

THE HISTORY OF THE
ROYAL ACADEMY OF CULINARY ARTS
1980-2020

The origins of the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts lie in the Académie Culinaire de France, an organisation founded in 1883 by Joseph Favre, a French chemist. The remit of the Académie Culinaire de France was to collect and catalogue all the classical recipes – as the Académie Française does with literature and language.

The genesis of the British branch of the Académie was the Club 9, a group of highly regarded Chefs des Cuisines who met monthly to mull over the culinary business of the day. They were Michel Bourdin, Albert Roux, John Huber, Anton Mosimann, Guy Mouilleron, Peter Kromberg, Richard Shepherd, Uwe Zander and Felix Muntwyler.

Befitting the organisation, the Académie Culinaire de France Filiale de Grande Bretagne was launched as a Friendly Society with a momentous dinner at The Connaught on 6th December 1980, with Michel Bourdin as Founder President and Albert Roux as his Vice President. Sir Hugh Wontner, the Savoy's iconic Chairman, and Paolo Zago, the Connaught's now legendary GM, were the Academy's first Honorary Members.

The early days of the ACdeF UK were made possible by immense support from Möt & Chandon and its CEO Patrick Forbes. Lord David Marchwood followed as CEO and continued to offer significant support. Plenary meetings were faithfully held there once a month until the late Eighties when the Académie outgrew Möt's boardroom table.

In 1982, Associate membership began with invitations to the country's top suppliers to join the Académie – companies such as Möt & Chandon, Champagne Taittinger, Minch Fish (now James Knight of Mayfair), Laurent-Perrier, Cointreau, Hobart-Still and Forman & Sons have enriched the Académie ever since; and today the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts has over 40 Associate members with their own steering committee whose chairmen have included Sam Gordon Clark, Dai Francis, Ken Wilkins and Gillian Thomson.

Investitures began in 1983 and are a reflection of the Academy's ethos and the demonstration of its belief in honouring the culinary arts, both back and front of house. The ceremony calls on elected Academicians to deliver an appraisal of their historical mentors, after which they become Fellows of the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts. The term Fellow succeeds that of Academician mentor and was changed in 2010 commemorating the 30th Anniversary. To date 27 investitures have taken place, creating 130 Royal Academy Fellows.

In 1983, one of the Academy's most coveted awards: the Young Commis of the Year Award (which later became the Annual Awards of Excellence) began under the chairmanship of Emile Lefèbvre.

In 1985, Les Arts de la Table was founded by Michel Bourdin, Silvano Giralдин, Sergio Rebecchi and Richard Edmonds. This reflects the importance given to Front of House and its first Chairman – Silvano Giralдин – remains in post to this day.

At this time, the ACdeF was still governed by the French institution, which limited membership to 35 chefs over the age of 35. In 1986, the Académie in Great Britain sought to branch out and develop an independent, less restricting code. It was decided that membership should be broadened and invitations were extended to members' brigades past and present. These were mostly British, reflecting the steep change taking place within our own culinary culture. They were not eligible to become full members of the British Branch of the ACdeF partly due to the limit on numbers and partly due to their young(ish) age. They were known as Affiliates and were chaired by David Nicholls along with John King, David Dorricott, Michael Coaker, Paul Gayler, Herbert Berger, and Marjan Lesnik among other notable young aspiring talented chefs from the 'schools' of Bourdin, Mosimann, Kromberg and Roux. By the early Nineties, the two tiers were deemed divisive so the Affiliates became full Academicians.

