



The Fruiterers' Company NEWSLETTER

Number 6

February 1989



HRH The Prince of Wales honours the Company at its Annual Banquet

There can seldom have been more glittering and prestigious occasions in the history of the Fruiterers' Company, than the evening of February 9 last, when HRH, The Prince of Wales was applauded as the guest of honour at the Livery Banquet.

The spacious Plaisterers Hall in the heart of the City, was crammed to capacity, with an audience that was particularly gratified to hear that he holds the long term interests of fruit culture very much at heart.

As the newly elected Master, David Hope-Mason, shrewdly observed, "Your Highness has a better claim than many to being a genuine Fruiterer".

The wedding gift by the Worshipful Company to Their Royal Highnesses, comprising a collection of many fruit varieties now growing well in the walled garden at Highgrove, had already given The Prince of Wales much pleasure, and seasonal anticipation.

And it was the need for a continuing consumer fruit choice which provided one of the main planks of his speech.

Addressing a galaxy of interests, which included Sir David Rowe-Ham, the Rt Hon

Lord Mayor Locum Tenens, Ministers, diplomats, and over 100 liverymen, he stressed the need for traditional varieties to be retained and developed, rather than continuing to slip towards monoculture.

"I think there is a risk in the operations of the market that we should not ignore, if certain varieties of produce are not in demand," he said. "They will not be developed or cultivated, and probably die out".

The list of apple varieties has already shrunk dramatically from the 6,000 once listed over the last century. And, "all too often the range on display to customers is disappointingly small," he added.

"Apart from the ubiquitous French Golden Delicious, you are unlikely to find more than a couple of varieties of apple" said the Prince.

Where were the apples of yesterday with stirring names like Bowmans Reinette, Chelmsford Wonder, and Royal Jubilee, he wondered?

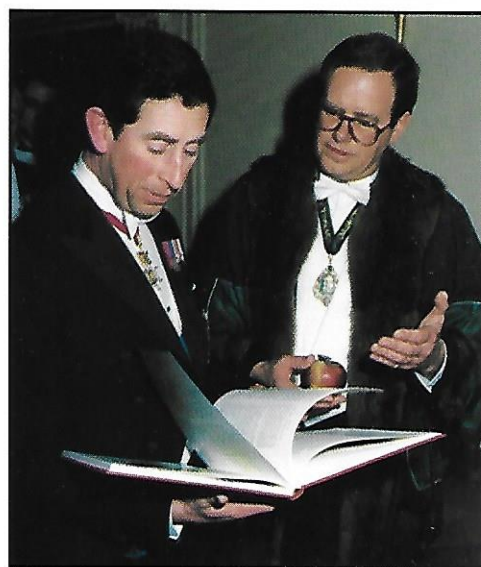
Most recently one Liveryman, he understood, had seen his orchard selection drop from 16 dessert and 8 culinary varieties to only two in the last few years.

"With pears it is Conference or Comice, whilst plums are simply classified into red, yellow and green. They must be sponsored by the Ministry of Transport!" he joked.

"This phenomenon appears to be a particularly British problem" he observed. "It



Above: Prince Charles addressing the Livery Banquet. His Royal Highness drew upon his knowledge of, and interest in, fruit growing in providing a thought-provoking and well-received after dinner speech. Right: His Royal Highness with the copy of *The English Apple*, inscribed with the Worshipful Company Crest, presented to him by newly installed Master of the Company, David Hope-Mason.



To mark His Royal Highness's attendance at the annual banquet, the Master presented The Prince of Wales with a recently issued book on English apples.

Suitably inscribed with the Company's crest, and date of the banquet, "The English Apple" describes 122 varieties, each one beautifully illustrated by Rosanne Sanders.

doesn't seem to effect others in quite the same way.

