

# BILLINGSGATE GOSSIP

THE LONDON FISH AND POULTRY RETAIL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2002

## What does the New Year hold for Billingsgate

In the Spring 2003 issue of The Gossip (February) we would like to bring you comments from the market about the future of Billingsgate and its rumoured relocation.

As this is a subject that will affect everybody we feel that now is the time for you to put your pens where your mouths are and give us your opinion. It's YOUR market!

## Colin takes over at 100 year old fishmongers

Condon Fishmongers of Wandsworth is now in the hands of Colin Bourne.

Colin worked with Ken Condon for twenty years, until Ken's retirement two years ago. Colin managed the shop for two years, but he now has full control.

He will still smoke fish in the traditional manner in the smoke house that has a brick built into it commemorating the Coronation of Edward VII in June 1902.

Although the variety and style of fishmongering has changed over the years, it is good to see the younger generation of fishmongers carrying on with some of the old traditions.

Good luck to him and long may he continue.

## Social event of the year?

The L.F.P.R.A Annual Dinner Dance was held on 27th October 2002.

The Chairman Ray Sandys and his wife Gill welcomed his guest to the Lakeside Moat House Hotel, Essex.

His guests included Peter Mann (President of the National Federation of Fishmongers) and his wife Jeanne from Sheffield. Hob knobbing on the 'top' table were Steve Davis, (Past Chairman) and wife Christine.

Roy and Maureen Jefferies, great to see you both looking so fit and well, It must be those sea breezes! Roy had among his guests Brian and Barbara Matthews and Ken and Pat Condon. Ken (our Treasurer) promised he would sort out his blood pressure but decided the wine would do the trick.

Terry Murphy (Fishy Business, Upminster), glad to see a HAPPY retailer making enough money to bring his 'poor' relations. Only kidding Les, good to see such a great family.

Happy memories? Good to see Lorne Mash (Brixton) and family, with mum Lou not looking any different with her lovely friendly smile, which hasn't changed for years.

Gordon Sage (Hundreds, Rochford) Yet another table of family and friends, glad to see 'young' son Graham was keeping all in order !!! Alison, the Essex sea front air must be better than vitamin tablets? Where did you find all your dancing energy from? 'Waddy' Hodges and wife Pat, you both look great. How can you even think of retiring? 'Waddy' thanks for coming. ('Waddy', known you for years and could not remember your name,

asked favourite son, now I know, but I will stick to 'Waddy') Tony Lyons table, family, friends, staff all having a great time. So good to see so many "YOUNG" people (well around the ——??). Must give a mention to one of our newest market friends, Bill Lyons. I wish you luck for the future. See you next year. Thanks for all your support .A special thank you to Sue Lyons (Joint Secretary) for your continued work for the Association.

Peter and Lynn Morris were kept busy all evening with a table of seventeen!! What a " family" to adopt - the dancing wizard, HARRY POTTER, alias Lee Barr, the QUIET MAN, Ian Macgregor, Andy Stearn, wide awake (not sleeping in the van!!), Paul looking after his "little" brother .

We understand son Mark had other things on his mind? Trust he told Mum & Dad first ! Still you did have Brian to keep everyone in order.

I have not mentioned all the charming ladies on your table, but word has it that the Chairman threatens to do a " Peter Stringfellow" and have his own table of lovelies next year. That would leave the "boys" to entertain one another!!! (Thank you Peter for your continued support). Another couple who will always be welcome are John & Ann Masters, both looking relaxed and enjoying semi-retirement. Good to see you both!

### show tunes

Dave Shepperdson and Julie, like quite a few others, had great trouble , battling through horrendous traffic, but arrived to find friends Richard Gaveny & Katey had travelled from Wales without to much bother!!! (Should we consider the next Dinner be held in Abergavenny?).

What can we say about another of our guests, always got a smile and so full of enthusiasm for our trade, Libby Woodhatch from the G.T.A & SEAFOOD SCHOOL. Thank you for the support you are always ready to give to all our Members. Good luck to both Ian and yourself in the future.

A special mention for some great entertainment from Darren King and his group. Thank you so much, hope to see you again.

How lucky we are to have the great voice of Darren, and someone amongst our guests to give us such a fine rendering of two wonderful show tunes - take a bow Phil Cavell.

Our thanks also to the hotel for their care and attention.

To end our report, what can we say to Lee and Nicola Fawsitt, but ,thank you once again for all your hard work and for a wonderful evening. Please continue the good work next year!

Season's Greetings

The London  
Fish and Poultry Retailer's Association  
and The Billingsgate Gossip  
wish all our readers a  
Very Merry Christmas and  
a most Prosperous New Year

## Greater London Seafish - *Group Training Association*

### Dear Colleagues

#### Computer Room - Time is running out!

The free computer courses that are run throughout the week in the IT Suite in Office 3 at Billingsgate will come to an end in June 2003, leaving those of you that still haven't joined a class less than 6 months to do so.

The funding to run the IT room and provide tutors comes via an European Social Fund Project co-ordinated by Newham College, and after two extra tranches of funding that have enabled us to keep the project going for 18 months longer than we originally anticipated, this really is the end!

