



What's Cooking

NEWSLETTER of the Worshipful Company of Cooks of London
Edited by the Warden, Graham Craddock

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The First Slice The Master savours the first courses of the varied menu which makes up the Cooks' year

Prior to becoming Master, there are three valuable years learning and observing from the positions of Renter Warden, Warden and then Second Master. Suddenly, you are crowned and immediately thrown into a very challenging, fast moving role. So, you just have to go for it and give it your all!

It can be very time consuming and requires daily concentration on the intricacies of the Company's affairs. I expect to attend well over one hundred official functions and by no means do all these take place in the City. Weekly, you can find yourself travelling across the country to say Cornwall or Shropshire and indeed, I have just returned from an international culinary arts and science conference in Stavanger in Norway!

There are so many activities taking place over the course of the year and therefore it would be impossible to mention them all but to illustrate their diversity, I list a few of my engagements for earlier in the year.

Wednesday, 27 February

General and Finance Committee Meeting General Court and Prize Winners' Luncheon at Innholders' Hall

Tuesday, 4th March

Luncheon at Proof House as guest of the Master Gunmaker together with the Clerk.

Thursday, 6th March

Lord Mayor's Banquet at the Mansion House with Mistress June Whitfield CBE (see picture)

Friday 7th March

United Guilds Service in St Paul's Cathedral and afterwards buffet luncheon at the Innholders' Hall, accompanied by Mistress Jo Watson. Together with Innholders and Needlemakers companies.

Tuesday, 11th March

King Edward's School Bridewell Service at St Bride's Fleet Street. Luncheon in the Guildhall.

City Markets Committee dinner in Skinners' Hall together with the Clerk.



The Master introduces Mistress June Whitfield CBE to the Lord Mayor and his wife at the Civic dinner.

Thursday, 13th March

Scientific Instrument Makers' Luncheon at Barber Surgeons' Hall. Invited by the Master and accompanied by Mistress Jo Watson.

Institute of Hospitality Fellows Dinner at Goodenough College as the guest of the CEO Col Philippe Rossiter.

Monday, 17th March

Springboard Future Chef 2008 Finals at Westminster Kingsway, College Vincent Square. Presented prizes to the twelve regional finalists.

Wednesday 19th March

The Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers. Dinner in the Great Hall at Lincolns Inn as guest of the Tax Advisers' Clerk.

Friday, 28th March

ACC Officers Annual Dinner Deepcut Barracks as guest of honour.

Wednesday, 9th April

Charity Committee Meeting

Followed by Armed Services Dinner at the Innholders' Hall

Each occasion has been so very different; some grand, others much more low key. All have so much to offer and provide the opportunity to meet such a variety of people, young and old, from all walks of life. I have enjoyed and learned so much during my term of office. It has been a great privilege and such fun to have had the chance to share in these occasions.

The Master of course is helped so much by his Mistress, or in my case Mistresses, and Miss June Whitfield and Mrs Jo Watson, have been unstinting in their help, support and time and I do so thank them both.

With the year flying by, I truly appreciate the willing encouragement of all the Company. I look forward to the many and varied activities which lie in store for me over the next few months. Two events in particular I would commend to you, which are open to all members of the Company. Firstly there will be a private visit to Clarence House on the evening of Thursday, 18th September and also the Annual Company Dinner at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park Hotel on Friday, 3rd October.

The Master, Alan Fairbrass



Mistress Jo Watson delivering humorous anecdotes of her life as a housekeeper, on the occasion of the Court Ladies Dinner. Jo is wearing a Victorian Cook's bonnet presented to her by the Master as a memento of the Ironbridge Livery Weekend which they attended with the Sheriff and other Companies' Masters.

HOW A LITTLE CHARITY GOES A LONG WAY

The Company's charitable activities are a regular feature of "What's Cooking?" In this issue Paul Herbage, chairman of the charities committee explains how three modest donations were turned into much larger amounts through "match funding".



HACKNEY

THE HACKNEY HOSPITALITY CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Our support over nearly a decade to Hackney Community College is known by virtually everyone in the Company. No one can fail to be impressed with the work that has been done by the college to give both life and culinary skills to disadvantaged young people.

