

The Worshipful Company of Cooks *of London*



NEWSLETTER number 17

July 1999

edited by The Renter Warden Michael Messent

Dinner for the Lord Mayor



The Company was honoured at its Livery dinner on the 12th May 1999 by the presence of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Lord Levene. In his response to the Civic toast Lord Levene spoke interestingly of his recent visit to China in support of the cause of trade generally, and the City of London in particular. He mentioned the apparent advance of capitalism within China, albeit still in a controlled and restricted form. He remains confident about the prospects for improving trade relations in the middle and long term.

He also spoke with gratitude of the support for his annual charity, Leukaemia 2000. The ambitious aim is to raise 6 million pounds but Lord

Levene is confident that the goal will be achieved.

The toast to the guests was responded to in a particularly amusing fashion by Prof. Roy Sanders. It is to be hoped that some of the stories he told of the medical profession are apocryphal but in any event they were extremely funny. He closed his speech with a very apt and witty self-penned poem. Many said they would like to see it produced in the newsletter, and by kind permission of Professor Roy Sanders, it is reproduced as a memento of the occasion on page 7, together with another memento which has been produced by a guest, this one in a cartoon style which may or may not incorporate a representation of the Renter Warden.

Millennium Celebrations

Two special events are planned for next year. Firstly, our annual Candlemas service on the 2nd February 2000 will be evensong and will be followed by a special millennium banquet, probably in the Plaisterers Hall. All members of the Company will be invited to attend, with consorts. It promises to be a splendid and memorable occasion.

Later in the year in May it is planned to arrange an informal Thames cruise for members of the Company and their families. This will probably take place on Saturday 13th or Saturday 20th May, starting at about 11am and finishing by 5pm. It is hoped to travel downstream as far as the Thames Barrier. Food, drink and entertainment will be available during the

Company Silver

- At the suggestion of Past Master Peter Herbage arrangements have been made for a cards to be prepared which give brief details and a history of all the silver which is on display at our dinners. It is hoped that this will enable members and their guests to appreciate to the full the splendour of the Company's silver.

course of the cruise and with some help from the weather it should be a very special and unique Company occasion which no-one will want to miss.

A sub-Committee of the Court is working on the detailed planning for these events and hope to publish full details in the autumn.

The Master welcoming the Lord Mayor upon his arrival at the May Dinner



A day at the Lord Mayor's Show

The second Saturday in November cannot really be expected to be a fine weather day, so it was a damp, and bitterly cold start as I made my way to London Wall to find float eleven in last year's Lord Mayor's Show.

What association, you will be asking, has the Cooks Company with this year's Lord Mayor, the Right Honourable Lord Levene of Portsoken. (It is, of course, many many years since the Cooks Company produced London's only Cook and Lord Mayor, Samuel Birch). Lord Levene is Honorary Colonel to the Royal Logistics Corps, and our Company is of course associated with the catering arm of the corps.

The Royal Logistics Corps entry was four long floats preceded by a rather grand nineteenth century coach, and escorted by motor cycle outriders. On arrival, I was warmly greeted by Major Glossop and introduced to Officers from the Gold and Silver Wire Drawers' and Launderers' Companies, also associated with the RLC. The Worshipful Company of Carmen, a fourth Company associated with the RLC and Lord Levene's own Company, had been given their own place elsewhere in the procession.

There is a great deal of hanging about for participants but at around 10.35. am we boarded our respective floats, in my case a simulated field kitchen - complete with potatoes to peel - and we were off. Maintaining ones balance is probably the hardest thing at least to start with - after that it is a question of enjoying the atmosphere of the day. Plenty of "smiles and waves" had been our instructions from the Pageant-Master.

On passing the Mansion House and acknowledging the Lord Mayor, I spotted our



Master. He was on duty as a Pikeman and he recognised me too; hardly surprising as by courtesy of our Beadle I was wearing an Officer's gown and Warden's crown.

