

BILLINGSGATE GOSSIP

THE LONDON FISH AND POULTRY RETAIL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2003

Farewell David

Mr David Butcher OBE retired in November after 24 years as Clerk and Superintendent of Billingsgate Market. He was appointed on the 1st March 1979 as successor to Charles Wiard MBE who had held the post for many years. He is the third liveryman of the Poulterers' Company to hold the office as both Mr. Wiard and his predecessor, Thomas Dove were also members of that Livery. He came from the private sector where for many years he had worked in Smithfield in a family transport business.

The most memorable and successful event for which he has been responsible was the successful move of the Market in 1979 from Lower Thames Street to West India Docks.

professional

Mr. Butcher was respected for his firmly held beliefs and his wide knowledge of the fish industry. He was a member of the UK Fish Industry Forum and Sea Fish Industry Authority's Technology and Food Legislation Advisory Committees and was an Officer Adviser on fish matters to the Wholesale Markets Committee of the National Association of British Market Authorities.

He has also been an active member of the World Union of Wholesale Markets and was made UK Director in 2002/03. His

services to the fish industry were recognised in 2000 when he was appointed on Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in the Millennium New Year's Honours List.

Throughout his career he was known for his professionalism and helpful manner. Many visitors will remember their early morning tours of Billingsgate Market under his guidance followed by a breakfast of smoked salmon and toast in the Superintendent's Office.

...and a big thank you from The LFPR

The London Fish & Poultry Retail Association would like to add to the many good wishes that David Butcher received on his retirement.

David has always been a great supporter of our association, from the first day of his appointment. Many of our members have called upon him to advise and help, you could always be certain of a reply. "No" meant exactly that, followed quickly by the reason why. "Yes" meant someone who would be there from start to finish and would not accept or expect any praise.

So may your retirement be long and happy Good Luck and Good Health.

Star-fish



Ex 'Steps' band member Lisa Scott Lee with Phil Palfrey at the 'Explore the Shore' exhibition at the Excel Centre, Docklands in November

Dinner Dance '03



Fun time... Paul Fawcett, Micky Simmonett, Mark Morris and Lee Barr

The now famous Dinner dance of the Year. On the 26th October 2003 The London Fish & Poultry Retail Association Chairman's Dinner Dance was held at The Lakeside Moat House Hotel, Essex. Thanks yet again to Lee and Nicola Fawcett the event was a tremendous success. The principal guest was The President of the National Federation of Fishmongers' Gordon Sage and his wife Maureen.

Many well known wholesalers gave us great support, our thanks to them for without their attendance we as retailers would look pretty thin on the ground!

Seasons Greetings

from The London Fish & Poultry Retailers' Association.

We hope that you enjoy the Winter 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', 67 Albany Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4AE.

E-mail: gossipnews@macmail.com

Roy Lambert obituary

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Roy Lambert who passed away in November.

Roy started work in the market for Jack Hayward (Billingsgate) Ltd. He eventually bought the company which he ran very successfully. Roy was always ready to joke and laugh with everyone, and his constant smile was a pleasure to see, an excellent salesman who will be sadly missed by all.

Greater London Seafish - Group Training Association

Dear Colleagues

Happy Christmas and festive greetings all round! As another year comes to a close, it is time to sink a few glasses to mulled wine and look forward to 2004! After a great 2003 our plans for 2004 are threefold. Firstly, to continue to help the industry access effective training; secondly to promote the seafood industry and finally through our job finder service help both companies and individuals find staff and work in the industry.

Oceans of Opportunity promoting careers in the Seafood Industry

A major campaign to promote the industry to school leavers will be launched by Seafish in the New Year. Initially going out to 5000 schools nationwide, 'Oceans of Opportunity' is an interactive CD pack that promotes all careers available to young people within the Seafood Industry. A key part to the package is a series of short videos showing young and successful people who describe their careers within the industry; it is good to see some familiar Billingsgate faces in there to! Myself, Lyn and Phil Palfrey from Seafish had the chance to test the package when we exhibited at a careers fair aptly called 'Explore the Shore' at Excel in Docklands earlier this month. We had good interest from young people about different careers open to them. We are now working on introducing these young people to local businesses to help them find their first job!

Fitting Learning into Life

This is one of the biggest challenges everyone faces. While it is easy to see the benefits of training, how do you find time to fit it into your life? While there is no easy answer, one option is the learner-direct courses that the GTA is able to offer. These can be taken on any computer that has an internet connection and cover areas such as business management, customer care, financial skills, introduction to computers and word processing, spreadsheets, presentations and databases. These courses are free and the GTA will help organize these from any business within the London Seafood Industry. If you don't want to tie up your business phone line or internet connection charges put you off, then read on. We can also organize FREE high speed internet connections for businesses that want to use this opportunity. Naturally, this internet connection can be used for other aspects of your business and help your business grow in the future.