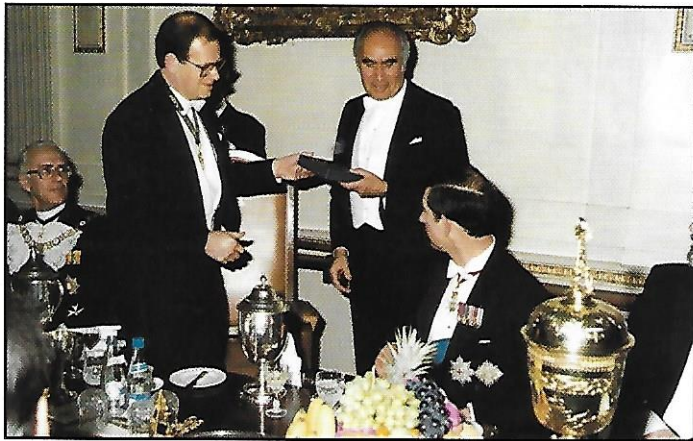
"For instance the growers in New Zealand have profited very well by sending at least 10 varieties of apples in commercial quantities to our markets each summer".

HRH however indicated to the audience that his concern was far more than merely wishing to preserve the past. Environmental

uncertainty could mean that current strains, and cultivation techniques might prove useless under new conditions.

In such a scenario the National Fruit Trials at Brogdale and the collection at Wisley took on an even greater and vital importance.

Certainly it was a message which was heard loud, clear, and very warmly applauded.



Ron Parker, Chairman of the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Information Bureau, on behalf of Past Master Matthew Mack receives the Lewis Award for Marketing from the Master.



Left: The Bishop of Sherborne and Past Masters Barton and Gothard are presented to HRH. Below: Some 270 Liverymen and guests packed into the Plaisterers Hall.



DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AT THE BANQUET INCLUDED:
 Alderman Sir David Rowe-Ham GBE Lord Mayor Locum Tenens
 Mr Alderman and Sheriff Francis McWilliams BSc CEng
 His Excellency BJH Jonkman, Ambassador for Holland
 The Bishop of Sherborne, The Rt Rev John D.G. Kirkham MA
 The Rt Hon The Lord Griffiths MC
 Baroness Trumpington, Parliamentary Sec. to the Minister of Ag.
 General Sir Robert Ford
 Vice Admiral Sir B. Bathurst
 Air Marshall Sir David Parry-Evans KCB CBE
 E.J.G. Smith Esq, CB, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
 Master of the Plaisterers Company
 Master of the Gardeners Company
 Senior Warden of the Farmers Company
 Master of the Stationers Company
 E. Douw Vries, Agricultural Attache to the Netherlands Embassy
 R. Parker Esq, Chairman of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable
 Information Bureau
 John Turnbull Esq, National Fruit Advisor ADAS

New Master pled much needed ind

Ways of encouraging young recruits into the fruit trade will play a key role for David Hope-Mason, the new Master of the Fruiterers Company during his year of office.

Making his inaugural address at the Livery Banquet, he was adamant that ways must be found to attract the next generation. For despite the fresh produce industry playing a vital part in the Nation's health and having a value of over £3,500 million, recruitment is difficult.

"The industry's structure and generally low profile, in every sense of the word, means that it has always been hard to attract young people" he said.

There is already tremendous competition from large business corporations, who are vacuuming up all the prospects, and with the drop in school leavers, the overall position will continue to deteriorate, he believes.

"Through the ages the Fruiterers' Company has provided assistance of various kinds to fruit production and distribution, more recently in the direction of culture and research", he said.

"But here surely is an urgent need for the sake of the healthy future of horticulture and fruit marketing in general, that we are in a unique position to assist."

As a director of the National Institute of Fresh Produce, the organisation which is already doing so much to improve communication and standards within the industry itself, the Master also gave a hint that he nevertheless sees some very practical ways of getting to grips with this problem.

"I hope that during this year we can take steps to introduce a new awards scheme to encourage young people to make their career in the fruit trade": he added.

In proposing the traditional toast to the Lord Mayor and Corporation, David Hope-Mason congratulated the Mayoralty on its 800th Anniversary.

"For an institution to survive that long, and for it to be as strong today, as at any time in its long history, indicates not just a continuing need for its existence, but also such inherent strength, as can only be imparted by enduring tradition," he said.

With a busy social calendar in the year ahead, there was also no doubt that he will be spreading the message that Fresh is Best.

Greater potential

On the same night he firmly identified fresh fruit as having a much greater potential as eating habits change.

"Nature has its own answer to convenience" he told the audience.

