



The Fruiterers' Company NEWSLETTER



Number 91 April 2018

www.fruiterers.org.uk

The Banquet



Our Master with the Company's Principal Guests

Our Banquet is the first real opportunity that a new Master has to present himself/herself in public and John Warner did it well. It is always a privilege and pleasure to have the Mansion House as a venue for the occasion. It was revealed in the Master's Speech that he had once been responsible for checking that the wooden elements of the gallery, in the Egyptian Room, were fit for purpose. His job was to ensure that there would not be a collapse, which would be an embarrassing experience for the diners below.

There was a glittering list of honoured guests. It included Mr Alderman and Sheriff T R Hailes, (representing the Lord Mayor), Mrs Fiona Adler, His Excellency D Ally, High Commissioner of the Republic of Seychelles, Baroness Byford DBE DL, The Right Reverend T Willmott, Bishop of Dover, The Rt Hon The Lord Burnett of Maldon, Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, The Rt Hon Lady Justice King DBE, the Rt Hon the Earl and Countess of Caithness, Commissioner I C Dyson, Commissioner City of London Police, Rear Admiral M P Briers, Director Carrier Enabled Power Projection, Lieutenant General T B Radford CB DSO OBE, Commander Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, Air Vice Marshall W James CBE RAF, Air Officer Commanding No 22 (Training Group), Masters of the Worshipful Company of Butchers, Farmers, Gardeners and Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers.

Before speaking and proposing a toast to the Lord Mayor and



Master and Wardens

City of London Corporation our Master presented Tim Biddlecombe with the triennial Matthew Mack Award.

Addressing the assembled company the Master wondered how a humble engineer could enter the preserves of the City Grandees but felt deeply honoured to be chosen to be Master of a Livery Company. He placed considerable emphasis on the Fruiterers' dedication to charitable giving mainly via the Awards Council. He highlighted support for educational research within the Fruit Industry and Nuffield Farm Scholarships. The Company had chosen, he revealed, to be headline sponsor at the Fresh Careers Fair. On a personal note he had selected 'Booted and Suited', a

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wed 9 May	Audit Court Dinner	Armourers' Hall
Thu 31 May	Royal Bath & West Show visit & Lunch	Shepton Mallet
Thu 31 May	Golf Day	Kingswood
Fri 22 Jun	Summer Court Dinner	Merchant Taylors' Hall
Mon 25 Jun	Election of Sheriffs Post-Election Luncheon	Guildhall Guildhall Club
Fri/Sat/Sun 6/7/8 Jul	Cherry and Soft Fruit Show	Kent Showground Detling
Fri 27/ Sat 28 Jul	Master's Weekend TBA Garden of the Year	Chilterns & Oxford Renishaw Hall, Derbyshire
Sat/Sun 29/30 Sep	Malvern Autumn Show	Malvern, Worcestershire
Mon 1 Oct	Election Of Lord Mayor	Guildhall



Master with our Musketeers and their Guests



A toast to the Lord Mayor, City of London Corporation and Sheriffs

charity that assists those from disadvantaged backgrounds to dress appropriately for interviews. In addition we will be supporting the Lord Mayor and the City at the 'Big Curry Lunch' where donations received will be distributed to veterans' charities from the three armed forces. Ignoring the golden rule of speech making, he listed those he wished to thank who had made the organisation of the Banquet so special. "I refer, of course, to our Clerk for his organisational skills and ability to cope with ever changing demands from all quarters, and whose wrath I will incur by over running the time he has allocated me". "To the Clerk's wife Wendy for all her help, Richard Felton for the flowers, Liveryman Peter Thomas for providing the fruit on the tables, the Militaire Orchestra, director Walter Appleton, for the music, our Toastmaster Jamie Wallis for keeping us in order, the Mansion House caterers CH & Co. for a wonderful meal, the Mansion House team led by Duncan Sparkes, and of course, our Beadle Ted Prior without whom I would probably still be standing outside looking lost"!



Sheriff Tim Hailes responds

We were entertained by Sheriff Hailes who delivered a well-constructed and carefully thought out speech when replying to the Master's toast. He commenced by saying that "listening to the Master's detailed descriptions of the historical weaknesses of the hall timbers, I fully understand why the Lord Mayor has sent his apologies". Continuing, he admitted

that a Fruiterers' function was one that he had been hoping to gate-crash during his year. This was not only because the menu would receive the approval of his doctor but would also prevent him from ending the year with a bad case of scurvy. Sheriff Hailes then went on to reveal the many reasons why he was so pleased to be in attendance. Describing the Fruiterers' approach as "refreshing" and "progressive" he continued by giving examples of how we preserve traditions while constantly having our eyes on the future. He levelled criticism at certain elements in the City, some banks and pension funds, who had not behaved in a trustworthy fashion since the financial crisis. These detractors from the Lord Mayor's theme "were letting us down". Referring to the guests of our Musketeers, he said, "I think we need look no further than to them for an illustration of how it is possible to link past and present, adapting to the times, despite huge challenges while remaining relevant throughout". He described the fashion in which the Fruiterers had rescued the Iford Cherry,



Sharing a 'Loving Cup'

using it as a metaphor of how fragile, beautiful and critically endangered objects can be saved and allowed to thrive in the 21st Century. He drew his address to a conclusion by offering thanks for our hospitality and by saying "I am delighted to be here with you to celebrate your bountiful past and your undoubtedly ripe future".

Responding on behalf of the guests, who had been proposed by Past Master Henry Bryant, we were fortunate to have Baroness Byford. She is a Conservative member of the House of Lords and served as Opposition Spokesman for Food, Farming and Rural Affairs from 1997 to 2007. A fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society she is therefore well versed in all matters relating to the land and its usage. Her speech touched on experiences she had encountered during her visit to a number of agricultural shows and production locations. On one occasion she had



Baroness Byford our Principal Speaker

been presented with a basket of cherries. This generous gift posed somewhat of a logistical problem as she journeyed back from London to Leicester by train. Fortunately the load was lightened by a grateful fellow traveller and ticket collector who were delighted to consume some of the fruits. She presented the Master with a bottle of wine from the Winbirri vineyard in Norfolk, which she had visited recently. The wine had won the prestigious 'Decanter World Wine Award' in 2017 against 17,200 other entries and had been voted best single white wine.

The general consensus of events was that our Master's triple theme of fruit, fellowship and fun had prevailed. Held in a relaxed atmosphere and pervaded by an ambience of unity and comradeship liverymen left feeling fully uplifted in body, mind and spirit.



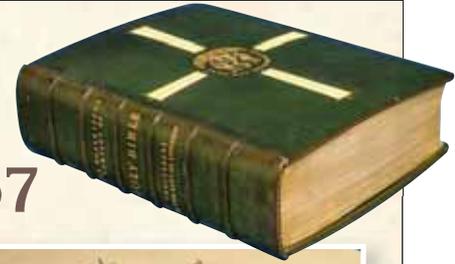
Dinner at Proof House

Honorary Assistants' Dinner

During the evening of Thursday 12th April, the Master, Wardens, four Past Masters, the Clerk four Honorary Assistants and Four Honorary Assistants Elect sat down to dine at Proof House - the home of the Worshipful Company of Gunmakers. This annual event is designed to allow free and open discussion on matters of consequence to the Fruiterers, in a somewhat more relaxed environment. As always, the ambition was achieved. The Gunmakers provided a hospitable reception and excellent fare. Surrounded by weaponry of every description, the Assistant Clerk, Mr Andrew Bignold, provided an interesting introduction to the Company and explanation of the important work of 'proofing' that is undertaken within the building.

