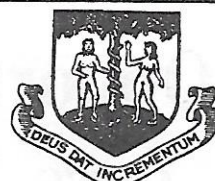




Number 3

# The Fruiterers' Company NEWSLETTER

Editor: Eric Williams



Winter 1987

## A Year of Progress

**IMPLEMENTATION** of the three chosen themes of consolidation, commitment and communication have made encouraging progress during the year—but much more remains to be done, reports our Master, Norman Sheldon, nearing the end of his term of office.

"A tremendous amount of work has been done in catching up with a backlog of Company affairs, particularly and understandably involved with the change of Clerkship, and I would like to pay a warm tribute to the support of our Clerk and members of the Master's Committee and the Livery generally.

"I have been concerned to examine and formalise the rules and regulations of the Company, for we have found that only too often these were known only by word of mouth and tradition to a few of the more experienced among us. Our Archivist, Past Master Gothard, is working on this. It is a long-term task but we shall hopefully end up with a rule book which will be a great help to those who take future office, and to the Livery at large."

There has been a satisfying consolidation of much of the Company's administration—"thanks particularly to a lot of hard work by our Clerk and his supportive wife, Glen."

The Master continues: "During the year I have been concerned to bring members of the Livery closer together, and our various functions have been organised with this objective. I like to think we have made good progress in getting to know each other much better socially.

"Commitment has come through a steadily increasing response to our appeal for support of the Company in various ways, including the fulfilment of our financial responsibilities to the Company, and our communications are certainly improving. I have been a fairly prolific writer of letters during the year, and have tried to let everyone know what is going on."

The Livery's financial situ-

ation is stronger at the end of the year than the beginning. "There are still some imponderables, such as our possible liability for VAT, to be resolved, but our books are now thankfully in credit balance," the Master states.

The reputation of the Fruiterers' Company stands high in the City, he reports. "We are not a large and certainly not a rich Company, but we are an old Company with a fine tradition and—unlike many of the City Livery Companies nowadays—we are true to our roots. A high proportion of our Livery earn their livelihood in the industry from which we take our name and whose best traditions we strive to preserve.

"During my year I've had excellent support from my two Wardens and the Court, with whom I have tried to work in close harmony, and I hand over to Tony Coster on January 25 with a cheerful heart and in full confidence for our continuing progress."

Since the Spring Newsletter the Master has represented the Company on some 50 occasions, including Livery meetings and social events, often with the support of his wife Eileen.

There have been a number of high-spots.

The dinner at the Mansion House on April 9 with the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Masters of other Livery Companies rates as "one of the most enjoyable events of the year".

On May 8 Norman and Eileen were invited to the Mansion House for a performance of "Trial by Jury" by the City Operatic Society—to discover that the Lord Mayor (Richard Whittington) played the judge. "Everyone was in great good humour and

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Visit to the New Covent Garden Flower Market on July 23.

## Our new Master

OUR NEW Master, Antony Coster, due to take office on January 25 next, follows his father Stanley, who served as Master in 1965.

A Lloyd's Underwriter, he runs his own underwriting companies, and at the age of 47 admits that building his career has so far been his main objective. As a young man in a hurry, however, he spent a good deal of his younger life racing cars and flying aircraft.

At Brighton College he was prevented by asthma from taking a flying scholarship—his ambition at the time—but learnt to fly for pleasure and enjoys

piloting a plane nowadays when time allows.

Tony began his career with an insurance company in 1957, moving to his father's company three years later. From 1962 to 1973 he was with Mitre Insurance Association, a Lloyd's motor underwriting syndicate, before becoming a partner in the managing agency of the syndicate and setting up his own partnership agency in 1976, incorporating the partnership agency in 1981.

He has always been closely involved in City affairs, and was apprenticed to the Haberdasher's Company through his father from 1954-61, becoming a Liveryman in 1961. He joined the Livery of the Fruiterers' by Redemption in 1973, becoming an Hon. Assistant in 1980.