So, if you've been putting off coming to see us why not pop in and see what we have on offer, before it is too late.

#### New Opportunities

Although many are seeing the proposed move of Billingsgate from its current site in Docklands as a threat to the future of the market, we hope it will provide the perfect opportunity for Billingsgate to finally get the services and facilities essential for any competitive fish market in the 21st century at a new single site.

Visits to other markets in Europe and the wider world clearly indicate that we are being left behind, and with increasing legislation and increased demands for higher quality and standards from customers, it's time we caught up and started deciding exactly what facilities we will need to achieve this.

#### Billingsgate Seafood Training School – Catching a New Generation of Fish Eaters

Apart from a number of courses for the public and counter staff from some of the UK's largest multiple retailers the greatest success of the Seafood School this term has been seeing 150 school children come on courses to raise their awareness of fish and the fish

industry, and learn to appreciate its versatility as a simple and nutritious food.

While we are all preoccupied with the future of Billingsgate, and where it will end up, we must not lose sight of the fact that unless people keep eating fish we may as well pack up and go home now. The majority of children that arrive at the start of our courses say they dislike fish and claim that they never eat it at home, because, "It's full of bones, smells bad, and besides it's too hard to cook!"

Fortunately our courses have an unbroken track record of convincing them otherwise, and after a few hours of finding out all about fish, and sampling a variety of mouth-watering fish recipes they are normally all converts, taking away fish recipes to try out in their own schools and homes, and ready to make an informed choice on why to choose fish next time they have a meal outside the home.

So, if you are interested in securing your long term future why not come and see what we have on offer, or perhaps help us with the cost of running these free courses by supplying us with the small quantities of fish and shellfish we need for each course.

#### Congratulations!

Finally congratulations to our very own "Webmaster Whittle", for winning a "Highly Commended" award at the recent East London & Essex Business Awards – to check out the Seafood School's Site so expertly put together by Adam, please go to [www.seafoodtraining.org](http://www.seafoodtraining.org). If you don't know how to access this site then it's high time you came on one of our free computer training courses!

Best wishes for Christmas and New Year

Libby Woodhatch  
Development Manager

## Billingsgate Seafood Training School – New Courses for 2003

The Seafood Training School's exciting new programme for 2003 was launched in mid-November, and kicks off on 8 January with a one-day practical knife skills course, perfect for those of you who wish you had more confidence with a filleting knife.

Throughout the year we also have a whole host of other practical and demonstration courses, using our team of experts including CJ Jackson, Duncan Lucas, Bob Cox, and the excellent team from 'notjustfood', with Christmas Gift Certificates available now for all of these courses.

We can also tailor-make courses to match your needs, so please do not hesitate to come and see us in Office 28 to see what's on offer.

## Seafood School award at the London Arena

Hundreds of businesses from across East London and Essex gathered at London Arena on Friday 29 November for the annual East London and Essex Business Awards. The glittering black tie event organised by The Recorder, and NatWest Bank, was hosted by TV personalities Paul Ross and Bob Mills. The evening saw businesses picking up awards in areas such as innovation, community involvement, the Internet, training and development. The UK Fish Industry was represented by Billingsgate Seafood Training School, who received the 'Highly Commended' award in the internet for business category for their site [www.seafoodtraining.org](http://www.seafoodtraining.org). The internet for business category was sponsored by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who judged all finalists on their ability to demonstrate good web site creation, either for their own or their client's business, and the sites utilisation as a corporate tool in

line with their objectives. Winners showed the ability to cross the technology barrier and were able to give evidence of real business being conducted as a result.

"I was absolutely delighted to have [www.seafoodtraining.org](http://www.seafoodtraining.org) recognised in this way," said Adam Whittle, Webmaster at the Seafood School. "We have recently published our 2003 dates and to have them online really helps us to market them widely. With the ability to reserve places online and keep up to date with all the latest gossip from the UK liveliest fish market, [www.seafoodtraining.org](http://www.seafoodtraining.org) has become a useful resource. Also, as we are a small team at the School, the site helps us concentrate on our core aim, delivering free educational programmes to school children. At the same time a website helps us marketing our broader portfolio to commercial businesses and the general public."

## World's Record Fish & Chips



'Fish 'n' Chick 'n' Ltd, the Hertfordshire fryers got their name in the Guinness Book of records on Wednesday 30 October 2002, by successfully preparing the largest serving of fish and chips ever! The fish, supplied by Jeffrey Cushway Ltd, was a bit of a whopper, and certainly one in the eye for Franz Fischler's Cod Recovery Plan!

"The fish weighed 7.25 kg/ 15.98 lbs before cooking", said Dean Lewis of Jeffrey Cushway. "It came from Fraserburgh and was thought to be about thirty years old. The fish fillet was

dusted in rice cone and dipped in batter, and it took a full 20 minutes to cook with the fryer range cranked up to 400° F."

Cooked chips were then added to the fish with a garnish of lemon and parsley producing together a healthy portion of 19.80 kg/ 43.65 lb.

