

THE SMITHFIELD GAZETTE



EDITION 152

April 2015

CITY OF LONDON PENSION DEFICIT

Local Government pensions are in the news again with the Mail on Sunday recently highlighting major problems with the system. Currently, 89 separate funds make up the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), leading to inefficiencies. If amalgamated into a single fund, it would be the sixth largest in the world. These combined funds are in deficit – that is an excess of liabilities over their assets – to the tune of 21% at the 2013 actuarial valuations. A leading council finance executive in the Midlands estimates that more than a third of council tax payments will go towards pension costs by 2019. This is despite reforms introduced in April 2014. He described the system as wholly unaffordable and unsustainable. The 2013 actuarial valuation of the City of London’s fund, which is part of the LGPS, showed a funding level of 85% and employers contributions have been set at 17.5% with the aim of eradicating the deficit within 20 years. However, the City’s 2014 annual report on the pension fund showed a deteriorating position with the fund’s assets increasing by £27.2 million and liabilities increasing by £75.6 million. The net liabilities at £422 million showed an increase of £48.4 million in a year. As we enter the unknown territory of zero inflation and possible deflation, we cannot rely on a strategy of hoping that investment returns alone will be good enough to solve the problem.

Greg Lawrence CC
Chairman, Smithfield Market Tenants’ Association

GENERAL MARKET UPDATE

The future of the disused buildings adjacent to Smithfield Market appears still to be undecided. The Museum of London has been looking at the site for a possible relocation but it is just one of their options.

Meanwhile, the existing Museum site, adjacent to the Barbican, has been suggested as a possible location for the new concert hall that Sir Simon Rattle says London needs. A feasibility study for the location of the concert hall has been commissioned by George Osborne, the chancellor, and is due to report in the autumn.

FARRINGDON WITHOUT WARDMOTE

The annual wardmote for Farringdon Without was held at Haberdashers’ Hall on Tuesday 17th March. There was an unusually high attendance, perhaps because of the location. Alderman Julian Malins reappointed John Absalom and Alex Deane as his Deputies and several of the elected members addressed the meeting. Questions covered such diverse topics as the London living wage, the representation of women on Court of Common Council (or lack thereof), developments at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, Epping Forest and its long-term preservation, developments at Smithfield Market, film projects in the Ward and the political independence of the City of London.

THE SMITHFIELD GAZETTE COMMENT

The political parties are all vying for our votes in the forthcoming General Election, but, as we go to press, the likely outcome looks to be another coalition. Whether it will prove as stable as the current coalition or not remains to be seen.

The democratic process is designed to ensure that the majority rules, but what happens when it demands something the minority forcibly object to? The election reminds Common Council members of the duties they voluntarily undertook without pay; always to ensure that the views of the minority are also expressed.

The Ward of Farringdon Without has ten gifted members. One of these, Alex Deane, Managing Director and Head of Public Affairs, Strategic Communications, FTI Consulting, took up our Chairman's protest against pay for councilmen and wrote and distributed a superb email outlining the case for non-payment of councilmen - he said

"I completely oppose any remuneration for Members, in any form. It is antithetical to the conception of public service I hold, which prompted my seeking election. We enjoy various intangible benefits, receiving money would be difficult to defend. Cost is likely to lead to a shrinking of numbers of elected Members. Surprised this issue is canvassed so frequently, permitting a small group to perpetually raise this again veers loosely to an abuse of process. Best to mark rejection as near to permanent or "for the foreseeable future".

On another matter entirely, this Smithfield Gazette edition is unique as it contains a column by the "late" Lord Mayor, Dame Fiona Woolf, only the second female Lord Mayor in history. Smithfield Market salutes her and thanks her and her family for their continued support.

Quote of the Month

"In the end, it's not going to matter how many breaths you took, but how many moments took your breath away."

SMITHFIELD'S CONTRIBUTION TO LORD MAYORS OF LONDON

WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT YOU?

Smithfield has made a huge contribution to me and my family! My brothers and I think that we would not exist but for the magic of Smithfield. We were the product of a blind date between my mother, a Bart's nurse and my father, a medical student at Bart's. They first met in Smithfield and had such an affection for the market and the people that both my brothers trained and practiced at Bart's and we all have a soft spot for it.

