



Saturday night takeaway

Docklands museum celebrates its 10th birthday with a little help from Billingsgate



• *Charlie Caisey answers questions*



• *Oyster opening wizard Simon Chilcott*

The Docklands Museum celebrated their 10th anniversary recently and The Billingsgate Seafood School were asked to take part. The museum is situated inside a 210 year-old Georgian building on the dockside at West India Quay.

C.J. Jackson, the Director of the School, gave a short informative lecture on shellfish and demonstrated dressing a crab and the cleaning & cooking of scallops. Huge interest was shown in what courses were available at the School.

CJ was ably supported by Simon Chilcott of Bard's Shellfish, Billingsgate. Simon did a fine job in opening oysters for the 700 visitors, working at a terrific rate while still telling of the wonderful range of shellfish which is now available. Simon then joined CJ and assisted in cleaning scallops.

A small display of fresh fish was presented by Charlie Caisey, which was greeted by a constant stream of questions. It was hoped to demonstrate a small amount of fishmongering but the questions were endless, and, sad to say, very

few people recognised a whole cod. A finnan smoked haddock was greeted as if it had come from outer space and Manx kippers brought mouth watering gasps from many of the older viewers. Likewise, lots of question on aquaculture, bass, salmon and trout.

So, if you're fed up with the monotonous mix of TV talent shows, grab your coat and head down to the Museum of London, Docklands. www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Docklands

A Crafty way to bring home the silverware

Summer has arrived and with the sun comes The National Federation Of Fishmongers Craft Challenge Competition. It will be held in Cardiff on the weekend Saturday 24th - Monday 26th August 2013.

It always promises to be a great show run within the Cardiff



Harbour Festival so why not make a weekend of it as it would be great to see some London competitors taking home some silverware.

Will you join last year's winner Gopal Nandy from M&J Seafoods (pictured above) in joining the long list of winners of the NFF Fishcraft Championships?

Further competition details and entry forms will soon be available to download from our website www.fishmongers.info

Chairman's Notes



Well this could be the start of summer. It's taken long enough to arrive. It's great to see some wild salmon now coming into the market. Also nice to see some hook and line bass starting to show.

You might need reminding that it was about a year ago that we started paying for parking. So if you bought a yearly parking permit then it may well need renewing soon. I know mine does.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer, sell lots of fish and try and squeeze in a well-deserved holiday.

Best wishes,

Rex Goldsmith

Thank you from Piggy's

We'd like to thank The Billingsgate Gossip for your report on Piggy's award of 5 stars from Environmental Health Scores on the Doors scheme.

We would also like to thank the staff of the market stands & offices and of course the market customers for their continued support. We hope, since our opening in December 2007, we have continued to improve our service to you all.

Thank you once again. Mark & Carol - Piggy's Café

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WE AIM TO PLEASE



A fish market full of tales

Billingsgate appears unique in producing a close knit family from its historical past to the present day. Many would argue about the word family but, like most big families, there are squabbles as to who and what is most important. City, wholesalers, porters, retailers, caterers, public, etc. but this is the nature of the beast. This is why I think we should take a look at some of the characters that we seem to be losing as time goes by. Isn't it sad that we usually wait for the obituary notice before we take notice. I hope the following will make for a little lighter reading.

I dealt with Alan Cook for most of my time as an independent fishmonger, always aware of being a small buyer, but I grew to being quite happy with the service that I received. Alan would accept my often-barbed comments like "you miserable old sod" or stronger!

Alan would often tell me of his choice of restaurants, for which he seemed to have a real passion for with a wide knowledge of so many places, which of course was so important to his business.

I often asked him where all his knowledge came from and then I asked Alan to give me a few details. To my surprise I received this:

"Dear Uncle Charlie, I began work at Billingsgate in July 1964 working as a stand-boy for Joe Nathan, obtaining my porters licence in April 1965. I then worked as a casual porter covering holiday work during that summer, then working full time that year for Jacks Bros. They opened another stand, S&H Seafoods, so I moved on with owner Les Sullivan.

In the summer of 1973 I went to Fisher Bros, initially as a porter and then after a few weeks moved on to the sales side . I worked here for 8 happy years until the owner died and the business was sold to Knight's of Mayfair.

