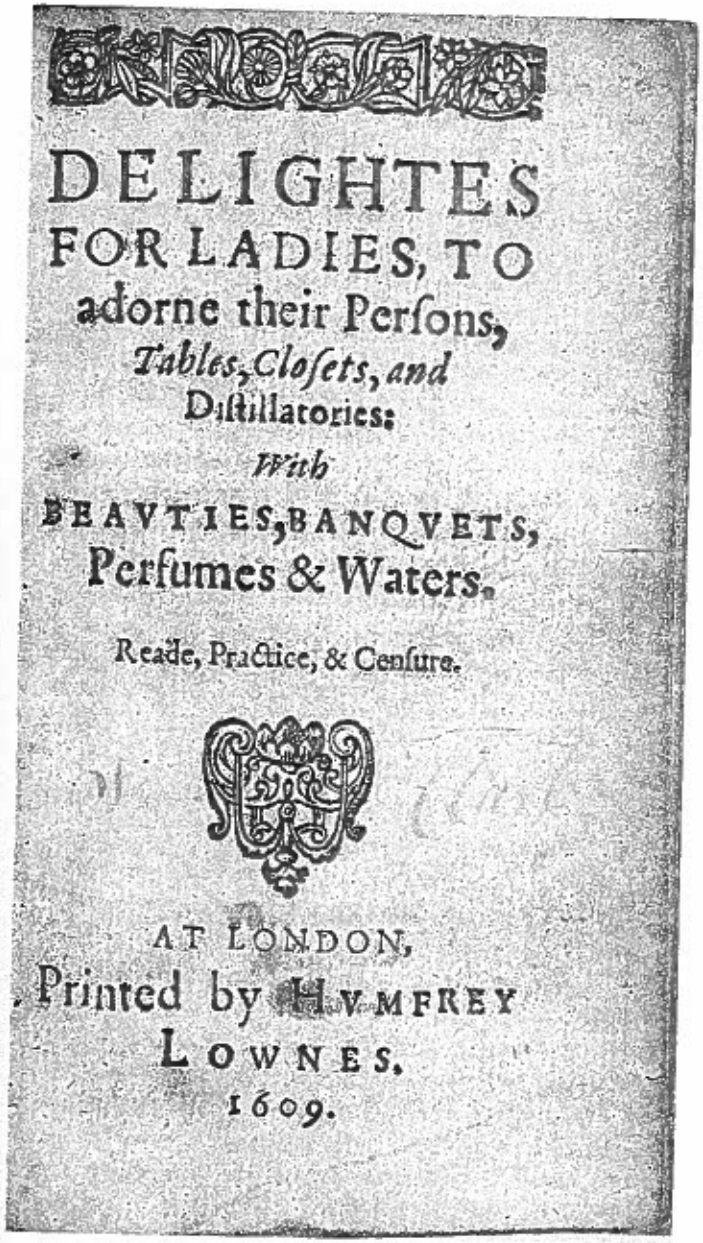
One of the earliest printed books of general cookery is A. W.'s *A Booke of Cookry* (1584), which includes sweetmeats as a subsection of tarts. This is unique in arrangement since it is the only subsection in the book. It appears that the writer recognises these foods as distinct, yet not normally included within cookery. The arrangement is significant since the book is otherwise divided in terms of specific, well-recognised constituents of the dinner-table, and thus provides a good indication of the more general use of sugar in cooking at this time. As

one moves down the social scale to the emerging commercial classes, it is reasonable to suggest that there was less possibility for building separate rooms within which to eat these foods, so they may have incorporated them in the latter stages of a meal much as their fifteenth-century forebears. It is notable that in the next edition of *A Book of Cookrye* (1587), the only changes made to the book are in the additions of recipes to this section alone, indicating the growing demand for them – a demand recognised increasingly in books over the following fifteen to twenty years.