"Business life becomes more and more demanding as the months go by, and Helen and I like to remain home at weekends, and—



Antony Coster

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# 'Opportunities await' says Lord Rayner

OPPORTUNITIES for the UK fruit trade to exploit were offered by Liveryman Lord Rayner, chairman of Marks & Spencer, in proposing the health of the Company at the Audit Court dinner at the Apothecaries' Hall on May 21.

Air transportation had brought travel to distant places within the grasp of large numbers of people, introducing them to different foods, and it had also allowed rapid transportation of perishable produce, as had modern sea freight and sophisticated container transportation.

"Thomas Fuller wrote in 1932: 'He that would have the fruit must climb the tree'," Lord Rayner said.

"How has the industry faced up to this challenge?"

"Forward-looking British produce growers and importers have responded well by finding new sources of quality fruit and vegetables and by working with foreign growers to develop better methods of harvesting, transportation and storage, with the result that freshness and eating quality have been greatly improved and many more

lines are now available all the year round," Lord Rayner stated. "At the same time British growers have found ways of producing in this country items like the iceberg lettuce, which were previously available only from abroad.

"Growing health awareness and the consequent interest in the nutritional aspects of food will further increase consumption. Changing life styles have provided the opportunity to develop a market in convenience foods. At the same time there is a tendency towards more snack meals. This presents challenges to the food trade as a whole, but there is no reason why fruiterers should not also be part of this development.

"The key to all these challenges is quality and specifically eating quality," Lord Rayner declared. "No amount of advertising or promotional gimmicks will persuade today's customers to go on buying fruit if the flavour is poor. There is a growing market, however, for produce of high quality and the rewards for satisfying this market are well worth the effort."



Admiring appreciation of the display of fruit at the Mansion House on October 29: The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress discuss varieties with the Master and Fruit Porter.

## Fruit for the Lord Mayor

FOR THE 410th year the presentation of fruit to the Lord Mayor—in place of the former tolls—was re-enacted at the Mansion House on October 29.

This year's display was well up to standard, drawing high commendation from the Lord Mayor, Sir David Rowe-Ham, accompanied by the Lady Mayoress and Sheriff Richard Saunders.

Replying to the Master's traditional speech, Sir David commented that he knew that the Livery had been at work since early morning—because he had heard them!

The Master and no less than three Past Masters—Louis Fulford, Ron Starns and Harry Lewis—were part of the team which arrived at the Mansion House at 6 am to arrange the presentation, with the support of Pat Starns (whose floral centre-piece gave the crowning touch), Steve Prentice and our new Fruit Porter, Nobby

Price, who has taken over from Charles Lawrence.

A second-generation greengrocer, Nobby has his own business in West London, judges at the Marden Show and is President of the London Area of the Retail Fruit Trade Federation and a National Executive member of the South of England Area of the Federation.

## Hon. Assistants nominated

FOUR Honorary Assistants have been nominated to serve for two years from May, 1988.

They are Peter Allocca, a money broker; John Dunham, a retired insurance broker; Ian White, managing director of a fruit wholesaler; and Kenneth Lipscomb, a motor car main agent.

## Golf day voted a big

GOLFERS in the Livery rallied enthusiastically to the first-ever Fruiterers' Golf Day, at the course of the Selsdon Park Hotel, Sanderstead, on April 29.

Organisers Past Master Robert Sice and Assistant David Hohnen were delighted with the response.

In good weather, Liveryman Pip Arnold received an engraved glass vase from the Master, with a notable score of only one over a scratch score, winning the competition with a Stapleford score of 42 points.

