



The Fruiterers' Company NEWSLETTER

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September, 1992



A Summer Court in Kent

Finchcocks, a living museum of music at Goudhurst in the Weald of Kent, was selected by the Master as an original venue for the Summer Court in July. This is the first time for many years that the Court has met away from the City.

It was a very happy occasion and Liverymen with their ladies joined Court members for a splendid dinner in the restaurant.

The house was acquired some years ago by Richard and Katrina Burnett and it is their claim that the house is always filled with music. There is an unique collection of antique pianos and harpsichords, all of which are fully maintained and available to play.

The Court meeting was restricted to urgent business only and was followed by tea and a tour of the gardens. Our photographs show members on the main lawn and the Master and Clerk engaged in earnest discussions!

Richard Burnett gave an hour's talk, full of amusement and interesting stories, illustrated by selections from composers as varied as Mozart, Haydn and Grieg.

The Company's guests included, most appropriately, the Master of the Musicians' Company (H. Willis FRSA, FISOB, FIMIT), who replied to the toast of 'The Guests' and the Master of the Innholders' Company (Michael Vass) and his wife.

Several particular Liverymen and their ladies were among those present and we were delighted to see Bernard Hammond, John Morrish and David Bowerman (now 90 years old) and his wife who were celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary, which was suitably recorded! We were also

pleased to see Eileen Sheldon, who lives nearby, who came with Philip Sheldon (Liveryman and son of

Norman) and many others.

We are looking forward to returning to Finchcocks in the

autumn to plant a small collection of fruit trees in their beautiful walled garden.





International Scholarship Exchange Scheme

Apart from administering the Company's various Awards and bursaries, the Fruiterers Awards Council has been working on proposals for an exciting new International Scholarship Exchange Scheme.

Under the guidance of one of the Fruiterers new overseas Freeman, Günter Schweinsberg from Germany, a number of companies involved in fruit production and marketing in Europe, are being approached to

sponsor the Fruiterers Company new scheme, which is hoped will get underway in the Spring of 1993.

Through this, young people from Germany, Holland, France, Spain and the UK, will have an opportunity to undertake a tour of the sponsoring companies, which have been chosen for their different aspects of the fresh produce industry.

The participants and sponsors will be invited to a dinner in the City, at the conclusion of the tour, and the Company will award a prize to the best essay submitted thereafter on the experience gained.

If the scheme proves successful, it is hoped to repeat the exercise on an annual basis.

Cherry and Soft Fruit Show

Congratulations to Tony Redsell's company for winning both of the Company's awards at this year's show.

OBITUARY

It is with much sadness that we record the death of George Smalley.

The Master with the Pearlies

Tuesday, 14th July, 1992, was a wet and miserable morning, but it was a colourful occasion for the Master to attend the annual visit by the Right Hon. The Lord Mayor to the New Spitalfields Market. Our photograph shows the Master with a Pearly King and Queen.

The Master, duly refreshed after a visit to Liveryman Alan Pendergast's firm, was on parade for the 7.30 am start. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, were welcomed by the Market Superintendent Michael Culverwell and Arthur Hutchinson MBE (Liveryman), chairman of the Tenants' Association.

The chairman of Spitalfields Market Committee (Miss Stella Currie CC) welcomed the official party, supported by Mr and Mrs David Shalit and the Deputy Mayor of Waltham Forest.

Also present was the president of the London Fruiterers and Florists Association (Norman Thompson) with his wife, members of the Market Association and Douglas Kemp

(Liveryman), president of the National Federation of Fruit and Potato Trades.

The visitors were clearly impressed with the vast array of produce from both home and abroad and market humour abounded.

After a Champagne breakfast and presentations of both fruit and flowers, the mayoral party moved on to their next appointments and everyone present agreed it had been a most successful and enjoyable morning.

Lord Mayor on his way to Detling

The Master and Wardens are much honoured that the Right Hon. The Lord Mayor is to receive this year's Presentation of Fruit at Detling during his visit to the Marden Fruit Show on 26th October, 1992.

Visit to East Malling Research Station

After several years absence the Fruiterers Award Council held their meeting at Horticultural Research International East Malling, on June 3rd, by kind invitation of Dr J F Legg.

An invitation was extended to all Livery members to join the Awards Council for lunch with some members of staff before visiting the new Post Harvest Technical Building, which has been named the Jim Mount Building. Sir James Mount is a member of the Livery and past chairman of

the East Malling Trust for Horticultural Research. The trustees are funding three-quarters of a million pounds towards this building.

The assembled company then had two paper and slide presentations on research work, one by Dr. Neil Hipps on Fertilisation of Soil Management and the other presentation on breeding new apples and pears by Dr. Frank Alston. Both of these scientists have had sandwich course students that have been financially supported by Company funds.

