



THE FRUITERERS' COMPANY NEWSLETTER



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A celebration of our links with the City

The Master & Wardens' Dinner is the Fruiterers' annual City-themed dinner, which celebrates the Company's relationships with the City of London Corporation and with the Mayoralty.

At this year's event, on November 9th at Butchers' Hall, The Master made a small deviation from historical protocol and invited not one, but two very special guests to speak: Sir William Russell a financier who became the fifth member of his family to be elected Lord Mayor of the City of London and the first Lord Mayor since 1862 to serve more than one term, from 2019 to 2021; and his wife Lady Hilary Russell, who is the Chairman of the Sheriffs' and Recorders' Fund, which conducts invaluable work reintegrating ex-offenders into society. It was the first occasion that the two had spoken at the same event and between them they shared entertaining insider perspectives and several light-hearted anecdotes from their experiences of the Mayoralty.

The former Lord Mayor recalled the unique experiences of switching traditional events online during the pandemic and more than 2,500 Zoom calls during his



The Master with Lady Hilary Russell and Sir William Russell, the former Lord Mayor of the City of London

term, attending 100-year-old Captain Tom Moore's virtual Freedom of the City ceremony at which the Captain was amused to be referred to as "the youngest Freeman" and the joyous occasions that followed the lifting of lockdown when London came back to life. Lady Hilary looked back on some of her memories of

the period, but was also able to highlight the work of the organisation she chairs, which is funded by the City and several Livery Companies.

The Master was, of course, welcoming Liverymen and guests to his last dinner as host and Master Fruiterer. After another successful year of recruiting new members – 24 have been

clothed this year – he welcomed a number of newly admitted Freeman and newly clothed Liverymen on the night, before detailing some of the City-based events that had taken place since the previous dinner, in July.

"We recently executed our duties to elect the Sheriffs and the Lord Mayor for next year in these highly contested elections(!) steeped in rich history and tradition," said the Master. "Our Presentation of Fruit to the Lord Mayor has thrived since 1577, and no more so than this year when 71 Liverymen and guests enjoyed spending time "at home" with the Lord Mayor and Lady

Mayoress, followed by lunch in the Old Ballroom.

"This year, we took part in City Giving Day for the first time and supporting the Lord Mayor on a day that enabled 571 City companies to celebrate their philanthropy. Next year we will plan an even bigger role in the event."



Newly clothed Liverymen, left to right – Martin Eldred, Toby Pullen, Stephen Swainston, Jack Ward, Douglas Ames and Samuel Rowe



Honorary Assistant Andrew Banks gave the response to the speeches by the former Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress



Seasonal berries donated by Rodanto



Stunning cherries donated by Norton Folgate



The Master congratulates former Journeyman Ben Bardsley, on his election to the Freedom of the Company, by servitude. On the same night, James (Jim) McDougall and Harvey Choat were also elected to the Freedom of the Company, by redemption.

He also looked ahead to the Sunday following the dinner, when the Company led Livery Remembrance Day celebrations. "Past Master Warner has been the leading force behind the City's Remembrance Day celebrations, where the Fruiterers lay a wreath on behalf of all Livery companies. As organisers, we are punching well above our 45th rank in the order of precedence of livery companies," said the Master.

There is much more that goes on through the year, from the Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch, to the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Race, the Master added. "We continue to enjoy a successful relationship within the City and it's humbling to see the generosity offered to supporting the City and the Mayoralty."

He heralded a "fantastic fundraising effort" in 2023, which after costs will have raised in the region of £80,000 for

the Fruiterers' Foundation's main charity, City Harvest, as well as many other very worthy causes.

"None of this happens without the support of a great team of volunteers in our sub-committees," the Master said, extending special thanks to Liveryman Adrian Padfield, who has stepped down as Chairman of the Finance sub-committee after six years' service, and our gallant and learned Clerk. "Thank you also to the Court and the Master's Committee for your support and wisdom throughout the year," he added.

Among the other distinguished principal guests welcomed by the Master at Butchers' Hall were Alderman Alex Barr, our representative on the new Livery Liaison scheme, Master Cooper John Fahy and his Clerk Wing Commander Stephen Borthwick, Her Honour Wendy Joseph the Master Pewterer and her

Clerk Commodore Mike Walliker.

As part of ongoing efforts to make these events more affordable, the evening had two main sponsors, namely Nationwide Produce and More People, led by Liverymen Tim O'Malley and Guy Moreton respectively. Rodanto and Norton Folgate also donated exceptional berries and cherries, which were delivered to the event by Liveryman Peter Thomas. Liveryman Chris Newenham together with the team at Tiptree and Thursday Cottage donated jars of their international award-winning 2023 marmalade for Liverymen and guests to take home. The Master thanked them all.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Date	Event	Location	Date	Event	Location
January			April		
Thurs 25	St Paul's Day Service	St Mary Abchurch	Sat 13	London Roman Baths Visit & Walk	The City
	Luncheon	Tallow Chandlers' Hall	Thurs 18	Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch	Guildhall
February			Sat-Sun 20-21	International Marmalade Festival	Dalemain House, Cumbria
Tues 13	Inter-Livery Pancake Race	Guildhall	Wed-Sun 16-21	Fruiterers' Ski Trip	Cervinia, Italy
Tues 27	Mansion House Banquet	Mansion House	Wed 24	Honorary Assistants' Dinner	TBC
March			Tues 30	Visit and Tour of the King's Chapel of the Savoy	Savoy Chapel, London
Mon 11	City Food & Drink Lecture	Guildhall	May		
Thurs 14	New Members Evening	Guildhall & Globe Pub	Thurs 2	Fruiterers' Golf Day	Kingswood GC
Fri 15	United Guilds Service	St Paul's Cathedral	Thurs 9	Fruiterers' Partners' / Consorts' Visit to The Foundling Museum	Brunswick Square, London
			Tues 14	Audit Court Dinner	Cutlers' Hall

John explores grower share of value chain



John on stage at the 90th National Fruit Show, at Detling Showground, Kent

John Gray, Managing Director of Angus Soft Fruits, Scotland's leading soft-fruit grower, is a Nuffield Scholar whose research is part-funded by the Fruiterers. Within a few days in November, he spoke at the Master & Wardens' Dinner and also gave a presentation during the Company's session at the National Fruit Show. Here, John summarises his findings to date

Given the unforeseen impacts of the pandemic and laterally soaring input costs, my Nuffield topic "*Fresh produce supply excellence: How we as growers can increase our share of the value chain*" is now more relevant than ever.

