

**Object(s):** Recipe Book

**Object Number(s):** STMEA:2009-4

**Researcher details:** Richard Hall, Volunteer

## Recipe Book

A delicious treat was assured from this item in our collection. It is a recipe book (Figure 1) entitled: 'The Great Big New Book of Cheese Recipes'. Published in 1969, the book contains 64 pages and several recipe ideas which use cheese as an ingredient.

The front cover of the book contains a photograph of a mouth watering wedge of cheddar cheese, in front of a cheese grater and surrounded by red tomatoes. The book was compiled and published by the Cheese Bureau and this particular copy was owned by the Vera and Ena Longe of Abbots Hall and doubtless made a contribution to some of their meals during the 1970s.

This book is just one of the numerous recipe books and pamphlets that can be found in our collection.



Figure 1: Recipe Book – Museum of East Anglian Life.<sup>1</sup>

'The Great Big New Book of Cheese Recipes' contains lots of helpful tips on how to use cheese in everyday cooking including recipe ideas for: filler dishes; pastry; cheese sauces; cheese with eggs; salads; snacks, together with nutritional information and some facts about cheese.

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<sup>1</sup> Recipe Book [STMEA:2009-4]; Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket. (CC-BY-NC).



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Here is a list of ingredients from the book. It is a recipe for a macaroni cheese dish (serves 4-6 people):

- 6 oz of quick cook macaroni.

And for the cheese sauce:

- 1½ oz butter,
- 1½ oz flour,
- ¾ pint of milk,
- salt, cayenne pepper and dry mustard, and
- 4 oz grated Cheddar cheese.

and for the topping:

- 1 oz grated Cheddar cheese, and
- ½ oz brown crumbs.

The whole dish should be browned under a hot grill and served with hot toast.

Delicious!

## The Cheese Bureau

The Cheese Bureau, was set up in 1955, as a representative body for UK and Commonwealth cheese producers<sup>2</sup>. Their dominant interest was in Cheddar and Cheshire cheeses which, at that time, accounted for roughly 80% of cheese sales. Its members included the New Zealand Dairy Production and Marketing Board, Australian Dairy Produce Board, the Milk Marketing Board of England, Wales, Scotland, Ontario and Northern Ireland and the Cheese Board of Eire.

The Cheese Bureau acted solely as a promotional force, producing promotional pamphlets and recipe books such as the one in our collection. Although a force for the promotion of home grown products, the Cheese Bureau was only in existence for 17 years, its closure coinciding with our entry into the European Union (EU), or Common Market, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973<sup>3</sup>. We might surmise, that when Britain joined the EU, any organisations whose sole aim was to promote British products, would no longer be considered politically appropriate.

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<sup>2</sup> Cheese Bureau | Catalogue | History of Advertising Trust [Internet]. Hatads.org.uk. 2021 [cited 9 March 2021]. Available from: <https://www.hatads.org.uk/catalogue/record/f543b080-2226-4278-b8ef-f211c3024ca4#:~:text=Admin%20History%3A%20The%20Cheese%20Bureau,80%25%20of%20total%20cheese%20sales.>

<sup>3</sup> 2. When did Britain decide to join the European Union? | UK in a changing Europe [Internet]. UK in a changing Europe. 2021 [cited 9 March 2021]. Available from: <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/the-facts/when-did-britain-decide-to-join-the-european-union/>

## Why did we need the Cheese Bureau?

To answer this question, perhaps we need to go back further in time to May 194, when cheese was first rationed during the Second World War<sup>4</sup>. Although allowances under rationing varied, cheese on average, was reduced to around 57g (or 2 oz) per adult per week<sup>5</sup>. Given that such reductions were in place, it's hardly surprising that people didn't use very much cheese in their cooking.

In fact cheese was one of the last items to be removed from rationing restrictions and remained on ration until May 1954<sup>6</sup>. Even sweets and confectionery had been de-rationed the year before.