Honorary Archivist

Sir Clayton Russon OBE, Master 1957



The Company's Holy Bible which can be seen at St Mary Abchurch on St Paul's Day will be known to all who attend Court Meetings.

Its origin, however, is perhaps less well known. But a glimpse inside the front cover, would reveal that almost sixty years ago it was presented to the Company on St Paul's Day, 1959, by Sir Clayton Russon OBE (*inset picture*). He had been Master of the Company for the year 1957 and bestowed the gift as a token of his affection for the Livery.

Sir Clayton also presented the Company with a magnificent George IV silver gilt, campagna shaped cup and cover lid and body with applied fruiting decoration and root scrolled handles with leaf rims on a circular foot.

His obituary in The Times in April 1968 reported that Sir Clayton was "a classic example of a man who through sheer dogged determination created from tiny beginnings a vast, highly respected business." His first important venture was the acquisition of the seed and plant business of R and G Cuthbert. This, greatly aided by his wife, he built up into a thriving mail order house with a fine reputation for quality and keen prices.

George IV, Silver Gilt, Campagna shaped Cup



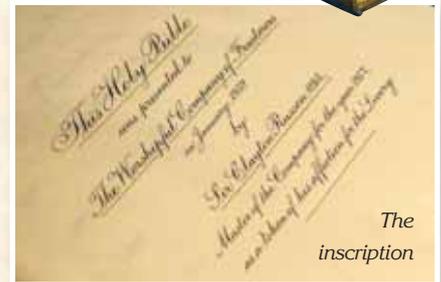
He was one of the most consistent and persistent advertisers in the field of horticulture.

His 'Mr Cuthbert's' column in the Times Newspaper became an institution with the gardening community; the 1680th issue being published the week before his death. From its first appearance Sir Clayton wrote the chatty introduction to his special offers personally.

Sir Clayton Russon was without doubt a prominent and successful man in the business world.

He became fully involved in the life of Wales and in 1944 became the first chairman of the North Wales Industrial Society and its President in 1947. He was High Sheriff of Merionethshire in 1947-48 and again in 1965-66. He took a prominent part in the establishment of the Llangollen International Eisteddfod and was its first president in 1947.

He was chairman of the Committee for National Savings in Merionethshire from 1939-1947 and was honoured for this work by the award of an M.B.E. in 1946 and an O.B.E. in 1952. In 1958 he was President of Gŵyl Gwerin Cymru and a member of the Empire and Commonwealth Games Committee and was that



The inscription

year knighted for his contribution to the public life of Wales. He served on the Council for Wales from 1949 to 1963 and was chairman of its panel for the promotion of tourism. He was a member of the Wales Development Corporation from 1958 to 1963 and a chairman of several seed companies and of the Phostrogen Company in Corwen. From 1960 onwards he served as an officer of the Order of St. John, becoming Commander in 1962 and Knight in 1968.

A memorial service for Sir Clayton Russon was held at St Mary Abchurch on 23rd May 1968 which was attended by the Master Fruiterer and Wardens together with many other friends and business associates.

Source of information:
The Times Newspaper and The Dictionary of Welsh Biography

Not a Flop but a Flippin' Success!

The Fruiterers Company are proud to have participated in the Shrove Tuesday Inter Livery Pancake Race since its inauguration fourteen years ago. The event which is organised by the Poulterers' Company in collaboration with the Cook and the Butler is held in Guildhall Yard.

This year under the direction of Liveryman Susan Handy a very competitive team was assembled to represent the Company, together with additional support and applause from fellow liverymen for the Master and his Team.

However, due to the continued non-stop rain, the organising committee, for reasons of health and safety deemed the

course as 'too slippery' and took an early decision not to run the traditional "Pancake Race" but switch to a "Pancake Tossing Competition" which proved to be a "Flippin' Success" for the Fruiterers!

Not deterred by the cold and damp conditions, Apprentice, Elliott Porter dressed for the Novelty Category as Banana Man was in "Flippin' Good Form". He won his heat and went on to achieve a very credible third position in the overall event.

Following the excitement of the competition, participants and supporters made their way to the Guildhall Crypt to enjoy a mug of delicious hot soup, a tasty lunch and pancakes of course for dessert!



Fruiterers' Team ready for Pancake (Flippin') Competition

The Master would like to thank New Spitalfields Tenants Association for providing the "Lemons" which the Fruiterers contribute to the success of the event and of course a huge thank you must go to Sue Handy for her team management.

But whether Flippin' or Watchin', the Master wishes to thank all members of the Livery for their participation, together with their enthusiastic support and encouragement.

City Perspective



It is a decade since the 2008 global financial crisis. That crisis led in 2009 to the only annual contraction in the world economy since the Second World War and also brought the banking system to its knees, to then be bailed out by taxpayers. It also ushered in a period of prolonged monetary stimulus.

Interest rates were slashed, money was printed, and for a while, words such as “unconventional monetary policy” and “quantitative easing” were heard regularly on the news. Now things are changing. The focus is on when central banks will exit and reverse their cheap money policies and how financial markets and world economy will cope.

Central banks such as the Bank of England have been the shock absorber for the world economy over the last decade. Now a big worry is that they might become shock creators.

The path of interest rates and quantitative tightening - in which the printing of money is reversed - will vary from country to country. The US has already begun raising interest rates, hiking them gradually over the last two years, and is set to tighten further. The UK, also, has started to raise rates, but whereas the Americans have increased rates four times and by a total of 1%, the UK has merely reversed the 0.25% rate cut implemented soon after the result of the June 2016 Referendum. Meanwhile, the European Central Bank and Bank of Japan are still providing stimulus, helping the recoveries that are now well underway in the euro area and Japan.

While the policy profile will be determined by what happens in each country, the global backdrop remains positive. The question is whether this will continue? Many economic indicators in the first three months of this year have been good. Perhaps most encouraging has been the stabilisation in the Chinese economy and stronger profile seen across most emerging economies. These now account for a far bigger proportion of the world economy, hence their improvement is welcome news. Also the US economy has been strong, helped by the President’s tax cuts.

Also encouraging has been the strength in world trade over the last year. However, recent worries about a trade war have dampened some of the enthusiasm about its sustainability. Meanwhile businesses appear more confident about investment. There has also been solid jobs growth in the US, UK, Germany and Japan and a significant improvement in France and across parts of the euro area, where unemployment is now falling from high levels. All this is welcome news.

But there are worries. The performance of financial markets in the first few months of this year suggests greater future volatility. Monetary growth has slowed across a number of countries, including the UK, where it is now growing at half the rate of a year ago. Weaker monetary growth can sometimes be a harbinger of a

slowdown in the economy.

Another issue is whether higher inflation will reappear? There is still intense global competition. This, plus new technology, is forcing firms to keep prices down to stay competitive. Although inflation is low, it is worth keeping an eye on oil prices as Russia and Saudi Arabia are trying to push these higher, and on commodity prices, as China recovers. All this feeds into food prices too. But the big test will be what happens to wages. I think there will be some upward creep in this area. And this may now finally be happening in the UK, where wages have remained stagnant for some time.

The UK economy slowed last year, bucking the global trend. After growing by 1.9% the economy slowed to 1.8% in 2017. This year, I expect this growth rate to accelerate towards 2%, which is better than the consensus which expects only 1.5%. The outlook will depend upon the interaction between the fundamentals, policy and confidence.