The Academy's standard of excellence and education was further developed through the first Meilleur Ouvrier de Grande Bretagne, inspired and masterminded by Michel and Albert Roux, Michel Bourdin and Richard Shepherd, names that occur so frequently in this history as those who have shaped the character of the Academy. The MOGB was held under the chairmanship of Emile Lefèbvre and was a benchmark for the more advanced professional chef (and today, the pastry chef and restaurant manager). It tests the skill and knowledge of the competitors and stretches those who enter to achieve exemplary results. It continues to be recognised as a major achievement of the most talented hospitality professionals. The first MOGB was held at Slough College and judged by senior members of the ACdeF (UK) together with a bevy of high profile names from France including Paul Bocuse; Joel Robuchon; Roger Verge; the first MOGBs were Michael Aldridge; Michel Perraud; Antony Worrall Thompson. The first Awards dinner was held at Le Meridien cooked by David Chambers. Keith Podmore took over the chair in 1991 followed by David Pitchford in 2009. The awards semis and finals have been held at Slough College, University of West London, University College Birmingham and Le Gavroche. Awards dinners have been held at the Inn on the Park (now the Four Seasons) hosted by Ramon Pajares, cooked by Eric Deblonde and led by David Petrie and Claridge's hosted by Francois Touzin, Thomas Kochs and Paul Jackson and cooked by John Williams and Martyn Nail and where they continue to this day. (See Directory for full Roll Call of MCAs, judges and our wonderful sponsors).

At the same time in 1987 Richard Shepherd was appointed its first British Chairman.

1987 Roy Ackerman launched the first National Restaurateurs' Dinner at the Park Lane to raise funds for the industry. The ACdeF, the Restaurateurs Association of Great Britain, the IoH and the Academy of Food and Wine Service joined the dinner in 1988. For over 20 years, Patrick Gwynn Jones MBE of Pomegranates was master of fund raising succeeded by Bob Walton MBE. Since then the dinner has been held at leading London hotels including the InterContinental, the Royal Garden, the Globe Theatre and the Dorchester and The Savoy. Currently benefactors are the RACA, the Restaurateurs Association and the Wine Guild who, with Nick Scade and Paul Breach, manage persuade the industry to support with marvellous wines. With thanks to Chefs' team leaders who have included John William MBEs, Henry Brosi and currently Jeff Galvin MCA. To date this dinner has raised over £1.5 million for its beneficiaries. So many industry luminaries have contributed to this event so here is an official thank you. It is now planned to make a fresh start after 33 years with an International Restaurateurs Dinner. (See www.nrdinner.co.uk)

1988 witnessed the Young Commis Chef of the Year evolving with two most important additional disciplines of Pastry and Service and Keith Podmore taking over the chairmanship. Keith recognised that this would embrace all the highly important skills that make the hospitality industry tick. The competition, now with its three categories, became the Annual Awards of Excellence.

In 1995-2005 David Dorricott took over the chairmanship followed by John Williams in 2006 to present day and over the past thirty years, 538 young people have achieved this award of merit, skill and aspiration – and it is still going strong in 2020. Thanks to Willy Bauer OBE and Anton Edelmann for all the lunches to celebrate the winners were held at The Savoy. Speakers included Derek Nimmo; Clement Freud and Barry Cryer. As the Awards grew in size dinners moved to Claridge's and continue to this day with thanks to Paul Jackson and Martyn Nail, The Savoy Educational Trust (SET) scholarship has afforded the three winners of each category amazing experiences in Mexico (3 with thanks to the Mexican Ministry of Tourism and Los Cabos); Dubai; Louisiana (with thanks to Tabasco); Hong Kong, Shanghai (thanks to the Langham); Los Angeles (3 with thanks to the Dorchester Collection); Tuscany (with thanks to Amedei); Maple in Canada; Paris; and Bordeaux. (See Directory for full Roll Call of AAEs, judges and our wonderful sponsors).

1989 was the launch of the Academy of Culinary Arts Specialised Chefs Course in partnership with Bournemouth and Poole College. We started with 12 students including Simon Boyle (the first graduate to become an Academician) and the latest Gary Robinson. The three year course was inspired by Michel Bourdin and Peter Taylor – then Senior Lecturer at B&P - and devised by a team of Academicians and college lecturers, including David Boland; it was the first of its kind. It aims to train its 16-19 year old students to the highest possible standards and at the same time, provide employment for them with members of the Academy. The course is at the heart of the Academy's raison d'être, which made it all the more special when the programme won a National Training award in 2000. Despite changes in the apprenticeship system, the course currently follows NVQ to Level 3 and culminates in an Academy examination. Jenny Brett continued to look after the apprentices until her retirement in 2018. Today the course is well subscribed with between 20 – 25 apprentices every year. To date there are some 500 graduates – 75% of whom are working successfully within the industry both at home and across the world. Waitrose sponsored the programme until 2016 succeeded by Teflon. (See Directory for full Roll Call of Graduates).

