

The BILLINGSGATE GOSSIP

THE LONDON FISH & POULTRY RETAIL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2005

Billingsgate Harvest Festival 2005

On Sunday 9th October we were once again invited to display the fish for the Harvest Festival which was so generously donated by many of the London Wholesale Fish Merchants Association.

The Harvest Festival took place at The Church of St. Mary at Hill, Lovat Lane, City of London. Conducted by The Ven. Archdeacon, Dr. B.A.C. Kirk-Duncan, Sub-Prelate St. J., M.A. D.Phil., Rector of St Mary at Hill, Billingsgate Parish Church and Ward Chaplain. The Address was by The Rev. Paul Abram, M.A., Deputy Priest in Ordinary to the Queen in H.M. Tower of London.

The 'team' of William Hill, brother Leslie (retired from W.Hill and Son, East Ham), Ted Saunders (Ealing) and Charlie Caisey, produced a much admired show. Gratefully assisted by Billy Hallett porter, Frank David retired porter and Michael Desmond, City Of London.

Collection of fish from Merchants was by Scott Hitchcock (Wren & Hines).

At the end of the service all the fish was collected to be distributed to outlets of The Salvation Army.

Thank you all again for your support of this unique event.

It's showtime!

Within sight of The Old Billingsgate Market over the weekend of Friday 9, October to Sunday 11, October, saw the return of the Hays' Galleria annual Oyster and Seafood Fair which featured the National Federation of Fishmongers Craftsmanship Competition.

The excellent displays of fish on the Friday, organised by Duncan Lucas & Sue Hallman (www.passionateaboutfish.co.uk), Gary Hooper, and Charlie Caisey created a mass of public interest.

Saturday was an extremely busy day. Many fishmongers arrived, giving their support and showing their skills in all kinds of demonstrations. The National Federation of Fishmongers produced another outstanding craft championship on the Sunday. The gathering of our judges, the competitors, from far and wide with their dedicated supporters made for a terrific day.

Be sure to look out for the next National Federation news letter for a full report, more pictures and full details of all the competition winners.

Over five hundred photographs were taken on Saturday and Sunday at Hays' Galleria for the National Federation.

They really are worth seeing, with fantastic images of competitors, judges, prize giving presentations and action shots. Why not contact Neil Morris of Touchdown Design to see if he has one of you?



Photo: Adam Whittle

• *Hard work all the way - that's the Hays' Galleria Show*

Telephone: 07973 711523 or e-mail: neil@touchdowndesign.net

We've included a selection of our favourite selection of Touchdown's images from this year's event on page 4 of this edition of The Gossip.

Just where is London on the map?

We are again this year forced to ask the question: Where were our competitors from the London scene? Although we do have to say well done to three young men. Kevin Yaxley (Sandys, Twickenham), Robert Hodson (W. Purkis & Sons) and 'gentleman' fishmonger Ted Saunders for flying our flag. This raises a point, are you passionate about fish? Just listen to Duncan Lucas' passion.

- Why did Ted Saunders enter? – *passion*.
- One of the young gents apologised to the judges for making a small mistake – *passion*.
- Our very own National President, Ken Welch (Edinburgh) insisted on being involved in everything including the cleaning! – *passion*..

- Ray Sandys and his team worked without a break from 9am till 6pm – *passion*.
- Two young gentlemen, Paddy and Robert Chambers, have for the last four years allowed us to use their excellent display cabinets. They transport them from Ireland, set them up, assist in cleaning up and then transport them back to Ireland. They even paid an early morning visit to Billingsgate to help transport our wares – *passion*.

Fortunately, we could keep highlighting many more people which answers some of the 'doom and gloom' merchants that there is still belief in our business.

So back to the opening line. Just where were our competitors from London?

Dear Colleagues

Keep on fishmongering!

With another 'Get into Fishmongering!' event just about to take place as I write and am delighted to report strong interest continuing for our fishmongering events. More applicants than ever are applying to find out more about the trade and see fishmongering as an opportunity to start their own business in the seafood industry. Our latest course sees eight individuals join Charlie for his now established day at the market.

The focus of 'Get into Fishmongering!' is to open the door into the trade, particularly for those who aim to buy at Billingsgate. With ongoing support from Seafish we will be continuing to offer this type of motivational introductory course.