I decided to open my own business in September 1981 and together with partner Cyril Seagrave (ex Brice Bros.) started C&A Seafoods. We moved to the new Billingsgate market January 1982 and finally, in March 2013, I retired." Alan wrote this short history which I find unique to our market. We wish Alan a long and happy retirement. Thanks for the memory.

Charlie Caisey.

The business of C&A Seafoods will continue to trade run by Peter Seagrave son of Cyril Seagrave.

No smoking?

The Purkiss smokehouse saga continues. The 130 year old smokehouse is still operating but under restrictions. Mr. W. Purkiss is still looking for complete exemption from the Haringey Council ban that we featured in the last edition. We'll continue to keep you updated and will have the full story when the outcome is decided upon.

The Brussels International Seafood Exhibition 2013

by Barry James O'Toole

I was fortunate enough to attend the recent International Seafood exhibition in Brussels.

Getting there is quite quick, St Pancras to Brussels Gare Du Midi in around two hours by Eurostar. From the Brussels terminal you get onto the Metro and travel a few stops to the Heysel Stadium station and you have arrived. You can book in advance and the organisers will e-mail you a ticket so you miss the queues.

The Exhibition Halls, nine in total are enormous and filled to bursting with all sorts of Fishing paraphernalia. Each hall has a range of countries exhibiting Farmed fish, Shellfish, Crabs, Lobsters smoked fish, processed fish, processed shellfish, caviars of all types, sizes and colours.

experience

You will never go hungry, every other stand is offering their latest new product to taste and enjoy all washed down with Indian beer or Italian and French wines. You require good walking shoes because without realising it you can cover a few miles just wandering from stand to stand.

Most countries have exhibitors promoting what they consider the next big thing in the world of fish commerce.

Meeting your suppliers and searching out new ones is all part of the experience. Each exhibitor has a sales team to challenge any current prices and level of service you are currently getting. The sweet talking can go on for hours with drinks and snacks to stop you getting hungry and weary. The variety of product on display is breath taking

in hall after hall. All aspects of the industry are represented, Software companies design programmes for managing fish processing lines and temperature tracking. Manufacturers of Heading, Gutting, Skinning, Filleting and water or laser cutting for exact portion control are set up and operational.

Packaging suppliers for waxed cardboard, Polystyrene, foldable trays and containers for the safe packaging, storage and transportation of perishable fishery products are on display with staff ready to take orders for delivery by the 1000 to any part of the world providing they are willing to pay.

Food labelling has been turned into an art form, you can have a computerised programme that will print your logo, contact details and product details on any label shape you care to design. Publishers have on display books by the million describing common Fish, exotic Fish, Shellfish, with common names and scientific latin names with species type and genus.

The noise and atmosphere is intoxicating along with the free wine and beer, but it is truly a great place to meet your competitors in the industry, it is a great place to meet new friends and suppliers, get new ideas and keep abreast of what is happening in the rest of the world.

After the hustle and bustle of a busy days wandering and chatting what better way is there to unwind than in central Brussels around the Grand Place to dine in the open and watch the rest of the visiting world go by before tucking into a warm hotel bed. The Brussels International Seafood exhibition is held each year in mid April and is a must for all Fish and Shellfish etc. businesses looking to keep ahead of the opposition.

Only as old as you feel...

Young Eddie Fancourt has decided to retire. Why *Young* you may ask? Eddie left school in 1965 and came into the family business - Fancourts of Romford Market who were almost as famous as this historic market that dates back to 1247.

Father, Charlie Fancourt, started the business in 1935, a strong and vociferous character with a stern dry sense of humour, he was second to none in the way that he ran his business. It's never easy to run a market set-up and Charlie would live through many changes in the trade but became renowned for quality.

So, *Young* Eddie had a mountain to climb as working along side Dad he was not likely to get much praise. More likely "that doesn't go there" or "do it like this". Eddie left school in the mid-sixties but didn't get to

take over the business until 10 years later. Like his father he steered the business through many changes.

The biggest of these was the volume of fish once sold back when families would eat all their meals together - kippers for breakfast, cod roe for lunch, smoked haddock for tea - those were the days!