Primary producers who take by far most of the risk in our food chain are the least rewarded. And the UK berry sector is on the brink of an existential crisis.

My research has led me to explore the dynamics of breeding, production and marketing of berries in different parts of the world. So far, I've visited leading businesses in the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, the Netherlands, Norway and, of course, the UK.

I was struck by the remarkable diversity of markets around the world. Whilst supermarkets remain the primary route to market, the presentation of produce is generally significantly more engaging than what we see in the UK. Branding is the norm – examples being Zespri Kiwifruit, Ocean Spray Cranberries, Driscolls Berries, and Rock-It Apples. Moreover, fresh fruit commands higher prices in most of these countries, indicating a higher

value placed on fresh produce by the final consumer. Pricing strategies are notably more dynamic, changing daily based on availability and demand.

During my journey, I witnessed the potential for significant "breeding gains." For example, in California, I encountered breeders who successfully gene edited out the wasabi-like bitterness from mustard greens, creating nutrient-dense salad greens. With its openness to gene editing, the UK is well placed to take the lead in European breeding.

The technological landscape, particularly in the Netherlands, emerged as a significant focal point. With 60% of Dutch strawberries grown in greenhouses, the country serves as a beacon for controlled, high-tech agriculture. One observer commented that "the strawberry grower of tomorrow is the tomato grower of today". This is a reference to the large scale, sophisticated tomato businesses that have led to the Netherlands being a major player in world tomato production despite not having a climate traditionally suited to tomatoes.

Given the changing climate conditions, higher temperatures and comparatively less water in traditional counter season origins such as Spain and Morocco, there could be an opportunity for UK growers to extend their harvest seasons through similarly controlled environments. The rise of AI-powered control and management systems promises even more sophisticated control over production, enabling marginal gains that could redefine our industry standards.

However, amidst the pursuit of

higher technology, I couldn't help but reflect on our approach in the UK. Have we, perhaps, overcomplicated our value chain? Unlike many other countries where fruits are packed in the field, cooled, and dispatched directly to supermarket depots, we adhere to higher specifications and levels of complexity that incur additional costs. It's a contemplation worth considering as we navigate the future of our industry.

A recurring theme throughout my travels was the profound impact of investing in people. In New Zealand, the Maori saying, "What is the most important thing in the world? It is the people, it is the people, it is the people," resonated deeply. World-class individuals, when nurtured and empowered, drive businesses forward, fostering innovation and sustainable growth.

As I stand at this juncture of my research, questions still outnumber answers. Yet, amidst the uncertainties, I remain optimistic about the future of our industry. With continued exploration, investment in our people, and a willingness to adapt, I believe we can not only weather the challenges but also emerge stronger and more resilient in the face of adversity.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers and the Royal Highland Agricultural Society for their generous sponsorship.



John with Awards Council Chairman Chris Newenham at the Master & Wardens' Dinner

Tom takes Under 30 Award



Tom receives his award from the Master at the Master and Wardens' Dinner

Tom Beach of Autonomous Agri Solutions was presented with the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers 2023 Under 30 Award at the Master and Wardens' Dinner.

The award is given to individuals

who have made a mark in horticultural studies, made a career in the fruit industry and may have reached management level, all before reaching the age of 30.

On presentation of the Award, the Master said: "It is one of the many pleasures of the role to present awards to deserving people in our great industry. Tom's success and impact at a young age clearly demonstrates that he is a worthy recipient."

Tom, who is son of Liveryman George Beach, is one of the 10% of the UK population who has had to overcome the challenge of living with dyslexia. Notwithstanding this challenge, in comparatively short time Tom has forged a highly successful career in agricultural engineering.

Having been brought up on a farm surrounded by farm machinery it became obvious in his mid-teens that he had a flair and passion for all things mechanical. This initial flair led him to taking up engineering roles with two of

the UK's largest salad growers, where he was responsible for the management of their salad harvesting equipment.

Tom then earned a place at Agricultural College studying Agricultural Engineering where this passion was crystallised. He expanded his experience with overseas placements in various parts of Africa and Europe, again working on farm machinery.

In 2019, Tom established Autonomous Agri Solutions after visiting Agritechnica in Italy. His USP was to take a standard piece of robotics equipment and adapt it to a much wider range of uses based on the broad range of UK agricultural needs. By 2021, he was selling his first pieces of equipment and further invested in the business to allow for future growth by bringing in another partner with stronger business skills. This demonstrated a degree of maturity beyond his years and Tom continues to pursue a collaborative approach to growth.

Today, Tom is regularly posting and being interviewed across the sector about his thinking on the hot topic of robotics. He continues to be incredibly articulate and passionate about what he is doing and has identified availability of labour and future margin challenges as opportunities for robotic solutions. Most importantly he is doing this not just in the fruit sector but across arable as well.

Sign up for New Members' Evening

It is expected that all Liverymen, during their membership of the Company, will look to recruit new members. There is no requirement for a new member to be related to the fruit industry, but they are expected to show an interest in the City and the Company as a whole.

The recruitment process is straightforward and a summary document about it can be found on the website, under the 'Company Information' tab in the members' section.

A good way for potential new Freemen to find out about the

Fruiterers, what the Company does and how a Fruiterer can contribute, is for them to attend a New Members' Evening, and the next one is planned for Thursday March 14th. The evening will begin at Guildhall at 6.00pm and involve:

- A tour of the Guildhall and informative and entertaining talk about the Livery and the City from Murray Craig, a former Clerk of the Chamberlain's Court who may well have conducted new members' Freedom of the City ceremonies.
- At 7.30pm, a short walk to The

Globe pub (83 Moorgate) for an informal chat and questions, as well as a buffet supper and drinks.

The evening will conclude at 9.30pm. Please book tickets for yourself and any guests you would like to bring through the Members section of the website.

If you have any questions, please either contact Caroline Hulland, Chairman of the Membership & Communications Sub-Committee (caroline@stripyfig.co.uk) or the Clerk.



The Company has launched its first series of charity Christmas e-cards this year. By buying the e-cards, you will be supporting the Fruiterers' Foundation, saving on ever-increasing postage costs and helping the environment. You'll also be able to guarantee

Get your Christmas e-cards

that your cards will arrive on time, wherever in the world you're sending them to!