The "crown" was one of the new ones, and did attract a good deal of interest and comment from officers of other companies. It is probably the only time it has been seen outside our hall - tending only to be used once a year at the November Livery Dinner.

The halfway stage was marked by lunch in Temple Place. This I where the RLC's catering arm really came up trumps, sandwiches, canapes and red wine!

The return journey always passes quicker and by 2.00pm it was back to our start and the day was over. My thanks to the RLC for their hospitality and an opportunity to "fly the Company flag!" at another civic occasion.

The Second Master Paul Herbage



The Office of Clerk

In our Company there is a tradition of long serving Clerks and a close involvement by the Clerks in the general affairs of the Company. In the 18th century T. Freebody completed 45 years as Clerk, and then R. Henshaw served 36 years. The Towse family then provided Clerks for 116 years until 1895. In this century we have seen just 5 Clerks and with the recent admission of Michael Thatcher to the Livery, 4 of them have become Liverymen. Of these 4, only C.E. Messent has become Master of the Company, in 1990, having previously served as Clerk from 1962 until 1972. G.W.E. Sherrard, the previous Clerk, died while in office as Warden. H.J. Lavington then served as Clerk and also became a Liveryman prior to his death. Michael Thatcher now follows in the footsteps of his predecessors.

Our new Liveryman, in his capacity of Clerk, may care to reflect upon the following extract from the Court books of the Company which records the following resolution made on September 28th 1664.

Whereas fees belonging to the Clerk of this Company hath hitherto been uncertaine, therefore the Court doth order that for the future they shall be as followith:-

For paper, inks and pens seven shillings per annum

For candles for the whole year twenty pounds

For mops and brooms for the whole year twenty pounds

Beer for the whole year eight pounds

Provided that as the Company shall increase, so it shall be lawful for them to make the said perquisites more according as this Company shall think fit.

Admissions to the Court

- Family links are underlined this year, which has seen the admission of four new Assistants, Peter Messent, George Reece, Bob Grainger and Graham Craddock. Peter Messent joins his brother on the Court; Bob Grainger joins his father and Graham Craddock follows his father.

Admission to the Livery

- There has been a similar flurry of activity regarding admission to the livery with Brian Clivaz, Michael Thatcher, Steven Hughes, Simon Fooks and Mark Grove all having been clothed in the Livery of the Company since the beginning of the year.



A proud new Liveryman, our Clerk Michael Thatcher with Sandy

Life in the Balkans

Retired Freeman Major Marcus Appleton is currently serving with the UK Logistic Regiment which is part of the NATO Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in the Balkans. Prior to the recent crisis in Kosovo, he contributed the following article on his experiences with the Logistic Regiment, which is responsible for sustaining British Forces throughout Bosnia/Croatia by providing such commodities as bottled water, ammunition, vehicle spares and fuel. An even greater burden falls on the Regiment with the movement of British Forces into Kosovo.

"The NATO involvement is not only about maintaining the peace but also assisting in civil development of the country. Peace is maintained by extensive troop patrols. These range from low level foot or bicycle, to overt armoured vehicle patrols. Such presence presents a deterrent to any one of the four warring factions, thus providing a secure environment for the locals. Whilst SFOR is present, the threat of resurgent military violence is minimised, however without an SFOR presence the situation may well be very difficult.

The country is still badly scarred from the effects of war, therefore civil development has a high priority. There are more than a 100 aid agencies in the former Yugoslavia and SFOR can help bring aid and the needy together. Getting out on the streets, talking to locals is an important part of the job and the successful completion of many projects is down to the soldiers being out and about with the locals. Some villages are being rebuilt but others have been shelled and burnt, and are now empty uninhabited shells. Furthermore many of the abandoned villages are in or surrounded by mine fields that have yet to be cleared.

1998 was designated the year of Displaced Persons, Refugees (DPR), when thousands were expected to return to their homes, from which they had fled or been evacuated during the war.