I am, of course, the black sheep of the family having become a lawyer but, happily, my firm moved to Aldersgate Street 25 years ago and Smithfield has been a happy home for us all, particularly first thing in the morning and at lunchtime. I had been active in the City of London Solicitors' Company which held a lot of meetings at the back of my office in Butchers' Hall. I met a lot of Butchers who seemed to be everywhere in the City. When I was elected Alderman, Peter Martinelli kindly briefed me on the market issues and started sending me this newsletter. This helped me in my role as a Member of the City Corporation.

I never dreamt all those years ago that I would be elected Lord Mayor but it soon became clear, how strong the connections are between the markets in general, and Smithfield, in particular and the historic and modern role of the Lord Mayor.

The Lord Mayor is famous for the overseas travel, promoting UK plc in twenty-five countries. Large urban markets came up in my discussions from Uruguay to Morocco and it was great to be able to say that the City has vibrant markets. Smithfield is well known and I felt that the mayoral connections with it enhanced my credibility to talk about them.

In the run up, I was invited to fascinating early morning visits to see the market in action, wonderful breakfasts at Butchers' Hall and, unforgettably, a magnificent banquet in the Grand Avenue. The rehearsal for the Lord Mayor's Show in the very early hours finished with a lot of protein in Smithfield hosted by the Butchers' Company! I didn't need to eat again that day!

People keep asking me, "what was the highlight of your year" and I keep saying, "The people I met" and that is certainly how I think about my encounters with Smithfield. When I paid the annual visit as Lord Mayor, it will always be the tenants and the people that I will remember. We were so impressed with the way in which Smithfield has changed to serve the modern needs of society. We were overwhelmed by the kindness we received and the huge range of poultry that we were given. It was so large and diverse that we shared it with our family. "Ah", said my brother, "you cannot think of Smithfield as just a place and a market. It is much more than that - and they make you feel part of the family"!

Alderman Fiona Woolf DBE

THE MEAT TRADE IS NOT A GAME FOR CHILDREN

21 July 1954 was the day meat came off ration for the first time since the war had started in 1939. Prior to 1939, the UK enjoyed lamb from New Zealand and Australia and beef from Argentina. The country was totally dependent on the Commonwealth countries for the supply of meat, grain and fruit. Whilst Argentina was not in the Commonwealth as such, she enjoyed the benefits of Commonwealth status. This was mainly due to the large British interests in Argentina, controlled by the Vestey Organisation and the British Argentina Land Company.

Rationing meant all livestock was purchased by the Ministry of Food, later to become the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries or MAFF. The Government employed former wholesale butchers and cattle dealers to act as Government agents. These agents would grade the cattle, sheep and pigs at livestock centres in cattle markets all over the country. The cattle markets and abattoirs had all been closed for the duration. Many butchers had a small slaughter house behind their butchers' shops and these too were closed.

Most railway stations had a slaughter house as rail was the main means of transport. Local councils in all large towns had a Municipal Slaughter House, catering for local wholesalers and retailers alike. I have a good memory of rationing days down in mid Devon, where my father had a butcher's shop. Each customer in the shop had a Rationing Book. My father had to declare to the Government, via the Ministry of Food, how many people were "On The Book" he was then allocated the appropriate weight in meat and corned beef to comply with his books.

The local central slaughterhouse for mid-Devon was Tavistock on Dartmoor, each week the meat would be delivered to the shop, mainly Argentinean beef, Canterbury lamb and corned beef. Each customer was allowed 10 pence of meat per person, (old money). Obviously everyone wanted the steak cuts, in those days only fillet or rump. Sirloin was traditionally boned and rolled, as a roasting joint. Every family in England had a roast of beef on Sunday and perhaps stewing steak on Wednesday. meat had become a luxury item. A lot of money was made in those days of rationing, mainly by the Ministry Graders, who graded the farmer for a price, not the animal. There was also the black market in country areas - not as sinister as it sounds, only people trying to add a bit of luxury to their diet.