There are also printed cards available, although no new cards were printed this year, as the current batch is still being sold.

Click on the QR code to order your cards – you can donate £10 to £100 and each purchase will give you the chance to send up to 100 e-cards. Caroline Hulland, Chairman of the Membership & Communications Sub-Committee, which is leading this project, said: "The Company Christmas cards have always been supported by the same few

Liverymen and we would really like to encourage everyone to support us in the coming years, whether through the purchase of the last remaining physical cards this year or with our new e-cards in the Christmases to come."

Another new addition to the online shop this year is the Fruiterers' lapel pin. This will be available to women only and can be worn in addition to Company scarves or instead of them, where appropriate. It can be inappropriate to wear scarves at certain events, particularly on sporting occasions and this stylish pin distinguishes you as a Liveryman without the need for the other garments.

Fruiterers' day in the field

Liverymen Justin Farrington Smith, Nick and Tony Reynolds and Charlie Hodges plus guests enjoyed a day in the field partridge shooting at Ashwick-ken estate, near Kings Lynn in Norfolk.

Enjoying the exceptionally warm weather on the last Friday in September (and somewhat overdressed for



the heat in tweeds!) all the team had a thoroughly pleasurable day and must have been on their best behaviour to be invited back next year!

A sweepstake to guess the size of the bag and number of cartridges shot was held, with £180 being raised for the Fruiterers' charity.

Sarah steps down as NFS Chair

November saw the last National Fruit Show (NFS) as Chair for Liveryman and Honorary Assistant Sarah Calcutt, who stepped down to focus on her role as Chief Executive at City Harvest.

"I have loved my 14 years in the chair," she said. "It's been an absolute honour in every way, my privilege to lead this organisation and I will treasure every moment. I leave it in safe hands with a good structure and an excellent team, fit for a strong future doing what it has always done best – shouting about the very best of the British fruit industry."

Liveryman Sally Flanagan has become the first Chief Executive at NFS organiser Marden Fruit Show Society.



Sarah surveys the show's spectacular annual apple and pear showcase

Fruit Industry Lunch

With a focus on the fruit and produce industry, the inaugural Fruit Industry Business Lunch will take place at Browns Restaurant, Covent Garden (WC2N 4AG) on Thursday 18th January from 12.30 to 4.30pm.

This will be an informal three course lunch with wine and will include an industry focused talk from Ged Futter, GSCOP expert and former Senior Buying Manager at Asda/Walmart.

Tickets are limited to 40, and can be booked via the Members' area of the website, including up to one guest per person. If you had already booked a ticket for the postponed October date, your booking will automatically be moved to the new date.

If you need to cancel, or have any questions, please contact the Clerk.

Master's Reflections

As I approach the final furlong of my year, I cannot believe where the time has gone. I started the year aiming to promote our inclusivity values, promote our relevance to the industry and have fun while doing good in our communities.

I am very pleased to report that the company has achieved a great deal under these pillars. We have recruited and clothed a total of 24 members to the company from a wide range of trades and backgrounds. We have delivered our first Legends Lunch celebrating heroes in our industry, as well as hosting an open day at the Norton Folgate cherry factory and orchards in Kent. We still have our Industry Lunch to look forward to on January 18th.

As for having fun while doing good in our communities, I am particularly proud of the collective support shown by the whole Company. Our overseas events in Spain and Italy generated significant surpluses for the Fruiterers' Foundation, our cycle ride around the Isle of Wight was a particular success and I cannot thank everyone enough for the tremendous fundraising support that went into this. City Harvest was very pleased with the £23,000 raised. The Cherry Book project has also gone very well, raising more than £30,000 after costs and this will be split between the education and research fund and the general charity fund. Overall, we have raised over £80,000 through a wide range of events and projects during the



The Master Matt Hancock

year, which could not have happened without a tremendous effort from all our volunteers who have supported the Fruiterers in delivering an ambitious fundraising program during 2024.

We have, of course, been busy with a whole host of other initiatives during the year. We supported our cider industry at the Royal Bath & West Show, where I presented the Rupert Best Cup for Supreme Champion of British Cider 2023. We also supported the marmalade industry at the International Marmalade Awards in April, at Dalemian Mansion. We visited the Eden Project in Cornwall, to find out more about its important research work into sustainable agriculture, as well as planting a cherry tree at Wentworth Woodhouse in South Yorkshire, to celebrate the Historic Houses

Association's Garden Of The Year.

Away from events, we have forged closer relationships with a range of organisations. Following a meeting with the Fresh Produce Consortium, its Chief Executive Nigel Jenney was kind enough to include the Fruiterers in the program for the association's FPC Fresh Awards, where we sponsored the Manager of the Year award. At the Cherry Open Day, we hosted a delegation from the NextGen Fruit Group, forging an important link with some of the younger members of our industry. We further strengthened our links within the City of London

through our participation in City Giving Day, celebrating philanthropy in the City of London with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress.

Our traditional support to our industry continues apace as our Awards Council presented several well-deserving individuals with another round of bursaries and scholarships for travel, Nuffield Scholarships and research projects. I am pleased to say that we are placing a renewed emphasis on sharing the results of these initiatives with our members as we would like to encourage future donors to come forward. We continued to celebrate success in the industry through the Under 30s Award, which went to Tom Beach, as well as the Ridley Medal, for distinguished services to fruit growing, awarded to Harriet Duncalfe. John Giles was the



The Master with his wife Fliss at the Inter-Livery Pancake Day



The Master presents the The Lord Mayor with a copy of Celebrating the Cherry, which has raised more than £30,000 for the Fruiterers' Foundation

recipient of the Master's Medal for his contribution to chairing the City Food and Drink Lecture for the last six years.

My final reflection is to members of our industry who don't know the Fruiterers or who don't understand what this Livery Company is all about. I hope that my comments above will reassure anyone who might think that we are a dated dining institution that we are far from being that. Yes, we can trace our roots back to the 13th century and we are proud to uphold our traditions within our social calendar as well as our civic duties to the City of London Corporation. History and tradition is important, however the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers is a vibrant organisation carrying out important work within our modern industry. We are also an active philanthropic entity raising money for our communities. The Livery Companies of the City of London represent the 6th largest charitable movement in the UK, raising over £75 million last year. Finally, and most importantly, we are a group of individuals



IPM Laurence Olins presents the Master with a book of photos to commemorate a memorable trip to Spain

from a wide range of backgrounds and professions with shared values, who come together to share ideas and friendship.