The UK’s economic fundamentals point to a solid performance by manufacturers and exporters this year, helped by the strength of the world economy. The fall in the pound following the June 2016 Referendum has also helped improve competitiveness.

I thought a weaker pound was good news, and was long overdue. It was also needed to rebalance the economy as the UK has a large trade deficit. Unfortunately, the pound is now starting to strengthen again as the predictions of Project Fear are being proved wrong, and as it becomes more likely that a trade deal will be agreed between the EU and UK later this year.

Another factor that should help the British economy this year is consumer spending. Last year this suffered as inflation rose sharply. Now inflation is decelerating, having fallen to 2.7% in February from its November peak of 3.1%, and I expect this to continue. Meanwhile, the tight labour market, where employment is at an all-time high, is leading to faster wage growth. As a result, by the second half of this year, wage growth should be outstripping inflation, boosting spending power. Much will depend upon confidence - not just of households but of businesses too, who remain worried it seems by the uncertainty surrounding Brexit. I remain positive about the economic impact of Brexit. But it is not just about leaving the EU but what you do once you leave. But so far, so good.

Dr Gerard Lyons is the co-author of ‘Clean Brexit’ (Biteback publishers) and is a Liveryman.



View from Overseas



What does BREXIT mean for the rest of the World?

The whole subject of BREXIT has become something of an all-consuming issue for many in the UK, and not just in the horticultural sector. Hardly a day goes past without some new angle or discussion in the media about what sort of BREXIT we might be heading for and how quickly this may happen.

At the Oxford Farming Conference held in January, Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, set out a bold new vision of how agriculture and food in the UK might look. He gave an optimistic view of the role of high quality, environmentally sensitive, and competitive food production, with an industry making full use of the new technologies available to it. He also indicated continued financial support to farmers for at least the foreseeable future.

This was all widely reported in the mainstream and farming media and many seemed to be pleased with what he had said. What wasn't mentioned quite so regularly was one of his closing comments, in that this is all open to discussion and consultation in the spring of 2018. So, nothing is set in stone at this stage.

The comments of a subsequent speaker, Professor Dieter Helm from Oxford University, a top-ranking UK economist, have also been overlooked by the media. He pointed out that at just 0.7% of the UK's GDP, it was unlikely that agriculture would be the top issue for the UK government to think about when the real crunch comes on BREXIT in March 2019.

However, what is clear for the horticulture sector is almost regardless of the type of BREXIT we end up with, the issues of access to labour and the question of market access with the rest of the EU, are still critical ones. There still seems a good deal to play for. It is inconceivable that organisations such as the NFU, AHDB and the Fresh Produce Consortium will not be lobbying hard on these issues over the coming months.

So, while in the UK the debate over BREXIT will continue, it's worth considering how other parts of the world might be viewing this issue. The UK is probably one of the most international markets on the planet. Produce is sourced from the rest of the EU, as well as a number of other

countries, internationally.

What happens here in the UK post-BREXIT will have implications for them all, the extent of which is unknown.

Based on the work Promar has carried out in the value chain around the world and the insight this has given us, it seems that a number of key themes might emerge.

For countries in the rest of the EU, such as Holland, Spain, Italy, France and Portugal, the UK is an important export market for a wide range of fresh produce. It is highly likely that the growers and exporters in these countries would want to see a relatively soft BREXIT whereby they still have fluent access to the UK market in terms of both tariff and non-tariff barriers.

But it is well known that all of these countries are evaluating new export markets in areas such as the Middle East, Africa and SE Asia. In the mid-to-long term, the importance of the UK as a key export partner, may be downgraded. This was beginning to happen, with an increasing amount of produce being shipped to Russia before the trade ban was imposed by the Soviets on the EU in 2014.

So, in the short term, it is likely that other EU growers and exporters would still want reasonable access to the UK. The real issue here is the noises that are being made by the political heavyweights across Europe. On one hand, saying that they want a constructive finale to the BREXIT talks. On the other, indicating that the UK cannot be seen to leave the EU in a better position than it is now. The main concern of EU and UK growers and exporters during the intervening period may be the lack of clarity over what might be the final outcome of BREXIT and the uncertainty that this creates.

In other parts of the world such as Latin America, Oceania and South Africa, the UK has been a prime export market for many years. However, over the last 10 years and more, there has been a strong effort to diversify exports to new markets, especially to India, SE Asia and the Middle East. In some cases, the Russian market is still open to them. It is likely that all of these countries will need to negotiate new trade arrange-



Michael Gove at the Oxford Farming Conference

ments with the UK. In a number of cases, they will already have a free trade agreement with the EU. The simplest thing to do would be to re-vamp the details of this to allow trade to carry on with the UK in a relatively uninterrupted fashion.

Countries such as Peru and Chile have developed a high degree of expertise in negotiating free trade deals with other parts of the world. They have demonstrated they can achieve this relatively quickly. Almost certainly they will want to use this expertise to sort out new arrangements with the UK, but at the same time, have other priorities in emerging markets to contend with too.

The UK, although still important, might not always be the top priority. Growers and exporters in Central America, especially for bananas, are also no strangers to the vagaries of accessing the UK and EU market over an extended period of time.

The question of BREXIT will continue to dominate in the UK over the next 15 months and beyond. In other parts of the world, the issue will be bought in to sharper focus as time goes by, but in some cases, might not be the number one priority to deal with. And there are still wider issues beyond access to and from the UK market for all growers and exporters to contend with. These include the consolidation of the supply chain and the development of sustainable and resilient trading arrangements.

Piece provided by Liveryman John Giles, a divisional director of Promar International john.giles@genusplc.com



What will be the effect on imports?

FROM ORCHARD TO MARKET

TOP FRUIT NEWS

None of us can have failed to be aware of the protracted winter that has endured since November. Wet and cold climatic conditions that have dampened the spirits as well as the ground. Neither will the fruit trees and as we go to press very little blossom has been seen throughout the entire country. It is going to be a very late season although on the positive side heavy budding is reported. What is needed now is an elevation in temperature and some days of sunshine to accelerate the 'wakening' process.

As reported in previous Newsletters the crop of 2017 was light, not just in England but throughout Europe. This resulted in a higher price structure which did not compensate entirely, as many growers had a much lighter crop due to the effects of frost. English apples are in reality sold out with depleted stocks being available in a trickle until June. This is in sharp contrast to twelve months ago when domestically produced apples featured strongly into the summer months. Bramley will be available but in diminishing quantities and that is mainly due to the larger crop in Northern Ireland. British retailers have continued to reflect the demand of their customers and have stocked 'English' heavily.

A post mortem of this closing English season will record a dessert apple crop that was 11% down overall. Braeburn will have been a major disappointment but Gala fared better. Those growers with a reasonable crop will have experienced satisfactory returns. The Russian ban on EU produce has created congestion in some markets.

Interestingly Comice volumes were down by 30% but Conference tonnages rose from the previous year by 40%. Quite a contrast, that is attributed to the different blossoming times and as a



Conference escaped the ravages of frost last year

consequence their susceptibility to frost. In addition, there are a number of new Conference orchards coming into production.

A labour issue has been widely highlighted with many growers reporting that the number of returning overseas workers has reduced. The strength of Sterling, or rather lack of it, and hostility in certain parts of the country are possible causes. These are seasonal labourers and not migrants. Government has to make its position clear on this issue and quickly. Some large fruit growing businesses have already taken the decision to move their operations overseas.

The loss of appropriate treatments to combat common diseases is another major concern amongst the growing fraternity. And while many natural biological replacements are being re-

searched the programme will require substantial funding and it is finding the financial resources that is proving problematical.