The School is currently working with Seafish Training to develop a one day 'Introduction to Fishmongering', that can be delivered around the UK at other regional centres such as The Seafood Training Centre in North Shields and the soon to be opening Fleetwood Seafood School. We recognize that experienced people are the key to the success of any such programme. Unfortunately, we can not yet clone Mr. Caisey so we would be very interested to hear from anyone with a passion for the industry to contact us and help us develop this national project.

Knife Skills

New knife skills course dates have been scheduled for 2006. This programme is open to the general public and offers the fish enthusiast expert tuition preparing round and flat fish our new dates are scheduled for:

Dates for 2006

Fri 20th Jan, Thu 16th Feb, Fri 17th Mar, Thu 20th Apr, Fri 19th May.
(We have one last available date for 2005 on Fri 25th Nov.)



Passionate about Seafood

Since our successful week at Skill City, Excel in July, Duncan Lucas (left) and Sue Hallman have delivered a fabulous series of events at the School on Saturday mornings focusing on fish and shellfish preparation for the general public. We have just scheduled one more date for 2005 and new dates for 2006 these are:

Sat 26th Nov - Passionate about Shellfish

Dates for 2006

Sat 21st Jan: Passionate about Fish
Sat 4th Feb: Passionate about Shellfish
Sat 25 Feb: Passionate about Fish
Sat 18 Mar: Passionate about Shellfish
Sat 1st Apr: Passionate about Fish
Sat 22nd Apr: Passionate about Shellfish
Sat 6th May: Passionate about Fish
Sat 20 May: Passionate about Shellfish

These events start at 0830 (we do not offer guided tours on Saturday as the market is so busy) and finish at 1300. These are

practical courses which focus on preparing fish or shellfish for cooking. The preparation is followed by a cookery demonstration using some of the seafood which has been prepared. These dishes are then eaten for lunch accompanied by wine chosen to complement the food. Copies of all the recipes used will be supplied. Please note, attendees can buy fish on the market before the course (the market starts trading at 0500) and Duncan will fillet them after the course, also please remember to bring along cool bags to take the fish home with you.

New dates available for CJ Jackson

Ever popular, CJ's full day, half day and new evening courses are going from strength to strength. With a new edition of the Leith's Fish Bible that she has written just published, CJ's courses reflect the fantastic new recipes she has been working on recently. Always fun and exciting CJ's courses simply must not be missed. New dates for CJ include:

Fish 'n a dish evenings;
Tue 1st November -
Lemon Sole

Tues 22nd November - Sea Bass

New dates for 2006

Wed 18th January: Catch of the day
Thu 2nd February: Global fish
Wed 1st March: Shellfish
Wed 5th April: Oriental Seafood

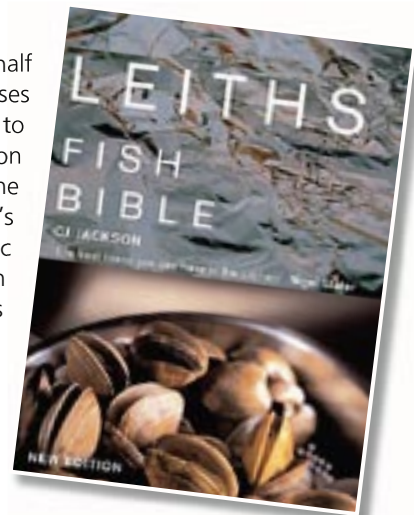
NB. Please remember ALL commercial courses help fund the free courses we offer to young people.

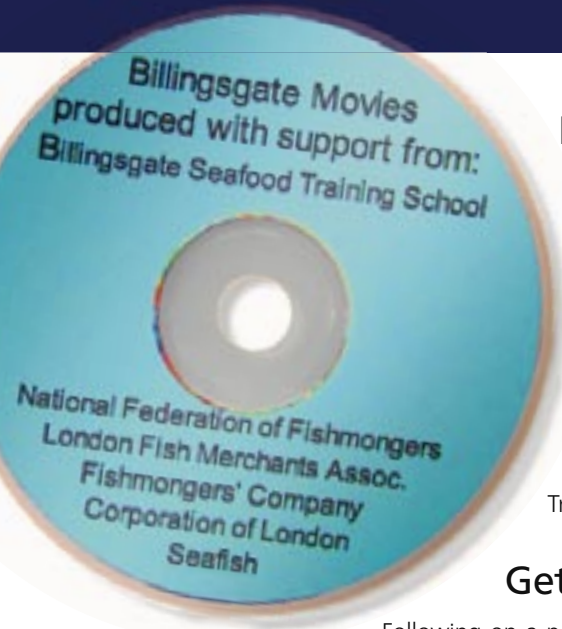
Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) - Fish & Kids project 2005-08

This is an MSC project aiming to get sustainable (MSC-labelled) fish on menus in schools and family restaurants across England. The project involves working with Food service organisations to increase the availability of tasty products carrying the MSC logo.