I have enjoyed an incredible year, whether I've been dining with His Majesty The King and His Queen, giving away apples to early morning workers in the City of London or planting trees in Yorkshire. I have met some incredible people along the way and established many new friendships. Thank you to everyone within the Livery for the opportunity and from within the industry for your support.

Election of the Lord Mayor of the City of London

At Common Hall, held at Guildhall on Friday September 29th 2023, Liverymen of the City of London, including the Master and several Fruiterers, met for the Election of the Lord Mayor.

The election fell upon Prof. Michael Raymond Mainelli – Alderman and World Trader to serve as Lord Mayor in 2023/24. Alderman Mainelli will be the 695th Lord Mayor of the City of London. As the elected head of the City of London Corporation, he will serve as a global ambassador for the UK financial and professional services industry from Friday November 10th for a one-year term. He will succeed current Lord Mayor Nicholas Lyons.

With the proceedings complete at Guildhall the Master together with fellow Fruiterers and a number of other Livery Companies continued on to Stationers' Hall where a hearty luncheon and good conversation was enjoyed!

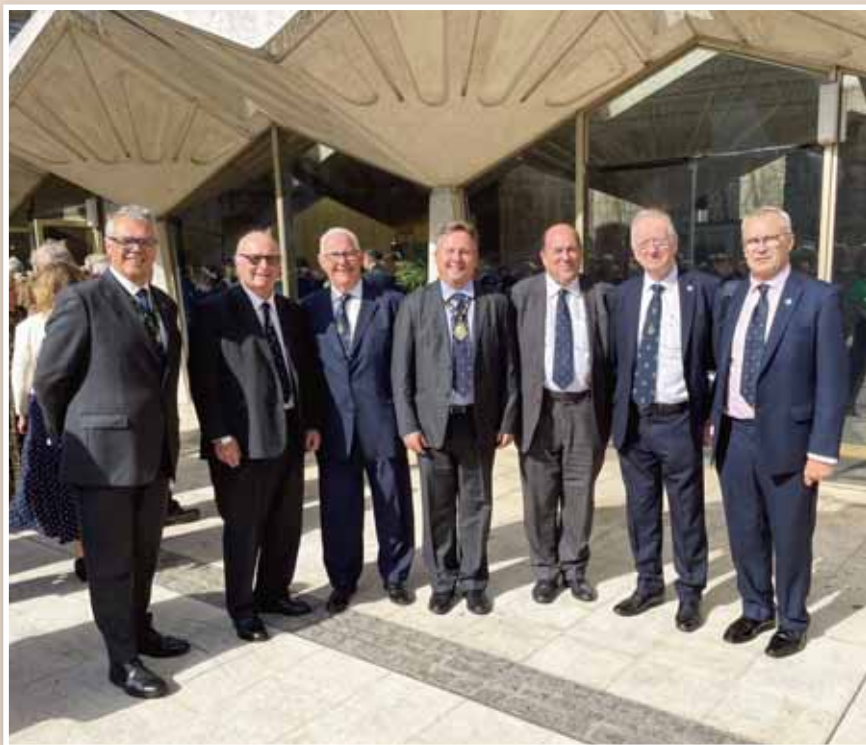
The Lord Mayor acts as an international spokesperson for the City, leading business delegations overseas to key international markets on behalf of the UK's financial and professional services industry. In the role Alderman Mainelli will meet government

representatives from around the world, alongside business leaders and policy makers both at home and abroad. He will work to strengthen global economic ties with the UK, identify new business opportunities, and promote the UK as a top global destination for foreign investment.

During his Mayoral year, Alderman Mainelli will champion 'Connect to Prosper', an initiative focused on harnessing the City's vast knowledge ecosystem. With over 40 learned societies, 70 higher education institutions, and 130 research institutes in and around the City, it is a dynamic hub for innovation.

He will spotlight the City's expertise in areas including finance, law, art, and engineering, while bringing together thought leaders from diverse backgrounds to encourage innovation and global problem solving on critical challenges facing the world – from climate change to artificial intelligence.

He will also emphasise the City's unique role as a global knowledge connector and talent cluster, showcasing its capacity to address global challenges and foster inventiveness within its communities.



The Fruiterers group outside Guildhall

Meet your next Master, Dr Chris Bishop



Dr Chris Bishop and his wife Stephanie

The themes of support of the City, charitable work, fun and support of the industry will I hope be intertwined in my year as Master, in 2024, writes Upper Warden Dr Chris Bishop.

As well as the traditional events such as the Mansion House banquet, we will continue to focus on “affordable” visits to encourage the participation of as wide a cross-section of Liverymen, and where relevant, partners and guests, as possible.

Already in place for next year is a walk round ancient Roman London, which must consider relatively recent Livery Companies as modern upstarts, and to City Harvest, a charity that is near to the hearts of many in the Livery. Prior warning though – this visit may start a little earlier than is normal! We will also make a residential visit to Lincoln, the city that at one time could boast the tallest building anywhere in the world. Lincoln Cathedral, which was completed in 1068, held the record for the world’s tallest building for longer than two centuries. While its height may no longer be its outstanding attribute, it remains as one of the most spectacular examples of Gothic architecture, dominating the city. Our group will look at modern robotics and there will be a conference/workshop in Cambridge on how data can be used more effectively in the fruit industry. I also plan a visit to look at the results of another life changing technology – the

British Library.

Many readers will already know me, but you might not know my background. I was born in Montréal, Canada, and baptised in Westmount, which is the centre of the “English-speaking crowd” in the province of Québec. That start to life still can cause problems as I have a baptismal certificate but no birth certificate, an issue that still confounds bureaucracy. After a few months we moved to Toronto, but eventually the family returned to the north-east of England and North Yorkshire/County Durham was where I was based.

As a youth, my idea of farm work was feeding sheep or taking beasts to the abattoir! No fruit infiltrated my life in those days, alas. From the age of nine I was at school in London, but I consider a key part of my education was the nine months working on an oil refinery before going to begin my engineering studies at Oxford, where my best achievement was meeting my future wife Stephanie.