Considerable evaluation into the nutritional values of fruit has been undertaken. Understanding has moved on dramatically in recent years but determining how the constituents influence human metabolism requires far more research. How can the positive elements in natural food be boosted to improve the health of those that consume them?

Sir David Attenborough's latest TV series 'Blue Planet 2' has thrown the spotlight

firmly on plastics and the disastrous effects that the universal, cavalier disposal tactics of the material are having on the planet. Fruit growers and packers use plastics to protect and enhance presentation to the consumer. It is blatantly apparent that alternatives will have to be found to satisfy the demand for packs using less of the material.

Funding must also be made available to accelerate the growers' ability to mechanise production and packing. This is particularly critical if the pool of seasonal labour continues to shrink. A recent report has come up with the conclusion that the global 'Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture' (AIA) market could increase by almost 25% in the next six years. Driving the development are the adoption of information management systems (IMS), automated irrigation, increasing crop productivity and the ever rising global population. The AIA Market is segmented into technology, offering,



2018 will be a late season in the UK

application and region. Technology is further divided into machine learning, computer vision and predictive analysis which is forecast to be the fastest growing.

Although many English growers are adopting the new systems and thinking as quickly as possible, it will be several years before they are universally applied in these islands.

2018 will be a late season for apples and pears in the UK and possibly heavy. It is essential that the industry maintains the level of PR and advertising support that has given such success and growth of awareness in the last ten years.



A fine English Braeburn in a difficult year

Tim Biddlecombe receives the Matthew Mack Award

In recognition of the vitally positive influence he has exerted on the UK fruit industry, Tim Biddlecombe was presented with the Matthew Mack Award by our Master John Warner at the Banquet, held on 22nd



February in the Mansion House.

Early in his career Tim worked for ADAS, managing R&D at the National Fruit Trials at Brogdale near Faversham in East Kent. After a spell as an independent consultant Tim then joined the new advisory team being set up at East Kent Packers, which was later spun off as the Farm Advisory Services Team, known as FAST.

He spent the rest of his career working as a fruit advisor for FAST, rising through the ranks to become the Managing Director.

The man was always interested in R&D

and cultivated close relationships with leading researchers and growers home and abroad. He has played a major role in searching out, trialing, developing and introducing the key elements that have led to a turn-around in the fortunes of the UK top and soft fruit industries.

Notable successes have been the intensification of orchards, the move to soil-less cultivation of soft fruit under protection and table-top production of strawberries, all resulting in significantly higher yields, returns and profits.

Tim Biddlecombe receives the Matthew Mack Award

VIEW FROM THE HIGH STREET

Chatting with the Newsletter's correspondent, the editor was pleased to learn that supplies of fruit and vegetables were uninterrupted during the inclement weather earlier in the year. Over the past four months product has flowed smoothly and in good condition. David Bryant did add however that his customers were becoming increasingly discriminating when it came to quality and flavour. Fortunately his level of waste over the year is measured at less than 0.5% but consumers are being bombarded by so much media coverage on the subject that they are becoming increasingly sensitised. The importance of adding flavour and natural, beneficial side effects to the fruit and vegetables that we consume is also mentioned on page 6. One of the edible barometers of Spring is the arrival of Jersey Royal potatoes. Unfortunately for the islanders the season is late with reduced volume. Our proprietor further added that plant sales were down with gardeners being kept inside.

Amazon Pantry



Lidl has revealed it is considering creating a Deposit Return Scheme. This will allow customers to return their plastic rubbish to the store, aiming to drive demand for recycled materials and reuse systems. The move is part of a wider commitment to reduce plastic packaging by 20 per cent by 2022, with 100 per cent of its own-brand packaging to be recyclable by 2025. The Company will also ditch all 5p plastic bags, replaced with reusable bags by the end of the year. This is similar to the closed system that Tesco boss Dave Lewis described at the City Food Lecture.

According to a report appearing in the Farmers Guardian, UK consumers have more than halved their proportion of weekly expenditure on food. The figures have dropped from 33 to 16 per cent since 1957, according to the Office for National Statistics. Alongside having a much greater choice of food items and living in smaller households, British people have higher disposable incomes and have elected to spend the money on luxuries, such as foreign holidays, leisure and cars, according to Kantar Worldpanel. Increasingly busy lifestyles have created a drive for convenience influencing where consumers shop and what they buy. The nation has also switched to shopping at supermarkets, leading to a decline in local butchers, greengrocers and milk deliveries and the competitive retail environment has kept prices low. As a consequence more farmers have been supplying formalised retail and as a result have become subject to price pressure.



Quality and flavour are becoming more important

Amazon is looking at ways it can generate more cash from consumers through its 'Pantry' delivery service by establishing it on subscription. According to one source it will charge \$5 in the US but deliveries will be free for those spending over \$40 per order. The charges for the UK were not cited. There's no real expectation that this will increase the number of customers using Amazon Pantry but would appear more of an effort to encourage regular ordering and a way to extract money from those who order less frequently. If you don't subscribe then the one off delivery cost will increase to \$7.99 so Amazon will increase revenues whether you opt to subscribe or not. Subscription fees are always a nice way for a company to increase revenues as the money disappears from your account even if you're on your summer holidays and don't use the service. The other upside is that as with 'Prime Subscriptions', once you've committed, you'll want to get as much value as possible from your commitment and will be likely to order more regularly than before, the report suggests.

Master's Refl

Promotion of Excellence



Taking the Oath in St Mary Abchurch

It was my great honour and privilege to be installed as Master on St Paul's Day and, as our new Honorary Chaplain (The Very Reverend Mark Bonney) said in his sermon, I am the latest in an unbroken line stretching back to 1416 when "John Gaunt and Geoffrey Whyt were sworn as Wardens of the 'Mysteries' of the Fruiterers". (Page 12)

A week later I represented the Company for the first time. I was entertained, along with several other Masters of Livery Companies, by City, University of London at one of their Graduation Ceremonies in the Barbican Centre. We processed and regressed in full regalia together with the gowned academics and the new Rector – the Lord Mayor.

It was wonderful to see so many enthus-

astic young people revelling in their achievements with their whole future before them.

The first "social" event of the year was the annual Pancake Race, (Page 3) appropriately enough on Shrove Tuesday, organised by the Worshipful Company of Poulterers and held in Guildhall Yard. I had promised to participate in the Masters' Race but as a walker not a runner - even this level of exertion was not needed as the course was deemed too wet and the race was reduced to a pancake tossing contest. Apprentice Elliott Porter won in the Novelty category, dressed appropriately enough as Banana Man, and came a very creditable third in the Grand Final.

My next official engagement was a Dinner at Coopers' Hall as a guest of their Master.

Coopers' Hall is relatively small, so it was a very cosy and convivial evening.

The first time I acted as Host rather than guest was at our Banquet in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House on 22nd February. The Aldermanic Sheriff Alderman Tim Hailes, the Sheriff's Consort Fiona Adler, together with Baroness Byford, the High Commissioner of the Seychelles, the new Lord Chief Justice and the Commissioner of the City of London Police were among many other distinguished guests. I invited Past Masters of several other Livery Companies as my personal guests and none had managed to gather such a glittering array to grace the top table at their events! (Pages 1 & 2).

At the Banquet I was privileged to present the Mathew Mack award to Tim Biddlecombe (Page 7) for his services to the industry. The acknowledgement of excellence in this way is an important aspect of our Company that is often overlooked.

People like Tim make a huge contribution to the industry and it was my pleasure to recognise this on behalf of the Fruiterers Company.