Freeman Marcus Appleton

To date not as many DPRs have returned as it was perceived, nevertheless no excuse is needed to help the local children. Help ranges from collecting and distributing toys, books, clothes and stationery, organising football coaching, rebuilding schools, playgrounds and organising a children's fund et including dressing up as Batman and Robin!

Regardless of the weather or time of year the regiment continues to sustain British Forces throughout the Balkans."

Admission of Ladies to the Livery

- The Court decided at its February meeting not to proceed at present with the alterations to the standing orders which would be necessary to allow the admission of ladies to the Livery. The survey which was conducted recently showed a small majority of Members of the Company in favour of admission of ladies but changes in the standing orders would require a majority of 75% of Court members and in the course of debate it became clear that there was no prospect of such a majority being achieved.



The Lord Mayor and the Cooks

The Lord Mayor nearly didn't come to dinner with the Cooks
So very nearly wasn't in their very best of books
Though not complete disaster, it would have been a shame
And who I wonder would the Cooks have found to bear the blame.

Could it have been Her Ladyship who wouldn't let him out
Might if have been the esquires who, without a doubt
Have a very solemn duty to stop him getting fat
From eating too much dinner, the Cooks are good at that

Might it have been the choice he has: so many things to choose
With the Cooks the wine is excellent so it couldn't be the booze.
It couldn't be the company: the Cooks are very nice.
Could it be the Clerk d'you think, did he get the date precise.

Did he think the invitation came from Mrs. Thatcher
But in after dinner speaking he knew that he could match her.
Did he fear the wit might be too sharp or too profuse the verbage
Of the present Master Hodgson or the Second Master Herbage

He knew it would be free so no fear about the price
Had Powell not persuaded or Wright sufficiently enticed
Could a livery of seventy Cooks still not be enough
To seduce him to a table where the meat is never tough

Well never mind you might have said with him we'll do without
But then he heard the rumour, for someone let it out
That of all the City Companies by which to be impressed
That of all the City dinners the Cooks provide the best

But here he is, and here we are in a hall not bare and shivery
No fear have we tomorrow to learn what's meant by livery
Here amongst the Cooks we've had a time sublime
Superlatives escape me and I couldn't find a rhyme

So thank you one and thank you all my song is at an end
May London live may England thrive, may Cooks the world defend
With stomachs full and hearts content we'll wend our homeward way
With the hope to be invited to dine with you another day.

*Delivered to great acclaim at the dinner for the Lord Mayor on the 12th May 1999 by the Master's guest,
Professor Sanders and reproduced here with his permission.*



A New Liveryman in the Windy City

Sponsored by Chester Boyd, I spent four days in Chicago in May attending the 80th National Restaurant Show. It took place at one of the largest convention facilities in the United States. There were 2050 exhibitors and the event attracted something in excess of 120,000 paying visitors.

The show is organised by the National Restaurant Association of America, which was founded in 1919. The theme for 1999 was "The Year of the Restaurant". We learned at the opening address that there are in excess of 815,000 restaurants in the USA, that it is an industry employing 10.2 million people, with gross annual sales approximating to 4% of the U.S. domestic product. During a typical day in the USA the restaurant industry has daily sales of 970 million dollars.

A couple of the exhibitor's stands caught the eye. One was handing out cigars offering specially wrapped "Monica Lewinski cigars" complete with the White House Oval Office Presidential seal. There was also a Budweiser stand with a purpose built bar complete with a replica brewing still and the staff on the stand had no trouble in dispensing 4000 gallons of beer during the course of the convention.

On day two the keynote address was delivered by Steve Forbes, a Presidential nominee in 1996 and expected to stand again in 2000. He spoke of his concern at the rising tax burden and the need to limit bureaucratic interference in business. There was also an address from the Chairman of the National Restaurant

Association who reminded the delegates the food industry is not as the public sometimes see it, as a low paid and even deadend line of work, it is worth entering and provides well paid and professional opportunities. He also stressed that the restaurant industry is the largest sector in the tourist industry. Is that not similar to where we are in the UK?