A couple of years ago the College approached the Company with a request for financial assistance for a new project - the creation of 'a state of the art' training facility to enable up to 300 students a year to follow a range of courses designed to lead to careers within the hospitality industry. Despite some concern about the budget, I attended a meeting at the College with the Company's authority to offer up to £40,000 towards the project on condition that the College raised the rest of the funds. As it turned out something of a bidding war started between the London

Development Agency, and other statutory agencies including Learning Skills Council, Team Hackney and others anxious to invest resources in a project designed to train staff for the Olympics and a rejuvenated East End by 2012.

The end result was that the new training kitchen, costing nearly £1 million to build and kit out, opened to its first students this February.

The Charity Committee has recently successfully recommended to the Trustees that the project should receive three years' ongoing support by part funding the cost of chefs' whites and cooking knives for around 150 students annually.



Pembroke House

Investing in the lives of the people of Walworth by supporting community life, promoting education and fighting for social justice.

PEMBROKE HOUSE
£5,000 nets a lottery grant of £1/2 million

Pembroke House is a youth and community centre. It was founded in 1885 by students from Pembroke College, Cambridge as a centre for social action in

Walworth which was then and remains one of London's poorest communities. We received a request for a contribution towards £1½ million of improvement works, which would provide new facilities allowing an increase from 450 to 1,000 students from Walworth's disadvantaged youngsters.

Our donation of £5,000, which we designated for the kitchen works, along with contributions from other Livery Companies, enabled the charity to qualify for a £½ million Lottery grant.



RECREATING A VICTORIAN FRIED FISH SHOP

One of the highlights for Masters' and their Ladies is the annual gathering at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum in Shropshire in June.

Just to the east of Coalbrookdale, lies Blists Hill a Victorian town where 300 years ago Abraham Darby first smelted iron. An ambitious £10¼ million project to redevelop the town was proposed by the museum Trustees with the aim of securing £9½ million from European and Regional Development Agency, but requiring £300,000 from other sources. Part of the plan was to locate replica working shops of the era in the main street.

The Cooks' Company offered a grant of £15,000 towards the cost of recreating a 1900 Shropshire fish and chip shop ensuring that the balance would come from development agency funds.

The Master visited the newly cleared site this June and received a briefing on the plans from the museum curator. It is hoped that visitors will be able to buy fish and chips from early 2009.

Paul Herbage

Past Master and Chairman Charity Committee

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG CHEFS

The Company Underlines the Importance of Cooking Skills through Supporting The William Heptinstall Award



William Heptinstall, who died in 1971, was a well-known British chef.

The Heptinstall Award is made each year to enable a young chef to widen his or her culinary experience whilst travelling outside the UK.

The Award of £3,500 is primarily designed to allow the recipient fully to experience the cuisine of the area chosen, by sampling local food and wine whilst undertaking an overseas stage or stages. The young Chef is encouraged to plan time abroad to experience the best kitchens and work with the best Chefs, anywhere throughout the World.

William Heptinstall was patron of Fortingall Hotel, Perthshire. He became a Freeman of the City of London and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Bakers. Whilst he took immense pride in British food, he was also deeply interested in European gastronomic traditions.

The William Heptinstall Memorial Fund is a Charitable Trust set up in his memory in 1972 by his niece the late Mollie Lowrance.

The Fund Directors include John Avery, Brian Turner, CBE, John Williams, John Valentine and Jenny Rodgers.

The Board is supported by Liveryman Simon Fooks, representing The Worshipful Company of Cooks which donates £1000 each year towards the Award.

In January requests for nomination are sent to Chefs and Restaurateurs throughout the UK. Young Chefs may also apply directly through the web site www.williamheptinstallaward.org.uk. Those eligible are resident in the UK, 20 to 26 years, who are establishing a career in the catering industry.

In early Summer six short-listed candidates come to London for an interview, following which they are treated to lunch at a renowned London restaurant.

Past winners of this prestigious award have gained immeasurably by the experience. In 2003 the winner Magalie Leray, returned to her previous job at the RAC Club in London bursting with ideas from three stages at The French Laundry in California, Paul Bocuse in Lyon, and Villa d'Este in Italy. In 2004, Nick Edgar concluded his report by saying that, following his stints in New York and Chicago, he now understands himself better as a chef and the way he see his future. Mark Machin in 2005 found his time abroad in the Basque country has given him the confidence and the opportunity to decide what he wants to do with his career. He worked at Chez Ruffet for two months before moving to Martin Berasategui's Michelin Three Star restaurant.