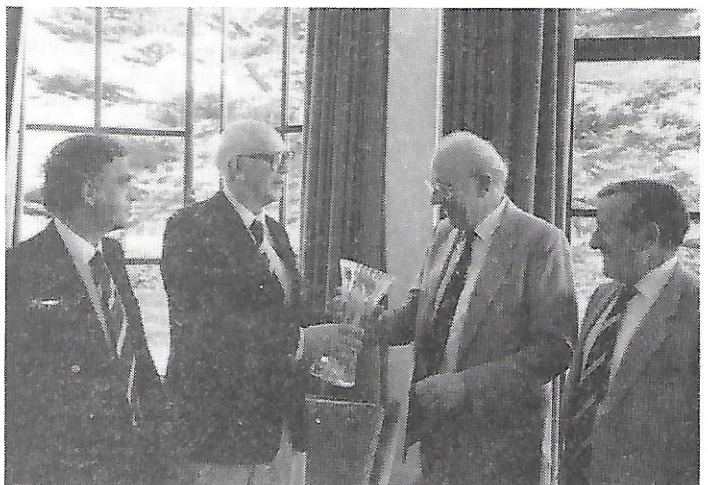
## success

A visitor won Division 'A', and Ken Lipscomb headed Division 'B' with 37 points.

A generous clutch of prizes included the presentation of a pair of kippers given to Ralph Felton for having breakfast and turning up late!

A Golf Society is being formed with Ralph as its first President. All golfers please wait patiently for next year's announcement.

The Company fielded a



Presentation at Selsdon Park. Left to right: Assistant David Hohnen, the Master, Pip Arnold and Past Master Robert Sice.

team for the Prince Arthur Golfing Cup in May, sadly without notable success,

coming 21st out of the 45 Livery teams competing. Pip Arnold was captain.



# 'Lords, Ladies and ...'

THE rich, resonant tones of toastmaster Bernard Sullivan need no introduction to members of the Livery.

But they usually provide one, for Bernard has served almost invariably as our toastmaster since 1963.

Turn on your TV for any of the big fights, and chances are that it will be Bernard taking the centre of the ring making the introductions. More than 50 British and European championships and 10 world championships (including the Hagler/Minter riot!) are part of his professional experience.

## Robust

Now a robust 67, he started his career as an M.C. when in the Royal Navy serving with Combined Operations.

He ran dances at shore bases, enjoyed the role—and was continually asked to M.C. social events.

He ended his war career, incidentally, as First Lieutenant at the naval base at Gibraltar.

At the Bank of England, where he worked for many years, he became an Assistant Principal of the Bank's exchange control and was responsible for initiating efficiency ideas. "I was always an ideas man, and during my 33 years with the Bank had more than 300 economy suggestions adopted," he proudly recalls.

He started work as a professional toastmaster in 1955 and enjoys his role enormously. One of his



*Bernard Sullivan in action in the ring.*

proudest memories is taking part at a function at which Winston Churchill was the chief guest—"I was always a great Churchill fan."

Over the years Bernard has got to know the City well. Ask him which is his favourite Livery Company and he says unhesitatingly—"The Fruiterers, of course. They are very nice friendly types. Some of them came to see me when I had my heart trouble in 1983 and I had lots of friendly messages."

## Fruit

A six-by-pass heart operation in 1984 gave him a new lease of life. He guards his health zealously, exercises daily and eats lots of fruit. "I love fruit," he will tell you. "Pineapple reduces inflammation and therefore the pain in arthritis. Carrot juices are very good for hiatus hernia, garlic reduces blood pressure, and an exclusive fruit diet for two days brings your blood pressure down," are included among his prescriptions.

Guide, mentor to many a

new Master, and friend to all, Bernard is now part of the Fruiterers' more recent traditions. Long may he

warn us as we venture from the ante-room to the hall of the Innholders to "mind the step!"

# Contribution to research

UNDER the direction of our Fruit Culture Council, the Fruiterers' Company makes a considerable contribution towards research into fruit culture.

Most of this work is centred on East Malling, in Kent, where the newly-established Institute of Horticultural Research, under its Director, Professor Swinburne, has its headquarters.

The Master recently organised a visit for the Hon. Assistants to see some of the work being carried out at the Institute, and also to hear of some of the projects which require urgent funding.

These include the improvement of nursery tree quality, for good nursery stock has a major effect on production; the application of apple systems research to provide much-needed information about the most practical density to plant Cox trees; and research to extend the season and fruit quality of strawberries.

