PETER WHELDON IS AWARDED THE RIDLEY MEDAL

The Company's most prestigious award, the Ridley Medal, which is presented every three years, was presented by the Master at the Livery Banquet on 11th February 1999 to Peter Wheldon MBE.

Mr Wheldon is one of England's leading fruit growers. At an age when most have fully retired, he is still dedicated to fruit culture and works a full and active day. Together with his sons, he runs a successful fruit enterprise with a reputation for efficiency, production and quality.

He is an innovative man, who has introduced new techniques, often in advance of the industry. He has maintained a close interest in horticultural science and technology; he has been keen to co-operate with research workers, advisers and technical representatives, and offer them trial facilities on his farm. He did pioneer work on machinery to improve spray application in the orchard. Another chief interest was fruit harvesting; his ideas contributed to the development of well-based harvesting bins and mobile bin transporters.

He has always taken an interest in new entrants to the fruit industry and several present growers and managers owe their success to the training and experience gained on Peter's farm. He has welcomed, guided and entertained many parties of horticultural students and has had a particular close link with Writtle College.

Peter has given much time to outside committees and organisations. He gave great support to Long Ashton Research Station, Bristol, and was a member of its governing committee. He served for 25 years on the Governing Body of East Malling Research Station and, for ten years, was Chairman of the Station's Research Association Committee. In both roles he encouraged the close liaison between growers and research staff. He had a genuine and friendly interest in the staff and their research projects. Following a day of committee work, he would usually visit the laboratories and seek discussions with individuals.

He was very concerned with the continuity of financial support for fruit research, following the reduction in funding from official sources; he did much to encourage industry support. His name is associated with a fund which he established to support projects, and the employment of research students, at East Malling.

Peter gave much time to serve on many Ministry of Agriculture and National Farmers Union activities; he served on MAFF regional committees and was Chairman of the NFU Area Fruit Committee for a long period.

He supported national fruit competitions and shows; he assessed at Wisbech Orchard Competition and, for many years, was a judge at Marden Fruit Show Society Show.

To some Peter Wheldon is one of the fathers of modern fruit growing. A man of vision who has had the satisfaction of seeing many of his ideas implemented. His warm personality, infectious enthusiasm and sense of humour were demonstrated in all he did and continues to do. He has the respect and friendship of so many in the horticultural industry.

Peter Wheldon was awarded MBE in 1989 for services to the fruit growing industry.

AN EARLY START AT WESTERN INTERNATIONAL

The Master, seen in our photograph with the Chairman of the Market, George Bray, visited this leading market on Monday 15th March.

The market is celebrating its 25th anniversary on the present site, having originally moved there from Brentford in 1964.

For those who do not know the market, it is a thriving concern, so much so that there are plans for expansion to take full advantage of modern technology for the handling and storage of fresh produce.

After a hearty English breakfast, the Master set off for his daily duties in Court.

Our photograph shows Peter Wheldon MBE receiving his award from the Master. In the foreground is His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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THE RENTER WARDEN VISITS THE CASSEL HOSPITAL

The Renter Warden, Hugh Kelsey, who was accompanied by his wife Caroline, undertook one of his first visits since taking office on St Paul’s Day by representing the Master at a “Laying of the Foundation Stone” ceremony at the Cassel Hospital, Hammersmith, on 24th February.

Princess Alexandra and The Countess Mountbatten of Burma were among those present, as were also the Masters of the Broderers and Goldsmiths Companies. The hospital, which was founded by Sir Ernest Cassel, the great-grandfather of the Countess, is internationally recognised as a leading treatment, research and training centre for psychotherapy.

The hospital has launched an appeal to raise money for a new building to be known as the Families Centre, which will be able to house entire families, enabling them to be treated as a unit.

The Livery has made a donation to this appeal (see our last issue).

Hugh and Caroline meeting Countess Mountbatten.

EXTRAORDINARY COMMON HALL

The Master issued a Precept for attendance at a second Common Hall early in January to facilitate further discussion on the Strategy Document which had not been available on 28th September 1998. There was a good attendance, actually beating (by a narrow margin!) that of the earlier meeting. There was a lively discussion and explanations were given on a range of items. Whereas much of the paper updates existing thinking and procedures, the central thrust is towards greater participation by the Livery in the company’s affairs and a number of objectives towards the promotion of excellence within the Fruit Industry. Views of Liverymen were duly noted and amendments made to the drafts to take these into account. The final version will be considered by the Court at their meeting on 18th May.