The next major period of importance to books relating to sugar-works starts in 1602 with the publication of the anonymous *Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen*, which, along with Hugh Platt's *Delightes for Ladies* (1605)[15] received continuous publication for fifty to seventy years. Curiously, although these two works cover much of the same ground, they are often bound together. *Delightes* contains sections on preserves and conserves as well as candying, distillation, cookery, and beauty. The *Closet* covers preserves and conserves and 'banquetting stuffe', medicines and distillation. To bind together two such books implies that people wanted cookery from one, medicines from the other, and sugar-work and 'banquetting stuffe' from both. Indeed, one copy at the Brotherton Library binds together the cookery section from *Delightes* and sugar-work and medicine from the *Closet*, alone.

Despite the clear need for both, these two works are particularly interesting because they present the first real split between sugar-works as a household skill and as a medicinal skill. Even the titles, with the *Closet* as a place for secrets and cures and *Delightes* as a source of entertainment, underline this division. Hugh Platt's epistle specifically lays out his pleasurable intent:

> By now my pen and paper are perfum'd,
> I scorne to write with coppresse or with gall,


DELIGHTES
FOR LADIES, TO
adorne their Perſons,
Tables, Cloſets, and
Diſtillatories:
With
BEAVTIES, BANQVETS,
Perfumes & Waters.
Reade, Practice, & Cenſure.
AT LONDON,
Printed by HVMFREY
LOWNES.
1609.

3.
Title-page from Sir Hugh Platt, *Delightes for Ladies*, 1611 edition.

Barbarian canes are now become my quills,
Rosewater is the ink I write withall:
Of sweetes the sweetest I will now commend,
To sweetest creatures that the earth doth beare: . . .
Let pearcing bullets turne to sugar bals,
The Spanish feare is husht and all their rage.

The corollary of the separation is that medicine is moving away from being a domestic skill, specifically part of the housewife's learning – a role it had occupied until at least 1577, when the duties of older women are defined as skill in surgery, distillation, and artificial practices.[16] The artificial is swiftly becoming unnatural and prohibited.

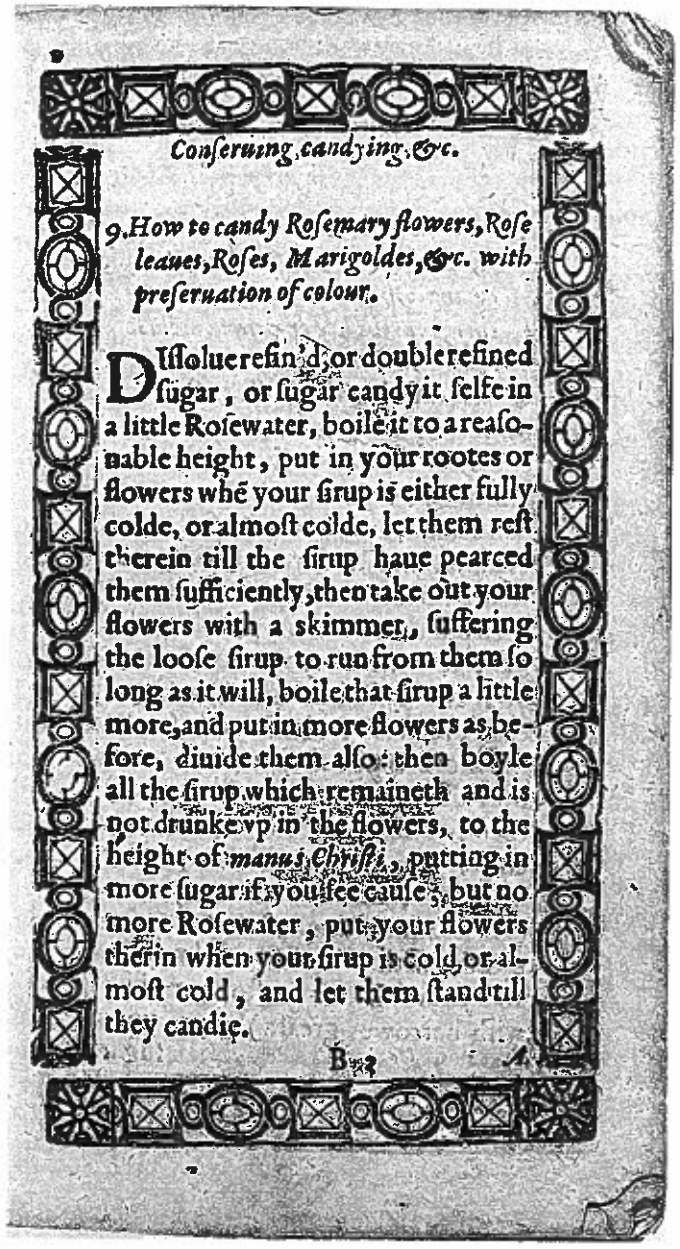
The *Closet's* section explicitly on sugar-work as 'banquetting stuffe' put a name to this growing area of cookery which was maintained by other books of the period. Enormously popular was Gervase Markham's *Country Contentements* (1615), which included the book *The English Huswife*, with a specific section of 'banquetting stuffe and conceited dishes'. However, even at this date, there is a confusion about 'banquetting stuffe' on the part of the compositors and printers which indicates the probability that these foods were restricted in consumption. Although the rest of the book is neatly set out with running headlines relating to each section, in 'banquetting stuffe' one finds the headlines 'cookery' or 'feasts' continually intruding. The entire section caused a classic bibliographic problem in pagination which was not sorted out until the 1688 edition.