Those who attended this interesting visit, including fruit growers, came away impressed with the practical nature of the work being undertaken, at the U.K.'s premier research station. And also of the need for our help as a Company.





*After lunch on the 'Southern Belle': a cheerful group of Fruiterers and guests begin the tour of Hampton Court Palace.*

## All aboard for Hampton Court

A CHEERFUL crew of Fruiterers with their partners and guests, boarded the Southern Belle at Turk's Pier, Hampton Court, in glorious sunshine on June 16 for a summer function.

Champagne on the downstream leg of the adventure was succeeded by a buffet lunch and a return to Hampton Court for a guided tour of "The grandest Tudor residence in England", built by Cardinal Wolsey in 1514 but given by him soon afterwards to Henry VIII.

With tea in the Tiltyard restaurant, the party visited the banqueting house, the

Montagna collection, the Tudor tennis court ("anyone for Real tennis?"), the maze and the grapevine, planted in 1768.

## Keeping stock of the Company's treasure

AMONG the duties of the Renter Warden is an annual inspection of the Company's valuables.

The Fruiterers own a number of rare and fine pieces, of which the Loving Cups are the most familiar to the Livery. But there are many other decanters, dishes, goblets and ashtrays which have been presented to the Company in the past, usually by the Master of the day.

Many of the items are used at Company functions, especially when these are at the Innholders' Hall, though the Annual Banquet also has a full display of our valuables.

## Father to son

OUR new Master and Wardens are all sons of Past Masters of the Livery.

Tony Coster follows his father, who was Master in 1965.

David Hope-Mason's father, Gordon, was Master in 1979, and the new Renter Warden, The Rt.Hon. Sir Edward du Cann is the son of Charles du Cann, who was master in 1946.

## Prizes awarded to students

THE COMPANY awarded prizes to four University and College students during the year.

At Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture, a prize was awarded to Mark Fourie, who studied for an Advanced Certificate in the Horticulture Commercial Fruit Production Course. He was judged the best all-round student on his course.

Mark is from New Zealand, where he studied at Lincoln College, gaining their Diploma in Horticulture.

At Writtle Agricultural College a prize was awarded to David Riccini, who studied for the Higher National Diploma in

Commercial Horticulture. He was awarded the prize for his excellent performance in fruit culture. David comes from Canterbury, Kent.

Paul Willgoss, of Welwyn Garden City, was awarded a prize at the University of Reading.

At the University of Bath, a prize was awarded to Louise Labuschagne, who studied for a B.Sc. in Horticulture, and obtained a first class degree. Louise was awarded the prize for her performance in fruit production specialisation. She has since married Dr Wainwright, who was a lecturer in Fruit Crops at the University, and is now at the Tropical Crops Research Institute.



*Annual examination of the Company's valuables at Innholders' Hall: Renter Warden David Hope-Mason with some of the silver.*



# Marden award

DAVID Pilcher, an instructor at the Institute of Horticultural Research, East Malling, where he has been for the last ten years, is this year's winner of the Fruiterers' Company's Skilled Artisan's Award. Raised on the family farm in the Faversham area, he trained with leading growers A. R. Neaves & Son, and at East Malling has trained more than a dozen apprentices. More recently he qualified as an instructor and examiner for the Agricultural Training Board.

Making the presentation at the Marden Show, the Master stated: "The Fruiterers' Company makes a number of awards annually to promote excellence in the production or



David Pilcher receives his medal at the Marden Show.

distribution of fruit. But we are prouder of none more than our award to the Skilled Artisan of the year. This is given to the man or woman who has contributed most, not only to the development of new skills, but also imparting them to others.

"In the process of transforming many a raw recruit into a professional orchardist, David Pilcher has become known and

respected throughout this fruit community. His demonstration of methods of netting cherries is just one example of his inventiveness," Norman Sheldon declared.

Members are encouraged to join the Marden Fruit Show Society.

