

BILLINGSGATE GOSSIP

THE LONDON FISH AND POULTRY RETAIL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2005

Fish Academy at Skill City



Together with Seafish, Billingsgate was represented at Skill City London 2005, the UK's biggest ever national interactive careers and training event for young people. Held at the ExCeL exhibition centre in London's Docklands from 6th-9th July, it was a massive success and we even had the occasional celebrity popping over for a chat.

- Sue Hallman from Salmon Poachers helps a youngster get to grips with an Octopus

- David Grant, singer and judge from BBC1's Fame Academy, popped over for some career advice from Charlie Caisey



- Duncan Lucas from Salmon Poachers was on hand to demonstrate his fishmongering skills



Market Art

We are pleased and proud to announce that Virginia Powell (above), Billingsgate's own lady artist, will be exhibiting her work at Abbott & Holder Ltd, 30 Museum Street WC1A 1LH from October 13-22. We hope you'll show your support and maybe even spot yourself captured on canvas.



Seafood Week 2005

Seafood Week is one of the biggest, exciting and most inclusive national events of the year with thousands of seafood businesses and organisations working together to celebrate seafood and the many benefits it offers.

Feeling Good With Seafood is the main theme for this year's event. Seafood Week 2005 takes place from 4-14 October.

Previous years have seen support from well known celebrity chefs including Gordon Ramsay.

For more information on national and regional events during Seafood Week check out the website. www.seafish.org/seafoodweek

Up the Hammers!

To our many distant readers that's West Ham United. On a recent Sunday, a family fun day was organised by Lee Fawsitt and friends. The venue was at the grounds of Billingsgate's favourite team! No refunds to Arsenal, Chelsea, 'Spurs or Orient supporters.

A great day was had by everyone, the estimated number who attended was in the region of 400 to 500. The Gossip has been promised a full report, and we hope to give more details in our next issue.

We understand that once again the generosity of the Market and their friends raised a good sum of money for charity.

BILLINGSGATE SEAFOOD TRAINING SCHOOL

Dear Colleagues,

GTA & Seafood School Merger

To formalize the long standing relationship between the London Seafish Group Training Association (GTA) and The Seafood School the two organisations have now merged. This move is supported by Seafish who have a continued commitment to training for the onshore seafood sector. This also reflects the fact that as the Seafood School has become busier many students who attend courses come from across the Southern Region of the UK, not just from within London.

The GTA's management committee who is made up of industry representatives are now the Training Advisory Committee for the Seafood School which makes sure the industry training offered at the School is relevant to industry. I would also like to introduce Walter Purkis (Walter Purkis & Sons, www.purkis4fish.com) to Gossip readers as our new representative on our committee from the fishmongering trade. We always welcome experienced industry representatives to join us, if you are interested please contact us.

Free Billingsgate Videos

As readers to our newsletter we are now offering you the opportunity to reserve your free Billingsgate videos. These quality assessment and fish identification videos capture the buzz of the working market and have been produced with support from Fishmongers' Company, Seafish, the Corporation of London, LFMA and the National Federation of Fishmongers. The two titles that we are currently copying (on video CD format) for general release are:

'Quality Assessment and Fish Identification' by Chris Leftwich, Chief Inspector Fishmongers' Company.

Chris visits the market floor and illustrates seven different species ranging from crab to shark. The video is modular so we can incorporate the individual species within PowerPoint presentations and also make them available as downloads on our website.

'A Fishmonger's Buying Guide to Billingsgate' by Charlie Caisey, National Federation of Fishmongers.

Charlie offers his extensive experience in buying at Billingsgate to illustrate how the Market operates and how to identify good and bad quality. Essential viewing for species identification and anyone (not only fishmongers) that would like to buy fish from Billingsgate.

We have also produced two shorter videos that will be available from our website www.seafoodtraining.org. These are 'An Overview of Billingsgate Market' by Michael Desmond, Corporation of London, and a promotional video introducing the scope of the training opportunities at the Seafood School.

To reserve your videos please either come along to Office 28 or send a stamp addressed envelop of suitable size to hold standard CDs to: Free Video Offer, C/o Adam Whittle, Billingsgate Seafood Training School, Office 28 Billingsgate Market, Trafalgar Way, London E14 5ST.

Get into Fishmongering!

Last October this event was a great idea waiting to happen; now with four over subscribed events under our belt the Seafood School at Billingsgate is delighted to be able to announce a new series of free courses for people wanting to get into fishmongering. These events

are free to attendees but are sponsored by Seafish and The National Federation of Fishmongers.

The day is a motivational introduction to fishmongering, open to anyone who wants to work in the seafood industry. Our focus is on encouraging new start up businesses by giving practical training together with a first hand insight into the business. The response to the first four events has been fantastic, so far at least 8 out of the 32 students have gone forward to set up their own businesses!