Kent harvest visit

*"Sure, I said, heav'n did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but
glean,
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home."*

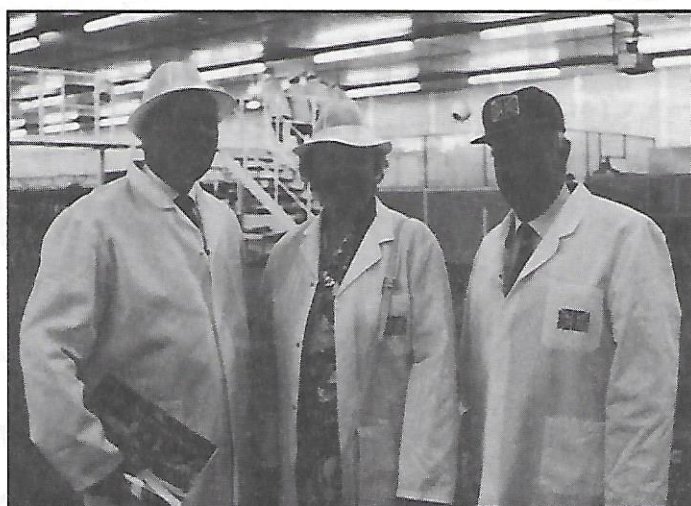
Although these words were written by Thomas Hood in 1843, they most aptly describe the Company's Kent Harvest Visit held on Tuesday, 8th September, for we not only enjoyed a fascinating insight into the wonders of the Kent harvest, but were royally entertained at each venue we visited. Nearly 50 Liverymen and their Ladies and guests started the visit by being invited into Nash Court, the imposing home of Honorary Assistant Tony and Mrs Redsell, where they were entertained with coffee before being taken on a conducted tour of the hop gardens and Oast house. The 20 ft tall hops were being picked by teams of five, one driving the tractor, two perched high on an elevated platform, cutting the bines as the tractor progressed through the lanes between the plants, and the other two neatly laying them out in the trailer behind the tractor. As each tractor was filled it was replaced by another one and rushed to the 'hop thresher'.

This Heath Robinson type machinery was housed in a cavernous barn, and was a marvel of

automation. Each hop branch was clipped onto a propelling line, hoisted high into the air and fed into the machine which stripped the flowers from the branches. The flowers were then transported along a number of conveyor belts where they were filtered and fed into large mobile containers. These were then moved to the Oast House where the hops are dried by hot air at varying temperatures before being sacked for transportation to local breweries or for export.

We followed the road taken by the hops when we embarked on the next part of the visit, to the Shepherd Neame Brewery in the centre of nearby Faversham. We were first allowed a generous tasting of their traditional beers and lagers in their hospitality rooms, in the magnificent setting of a medieval barn. As the brewery also own a vineyard, English wines were sampled too. Lunch followed under the ancient beams and trusses of the barn's roof.

Although the pace of the party was now noticeably slower than hitherto, we embarked on a guided tour of the brewery itself, and gained a fascinating insight into the centuries old art of making beer. A brewery has existed on this site since 1698, using the same 200 ft deep artesian well, and exactly the same



The Master and Mrs Todd at East Kent Packers, with the managing director Mr Dick Brook.

ingredients - pure spring water, malted barley, Kentish hops, and brewers yeast. The brewing process starts with crushed malted barley being mixed with heated water in a huge mash tun, which after an hour releases its natural sugar to produce a liquid known as wort. The wort is run off into the 4,320 gallon coppers where hops are added and boiled for about an hour. The wort is then cooled and run into fermenting vessels, where yeast is added to act with the natural sugars to produce bubbles of carbon dioxide and alcohol. This process takes about a week, after which the beer is stored a further week before being casked. The beer is still living in the barrel when it is dispatched to the receiving pubs - true 'real ale'.

In a happy frame of mind, after sampling the wares, we set off for the last stage of our Kent visit, calling

at the large and modern premises of East Kent Packers Ltd. This co-operative provides a 30,000 ton capacity controlled atmosphere storage facility for fruit from its 90 supplying growers, and handles the storage, grading and marketing arrangements for its members. It is the biggest such operation in Europe.

The fruit is first inspected on the tree, when it is chemically inspected to determine its probable keeping period. After harvesting it is rushed to East Kent Packers' 21-acre site in Faversham, where it is first washed and dried, then graded and packed in the livery of the end seller. These include Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury, Tesco etc, as well as the major fruit markets. Fruit not ready for immediate sale is stored in huge bins in a fully controlled atmosphere, in which the temperature and oxygen content is monitored around the clock to preserve the fruit at its optimum freshness until the designated selling date. This can be a surprising six to seven months from when it was picked.

After our tour we were entertained with a welcome cup of tea, and the ladies were all presented with a handsome basket of apples.

As Ecclesiastes said: "Awake, O North wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruit." We indeed came to gardens, and ate (and drank) pleasant fruit. Our warm thanks are due to the Master for organising such an interesting visit, and to the kindness of Honorary Assistant and Mrs Tony Redsell, Shepherd Neame Brewery, and Mr Dick Brook of East Kent Packers for their enthusiastic and generous reception.

Birthday Honours for two of our Liverymen

The Master sent letters of congratulations to Arthur Hutchinson and Barrie Collingridge on receiving respectively the MBE and OBE in the June Birthday Honours.