In the part on 'banquetting stuffe' Markham gives instructions about a wide range of cooking, and also provides one of the few descriptions of how the foods should be served, indicating the relative novelty of such dishes to at least part of his audience. That audience was primarily the country gentry, but this well-written and fairly well-printed book found a much wider urban audience and began to reflect its consensus in later editions. The first edition notes that 'banquetting stuffe' is

'not of general use, yet . . . whosoever is ignorant therein is lame, and but the half part of a compleat housewife', and goes on to explain that once the reader is 'exact and rehearsed in the rules' other housewifery 'secrets' can be introduced: those of distillation, waters, perfumes, incense, pomanders, vinegars, verjuice. Later editions displace these conceits into an awkward position towards the end of the book, and replace the material on 'banquetting stuffe' with a more urban and sophisticated concern: 'skill in the ordering of feasts'.

Nevertheless, *The English Huswife* is part of *Country Contentements*, which contains sections on domestic medicine, cookery, brewing, and so on, as well as 'banquetting stuffe', and definitely holds to the traditional role of the woman as skilled in all these areas. Significantly for a writer who provides in 1615 a substantial opening section on medicine, Markham notes in his 1616 revision of Charles Estienne's *The Country Farm* – a work directed towards male managers of large country farms – that while women do have the responsibility of looking after their family's health they should do so 'with sobrietie, not medling, above their place and reach, in matters of Physicke; and [with] Gravitie, as [like] not having anything to do in the matter of Fukes [hair fashions]' or they will lead a 'loose and very sinful life'. Why this rather surprising statement should be made may have to do with the impending incorporation of the Apothecaries' Guild (1617). It is not surprising that John Murrell's *A Daily Exercise for Ladies and Gentlewomen* (also 1617) advertises itself as a fashion book, comparing the newest strain of conserves with the recent fashionable change from blue to yellow ruffs,[17] although most of the recipes are quite ordinary repetitions from older works.

John Murrell's contribution was one of the last to be made until 1652, with the exception of Lord Patrick Ruthven's *The Ladies Cabinet*, published in 1639 and not



Conſeruing, candying, &c.