With no refrigeration pork was only eaten when there was an "r" in the month, so not from May of each year until September. Before the war TW Walls Meat and Handy Foods, were the biggest producers of ham and bacon in the UK. Because of large stocks of pork in the summer months, Tom Walls, the founder,

came up with the idea of making ice cream. Walls Ice Cream is still around today but is a far cry from the pork fat base.

There are wonderful stories of the black market - people in the cities were all told to plant potatoes in their gardens "Farming for England" this meant lorry loads of animal manure being sent up from the country. Usually under the manure covered with a tarpaulin was meat. No self-respecting policeman was going to put his hands through manure to look for contraband. Bill Lendon, a Devon meat wholesaler before the war, sent a hearse to London each week. No one would question a hearse, albeit full of veal and pork not human remains.

My own mother had a large pram that she pushed my sister in, who was born in 1943. When my Father came home on leave from the war, he would kill a pig in the kitchen, with a copper of boiling water he would clean it and scrape it. He would cut the pig the following day and my mother would deliver the meat, hidden under the baby in the pram.

So all these antics were now to come to an end. The war had been over for nine years and happy days were here again, the Ministry of Agriculture set out guidelines for the slaughterhouses to comply with. Once all improvements and modifications had been made, the local council could license the premises. This was the birth of free enterprise after 15 years of Government control. Many people came into the meat trade on bicycles and rode out in a Rolls Royce, several did the reverse and came in with a fancy car and rode out on a bicycle. The meat trade is not a game for children.

Bill Hayes

Extract from 'The Master Butcher, A History of the Meat Industry from 1954 to 2009', researched for the Gazette by Norman Finimore, Meat Industry historian

CITY OF LONDON CHIEF OFFICERS – THE TOWN CLERK

John Barradell is the present Town Clerk and Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation and has authority over all other City Officers. He is the principal adviser on policy matters through the Policy and Resources Committee. His department is responsible for meetings of Common Council and those of the Court of Aldermen, their committees and working parties. John Barradell came from Brighton and Hove City Council after 22 years in the private sector.

VIEW FROM A CATERING BUTCHER

The word change may be an instruction, a request, or refer to coins in your pocket, but it can also be a word feared by those who cling to the status quo. Are more people eating out? Yes - but every day we read of new restaurants which do not have prime protein on the menu. Proteins build body tissues, supply energy and are a combination of amino acids. Some amino acids when absorbed by the body are essential. Eating meat and poultry is the natural way to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The catering butcher has to consider the threat of the growth of restaurants which do not offer meat and poultry as their main focus. The great divide between restaurants selling or not selling prime protein is a challenge for our sector and indeed for the whole industry. To eat at restaurants offering little or no protein on the menu was unimaginable just a short time ago. We have to change to ensure the restaurant selling beef and poultry is supplied at the highest standard, or close.

This brings me back to Smithfield Market which the negative love to say isn't the same. Of course it isn't - all things change! So thankfully it is changing all the time to raise the levels of hygiene and in selling an increasing diverse variety of products. Despite its detractors Smithfield remains the beating heart at the centre of this wonderful industry - that certainly has not changed.

Peter Allen

Chairman, National Association of Catering Butchers

SELLING WIVES AT SMITHFIELD

Visitors and tourists strolling through Smithfield's Grand Avenue which separates the East and West market buildings stop to look at pictures and posters displayed on the walls, one of which depicts the sale of a wife.

These sales were legal until the early part of the twentieth century as only the wealthiest of men could afford a divorce. As late as 1913 a woman in a Leeds Court claimed her husband sold her to a work-mate for £1. Sales would be announced in advance in local newspapers and sometimes there would be an auction but often the buyer was already lined up. The husband who was relieved of his wife was also relieved of her debts.

A wife was led in a halter or ribbon and very often party to the sale; pleased to get away from her husband into the arms of her lover. The halter was usually retained by the buyer as a receipt of the transaction.

The Times newspaper of 1797 was concerned that the going price of a wife at Smithfield had risen from half a guinea to three guineas and a half. The Gentleman's Magazine 1832 reports the Duke of Chandos saw an ostler beating his wife. He intervened and purchased her for half a crown had her educated, later married her and raised her to great prosperity.