Arthur Hutchinson joined the Livery in 1978 and is active in Spitalfields Market where he 'heads up' a well established family business.

The firm was founded by his father Arthur in the early 1930s, who was prior to this a market porter. Young Arthur joined his father in 1952 to continue the business of 'Hagglers' a term no longer used today to describe a business of buying and selling, hopefully at a profit, perishable produce on a daily

basis. In other words predicting a market rise in price on different fresh produce commodities. Over the years young Arthur's son Chris, who took an agricultural college course and worked on farms, entered the business allowing Arthur to step back just a little to give more time to his Chairmanship of Spitalfields Market Tenants' Association.

Almost since he accepted his unanimous election from members to this high office in 1985 he has been deeply involved, together with his committee of very dedicated people, in the re-location of Spitalfields Market from the City of London out to Leyton, East London, about four miles away.

The move took place in May 1991, six years after its inception and following many meetings with Corporation of London officials, developers, tenants, unions, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest Councils, and regular visits to Parliament to 'lobby' MPs, etc.

Arthur did a remarkable job in liaising with all these different bodies so successfully.

His MBE is a great tribute to both himself and the fruit industry in general, especially in the New Spitalfields Market.

Barrie Collingridge also heads up a well established family firm in New Covent Garden Market. We will hope to include more news of him in our next issue.

Our Senior Liveryman



Many members will remember Percy Bradley, but for the younger ones it may come as a surprise that Percy was born in 1888, and is now 104 years old. Alan Pendergast was asked to visit him not only to send the Company's good wishes but to hear some of his recollections. Our photograph shows Percy in his garden in North London, where he lives with his daughter.

Genuinely born within the sound of Bow Bells in August 1888, Percy was the third generation to join the family business founded in Spitalfields Market London by his grandfather in 1828.

Soon after the turn of the century, Percy, by now in his early teens and already becoming a fluent linguist, accompanied the firm's buyer on many trips into Europe to procure the finest fruit and vegetables to ship back to this country. A lot of business was done in both Belgium and Holland because of a daily boat service from Rotterdam to Custom House Quay in the City of London.

The Company expanded over the years into both Covent Garden and Stratford Markets.

Percy's travels had now reached even further to both South Africa and Australia, which made his company one of the biggest importers in this country.

In the First World War Percy

fought with the army in France where he lost a number of good friends, which made him very appreciative of life.

Percy was one of a family of five brothers and two sisters.

One of the early pleasures that Percy remembers was doing a lot of rowing on the River Lea which was near his home at the time, Stoke Newington/Stamford Hill, and which also had a gymnasium for general fitness.

On retirement from his very successful company in the 1950s, he diversified into the management of a sand pit at Colchester, which kept him occupied for a good few years.

He no longer drives his car having voluntarily given up driving at the age of 94 years.

He walks out from his home every day both morning and afternoon as regular exercise. Percy attributes his long life to 'good luck, good health, no major operations and a very strong constitution', together with having worked very hard during his business days.

It was truly a pleasure and privilege meeting Percy again after so many years. His lovely daughter Moira was the perfect hostess with some superb refreshments. I was delighted that the Master asked me to visit him.

Michaelmas Elections 1992

The election of the Lord Mayor is to be on the day after Michaelmas this year, so the Master hopes that Liverymen will not doubt the wisdom of the Clerk's letter (as did the Editor). There will be a coffee meeting at the City Pipe beforehand, which is a return to an old custom. Many Liverymen will be voting for the first time and we particularly

look forward to their attendance. It cannot be stated strongly enough that this is an obligation entered into on admission and whereas all Liverymen cannot attend every year, the first opportunity should not be missed.

Honorary Assistants briefing

The Master initiated a briefing for all those who have served as Honorary Assistants to the Court at the conclusion of the Audit Court Meeting on May 28th. This is part of the communication process which the Company is continually developing and provided an opportunity for many liverymen to hear reports from active Court members on aspects of the Company's affairs.

Acknowledgements

The Editor wishes to thank the Master and Upper Warden, John Dunham, David Hope-Mason, Alan Pendergast, David Homewood and the Learned Clerk for their contributions to this issue.

All Liverymen are welcome to send copy for future issues to the Editor.

Fruiterers' Golfing Society

There was a good turn out at Kingswood in May, when Liveryman Tom Hilliard welcomed the president, Ralph Felton and Robert Sice, joint secretary. David Hohnen was regrettably away, probably having golf lessons. Robert was the outright winner and the Company's cup was won by Norman Coppock. Michael Coyle (Beadle at Plaisterers Hall and guest of the president) was runner-up and the other winners included Andrew Potter, Philip Hargreaves and Tony Wolff.

The autumn joint day is on 22nd October and next year's event will be at Kingswood on 6th May, 1993.

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Clerk: Commander Michael Styles, RN

Denmead Cottage, Chawton, Nr Alton, Hants GU34 1SB

Editor: David Hohnen

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