A vital objective of the project is to increase awareness about sustainable seafood issues in primary schools and in families, which will be achieved in the education sector by developing a whole school approach to sustainable seafood.

This will involve providing teaching material for primary schools, a dedicated website with online learning and fun activities and targeted communications to inform parents and other stakeholders of the objectives and outcomes of Fish & Kids. One of the biggest UK suppliers of food to restaurants and school canteens is working closely with us on this project, making more MSC-labelled products such as salmon nuggets and fish fingers, available to children and families. More information can be seen here: http://www.msc.org/html/ni_153.htm





More Billingsgate videos available

With strong demand for our free educational videos we have just produced another run of our video cds, which includes:

'Seafood Identification at Billingsgate Market' by Chris Leftwich, Chief Inspector Fishmongers' Company;

'Buyers guide to Seafood at Billingsgate' by Charlie Caisey, National Federation of Fishmongers;

An Overview of the Market and of the Seafood School.

These are available free either by collecting a copy from our office or by sending a stamp addressed envelope (to hold a CD) to Free Video offer, Office 28 Billingsgate Market, Trafalgar Way, London E14 5ST.

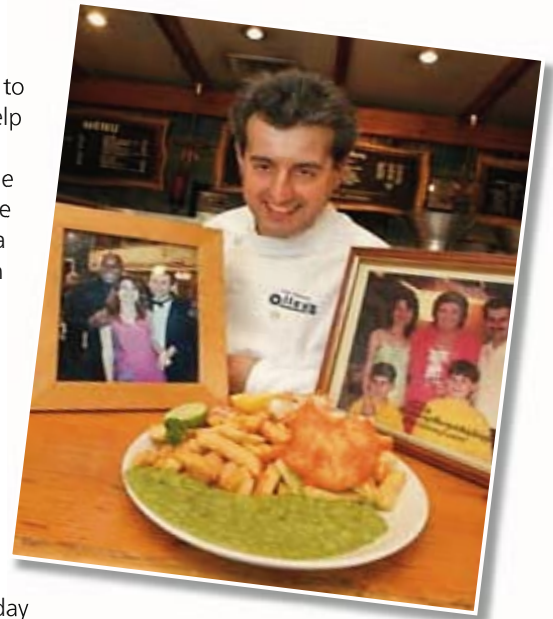
Get into Fish Frying!

Following on a popular theme I am delighted to be able to announce another addition to our free introductory courses to help individuals get into the Seafood Industry.

The day will be lead by Harry Niazi from Olley's Fish Experience, Norwood Road, Herne Hill, and will take place on Wednesday 8th February 2006. The aim is to offer the same motivational day that is offered on our 'Get into Fishmongering!' days. This will include a market tour of Billingsgate, focusing on the wide range of fish that can be prepared by fish and chip shops and seafood restaurants.

After breakfast there will be time in the School's knife skills room preparing fish for frying. This will be followed by a presentation giving an overview of the industry and introducing 'next step' training opportunities such as the National Federation of Fish Friers (NFFF) 3 day training course in Leeds and the Seafish/ NFFF 'Fish Frying Skills qualification'. The group will then travel to Herne Hill to view the lunch time trade at Olley's Fish Experience, Herne Hill, with plenty of opportunities to speak to Harry about the individual's specific plans.

To reserve your place please contact Adam in office 28 or on 020 7517 3545. For more information regarding the Seafish/NFFF Fish Frying Skills Qualification contact Richard Wardell on 01482 327 837. More information regarding the NFFF three day course in Leeds call Ann Kirk on 0113 230 7044. They also have a great website www.federationoffishfriers.co.uk next dates for their course are w/c Mon 5 December and Monday 9 January 2006.



Full details of all our training opportunities can be obtained from Office 28 or via our website www.seafoodtraining.org.