As you may well know my "motto" for the year is "Fruit, Fellowship and Fun" and I think that the Banquet exemplified this. Fruit featured not only in the baskets for the traditional Fruiterers' Desserts but also in the vases and as a wonderful display on the Poupart Stand on the top table, this was remarked upon by Sheriff Tim Hailes in his speech.

Next was the City Food Lecture. Now an



Mortarboards high on Graduation Day



The Fruiterers' master with Liveryman Jonathan Choat at the CFL



The Worshipful Company of Gardeners' garden at Guildhall

ections



Mansion House Scholars

annual event the keynote speaker this year was Tesco's Chief Executive, Dave Lewis. This was followed by a panel discussion and the proceedings were concluded with a summing up by HRH The Princess Royal (Page 13).

Next I attended, on your behalf, the opening of the Gardeners Company memorial garden in Guildhall Yard, part of their contribution to the Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch before moving on to a gathering at Mansion House to meet the Mansion House Scholars. As a Company we donate a relatively small amount to this scheme, but the outcomes are amazing. I spoke to several former scholars and all said that they could not have achieved their academic success without their grants – again we are helping to promote excellence.

One former scholar in particular stuck in my mind. He was from Uzbekistan and, when I was joined by a representative from the Bakers Company, he brought the talk round to his astonishment at the amount of bread that we waste in this country. He said that in his homeland bread is considered such a vital staple that it is never wasted. He amazes his City colleagues by always stopping to pick up any abandoned sandwich he spots on the ground! This echoed part of the Food Lecture where the matter of food waste featured strongly. Apparently about 80% of food waste is generated in the home – an appalling statistic. Tesco no longer advertises 2 for 1 offers as it believes that this leads to one item being thrown away!

The next day, Mavis and I were back in Mansion House, this time for what may well be the highlight of my Master's year. We were the guests of the Lord and Lady Mayoress for their Banquet for the Masters and their

Consorts of every Livery Company. It is an amazing display of Pomp and Ceremony with members of the Honourable Artillery Company and the trumpeters of the Heralds. We were told that they were playing, for the first time in public, the new trumpets that are to be used at the Royal Wedding later in the year.

The following day was the United Guilds Service in St Paul's Cathedral. This is probably the most colourful event in the Livery calendar, perhaps even more colourful than the previous evening as the Masters are arranged one behind another either side of the aisle, with their Clerk and Wardens to their sides, all fully gowned and badged.

After the service, 21 Fruiterers and their guests adjourned to Stationers' Hall for a wonderful lunch, again fellowship at its best.

Immediately after lunch Mavis and I got on a train to Cumbria for the World Marmalade Festival. This is organised by one of our Liverymen, Jane Hasell McCosh, in her home, Dalemain (some of you may remember Jane's garden won the HHA/Christies Garden of the Year a few years' ago and we planted a medlar tree in pouring rain). This time it snowed!

I duly presented the Fruiterers' Trophy for The Best in Show. The winner was Janice Miners from Cornwall, whose delicious Grapefruit and Gin marmalade scooped the coveted prize. This marmalade will be made by Thursday Cottage (part of the Tiptree Group) and it was good to see their MD Hon. Asst. Chris Newenham together with Peter Wilkin, Amanda Courtauld, William Parry and, of course, the Renter Cheryl Roux in attendance.

Many of us, including the Mayor of

Yawatahama (a town in Japan which is to hold its own Marmalade Festival next year), together with the Japanese Ambassador and Deputy High Commissioner of India and Paddington Bear(!), were then taken to Penrith. They have really taken the Festival to heart with the High Street being closed and everything being decked in orange. There is even a competition for the Best Dressed Window. It was a delight to watch the dignitaries doing the Salsa and trying to walk the tightrope!

Next I had to judge marmalade produced by the "Legals" versus the "Convicts". All the latter were made by descendants of transported prisoners. It was a dead heat broken only by a tiebreak where the unanimous decision that the best of the six marmalades tasted was made by a "Legal". It turned out that our judging was consistent with the "professional" judges as the same marmalade had received maximum marks in the main competition.

A Black Tie Dinner in the candle lit Dining Hall of Greystoke Castle concluded the day.

The next day we braved the snow to attend Dacre Parish Church where I read the second lesson.

What a week!

I hope you approve of my effort to represent you, even after this short time I have learned how we, as a Company, are held in such high esteem among not only other Livery Companies but by the Lord Mayor himself. We really do "punch above our weight" and it is a great privilege to be your Master.



Some of the entries



Janice Miners with the Fruiterers' Trophy for her 'Grapefruit & Gin' marmalade



The Party in a very cold Penrith

Soft and Stone Fruit

BERRIES and CURRANTS



Raspberries and strawberries from the Western Med have suffered



Blueberries from traditional sources are late



Many Spanish stone fruit growers are considering abandoning production

According to the Newsletter's correspondent, it has been a particularly difficult four months for those involved in the soft fruit business. There have been problems encountered in most areas of production that has resulted in shortages of supply.

After Christmas, availability of Egyptian **Strawberries** tailed off early but because of adverse weather conditions, Moroccan and Spanish supplies from the western Mediterranean were delayed. Quality also suffered and a peak from these areas is now anticipated towards the end of April. The UK season will also be late because of the low temperatures and general lack of sunshine. As a consequence volumes have been lower and prices higher. With the multiples reluctant to alter retail tickets the only variable that is available is pack mass. This feature has been used regularly.

A similar pattern has influenced **Raspberry** supply. There was a dip in availability during January but that has been extended owing to inclement growing conditions in the main areas of production. Over the period under consideration Mexico is the main source of **Blackberries**. *Tupi* is the principal variety from this origin, which lacks the dessert characteristics that consumers are coming to prefer and which are exhibited by some of the newer cultivars. Meanwhile a Dutch, company, The Greenery, has announced that it has invested more in blackberry production and incorporated new growers in an endeavour to make the fruit a twelve month choice.

Blueberries were supplied from South Africa during the Christmas period and into the New Year. But with a delay in Chilean fruit there were insufficient volumes to satisfy the gap between demand and supply. It has been a struggle to fulfil programmes and the delay in a container vessel can have disastrous effects. What is not generally realised is that from harvest to shelf availability in the UK, the transit time from Chile is a full six weeks.

Northern hemisphere Blueberry availability has been delayed. Whereas in a normal year there would be fruit from Morocco and Spain by March there has been a hiccup this year. The main supplies will not materialise until late April or May.

In the high street the 'discounters' are making an impact in respect of sales while Tesco has pursued a policy of dealing directly with the growers.

On the seasonal labour issue it is the responsibility of the growers to provide acceptable and desirable accommodation and recreational activities to attract the workers. Obviously there are other factors but in a short supply situation it will be the employers who offer the best deals that will end up with the crew.

Focusing on the stone fruit front, Newstairs, part of AG Thames, has announced the arrival of several new, early season varieties. A white fleshed cultivar of peach bred in Australia, Alpine Delight and Spring Flame 20. A spokesman for the Company said that it was planning

to launch new plum and cherry varieties all of which should deliver flavoursome fruit, yielding well in the orchards and giving consistently high quality on the retail shelf. But spare a thought for the stone fruit producers of Murcia. One authority estimates that around 8,000 farms covering 27,000 hectares are in danger of being abandoned after their owners were not able to recoup even half the production costs. This followed a collapse in market last summer. This area of Spain, is one of significant stone fruit production, (estimated 390,000 tonnes in 2017), and supplies much of Europe. The causes have been cited as the collapse of the European market, Russian veto on EU fruits and vegetables, rising production costs, water shortages and inadequate market regulation policies. In contrast, a warming climate should assist UK stone fruit producers to raise their expectations in the future.

