

# BILLINGSGATE GOSSIP

THE LONDON FISH AND POULTRY RETAIL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2003



## Repeat performance

...and what a performance it was. The now famous costermongers' barrow, (which was built by the Special Objectives for Local Disabled in Lowestoft) and a Billingsgate Porter, were yet again the star attractions at the Lowestoft Fish Fayre.

Gary Shaw, dressed in his traditional working gear, must have shed at least a stone throughout the day, as the temperature was around the 90s. Gary, who again sold fish to the public, was full of praise for the large crowds who supported the show.

*Gary, seen here with celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay, who opened the show*  
*Picture - Terry Bloomfield*



### Craftsmanship competition

The Oyster and Seafood Fair will once again be held at Hays' Galleria, Tooley Street, London Bridge. The date is Friday 5th, Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th September 2003.

On show will be a great display of fish, excellent demonstrations, but most of all another chance for all to enter The National Federation of Fishmongers' Craftsmanship Competition.

Look out for posters, entry forms and further news in the NFF News. There are fantastic cash prizes, trophies and medals to be won so come on all you London fishmongers. Let us all see your skills!! The Competition day is Sunday 7th September.

### Hottest tickets in town?

The London Fish & Poultry Retail Association Chairman's (Ray Sandys) Dinner Dance will again be held at The Lakeside, Moathouse Hotel, North Stifford, Nr Grays, Essex.

We understand that tickets for this extremely popular event will be more difficult to obtain than tickets for the World Cup Final!

As it is the LFPRA's own dinner dance why not become a Council member and change the rules for ticket allocation! You never know, it might just boost your chance of getting a ticket. (Minimum term of office - 3 years!) or wait 'til next year! Further details and entertainment line-up to be announced.

## Greater London Seafish - Group Training Association

### Dear Colleagues

Summer is here and another issue of the Gossip is hot off the press! Since the last issue there have been a couple of changes with Libby leaving us for Seafood Scotland. I am now working with the GTA Committee as the GTA Development Manager and Lyn Gower is now the three months into her role as the Director of the Seafood School.

### Computer Classes – Billingsgate Porters show what they are made of!

While our Flexible Learners Initiative project has just finished at the end of June, there is still the opportunity to make use of the GTA's IT facilities in Office 3 Billingsgate Market. The room is still available for those already signed up to a course to allow them to continue with their studies. Also, we have arranged with the support of Newham College to sign people onto Learn Direct. This is the government's new initiative to offer training courses via the internet. There are hundreds of courses available and unlike other providers the GTA can in many cases save course fees (normally around £50). If there are any companies that want to send larger groups (up to six) for a series of training sessions the GTA and Newham hope to be able to continue to offer free training subject to availability. I must send a big shout out to all the porters (Gregory Jacobs, Gary Durden, Christopher Jacobs, Laurence Bellamy, Steven Moore, and Steven Durden) who have recently completed an

introductory IT course. Michelle Golding, their tutor from Newham said they were her star pupils and one of the keenest groups, she has ever had – nice one lads!!

### Free Health & Safety and Food Hygiene CD's – Grab them now!

The GTA has managed to source free CD's that offer good advice and information about Health & Safety and Food Hygiene that all seafood businesses need to know. Contact me for further details!

### Industry Mailing – How can we help you

Over the next three months the GTA will be contacting over 1200 London Seafood Businesses to make sure they are aware of how the GTA can help their businesses. The GTA is run by a committee of Seafood Industry representatives with the main aim of helping access and deliver training to improve the quality and standards within our industry. If you can't wait full details of our services are available at [www.london-seafish.org.uk](http://www.london-seafish.org.uk)

We welcome ideas and feedback on our services, they are vital to help us develop and improve.

Best wishes,

*Adam Whittle – GTA Development Manager.*

## The Seafood Job Finder Free Advertising of Seafood Jobs

The GTA is currently developing this new service to help companies promote job vacancies and individuals find work in the Seafood Industry.

We have focused on useful contacts (local job centres, schools, interview tips etc) for companies looking for staff and contacts for individuals looking for work. These are available at our website [www.london-seafish.org.uk](http://www.london-seafish.org.uk). We offer free advertising space on our website, and also listings (like those below) in the Gossip.

### Fishmongers

Contact Dagim Fish & Deli, 105 Dunsumure Road, London N16 for a part time fishmongering vacancy. Call 020 8802 1307.