9. How to candy Roſemary flowers, Roſe leaues, Roſes, Marigoldes, &c. with preſeruation of colour.

DIſſolue refin'd, or double refined ſugar, or ſugar candy it ſelfe in a little Roſewater, boile it to a reaſonable height, put in your rootes or flowers whē your ſirup is either fully colde, or almoſt colde, let them reſt therein till the ſirup haue pearced them ſufficiently, then take out your flowers with a skimmer, ſuffering the looſe ſirup to run from them ſo long as it will, boile that ſirup a little more, and put in more flowers as before, diuide them alſo: then boyle all the ſirup which remaineth and is not drunke vp in the flowers, to the height of *manus Chriſti*, putting in more ſugar if you ſee cauſe, but no more Roſewater, put your flowers therin when your ſirup is cold, or almoſt cold, and let them ſtand till they candie.

B 2 A

4. An extract from G. Markham, *The English Huswife*, 1631 edition.

republished until 1654.[18] Ruthven recognises the implicit divisions in the publishing history of the *Closet* and *Delightes* by separating the recipes into preserves, medicines, and cookery. He notes in the forematter that medicines are the most important area; they are 'rare secrets' bounded on each side by 'delightes for pleasure, sport and pomp' (sugar-works) and by neat cooks. The book is still part of a serious explanatory study, although, in adapting to the new experimental procedures, Ruthven is caught up in their ambivalence. In practice, as the title suggests, its aim is to improve nature by art. Indeed, Ruthven extends the conflation of old and new analogies: he says he will lay each jewel, or item of knowledge, in its particular box, providing a *tabulation* for their cabinet, a *fixed* design and place for items in the mysterious world. From this period on, secrets are rarely other than medicinal, and sugar-work is neither medicinal or secret.

Ruthven's *The Ladies Cabinet* is an anomaly; however, it sets a pattern for the presentation of sugar-cookery, which was followed during the next main period for related books from 1652 to 1670. Why the hiatus in cookery and sugar-work books between 1617 and 1652 should have occurred is problematic. The incorporation of the Guild of Apothecaries in 1617 is clearly a contributing factor. In 1618 the following of the *London Pharmacopoeia* became mandatory for practising apothecaries.[19] The power of the guild increased dramatically until 1632, when its central hall was opened in London, and it remained powerful until at least 1640, when the events of the commonwealth began to shift the emphasis of government.[20] There is the possibility that the persecution of witches which came to a head under James I may have had some significance since the medical skills in question were increasingly viewed as unnatural if practised by women.[21] But there was further harassment in the early 1630s by Charles I. Many scores died in the purges of the 1640s and killing

continued from 1650 to 1670 concurrent with the next upsurge in popularity for the books.

A more likely set of factors may have to do with the 1615 Star Chamber decrees restricting the printing of books to twenty master printers in London, Oxford and Cambridge. These printers were allowed only one or two presses, and there were limitations on the number of type-casters.[22] The rate of all printing was slowed down, particularly the popular and vernacular printing which was not going to be of an immediate profitable return, such as dramatic works. At the same time, stricter rules about copyright were instituted so that one could republish without re-entering the book for the Stationers' Register only as long as the copyright ownership remained the same: indeed Markham's *The English Huswife* remained within one firm throughout successive editions from the 1630s to the 1650s. However, reprints were not markedly reduced. It is the lack of any original works that is startling.

It may be that the works published to 1617 were adequate, the market saturated, and fashions stable. As cookery was being excluded from serious consideration, possibly their contents were not respectable enough to merit new work by the few people who could write them. It is the case that until this hiatus these books were by and large written by men, and that after 1652 they were increasingly written by women. Not only was this still a woman's province in practice, but it also became less associated with the pursuit of serious inquiry by interested gentlemen. The events of the commonwealth, particularly aspects of reformation religion, radically altered the education of the less-privileged majority of the population; and certainly shifted the whole structure of social expectation, particularly for women.[23] Also, supplies of food were changing. At the same time sugar was flooding into England in unprecedented quantities and was becoming available to a broader group of people.

Certainly, by the late 1670s, the use of sugar was widespread in urban cooking practices.