Apply for an entry form to Mrs Diane Neaves, Secretary, Marden Fruit Show Society, High Street, Marden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 9DP (0622) 832188.

## Inter-Livery big bang

ECHOES of the City's Big Bang reverberated on May 20 this year when 114 guns representing 29 teams gathered at Holland's extensive shooting grounds in Northwood, Middlesex, for the inter-Livery Clay Pigeon Shoot.

Upper Warden Tony Coster marshalled a team

from the company, including Liverymen Jack French, Tom Miller and Ray Whittaker.

The shoot was held in four sections: three of them at stands offering grouse and skeet, crossing pheasant and partridge respectively, and the final section was an exciting

barrage, with 100 clays launched in a steady stream towards the team standing in line abreast for them to hit as many as possible.

Tony Coster reports: "The Fruiterers, although they shot gamely and well, unfortunately did not all have the skill to match the rest of the teams and we completed the day with a score of 55 against the winning Founders' 85 out of 120.

## Mulberry promise

DEVONSHIRE SQUARE in the City is still without the Fruiterers' Jubilee mulberry tree, planted in 1978 to commemorate Her Majesty's 25th year of her reign.

The tree had to be removed when the square was being re-developed to incorporate an electricity sub-station. During 1985 it was transplanted in the Drapers' Hall Gardens, but sadly failed to survive.

There is assurance from the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in the City of London that when Devonshire Square is restored, our tree will be replaced.

A recent site inspection by both the Master and Upper Warden reveals that there is still a massive hole where the

Central Electricity Generating Board are building the sub-station, due for completion in 1988.

We then hope to record the installation of our Jubilee successor, flourishing in root and branch.

## New members

FOUR new members of the Livery were clothed at the Court of Assistants on November 12. They were: **Eric Burleton**, advertising agency director; **Kenneth Bloomfield**, fresh produce distributor; **Thomas Hilliard**, fruit and vegetable wholesaler.

## Tie break

APPROVAL of the new Livery tie, available since October, is shown by more than one-third of the Livery who've bought one from the Clerk.

The compatibility of Mark 2, compared with the more rigid sartorial impositions of the Company's traditional neckwear, seems to have captured its converts. The "tie hards" will, of course, continue to exercise their first choice.

The miniscule figures of Adam and Eve on the new tie are providing an interesting conversation piece—particularly for the shorter-sighted!

## Kenwood tour

KENWOOD, one of Britain's great Georgian houses, was the setting for the autumn reception of the Company on October 7.

It is one of the finest expressions of the genius of the Adams' brothers, Robert and James, has a library which is one of the finest Adam rooms in existence (Mrs Thatcher rightly described it as "stunning" when she visited it a few days earlier), the Iveagh Bequest of outstanding paintings and sculpture, and a superb parkland setting in North London.

After touring the house and admiring the pictures, the party of more than 50 members and guests enjoyed dinner in the "Old Kitchen".

## Honorary Freeman elected

CHRISTOPHER Walker, since 1952 Honorary Technical Secretary to the Fruit Culture Council, was elected an Honorary Freeman of the Company at the November Court in recognition of his services to the industry and, in particular, to the Company's Fruit Culture Council. He was supported at the ceremony by Past Masters Harry Lewis and Robert Sice.

Apart from war service,

Christopher Walker has spent the whole of his career in horticulture. He joined the Ministry of Agriculture National Advisory Service in 1951, retiring as the National Fruit Advisor, Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, having filled that office for ten years.



# Gordon Hope-Mason

THERE are others better qualified to write a tribute to Past Master Gordon Hope-Mason; but, however unworthy, I am glad to have the opportunity to do so.

I cannot remember our first meeting but it must have been soon after the end of the War, when both of us returned to the fruit business.

From then on for the next 30 years and more we were often together.

He was someone whom I respected from the beginning for his acumen and strength of character. But he was with it all a modest man, and it was only gradually that I came to

admire him also for his understanding, honesty and compassion.

