



MEDIA RELEASE:

Central Coast Author and spice merchant to present an online Paper at The Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery 2020

14 May, Charmhaven, Australia: The Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery is an annual event held in the UK to celebrate, explore and share food research by scholars, enthusiastic amateurs, writers and chefs from around the world.

For almost 40 years the Oxford Food Symposium has been a weekend conference on Food and Cookery, held annually in Oxford, most recently at St. Catherine's College.

This year, it will be different. The worldwide pandemic requires that the organisers transform the annual gathering into a virtual symposium, to be held starting on July 10th, where participants around the globe can join the Symposium's community remotely.

This year proposals were requested to present a paper on the cultural and culinary impact of *Herbs and Spices* in the context of food and cookery.

Ian Hemphill, Australian based author of several books on herbs and spices, and owner with wife Liz of Herbie's Spices at Charmhaven on the NSW Central Coast, submitted a proposal titled *The Perils of Popularity* that has been accepted by the editor.

Ian's paper on the perils of popularity can be summarised as follows:

Herbs and spices have been a part of human history for thousands of years, and now in the 21st century, herbs, spices and spice blends have achieved unprecedented popularity, with the widest distribution and availability in history. They have become readily available, and cooks are able to add symphonies of taste to what may otherwise be boring meals. But, we have to wonder, at what cost? What are the 'Perils of Popularity' for herbs and spices in 2020 and beyond? And who – or what – are the spice rogues of today?

Someone with an obsession for foodways will discover ancient ingredients and methods and bring them perfectly to a modern restaurant. Under the pressure of

multimedia and celebrity adoration, often the lovingly nurtured and authentic product will be reproduced in an affordable, cheapened and bastardised way for the home consumer. This paper proposes that popularity and widespread acceptance should not lead to a devaluation of the true intrinsic qualities of herbs, spices and spice blends.

Ian looks at answering what are the risks of losing quality, authenticity and accuracy of information? Is a herb, spice or spice blend, based on cultural traditions evolved over thousands of years, in danger of losing its identity?

Although Ian and Liz are disappointed to be missing the opportunity to personally attend at St. Catz, Oxford's only Modernist College, Ian is looking forward to participating in the first-ever online (V-Symp) virtual symposium.

For more information about The Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery 2020 and to register to attend the V-Symp follow this link:

<https://www.oxfordsymposium.org.uk/this-year/booking-a-place/registration-2020-our-very-first-v-symp/>