

03-05.06.08

PRESS RELEASE

TV CHEF JOINS COOKING BUS TO GIVE PUPILS A TASTY LESSON.

Simon Rimmer, TV chef BBC2's *Something for the Weekend*, joined one of *Focus on Food's* Cooking Buses at a Manchester primary school to teach youngsters how to make delicious Tomato and Basil Tartlets.



The Cooking Bus, one of several run by the *Focus on Food* Campaign, was at Brookburn County Primary School, in Chorlton-Cum-Hardy from June 3 to June 5 as part of the Food For Life Partnership programme.

Simon Rimmer is married with two children and his youngest Hamish, is a reception class pupil at Brookburn. Simon joined Hamish and his five and six-year-old classmates on board the Cooking Bus for a practical cooking lesson.



He opened his first restaurant Greens, in Manchester, in 1990 and then a second restaurant Earle, in Hale. Greens is a vegetarian restaurant with an inspirational menu described as 'fresh, funky and fun'. He has written several books including *The Accidental Vegetarian* and *The Rebel Cook*.

As he squatted down on the Cooking Bus's yellow table "Hamish's dad" as he is known, had pupils smiling and laughing as he told them about the food they were going to cook and passed round fresh basil, garlic and pesto for them to smell. He showed pupils how to make fresh pesto and then taught them how to use it to make Tomato and Basil Tartlets.

Simon said: "*Focus on Food* Cooking Buses are a fantastic resource and have a real and lasting impact on schools when they visit.

"Learning to cook delicious healthy food is a vital life skill which all children should be taught, which is why I am happy to support *Focus on Food's* work.

"Cooking should excite people and be a fun and sociable pastime and you are never too young to start."

When he first stepped onto the Bus Simon was amazed. "It's fantastic. I really did not know what to expect. I'm absolutely stunned - it's better equipped than my kitchen!" He said it was worrying that in some families two or three generations had not cooked and that basic cooking skills were being lost, which is why both children and their parents needed to be encouraged and taught to cook.

"This is just what's needed. It is an excellent environment and a very positive environment. You cannot help but be inspired, whether you're five or 50!



continued...

“I like the fact that children are using knives, they see it as something exciting and different. Kids are not stupid. We think if we give them a knife they will go crazy with it, but if they are being taught properly how to use it they will not.”

Headteacher Schelene Ferris said the Cooking Bus had been a wonderful experience for the school. The school, which is currently being rebuilt, will have a dedicated cooking area and she said the COOKIT would be a fantastic resource for cooking in school in the future.

Simon too was very impressed with the COOKIT (a trunk full of cooking equipment specially selected and designed by Focus on Food) and pledged to do more cooking with pupils in the school once the specialist room was open.

Brookburn County Primary School as part of its commitment to the Food for Life Partnership. The school is one of 180 flagship schools which have signed up to the Partnership which is working to transform school food culture throughout the UK.