"Most fresh fruit comes ready-to-eat in its own take-home pack.

"Why not take a kiwi instead of a Kiara at the cinema? Why not an ortanique instead of a Yorkie? And what better snack is there than an apple or a banana?" he asked.

He is however a realist. Having worked in one of the largest advertising agencies in London, prior to entering the world of fresh produce publishing 25 years ago, he recognises the impact of multi million pound promotional campaigns mounted by the confectionary, and soft drink manufacturers.

However, there is another aspect where the Livery is well placed to seek, if not total solutions, then at least aid its strength to gathering support.

The target is Brussels.

"Now that the good attributes of fresh produce are so widely accepted, why can't the Commission spend just a fraction of that which it devotes to destroying thousands of tonnes of apples peaches and tomatoes, on extolling the value

ges support for ustry recruitment

of our produce to the consumer?" he asked.

Livery dinners are excellent platforms on which to dig up gems from the past, which are polished, and enjoyed in the speeches, as part of the close fabric and ongoing relationship with the City of London, which stretches back over 700 years

Historically one which came to light for many guests, is the story of English apple growers who through the Company petitioned Members of Parliament to plead that protection might be given against the ever increasing quantity of fruit from overseas.

"The date in this case was 1624", David Hope-Mason told the audience. Although the analogy to Southern hemisphere fruit could have given the story modern connotations.

But Fruiterers were plying their importing craft, 50 years before Columbus discovered America.

The arrival of Brazilian mangoes, Peruvian pawpaws, Kenyan passion fruit, Chilean

raspberries and Malayan starfruit, or carambolas in the fruit baskets shows that their skills have not diminished.

The Livery still however take a keen interest in the well being of English producers, many of whom are in their ranks.

Apart from the wide range of exotic fruit enjoyed for dessert at the Banquet, the tables were laden with colourful baskets of fruit, both from the orchards of Kent and from the four corners of the World.

Under the good organisation of Past Master Ron Starns, all fruit that remained at the end was donated to Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, the charity chosen by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, who is President of their Wishing Well Appeal.



The Company's principal guests, with the Master, Wardens and Immediate Past Master.



His Royal Highness is presented to the Clerk, Commander Michael Styles, RN, before the Beadle, Paul Marsh, on the left.

Donald Mack warns 'Don't let research cuts go too far'

While the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers has never taken a partisan role in the affairs of the industry there is no doubt that research and development is very near to its heart.

Its Fruit Culture Council is highly regarded for its work in Kent, and its association with East Malling Research Station.

At a time when many Liverymen freely say they are concerned that swingeing governmental cuts in this sector could have a particularly damaging effect, it was appropriate that past- Master Donald Mack, and chairman of the Council, bluntly voiced these

fears, when welcoming the guests.

"Personally speaking I think that the time was long overdue for the industry to stand on its own two feet" he admitted.

But he warned, " Care however, must be taken to ensure that the ground is not cut from under these feet.

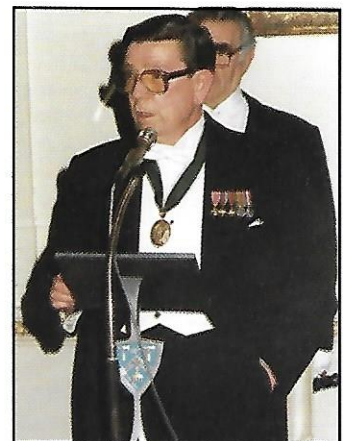
"Many are rightfully concerned that the very foundations will be undermined, if the rumours about the closure of the National Fruit Trials at Brogdale prove to be a fact. Brogdale is unique and is the international point of reference for world fruit growers, and

more than worthy of consideration."