Piece prepared after interview with Dave Ashton, Procurement Director, Berry World

Apple sultana cake

Serves 8-10

450g dessert apples
350g plain flour, sifted
1 tbsp baking powder
2 tsp ground cinnamon
200g butter, softened and cubed
150g light muscovado sugar
2 large eggs
100ml milk
100ml Amaretto
200g sultanas

To finish

3 small, red-skinned dessert apples
2 tbsp runny honey

Preheat the oven to 180C. Core, peel and chop the apples into 1-cm chunks.

Tip the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, butter, sugar, eggs, milk and Amaretto into an electric mixer and beat together to combine.

Fold in the chopped apples and sultanas.

Spoon into a 23cm x 6cm deep springform tin that has been lightly buttered and base-lined with baking parchment.

To finish, core and thinly slice the 3 red-skinned apples. Arrange the slices, slightly overlapping, on top of the cake in concentric circles.

Put the tin on a baking tray and bake the cake for 1½ - 1¾ hours until risen and golden, cover with foil towards the end of cooking to avoid over-browning if necessary.

Warm the honey in a small pan, brush all over the top of the cake. Cool in the tin.

Sarah Randell

The Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch 2018



Jan Hutchinson led the Spitalfields group

Motivated by the Master's motto "Fruit, Fellowship and Fun" a highly energetic and enthusiastic team from the Fruiterers Company, among whom were the indefatigable Apprentice Elliott Porter and Honorary Fruit Porter Jimmy Huddart, were seen in action supporting this year's Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch at The Guildhall on Wednesday 11th April.

The Lunch supports members of Her Majesty's Armed Forces and Veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan through the British Army's national charity ABF, The Soldiers' Charity and from 2018 in association with The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

The luxury products of Royal Warrant Holder "Tiptree" drew the attention of HRH Princess Eugenie who was attending the event and took time to browse the stalls of many Livery Companies.

A magnificent display of fresh produce, which was built on a traditional market barrow by Liveryman Peter Thomas, was greatly admired by the Princess who also spoke with Liveryman Susan Handy reminiscing the days when she had attended Susan's School of Dance.

The Master Fruiterer John Warner and his wife Mavis together with the Upper Warden Cheryl Roux and Past Master Henry Bryant were also present and added their support for what proved to be a highly successful day for all of those under the "Fruiterers' Umbrella".

The Master extends a personal thank you to the Liviermen and members of their families, along with the following companies for their participation in this most valuable cause:



HRH Princess Eugenie receives some pointers from Peter Thomas

Belazu Ingredient Company, New Spitalfields Market Tenants Association, Pink Lady Apples/Coregeo Ltd, Prescott Thomas Ltd, Rodanto Ltd, Sue Handy School of Dance and Tiptree / Wilkin & Sons Ltd.



Kate & Peter Thomas with Escort



Sue Handy with her dancers



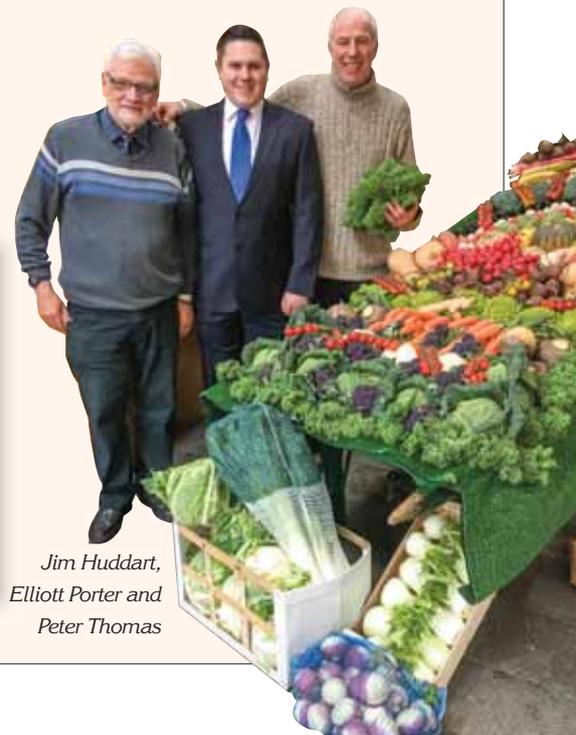
Renter Warden with Past Master Henry Bryant



Jim Huddart with some pretty serious protection provided by some very cheerful City Police



Master with Mavis



Jim Huddart, Elliott Porter and Peter Thomas

Thank you Dennis and welcome John

St Paul's Day has always been a social and sociable occasion for the Fruiterers. The formalities surrounding the importance of appointing a new Master at the commencement of the Company's year, has been lightened by the renewal of acquaintanceships and the pleasure experienced in the completion of another successful Master's term. While the foundations for the next twelve months stewardship were being formally recorded at the Court Meeting, Janet Surgeon hosted an informal pre-service reception in Harry's Bar, adjacent to St Mary Abchurch.

As the last official functions in the outgoing Master's calendar, the St Paul's Day Service and Luncheon are occasions for sadness and yet joy. Certainly with the rousing hymns and choral renditions resounding around the ancient Wren Church one cannot help but be moved by the solemnity and yet, spiritual satisfaction. The service was led and the sermon given by our own Honorary Chaplain, the Very Rev Mark Bonney. He oversaw, along with the Clerk, the swearing in of John Warner, an engineer, as the successor to Dennis Surgeon. Cheryl Roux assumed the role of Upper Warden while David Simmons, a fruit grower, was appointed as the new Renter Warden. With mind and spirit refreshed there followed the usual short, sharp walk the few hundred yards to the welcoming warmth of the Innholders' Hall for lunch.

We are always made most welcome at this College Street venue. The resident Beadle and his staff ensure the perfect ambience for our family affair. Under Philip Brown's direction the arrangements were to their usual high standard and we Fruiterers enjoyed, after a first class meal, listening to Past Master Peter Bartlett acknowledging and praising the outgoing Master's achievements. These were many and varied. But selected for special mention were the trip to France and the Summer Court Dinner. It was noted that Dennis had attended over 180 functions or events during his year in office. Throughout his twelve months he has been steadfastly and loyally supported by his wife Janet who was



Peter Cooper receives the 'Master's Medal' for 2017



Incoming Master, with Wardens

presented with a spectacular bouquet of flowers by the orator. In response, our outgoing Master paid tribute to those who had assisted him during his year. Firstly, was Janet followed by a team of "close Past Masters", the Clerk and a host of others too numerous to mention. Nobody at the luncheon would have been surprised when he presented the 'Master's Medal' to Past Master Peter Cooper for his dedication and support since the previous January. There were his contributions in his capacity as Honorary Archivist, procurer of lemons for the pancake-day races, joint organiser of the Red Cross Christmas Market, Fruiterers' directeur des operations, for the Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch and for his regular Newsletter articles. Dennis' final duty as

Master was to pass the symbols of office to his successor and to receive his Master's Jewel. And so ended another successful Fruiterers' St Paul's Day celebrations. A renewal, a beginning and the anticipation of what will unfold during the next twelve months. And as our outgoing Master had said in the opening of his valedictory speech "nothing has given me greater pleasure and pride than in serving as the Fruiterers' Master".