Best wishes,

Adam Whittle

Development Manager
Billingsgate Seafood Training School

For enquiries about
The Billingsgate Seafood Training School
please contact:

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London E14 5ST.

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E-mail: newsletter@seafoodtraining.org

Web: www.seafoodtraining.org

Goodbye Kevin.

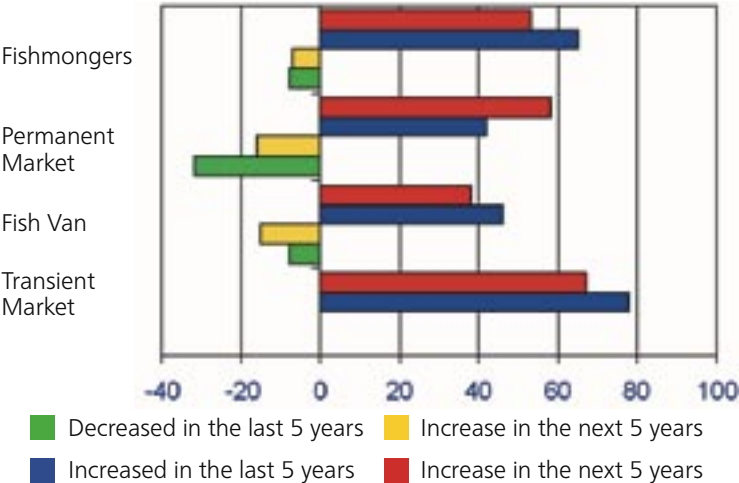
Kevin Everett has recently left Billingsgate to plunge back into the City to pursue his career in the legal world. A huge thank you to Kevin for all his excellent work at the market which has seen him take some tough decisions during the eight years as Chief Executive and Chairman of the London Fish Merchants Association.

He was the representative in all negotiations with Trade Unions and restructured the LFMA considerably during his time at Billingsgate; also managing capital projects and re-developments. Kevin promoted the interests of Billingsgate widely to the Corporation, government departments and external bodies such as Seafish and the Group Training Associations Network. As a trustee for the Seafood School, Kevin will continue to support the exciting developments currently underway at the School.

Independent Retail Study - Summary of Key Findings

The Sea Fish Industry Authority (Seafish) recently commissioned research looking closely at the Independent retail sector. The purpose of the research was "To assess the current market situation for independent seafood retail outlets in the UK, develop an understanding of the factors for changes in market share and determine the ways in which these outlets can adapt to the current marketplace and remain competitive in the future." The research took on two parts, firstly a questionnaire which was conducted via the phone and targeted 116 Independent fishmongers. This captured a wide spectrum of opinions from a very knowledgeable set of respondents; in fact over 55% of Independents had been in the business for in excess of 20 years. Over 70% of respondents worked out of businesses that had been running for over 20 years. The second stage was to carry out 4 consumer focus groups. This helped us to gain an understanding of the consumer's view of independent fishmongers.

Fig 1.1



The total seafood retail market is worth approximately £2bn and this is being driven by the chilled sector. Research shows that the Independent sector is worth 12-13 per cent of the market which is around £236m*. When compared with other independent sectors fish retail value is performing strongly up +6%** by comparison meat is up +1%**. The fact that Independent retailers have a good share of the Seafood market and that the Total Seafood market is growing at a health rate is great news for the future. We asked independent retailers "Over the last 5 years, has your company's revenue increased, decreased, or stayed about the same? And do you think your company's revenue will increase, decrease, or stay about the same over the next 5 years? Many responded in a positive manner see Fig 1.1.

So the future looks positive for the independent trade but there are areas that can be worked on to increase value share.

Customers are seen as the key opportunity

When asked "Which three issues would have the most potential to help you improve your business, if you could change them in some way?" Independent retailers ranked customers as the area that they thought they could have most influence over. This was followed by premises issues, Price and Supply. Interestingly competitors, who include supermarkets, come well down the list. Independent retailers

place a lot of emphasis on relationship building however customers are not so bothered about that aspect of their conversation, it is their expertise and knowledge that consumers are looking for. Fig 1.2 shows some areas where Independent fishmongers and consumer thinking is not quite in alignment. If fishmongers address some of these issues it can only make their retail proposition more appealing to the consumer.

Fig 1.2

What do independent retailers see as their USP?