The landmark activities of the Eighties were quickly followed with the creation of Adopt a School in 1990, whose aims and objectives have developed over the years to represent a hugely successful model for food education at primary level. In 1990, it was noted by members of the Academy that there was a lack of young people coming into the industry. Ever the proactive organisation, the Académie founded Adopt a School – a programme that would provide an interface between chefs and secondary school students. It was hoped by Bev Puxley, John Huber, Giles Thompson and Sara Jayne Stanes (among others) that by teaching these children about food and cookery, and introducing them to chefs, the profession would become an attractive career option. However there was an almost immediate set back: the majority of secondary school children had neither base knowledge nor demonstrated an interest in food or cookery. (This was of course prior to food and cookery becoming popular mainstream television with the subsequent host of celebrity chefs). It was clear that intervention was needed at a much earlier stage. And so, at the inspiration

of Richard Shepherd, the focus shifted to primary schools. This identified the second set back which was (and is today) the severe lack of food rooms and cooking facilities in primary schools. This was overcome by the design of the Taste and Sensory session which inspires and educates children without the need for ovens or kitchens. This is still the first lesson delivered today to every group of children regardless of age or ability. Adopt a School had its press launch in 1993 at a primary school in Barnes with Brian Turner, Bruno Loubet and the then Secretary of State for Agriculture (MAFF) Nicholas Soames MP. Giles Thompson was chairman of the committee, later succeeded by Michael Coaker in 2002 and Sara Jayne Stanes in 2012. In 2001, Adopt a School became a registered charity in its own right.

In 2012 the RACA and AAS helped to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee by cooking lunch for her and local dignitaries at a school in south London during one of Her Majesty's many tours with thanks to Harrison's Catering, and the AAS team. Every year, Adopt a School reaches thousands of primary school children across the length and breadth of the country. In 1990, we were almost the sole pioneers in this field – no-one was providing the services that which have become the backbone of our work. Today there are a number of other providers in the sector but with 3 ½ million primary school children across the British Isles, even with every one of us working at full capacity, we would not be able to reach them all.

From 2013 - 2016 we worked closely with the Henry Dimbleby's School Food Plan, chaired by Myles Bremner (now one of our Trustees) and won the support of the Department for Education in 2014 to include food education as compulsory for 5 year olds upwards. This was a result indeed. But still few schools take it up citing lack of qualified teachers and budgets as reasons. Additionally, food education is not on Ofsted's 'tick box' removing any incentives for head teachers. However, those committed head teachers are aware of the value of Adopt a School and still come to us to fill the voids. The School Food Plan Alliance took over from the SFP to continue its work and still exists today.

In addition to the School Food Plan, other organisations with which we have been closely associated are FACE (Farming and Countryside Education) launching the Countryside Classroom, a web-based resource for teachers and parents who want their children to understand more about farming and the sources of their food; the London Food Board; Sustain; All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on School Food; APPG on Food and Health Forum; School Food Plan Alliance; School Food Matters; LEAF (FACE integrated in 2019) with whom we partner on many farm visits; Soil Association; City University; the North West Development Agency (with thanks to Paul Heathcote MBE) and more...

We have worked with a number of colleges including University of West London; Westminster Kingsway; University College Birmingham; City Liverpool College; City University; Bournemouth and Poole who all include an AAS Taste and Sensory session as part of the RACA apprentice chefs curriculum; and currently University of Nottingham who are doing a 5 year pilot curriculum study with Idris Caldora MCA and Milford Academy. James Holden has worked in the North West with linking together a number of colleges to support Adopt a School including St Helens; Southport; Wirral Met; City of Liverpool; West Cheshire and L20 Hugh Baird.