Fruiterers gather at St Mary Abchurch



The Innholders did us proud



Dennis' valedictory speech as Master



HRH The Princess Royal was escorted by Liveryman John Giles



Chris White chaired the discussion

Tesco chief makes plea for transformational change

Dave Lewis, the chief executive officer of Tesco, was the 16th headliner at the annual City Food Lecture and, while his address contained few surprises and plenty of platitudes, he did end by urging both the supply chain and its customers to combine in the interests of “heavy duty, transformational change”.

Interesting introducing himself to the audience as “the new boy” who joined Tesco just three and a half years ago, Lewis admitted that in the previous 27 years whilst at Unilever, he had never fully grasped the “vast interaction of the food supply chain”. While calling for a step-change in the way we produce sustainable, affordable, healthy food for the UK, he was also quick to acknowledge that Tesco has, in the past, been a big player in creating the problems it is now attempting to solve with its suppliers.

Recognising that he had as many detractors as supporters within an audience of farmers, producers, retailers, wholesalers and their representative bodies, Lewis asked them to help him and his organisation to right the industry’s ship by focusing the debate on “the 95% of what we agree on, not the 5% we don’t.

“I don’t have a political bone in my body,” he said, “but I see Brexit as a challenge and an opportunity. The UK food industry has done a great job of feeding the nation through many challenges,” he continued. “But the challenges we face today are complex and evolving. To overcome them, we must seize the future and change”. “Not simple in-

cremental change, but heavy duty transformational change. The sort of change that means we all have to bring our expertise together and work in a very different way. To feed all of our nation, in a sustainable, affordable, healthy way.

Lewis said he believes that the food supply chain will rise to the challenge: “I believe in the power of human intellect and ingenuity [in this industry],” he said.

“I believe customers want businesses to make responsible decisions. Quite rightly they deserve higher standards and responsible leadership from all of us. They want us to make the right calls on their behalf.”

Lewis observed that at its very roots, Tesco remains a trader and is therefore “buying things that our customers need and want and making a very small margin as we do so”. There was a fair degree of mirth in the audience at that comment, and Lewis added: “At Tesco, we are trying to change. What we do is not enough and it will never be enough, but we are trying in several areas.”

He pinpointed a concerted attempt to move away from “confrontational relationships” and for Tesco taking a more flexible view of suppliers in order to become a home to larger proportions of its suppliers’ available food.

He also highlighted areas where Tesco is already working in partnership with suppliers, Government and other organisations to collaborate more effectively, share insight and expertise. These included work that has led to the removal of 9.4 billion calories from Tesco shopping baskets in “the last few years” and initiatives including Little Swaps, which compares the health attributes of two shopping baskets with the aim to inspire customers to make healthier purchasing choices. “All of our promotional money goes into the healthier options and since it was launched last May, Little Swaps has

made the single largest impact on shoppers’ baskets at Tesco that we have ever made,” said Lewis.

On the issue of food waste, he mentioned that just 1% of waste is generated by retailers, though this “fact” was disputed by suppliers in the room, who claimed that Tesco and its retail counterparts have introduced manifold measures into the supply chain that have increased waste. “More than two-thirds of food waste in this country occurs after it is bought, but that 1% needs to be eradicated too,” said Lewis, adding that he is willing to share the business model adopted by Tesco to reduce its waste levels with the rest of the industry.

“I can’t go back,” he added. “We are where we are. But some of the innovation within our supply chain means that we are able to use product much better and reduce our waste phenomenally.”

As has now become tradition at the CFL, this year orchestrated by Fruiterer John Giles, a panel discussion, chaired by fellow Fruiterer Chris White, was followed by an erudite summing-up by HRH The Princess Royal. “The standards we take for granted as being the best in this country are going to be challenged [post-Brexit]. What we do not want is to suffer from product pulled in from elsewhere that has achieved similar standards but at lower cost.

“We all need to have more control of what we do and why we do it; it’s a complicated process,” she said. “But there’s an App for everything!”

Dave Lewis delivered the lecture



HRH The Princess Royal provided her observations

Piece provided by Liveryman Tommy Leighton



Awards Council

Fruiterers drive students to a career in the fruit sector

The Company through its Awards Council was the headline sponsor (£5000) for the recent Fresh Careers Fair held at the Kia Oval on Thursday 8th March

Much of the money was used to support students' travel to the Fair; around 700 of them came from colleges and universities from all corners of the



Past Master Sandys Dawes advises two interested visitors

country to meet representatives from the exhibitors many of which had job vacancies on offer. Some were filled on the day.

Eleven Fruiterers including the Master, Past Masters, Liverymen, Apprentices and the Technical Secretary engaged with many of the students to discuss opportunities and careers in the fruit and fresh produce industry.

At the same time students were introduced to two competitions that were conceived and organised by the Company.

Over 60 students registered their interest in competing for one week's fully expensed internship with either Berry Gardens or G's; the Awards Council is most grateful for the enthusiastic and generous sponsorship of each of the companies. Applications, which close towards the end of April, will be assessed by representatives of each business and



The Fruiterers' Stand

it is hoped that the winners will be announced in the next Newsletter.

This year applications for Company's Student Prizes (two undergraduate prizes and one for a Masters student - £1000 each) have been opened to more than 55 attendees at the Fair. This is in addition to students from our nominated colleges and universities. Applications close at the beginning of May and will be judged by Liverymen Eve Mitleton-Kelly and Professor Geoff Dixon together with members of the Awards Council.

The Fair, expertly organised by Linda Bloomfield and Emma Grant from Phoenix Media Network Ltd, was an enormous success. It has grown year on year and so much so that for 2019 the organisers are seeking a larger venue.

Under 30s Award

Over the last 4 years Andrew played an instrumental role in improving the knowledge and understanding of pests affecting soft and stone fruit crops. As a result, the Berry Gardens agronomy team were able to implement new and improved pest and disease control measures. His next challenge is to replicate the successes from pest monitoring to disease control in soft and stone fruit.

As an Ecology graduate, Andrew led a team of seasonal workers from 55 sites throughout the UK, trapping and monitoring an invasive pest

of soft fruit. He works with research groups to advance the control of pests and disseminates information relevant to the Berry Gardens grower community. His enthusiasm for Insect Ecology, the implementation of trapping technologies, pest monitoring and identification enabled him to give immense support to highly successful Integrated Pest Management programmes which have been implemented by Berry Gardens' growers.



Andrew Barclay; the first under 30 Award Winner

Progress report: Apples in a warmer climate Received from the University of Reading

We are very grateful to the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers for your generous support, which is facilitating ground-breaking research into climate change and food production in the UK.

Recipient of the PhD studentship is Tobias Lane. Tobias is from a small village in Hampshire. He showed a keen interest in horticulture from an early age, showing fruit and vegetables at local shows and working his own allotment by the age of thirteen.

In 2012, he graduated from the University of Reading with a first class honours BSc Horticulture and Environmental Management and five prizes to his name – a fantastic achievement for any student, but

especially so for Tobias who was the first in his family to attend university.

Before assuming this post, Tobias was employed by the University as a Horticultural Crop Technician, where he was responsible for the management of the trial plot areas and of external business research contracts there. His PhD is supervised by Professor Paul Hadley, Professor Richard Ellis and Dr Matthew Ordidge, all of the University's School of Agriculture, Policy and Development and Trustees of the National Fruit Collection Trust (NFCT). Mr Tim Biddlecombe, of the Fruit Advisory Services Team also provides supervision to the larger project and serves on the board of the NFCT.