The days were long with a 4.00am start and a 6pm finish come rain or shine, sometimes covering eight markets and the staff to go with it. For the last 2 years Eddie has worked single handed. He has no real regrets and most of his customers became almost friends often greeting many by name.

Enjoy your retirement Ed, you will be sadly missed by your many customers and fishy friends.



BILLINGSGATE SEAFOOD SCHOOL

Apprenticeship Programme for London and the South East

An encouraging response to our request for expressions of interest in the apprenticeships means that this programme is likely to go ahead, starting in September 2013.

For employers and apprentices to fully participate in this programme we do advise apprentices are recruited well in advance and have completed any company required probationary period. Any employer or employee interested in the opportunities presented by an apprenticeship should contact Billingsgate Seafood Training School as soon as possible for an information pack on apprenticeships.

Employers outside of the South East or London should contact: academy@seafish.co.uk as there will be similar opportunities in other parts of the UK.

Lee Cooper

Seafish Onshore Training Manager
www.seafoodacademy.org
www.seafish.org



Fantastic Alaska

CJ has just returned from her whistle-stop tour of Alaska to see sustainable and responsible fishing in action. To view the blog of her five-day trip visit: <http://seafoodtraining.org/blog/>

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Get into Fishmongering with Charlie Caisey

Thursday 22nd August

Introduction to Fishmongering

Tuesday 3rd September 2013,

Wednesday 20th November 2013

City & Guilds Seafood Retail Certificate

Tuesday 8th & Wednesday 9th October

Celebration of Sustainable Seafood

Wednesday 20th November.

Gift vouchers available

The Billingsgate Seafood School offers a gift voucher service for all our courses and these can be personalised and made out for any occasion. An ideal gift, the vouchers can be for a specific course (to guarantee a place) or as open voucher (valid for 12 months from the date of issue) so the recipient can redeem against the course of their choice.



For further information
 on any of these events please contact the
 admin team in Office 30 at
 Billingsgate Market on
 020 7517 3548 or visit
www.seafoodtraining.org



NORTH O' THE BORDER By Ken Watmough

Marine Conservation Society: reclassify mackerel

Much has been said in the past about Iceland and Faroe blocking the UK fleet share of mackerel, and to date no solution has been agreed. I have no intention of continuing the dialogue on this unsolved problem, but there is a bit of good news: read on.

The lack of share of mackerel quota, particularly on the Scottish fleet had a great affect on the status of the species at the end of the retail chain, so much so that the Marine Conservation Society de-listed Scottish mackerel as endangered.

About four months ago MCS had the species removed from its "fish to eat" list. Now after very serious co-operation between the European and Norwegian fleet, and a strong commitment to work together to safeguard the long term sustainability of the stock, the MCS has now restored mackerel to their "fish to eat" list and it has been upgraded to the MCS's "yellow three rating".

This means that people can eat it occasionally without endangering the species. Paradoxically, the mackerel caught by the Icelandic and Faroese fleet has now been given a "red four rating", meaning people should avoid eating it. We all know that eating oily fish has great health benefits, and our aim as members of this valuable industry is to make sure people across the UK have access to the most sustainable sources of mackerel available. Mr Francis Clark, who is known to many in the fish trade, certainly the golfers amongst us, as a board member of the

Scottish Pelagic Processors' Association said: "We welcome the decision taken by the MCS to reclassify mackerel caught by members of the European and Norwegian fleet". So you see it's not all bad news, there are rays of light for an improved arrangement on the horizon. Hey ho!!

Free safety gear for fishers

Good news for Scottish fishermen. A recent announcement by the Scottish Government shows that the Scottish Fishermen's Federation has secured vital funding to buy lightweight life jackets for all the Scottish trawlermen, there's about 5,000 of them.

The funding comes in the form of a European Fisheries Funding grant of £306,000 towards the £444,000 project. The balance of £130,000 will come as a donation from the SFF - via the Scottish Fishermen's Trust - and £10,000 from the UK Fisheries Offshore Oil and Gas Fund.

Bertie Armstrong SFF chief executive welcomed the news and commented saying: "What we want to see is a change of culture. We have taken on board concerns about life jackets as being cumbersome to working and we fully understand that". The new gear has been tailor made for the industry, they are slim, horseshoe shaped and hold a gas cylinder designed to inflate the life jacket as soon as the fisherman hits the water.