Better than FREE training

The Employer Training Pilot (ETP) is a scheme currently in operation by the London East Learning & Skills Council. The ETP offers free training for employees and compensation to employers for the time employees spend away from work. This is one of only seven such schemes operating nationally and will run until August 2004. This project is specifically aimed at smaller businesses within 10 local

London Boroughs. There are some conditions, however, if you like a great deal and want your staff to develop please contact the GTA for a list of the training opportunities available.

Please do not hesitate from contacting us if you would like to discuss any of these opportunities.

Best wishes over the festive season!

Adam Whittle - GTA Development Manager

Seafood Job Finder

Young fishmongers wanted for FREE training. During 2004 Billingsgate Seafood Training School will be running another free City and Guilds course in Seafood Retail. Register now for this excellent 2 day course that is free for young people who want to either get into the industry or improve their existing skills. Tel: 020 7517 3545

M&J expanding in 2004

M&J Seafoods - London - A significant variety and number of opportunities are currently available and more during early 2004 with M&J Seafoods in London, contact:

Ian Robinson MInstSMM
Sales Development Manager
Office - Maidstone 01622 817 012
Mobile 07776 256 943
Email: ian.robinson@brake.co.uk

Recruitment of staff for M&J new site in Park Royal March/April 2004. M&J are looking for 45 staff in total initially day one, increasing as sales grow.

Key areas

- fresh fish block, portioning, picking nights / day.
- Sales field, telesales, night clerks
- Freezer warehouse
- Drivers
- Office Admin
- Senior Management

Full time Frier required at Hardy's, Petts Wood, Orpington Contact Glen Hardy for further information on 07813 800 372 or email at granthardy1@aol.com

Piers Phipps is looking to employ a fish sales person early in 2004 for further details contact him at pachp@globalnet.co.uk

If you have any job opportunities or would like to promote your own skills to prospective employers free here and on our website www.london-seafish.org.uk or please contact Adam on 020 7517 3545 or email 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

...postscript from *The Gossip*

Don't say that you "dont know!" You do now !!! The London G.T.A. has on offer a 2 day fishmongering course, FREE! yes free! So come on you people who say "we cannot get staff" or "where can we get some training" Put up or shut up!

Superfish takes on flexible food hygiene training from the GTA

Superfish is the latest London Seafood company to use the Greater London GTA's open learning route towards the Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene.

"As part of our staff training programme we are now using this flexible package for our key staff," explains Michael Rhodes owner of Superfish. "Individuals work at their own speed, through a well written work book and then sit an exam in our premises organized through the GTA. This makes the whole process nice and easy and flexible to fit in with our business."

Superfish was formed in 1971 with a capital of £4000, and opened its first branch in Isleworth, Middlesex. Steady self financed expansion over the years has resulted in seven branches in Surrey, with a staff of over a hundred and twenty and an

annual turnover in excess of £2.5 million. 420 tonnes of potatoes from Cambridgeshire and Essex are used each year producing three quarters of a million portions of chips; 120 tonnes of fish are used each year, cod accounts for 70% of sales.

In addition to superb fish and chips, Superfish has developed over

the years characteristics of the American Family Diner and the French Bistro. Superfish have always been innovative and have jointly developed with various range companies a modular style of Frying with a very efficient overhead extraction system. They were one of the first restaurant chains to be licensed and now in addition to their range of fried fish our able to offer all their items grilled. "Our units have been designed by a highly competent team of designers," explains Michael. "Contract cleaners work throughout the night to maintain high standards of hygiene. Staff training is an important part of our business and we recognize that only with well trained staff can your business expand and develop".



Oak Lodge Salmon - Gearing up for Christmas

During a recent visit to Oak Lodge Salmon, Ken Condon met up with Oak Lodge Salmon owner Peter Bennett to catch up and see how recent improvements to their factory are helping them gear up for the busy Christmas period.

"I have known Peter for years," says Ken. "I always have joked with him that my traditional smoked salmon was far superior to his fish but have been amazed at how Oak Lodge have developed their processes and systems in recent years."