The Food Company Anglia Ltd (Colchester based) are looking for fishmongers full and part time opportunities are available, contact Matt Panks 01206 214 000. All applicants need a full driving licence.

House of Frazer - Rackhams Food Hall (Birmingham) - Fish Department Manager. A salary commensurate with experience, likely to be c £20,000 with 25 days holiday, staff discounts, pension, + benefits.  
Contact: Neil Robertson Tel: 07968 303934

### Fish Processors:

Wicker Fisheries (East London) are looking for 2 new blocks persons. Both full time positions working 4am - 1pm, 5.5 days per week. Pay negotiable depending on experience. Contact Mr Wicker 020 8986 9214.

H. Forman & Son (East London) are looking for 2 new salmon splitters.  
Full details are available from Lloyd Hardwick contact 020 8221 3900.

### Fish Restaurants:

The Famous Olley's Fish Experience [www.olleys.info](http://www.olleys.info) are looking for full and part-time staff at their Sevenoaks fish and chip restaurant. With management opportunities for the right candidate, contact: Harry Niazi, Olley's Fish Experience, 93 St. John's Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3PE.  
Tel: 01732 451 308

If you want your job vacancy details here and on our website contact Adam Whittle on 020 7517 3545.



Lyn Gower - BSTS Director

## Back to her roots, Lyn Gower joins the Billingsgate Seafood School

A familiar face to many at Billingsgate, Lyn Gower is now settling in to her role as Director of Billingsgate Seafood Training School. The founder of the highly successful, Colchester based, Direct Seafoods is already making her mark at the School.

"Coming back to Billingsgate has been a case of getting back to my roots and I still recognise a few faces at Billingsgate from when I first started buying fish here twenty years ago," explains Lyn. "Direct Seafoods quickly grew into a large seafood business with a turnover of more than £5m. I managed to sell the business a couple of years ago and have been working with the new owners as a consultant.

### experience

I now have the opportunity to take on new projects and the Seafood School is a great way of putting something back into an industry that I have worked with in for so long." With experience working on the committee of the Eastern Seafish GTA, Lyn is no stranger to training and with her Direct Seafoods experience brings considerable business acumen to the Directors role.

"The facilities at the Seafood School are second to none with a fabulous cooking demonstration area and knife skills room already in place. The challenge I have is to make best use of this great resource. On the one hand we need to run commercial courses such as our City & Guilds courses while delivering as many free courses to school children (tomorrow's fish buyers) which is the core aim of the School. As a charitable company all profits go to our free courses and it is vital we support both commercial and charitable courses to sustain the facility."

In the three months since taking her new post Lyn has got stuck in to the job

at hand. She has organised 20 events at the Seafood School ranging from the popular knife skills courses to free 'From Fish to Food' courses for secondary schools.

"I feel that I am settling into the job," said Lyn. "It is now time to look forward and we have some great courses planned for the autumn. Firstly, we have our Quality Assessment courses for EHOs planned for 16 Sept (Fish), 7 Oct (Shellfish). These courses give EHOs the chance to see fish and shellfish first hand at Billingsgate.

With expert tuition from Chris Leftwich and his team together with guest speakers, students will learn how to benchmark quality, become aware of health issues and legislation within the seafood industry. Also, with sponsorship from Fishmongers' Company and City & Guilds we will be offering free places on a two day City & Guilds Seafood Retail Certificate 15-16 Oct (Spaces are free but strictly limited so please book early!!).

This course is aimed at those selling fish and will take students through fish selection, health and hygiene issues, practical preparation skills, seafood cookery, counter skills and customer service. Our other plans include continuing with our Schools Education Programme, promoting Modern Apprenticeships (NVQs) within the Seafood Industry (if anyone is interested please come and see me) and delivering a special series of events during Seafood Week which this year will be 3-10 October. I strongly believe that by investing in seafood training we can help raise awareness of seafood to consumers and by delivering high quality industry training help seafood businesses develop and grow.

If you want to get involved please come and see us in Office 28 Billingsgate Market, call 020 7517 3548 or visit [www.seafoodtraining.org](http://www.seafoodtraining.org)

## Gossip goes North!

Development has not stopped the Gossip spreading its wings, as one of the Gossip's main reporters has packed her bags and headed back north of the border, adding to the Gossip's reputation as a class international publication. "With readership spreading south to Australia and Chile it was high time we bit the bullet and headed north to finally penetrate the wilds of Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Kinlochbervie" she stated.