Oddly, one contributing factor to the re-emergence of these books after 1652 may have been the execution of Charles I in 1649. Most of the related works published during this later period, even during the 1650s and the latter years of the commonwealth, make specific reference either in their titles or their provenance to royalty or aristocracy – although it is clear that both Royalist and Roundhead enjoyed banquets. Elizabeth Cromwell certainly included 'banquetting stuffe' in large feasts ordered for special events such as the visit of the French Ambassador in 1656.[24] But while the scope of the books returns, the relevant recipes are rarely connected with the term 'banquetting stuffe'.

Among many other publications is that in 1653 by W. J., Gent. of *A Choice Manual of Rare and Select Secrets in Physick and Chirugery*, which includes preserves, bound in with *A True Gentlewoman's Delight*, which included cookery; both were attributed to the Countess of Kent.[25] The 1653 editions show that they have been printed separately but often bound together. Presumably they were conceived of as two separate books but put together by W. J., possibly because he was capitalising on the countess's name. What is interesting is that the *True Gentlewoman* is primarily about cookery, but with a sugar-work section advertised specifically as 'very necessary for all ladies and gentlewomen', as if the writer is aiming at a wider audience but noting that the gentrified reader will not be as concerned with cookery as with the gentle art of confectionery. The 1656 edition is already purportedly the ninth, and the work must have been popular even looking at the evidence of the large number of copies remaining today. The ninth edition prints both the *Choice Manual* and *True Gentlewoman* in one, deleting the candying and preserving section from the *Choice Manual*, and indicating the continued demand for all of the skills

relating to medicine, cookery and sugar-work.

The two parts were published usually as one book until 1687, but even they are far outdone by *A Queen's Closet Opened, Incomparable . . . Secrets* (1655), attributed to Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I, and brought together by a 'W. M.' Henrietta Maria died in 1669, but the work continued to be published until 1713. *A Queen's Closet* is made up of the *Pearl of Practice* (medicine), *A Queen's Delight or the Art of Preserving* (sugar-work), and the *Compleat Cook* (cookery), again maintaining that three-part division of Ruthven's *Ladies Cabinet*. But here the parts are clearly thought of as distinct and separate. One often finds just one section alone bound in what appears to be a unique edition. There are, for example, even at a rough estimate, twenty-one or twenty-two editions of *A Queen's Delight*, but only sixteen or so of *A Queen's Closet, Pearl of Practice*,[26] and each part changes according to the times. Early eighteenth-century editions of the three together advertise them as 'after the newest Modes'; but *A Queen's Delight* incorporates substantial changes during late seventeenth-century editions, particularly the inclusion of definitions for clarifying and boiling of sugar lifted directly from La Varenne's *Le Parfait Confiturier* (1668).

The practice of combining sugar-work, medicine, and cookery also continued into the 1670s and 1680s, but with increasing specialisation. The pattern of distinct and separate publication (but joint bindings) for *A Queen's Closet* was the precursor of a fashion which published specialist books more and more for career or vocational purposes, and combined the areas in a less rigorous manner for general domestic use. There are, of course, always exceptions, and Robert May's *Accomplish't Cook, or the Art and Mystery of Cooking* (1664) is an important example. The work is anomalous in several ways, possibly reflecting May's career as a cook to the aristocracy from the 1630s to the 1650s, having spent much time working in

France cooking for exiled families during the Commonwealth. Unlike many writers of the period, he includes most of his sugar-work recipes in a section on 'tarts for banquetting', explicitly using the word. One has to realise that during this period the English were renowned for their poor fruit preserves. Indeed, they were accused of over-boiling and disguising bad fruit with sugar. But the French had the treatment of fruit down to an art. Markham notes of English and French differences as early as the *Country Farm* (1616, p.2), that 'we are as farre from their fruits, as they from our wools'. Many English accounts of buying sweetmeats abroad are concerned with the purchase of fruit conserves,[27] but in terms of confectionery the English are highly skilled: the French looked on the English as a nation of sweet-eaters,[28] and the reputation was so widespread that later writers on confectionery sometimes felt the need to defend their use of sugar.[29]

