

BILLINGSGATE GOSSIP

THE LONDON FISH AND POULTRY RETAIL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2003

NFF Annual Show 2003

The Hay's Galleria Oyster & Seafood Fair was held over the weekend of 5th, 6th & 7th of September. Set in magnificent surroundings close to London Bridge, HMS Belfast and within the sights of Old Billingsgate (and David Blaine!) it was a resounding success.

There were fantastic displays of fish on the first two days which were most worthy of the interest shown by all the visitors. The quality and variety was a credit to our most generous sponsors.

With a great team of supporters, we were able to demonstrate many of our skills, give advice as to how to buy fish, how to eat fish, how to recognise quality and so on.

Have you got a fishmonger? If you have, pay him a visit, as he can supply this wonderful food! This was the message, loud and clear.

competition

The National Federation of Fishmongers (NFF) Craftsmanship Competition was held on the Sunday. Another superb show and good to see people who were prepared to enter the competition, do their very best to show that we are proud of our profession and will not allow our traditional skills to die.

We should also be aware of the effort that is put into this event by so many people, most of them still have their own business to run, yet give up valuable leisure time to make this such a showpiece. Unfortunately, there always some people who choose only to criticise. Here is an example, "There were too many people from the supermarkets and catering trades in the competition!" Well who's fault is that? Are the 'macho' fishmongers of London too shy to take to the stage? Are you really that good that you don't need to let anyone know? Or is it you can't take the famous Billingsgate criticism? The total entry from London? One!!!

To finish on a more upbeat note, please read your next copy of The National Federation Newsletter as it will contain a full list of competitors. Thanks to all who entered. A final word. The 'independents' that did enter were among the prizewinners!

National Seafood Week 2003



By Adam Whittle

Gordon Ramsay proved to be good value when he joined Seafish to help them launch Seafood Week at Billingsgate this October. He pledged

he would help capture the youth market and promote seafood as a healthy and nutritious food; getting behind Seafish's 'Sexy Seafood' campaign with characteristic enthusiasm. One class from Lewisham Catering College was lucky enough to have Gordon cook them a breakfast seafood omelette with one or two even walking away with work experience opportunities at his restaurants. The main photo shoot saw Gordon and the students posing with a fabulous 29 Kg Halibut from Peter Morris of Leleu & Morris, thanks Peter for providing such a specimen fish! This along with the other fish from the demos and breakfast was donated by Seafish to charity. Michael Desmond of the Corporation and long time supporter of St. Joseph's Hospice in Mare Street, Hackney, was only too happy to take time during his lunch to deliver the donation.

New Market Superintendent

Following second interviews, The Corporation of London has appointed Malcolm MacLeod as new Superintendent at Billingsgate Market to take over from David Butcher when he retires in November.

Malcolm was formerly employed as General Manager of Christian Salvesen at the Port of Felixstowe, so he has a vast knowledge of the food distribution industry. More recently he has been employed as a project manager for a logistics company. He will be joining us on 22nd September.

The London Fish & Poultry Retailers Association offer their good wishes to Malcolm and The Gossip will be running a feature on the Retirement of Mr David Butcher OBE in the next issue out in early December.

Greater London Seafish - Group Training Association

Dear Colleagues

After a busy three months it is great to be able to report some positive news this Autumn. The GTA and Seafood School have been busy delivering a wide selection of programmes and there are some exciting opportunities up and coming. The Seafish launch of Seafood Week this October at Billingsgate was a great success which was followed by a packed week of events. Lyn Gower, the School's Director also organised a fabulous Open Day at the Seafood School, which welcomed many new and old faces to the School. We are also pleased to report the successful launch of a new seafood business out in Canvey Island (see Good News for Your Good Fish article) and a comprehensive expansion of the training opportunities available to both the trade and the general public over the coming months.

BBC Documentary in the IT Room at Billingsgate

A big thank you to Terry Bloomfield, Swarn Singh Rakkar, Bob Cox and Lee Barr from Billingsgate; who helped us out when the BBC came to the market recently to film in our IT room. The filming was as part of a documentary for broadcast next year, which focuses on Michelle Golding one of our IT trainers who is taking a gap year later on in life. The filming at Billingsgate was to show her in the work environment and captured some classic Billingsgate humour from the lads.