The next three courses will be held at Billingsgate Seafood Training School on:

1st September, 13th October, 8th December.

New training dates for Autumn 2005

- Knife Skills: 9th Sep, 21st Oct, 25th Nov.
- Quality Assessment of Fish for EHOs - 15th Sept.
- Quality Assessment of Shellfish for EHOs - 27th Oct.
- Steve Pini's Chef Master Class - 21st Sept, 5th Oct, 18th Nov.
- C. J. Jackson Fish for every night of the week - 13th Sept.
- C. J. Jackson Global Fish - 11th Oct.
- C. J. Jackson Catch of the Day - 8th Oct.
- C. J. Jackson Shellfish preparation & cooking - 3 rd Dec.
- Duncan Lucas Passionate about Fish - 24th Sept.
- Duncan Lucas Passionate about Shellfish - Sat 22nd Oct.
- Duncan Lucas Children's Cookery - 17th Sept.



• Executive Head Chef Steve Pini offers his exclusive master class at Fishmongers' Hall.

Free Courses for Industry

City & Guilds Seafood Retail Certificate 4th & 5th Oct.

Seafish Scholarship 25th & 26th October.

Full details and reservations can be made at Office 28 or at www.seafoodtraining.org

Please call 020 7517 3545 for further information regarding the above items.

Best wishes,

Adam Whittle

Development Manager
Billingsgate Seafood Training School

Seafood Jobfinder

Got into Fishmongering

The Norris brothers John and Daniel are becoming regular faces at Billingsgate after successfully launching their business in April this year. They first were in contact with the Seafood School back in October of 2004 when they both attended the first 'Get into Fishmongering' event. Since then they have worked closely with John Wright, the well established fishmonger to gain experience. The Seafood School also supported them by offering knife skills events, City & Guilds Seafood Retail Certificates and the pilot Seafish Scholarship Programme to help them gain the necessary skills to make their business a reality.

"The training at the Seafood School was excellent, practical and also really friendly and accessible," explains John. "As the School is based at the market there is the great opportunity not only to find out about a vast selection of species available but it



- *The Norris Brothers (Daniel and John) each side of Fishmonger John Wright.*

is a great way to get introduced to the merchants and find out the different varieties of seafood each offer."

Both brothers currently still work part time in IT support and are gradually building the fishmongering business from the current stall in Tachbrook Street market (in Pimlico).

"We will soon be opening another outlet in St. Albans Broadway Market," said Daniel. "We are also building a delivery trade to local restaurants and pubs. The plan is to be working full time in the business from August this year."

The guys regular buy across the market, using A. A. Lyons, Leleu & Morris, Barton & Hart, Bennett's, Mick's Eels, Stockwell's and Viviers.

"The buying at the market is very much built on trust," said John. "Any problems we have, are always sorted out with a simple phone call. Like many other traders the one thing we would like to change about the market is the opening times. It would be great if the trade could have access to earlier trading and maybe later opening times for the general public."

As can be seen from the photo of the Tachbrook Street Market stall the business is definitely top end with wild salmon, bass, wild sea trout, tuna and scallops accounting for good trade.

"We are aiming on offering excellent customer service with first class Billingsgate fish to ensure our customers keep coming back," explains Daniel.

"We are also developing our own website to help promote the business in the future; www.norrisbrothers.co.uk will be coming online soon!"

Job opportunity at Ken Green Fish Fish Merchant & Fishmonger required

34 High Street, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, C015 1UQ
Tel: 01255 423 357

Ken is looking for an enthusiastic person to help in this business as he moves towards retirement. The business smokes and cures fish as well selling wet fish to the wholesale and retail trade. Salary for this full time position is dependant on the individuals experience; all interested parties should contact Ken using the above contact details.

Experienced fishmonger/ manager required For busy indoor market in Watford

3 days a week Tuesday, Friday and Saturday

The best candidate...

- Must have experience in wet fish preparation and/or fish cooking
- Will possess outstanding customer service skills
- Must have a positive attitude to work, in a can-do environment
- Must be flexible, approachable and have the ability to smile!
- Should be sales driven and quality focused

In return we offer an excellent salary and the ability to develop in this fast growing small independent business.

Please ring Ross for an informal chat on 01727 860519
or 07973 359363

Mackenzie Brothers – Sales Personnel

Mackenzie Brothers are the Fish Specialist to the Catering Trade. We have vacancies for sales personnel to join our professional team. The successful applicants must have experience of the fish industry or a catering background and be smart, energetic and well organised with a passion for quality seafood. A polite telephone manner is essential, and computer skills are essential.

To find out more about our company visit:

www.mackenziebros.co.uk, the position offers excellent career opportunities.