Both men despite their jokes are passionate about their fish and Peter's enthusiasm for the business and the smoking techniques he uses is clear. Now, new machinery in the wet fish room is helping Oak Lodge start with the best fish even before they enter the kilns. "Recent improvements at our



factory in Eastbury Road (E6, London) have changed how we receive our fish and how we initially process them," explains Peter. We obviously have close links with our suppliers and now receive the majority of our fish in totes rather than polystyrene boxes. This reduces our labour requirement and our manual handling significantly. There is also the environmental benefit too, as the totes are reused and we do not have to dump polystyrene boxes into landfill. The totes feed straight into our mechanized line for splitting salmon. This is a remarkable new plant from a Scandinavian company which we are thrilled with. If we ever need the capacity we can now fillet up to 15 fish per minute! This is giving us great consistency to the product and helps the business as manual salmon splitting is rapidly becoming a dying art!

Christmas is a particularly busy time of year for Oak Lodge Salmon, with smoked salmon on many families' menus over the festive period. "We supply many wholesalers and exclusive retailers alike," says Peter. "We also market under our own brand Royal Scottish. I would like to take this opportunity to wish our customers a Happy Christmas and also ask anyone interested in our products to give us call on 020 75111242."

Billingsgate Seafood Training School news

The school has been getting busier than ever over the past few months with more schools applying to come than we can accommodate. The interest in the courses we offer schools has increased dramatically since we ran a course for Primary school pupils in September, which was featured in an article in The Telegraph.

Charlie, Ken and Paula also took a shortened version of the schools course to Guys Hospital for children in the school there. The kids were really appreciative, in spite of all their ailments and disabilities and were fascinated by the various fish we had taken. They came and went during the morning as they had to go for treatment, but we had about 10 children altogether. It was definitely worthwhile doing! The school has just been nominated for a Business award in recognition of the work done with schools by Greenwich Education Business Partnership.

Our first Open Day on 8th October was more successful than we expected, so much so, that we kept running out of food - we'll get it right next time. The artist Virginia Powell, who you see in the market sold several of her pictures from the exhibition of her work and donated a large percentage of the proceeds to the school. Thank you for that Virginia and thank you to



all those from the market who came up to see us, it is great to know that we have your support. Talking of support, through the pages of The Gossip, I would like to thank L & D Hart for the very generous donation they made to the school. The school is very dependent on charitable donations to fund the courses we run for children and

young people. We aim to make a profit from commercial and public courses we run, but there is never enough to enable us to accommodate all the schools which apply. So a big THANK YOU to Harts.

In October we ran our first FREE 2 day City & Guilds course for fishmongers. Nine trainees attended and eight completed the two days. We are expecting to run another course in 2004, so if there are any young fishmongers out there who would like to enrol for this course, which will give you a nationally recognised qualification, give Lyn or Adam a ring on 020 7517 3548.

Also in October we organised a Fork Lift course for employees of C. Holmes and Company. I'm happy to say they all passed with flying colours and were awarded their licences.

If anyone else is interested in a Fork Lift course, we will be running more next year, so again, give us a call.

Gossip's Gone North

Don't believe all you read in the newspapers!

Did you know?

- The current haddock stock is the largest for 35 years
- The cod recovery plan *IS* working
- Nephrops and herring stocks are in good shape & scientists have recommended an increase in quota

Bet you never saw any of these make the headlines, as once again the press favours the "doom and gloom" scenario for the industry, telling the public the North Sea is empty and that the whole sector is just about to give its last gasp.

Fed up with the negative publicity, and in an effort to increase consumer awareness of the real situation in the seafood industry, Seafood Scotland kicked off their positive promotion campaign in Brussels on 16 December, holding a "Celebration of Scottish Seafood" event for the press and ministers who had turned up to attend the annual round of quota-setting talks. Apart from giving guests the opportunity to sample top quality Scottish seafood, they were given information on the success stories of the Scottish industry, from sustainable fishing projects through to quality improvements from first capture through to consumption.

Focusing on haddock, Nephrops & herring the campaign will gather momentum in the New Year, with promotions involving retailers and friers, which will be run in tandem with increased media coverage to increase public awareness and to show them that the industry IS committed to a bright and sustainable future!

For further information please contact Seafood Scotland on:

0131 557 9344 e-mail enquiries@seafoodscotland.org www.seafoodscotland.org



• Above - the new Starlight Rays, sailing out of its home harbour of Peterhead. The new whitefish vessel was repossessed by a bank and on the list for decommissioning. James Thores, the new owner, bought it a couple of months ago from the bank as he wanted a larger and newer vessel as he is confident and committed to the future of the fishing industry.

What a great article from our Northern correspondent. Who said we are finished? Nobody said it was easy, but was it ever? At least there are still people who believe we have a future. Congatulations to John Thores, good luck to all who sail on the Starlight Rays