After leaving university, for a number of years I worked for ADAS, the UK’s largest independent provider of agricultural

and environmental consultancy, policy advice, and research and development. For the last 25 years though, I have mixed university lecturing on post-harvest technology (the subject of my PhD) with consultancy, working in more than 60 countries ranging from Denmark to East Timor (where the UN fortunately had a good helicopter service). Much of this work has been on fruit although potatoes and flowers have also crept in on a number of occasions. I am currently a part time Assistant Professor in Postharvest at University of Lincoln and Director of Cambridge Postharvest and Marketing.

For four years, Stephanie and I lived in central Mexico, which was a tremendous experience but deemed perhaps a little bit far for a Livery trip! We lived in Irapuato – the strawberry capital of the world (or so they told us!). Avocados also very much featured as the key crop in the neighbouring state.

I became a Fruiterer in 2011 and received the sage advice that we all do: “the more you put in, the more you get out”. Never have truer words been spoken; the last 12 years have been a hugely enjoyable experience and I have made many good friends into the bargain. I have been particularly involved with the Awards Council, working closely with the current Master Matt Hancock and I am conscious I am stepping into the shoes (and skis!) of a very energetic Master.

His work is not done – he will be organising another Fruiterers ski trip in 2024, when he will be Immediate Past Master.

Thanks Matt.



Honouring an Ancient Custom

Annually, the Master and Wardens together with fellow Liverymen and their ladies are honoured to attend Mansion House where in accordance with an "Ancient Custom" the Master presents the Lord Mayor with a gift of the choicest fruits in season.

In days gone by the Lord Mayor exercised his privilege of levying a tax in the form of samples of the fruit brought into the City of London.

The custom worked smoothly enough so long as London remained at a moderate size, but as the City grew so did the volume of fruit and thus the burden of the levy became too much to bear, friction arose, the enforcement of the mayoral rights led to disputes and there were many bitter quarrels.

Fortunately common sense prevailed and the genius of both parties employing compromise as a solvent for troublesome situations came to the rescue!



The Lord Mayor accepts the annual gift from the Master

The Fruiterers' Company undertook to pay an annual tribute of fruit to the Lord Mayor in return for a surrender of his Lordship's right to exact a toll of supplies sent to the market.

In return for this gift the Lord Mayor would invite the Court and officers of the Company to a dinner which would take place at the discretion and convenience of his Lordship. The Lord Mayor would invite whomsoever he thought proper to meet the Company, Civic or Private friends but according to ancient custom the Master and Wardens took precedence over all other guests.

This annual ceremony which continues to this day albeit in a much-reduced format is nonetheless important and



Our Learned Clerk, Honorary Fruit Porter, Immediate Past Master, Renter Warden, Master, Upper Warden and Beadle

provides both the Fruiterers' Company and the Lord Mayor the opportunity to fulfill their commitments.



The Master and the Lord Mayor take wine

This year, an excellent turnout of Liverymen and their guests joined the Master and his Wardens for the ceremony at Mansion House. Lord Mayor Alderman Nicholas Lyons and Lady Mayoress Felicity Lyons were both present as the Master instructed Beadle Ted Prior to summon Honorary Fruit Porter Jimmy Huddart, who unveiled the fruit to the Lord Mayor. The gift was accepted and the Lord Mayor took wine with the Master.

The Fruiterers' party then enjoyed

luncheon in the building's magnificent Ballroom. The Master thanked Liveryman Peter Thomas and Dole for their sterling work and kind donation of fruit. The Honorary Chaplain Reverend Canon Thomas Woodhouse said Grace.

Stuart Tappin was a fascinating after lunch speaker, having worked with our Past Master John Warner on the refurbishment of Mansion House in the 1990s.



The Company's Honorary Fruit Porter Jimmy Huddart and the Master present a basket of fruit to Lady Mayoress Felicity Lyons



An excellent turnout of Liverymen and guests enjoyed the occasion

The Fruiterers go to Eden

Liveryman Professor Geoff Dixon was one of a lucky Fruiterers' group that ventured to Cornwall in September. Here, he gives us a synopsis of an excellent few days in the South West, including fascinating visits to the Eden Project and The Lost Gardens of Heligan.

Capturing energy from sunlight by green plants is fundamental for all life on Earth. Photosynthesis provides our diets with carbohydrates, proteins and lipids.

The Eden Project's basic aim is enhancing peoples' interest and understanding of how the world's flora achieves these miracles. Founded 20 years ago from the modest ambition of building the largest possible greenhouse, Eden has grown into a major horticultural educational charity. It is the largest private social and environmental horticultural development in Great Britain since the 19th century Parks Movement.

Its reach is now local, national and international – all coming from the "Mothership Eden Cornwall". Each new Eden shares the mission for floral exhibitions, arts and cultural programmes, community and educational work.

The Fruiterers' party had gathered at the luxurious Carlyon Bay Hotel mid-afternoon on September 12th. Dinner was arranged at the Longstore restaurant in Charlestown and pre-prandial libations at the Harbourside Inn offered opportunities for meeting and greeting fellow Fruiterers. The Longstore provided substantial and enjoyable carnivorous meals liberally washed down with good wines.

Gathering at Eden's entrance hall the next morning we were greeted by "Phil", Phillip Young, Living Landscapes Manager and leader of the Estate's team. Under his guidance, we trekked up out of the china clay pit in which Eden is built. Phil demonstrated the properties of a sample of pure white, pliable clay. This



Eden's biomes

was one of Cornwall's major exports through the Georgian port of Charlestown, feeding the Midland Potteries. We journeyed on appreciating the pit's huge size, passing the disused Voudier Farm house (1420-1948), reaching an orchard filled with old Cornish apple cultivars. Thence we proceeded onwards to an orchard planted recently with more than 50 apple trees donated by the Master.

Alongside the trees is a large protected cropping enterprise, which exploits geothermal energy as its source of heat and power. Paul Foster, who leads this project as Commercial Manager, explained that the geothermal plant had cost £25 million and the associated 1,000m² cropping structures an additional £2.8m. Their functions are to produce food and ornamental crops, the former for Eden's restaurants and the latter for sale of high-quality pot plants through its shop. The aim is achieving carbon neutrality and self-sufficiency.

