

# Let the children eat snails, says Edinburgh chef

French restaurateur wants schools to serve fish heads and escargots instead of nuggets and chips to combat obesity

Julia Horton

Let them eat cake? Mais non, let them eat snails. While it is questionable whether French queen Marie Antoinette ever uttered the infamous former line, Frenchman Fred Berkmler has just said the latter.

The chef is calling for foods such as snails and fish heads to be served at schools across Scotland as a way for ministers to show they are serious about a pledge to combat obesity and make the country a truly "good-food nation".

Berkmler runs two Edinburgh restaurants – L'Escargot Bleu and L'Escargot Blanc – and gets his snails from the Isle of Barra.

He believes the molluscs should be eaten in schools nationwide. He wants imported, processed or deep-fried foods such as nuggets and chips to be replaced by fish heads.

Berkmler says pupils should grow vegetables and keep poultry at schools, which should each have a proper kitchen and a chef to help children learn how to

“**The pupils could keep chickens and learn to cook them too**”

eat healthily and sustainably. Speaking as the government began a consultation on its diet and obesity strategy, which includes plans to curb supermarket promotions on foods high in fat, sugar or salt, Berkmler said: "In the old days we had chefs or cooks buying raw ingredients and cooking proper meals for kids at school."

"Now we come across far too many youngsters and adults who have no experience with food except the regular bland sandwich, the chippy or chicken nuggets."

"Why haven't Barra snails reached the local school yet? Or fish heads, which are thrown back into the sea?"

"We are facing maybe three generations, grandparents, parents and children, who do not know how to cook. How can we create a nation of food and drink when people have no clue?"

"Schools have to step in. We could easily have a vegetable garden in every school, run by the pupils who could keep chickens and learn to cook them too."

Berkmler recommended an old Scots recipe for fish heads, which involves stuffing them with less popular "but tastier" brown crab meat, before steaming them in the oven.

Wild snails were "extremely nutritious, organic, sustainable, flavoursome and free, if you pick them yourself", he said, with "easy" recipes including snail tartine, combining the molluscs with fresh vegetables and herbs and serving with bread.

He backed criticism by Nourish Scotland, the food justice charity, which said the government's approach to its Good Food Nation pledge – to make the country's bountiful larder accessible to all – had focused on multibillion-pound exports of produce such as salmon, while many Scots were obese or becoming obese because they could not or did not eat fresh local produce.

About two in three adults and one in three Scottish children are obese or



Berkmler gets his escargots from Barra, and wonders why children cannot eat their own fresh local produce

overweight, putting them at greater risk of conditions including heart disease, cancer and stroke.

Eating more fruit and vegetables would significantly reduce the dangers, but only one in five adults and one in ten children meet the recommended five a day target.

Nourish Scotland backed Berkmler's call, but said the focus should be "far wider" than schools where dinners, while "not perfect" were "far better" than food in shops and petrol stations.

Its director Pete Ritchie welcomed the government proposals which include the possibility of using planning regulations to restrict fast-food outlets near schools.

## The end? BBC's film show vanishes

Richard Brooks  
Arts Editor

It began as Film 71 in the southeast before going national the following year with the late Barry Norman as presenter. Attracting an audience of up to 5m, the Film programme was the most watchable and influential BBC show about cinema, often running for 36 weeks a year.

But now insiders fear the BBC has decided to kill it off, quietly – yet in true Hollywood style leaving themselves room for a sequel.

Film 2017 ran for just seven editions but there has been no programme since February; nor will there be any more this year. And the film critic Danny Leigh, the programme's co-host since 2010, has told the BBC he is not going to return.

Iain Johnstone, who devised the programme and presented it himself when Norman was absent in the early 1980s, said: "Whatever happens next, the main BBC channel should have a film criticism programme, but with the right man or woman as sole presenter."

Johnstone, who was the film critic of The Sunday Times from 1983 to 1992, said he chose Barry Norman as presenter: "The audience really liked him."

One fan was the director Alan Parker. "But once Barry had gone, I stopped watching," he said.

So is it end credits? This weekend the BBC said: "The Film show will be back in 2018." But the corporation would not say when – nor who would be in front of the cameras.

● A second series of the arts programme Front Row is to be commissioned for next year for BBC2. The TV show is a spin-off from the long-running Radio 4 programme of the same name, but with its own roster of presenters, including Giles Coren, Nikki Bedi and Amol Rajan.

JAMES GLOSSOP/ALAMY



Berkmler, who runs two restaurants in the capital, backs a new menu

# Puff away, says poll on smoking at home

Mark Macaskill

Most people believe smokers should be allowed to continue lighting up in their homes, according to a poll that suggests more curbs on indoor smoking in Scotland would be unpopular.

Smoking in public places and in cars when under-18s are present is already illegal but campaigners say tens of thousands of people, including children, are exposed daily to secondhand smoke at home.

Pro-smoking group Forest, concerned that new curbs on indoor smoking are becoming more likely, commissioned the survey. It was carried out by Populus on October 18-20.

The Scottish government has indicated it has no plans to consider further legislation in this area.

The poll of 2,101 adults in Britain asked if people should or should not be allowed to smoke at home. Nearly half

FOREST SURVEY SHOWS MAJORITY AGAINST CURBS

76%

People who say smoking at home should be allowed

59,767

Scots who tried to quit this year with help from NHS

2,101

Britons polled in survey funded by smoking lobby

the respondents (48%) said people should "definitely" be allowed, while 28% said smokers should "probably" be allowed.

Twenty per cent said either people "definitely" or "probably" should not be allowed to smoke at home. "Don't knows" accounted for 4%.

A law making it illegal to smoke in a car in the presence of anyone younger than 18-years-old came into force in Scotland in December.

Since 2006, bar workers in Scotland have been protected from secondhand smoke by a ban on smoking in public places. Some people question why the same protection has not been extended to children at home.

This month, Dr Sean Semple, a senior lecturer in the respiratory group at the University of Aberdeen, said a debate was needed on the issue.

Action on Smoking and

“**I have no doubt that the aim is a ban, starting with social housing**”

Health Scotland, the health charity, believes more can be done to protect people who live in social housing from secondhand smoke.

The organisation has warned that exposure to smoke in the home causes "real harm" but has said it does not support a ban on smoking at home.

However, Simon Clark, director of Forest, said: "I have no doubt that a long-term goal of the tobacco control industry is a ban on smoking in the home, starting with social housing."

"The only way they can hope to achieve their ambition of a smoke-free Scotland is to persecute smokers into submission."

"The poll is a reminder that most people don't support an extreme anti-smoking agenda."

Sheila Duffy, chief executive of Ash Scotland, said: "Simon Clark is shadow-boxing with fake news."

The SNP has set a target of Scotland becoming "tobacco-free" by 2034. In 2016-17 the number of people trying to quit with help from the NHS fell to 59,767, down eight per cent on the previous 12 months. In the country's most deprived areas, 7,842 people had kicked the habit for three months, but this was below a target of 9,404.

PATRICK MACSEAN



Pro-smoking lobby fears people who light up at home will be 'persecuted into submission'

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