New computers and FREE broadband offer from Newham

I am delighted to announce that the GTA in partnership with Newham College and the Centre for Innovation and Partnerships (CIPS) team has another great opportunity for all Greater London Seafood businesses. As the start of a new series of training programmes now available, Newham College has just upgraded all our computer systems in our training room at Billingsgate. This is now fully operational and FREE to use for everyone in the London Seafood Industry!!! In the past we have offered reduced cost PC's to companies interested in IT and training. Our new offer is to provide free broadband internet service for those who want to take part in free online training programmes. Provided the company agrees to undertake 2 hours a week of training, the full cost of installation, all equipment and running costs will be reimbursed for 12 months a saving of as much as £500!!! For further information on this time limited offer and a list of the programmes available please come and see me in office 28 or call 020 7517 3545.

Expanding the training portfolio

I am delighted to announce that this Autumn has seen the variety of training opportunities available at Billingsgate expand significantly. Lyn has been instrumental in both expanding the Schools Education Programme and also the industry focused courses we offer. The

Seafood School is now offering free courses to both Primary schools and Catering Colleges as well as the established Secondary Schools course. This means we are now reaching a much wider age range of young people and we will continue to promote seafood and expand this work in the future. For the trade we are now offering forklift training, with significant interest from Billingsgate, but also welcome enquiries from all seafood companies within Greater London. With sponsorship from Fishmongers Company and City and Guilds, we have been able to offer a free two day City & Guilds Certificate in Seafood retail which is aimed at trainee fishmongers. This is our effort to motivate those already in the trade and encourage others to join. Please see the article about 'Your Good Fish' for further details about the content of the course. With a successful pilot now under our belt the funding for future events is looking hopeful. I would encourage anyone either currently working in a fishmongers as a trainee or those interested in finding work in the trade to contact us and register their interest for the next event.

As always if you have any ideas or feedback on the services we offer we welcome your comments.

Best wishes

Adam Whittle - GTA Development Manager

Seafood Jobfinder Fishmonger Focus

Fresh and Wild - (Notting Hill) This organic food retailer is looking for 2 trainee fishmongers to work on the fresh fish section of their new speciality food department. £5.50 per hour, free lunch, 25% staff discount on all products, full training given. Please contact Gary Hussey on 020 7229 1063 or e-mail: jobs@freshandwild.com.

NEW OPPORTUNITY - Kensington Fishmonger-Recruitment consultant Ainsley Morgan has a vacancy shop opening in November, South Kensington, For a fishmonger with experience (or starter). Salary starting £15,000 + %. Contact Name: Mr Jean-Pierre Muzy. E-mail: catering@ainsleymorgan.co.uk Telephone : 020 8688 0505

If you have any job opportunities or would like to promote your own skills to prospective employers for FREE here and on our website www.london-seafish.org.uk please contact Adam Whittle on 020 7517 3545 or e-mail: adam@london-seafish.org.uk

For enquiries about The Greater London Seafish Group Training Association, please contact: Adam Whittle Office 28, Billingsgate Market, London E14 5ST.

Tel: 020 7517 3545 Fax: 020 7517 3535

E-mail: info@london-seafish.org.uk Web: www.london-seafish.org.uk

Billingsgate Seafood Training School Open day

As part of its Seafood Week activities the Seafood School at Billingsgate held its first ever Open Day on 8th October. The Open Day was designed to show what the school has achieved in the last three years since its inception in 2000 and to illustrate what courses are available to all sectors of the community.

Courses are currently offered to everyone from primary school children to Environmental Health Officers, from catering students to fishmongers. Most courses for schoolchildren and students are provided free of charge. Funding comes from a variety of sources including Sir John Cass Foundation, Seafish, Fishmongers Company and Lambeth Endowed Charities. The school also uses any profit from commercial courses to provide free courses for youngsters.

Director of the school, Lyn Gower, said "Today is a great opportunity to show as many people as possible what we can do, we want all sectors of the industry to feel that they have a stake in the school, and to be involved in achieving its aims of promoting the industry and improving the skills levels of those working in it".

Activities and demonstrations were held throughout the day starting with a guided tour of Billingsgate Market at 6:30am for chefs, through to filleting and cooking demonstrations ending at 4pm.