Gordon went to work on a South African fruit farm as a young man, and like me came to love the country and his friends among the growers. He was called home to manage the family business, Lockwood Press, but when war broke out soon afterwards volunteered for the HAC, and saw service with the British Expeditionary Force and later with the invasion army.

After the War he made the "Fruit Trades Journal" an indispensable publication for everyone associated with the trade. At

conferences he was a cogent and forceful speaker, a devastating critic, but always ready to make a positive contribution.

In 1967, Gordon was admitted to the Livery, and in 1979 was elected Master. He committed himself wholeheartedly, as to everything else that he touched, and was particularly proud of his part in organising a "Fruiterers' Float" in the Lord Mayor's Show. He was a tireless supporter of the Court and Master thereafter.

My own sincere admiration for Gordon was expressed when I asked him to speak at my Banquet in January this year. He told



Gordon Hope-Mason

me how honoured he felt and how proud to participate in a function which his son, David, attended as the newly-elected Renter Warden.

Gordon's death is mourned by me and the entire Livery. Our sympathy at our common loss goes to his wife, Gunnel, and his family.

Norman Sheldon

## Marketing skills

PROBLEMS of British horticultural marketing were touched on by the Master, Norman Sheldon, at the Master and Wardens' dinner at Innholders' Hall on November 12.

"There is a general consensus when we talk about the prosperity of British horticulture that what is lacking is not the ability to produce good products on a competitive basis, but the structure to market them successfully," he stated.

"Indeed, from my own brief experience with the British salad industry, I believe that to be true. Some people have offered the explanation that in this nation of shopkeepers, marketing skills no longer exist.

"Of course it is quite untrue. You have only to look at our financial bodies, or our retail supermarkets, to see that they are the best in the world.

"What is missing is not marketing skills—they are all around us—but the confidence of producers to use them," Norman Sheldon declared.

## Year of progress—from p.1

it was tremendous fun," Eileen recalls.

Tea with the President of the Royal Horticultural Society at the Chelsea Flower Show on May 19 had to be curtailed—to dash to St. Paul's for a service for the Corporation of Sons of the Clergy.

Links with East Malling were strengthened by meetings on June 2 and September 30, where there were opportunities of seeing something of the research work undertaken with the help of the Company and to discuss future support.

There were visits to Spitalfields market and New Covent Garden on June 4 and July 23. The Buckingham Palace Garden Party on July 21 was an impressive demonstration of Royal fortitude. "It rained and rained—but Her Majesty, undaunted, gave the impression that the umbrellas were parasols!"

There were interesting Cox trials to be seen on the Marden Fruit Show Society Walk at Mereworth on August 26 ("a tremendous advantage during the last ten years"), together

with the Show itself on October 28.

The annual presentation of fruit to the Lord Mayor, on October 29, was another date to remember, particularly with the informal lunch for the Court afterwards.

"The City Livery Club's banquet at the Guildhall on December 2 again brought the Master in touch with contemporaries in other City Companies—and further assurances of goodwill and high regard in which our Company is held.

## Bequest

A BEQUEST of £1,000 has been made by Liveryman Norman Russell, who died last year. A partner in Spicer Pegler, he retired in 1985.

Part of the bequest will be used to purchase a new hand-made Oath book for the Livery, which will be suitably inscribed.

## Obituary

WE sadly report that the following Liverymen have died since March: John Tyndall, George Stancliffe, Albert Colman and John Downes.

## Master

### —from p.1

when the opportunity permits—to travel to some remote part of the Aegean, where the phone cannot reach us."

Our new Master has decided aims for his year of service. "I want to make the Fruiterers' Company much more influential and in the forefront of the industry. We need to become more involved in the fresh produce industry and even more highly regarded for what we are and do. We also need to encourage prominent people in the industry to take an interest in the Company," he declares.

## Diary dates

DON'T forget the two important items of the January Calender.

The Livery Service held at St Mary Abchurch on Monday, January 25, is followed by luncheon with ladies at the Innholders' Hall, and the Annual Banquet takes place on Tuesday, January 26, at the Merchant Taylors' Hall.