Finally last year's winner, Andy Ball, has his travel plans well advanced and plans to visit WD40 Aquavit, Per-Se and Daniels. He has already secured rooms in mid town Manhattan and is looking forward to his trip.

THE COMPANY LOOKS TO ITS PAST WHILST INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The New History...

Last year the Court authorised the Company Historians, Past Master Paul Herbage and myself, to commission a new Company History. Four professional historians were invited to submit proposals, and following personal discussions with the applicants, it was resolved to appoint Alan Borg. He is an eminent historian and has recently prepared a new history for the Painter Stainers' Company. His background includes a period as Director General of the Imperial War Museum, Director of the V and A Museum, and involvement with many other similar establishments over the years. Inevitably he is a busy man, but he has agreed to complete the work within 3 years.

A start has been made and he has already unearthed some interesting information, not least the fact that a woman by the name of Agnes Godman is recorded as having been a member of the Cooks Company in the fourteenth century.

Alan is still working on the early centuries of the Company's development, but towards the end of this year he will be concentrating upon more recent times. With this in mind, I request that any member of the Company who has any historical records, old menus, invitations or any other documents of that kind, then will they please let me know. Sadly we do not possess a good archive. Many of the Company records were destroyed as a result of the Clerk's office in Central London being bombed during the second world war. We still possess old Minute Books and other records and documents, but it is not a comprehensive archive, so your help is needed!

*Michael Messent
Joint Company Historian*

The New Future...

The private side of the Cooks website - or 'Members' Area' - is due to go live in the next few months; 'dynamic' as they call it in the IT world! This rather dramatic characterisation of contemporary communication allows us all to be more informed about The Company whilst providing interactive communication.

It is certainly intended to be a useful means to communicate about Company activity open for all members. For example it will include our diary of

events, the Master's diary, committee meeting minutes, our contact details, and a message board, as well as keeping us all abreast of the principle activities that form the objectives of our Company - support to charity and the craft of cooking. It will of course continue to evolve in line with our activity and in line with technological developments. Instructions for access to the Members Area will be sent out in due course.

Virtual communication across the Internet is of course not the only way to communicate. It is a very poor substitute for real and face-to-face dialogue; yet it can be a most useful adjunct. Whether you are a fan or a phobic of modern technology we can be sure that modern information and communication technology (ICT) is here and available. The invention of the alphabet, electricity or the internal combustion engine might yet claim a more prominent position in the contribution to human progress than the internet or the mobile phone, but we are only at the very early stages.

Well, the Cooks' livery company was established before the invention of electricity but after the alphabet. It seems fitting then that we adopt contemporary technology with our usual equanimity if not a little scepticism. Ed Murrow, the celebrated American journalist, put it best, when he said prophetically of computers in 1965: "The newest computer can merely compound, at speed, the oldest problem in the relations between human beings, and in the end the communicator will be confronted with the old problem, of what to say and how to say it."

The new private Members' Area is a modest engagement with the latest transformation in ICT. Its purpose is to inform and communicate with ourselves rather than a wider public, which is catered for by the public side of the website. As it unfurls, your ideas, reactions, and contributions would be most welcome ... via the website perhaps (!)

Assistant Stevyn Gibson

Keep in touch with the livery at www.cookslivery.org.uk

As we move forward in this electronic age the clerk would like to make sure he can keep up with you!! Please send him an email - he wants to collect your address, his email address is: clerk@cookslivery.org.uk

CITY FOOD LECTURE 2008

This year's debate once again got the juices going. Liveryman Adriano Leto writes passionately about what the future may hold. A call to action is needed and he considers what form that action might take:

I have always found the city food lectures deeply stirring events because of the issues and moral principles they raise. This year's lecture called 'Are the Malthusian chickens coming home to roost?' explored what needed to be done to meet the demands of the world's growing population. The prospects look pretty daunting and it seems as if mankind will need all its political and technical genius to avoid a major disaster in the coming decades. Faced with a population explosion, increased consumption, global warming and finite resources, we may need to call on everything we have from GM to organic farming practices as well as personal restraint and changes in our food habits to avoid a crisis.