Displays of photographs and posters illustrating the work of the school lined the walls, along with an exhibition of lithographs, pastels and prints of Billingsgate Market by Virginia Powell. There was also a display of black and white photographs by Terry Bloomfield. "I've been taking photographs down here for years, and it's really good to see them on display" said Terry, "everyone wants to see if their picture is up".

Around 150 guests, including merchants and porters from Billingsgate Market were treated to displays of fish

preparation and filleting by the schools instructors, retired fishmongers Ken Condon and Charlie Caisey and fish merchant Bob Cox. Andrew Dewar-Durie, chairman of Seafish was persuaded to try his hand.

Ruth Arnold and Paula Williams, food and nutrition advisors who take the school courses, held cookery demonstrations along the same lines throughout the day. Some of the dishes, which were enthusiastically tasted by the appreciative audience, were: Pan-fried Monkfish and Tiger Prawns with spring onions, Citrus Mackerel with Cajun Spices, and Smoked Haddock & Mozzarella Brochettes.

"The smoked haddock is always a favourite with the children, and seems to be going down well with the market folk as well" laughed Paula, as tray after tray of them disappeared.

design

In addition to Mr Dewar-Durie, Nigel Atkins from the board of Seafish attended. Other guests included Malcolm Macleod, new superintendent of Billingsgate Market, Abdul Aziz Sardar the Mayor of Tower Hamlets and Anthony Duckworth Chad, Prime Warden of The Fishmongers' Company along with other members and members of other city livery companies.

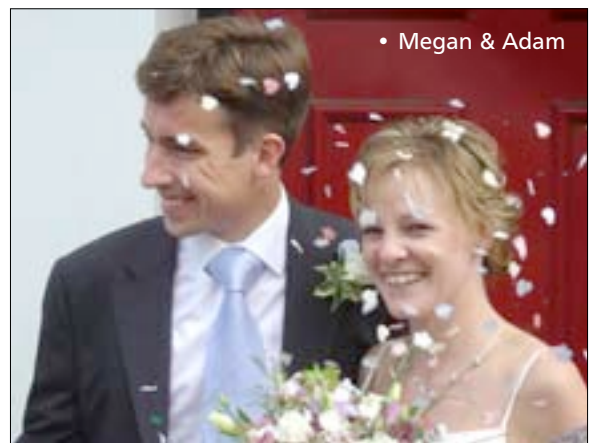
Guests were invited to vote for a design for a new logo for the school, to be chosen from work submitted by art students from Shoeburyness High School. The student who created the winning design will receive a voucher and the school will be presented with a colour printer for the art department. There were three designs which tied for first place, so a final decision has yet to be made.

All those involved in the day agreed that it was a very successful, informative and enjoyable day, which the School hopes will become an annual event.

Gossip's Gone North!

The social event of the year had the Gossip's most northerly reporter heading south beyond Hadrian's Wall to the depths of sunny Chichester, where GTA Development Manager Adam Whittle finally made an honest woman of the lovely Megan Allen.

Congratulations to both Adam and Meg - it was a great day, and we hear the prawns & salmon from Billingsgate were barbecued to perfection!



• Megan & Adam

Back at work we have been busy on many quality and promotion projects, with Seafood Week involving a large push on the pelagic front. Sampling campaigns were run in Waitrose; Asda & Tesco - all helped by the fact that the Omega 3 found in oil-rich fish not only keeps your heart healthy, but according to the latest research also keeps you looking younger too! With Samantha from "Sex in the City" avidly promoting this benefit it is only a matter of time before the kipper becomes a "must have" down the King's Road.

We have also been working with Marks & Spencer, the processor Cavaghan & Gray, Seafish & Scottish haddock fishermen, on a project to improve the supply chain for conservation-grade haddock. Following on from their successful meat campaign, M&S want to bring the origin of the product closer to the consumer, whilst reassuring them over conservation issues. So, when you pop in to M&S to get that new winter vest, why not nip in to the food hall where you should spot a photo board showing Skipper Iain Marcus from Orkney, with a box of his finest haddock?