Significantly, Robert May includes preserves and conserves with distillation and candying in a section also on foods for dieting and for the sick. In contrast to his contemporaries, he refers to all these receipts as 'secrets'. But since he does so in his address to Master Cooks and Young Practitioners, this word may be present in the sense of professional or trade secrets. This in itself is significant, since cookery practice had not had the sense of 'trade' until this time. Along with this is the sense of schooling for cookery. The support system for training cooks by apprenticeship to the kitchens of the gentry must have greatly been disrupted during the Commonwealth period, and as society changed so did the methods for training. This last aspect becomes very important over the later years of the seventeenth century and is a major factor in the gradual specialisation of sugar-work into the confectionery arts.

During the final stage of books relating to 'banquetting stuffe', one watches the change of role parallel the

changing position of the audience for these books. Hannah Woolley's *Queenlike Closet ... Rich Cabinet of Rare Receipts [for] ... Ingenious Persons of the Female Sex* (1670) presents two sections only in its early editions: one on sugar-work and one on medicine; later editions add a section on 'advice'. And the work is geared to the emerging group of women who no longer have a supportive community structure and have to earn their living in an increasingly commercial economic structure.

Hannah Woolley was responding to specific changes in class structure and social needs. Greater numbers of women were educated, many more needed to support themselves, and many others needed advice on how to behave in new social situations. The mistress of the household was taking on much greater responsibility with the breakdown of extended families; urban life, disease-ridden and unhealthy, was becoming more common and less escapable. In contrast to *A Queen's Closet* (1655), which opens with a list of aristocratic subscribers,[30] Woolley's *Queenlike Closet* is prefaced with an account of her rise in life from servant to gentlewoman. The book is intended to help others do likewise.

One of the many interesting features of the *Queenlike Closet* is the staunch claim that the section on medicine is specifically for the 'Female Sex': it is straightforward, neither 'confounding' the brain nor using 'vain' expressions. Earlier compilations in this period aimed the medical sections at men. The shift here may have as much to do with the ineffectiveness of doctors in the recent plague year of 1665, which must have brought home the need for domestic medicine, as with the emergence of nursing as a vocational opportunity for women. Doctors were expensive, and apothecaries notorious for their abuse of the trade.[31]

But the most significant aspect of the book, or rather the most significant absence, is that of cookery. Woolley did not dismiss cookery, indeed she wrote entire books of

recipes,[32] but clearly for this publication she was aiming at the woman who needed a way of earning a living. This exclusion of cookery but inclusion of sugar-work indicates that, while at this time cookery was not a career for women, sugar-work was not only an 'accomplishment' to the gentlewoman but also a skill and artifice which could turn the 'ingenious person of the female sex' into a self-supporting confectioner.

The practice of these skills as a gentleman's accomplishment gradually fades towards the end of the seventeenth century. One of the last books addressing this audience was the *True Preserver and Restorer of Health ... by T.D.* T.D. was a follower of Sir Kenelm Digby, whose *Closet* contained many recipes for drinks and some for sweetmeats and cookery. Indeed the *True Preserver* is dedicated to Digby's daughter and uses many of his recipes, simply organising them and extending the cookery section. T.D. claims that in the part on medicine he is making receipts public so that the 'private person or Mistress of a family may prepare their own Physick', indicating again the change in attitude of the post-plague years. The book is one of the last in England for over a century to conflate cookery with explicit concern for the treatment of illness and maintenance of health, and also one of the last to incorporate the scientific into the culinary.