IAN RAINFORD IS APPOINTED AS OUR REMEMBRANCER

At the November Court Meeting the Court appointed our first Remembrancer, or at least the first of whom we are aware!

An alternative title for the position was Almoner. The office holder is immediately responsible to the Membership Committee, of which he is currently a member. The job is part of the Contact Network which has been set up by the Committee and organised by Alan French.

“The is all about being in touch and caring”. Over the next few months there will be feedback to the Remembrancer from those charged with contacting Senior Liverymen or those whom we have not seen for a while, and he may then be able to make or arrange personal visits to individuals.

MILLENNIUM DINNER DANCE

The Master, together with his wife Pamela, stepped out at the London Marriott Hotel on 6th February at the Annual Dance of the Spitalfields Market Traders’ Association. They were the guests of the Chairman (Mr John Olney) and his wife.

The Master tells us that it was “a fun evening”, very jolly relaxed company and that his wife won a coffee maker (a machine of course!)

Clearly getting in practice for the Fruiterers’ Ball on July 17th!

The Master and Pamela Cryan with Mr and Mrs John Olney.

PRESENTATION OF OUR FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

The Judges for these awards have met and made their decisions. Full details will be given in our next issue.

We are delighted that The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor has agreed to receive the winners, together with a number of Liverymen at The Mansion House on 7th July 1999 at 11.00 am.

This is a generous gesture for which we are very grateful, and helps to emphasise the calibre of these awards. A great number of Liverymen are working hard to raise the profile of the Company within the industry.

INFORMAL CARVERY LUNCHES OFF TO A GOOD START

Since the announcement of the arrangements for us to join Liverymen of the Butchers Company at their Hall for a series of informal lunches, there has been an encouraging response. The initial lunch was “sold out” (we have a maximum of 45 places) and the second was well supported.

The next scheduled date is 7th July, and will follow the presentation of the Environmental Awards as detailed above. There may be pressure on space as we shall be entertaining the winners and judges.

There are further lunches planned for later in the year as detailed in the Calendar.
KENT — THE COUNTY OF HOPS, LEFT-HANDERS AND GOOD-LOOKING WOMEN

The above extract from the excellent Toast to The Retiring Master made by Past Master Garth Doubleday at the St Paul's Day Court Luncheon caught the Editor's ear.

Garth Doubleday farms neighbouring land to that of Tony Redsell and has known him for many years. In his speech of congratulations and thanks for the Retiring Master's contribution to the well-being and furtherance of the Company's interests, Garth summarised yet another year of activity and innovation.

The lunch, which was hosted by tradition by the retiring Master, who was accompanied by his wife Jill, followed the Annual Livery service held at St Mary Abchurch. Our visiting preacher was The Right Reverend Ian Harland MA, Bishop of Carlisle, who questioned whether many knew exactly where Carlisle was. Some had enquired whether he had had a good journey from Scotland.

The Bishop gave a delightful sermon and our Singers, again ably directed by Peter Barley, sang the anthem “Thou visitest the earth” by Maurice Greene.

At lunch the Master warmly welcomed Gunel Hope-Mason, Eileen Sheldon and Toni Sice, widows of Past Masters, together with particularly June Bowerman who was escorted by Peter Morrish.

WAITROSE — TAKING THE ORGANIC INITIATIVE

Waitrose is committed to increasing the range of organic alternatives on offer to its customers. Currently the range contains over 300 products, including fruit and vegetables, bread, chicken, ice cream, smoked meats, dairy produce, wine and ales.

Demand continues to outstrip supply and because such a small percentage of UK land is in organic production compared to the continent, we have to source a great deal of produce that could be grown here from abroad.

To help rectify this, in June 1998 Waitrose launched The Waitrose Organic Assistance Scheme to support its UK livestock and fruit and vegetable suppliers who plan to convert to organic production.

The scheme supplies practical advice and active support, including a guaranteed market for suppliers' produce during the organic conversion period. Waitrose also works with growers, seed producers and research stations to identify and trial both new and old varieties for their suitability for organic production, and has close associations with approved certification bodies and research organisations to encourage the transfer of best organic practice to new producers.
CHEQUERS TREE PLANTING

On 6th March, the Master and Pamela, accompanied by the Wardens and a number of liverymen and friends, were the guests of Cherie Blair at Chequers, on the occasion of the planting of the Company's gift of a mulberry tree and five apple trees in the gardens. An earlier reconnaissance trip by William Sibley had established the best siting for the trees and allowed the ground to be prepared.