Paul demonstrated crops of very high

health status and quality house plants with biological control of pests achieved using products from Koppert. The party descended back down into the clay pit. A very welcome and fulsome Italian lunch awaited, hosted by Si Bellamy OBE, Eden's Chief Activities Officer. Appropriately, this was enjoyed in an olive grove.

Post-lunch offered free range enjoyment of the huge biomes that contain examples of flora drawn from the Earth's climatic zones. These range from cool-temperate through warm-temperate into tropical. The plantings are exotic, colourful and informative. As a result, Eden is a major tourist attraction for Cornwall. Initially attracting over one million visitors per year, this has now scaled back to around 600,000 with a ticketing and timed entry system. After wandering through and being amazed by the biomes, the Fruiterers returned to Carlyon Bay Hotel for rest and relaxation. We reconvened at G&T time, followed by a dinner of excellent cuisine created by the hotel's chefs suitably accompanied by a selection of wines. The Group Chief Executive of Eden Project, Rob Chatwin, joined us as a very welcome guest, describing the plans for further expansion of Eden centres.

Our second day started by visiting The Lost Gardens of Heligan. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Heligan was a thriving and largely self-sufficient estate owned by the Tremayne Family. Losses of staff killed in World War I and subsequent economic depressions saw Heligan,



The happy Fruiterers party



Geothermal energy high quality house plants

like so many similar estates, fall into disrepair and loss of purpose. Sir Tim Smit, discovered this sleeping beauty in 1990 and determined she should be awakened. Following planning with a group of local and national horticultural experts, permission was granted for resurrection of the garden and estate. The resultant removal of decades of overgrowth revealed champion trees and shrubs, antique buildings, glasshouses, frame yards and bothies. The walls of the latter contain signatures of gardeners of August 1914, before they joined the mayhem of war.

We admired finely cultivated gardens filled with annuals, perennials, exotic shrubs and magnificent trees. Sir Tim has recreated a thriving rural community practicing traditional horticultural skills and another major tourist attraction supporting the Cornish economy.

Following a ploughman's lunch, we travelled down the peninsula to the

Minack Theatre, in Porthcurno. This unique, open-air playhouse sits on the cliffside with seats carved from local stone. Players presented with very obvious fun and enjoyment their



The Olive Grove

modernised version of the Threepenny Opera, a German play with music written by Bertolt Brecht. It is based on John Gray's 18th century ballad, *The Beggar's*



The Master inspects the trees planted at The Eden Project during Treebilee

Opera, which comments on London's poor and destitute. Brecht's work includes the ballads, *Mack the Knife* and *Pirate Jenny*. Minack brought this up to date with a rousing combination of rogues' misconduct and police chases accompanied by an expertly conducted orchestra.

The performance was hugely enjoyed by the Fruiters and our subsequent return to Carlyon was brilliantly accomplished by minibus driver Steven Norcross who achieved the near impossible feat of delivering us to the hotel in good time for another excellent dinner, accompanied by good conversation and mutual enjoyment.

We departed after breakfast the following day having greatly appreciated the sterling work of our Clerk and Master in staging this event with great ingenuity.

Professor Geoffrey R Dixon



The Lost Gardens of Heligan



The Lost Garden of Heligan's Italian Garden



The Minack Theatre

Putting English apples in spotlight on City Giving Day

The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers and British Apples & Pears Ltd (BAPL) combined to mark the Lord Mayor of the City of London's City Giving Day.

The annual event hosted by The Lord Mayor's Appeal, brings business together to celebrate and promote the positive impact of charity, philanthropy and giving. This year, the 10th annual event, saw the Lord Mayor of the City of London Alderman Nicholas Lyons and the Lady Mayoress Felicity Lyons join more than 200 businesses and charities hosting events and initiatives across the Square Mile.

took place in the week before the official start of the new British apple season, the tie-up with British Apples & Pears made perfect sense.

While it may not be a bumper crop, the taste and flavour of the new season fruit is excellent, a fact confirmed by the delighted consumers who took an apple from a Fruiterer on the day. Liveryman and apple grower George Beach reported that the sunniest June since 1957 ensured young apples got the sunshine hours they

needed to develop the full potential of their taste and flavour and build up the delicious natural sugars in the new season fruit.

Nicholas Lyons KStJ DL, the 694th Lord Mayor of London, was at Pewterers' Hall to meet the Fruiterers group and taste the Red Windsor apples, which had been picked at Mud-

walls Farm in Warwickshire that same morning. Talking to the Master and Liveryman George Beach, Managing Director of Mudwalls, the Lord Mayor emphasised the vital role that British growers play in the British food supply chain and how important he feels it is for the nation to support British growers, wherever possible.

Beach thanked him for those sentiments and said: "We need that support. I'm sure I don't need to tell you how tough it has been for

growers of all crops in this country. Increased costs are not being matched by rising returns and as a consequence, we are seeing far too many growers forced to take out orchards, or unable to afford to plant new trees.

"Ali Capper, head of British Apples & Pears, has warned that unless that support is forthcoming and British growers are consistently paid a fair price for their fresh produce, it's unlikely we will see the same volume of fruit produced in this country in the future," added Beach. "Every bit of evidence we see tells us that the great British public wants to eat more homegrown fruit and vegetables and we want to grow it for them. Something has got to give."



Liveryman George Beach, left, and Freeman Mark Haynes, right, gave apples to two happy members of the City of London Police



The Lord Mayor and The Master with the Fruiterers group on City Giving Day 2023

In the spirit of giving – and importantly to raise awareness that the domestic apple season had recently begun – a group of five Fruiterers, including the Master, donned t-shirts donated by BAPL and handed new-season apples out to passers-by at Guildhall Yard, in the City of London, and the surrounding streets. Under the Lord Mayor's #GoRed hashtag, the fruit was given away free, but there was also a charitable element, with money being raised for City Harvest.

One of the core objectives of the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers is "To be active in raising funds and giving to charity", so this activity was illustrative of the kind of work that the Company gets involved with throughout the year, said the Master. As City Giving Day



Liverymen Beach and Ed Velasco and Freeman Haynes congratulate a brand new Freeman of the City of London

Nigel and John win Fruiterers' Awards

Upper Warden Dr Chris Bishop presented two Fruiterers' awards on the second day of the National Fruit Show, in November.

Nigel Kitney of Hutchinsons received the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers' Fruit Culture Award 2023, which is given in recognition of a substantial contribution to the fruit industry through communication skills or the transfer of technology.

