

Fancy a piece of locust bread with your invalid tart?

Foodies to serve up strange recipes from bygone days

■ DAWN MORRISON

LOCUST bread, "invalid tart" and 17th century marmalade are just some of the dishes on the menu at an upcoming gastronomic feast.

Those brave enough to have a try will be able to tuck in to a selection of delicious, unusual and positively strange recipes lost in the mists of time.

Organised by the Scottish Council on Archives, A Taste of History is the result of efforts to compile a historic "national cookbook" – with many of the

recipes coming from the most unusual places. Under the banner the Edible Archive, the search uncovered everything from 18th century instructions on how to cook turtle to Federal Pudding from Anna Whistler – the subject of the famous James Abbott McNeill Whistler painting.

Invalid tart – a fruity sponge from the Lothian Health Services Archive – traditional Orkney pancakes and family gingerbread are among the six dishes to be served up at the event.

Other dishes uncovered during research include the original recipe for sour crout, or sauerkraut as it is known today

Ben Burnett of the Scottish Council on Archives said: "It's really exciting to bring back

these recipes that have most likely never been touched for years. Some of them are quite spectacular – and some of them sound more gruesome.

"From our point of view, it's hearing about the stories associated with these recipes – we want to hear people's stories and their food history.

"We had a member of the public who had a tiny book you could fit in to the palm of your hand, and it turned out it belonged to their grandfather, who was a butler.

"It was kind of a butler's handbook and there was everything in there ranging from how to keep boots nice and shiny to how they seemed to be very fond of ginger beer. We will be trying to recreate that on the day.

"One of the main aims of the project is to raise awareness of the archives in Scotland. We want people to engage with their past and to enjoy and see an example of the amazing stories the archives provide."

The event will see people swap their favourite concoctions and foodie adventures – all while learning what's involved in sheep's head broth and why two army officers exchanged encoded instructions on how to prepare rice pudding in 1808.

Special guests are Dr Sue Bird of the Rowett Institute, who will give a talk on why Second World War rationing worked so well, and Dr Michael Turnbull, who will speak about his extensive research in to Scottish food. Paul Rogerson, former executive chef at the Caledonian Hotel, will be giving live cooking demonstrations.

The event, which runs from 10am-2pm on Saturday, November 26, is being held at the Captain Taylor's on South Bridge, a venue used by homeless charity Streetwork.

To submit family favourites, stories or recipes, contact the Scottish Council on Archives on 0131-535 1362 or e-mail infor@scoarch.org.uk.

dawn.morrison@edinburghnews.com



DISCOVERY: Alison Scott, archivist at the Edinburgh Royal College of Physicians, with a Medical Annotations book found to contain the original recipe for sour crout