A happy gathering for lunch at the nearby Bernard Arms preceded our arrival at Chequers, where we were met at the front steps of the house by Cherie Blair. The planting ceremony was performed by the Master in cold inclement weather. Cherie Blair and her three children all helped to bed down the mulberry, which prompted the Master to suggest that the names of the three children should be added to the plaque which will stand beside the tree.

Following the planting, the party was entertained to a most enjoyable tea, including scrumptious éclairs, in the magnificent main drawing room of the house. Cherie Blair then delighted all present by inviting us to tour the house with her and to see some of its exceptional treasures.

This was a most special occasion in the current series of tree plantings, started in 1981 at Highgrove, all of which are recorded on the Company's ceremonial spade.

THE ROCOCO MASTER'S CHAIR 1748

This splendid example of a furniture maker and wood carver's art, was used during the reign of George II by the Master of the day when Court was held.

In 1984 it was on public exhibition in Vauxhall - "Rococo Art and Design in Hogarth's England".

The acanthus cartouche on the arched crest rail depicts the Beadle of the Fruitiers Company making the annual presentation of fruit to the Lord Mayor. The carving also displays the arms of the Company - Adam & Eve and the Tree of Knowledge entwined by the serpent. Lions "couchant" are perched on the arms, and the cabriole legs are headed by men-of-the-woods masks and Lion paw feet. This reproduction is given with kind permission of the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight Village, Bebington, Wirral.
OUR ANNUAL LIVERY BANQUET “JUDGED” A SUCCESS

At the conclusion of the Banquet held at The Mansion House on February 11th Livemmen and their guests withdrew from the Egyptian Hall well satisfied with an enjoyable evening. Everything appeared to go particularly smoothly and congratulations are due to the Clerk and the Honorary Assistants who ensured that our many guests were well hosted and directed to the right places at the right time!

The fare was excellent, the speeches “just right” and there was a happy and relaxed atmosphere.

Our guest list was well up to standard, headed by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom we were delighted to meet again. His Excellency the Irish Ambassador (Edward Barrington Esq) together with the Minister-Councillor Economic Affairs, Embassy of Morocco, and H. Mahlangu Esq (Deputy High Commissioner, South African Embassy) headed the diplomatic guests. The Permanent Secretary, MAFF (P J Packer Esq) was given a warm welcome. This also extended to the Lord Mayor Locum Tenens, Alderman Sir Christopher Leaver, GBE, and Lady Leaver together with the Sheriffs and their ladies.

We had not met, Sir Christopher for some years and it was delightful to meet him again with his wife. In reply to the Toast of “The Corporation” the Lord Mayor Locum Tenens made reference to the Impending changes to the electoral system in the City of London and the establishment of “A Mayor for London”. In conclusion he presented the Master with a gift from the Lord Mayor who was regrettably unable to be with us due to commitments in Finland.

There is no doubt that this was a Judges’ evening! The Master, himself a Judge, welcomed the new Recorder of London, His Honour Judge Hyam, and the Right Honourable The Lady Justice Butler-Sloss DBE. Dame Elizabeth gave a spirited and outstanding reply to the toast of “The Guests” excellently proposed by Past Master Sir Rowland Whitehead Bt.

Our Musketeers turned out in force; Sir Robert Pascoe invited the Commander, Permanent Joint Headquarters, and Sir Thomas Kennedy invited Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns.

We were also delighted to entertain Admiral of the Fleet Sir Benjamin Bathurst, who has accepted our invitation to become our Naval Musketeer in succession to Sir David Williams who is to retire this year.

City Livery Companies were also well represented, although we were sorry that the Master Gardener could not come this year. We were pleased to welcome the Master and Clerk of both the Innholders and Farmers’ Companies.

Many Livemmen brought guests of repute and Colonel “Tommy” Tucker was the Duty Officer with the Lord Mayor’s party. The Master and Pamela Cryan invited a party of ladies to join the dinner.

The music was provided by the Militaire Orchestra, and as an innovation, the Director of Music, W E Appleton, joined the Master for a drink at the conclusion of the musical performance. The presentation of the Ridley Medal to Mr Peter Wheldon (reported elsewhere in this issue) took place during the dinner.