1. Quality
2. Personal Service
3. Price
4. Product range
5. Reputation
6. Fresh Fish
7. Experience/Expertise
8. Hygiene
9. Accessibility

Consumers key requirements from a fish retailer

1. Quality/taste
2. Choice
3. Expertise
4. Price
5. Environment
6. Accessibility
7. Reputation
8. Relationship



Product range and hygiene are also high on the list of consumer demands but not seen as quite so important by the fishmonger, this needs to change.

Fishmongers are the specialists

Fig 1.3



The research also highlighted the fact that whilst not very convenient consumers would prefer to go to a fishmongers. Customers identified the quality product and knowledge that Independent retailers have as being superior to that which they would find elsewhere. Consumer's perceptions of independent retailers positioning in the market is shown on Fig 1.3.

So what were the key findings of the research?

- Independent retailers need to use their expertise to encourage customers back
- The range on offer and shop environment is also important
- Retailers need to look to other areas to increase business i.e. supplying restaurant trade, delivery service, call and collect
- Complimentary items
- Supply, New business, legislation and price all occupy retailers thoughts, they can influence 3 out of 4 of these
- Consumer accessibility is an issue people are pushed for time and demand convenient opening hours
- Consumers see you as the specialist so you really need to take advantage of that fact.

* B2B independents research ** TNS Superpanel July '05

GOSSIP FROM THE SEAFOODSCHOOL

The highlight of the last few months has to be the visit by Lyn Gower and Charlie Caisey to St James's Palace for a "Maritime Reception" which was hosted by HM the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward, and other members of the royal family. It was an honour to be invited – and we still don't know why we were singled out for the invitation – but we had a great time seeing how the other half live. Just as interesting and enjoyable was the visit we made afterwards to The Prospect of Whitby in Wapping, a case of doing both ends of the social spectrum in one evening!

In August, the school was invited to run a promotional demonstration at the John Lewis store in Oxford Street. CJ Jackson, Lyn and Terri went along for several hours. CJ cooked several different fish dishes while Lyn (all miked up like a real professional) talked to the spectators about the work of the school. In spite of the fact that it was only a couple of weeks after the bombings, there were plenty of people about, they were very interested and we have had several bookings for CJs cookery courses as a result of the day. John Lewis who very generously do not charge us, have invited us to do another one in November.

In the last Gossip, we were asking for applications for the next Seafish Scholarships in October, we had a great response with over 20 applications for only 6 places (four of whom want to be fishmongers and two blocksman). It was really hard to decide where the sponsorship should go, but all the places have now been allocated and we look forward to meeting all the students in a couple of weeks.

In the first 9 months of 2005 we have run 98 courses and have given training and instruction to well over 1000 students – what a great milestone, and what a target to beat for next year. We really need our new facilities NOW. We have actually, at last, started work on office 30 and should be moving in there before the end of October, then with luck, work will start on the knife skills room and new kitchens over the Christmas period ready to launch some exciting new cookery courses in 2006.

Last bit of gossip and really the most exciting for Lyn – she became a granny for the first time in July with the birth of her grandson Benjamin Matthew Gower.

Training from a different angles 'Where does the money come from?'

On Wednesday 7th of September 2005 a team of twenty Barclays Bank Managers, eighteen male and two female, worked together with the brilliant merchants of Billingsgate Market as part of their training programme which was co-ordinated by Michael Desmond from The Corporation of London, Neil Harris and Debbie from Barclays Bank.

The participants had a very early start (that's what they thought, not knowing that this starting time was a norm for most of us at Billingsgate) kicking off at 2.45 am and working with several merchants until 8.00am

They all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and commented that it was a 'fantastic day'. They would like to take this opportunity to shout a big THANK YOU across the market floor to the merchants, co-ordinators and to everyone that co-operated to make this event a great success.

Congratulations!

As we all know by now and if you didn't, let it now be known that Michael Desmond from the Corporation of London has successfully completed his European Computer Driving Licence (E C D L) course. He would like you all to know that he can now be consulted on any issue about the computer and its usage (charges may vary). In future could you address him as Mr. Desmond, and not just "Hi you".

Congratulations Michael on your achievement. Just shows that you're never too old to learn.