If Gossip readers who use Scottish seafood, or would like to source more Scottish product, are interested in being involved with Seafood Scotland, please contact: fax 0131 557 9344
E-mail: enquiries@seafoodscotland.org
or visit www.seafoodscotland.org

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Anyone for Caviar?

by Ken Condon

Caviar and Sturgeon Images courtesy of *Princesse d'Isenbourg et Cie Ltd.*
Tel: 020 8960 3600
www.caviar.co.uk

Sturgeons are the largest freshwater fish in the world, reaching up to twenty-five feet in length. Historically specimens have been known to attain a weight of up to 1800lbs, although these days 600lbs is about the largest seen. Worldwide there are 24 different species found in Russia, Northern Europe, Asia, The United States and Canada. All sturgeons have a cartilaginous skeleton, five rows of bony plates on their bodies instead of scales, thick lips and four sensory barbs in front of their mouths for detecting food.

Unlike salmon who spend years at sea fattening themselves up before returning to the rivers to their spawning grounds, sturgeon spend little time in Ocean waters preferring to remain mostly in coastal estuaries. Nevertheless, they are anadromous fish in that they spend part of their life in seawater and return to freshwater to spawn.

The sturgeons feed on algae and small aquatic insects on their way to the estuaries. They are a slow growing, long-lived fish that take years to mature. Historically they have been known to live up to 200 years, although 80-125 years is now the norm. The female takes between 15-20 years to reach sexual maturity, whereas the male is slightly quicker off the mark in 7-15 years. They mate infrequently, but when they do, the female can produce several million eggs. Sturgeon eggs hatch within a short period of being laid and fertilised however, as with most fish, the majority are lost in the current or eaten by predators.

Different sturgeon produce different sized eggs, and it is these eggs when removed from their membrane and salted that produces one of the most expensive foods in the world - CAVIAR.

There are three main types of caviar sold regularly, Beluga, Sevruga and Oscietra. However, all types of caviar should be firm, yet soft and moist - never dried out. Good caviar is best savoured on its own, except for a little fresh lemon juice and thin slices of toast. The experts actually taste the caviar on mother of pearl spoons to ensure there is nothing to compromise the flavour of the caviar. Some of the poorer quality/cheaper caviar can be particularly salty. A good tip is to place the caviar in a plastic sieve and pour the contents of a small beer bottle through the eggs. Never rinse with water.

The most popular and expensive caviar is BELUGA. This comes from the largest of the sturgeons, the beluga. The eggs are quite large granules and are a soft, pearly, light to dark grey colour. Beluga sturgeons mature at about 18 years and live up to 100 years, making them the most valuable of all the sturgeons. The next in terms of size

is the OSCIETRA, which comes from a slightly smaller sturgeon. The eggs are smaller than those of the beluga and are a grey brown to gold, or sometimes even greenish in colour.

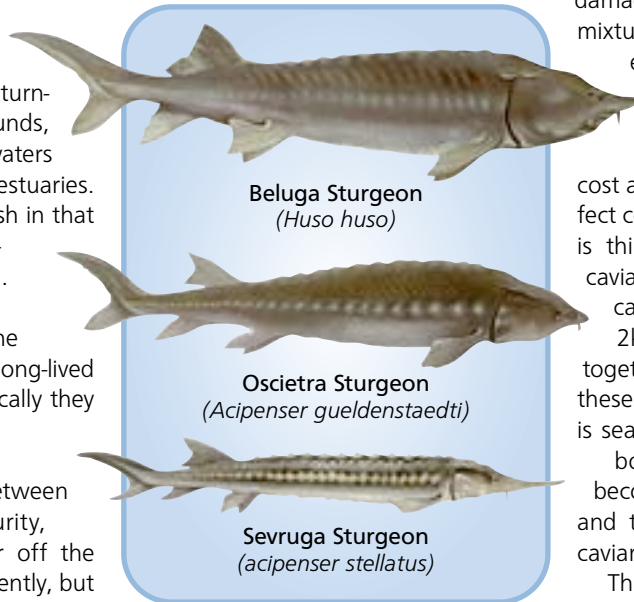
The third type of caviar is the SEVRUGA. These fish are smaller than the other two types and mature at an earlier age. The caviar is fine grained and dark grey in colour.

Only perfect eggs are used to make caviar, any damaged eggs will be pressed into a jammy mixture and sold as pressed caviar. However, even the different varieties of caviar are graded, with the best grade known as Molossol. When purchasing caviar, fresh is better than pasteurised and will cost a lot more, but keeping fresh caviar in perfect condition is difficult. The ideal temperature is thirty degrees Fahrenheit, the salt in the caviar will prevent it from freezing. The best caviar is imported into this country in large 2kg tins, the two halves of which are held together using a large rubber band. Usually these are packed twelve into a box, and the box is sealed using a lead seal. These tins go into bonded warehouses and duty only becomes payable once the seals are removed and the tins are taken out of bonding. The caviar is then packed into smaller retail tins.