The lecture by the Right Hon Lord Haskins of Skidby was extraordinarily well balanced. With a background in food manufacturing he was well placed to speak authoritatively on the subject. Speaking quickly, so as to cover all the major points, he took us through a brief history and politics of food manufacture, how technology had improved over the centuries and how yields had increased fivefold in the western world leading to food prices dropping significantly. Although he praised these achievements, he balanced it by acknowledging problems of pesticides, surplus production, pollution and high levels of waste in our current food production and distribution practices.

He explained that of all food produced some 50% was wasted. And that 30% of food bought in shops was wasted in our own homes where food was allowed to go bad in our fridges. He claimed that overly conservative sell by dates meant food was discarded far too early, and our own laziness in not using left-overs in the making of meals contributed further. With the world food supply facing a range of pressures from population explosion, shortages in energy and water, attitudes towards food in the western world had to change or there would be a catastrophe. Although much of the solution lay

with the industry, scientists and politicians, there seem to be plenty that we as individuals could do.

Lord Haskins claimed that over consumption was encouraged by supermarkets (buy one get one free) and by manufacturers and restaurants with portion sizes that encouraged overeating (supersize me). The British weight epidemic was the result of people eating too much, eating poorly, not exercising enough but had come about particularly because we did not exercise restraint and personal responsibility. Education in schools would be helpful but as individuals we had to take personal responsibility now for our own and family's consumption and habits. Lord Haskins was passionate in his criticism of western greed and the need for restraint and change. He suggested that until food became more expensive our attitudes were unlikely to change. Since the lecture food prices have started to rise.

I was encouraged to consider what personal changes we might consider. Maybe we should make all meal sizes 30% smaller and buy 30% less when going to the supermarket regardless of the price incentives. Perhaps many of us should reconsider our hoarding, hamster-style habits and change the way we shop and store things. Maybe having a half empty fridge was good and not a sign to go shopping. Shopping locally, more frequently and in smaller amounts rather than a weekly shop might also be more beneficial. How many of us start eating things in larger amounts than necessary to finish food off before they expire? Would it not be better to eat based on hunger rather than trying to beat expiry dates on a glut of food that we really shouldn't have bought in the first place? Bucking the consumerist trend and advertising pressure to buy more and more, buying and eating less food would not only make us healthier and wealthier but would help the planet and fellow human beings.

As children many of us will have often experienced being told to finish everything on our plates. At the time I would wonder why there was so much on my plate in the first place; I would have been happy to eat less. I also could not understand many adults' argument that starving people on the other side of world was the reason why I should finish the spinach on my plate. 'Buy less and send the money to the starving millions,' I would complain, and be punished for my insolence. However strange their arguments may seem to me still today I realise that they were born from a time when food was scarce and starvation was common in Europe in the early 20th century. We had to eat whenever food was available so when the lean times came we could survive. The fear of starvation was subconsciously ever present it seems. But we need a different attitude to meet a different current situation. In the Western world we live in a land of excess where control and restraint are now necessary.

Another outdated notion we have as a nation is that meat is nutritionally essential and should form that part of every meal. Lord Haskins highlighted that meat manufacture is a major problem when it comes to global food supply. Meat production is not only a much less efficient use of land (grains and beans can feed up to 50 times more people per acre) but beef production (more so than pigs and chickens that are more efficient than beef) raises the global price of foods such as maize and corn creating shortages in continents such as Africa. Consequently vegetarianism is strongly endorsed and encouraged by the World Health Organisation for both the food production and health benefits.

The discussion with the panellists expanded the subject considerably. Not only was the need for greater global political coordination highlighted but the potential role of GM as a tool to solve the world's problems was explored and seemed to be a valid argument if used selectively and cautiously. The overriding message I took out of the lecture was how our own personal choices could contribute considerably to mitigating the looming crisis.

When it comes to food it seems that we are still pandering to ideas rooted in the past. As the world changes outdated habits handed down also need to change. Tradition is a beautiful thing that gives us a sense of belonging and continuity but as a Livery Company, if we are to take the wisdom presented in this and previous lectures seriously, we need to sharpen our understanding and make changes. Our beautiful dinners and the various activities the company supports should reflect an increasingly responsible approach to food. Seasonality, organic, a focus on creating dishes that are nutritionally and environmentally responsible yet every bit as delicious as they have always been seems to be a sensible route to explore. Maybe 'Chicken Wellington' or 'Soya Stroganov' have a strange ring about them but if we are not prepared to face the current world situation with creative and responsible culinary response as an organisation we will be seen as lazy, irrelevant, historical and even stupid. If the Cooks Company does not take care in these matters and start to set an example who will?