## British Cheese – a troubled past but a brighter future

Although difficult to evidence, it has been suggested that cheese making in Britain began in pre-Roman times<sup>7</sup>. It is likely however that cheese making was either a skill imported to this country from the continent or otherwise discovered by accident, when milk was left to curdle.

Cheese is made<sup>8</sup> by removing the excess water ('whey') from cows milk, although goats or even buffalo milk can be used. The process uses a gentle heat to establish a very loose jelly like 'curd'. 'Rennet', which is an animal based enzyme, and starter cultures are added to the curd to firm it before adding salt to the mixture. It is then cut and pressed into shape, which process removes any excess water. The drier and harder the cheese becomes during this process, the longer it tends to keep. The final product is stored for 12 to 15 months in a cool room, a process known as 'maturing' before being eaten.

In a review of the book 'A Cheesemongers history of the British Isles' by Ned Palmer; Bee Wilson<sup>9</sup> tells us that cheesemaking in Britain has often been a story of cycles of excellence followed by periods of decline, as evidenced from the example of Suffolk cheesemakers who in 1690, were obliged to petition Parliament complaining that the cheesemakers of London had forced them to

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<sup>4</sup> War S. Saving food, saving lives: rationing in the Second World War [Internet]. HistoryExtra. 2020 [cited 20 March 2021]. Available from: <https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/when-food-rationing-begin-end-ww2/>

<sup>5</sup> The weekly food ration for two people, UK, 1943 - Rare Historical Photos [Internet]. Rare Historical Photos. 2021 [cited 9 March 2021]. Available from: <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/weekly-food-ration-britain-1943/>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid (3).

<sup>7</sup> History of British Cheese [Internet]. Cheese Store. 2021 [cited 10 March 2021]. Available from: <https://cheese-store.com/history-of-british-cheese/>

<sup>8</sup> How is cheese made? A basic outline. - The Courtyard Dairy [Internet]. The Courtyard Dairy. 2021 [cited 10 March 2021]. Available from: <https://www.thecourtyarddairy.co.uk/blog/just-cheese-made-heres-basic-outline/>

<sup>9</sup> Wilson B. A Cheesemonger's History of the British Isles by Ned Palmer review – a miraculous resurgence. This delightful romp through centuries of cheesemaking will make you ravenous for Renegade Monk [Internet]. Food and Drink Books. 2019 [cited 10 March 2021]. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/oct/23/cheesemonger-history-british-isles-ned-palmer-review>



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skim ever more cream from their milk to make butter, resulting in poor quality cheese “only fit for slaves” in the county.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the first British dairy factories set up solely for the production of cheese. However, these were unable to compete with cheaper imports from Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands. By the 1930s, most British dairies had switched to milk production rather than producing cheese. The period after the Second World War saw British cheese once again on the back foot, with cheeses from France or Italy amongst the most sought after. In fact the British cheese industry could easily have been lost, had it not have been for the promotional activities of individual cheesemongers like Patrick Rance<sup>10</sup> and Randolph Hodgson<sup>11</sup> or the concerted promotional efforts of the Cheese Bureau who did much to encourage the consumption of British cheese.

Today, thanks to these efforts the British cheese industry is once more thriving with cheeses with regional flavours as well as lower fat and vegan alternatives for anyone who is unable or unwilling to take animal milk based products. There is also a thriving market for artisan cheeses,<sup>12</sup> all competing for a place in our fridges.

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<sup>10</sup> Patrick Rance [Internet]. En.wikipedia.org. 2021 [cited 10 March 2021]. Available from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick\\_Rance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Rance)

<sup>11</sup> Randolph Hodgson Bio - Slow Food in the UK [Internet]. Slow Food in the UK. 2021 [cited 10 March 2021]. Available from: <https://www.slowfood.org.uk/ff-info/randolph-hodgson-bio/>

<sup>12</sup> Welcome [Internet]. Specialistcheesemakers.co.uk. 2021 [cited 10 March 2021]. Available from: <https://www.specialistcheesemakers.co.uk/>