Although the temperature controlled market floor of Peterhead Market was an initial shock to our reporter, not to mention the complete absence of both porters and anything more exotic than a haddock, the culture shock has now abated, helped by the purchase of a balaclava.

When not undercover for the Gossip our reporter is busy fronting up an organisation called, "Seafood Scotland", which has been established by the Scottish seafood industry, to help them improve their level of return through the implementation of quality schemes at all levels of the supply chain, and through positive promotion of the product and industry.

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:

Libby Woodhatch,  
Chief Executive,  
Seafood Scotland  
Tel/fax 0131 557 9344

E-mail: [libby@seafoodscotland.org](mailto:libby@seafoodscotland.org)  
or visit: [www.seafoodscotland.org](http://www.seafoodscotland.org)

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](mailto:info@london-seafish.org.uk)

Web: [www.london-seafish.org.uk](http://www.london-seafish.org.uk)



# The Life Cycle of Wild Salmon

Words by Chris Leftwich

The life cycle of the wild salmon begins when the adult female cuts a trough, which is known as a Redd, in the gravel of the spawning grounds of the river. She does this by vigorously fanning her tail backwards and forwards to displace the gravel. Once complete she lays her eggs in the redd. On average an adult female will lay around 700 eggs for every pound in weight of her body mass.

At the same time as she is laying her eggs, a dominant male will fertilise them by ejecting his sperm into the redd. Once this act is completed the female will cover over the fertilised eggs by once again fanning the gravel with her tail. Usually the exertion of fighting their way up the river to the spawning grounds and the final act of mating causes catastrophic mortalities amongst the adult fish. The majority dies, with only about 10% surviving to make their way back down the river to the sea. These are almost all female fish, which proves the age-old theory that women are in fact the stronger sex. Should they make it back to the sea recovery is extremely rapid. The eggs will slowly hatch over a period of about 100 days, give or take 5 days depending on the local water temperature.

At this stage they are known as Alevin. These tiny fish still have their yolk sacs attached and swim around the gravel feeding off the yolk. The alevin are extremely vulnerable at this stage and very few will actually survive predation. After about 50 days the fish grow to a length of about 50cms and are known as Fry. For around the next 60 days they grow very slowly and develop a series of black finger marks along their backs and at this stage they are known as Parr.

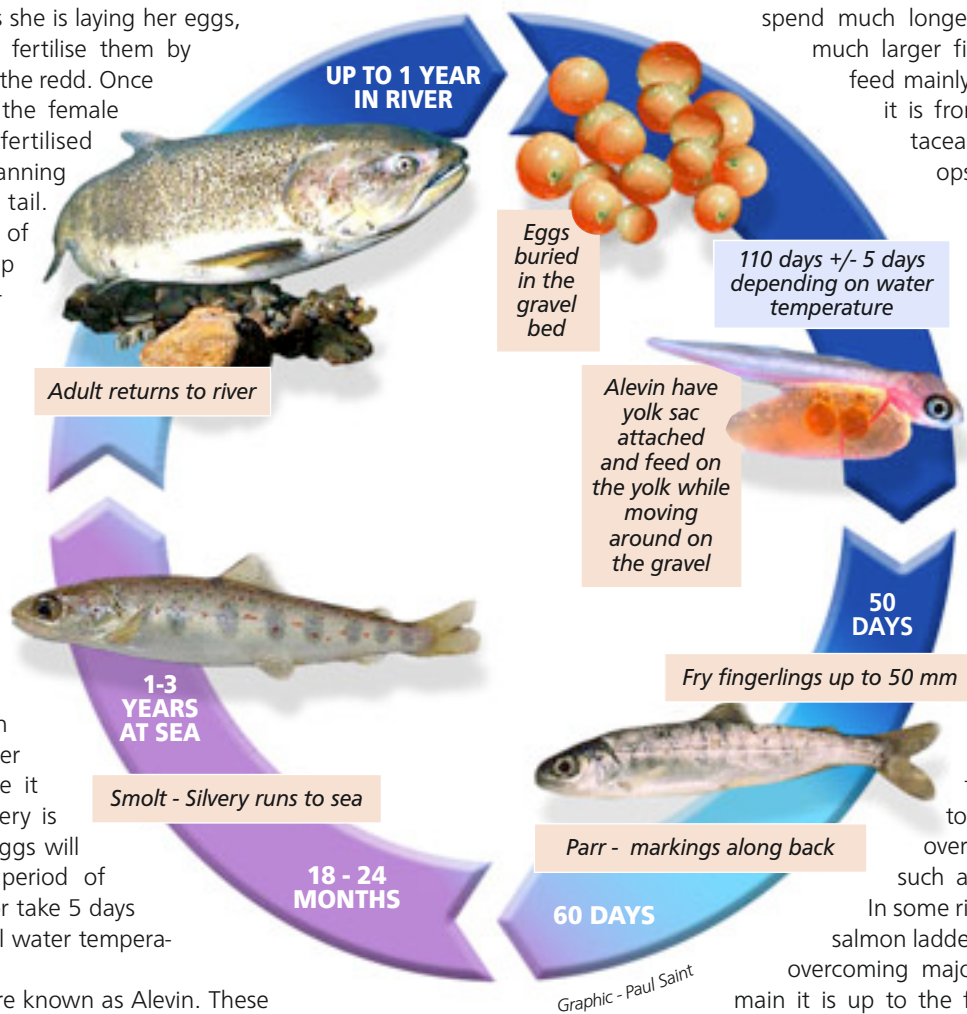
The Parr spend anything from 18 months to 2 years in the river and are still extremely vulnerable to predation. At the end of this period a chemical change takes place within the fish, the fish lose