A later work with similar concerns but with no intention of providing receipts, is the splendid Thomas Tryon's *Health's Grand Preservative or the Woman's Best Doctor* (1682), which lashes out against the abuses of drink and tobacco by women and children. In *The Good Housewife made a Doctor* (1692), Tryon inveighs against the high costs of medical care and calls for women to take responsibility for preserving health. The jeopardy to health is primarily seen in terms of sugar and strong liquor, with the remedy being a careful control of diet: the introduction speaks of the 'Baneful Mysteries of

Preserving, Conserving etc.' where sugar destroys rather than preserves fruit. While Tryon states (p.107) that sugar-cane is a good fruit if not taken to excess, he launches into an extraordinary tirade against the course of sweetmeats at the end of a meal, the banquet:

> no sooner have they by Gluttony, or eating of too great quantities of Flesh, fish, or other Rich-foods or over-strong liquors brought themselves out of order, but away they run or send Jillian the Chambermaid (who already spoil'd her Teeth with sweet-meats and Kisses) to the Closet for some Conserves, Preserves, or other Confectionary-Ware; and if that will not do (as alas! how should such sower abortive things, only Embalm'd with nauseous Sugar, do any good?) then fetch the Bottle of Black-Cherry-Brandy, the Glas of Aqua Mirabilis, and after that a dose of Plague-water.

But Tryon was a voice crying in the wilderness. For sugar-work, the way forward was firmly into confectionery. *The True Way of Preserving and Candying . . . Sweet Meats* (1695) was produced for a school of confectionery, probably by Mary Tillinghast,[33] where apprentices went through six years of training. Interestingly, this book specifically notes that other writings on the topic are a 'ready way to spoil sugar and fruit, rather than to preserve sweet meats'. Although the book is partly a publicity exercise for the school, it is also one of the forerunners of the specialised confectionery books, produced mainly for career women who may have supplied the sweetmeats for the remnants of the banquet that linger on in the early eighteenth-century ambogue. The introduction to *Mrs Mary Eales's Receipts* (1718),[34] a book devoted to sugar-cookery, indicates that Mary Eales may, indeed, have been one such supplier of confectionery to the Court, and that there was at this time a distinct department for confectionery within the Royal Household. As for the ambogue, it is another topic, but it is interesting to note that 1688 reference to the word 'ambigu' in the *London*

Gazette.[35] This composite repast included some of the fare of the sweetmeat banquet, but combined it with other dishes more appropriate to a supper, as William King makes clear:

> When straiten'd in your time and servants few
> You'll rightly them compose an *Ambigue*
> Where first and second course and your Desert
> All in a single Table have their part.[36]

Sweetmeats made by most other women were not, it seems, for banquets; and they rarely claimed any medicinal value. The large compilations, dictionaries, and encyclopedias which arose during the early eighteenth century had separate sections on cookery, confectionery, and domestic medicine, but they were included as part of a very different kind of organisation and along with many different topics. What is quite clear is that, at the level in which they are included in these works, neither sugar-work nor domestic medicine is considered as secret. Eliza Smith in *The Compleat Housewife or Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion* (1727) links the seventeenth-century gentlewoman and the new breed of eighteenth-century urban housewife together in her book's claim both to maintain the 'family' and provide guidance for 'publick-spirited women'. By the end of the seventeenth century not only 'banquetting stuffe' but also the books which conveyed receipts about it had accommodated both to a wider audience and a different class, and to the predominant urban division of women's lives into the commercial and the domestic.

Notes

1. See C. A. Wilson, *The Book of Marmalade* (London, 1985), for an outline of these three main areas of sugar use.
2. See the accompanying essays in this book for a background to the social practices associated with the banquet.
3. I have often wondered if medicinal fashion was at the root of the long-running debate about whether to serve cheese or dessert last in the meal.
4. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1970), cities two references for

the emergence of the word during the 1530s: 1534, Berners; and 1533, Coverdale.