In the presence of so many high ranking guests from the military and the law, it seemed that the Livery were on their best behaviour!

Our principal guests with the Master and Wardens and their ladies.

The Master with our Musketeers and their guests.

PAULINE HALLIDAY IS A CANDIDATE IN THE ELECTION THIS YEAR

There are four candidates for the two Offices of Sheriff at the 1999 election. Livemmen may well receive personal letters from one or more of the candidates. The master is serving on Pauline’s committee.

It is likely that a poll will be demanded; if so this will be also at Guildhall on July 8th, and of course votes will be vital at that poll.

Our Livemmen must, of course, decide the candidate(s) of their choice, but we wish Pauline good luck. It would be a great delight if she was elected!
A GIFT OF FRUIT FOR THE HOMELESS AT CHRISTMAS

The giving of fruit is nothing new for the Fruitiers Company but at Christmas the Company made a large donation to the Homeless and to the Salvation Army. The major part of the donation went to St Botolph’s, Aldgate, which previously has received part of the fruit presented to the Lord Mayor at the annual presentation.

The Rector, the Rev Brian Lee, seen in our photograph with Tony Redsell, the then Master of the Company, said: “Homeless people would not readily think of buying fruit, but it is so important for good health, so it is an extra treat for them at Christmas time. We are delighted to accept it on their behalf.”

It is likely that other charities will be supported by fruit giving. The Company is able to deliver “value for money” by the generous help of wholesalers and merchants within the Livery. Support for the Lord Mayor’s Charity, Leuka 2000, is being given by the Company donating strawberries for the Mid Summer and Fund Raising Banquet to be held at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich on June 21st. The Master and the Wardens will be attending the event and there may still be some tickets available. Anyone interested should contact the Clerk.

GARDEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Congratulations are in order to Mr and Mrs Cartwright-Hignett, the present owners of Iord Manor In Wiltshire who have won this year’s award sponsored by The Historical Houses Association and Christies.

The garden suffered years of neglect during the Second World War and has been lovingly restored by the owners over a period of 35 years.

We are again delighted that our Master has been invited to the formal presentation, and arrangements are in hand for the Livery to visit the garden on Sunday June 12th. Details will be issued by the Clerk.

LIVERY ELECTIONS AT GUILDHALL

There is to be a change in procedure this year as to admission to the Hall by Liverymen. Greater identification will be required. This will be by means of the issue of tickets. In order to facilitate their issue, and generally focus on the election the Company is endeavouring to restart the habit of meeting beforehand in a Coffee House. There are now plenty of new ones in the area.

The Master has asked a member of the Master’s Committee to be present and issue the tickets. The Clerk will issue the formal Precept and this will contain details of the Coffee House where Liverymen should meet.

NEW FREEMEN AND LIVERNMAN

On St Paul’s Day the following were elected to the Freedom of the Company by Redemption:

- Peter Anthony Little
- John Nikola Cieclitira
- Graham Leonard Whiley
- Paul Hyde Kelsey (son of Hugh)
- John Scott

At the same Court meeting the following was elected to the Livery:

- Pauline Ann Halliday

CONGRATULATIONS

We congratulate Margaret Charrington, who was awarded the CBE in the New Year’s Honours.

GET WELL SOON!

We wish Tom Hilliard and Patrick Gooch a speedy and full recovery after their recent spells in hospital.

IN MEMORIAM

- G R Tyer
- Donald Methven
- D S Stuart

We extend our sincere sympathies to their families.

Donald Methven was Clerk of the Company from 1948 until 1960, and then served as Assistant to the Court for some years before retiring in 1972.

OBITUARY - ROSA DUNHAM

We would like to record the sad passing of Rosa Dunham. A memorial service is to be held at the Parish Church of Much Hadham, Herts, on June 8th.

We extend our sincere sympathies to John at his sad loss. Rosa was not a member of the Livery, but was well known to many from her frequent attendances at functions, especially the whole programme of Tree Plantings since their inception. Her humour and love of life and of the Company will be greatly missed. Thank you Rosa for all that you gave us.

Acknowledgements

The Editor wishes to thank all those who have provided copy for this issue, and in particular The Master, Julian Cronk, John Dunham, Ian Rainford and The Clerk.