Any piece of equipment which improves the safety of our fishermen whilst at sea must be good news, for a past study revealed that since 2007, about 30 fishermen who died in accidents at sea would have survived if they had been wearing safety gear. Let's hope that the introduction of the new safety gear keeps our fishermen safe in their dangerous working environment.



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backpage

Welcome back Lyn

It is nice to see Lyn Gower back in the Seafood School. Lyn, back from her stay in Chile, will be with us for a few months...

"Hi everyone, firstly, forgive me if you already got this message via facebook. Second of all, please donate money! I am registered to do a charity walk of 10 miles to help raise funds for St Helena Hospice in Colchester. I started walking as a method of combating osteoporosis and chose this charity to give me a focus for my training. The midnight walk is 10 miles, so I have a way to go yet. The event is on Saturday 8th June. I hope that you will feel able to donate something to support this worthy cause. To donate please go to www.justgiving.com/Lyn-Gower Thank you all and I'll let you know how I get on."

Lyn

OBITUARY

Leslie William Steadman

23rd May 1940 - 30th March 2013

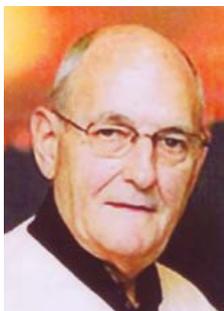
Where can you start? Les was Billingsgate's youngest porter, at just 18 years old, who never forgot where he started. Learning the ways of the Market as time went by, enjoying the good life, as only Les knew how. He later became a salesman for Minch Ltd. He made other connections before finally taking on Chamberlain & Therwell in 1980. Les, now in his element, competing with other well known Billingsgate traders putting on a show of quality fish with a range of dover soles 'slips' to 'blankets' which would bring tears to the eyes of some of the older buyers of today.

Les was joined by son Jeff, then followed Raymond and later the addition of his grandson.

A great family man, Les would talk with great pride of 'my boys'. Jeff became the front of the business on the market floor whilst Raymond built the hotel and catering side of the business. What a truly great legacy for any proud man to leave.

Les leaves his Wife of 51 years Janina, his children Jeff, Lyn, Raymond, Janina and six grandchildren.

A celebration of Leslie's Life was held at South Essex Crematorium, Upminster on April 17, attended by a very large gathering of colleagues and friends. The London Retail Fish & Poultry Association offer their condolences to all the family.



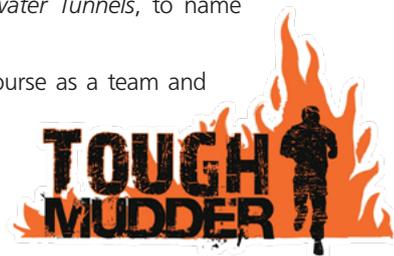
As tough as they come

On Sunday, 9th June, in a field in Winchester, 5 Billingsgate boys will try to become Tough Mudders! Competing in an Army Assault Course consisting of 25 obstacles over 12 miles, Lee Barr, Eddy Fawsitt, Ben Bryant and Michael Wright of Fawsitt Fish and Jamie Eaves of Eaves & Son will battle the event, which is supporting Help for Heroes, and will each be raising funds for charities of their choice.

Tough Mudder events are designed by Special Forces to test strength, stamina, determination and camaraderie. Here's a taste of some of the obstacles the boys must overcome and what they can expect:

Arctic Enema - swim through an ice-filled pool and under a wooden plank before pulling themselves out at the other end. *Electroshock Therapy* - sprint through a field of live wires, some carrying as much as 10,000 volts of electricity. *Trench Warfare* - crawl through dark, narrow, confined, muddy trenches. They will also face *Everest*, *Mud Mile*, *Fire Walker* and *Underwater Tunnels*, to name but a few.

The lads are tackling the course as a team and will be looking for your support and sponsorship over the next couple of weeks. Good luck boys!



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Contact the Gossip

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of The Gossip and welcome your views and input. Send your gossip, stories and photos to: The Gossip, 67 Albany Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4AE. Or e-mail your news to: newsletter@seafoodtraining.org