CVs - to Carla Mackenzie, Unit 3 Riverside Estate, Gillender St. Bromley by Bow. London. E3 3JW,
or E-mail: fish@mackenziebros.co.uk

For enquiries about
The Billingsgate Seafood Training School
please contact Adam Whittle, Office 28,
Billingsgate Market, London E14 5ST.

Tel: 020 7517 3545

Fax: 020 7517 3535

E-mail: newsletter@seafoodtraining.org

Web: www.seafoodtraining.org

GOSSIP FROM THE SEAFOODSCHOOL

By Lyn Gower

As some of you may have noticed, Perle Alcide has left the school after four years. She had been the administrator and lynch pin almost since the school opened in 2000. She has done sterling work and we wish her well in the future.

If you have been into office 28 recently you will have met her successor, Jahanara Begum (Jay) who is fast coming to terms with a world which revolves around fish. So with Jay AND Adam joining the team in the last two months, our workforce has doubled – it needed to, to cope with the extra work that the increasing popularity of the schools courses has brought.

We held our first Seafish Scholarship course just before Easter. This 2 day course which is free for the successful students, is totally funded by Seafish and is intended for people working in the industry - especially fishmongers, who want to gain a deeper insight into the products and the industry as a whole. One of the students who comes from Newton Abbott in Devon, wrote, "I want to say how great the Seafish Scholarship

course was... definitely worth coming back from holiday a day early. The tuition was superb... would have loved for it to carry on"

We are accepting applications for the next one, to be held on 25 & 26 October, so if you are interested, apply to Lyn, Adam or Terri in Office 28.

The provision of the Scholarships makes 3 different free courses we are able to offer to new or aspiring fishmongers. We will have held 9 free courses of different types by the end of the year. There will be one to suit YOU, so check out the website www.seafoodtraining.org or call into the office for details.

No news yet on our proposed new facilities, we're still trying to get the funding in place, but it's looking more likely that it will happen in December/January than August. I suppose it's only to be expected that they take a long time to consider the application, when it is such a big project, but we keep reminding ourselves, it'll be great when it's done.

Dinner Dance

A rather early reminder that the Association's Dinner Dance will take place at The Lakeside Moat House Hotel, North Stifford, Grays, Essex on Sunday 30th of October 2005. Tickets and reservations will soon be available. Further information will be reaching you soon.

Anyone seen two crabs?

Would the smartly dressed young man in his full regalia of white hat and very clean coat please donate the value of two beautifully dressed crabs (of excellent quality, prepared by a very ancient gentleman) to my favourite charity, The Fishmongers & Poulterers Institution. So glad you enjoyed them. I will gladly demonstrate how easily they can be prepared at no extra charge.

ADVERTISEMENT

We need you...

The London Fish and Poultry Retail Association is a working arm of the National Federation of Fishmongers. Membership of the National Federation is available to everybody who works in the fish trade. When you join the National Federation you automatically become a member of the London Association which entitles you to many excellent benefits including:

- £5,000,000 public liability insurance
- Our insurance brokers offer tailor made packages for Fishmongers
- Legal helpline
- Up to date information on fish legislation and labelling
- 'The Billingsgate Gossip' delivered to your door

To join today tel: 01376 571391



...and you need us!



Blagdens - A Swan song

As most people are aware Blagdens ceased trading on Saturday 30/4/05. A very sad day for all of us here, many a tear was shed, by customers and myself alike. With my son Joseph now unemployed the bitter blow is magnified. I was a third generation fishmonger in the family and my son was due one day to continue.

Independent retailers of any discipline are hard to find in this increasing advance to homogeneity. There was a knowledge, pride and understanding at our shop that alas is becoming second place in many of our stores. I feel that there is also a loss to the community, of not just a supplier of food, but a resource of humanity for the community. Why has this happened? Well I am sure most people are aware of

the now proven disastrous effects of the Congestion Charge. We lost 20% of our business overnight and for 2 years and 2 months such a diminution of customer base absorbed our financial resources. I simply cannot afford to trade anymore.

freedom

The timing was wrong, the attitude of the traffic wardens is appalling, and most of all the warden has no appreciation of the economic environment on which he seeks to police. 'The insolence of office' as Shakespeare would put it.

Our geography, the nature of the goods we sell and our specialist skills and products are what is expected in the city centre. We rely on freedom of movement and a measure of spontaneity that the CC actively

discourages. A rhetorical question: How many Fishmongers, Poulterers and Game Dealers are there in the satellite shopping centres such as Brent Cross and Bluewater? Yet Transport for London seem quite happy to have us all shop in an homogenous, soulless and dreary way.

May I thank all our customers who also remain our friends for their kind support in the past. The appreciative letters, the gifts and sympathy all help salve the blow. God Bless you all and Good-bye.