their parr markings and turn silver overnight. The fish are still just a few inches in length and are now known as Smolt. It is once they become smolt that the fish will head for the sea. The salmon will then spend anything from 1 to 3 years at sea. A small percentage of fish will return to the rivers after just 9 months at sea. These are small fish of usually no more than about 61lbs in weight and are known as Grilse, however the vast majority will spend much longer at sea and return as much larger fish. Out at sea the fish feed mainly on small crustacea and it is from the shell of the crustacea that the salmon develops its pink colouration.

The shells contain a natural colour pigmentation known as astaxanthin, which not only colours the flesh but is also important for the healthy growth and well being of the fish. The adult salmon will eventually return to river from which it originated. Once in the river it will stop feeding and will live off its reserve body fats. The salmon then fights its way up the river to the spawning grounds, overcoming major obstacles such as rapids and waterfalls.

In some rivers man has introduced salmon ladders to assist the salmon in overcoming major obstacles, but in the main it is up to the fish to negotiate all the obstacles in its path. It will take the salmon up to a year to reach its spawning grounds. As the salmon get nearer to the spawning grounds changes start to take place in the fish.

The females start to go red, whilst the males turn more of a black colour. At the same time the male develops fighting teeth and the lower jaw hooks upwards to form a kype. These are the tools that he uses to fight off other male salmon in order to get to the female of his desire. Once more the female begins to cut the redd, whilst the males fight for the right to fertilise the females eggs. Thus the cycle begins again!



Graphic - Paul Saint

# From FISA to FIGS

At the May golf meeting of the Fish Industry Sports Association held at Portmarnock Nr Dublin, the committee of past chairman voted unanimously to change the name to the Fish Industry Golf Society.

The Fish Industry Sports Association was set up in February 1946, by leading members of the fish industry, led by Walter Bradfield who was the then Managing Director of the Fish Trades Gazette.

The prime purpose of the Association was to bring together members of the fish industry to participate in sporting activities, which would bring better understanding between the various sectors. For a great number of years various sports were played, including golf, bowls, snooker, cricket. The sports were played on a regional basis with the finals being played at the end of the season. Also, bridge was a popular activity with the finals being played at the Crockford Club, London. Golf was the predominant

game. From the fifties fewer people participated in the sports except for golf, which has lasted. For many years the autumn meeting was held at Gleneagles Hotel, and in the spring Seacroft near Skegness. At the present time there is only one meeting a year. If any member of the fish industry would like to be put on the mailing list please contact Ken Gillie, Bay Tree House, 1 Laxton Garth, Kirk Ella, Hull, HU10 7NN. Tel: 01482 650330.

