

ITI ScotNet summer workshop – translating food and drink

Just as an army marches on its stomach, so too is a translator's work fuelled by a good collection of snacks! This year's summer workshop returned to the subject of food and drink, and it was the lovely village of Edzell on the Angus/Aberdeenshire border that played host this time round. Here, Ania Marchwiak and Isabel Stainsby talk about having their appetites whetted in the workshop's three expert presentations.

Translating Italian food, with Michael Farrell

On the Saturday of the workshop weekend, the ScotNetters met at the Panmure Arms in Edzell to begin a day of tasty workshops. The day started with a lecture and workshop delivered by seasoned (tee-hee) culinary translator and amateur cook Michael Farrell, who dived right in and discussed how food and culture are intertwined. We took a look at the surprising origins of haggis and also pondered links between immigration and food from the motherland. It made me reflect on my attempts at bringing Polish food culture to the UK and the way I execute it. Do I force-feed my friends and family with foraged goods and regional dishes like *gzika*? Well, maybe. But, as Michael emphasised, this is embedded in our nature and shows the need to maintain our links with home.

After a coffee break we started the first task of the day, which tested our knowledge of Italian dishes. We found out that garlic bread was actually an American invention and that the French sounding duck à l'orange was a favourite Italian dish that Catherine de' Medici brought with her to France.

During the next task we had a look at three different menu translations. Michael explained that menus can be translated in three different styles: summary style, pedagogical style and multilingual style. As we discovered, all three have their pros and cons: sometimes it works better to leave terms in the source language, and other times it is better to provide diners with a more extensive explanation of what they are eating. Aside from style, it is also important to consider the type of restaurant we are translating for: a higher-end restaurant will require different word choices to one that is designed to serve cheap and cheerful meals. Not only that, but it is always a good idea to have a line of communication with the chef, as they are sometimes the only person who can explain a dish properly. That way, we can avoid pitfalls and make sure that our translation doesn't become the next funny picture on the internet for everybody to laugh at.



Michael provided a tour and history of Italian cuisine