*David Joe Blagden,
Peter Albert Curd.
Formerly Blagden Fishmongers*

Boxing for Billingsgate

From Dean Lewis - Deanos Fish

A month ago I was approached by Michael Desmond from the Corporation of London. "The Real Fight Club" had approached him asking if the market would be interested in taking part in a boxing event against Smithfield meat market. Michael put them on to me and that's where the action begins.

ROUND 1, I met up with Dominic, one of the organisers, at the Peacock Gym, Silvertown, where some great boxers from around the world have trained. We hit it off straight away. As I have previously boxed and still manage to do 15 one minute rounds every week, Dominic asked me if I would like to come down to the gym and train, and get an insight into "white collar boxing". After a couple of visits members of the Fight Club asked if I would like to help promote this event. Having boxed since I was 9, (I'm 31 now) and with all that knowledge I realised this was a great honour.

ROUND 2, "White collar boxers" are normal working people, bricklayers, city slickers, cab drivers, dustman, teachers, from every walk of life. The same sort of people who play football on a Sunday afternoon and think they are the b*****s and are then down the teams local pub where they're hailed a hero for that great goal scored. It's a great feeling. The same feeling when that 3rd ROUND ends and family, friends and complete strangers all stand clapping, surprised to see you do so well.

ROUND 3, That's it you see, no one wins, its like adults sparring, nothing out of hand. Do you think I would put anyone I know in danger? All the fighters are matched according to their ability, weight and experience. The worst you'll get in these fights is a bloody nose.

ROUND 4, This event has caused a lot of interest in Smithfield where they have a committee of four organising it. There is a long history of boxing at Billingsgate. The few remaining boxers, Bobby

Umwin, Terry Skinner and Keith Wilson, plus the armchair supporters of the sport must be reading this and ageing with me.

ROUND 5, This is a big event. With the success of the "Inside Story" documentary about the market, Dom and I have sold the rights to a television production company. What a feeling, your fight on TV! Two of the most famous markets in the world taking part in a boxing event! The venue for this event is York Hall, Bethnal Green (the home of boxing) December 10 2005.

ROUND 6, I am starting to feel the pace here. So if you're interested in taking part in this amazing event, whether you work in the market, you're a buyer, or you know a friend who would like to take part, contact me.

ROUND 7, Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stand in the ring and have a go? Or do you want to show your kids that their Daddy is a real hero. Well here's your chance. It's over to you.



Lowestoft Fish Fayre

On a beautiful sunny June day, the Billingsgate contingent were out supporting the Lowestoft Fish Fayre on the Suffolk coast.

Over three and a half thousand other people were there as well, enjoying the huge variety of stands on the 5 acre site of the fish docks and harbour. One of the

stands was manned by Billingsgate porter Gary Shaw who sold smoked fish and dressed crabs to raise money for the National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, who were the main beneficiaries of the day. Gary, dressed in traditional Billingsgate porters gear, attracted lots of attention and was persuaded by the crowd to give a demonstration of carrying fish boxes on his head. A great bit of publicity for the market.

There were stands provided by RNLI, Fisheries Protection, CEFAS and many others. A major attraction were the 15 vessels alongside, which were open to the public.

These included the oldest (over 80 years) Lowestoft driftnetter "Excelsior" which is still in use as a training ship, there was also one of the old Lowestoft beamers which, since the closure of the auction facilities in Lowestoft is working out of Holland.

Live music, provided throughout the day by several local bands, a demonstration of water skiing on the harbour and the best fish and chips I have eaten for years all contributed to a marvellous atmosphere and a really fun day out.

Why not go up to the wilds of Suffolk yourself next year and join in, it's well worth the trip and you'll meet lots of friends old and new.



• Ray Sandys giving young Gary some hints on selling.
Photo: Terry Bloomfield

ADVERTISEMENT

fawsittfishltd

Billingsgate's newest
wholesaler
looks forward to
serving you

Satisfaction guaranteed

Office 4, Billingsgate Market
London E14 5ST
Telephone: 020 7987 9933
Mobile: 07966 475099

Are we listening?

A conversation recently on the demise of the 'Independent' trader, in this case a butcher based in a secondary row of shops. Established some 30 years, skilled, obliging, not over priced and his trade was declining - shut all day Monday, half day Thursday (gone by 12.50), Saturday finished by 1.45, and closed for lunch 1 'til 2 or perhaps a extra 10 minutes! Just a thought, it may not be relevant or have things been good for 30 years? Oh and shut for 2 weeks holiday every year!

Your 2005 Council

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

Send us your Gossip

Send us your gossip and you could be in the next issue!
The Gossip, 67 Albany Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4AE.
Or e-mail: gossipnews@macmail.com