There was an International Culinary Challenge held under the auspices of the World Association of Cooks Society. This challenge is held every four years at the show. The teams comprise a team captain, three chefs and a pastry chef. Teams are awarded points leading to the award of gold, silver and bronze medals. An interesting edge to the competition was the chance for show guests to sample the food produced by purchasing tickets. In the hot food section there were two areas allowing 80 guests per luncheon, with the food being prepared within a five hour time limit. Local students carried out the food service. Teams competed from Argentina, Norway, Azerbaijan, USA, Canada and Switzerland.

Switzerland were defending the title they won four years ago, and succeeded again, this time beating Canada into second place and Norway into third place. Great Britain nowhere!

There was an ice carving competition taking place over four days with teams required to carve ice in four ways; freestyle, compulsory figures, giant, and beat the clock. Teams were entered from Canada, Philippines, Italy, Peru and the USA. The standard of the competition was extremely high and the USA won the prize.

Between all the eating, the place to rest is at the House of Blues Hotel. It is in the landmark Marina City complex and has over 340 rooms, all of them, together with the ground floor public areas, decorated in a mixture of Gothic, Moroccan and East Indian influences. All this sits alongside some original Southern USA artwork. Upon checking in you are given your own CD which you can play on your own personal room CD player. The hotel also



possesses one of Chicago's biggest and best blues clubs where up to 1100 people come to hear the best blues in the city.

I also went on tour courtesy of the Caterer and Hotelkeeper Magazine. We saw a company called "Lettuce Entertain" who have developed a food court system much enjoyed by shoppers and office workers who collect a credit card on entering the food court complex and then make a selection from mini food displays offering an enormous range of foods. The main concept is that the food is cooked fresh in front of you. As the choices are made the card is presented and then at the end of the meal the guest pays the cashier on the way out.

We also visited "The Cheesecake Factory." On a typical Saturday 3000 guests dine. The menu offers 40 kinds of cheesecake in addition to a menu with over 150 choices. A trip to Chicago is worth it just to eat here.

It was a fascinating visit. Try Chicago!

Liveryman Mark Groves

New Freeman

Malcolm Le May

Malcolm Le May was admitted to the Freedom in February 1999. He is a Chartered Accountant but is currently head of global corporate and institutional finance operations for I.N.G Barings Limited. He started his career with Arthur Andersons where he qualified but he soon moved into the world of banking. He spent a number of years in New York before returning to Europe in 1995 when he joined the Union Bank of Switzerland.

He is married with three sons and is interested in shooting, golf, cycling, music and reading.

Golf

A reminder that the annual match against the Royal Logistics Corps will take place at the Berkshire course on Friday, 6th August. We hope to raise a team of twelve and as always will be followed by a mess dinner.

Golf Society



A team of four representing our Golf Society excelled themselves at the annual meeting of the City Livery Golf Society when 56 Companies competed for the Prince Arthur Cup.

This year was blessed with an excellent day for golf and the course was in superb condition. Despite (?) the absence of our Club Captain/Secretary/Treasurer Liveryman Richard Herbage, a team comprising Peter Messent, Simon Young, Frank Forbes and Michael Messent managed to achieve what is believed to be the best ever result by the Cooks Company in this event. We finished equal second. The team comprising Peter Messent and Simon Young just managed to achieve the best result of our two teams and so received the Renter Warden's Cup for the coming year. It only need one simple short putt to have fallen in the hole instead of unkindly clinging to the grass at the edge of the hole for the Cooks team to have achieved a clear second place, but then no doubt all the other teams involved have their hard luck tale to tell. Such is golf.



Editor's Note

This newsletter is the first in colour. More expensive to produce, but I hope the finished product is even more interesting than before. If nothing else it should provoke keen debate on the issue as to whether the chevron in the Company crest should be red or black. Comments to the Learned Clerk rather than to the Editor please!