In 1553 a priest sold his wife to a butcher when Queen Mary restored celibacy laws. A choice between his stipend or his wife meant she had to go. Nicknamed "Parson Chicken" he was pelted with eggs and chamber pots. There is no record of the price the butcher paid.

APRIL FOOLS' DAY

"April Fools" are gullible, trusting, hopeful and human. As an "April Fool" myself I offer my warmest support to each and every one of you.

I met the elegant lady at the steps of a church in Southern Spain. She spoke fluent English and was working to support the village charity by selling small items of jewellery made by local artists. Whether the jewellery was good value or not, she certainly was! Her seductive personality was like tasting nectar.

As she spoke I was wondering who I could buy the necklace for. Soon it didn't matter, I would buy it anyway. So how much is it? "Name your price" she said. "No no I'm not a jeweller". "Where are you staying?", she asked as I left.

Back at the hotel I examined my glittering £1200 necklace. Elated I went down to the bar where I met Charles an English lawyer and eventually proudly showed him my purchase. "You met Madeleine then? Such a charmer, she's my secretary; That's paste old boy, I bought dozens in Portugal - I think I paid about €50 each". After a number of drinks I ran out of cash. Charles loaned me €50 and agreed to take the neckless back to Madeleine, get her to return my cash less my loan and send his man to the airport next morning on my return to London.

I arrived at the airport with no time to spare and sure enough his driver was waiting for me with a small package. I found my seat and relaxed. As soon as we took off I opened the envelope which contained this note.

"The necklace is worth every penny you paid but now you have no necklace and no cash. We will sell the item many times over for our charity and thank you sincerely for your generous contribution" regards Charles.

P.S. You still owe me €50.

April Fool.

THE SMITHFIELD GAZETTE

wishes readers a

Happy Easter

Smithfield Meat Market

open to the trade and the public all year round
for top quality meat at unbelievable prices

poultry – game – pork – lamb – beef – offal
sausages – bacon – other provisions – halal

open 2am to 8am Monday to Friday

free car parking for market customers from

9pm on Sunday 29th March until midday on Thursday 2nd April

(the Market is closed from 8am on 2nd April, reopening at 2am on 7th April)



www.smithfieldmarket.com

Members of the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association

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47 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7329 2400
Fax: 020 7329 2401
E: keithdr@sky.com

Absalom & Tribe Ltd

21 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 0101
Fax: 020 7236 9026
www.absalomandtribe.co.uk
E: sales@absalomandtribe.co.uk

David Andrade & Sons Ltd

26 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 1173
Fax: 020 7248 3313
E: accounts@andrades.co.uk

B J Meats Ltd

45 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7489 0133
Fax: 020 7236 7824

James Burden Ltd

18 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 0333
Fax: 020 7489 8403

24 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7248 4266
Fax: 020 7248 7113

29 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7248 2388
Fax: 020 7236 2411

40 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7248 0121
Fax: 020 7329 0584

219 Central Market
Phone: 020 7236 4886
Fax: 020 7236 2699
www.jamesburden.co.uk
E: info@jamesburden.co.uk

Central Meat (Smithfield) Ltd

37/39 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 0906
Fax: 020 7329 3993
E: info@gemeats.uk

Channel Meats Ltd

31/33 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 0082
Fax: 020 7329 0337
E: channelmeats@aol.com

D.P. Meats(Alford & Ford Ltd)

16 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7248 0285
Fax: 020 7236 4173
www.dpmeats.co.uk

Darmenn & Curl Ltd

8/10 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7248 9083
Fax: 020 7329 3315
E: darmenn.curl@btconnect.com

Denton Brothers (Smithfield)

220 Central Markets
Phone: 020 7248 0281
Fax: 020 7248 0281
E: l.matthews@tinyworld.co.uk

J. F. Edwards (Smithfield) Ltd

42 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 9721
Fax: 020 7248 4359
www.jfedwards.uk.com
E: info@jfedwards.uk.com
and Shops 28, 34, 38, 207 & 208

Finclass Ltd

35 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7329 4779
Fax: 020 7329 0271
E: sales@finclass.co.uk

G & E (Meats) Ltd

36 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 6678
Fax: 020 7329 3993
E: info@gemeats.uk