Since graduating from Newcastle University with a degree in agriculture in 1985, Nigel has enjoyed a successful career as an agronomist. After leaving John Hills in October 1997, he joined Hutchinsons, where he still works as a Fruit Agronomist, based in Herefordshire. He also farms 50 acres of apples.

Alongside his career as an agronomist, Nigel was involved in the Horticultural Development Company's (HDC) Tree Fruit Panel, serving as a member and then as Chair. He always took an active part in project meetings, lending his knowledge and experience of tree fruit to guide the research scientists to focus projects on the needs of growers.

At Hutchinsons, Nigel has acted as a highly-respected consultant to many tree fruit growers in the dessert apple and cider industries in the West of



Nigel Kitney (left) receives his award from Upper Warden Dr Chris Bishop

England. He regularly attends industry events to support and challenge the thinking of researchers and those helping to develop the novel technology used by the industry. As a commercial grower of apples himself, he has always been willing and able to host trials to assess new techniques and technology.

The Upper Warden said: "The dedication and time he gives to the industry merits recognition and the Fruit Culture Award is a fitting way to recognise Nigel's contribution to the industry."

The Fruiterers' Craftsman's Award was given to John Longley, of Edward Vinson Fruit Ltd, who wasn't able to

collect it in person. This award is given in recognition of conspicuous dedication and demonstration of practical skills in fruit growing.

John has worked on farms since he was 14 years old. He joined his present employer in 2010 as a tractor driver and through hard work and dedication, has worked his way up to Crop Operations Manager. John looks after the growing operation for 170 tonnes of blackberries, 50t of blueberries, 500t of raspberries and 2,500t of strawberries.

He has also utilised his computer literacy to become an expert analyst of cropping data. Using spreadsheets he has developed himself, John breaks data down and makes it available in user-friendly terms to the rest of the business. A keen advocate of Integrated Pest Management, John relishes the challenge of sensitively and attentively managing populations of predators to keep his crops in tip-top condition.

Sean Figgis, a Director at Edward Vinson Ltd, commented: "John has transformed us from old fashioned to modern... I think extremely highly of him."

"So do we John," said the Upper Warden. "You are a worthy winner of the Fruiterers' Craftsman's Award, well done!"

Company hosts Fruit Show session

As well as handing out awards, the Company hosted a conference session at the National Fruit Show,



Chris listens intently to one of the speakers

which featured four speakers.

Fruiterers Awards Council Chairman Chris Newenham hosted the session, which was expertly chaired by celebrity chef Nigel Barden. It gave the Company an opportunity to showcase some of the prize winners and awards we have been supporting.

The session featured presentations by two of the winners of this year's student prizes. Cyndaniah Godfrey and Samantha Lynn (featured in next issue), who received the David Hohnen Medal and Student Prize respectively at Fruit Focus in July. They were followed by John Gray, MD of Angus Soft Fruits (page 3 of this issue), and Minette Batters, the soon to be outgoing President of the National Farmers Union.

After seven years on the Council,

the last five as Chairman, Chris is stepping down from the role and will be replaced by fellow Council member Sarah Calcutt, on St Paul's Day. "I've really enjoyed the whole thing," he said. "it's a very privileged position to have been in – the Awards Council does such good work supporting excellence across the industry in all its facets."

"In my time as Chairman, I think what I'm most proud of is the installation of the Special Merit Award and our support of the Collaborative Training Partnership, which I hope will be in place for many years to come and continue to contribute a lot to the industry."

"I wish Sarah all the best in her role as Chair – I know she will do an excellent job."



NextGen growers join Master for cherry tour

On Thursday July 13th, 38 Fruiterers and guests from NextGen gathered in Kent for a Cherry Tour and lunch, organised by the Master, Matt Hancock.



In the polytunnel

The day began with a visit to Macknade's Food Hall in Faversham, to view the entries for the National Cherry & Soft Fruit Show, an annual competition for commercial growers, showcasing the best award-winning fruit to the public. The entries were plentiful and beautifully presented and most guests agreed that the job of judging the winners must have been tough! After a quick shopping opportunity in Macknade's incredible food hall, the group was split into two, to begin the farm and packhouse visits.

One group, under the guidance of Bruce McGlashan from Norton Folgate, went to one of the FGA farms in Selling, where the two owners Andrew Wallace and Francisco Chadwick gave a very informative tour of the orchards. The group was shown several cherry varieties such as Kordia, Lapin, Skeena, Regina and Sweetheart and learnt about the challenges that face

growers in the UK.

Questions were also asked about automation and ways to speed up the process of getting the fruit from the orchard to the packhouse, but ultimately the cherry crop requires skilled pickers. Pruning the trees to limit their height and reduce the low growing fruit will, in future, enable pedestrian picking, which does not require a ladder and will again speed up the picking process.

The group headed on to Norton Folgate for a packhouse tour that began with a short presentation by the Master, who is MD of Norton Folgate. He explained, amongst other things,



The state-of-the-art packhouse

the intricacies behind the global distribution of cherry growing. The majority of those present were shocked to learn that the UK doesn't even feature in the list of the top-20 cherry producing countries in the world.

A state-of-the-art cherry grader has revolutionised the grading and packing process at Norton Folgate. In a nutshell, it takes the boxed cherries from the orchards via a hydro-cooling process to reduce the individual cherry temperature to 5°C, then the cherries

are automatically tipped into water on the grader to begin their journey to a final pack.

First they are de-clustered, singulated onto fast-moving conveyor belts, where each cherry is photographed five times, before being graded in accordance with pre-agreed specifications, based on colour, size, sugars and defect tolerances. This is the basis for deciding which channel the cherry is sent down for packing, and ultimately the sales point where the fruit will end up.

Whilst the packhouse tour was taking place, Bruce took the other group around the GH Dean Farm in Sittingbourne to view the cherry orchards.

After a very brief visit to the cold store, both groups headed off to the aptly named Fruiterers Arms for a buffet lunch.

All in all, this was an informative visit, hosted by industry experts happy to share their knowledge. It was a pleasure to have several members of the NextGen Fruit Group join us and to have the opportunity to chat to them. Many of them are just at the start of their careers in the industry – who knows, some may well be the Fruiterers of the future!



An appropriate spot for lunch



Obituaries

Liverymen, business partners and brothers Simon and Peter Brice sadly passed away within a few days of each other this summer. Here, we remember their successful and fun-packed lives.