You are strongly encouraged to read Lord Skidby's lecture which is to be found on the cooks company website www.cookslivery.org.uk

Adriano's eight ways to save the world!

- Eat 50% less meat (and when eating meat change from beef to free range chicken or pork that is more environmentally efficient)
- Eat until we are no longer hungry, not until we are full
- Avoid going shopping when hungry
- Don't fall for supermarket offers with short shelf-life food. Resist.
- Keep a half full or half empty fridge
- When preparing food use 30% less than you think you need. If you are still hungry have some more fruit afterwards.
- Tell restaurants that they should reduce their portion size so as to be more profitable and create less wastage
- Tell every restaurant that they need to improve the range of vegetarian meals

BANG!!! There goes another trophy...

*Keith Powell receives
the Peter Messent
Trophy from George
Rees.*



CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING

Past Master George Rees gives us the lowdown

A practice day was held at the Clerk's house, near Farnham, with Michael Thatcher operating the trap whilst Sandy provided a magnificent lunch following on from the morning's shooting. We are most grateful to Michael and Sandy for their kind hospitality. The shooters were accompanied by their wives and the Master presided over the proceedings. It was a perfect Summer's day as was the Inter Livery Shoot two weeks later.

In the annual Inter Livery Clay Pigeon Shoot at the Holland and Holland Shooting Ground, the Cooks fielded two teams of four. On the day we were three guns short due to unexpected circumstances, so the numbers were made up by John Browning of the Gunmakers Company, Christopher Maurice of the Makers of Playing Cards and Luca Salvato, a colleague of Crispin Payne. Our guests shot very well whilst the winner amongst the Cooks was the Chaplain by a large margin. Past Master The Revd. Keith Powell was presented with the Peter Messent Trophy during the lunch, which followed the shooting. Whilst not in the winning frame for the overall competition it was felt

that the Company acquitted itself satisfactorily, but with room for improvement. It has become a highly popular event with 71 Livery Companies competing, some with five teams. As usual teams from the Butchers and the Gunmakers were winning the prizes. All prize money goes to charities designated by the winners.

A BIG thankyou Livermen Sisters, Alexandra Horne and Virginia Bond "Race for Life"



On Saturday 7th June in blazing sun, we ran the 5k Race For Life in aid of Cancer Research UK at Stoke Park Guildford, along with 3,500 other runners. Virginia's 10 year old daughter, Francesca Bond, a possible future Cook, ran with us and completed the course with energy left over! We ran the race in memory of our Uncle, Past Master Robert Horne, who died 5 years ago from this dreadful illness. Together we managed to raise in excess of £650 which included donations from fellow Cooks. We would like to thank those Cooks who generously gave sponsorship enabling us to achieve this fantastic total.

Alexandra Horne & Virginia Bond

Anne Leto

On 4 May 2008 Daphne Anne Leto (née Kenyon), departed gracefully in Dorset after a long and spirited fight against cancer. Her courage, dignity and humour were an inspiration to her friends, family and carers. Long associated with the Cooks', she had many friends and family in the Company.

Anne (as she is usually referred to) was a witty and delightful lady. She spent a good portion of her life living abroad in places including Rhodesia, Ghana, Peru, Pakistan and Italy. She became a counsellor and therapist in her 40s and worked in London for many years in private practice before retiring to Lyme Regis in Dorset five years ago. An original thinker, she also practiced astrology and was involved in transpersonal psychology. She loved nature, helping people and simply the art of living. She had a very full life and enjoyed her grandchildren enormously.



Keep in touch with the Worshipful Company of Cooks of London through the Company's website at www.cookslivery.org.uk Assistant Stevyn Gibson who is responsible for the site has done a remarkable job in revitalising the site and is looking forward to further improving the site. Please pass on any comments to him through the Clerk. You can find an electronic version of this newsletter on the website.

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The editor apologises in advance for any errors and omissions