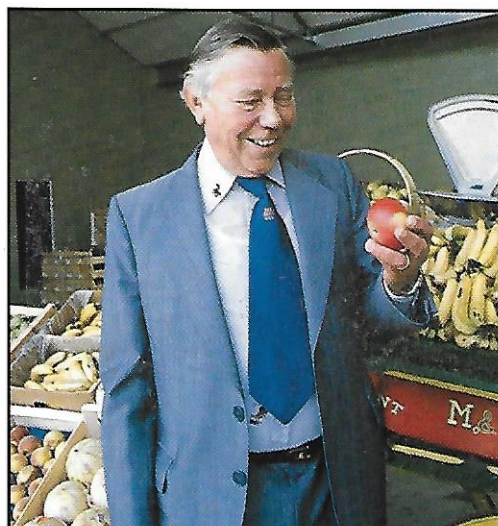
The Livery Company has also been as good as its word, in terms of the support it gives the things it holds so dear.

Over the past 15 years awards have expanded to encourage best students and colleges with fruit disciplines, together with travel bursaries.

In turn this has led to providing extra help and employment on specific projects, and also introduced young people who will be the leaders of tomorrow, to their first flavour of the industry.



Past Master Donald Mack OBE, proposing the toast to the guests.



Past Master Matthew Mack, winner of the triennially awarded Lewis Award for Distinguished Services to Marketing Fruit.

Matthew Mack wins Lewis award for dedication to Bureau

PAST Master Matthew Mack has been presented with one of the Livery's top honours, the Lewis Award for distinguished services to marketing.

It is in recognition of the crucial role he played in the conception and formation of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau fourteen years ago.

From this time it has gone from strength to strength and is recognised by the media and the trade as the unbiased and accurate public voice of the industry.

Matthew Mack, apart from being the catalyst in bringing together producers from home and overseas, importing organisations wholesalers and retailers together, served as its first chairman for no less than eight years for 1976-1984.

Diverse industry

Despite such a diverse industry being often competitive and even conflicting, he resolutely believed that something had to be done first to stem a then serious decline in both fruit and vegetable consumption, and second to provide a platform to respond positively to the more sensational aspect of press reporting, which damaged its image.

Despite the increasing competition of confectionary, and convenience foods he strongly held the view that freshness range and choice were the forgotten key elements

which could work to the industry's advantage.

Looking back how right he was.

And at its inception the Bureau had to fight against sensationalized press reports of 'rocketing prices' when winter crops were hit by the great, 1976 drought. Since then it has become the crisis centre for the industry handling everything from mercury in oranges to transport strikes, blizzards, pesticide residues and even most recently black widow spiders.

Strength and confidence

The Bureau's publicity machine gained considerably in strength and confidence during the years of this chairmanship. A massive increase in the colour feature coverage given to fresh fruit and vegetables in the women's and home interest magazines, was achieved by working closely with cookery and food editors.

As he hoped the amount of good publicity received for fresh fruit and vegetables began to increase with the inception of the Bureau and conversely, the amount of bad, uncontrolled publicity began to decrease.

During his chairmanship, the Bureau also took numerous promotional initiatives such as the 'Save Your Man' diet; 'Fresh is Beautiful' and the 'Super Salads' - all of these designed to attract more media and public attention to the particular advantages of fresh produce.

Now named by the press as

'the best food information service in Britain' it was generating around £5m worth of media publicity at the point when he retired.

The Livery continue to maintain close contacts with the

Bureau's activities. Mathew Mack, was succeeded by another past master, Norman Sheldon, and currently by Ron Parker, who accepted the award at the livery banquet in February.

Fruiterers Company Events 1989

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
Fri 17 Mar	United Guilds' Service Noon. Luncheon with ladies	St Paul's Cathedral
Thurs 4 May	Fruiterers Company Golf Day	Kingswood Golf Club, Surrey
Wed 24 May	Audit Court Meeting Audit Court Dinner	Stationers Hall
Tue 6 June	Fruit Culture Council Meeting	East Malling
Thurs 15 June	Summer Function with ladies	(to be announced)
Mon 26 June	Election of Sheriffs 11.30 am	Guildhall
Thurs 20 July	Summer Court Meeting Summer Court Dinner with ladies	RAC Pall Mall
Fri 29 Sept	Election of the Lord Mayor 11.30 am	Guildhall
Thurs 5 Oct	Reception & Dinner	(to be announced)
(?) Oct	Presentation of Fruit	Mansion House
Thurs 9 Nov	November Court Meeting Master & Wardens' Dinner	Tallow Chandlers Hall
Sat 11 Nov	Lord Mayor's Show	The City