Liveryman Simon Brice 1938-2023

After leaving Cirencester Agriculture College in 1960, Simon went to work for The Mount Family in Kent before joining his father at Mockbeggar, which had been bought by his grandfather in 1927.

Mockbeggar was one of three farms in the family estate and his father gave him one of them, Leeds Farm, in the '60s when it was running at a large loss. Simon worked incredibly hard to turn it around and also oversaw the other family farm, Decoy (sheep and cereal).

When their father died in 1974, Simon asked brother Peter to join the family enterprise and Mockbeggar became a leading soft-fruit operation. As well as selling to its retail and catering customers, it was at one time the sole supplier of strawberries to Wimbledon. For 30 years, Simon marketed the fruit, as well as running the growing and breeding side of their operation.

In 1967, Simon was chosen with 21 other young men and women to represent Britain on a trip to Australia, sponsored by The Royal Commonwealth Society, to tell the Aussies "what Britain was really like". He made many more overseas trips, both with fruit industry bodies and as a member of The Lucifer Golfing Society, promoting Commonwealth friendship through golf.

He was invited by The Ministry of Agriculture in the '80s to join The Apple and Pear Development Council, of which he became Chairman and was a co-founder of The National Summer Fruits Association (NSFA), in 1993. Simon also served on the Fruit and Vegetable Committee at Wisley for many years, as Honorary Vice President of the East Kent Fruit Society (President 2013 to 2016) and as Chairman of both the RHS and Brogdale.

His sense of fun shone through in his fine acting performances and regular pranking. The Sergeant Strawberry character and a raspberry blowing competition were amongst his contributions to the NSFA's innovative season launches.

The Brice family were great sporting



enthusiasts. There was a squash court and hard and grass tennis courts at Mockbeggar and the farm also had its own cricket club. Simon the golfer was one of the youngest members of Royal St George's, where he arranged a yearly Brice Christmas Handicap.

After retiring, Simon created an arboretum at home, as a member of the Kent Men of The Trees society. He added different tree varieties yearly. When he and wife Cynthia bought a house in Sotogrande, he planted a walnut orchard for posterity. It is now a going concern – three tonnes of walnuts were picked last year.

Simon was made a freeman of the City of London in 1998 and clothed as a Liveryman in 2001. He leaves Cynthia, daughter Annabelle and his grandchildren.



The youngest of four siblings, Peter Brice was educated at Uppingham School, where he won a choral scholarship to Caius & Gonville College, Cambridge. Despite a lack of self belief, he was a concert level pianist. He played the grand piano his parents gave him on his 21st birthday right up to and including the day he died.

On leaving Cambridge, with a law degree, Peter decided quite quickly that he wasn't remotely suited to the life of a lawyer and branched out into the antique business. This was a complete disaster – whilst he had an excellent eye, he was a hopeless salesman and far too honest!

Brother Simon suggested Peter join

Peter Brice 1943-2023

him in running Mockbeggar Farm and they soon made a formidable pair. Simon was an innovative farmer, while Peter paid careful attention to costings, margins and financial records.

Mockbeggar became one of the country's top soft-fruit growers, winning many prestigious awards including, more than once, the Soft Fruit Grower of the Year Award. A raspberry variety, "Brice", was named in their honour. Peter also served on the Apple & Pear Development Council for many years.

He was an enthusiastic stage performer and besides many cabaret performances became a leading figure in the Merstonians, his local Am Dram group, where, with Simon, their many product-

ions had audiences in stitches. A riotous 1972 production of Cinderella Superstar, for which Peter wrote an original musical score, was particularly well received.

Peter also found time to become a county level tennis player and a magistrate in North Kent, as well as being, for eight years, Classical Music Director of the Rye Arts Festival, introducing opera to the festival for the first time. The thing he probably loved most was forming his own choir, Vox Cantium, which performed not just in the UK, but toured abroad as well. Peter's annual Christmas Concert with his choir, which raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for the Heart of Kent Hospice, became a highlight of the Kent social scene.

continued on page 16



Obituary

Peter James Andrews 1946 to 2023

Peter Andrews was one of the very first systems analysts. Becoming involved at the time when computers were 'born', as they grew in importance to the world of business, so did he.

He had a very successful career managing the installation of systems for companies all over the world, including a spell living and working in Hong Kong.

Peter loved logistics – organising ski excursions and summer holidays was his forte, and he was also responsible for a very successful walking group,

which began life with five members and has grown substantially to 50 walkers.

He became a member of the Livery in 2007 and though he was not involved in the industry or the City of London, he and his wife Carole attended many Fruiterers' functions. Peter was a man who took great pleasure in talking to anyone and everyone.

He served as an Honorary Assistant from 2013-2015, was an active member of the Membership and Communications Committee and also took on the rather thankless task of finding members to man the Fruiterers' stands



at the National Fruit Show and the Royal Bath & West Show. He loved being a Fruiterer.

His funeral took place at St Margaret's Wychling Church, which he had supported very generously in many ways over the years. Peter leaves Carole, their four children Giles, Joby, Lucy and Claire and his grandchildren.



Obituary Peter Brice, continued from page 15

Peter was admitted to the Livery in 1996.

He married Bridget in 1972 and they raised three children, Ben, Jo and Miles, all of whom are married with children. Peter and Bridget divorced in 2010 and Peter remarried, to Caroline

Standen (Bumble) in 2018. They lived at Kitchenour, near Rye, where Peter sadly and unexpectedly died, surrounded by his family and closest friends, during his own 80th birthday lunch party.

Lest we forget

On Remembrance Sunday, November 12th, the Master laid a wreath outside the Royal Exchange on behalf of all of the Livery Companies of the City of London and Wales.

The Master is pictured at the ceremony, which is attended by the Lord Mayor, with (left) PM John Warner, who established this relatively new tradition in 2018, and (right) Renter Warden George Smith.

As the Fruiterers conceived and organise the occasion, the Company has the right to lead the ceremony in perpetuity.



Past Master John Warner, Master Matt Hancock and Renter Warden George Smith at the Remembrance Day service.

As this issue went to press, we received the extremely sad news that Jill Redsell, wife of Past Master Tony Redsell, and Liveryman Adrian Scripps had both passed away. Our condolences to their families and friends.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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