Numerous thanks to a roll call of celebrities and institutions for support including Philip Corrick and the RAC for a series of Take 3 Colleges and every single chef and supplier and college who

has taken part; the Muscular Dystrophy Trust; Carol Hehir; Debra; Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons (thanks to Raymond Blanc OBE, Gary Jones and Benoit Blin MCA); The Waterside Inn (with thanks to Michel Roux OBE, Alain Roux, Diego Masciaga MCA and Frederic Poulette); The Ritz (with thanks to John Williams and Sol); Paul Heathcote MBE; St Helens College; Terry Laybourne MBE; Steven Doherty MCA; the RAC at Epsom, Molly Shaher and Middlesborough College, Evoke, Liverpool Anfield Stadium and the Arthroplasty for Arthritis Trust.

We have been supported since 1996 by the Savoy Educational Trust; since 2000 by the Worshipful Company of Cooks; Baxters 1996-1999 and Waitrose from 2000-2004; also the University of West London; the Garfield Weston Foundation; Harrison's Catering and Caterlink and other generous donors including Albert Roux, Richard Shepherd, Sir John Spurling, Alastair Storey and David Coubrough, Sir Simon and Lady Watson (Roney), David and Jane Treherne Pollock, Karen Browne, and Chris Sheppardson.

Today Adopt a School is a team effort between volunteering members of the Academy a small number of personnel from the industry and a small professional team. This team is led by Idris Caldora MCA and now includes James Holden, Ashley Marsh, Helena Houghton and Juliet Snow (with thanks to Geoff du Feu, Elly Mercer, Alix Sinclair and Sarah Howard for their past input). See 2010 for a note of Their Royal Highnesses visit to St George's School in Mayfair. (Full reports and curricula can be found in the latest AGM Reports).

The early Nineties were a difficult time for the Academy, amidst an environment not unlike that of our last anniversary in 2010 and worse still in 2020. Heavy recession hit and the hospitality industry suffered badly from the fall out. The ACdeF was no exception. Recent recessions hurt the hospitality profession and slowed the Academy's progress. Led by Roy Ackerman, funds that had been promised in support of our vision of a stand alone, university level, training centre – a true Academy of Culinary Arts – evaporated. However, supported by a strong membership, the Academy came through these difficult times, just as it came through the credit crunch hit, at the time of our birthday in 2010. It is testament to the spirit of the organisation that it continued through this hardship. However, continue and thrive it does.

1991 Sam Gordon Clark, Albert Roux and Richard Shepherd were appointed Trustees of the Académie.

Silvano Giraldin and Michel Bourdin persuaded the MOGB judges to include Restaurant Management and Service to the Chef's discipline.

In 1993, with thanks to Professor David Foskett MBE and Professor John Huber we started the second apprenticeship programme with Slough College – now the University of West London.

And the same year, Richard Shepherd was appointed President with Brian Turner succeeding him as Chairman while David Dorricott took over the Chairmanship of the Annual Awards of Excellence.

Also in 1993 we launched the Scottish branch of the ACdeF UK at Turnberry. Alan Hill, from Executive Chef to Hotel Manager at Gleneagles was its first chairman followed by Jeff Bland and currently succeeded in 2020 by Kevin Dalglish.

Next, in 1995 an exceptional party was held at the RAC with thanks to the Chairman and Philip Corrick MBE to celebrate the 15th Anniversary.

In 1996, Professor John Huber lobbied the MOGB judges to add Pastry to the list of disciplines of the culinary arts.

In the same year we launched the Northern Branch with Terry Laybourne MBE as its chairman. He served until 2010 when he was succeeded by Paul Heathcote MBE and then in 2015 by Paul Askew and Steven Doherty MCA

Two years later, in 1998, the Academy responded to a vote overwhelmingly in favour of changing the name from the Académie Culinaire de France to The Academy of Culinary Arts. The change in name reflected the astonishing revolution for the better in the professional British kitchen and the dawn of the coming of age of Britain's place on the global culinary map.