There is imitation caviar made from the roes of other fish. The most well known being lumpfish roe, this is often coloured using a food standard dye to colour it red, orange or black. Many chefs use this for decoration purposes.

Other products include Capelin roe, Keta, which is the roe of the Pacific salmon, atlantic salmon roe and salmon trout roe. The atlantic salmon roe is more translucent than keta and the trout roe is slightly paler. Such is the demand for true caviar that the three main species are now on the endangered list. This has allowed caviar from the White sturgeon of North America to make inroads into the market and it is now providing thirty per-cent of the World's production.

Alternatively, a team of poultry farmers, sixty miles to the east of Moscow, who are making a new caviar out of hen's eggs mixed with tea, fish additives, colour and salt. Personally, I still prefer bloater paste!



Oyster and Seafood Fair article taken from The Corporation of London Markets' Newsletter

By Michael Desmond

On Friday 5th September we visited the Oyster and Seafood Fair at Hays Galleria, London Bridge. It was a wonderful display of fish and seafood from around the country which culminated in a craftsman's competition in filleting skills of fishmongers, to see who would win the annual prize. It was visited by people of all different walks of life, people involved in the industry and members of the public. The stalls were selling a full range of fish and oyster products, as well as crockery, jewellery and even Oyster beer! We witnessed a fabulous fish gutting demonstration, and were in awe of the speed and quality of the finished fillets. This year it was my pleasure to be able to assist in this fantastic "Piscean Extravaganza" which took place at the beautiful Hays Galleria. Thousands from throughout the United Kingdom attended and enjoyed a wonderful weekend. All the contestants in the Competitions showed breathtaking skills, as did the cooking and filleting demonstrators.

success

The sight and smell of cooked shellfish, copious amounts of Guinness, champagne and oysters must have been a great help to the small minority of non-fish eaters. This event is organised mainly by the National Federation of Fishmongers, whose dedicated members give up their precious time and travel from all over the U.K. and work extremely hard for no other reason than their great passion for fish and what they can do with it. Not forgetting that they endeavour to convince the general public to consume more of this user-friendly, superb nutritional dish.

Billingsgate Market plays an integral role in this event annually, however, is more or less invisible on the day, but without which, the show would surely struggle. So liven yourselves up at "The Gate" and lets see some more entrepreneurial faces next year and also enjoy your very generous input. This article recognises and appreciates the people who gave up their precious time and worked so hard to ensure its success: -

Charlie Caisey, John Masters and Ray Sandys are all well known at Billingsgate and are in the Premier League of Retail Fishmongers. A very big 'Thank You' from all at Billingsgate Market for this unpaid and largely valuable team.

Thanks are also due to the many sponsors and tenants, to name but a few:

- Generous donations of fish from Billingsgate's suppliers from all over the UK.
- Mr. John Stone of J. Bennett Billingsgate for the use of his van.
- Mr. Tony Lyons for the generous donation of fish.
- Young Billy Lyons for his invaluable assistance.
- Mr. Duncan Lucas for his brilliant filleting demonstrations.
- Mr. Alan Neighbour - the best forklift driver in the world.
- Mr. Michael Desmond of the Superintendent's Office, "general dogsbody".
- Several generous merchants at Billingsgate Market.
- The Worshipful Company of Poulterers and The Fishmongers Company.
- The London Fish Merchants Association.
- The Corporation Of London.

Thanks again to all who made this show a success.

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Good News from 'Your Good Fish'

This year's Seafood Week has seen the successful launch of Your Good Fish's fish retail unit in the main car park of the Knightswick Centre, Canvey Island. The business is a partnership between John Good and his son-in-law Martin Yourwarth whose names have aptly combined in the business name. The first month has seen really positive support for the business with customers buzzing like bees around a honey pot! Local fishing experience and training at Billingsgate Market are helping turn a new business idea into reality.

"As a local trawler skipper myself I have always been involved in the business," explains Martin. "After two fishmongers finished in the area more than two years ago, I saw a real gap in the local market. I had always thought it would be good to try and develop a retail unit. However it wasn't until John was made redundant recently that I had someone to build the business with.