5. Claude Valgelas, *Conservation de Santé,* translated by H. de Monteux (Paris, 1572).
6. *The Oxford English Dictionary,* as above, gives an occurrence of 'soteltie' from 1517.
7. E. Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge, 1927); see also the earlier reference to a feast's 'solace' in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure, c.* 1400, II. pp.174–201, pointed out to me by Lesley Johnson.
8. *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History.*
9. See the holdings of the British Library in *The British Museum Catalogue* (London, 1959–75), for an indication of the numbers of the editions.
10. Quoted from T. Elyot, *The Bankette of Sapience* (London, 1539), by S. Lohmberg in *Sir Thomas Elyot, Tudor Humanist* (Austin, 1960) p.130.
11. L. Leys, *The Temperate Man,* 1613, translated by J. Starkey. New ed. (London, 1678).
12. Anne Wilson of the Brotherton Library kindly directed me to 'A Medieval Book of Herbs and Medicine', by E. Brunskill, in *Northwestern Naturalist* n.s., I (1953-4), for this information.
13. This progression of science into private experiment from F. Bacon's insistence on experimental observation as the heart of the scientific method.
14. U. Schumacher-Voelker discusses this phenomenon in 'German Cookery Books 1485–1800', *Petits Propos Culinaires* 6 (1980), p.40.
15. Hugh Platt was an extraordinary early technologist who, for example in *The Jewel House of Art and Nature* (London, *c.* 1594), proposes dried parsnips as a source for sugar. The related sugar-beet did not go into production in England until the early nineteenth century.
16. W. Harrison in Holinshed's Chronicles, 1586, quoted in 'The Ladies of Elizabeth's Court', in *Early English Meals and Manners,* ed. F. J. Furnivall (Early English Text Society, OS32, 1868), p.xc.
17. A mention of the colour yellow for ruffs is made by Dodsley in connection with the Overbury plot, suggesting that the colour yellow was associated with the bands of a Mrs Turner, who went to the scaffold in 1615. *Albumazar* by T. Tomkins, ed. W. Hazlitt, *A Select Collection of Old English Plays, II* (London, 1875), p.328. I am grateful to Dr Martin Butler for pointing this out to me.
18. Prospect Books has printed a facsimile of the 1654 edition (London, 1985), and M. Bell in the introduction outlines a history of the book.
19. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1974), I, p.453.
20. The Commonwealth period is generally credited with having

lessened the powers of many of the guilds, the printers being a significant exception to the rule.

21. G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (London, 1944), p.246.
22. M. Plant, *The English Book Trade* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974), p.86.
23. See, for example, S. Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution* (London, 1972).
24. J. Cromwell, *The Court and Kitchin of Elizabeth* (London, 1664), p.44.
25. For this attribution see E. David 'A True Gentlewoman's Delight', *Petit Propos Culinaires* (1979), p.43.
26. J. Ferguson, *Bibliographical Notes on Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets,* II (London, 1981), sixth suppl., p.47.
27. Wilson, *The Book of Marmalade.*
28. L. Lemery, *A Treatise on Foods in General* (London, 1704).
29. Interestingly the word 'banket' is still in use in the Dutch language, to refer to sweet, spiced-baked goods.
30. This list goes through an interesting social shift. The edition of 1674 presents the order beginning with King/Queen, Doctor, Guild Master, Lord, Lady, etc., and ending with Mistress and then Master. The 1710 edition completely omits Guild Master and begins with Queen and Bishop, ending with Doctor, Mister, and Mistress.
31. See T. Cocke, *Kitchin-Physicke* (London, 1676).
32. See U. Schumacher-Volker, 'The Authorship of *The Accomplish'd Lady's Delight, 1675*'. *Petits Propos Culinaires* (1981), p.66, for a discussion of the attribution of the *Accomplisht Ladies Delight* (1675).
33. M. Tillinghast had already published an earlier book on pastry-cooking, *Rare and Excellent Receipts* (London, 1690 2nd edn).
34. M. Eales, *Mrs. Mary Eales's Receipts* (London, 1985 , reprinted from 1733 edn).
35. *The Oxford English Dictionary.*
36. W. King, *The Art of Cookery* (London, 1709), p.97. For an idea of the contents of an 'ambigu', see the menu outlines in C. Carter, *The Compleat Practical Cook* (London, 1985, reprinted from 1733 edn).