A year later, in 1989, this was to be further recognised by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as he became Patron of the Academy. This was a great moment for the Academy and The Prince of Wales is a Patron who continues to encourage the Academy to fulfil its potential and push the boundaries, not least with the Mutton Renaissance Campaign in 2003. This was devised in the wake of the foot and mouth epidemic the previous year and, working with one of its other founders, John Thorley OBE Chairman of the National Sheep Association and now PANSA, continues under the name of the Mutton Renaissance Campaign and Club to this day. The Mutton Renaissance campaign was fully active with farm visits and events supported by a number of sheep farmers and Academicians and chefs across England and Wales and which were attended by His Royal Highness between 2004 and 2012 but it still exists today albeit in a much reduced capacity mainly as a resource.

Together with the RACA, the Mutton Renaissance Club helped to celebrate His Royal Highness' 70th Birthday at a parade at the Royal Cornwall Show in June 2018.

2000 celebrated our twentieth anniversary in a warehouse on the banks of the Thames in Battersea. Thanks to Martin Lam, Herbert Berger, John Williams, Frances Bissell and members of Les Arts it was a memorable success funded by Waitrose. Regrettably the building is now a high rise block of flats!

In 2000, the title of the MOGB was changed to the Master of Culinary Arts.

2001 Adopt a School became a charity in its own right number 1087567.

2004 John Williams took over the chairmanship of the Annual Awards of Excellence.

2003/4 Under His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales we launched the Mutton Renaissance Campaign and Club. See above.

2004 John Williams MBE was appointed the Academy's Chairman, Brian Turner CBE became President and Richard Shepherd CBE became Honorary President.

2007 A new Board of Governors was convened under the chairmanship of Roy Ackerman CBE.

In 2009, David Pitchford took over the chairmanship of the Master of Culinary Arts; and in the same year Heston Blumenthal OBE was appointed Honorary President of the Annual Awards of Excellence.

In 2010 – the thirtieth anniversary of The Academy of Culinary Arts and the twentieth anniversary of Adopt a School - was as eventful and as dynamic as ever. Adopt a School celebrated its birthday with an exceptional, super special event in February – an Adopt a School session attended by Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, at St George's Primary School, Mayfari which was the first school ever 'adopted' by the programme. The celebration was a great opportunity to showcase Adopt a School and congratulate all those who have contributed to the success of the charity and it was wonderful to hear The Prince of Wales praise Adopt a School as 'the model for schools across the country'.

The Academy of Culinary Arts also moved forward with a strong, modern new logo; and the creation of – Friends of the Academy a new category of membership under the chairmanship of Roy Ackerman CBE followed by Sam Gordon Clark CBE. After 7 years in the chair, Sam handed over the reins in January 2018 to Tony Murkett from the Sloane Club.

In 2012 we started the third 3 year Chefs' Apprenticeship this time with Westminster Kingsway College with thanks to Geoff Booth, Gary Hunter and Tony Cameron.

In 2013, we were granted the Royal title by Her Majesty The Queen in recognition our eminence within the hospitality industry, a privilege indeed.

In September, we launched the fourth 3 year Chefs' Apprenticeship at University College Birmingham.

In 2015 we celebrated the 35th Anniversary with a tribute to Michel Bourdin and a brigade of his chefs from the early days of the Connaught and thanks to Philip Corrick MBE at the RAC. It was a splendid event.

The RACA resigned from the Friendly Society and became a Company Limited by Guarantee with new Trustees. See below.

In 2016 we started the fifth 3 year apprenticeship at City Liverpool College

We continue to support the plans for a sixth RACA apprenticeship, this time for Front of House and Service.

In 2016 Jason Atherton succeeded Heston as Honorary president of the Annual Awards of Excellence.

In 2017 we started a series of meetings among members to draw together all manner of sustainability issues and experiences of Academicians which led to our Sustainability Policy. In other words a policy devised by our members for our members. It is underpinned by six pillars and was due to have its own hub on our website which will be updated regularly. However, Covid has put a temporary halt to this significant piece of work. With thanks to the master 'builders' Martin Lam, John Williams, Rosanna Frost, Martin Christian Kent and Frederick Mostert.