Or e-mail [jjja@ashtonfishmongers.co.uk](mailto:jjja@ashtonfishmongers.co.uk)

**Mr John Adams (E.Ashtons.Ltd. Cardiff)**

Previous Chairmen of this organisation included many stirring names from the past, which many of our older readers will surely recall. Names like Leonard Merchant, W.A.Bennett, John Green, Stanley Rowe, Sam Stoller, Bill Riddle, Terry Hancock, Walter Bradfield and Denys Bradfield. Do you know of others?

## Busman's holiday

Why is it that fishmongers who visit another area always have to look out for other fish establishments? Usually to commiserate on how bad the trade is, how long can we go on...! So what a delight to find exceptions.

In Norfolk recently we chose a fish restaurant, it proved very worthwhile. A great menu and a fantastic variety of fish. The lobster was served in a variety of ways and the vegetables were all cooked to perfection.

Proprietors Colin and Sarah Bowett, were delighted to be serving fish and Colin, who greeted every customer, was happy to guide you through all of the mouth watering menu.

So if you're in the area, look up 'The Old Forge' Fakenham Road, Thursford, Fakenham. It was so nice to meet someone associated with fish that was not all 'doom and gloom'. This is not intended as an advertisement but just a simple thank you for a very enjoyable meal.

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# Billingsgate's tops for sport

## Almost a secret

Another congratulation. Ron Smith recently took part in a sponsored swim. It was rumoured that he was trying to raise enough money to buy a couple of good players for his beloved West Ham football team. But no, in his very quiet way, head down, he raised over £450.00 for a Prostrate Cancer Charity. Well done Ron.

## What the \$@!?!...

I was recently questioned about bad language in the market and was shown an article in The Times from 1934.

It described that "the expletives were as sweet as the fish".

It also stated that at this time there were probably 2000, yes 2000 porters and you could buy a porters hat for £2.10s - that's about £2.50 in real money!

On Sunday 8th June Billingsgate Football players Lee Fawcett and Lee Barr organised a 5 a side tournament held at the home of football Barkingside F.C., where the 5 a side pitches were divided into two. The teams taking part were:

The Billingsgate Allstars, Silverbacks, Billingsgate Tigers, Buffaloes, Leleu & Morris, Leleu & Morris (Porters), Candy Stripes, Hampton F.C, R.A.O, Supermongers, K.O.B.S.S.

The football was played with great spirit and win or loose, everyone had a great laugh! The support was fantastic with families and friends watching their loved ones and work colleagues running around for the first time in years, for some this was quite a site!

Joking apart it was great that everyone had a go even if 1 or 2 just got passed the first game! All games were tight regardless of the scores but at the end of the day only two teams can reach the final.

These were The Silverbacks and The Billingsgate Allstars, a case of experience vs. youth. Not much could tear the teams apart at the final whistle 1-1 was the score; it was going to take a penalty shot out to find a winner.

The Silverbacks had an advantage as they had a shoot out in the semi's and it was going to take steady nerves and lightning reactions to win. After a series of equal shots and goals the Silverbacks came through with an unforgettable save from Mike Durrell who saved the day

for the Silverbacks!! So the old Billingsgate F.C. goalkeeper, hero of the day helped the Silverbacks win the first 5 a side tournament.

Well done for everyone for turning up and giving up your Sunday to run around and ache for two weeks. Everyone deserved a trophy even the ones who played just 8 minutes.

See you next year!

**Dean Lewis**  
*Billingsgate All Stars*

## PostScript

Gentlemen of Billingsgate please take a bow! (Encore!!!)

What a great performance. Can you believe eleven teams of seven people, and many more people in the organising side of the event ,gave up their Sunday to take part in this event.The whole day was shared with families and friends. The London Retail Fish & Poultry Association applaud your efforts.

Your generosity knows no bounds. What should be told is the amazing amount of money you raised. Over £800.00 which all went to charity. We understand the charity this time was Parents of Autistic Children Together.

It is hoped that this will become an annual event.

Due to a lack of space we are unable to print all the action shots taken as by our resident cameraman Terry Bloomfield, but if you can get down to Billingsgate, all the pictures are there on display.



## Great minds think alike

Why can't we get a small group of people together, preferably keen people who really would like to improve their skills and knowledge of retailing. Who would be prepared to spend a day or two with other fishmongers watching and listening. We are sure The Billingsgate Seafood School would really like to see the Independent fish trade at least take advantage of the facilities that are available. So please give it some thought and speak to any of your council members.

We hope that you've enjoyed the Summer 2003 edition of The 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.

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