Our pitch is just behind Somerfield who only sell pre-packed fish so we are not in direct competition. We invested in a smart 14' x 7' refrigerated unit. We also have a freezer onboard and a chill unit, so we can hold stock close by. We timed our launch with the start of Seafood Week to maximise on publicity with all the family getting involved. It's been so busy, I am delighted to say the early signs are that it's going to be a winner! "While Martin's experience in the fishing sector has obviously helped in setting up the new business, John's background has been in security and telecoms, knowing nothing about the Seafood Industry.

intensive

"Martin's enthusiasm got me interested, but I felt I needed to get some training under my belt. I was recommended to the London Seafish GTA and Seafood School at Billingsgate who have been brilliant at both giving me some intensive training and also introducing me to the merchants at Billingsgate where we now buy much of our fish and seafood products. So far most of our business has been with A. A. Lyons, Roger Barton, R & G Fisheries and Mick's Eels who have all been really helpful."

"My training has included my Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene, a must for everyone in the business and a 'Knife Skills' course which has proved invaluable for me when preparing the fish. I also took part a free two day City & Guilds course in Seafood Retail, at the Seafood School. This helped develop my knife skills, but also looked at quality assessment, species identification and how to cook and prepare different dishes. The cookery was a real eye opener and great for making suggestions to my customers! However, I think one of the best sessions was with Fishmonger Ray Sandys, who delivered an excellent lecture on customer service and counter skills. As a new man to the trade I felt I learned some real insights into the business. It has given me some great ideas that I'm sure will help our business grow".



• John Good

Seatek acquires John Koch Ltd

To complement Seatek's growth in the wholesale sector John Koch Ltd was acquired on 30th June. Koch was established in 1920 and is to-day one of the leading Fish and Shellfish businesses in the world renowned Billingsgate Fish Market, London. Its Managing Director Keith Maguire will be working closely with Klaus Neilsen the Managing Director of Seatek to establish the leading wholesale business within the UK. The Seatek Head office has now relocated to the brand new purpose built John Koch office and cold store at No. 1 Billingsgate.

Seatek and John Koch will operate under their own trading styles, and Seatek personnel based in Harlow have now integrated into the Billingsgate office and cold store complex. The move is designed to ensure sales, supply and administrative benefits are maximised. David Hall, Chief Executive, commented 'This is an exciting opportunity for two respected businesses to complement each other during what should be an exceptional period of growth over the next 3 - 5 years.'

Fish scales

It couldn't happen to me! A very experienced fish retailer recently returned from his holiday desperate to earn some money. (an independent fishmonger taking a holiday?) On returning from market he set up his usual high standard display and having a very brisk trade was quite pleased with the day. But alas, on counting the takings he was a little disappointed. What was wrong? His scale was 100 grams out, and to the customers advantage. So think about it. He lost profit and could also have faced a hefty fine for an incorrect scale. So make sure that you check your scales everyday and then perhaps you too could afford to take a holiday!

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This advert originally appeared in the 1982 publication 'The Wonderful World of Fish'

Harvest Festival 2003

The Annual Harvest Festival took place on Sunday 12 October at St Mary at Hill,, Eastcheap EC3. As always there was a superb show of fresh fish kindly donated by the Merchants of Billingsgate for which the LFPRA thanks you.

The fish was collected from the merchants by Scott Hitchcock (Wren & Hines) and the display was assembled by Eddie Hill and brother Les. Your Chairman, Ray Sandys, kindly transported the fish and equipment ably assisted by the young Charlie Caisey. Our porter on the day was Frank David.

The Salvation Army gratefully accepted our donation of all the fish displayed.

A donation was also made to the Traffic Wardens of The City of London for allowing Eddie Hill to park near the church! (£50 fine!)



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Here at Gossip Towers we are trying to get an idea of how far and wide we spread our news.

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That way we can gauge how big our readership really is. It will only take a few seconds but will be of great benefit to us. Thankyou.

We hope that you've enjoyed the Autumn Gossip. If there is any item that you would like us to report or comment on then drop us a line and we'll do our best.

You can reach us at: 'The Gossip',
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Trivia Question: Who is the world's biggest user of Caviar?
Answer: The QE2