2018 After 30 years as chairman of the Trustees, Sam Gordon Clark CBE retired and handed over the reins to David Coubrough. David has been a member of the Board of Governors since its inception and now also chairs the BoG.

In November on the occasion of his 70th birthday, we 'gifted' our Patron, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales with 7 apprentices – one for each decade. After much toing and froing, candidates were selected from The Princes Trust and enrolled on a three year Royal Academy Apprenticeship programme in partnership with Westminster Kingsway College. Alas along came Covid and put a temporary halt to the plans ...

2020 has been a year of disaster in anybody's language. News of the Corona virus Covid19 started to seep through in January and took hold in March when the country was locked down. This has had a catastrophic effect of many hospitality businesses and at the time of writing and when we should be celebrating our 40th anniversary it doesn't look like it's getting any better. London is a ghost town as are many large cities across the UK. Much of the time our small staff have been furloughed but in between this we have managed to start using Zoom three times a week for one hour to keep ourselves linked together and to see what is happening around us. In addition we started a video series of one to one with Brian Turner CBE, John Williams MBE, Jason Atherton, Chris Galvin, Adam Byatt, James Golding and Cyrus Todiwala OBE DL followed by Silvano Giraladin and Sergio Rebecchi on the importance of service. These have been picked up and streamed by the Caterer and also distributed to 'our' colleges who use them as teaching opportunities for the students. Regretfully, our grand plans to celebrate the 40th anniversary have been put on hold until we are allowed to start 'partying' in numbers.

After 34 years Sara Jayne Stanes decided to semi retire.

So, to the present day – notwithstanding Covid19 - and here we are in 2020 with some 300 Academicians, both back and front of house – all leading members of the hospitality industry ready and willing to lend their expertise to the work of the RACA and AAS which is education and training the next generation; 40 Associate members and 125 Friends. RACA and AAS Trustees, Board of Governors, Management, Selection, 3 Annual Awards of Excellence, 3 Master of Culinary Arts, Education; Associates, Sustainability, AAS Management and fund raising committees underpin a successful portfolio of activities such as the Master of Culinary Arts, the Annual Awards of Excellence, the 5 Apprenticeship programmes; and our own charity Adopt a School ... benchmarks of an association with an impressive heritage and a powerful, inspiring future... and the Prince of Wales is our Patron.

Here is to the next 40 years and beyond.

RACA Trustees: David Coubrough (Chairman); Willy Bauer OBE; Frederick Mostert; Albert Roux OBE (Vice President of the RACA); Sara Jayne Stanes OBE (CEO of the RACA); Richard Shepherd CBE; Brian Turner (President of the RACA); John Valentine; John Williams MBE (Chairman of the RACA).

Trustees of Adopt a School: David Coubrough (Chairman); Amanda Afiya; Myles Bremner; Richard Dunne; Sara Jayne Stanes OBE; Brian Turner CBE; John Williams MBE;

Chairman of Les Arts de la Table: Silvano Giraldin; Chairman of the Master of Culinary Arts: David Pitchford; Honorary President of the Annual Awards of Excellence: Jason Atherton; Chairman of the Annual Awards of Excellence: John Williams MBE; Chairman of Associates: Ken Wilkins handing over to Gillian Thomson; Chairman of the Trustees and the Board of Governors: David Coubrough

ROYAL ACADEMY OF CULINARY ARTS: CEO: Sara Jayne Stanes OBE; General Manager: Richard Larkin; Projects AAE and MCA Manager for the RACA: Daniel Morris-Jeffrey; Executive PA and PR: Rosanna Frost.

ADOPT A SCHOOL: CEO: Sara Jayne Stanes; Programme Director: Helena Houghton; Project Manager: Juliet Snow; Executive Chef Team Leader: Idris Caldora MCA; AAS for the North West: James Holden; AAS Chef for London and the South: Ashley Marsh