On this occasion I am particularly pleased to be able to include voluntary contributions from Harold Taylor, Mark Groves and Marc Appleton. I do hope that other members of the Company will feel inspired to offer their own contributions to the next newsletter, ideally something that broadens our readership's knowledge of cookery and catering, but all contributions will be gratefully received.

My contact details are given in the member's list and my office fax number is 023 80 337902.

The Officers 1998 - 1999



One hundred and twenty Years Ago

The menu at a Company Livery Dinner held on July 17th 1879 may be of interest.

In that year the Master was James Matthew. The Warden was John Phillips, a member of a family well known for its connections with the Company over many generations. This Dinner

was held at the Crystal Palace. It appears the during the Victorian period our Company Dinners were held in Livery Halls in the City comparatively infrequently. In any event the menu on this occasion is indeed an impressive sight and pretty typical of the range and quantity of food that would have been available to our predecessors at Livery Dinners.

MENU					
<i>Hors d'Oeuvres</i>			<i>Remove</i>		
Saucisson.	Filet d'Anchois.	Sardines.	Selle de Mouton.		
	Potage.		Aloyeau de Boeuf.		
Purée de Legumes.	A la Printanière		Rôts		
A la Reine.	A la Julienne.		Canetons	Levrants.	
<i>Poisson</i>			<i>Entremers</i>		
Souchées de Carrelets.			Gelée au Millefruits.		
Souchées de Truite.			Crème à la Venetienne.		
Filet de Sole en Matelotte Normande.			Gelée au Ponche	Dame d'Honneur.	
Anguilles etuvée au Vin Rouge.			Suedoise d'Abricot.	Pâtisserie divers.	
Côtelettes de Saumon à l'Indienne.			-----		
Anguilles aux Fines Herbes.			Pouding glacés à la Palais de Cristal.		
Whitebait.			Glaces		
<i>Entrées.</i>			Vanille	Cerises	Citron
Petit Bouchées à la Reine.			Fraises		
Pigeons farcis en Ragout.			Dessert.		
Ris de Veau aux Champignons.					
<i>Relevé.</i>					
Poulet rôti au Cresson.	Jambon au Vin.				
Poularde à la Crème.					
Langue de Boeuf a l'Ecarlate.					
			BERTRAM & ROBERTS		
			CONTRACTORS		

A facsimile reproduction of the original menu for the Livery Dinner held on July 17th 1879



Bournemouth University

With the approach of the end of the academic year the company becomes involved in assessing skills.

One of the tasks set for the students is to make a presentation of an entirely new food or alternatively the modification of an existing commodity. The purpose of the presentation is to show they are capable of integrating the knowledge and skills that they have been learning during their previous months, and to focus them upon the development of innovative food products.

Emphasis is placed on the students' intrinsic motivation and the ability to exhibit creative and problem solving behaviour.

This year the judging of the students was as arduous as ever with some 108 students and some 30 different products produced by the various teams. Overall the standard was very high and good presentations were made by all involved. The winners are well worthy of the prizes supplied by the Worshipful Company of Cooks.

Overall I believe that the project is progressing well with articles appearing in various magazines concerned with food and catering, including papers on food in prisons and hospital food wastage. The articles give credit to the Worshipful Company for their support.

Bournemouth University may not be in the top flight of universities but it must be remembered that it is not a pure academic establishment but a vocational university and as such it excels and is the best in the country. Of last year's leavers 83% were employed almost immediately and are still so employed, and the department with which our company is concerned had 94% of their leavers being offered a job before they left. Many of them are already in prominent positions. I do not believe any other equivalent department in any other university can equal this record.

Past Master Harold Taylor

Father of the Company

- At the Court meeting on the 10th February 1999 Past Master Sidney Herbage was appointed Father of the Company following the death of Past Master Harry Tickler.



The recently donated Cooks Company Trailer in use by the St. John Ambulance