"Everybody then got stuck in, with plenty to go round," commented Dean. "With the average size of cod getting smaller, I think the record will be safe for some time to come!"

### Rain stops play for Billingsgate Boys

A flooded pitch following prolonged periods of torrential rain over the past few weeks has prevented our boys from making their gallant comeback from a slow season start. However, this time has proved invaluable in allowing the recovery of their goal keeper, Mark "let 'em in" Morris, from pioneering surgery to repair the holes in the hands. An undercover Gossip reporter has discovered that Mark, who would like to now officially be known as Mark "stop 'em dead" Morris, is convinced his operation was a great success but feels it will be wasted unless a group discount rate on frontal lobotomies can be secured for the remainder of the team to help them remember just which way they are meant to be kicking the ball.

## Fundraising events

The generosity of Billingsgate Traders has been shown again following a series of fundraising events led by Stevie Back from AA Lyons, to help raise money to send 5 year old leukaemia sufferer Aaliyah Reading and her 8 year old sister Ceylan on a trip of a lifetime to Disneyland in Florida. Stevie said, "Aaliyah is the niece of friends of the family, and when we found out what she had gone through, and how her dream was to go to Disney, we decided to help raise the money for the trip."

The fundraising started with a collection on the market floor by Michael Desmond from the Corporation and Colin Walker from Nashes, which raised £1400 in just one quick circuit of the floor! This was followed by a golf day on 10 November, organised by Stevie which raised a further £3650, and a car washing day organised at Wickford Fire Station by Paul Baker of Lawrence Brothers, who is a part-time fire fighter, which raised another £1100. Stevie continued,

"Although we have raised a fantastic sum in such a short time through everyone's hard work and generosity, we have just found out that medical insurance to cover Aaliyah on the trip will cost a staggering £24k, so we are using some of our connections to see whether help at a corporate level can meet this cost, as it would be such a shame if she couldn't make the trip after all".

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## Ken's crustacean frustration

### By Ken Condon

The crab most usually eaten in Britain is *Cancer Paggerus*. This crab is found only in European waters . It occurs all round the British coast and is found in abundance usually where the sea bed is rugged. It feeds mainly on living food, including fish, marine worms and shellfish such as mussels. The crab shell is cast off at intervals and replaced by a larger one so that the crab has room to grow; this process is known as moulting. The main moulting period is from July to October; the females start moulting in July, followed by the males a month or so later. At this time the crab seeks shelter among the rocks. The shell cracks along a precise line dividing the upper and lower halves, and the soft crab inside slowly backs out through the gap. It then absorbs water and swells, increasing in size across the back by as much as 20 to 30 per cent in one moult.

Males grow more during a moult than females, but moult less frequently after they reach a size of 4-5 inches. Most female crabs are mature by the time they measure 5 inches across the back, whilst males reach maturity at a slightly smaller size. The female crab has a broad abdomen or apron, whereas the male has a narrow abdomen

which fits tightly to the body. The claws of the male are also larger than those of a female of the same size.

Mating occurs in inshore waters during the summer, immediately after the female has moulted and while it is in a soft shell condition. The male sperms are introduced into the female's two sperm sacs. One supply of sperm may fertilise two or more batches of eggs in subsequent years, and the majority of females that mate in July or August will spawn, that is carry eggs, in November or December of the same year, but in some cases spawning is delayed until the next winter.

### plankton

Crabs usually select a soft sea bed for spawning, often in deep water, and the eggs remain attached to the swimmerets (the feathery part under the females abdomen ) for about seven months. A crab with eggs is called a berried crab and a crab in this condition is not allowed to be commercially fished, nor is a soft-shelled crab.

In spring and summer following spawning the berried females move inshore, where the eggs hatch; the young crab at first have a shrimp like appearance and form part of the free floating plankton. This period lasts about

a month, and during this time the larval crab will probably drift to new grounds away from the hatching area. It finally settles on the sea bed and assumes the adult form when it is about 1/8th inch in size.

Crabs should be stored or packed back uppermost and with little room to move, to prevent fighting and subsequent loss of limbs, but with ventilation.

Crabs should be alive at the start of processing, but must be killed prior to boiling; otherwise THEY WILL SHED THEIR CLAWS. THEY CAN BE KILLED EITHER BY DROWNING IN FRESH WATER OR BY SPIKING THE BRAIN. Crabs immersed in lukewarm water will be ready to boil after about 40 minutes. Spiking through the nerve centre is done by inserting a pointed rod just above the mouth parts.

COOKING TIMES are between 20 or 30 minutes, depending on size. This amount of cooking will kill a very high proportion of the bacteria present, and will destroy any potential disease causing organism. Crabs should be hosed down or immersed in cold water immediately after boiling to help set the meat.

If you would like to have more articles like this, please let us know. We are all quite happy to share our knowledge.

## Dinner dance special thanks

The LFPRA would like to thank the following for their continued support of the Annual Dinner Dance. If you would like to support us by placing a small advertisement in The Gossip please contact us .

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Merry  
Christmas