



Britain's hidden cider-growing powerhouse

British growers provide a huge crop of apples to the cider industry, and the Fruiterers have been supporting the sector at the RB&W Show

A party of Fruiterers attended the Royal Bath & West Show on the showground in Shepton Mallet on 1 June, as has become a pleasant custom.

It is not generally known, but the UK grows and commits a greater tonnage of bitter-sweet apples to cider than it produces dessert apples for fresh consumption. As a company we view the support of this industry as vitally important and as a consequence have sponsored and supported the show for well over a decade.

The Fruiterers' Cup is presented to the Champion Cider as judged best in show, a challenge that attracts increasing numbers each year. I had the privilege of being asked to assess the 96 entries this year alongside a distinguished panel of judges that included Kevin McCloud, Helen Thomas

The following week I travelled with fellow Fruiterers and partners to Chateau Perouse/COT International in the south of France. The visit included tours of orchards and the packing station and we were given the opportunity to sample and assess new varieties. We thank Pierre Riou for his time and hospitality and none of us who were on the trip will ever view apricots in quite the same light again. Other destinations in the itinerary included the Camargue, Nimes and Avignon. On the Tuesday evening we spent time at the residence of Past Master Eric Fraunfelter and his wife Harriet. It was a delight to be on their terrace being looked after so royally.

On Monday 26 June Fruiterers, along with liverymen from all of the City livery companies, assembled at Common Hall in the Guildhall to elect two sheriffs for the impending year. This is a practice that has been held annually for centuries.

A real treat was experienced by the clerk and myself when we answered an invitation to join the Cooks' company at the Innholders' Hall for their Summer Court Lunch. As befits their profession they did not disappoint. What we ate and drank was superb. The whole occasion was given additional resonance as the guest speaker was Lady Brewer OBE, chairman of the Sheriffs' Recorder Fund, who gave a most interesting speech.

The National Cherry & Soft Fruit Show was held at the Kent Showground in Detling from 7-9 July. As with the RB&W, I was invited to judge

VIEWPOINT



Dennis Surgeon
Master
London

some of the entries. Many Fruiterers are growers and I was surrounded by familiar and friendly faces – Past Mas-



ters Redsell, Bryant, Dawes and liverymen Dr Jim Flegg, William Pierce, Edmund Doubleday and Paul Kelsey, to mention just a few.

This has been an exceptional growing year for cherries and it is rewarding to witness a renaissance in the fortunes of this fruit here in the UK. I have the good fortune to be invited to the Show's Annual Dinner to present the awards and trophies. — FPI



and Nick Bradstock (former chairman of the European Cider Makers Association). We commenced tasting at 8.30am, finishing over four hours later. A unanimous decision was reached and later I had the great pleasure of awarding our company's cup to Nick Poole for his 'Keewed Cider'.

In March 2016, Neil Macdonald, a Nuffield scholar sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers, published his research entitled 'Cider Orchards: the Great British Success Story', a worthwhile read for those associated with the business.



LEFT— The election of sheriffs at Guildhall
RIGHT— Fruiterers at Chateau Perouse