

Hereford Times – Talking Point: Andy Link, chef/patron  
The Riverside Inn, Aymestrey  
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## **Forgotten Foods**

It is very easy to forget about some of the ingredients we ate when we were young but are now no longer commercially available. Unfashionable ingredients that have ceased to be a staple include beef dripping, tripe, quince, medlar, damsons and so many more. Occasionally us chefs will try and reinvent some of these for today's customers, and they are often a big hit as they are delicious – and, indeed should be celebrated as part of our national identity and food heritage.

Some former no-go ingredients that have reappeared in the national food repertoire include pigs' trotters and lamb shank.

The Slow Food 'Ark of Taste' does a great job of showcasing many forgotten ingredients, often representing traditional, small-scale food producers and production techniques, highlighting ingredients at risk of extinction by promoting and preserving them. This will hopefully save some of our food heritage and maintain and enhance our edible diversity. The 'Ark of Taste' now comprises of a range of artisan ingredients from unusual fruits, and vegetables, to rare animal breeds like Gloucestershire Old Spot pork; along with artisan cheeses such as Single and Double Lancashire, to unique recipes/processes such as the production method for our fantastic Three Counties Cider and Perry.

Slow Food UK is a not-for-profit organisation seeking to promote a better way to eat, celebrating the rich food traditions and the different cultural traditions throughout the UK, and protecting our edible heritage. It's definitely worth joining if you'd like to protect our amazing food culture.

Our local branch of Slow Food, Slow Food Marches, has already listed several items within the international register, from the Shropshire prune damson – common throughout Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. It was brought over in Roman times and then cultivated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for its purple dye which was widely used - from the Ludlow glove trade, to the Kidderminster carpet making industry to dyeing cotton uniforms in Lancashire. There's also Mortimer Forest venison introduced in the 11<sup>th</sup> century into the ancient hunting woodland, now unique to our area and an amazing wild product that needs its numbers managed to avoid damage to the woodland.

On a smaller scale, here at the Riverside, we now use part of our gardens and orchards for planting heritage food. We grow fabulous forgotten edibles such as Good King Henry – also known as 'Poor Man's Asparagus and Lincolnshire spinach; angelica, and a variety of flavoursome heritage vegetables. This autumn, several rare fruit tree varieties will be planted in our orchard.

I will be discussing forgotten foods and giving people a chance to taste some of these ingredients, when I do my talk at this year's Ludlow Food Festival (September 7- 9), as part of the Slow Food workshops. With a little luck some of these bygone favourites will be back in the public eye before too long.