THE LONDON
Fish & Poultry
RETAIL ASSOCIATION

PROUDLY PRESENT THEIR

*Chairman's
Dinner Dance*

AT
THE LAKESIDE MOAT HOUSE HOTEL,
NORTH STIFFORD,
GRAYS, ESSEX.
SUNDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2005

TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE BY CALLING:
020 7987 9933 OR 01708 448 667

Pic of the pics

some of our favourite moments from this year's Hays' Galleria NFF Craftsmanship Competition.



Robert Hodson (W. Purkiss & Sons, Crouch End) showed how it's done 'London style'



Even the NFF Vice President's (David Ridley), wife enjoys the competition



Peter & Claire Rostron of Gastronome UK, one of our many sponsors, enjoyed spending the day at Hay's Galleria.



A touch of Sandys magic. He set the display up 'just like that!'



Even Charlie got a trophy, specially designed by Chambers Engineering (Dublin). Shown here with NFF President Ken Welch and Paddy from Chambers Engineering.

Ted Saunders (Ealing) don't even think about retiring!



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backpage

Put **your** name here

Contact us to find out how advertising your company here could reach an estimated 1100 readers* across the UK and overseas.

The spirit of Billingsgate shines again

We recently needed fish for a demonstration for a few children at Guy's Hospital. Just single fish. A plaice, a lemon sole, a mackerel and a scallop. I then made a chance remark "One day I'll take a lobster". A few minutes later, a lobster, a crab and four oysters were handed to me. The fish given without question.

Why print this you may ask? London wholesalers, a porter, a member of the fishmongers company, the seafood school, the superintendents staff all were involved. Planned? No! This happened in about fifteen minutes.

By the way, a market constable then took me to the hospital. Thank you everybody.

MailBox

A letter from an old fishmonger Do you remember?

Wooden boxes with steel straps with tickets to return,
Tearing newspaper.
The way ice split from the block when the Iceman came,
The wet sack that he carried it into your shop with.
Boxes of lugs, Thorny Wings, Cats, and small boxes of milts.
Prawns in tins, Norway Plaice, and Jumbo's.
Joe Burrage, Snooksie, Maxie Soloman, Botts, Porch, my old man.
Forgive me if I only mention a few of the hundreds that have gone
Along with Hill and Daltry Haywood Chamberline and Therwell,
The old Koch, Lew and all the old firms that were the old 'Gate'.

Of course I feel for The Blagdens. Their story is typical of hundreds of fishmongers that no longer trade, for whatever reason. It's sad when a slice of this country's retail tradition has to shut.

Sadly, it seems the ad, 'Support your local Fishmonger or you will lose him' seems more appropriate lately.

Or perhaps if the powers that control so much of our trading lives now, were told just how few of us were left and just to keep going as they are now will end this way of life.

What a waste of breath?

from Tom Maiden



Are you listening?

It pays to advertise!

We would like to thank everyone who supports 'The Gossip'. As a small Regional Trade Association, we have very little income so we are very glad to print your advertisements for a modest fee. This is open to everyone, so please do not complain. Get in touch with us to put your name in front of an estimated* 1100 readers!

Negativity issue

Recently, whilst listening to a presentation produced by two young people looking at ways in which the 'independent' fishmonger could be helped, it was interesting to hear the phrase 'negative image.. TWO YOUNG PEOPLE had heard or noticed this! How true this is! Forever complaining and worrying about the trade, the supermarket, the long hours we work and staffing problems.

How about a few positives. We are highly skilled, so tell the world that there is more to the trade than Cod, Haddock and Plaice. Forget about the supermarkets, they won't go away. Encourage some more people to look at the trade, listen and learn! You must be mad to be an 'independent' anything. But be honest, most of us would not change and perhaps *that* is the problem. So 'negative image' give it some thought.

Mr. Sandys?

Ray Sandys wishes to be remembered to all at Billingsgate Market. He is fit, well and alive & kicking!

Your 2005 LFPRA Council

- Mr. R. Sandys..... Chairman
- Mr. K. CondonTreasurer
- Mr. C. Caisey..... Secretary
- Mrs. S. Lyons..... Joint Secretary
- Mr. E. Saunders
- Mr. D. Shepperdson
- Mr. G. Sage
- Mr. B. Bunkell
- Mr. L. Mash

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Professional images from the 2005 Hays' Galleria
NFF Craftsmanship Competition

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Get in the Gossip

Send us your gossip and you could be in the next issue!

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