Obituary

Laurence Vivian Eldred

Laurence spent his entire working life involved with the fresh produce industry. He left school at 15 and began his career by selling sacks of potatoes from a pony and trap around the streets of Epping, Essex. His apprenticeship was served in his father's nursery where he stoked the ovens and from where he delivered cucumbers and tomatoes to Spitalfields market.

The next step was the purchase of an Essex Potato Merchants Licence. This enabled him to secure product from throughout East Anglia which he delivered to the London markets. Establishing a retail business in Epping High Street he then decided to buy a stand in Spitalfields Market. This came in the form of B. W. Bookers, Vegetable Wholesalers.

During the 60s and early 70s, before the rising influence of the supermarkets the thrill of trading produce and stands was exhilarating for Laurence. One opportunity arose when James Ruane, one of the trade's premier importers and wholesalers decided to sell out. It was acquired seamlessly and new doors were opened in the areas of importing and processing facilities. He embarked on buying trips to Cyprus and the Canary Islands sourcing early

new potatoes and carrots. Some of his purchases did not deliver success. He remembered with discomfort his dabbling in the import of Indian onions.

The second important contact obtained from Ruane's was their affiliations and associations with the crisp industry. In the early 1970s working closely with United Biscuits (KP Crisps) and Smith Crisps (Walkers), the Company grew its potato warehouse merchandising business to 30,000 tons per annum. This was centred in Doncaster, South Yorkshire, with supplies being sourced from Catterick in the north to North Walsham in Norfolk. With his distinctive livery of red, green and gold, Laurence took great pride in the Eldred colours. He and his son Richard identified opportunities in logistics and established 'The Pallet Network (TPN)' a Company that flourished and grew.

Warehousing and property were equally close to his heart. Trading from three industrial estates in Yorkshire the Eldred Group services the rail, chemical industrial, engineering and power sectors, as well as many importing businesses.

Work was a pleasure for Laurence and he couldn't understand why



anyone wouldn't want to work seven days a week. On Boxing Day 2017, instead of watching Doncaster Rovers play football in the company of his family, he decided to visit the three sites in Yorkshire for a tour of inspection. In particular, he wanted to view his new 40,000 sq ft, high bay, racked warehouse to see whether he could identify any build faults.

Laurence was a proud man. He felt honoured to serve as 'Honorary President' of the Spitalfields Market Tenants Association. He also took great enjoyment in being 'Life President' of the North Weald Bowls Club, competing in more matches in his 90th year than ever before.

He entered the Fruiterers in 1989.

Laurence passed away peacefully on his 90th birthday, our sympathies are extended to his family, colleagues and friends.

Thomas Albert Hilliard

Tom suffered a fatal heart attack on October 17th. He had not been in full health for some time and we send our sympathies to Julie and all members of his family.

His family had been in Old Covent Garden Market for many years and he extended the business in the early seventies by the purchase of Downs Farm in Ewell. Having some available time, and being a keen golfer, he purchased Silvermere Golf Course in 1984 and later Kingswood Golf Club.

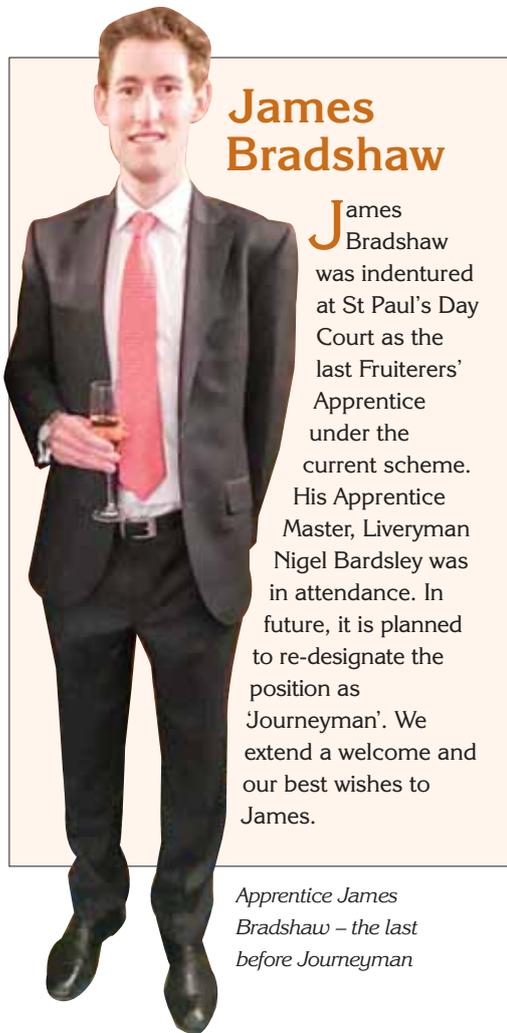
He was an ardent supporter of charitable work and became associated

with the Variety Club. He was awarded the OBE for his work.

The Company was most fortunate in having his support for our Golfing Society which had been formed by Past Master Robert Sice and Past Master David Hohnen. He invited the Society to hold its annual Golf Day at Kingswood and generously donated the green fees and subsidised the 'Half Way Hut'. The Event continues and his family are hoping that it will do so in future years.

His passing is a big loss to the Livery and we record our thanks for his support and participation since 1987.





James Bradshaw

James Bradshaw was indentured at St Paul's Day Court as the last Fruiterers' Apprentice under the current scheme. His Apprentice Master, Liveryman Nigel Bardsley was in attendance. In future, it is planned to re-designate the position as 'Journeyman'. We extend a welcome and our best wishes to James.

Apprentice James Bradshaw – the last before Journeyman



This year's Medal Winners

Congratulations

Congratulations to Liverymen Dr Rosemary Collier and Gerry Edwards for being awarded the prestigious Veitch Memorial Medal. The presentation occurred at the Royal Horticultural Society's People Award Ceremony held on the 14th March. The Medal may be awarded annually to any person, of any nationality, who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of science and practice of horticulture. It is held for life.



Rosemary & Gerry

Letters to the Editor

If any Liveryman has observations, criticisms, ideas or thought regarding the Newsletter then the Editor would enjoy receiving them. Email rbrighten@gmail.com

City of London Briefings



For any Liveryman who has not attended a City of London Briefing and is in two minds whether to apply ask a fellow Fruiterer who has attended. You will always receive a very positive response because the evening provides an interesting and valuable insight into the workings of the City. They are aimed particularly at new Freemen and Liverymen, but wives, husbands and partners are also welcome. Liverymen and Freemen of longer standing who have not previously been to a Briefing are also encouraged to attend. It is necessary to attend one of these briefings, held at the Livery Hall, 71 Basinghall Street, Guildhall, before being clothed in the Livery. The dates of the 2018 briefings are given here:-

They are: **Monday 21 May 2018, Monday 8 October 2018, Tuesday 20 November 2018**

Application should be made at www.liverycommitteecourses.org.uk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editor wishes to thank the following for their valuable contributions to this Newsletter; Dave Ashton (Procurement Director, Berry World) Adrian Barlow, Lt Col Philip Brown (Clerk), David Bryant, Sarah Calcutt, City, The London University, Dr Graham Collier (Chairman Awards Council), Dr Rosemary Collier, Peter Cooper (Past Master & Honorary Archivist), Gerry Edwards, Martin Eldred, John Giles, Jane Hasell McCosh, David Hohnen (Past Master), Tommy Leighton, Dr Gerard Lyons, Neill O'Connor, RHS, Ian Rainford (Honorary Remembrancer), Past Master Dennis Surgeon, Gerald Sharp Photography, John Warner (The Master), Mavis Warner and Sarah Whitworth.

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