H & C Meats (Smithfield) Ltd

17 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 0155/3913
Fax: 020 7489 8380
E: sales@handcmeats.co.uk

Icefront Ltd t/a Gordon Meats

222/223 Central Market
Phone: 020 7236 6286
Fax: 020 7489 9382
E: sales@icefront.co.uk

Kentas of London Ltd

41 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 8830
Fax: 020 7329 4764
www.kentas.co.uk
E: info@kentas.co.uk

PW & JK Killby Ltd

32 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 1347
Fax: 020 7329 0729
E: killby@hotmail.co.uk

G. Lawrence Wholesale Meat Co. Ltd

23 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7248 4488
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E: gregory.lawrence@btconnect.com

Longcroft & Old Ltd

30 West Market Building
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Fax: 020 7236 6310
E: julie@longcroftandold.com

P. J. Martinelli Ltd

25 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7489 8820
Fax: 020 7489 9387
www.pjmartinelli.co.uk
E: enquiries@pjmartinelli.ltd.uk
and Shop 2/4

Edward Price & Partners Ltd

27 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 8824
Fax: 020 7236 8395

Reeve & Co. Ltd

9/11 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 4030
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Rhonda Meats Ltd

13/15 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 0870
Fax: 020 7248 2300
E: elaine.webb@rhondameats.co.uk

H. Smith (Smithfield) Ltd

205 Central Markets
Phone: 020 7236 9062
Fax: 020 7489 0941
E: mark@hsmithsmithfield.co.uk

Peter Thompson Group Ltd

1 & 3/7 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7246 0000
Fax: 020 7236 3414
www.ptgplc.com
E: sales@ptgplc.com

Village Pork (Smithfield) Ltd

43 West Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 6229/3969
Fax: 020 7248 5915
E: villagepork@btconnect.com

Vixelli

14 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7248 7086
Fax: 020 7248 5873
E: sales@vixelli.co.uk

William Warman & Guttridge Ltd

12 East Market Building
Phone: 020 7236 7395
Fax: 020 7248 0441
E: sales@warmans.uk.com
and Shop 6

WINES FOR EASTER

Spring lamb must be the Easter fare of choice: whether roast leg, slow-cooked shoulder or grilled rack, lamb is an easy to cook classic that invariably turns out well and juicy. Its flavoursome nature demands more strident seasoning than pork or beef and the aromas of rosemary, garlic or other herbs create welcome harmonies, even anchovy and bay go well, as do Middle Eastern spices.

As wines go, lamb is always a gorgeous partner for red wines – whether you like them full-bodied and potent or rather elegantly slender. It would be hard to go wrong. But what if you'd rather drink white? If white wines are to be paired with red meat, they need to have some substance and flesh on their bones. They need to be able to stand up to flavour, structure and fat, so where to look?

Oak-aged Chardonnay is the obvious and not very imaginative candidate, but it is such a classic that is made well across the globe that it would be churlish not to mention it. Choices abound in all the shops and at any price level: make sure though you spend at least a tenner. Wine pricing makes for a sobering thought: if you pay £4.99 for a bottle, 83 pence of that is VAT, excise duty is £2 and that leaves exactly £2.17 to cover the bottle itself, its closure, label, transport and some slight profit as well as the actual wine. In plain English, if you are paying £4.99 per bottle you are rewarding the tax man more than yourself! If you spend £9.99 you pay £1.67 in VAT, £2 on duty and £6.33 are left to cover wine and packaging – so you are doing yourself a nearly four-fold favour by just doubling the price.

Here are some more unusual but nonetheless delicious white wine choices for red meat: Viognier, inherently peachy and fragrant, acquires a creamy roundness when aged in oak that would go well with tender lamb. Austrian Grüner Veltliner, especially a fuller-bodied one, would also be a winner, as would a dry Pinot Gris from Alsace or a Pinot Grigio from a serious producer in Friuli or Trentino – the difference between everyday Pinot Grigio plonk and a real specimen will strike you.

In any case, if you go to all the trouble of cooking a lovely Easter feast, make sure you give some thought to the wine as well. And do patronise your local independent wine merchant. They have great choices at every price and most of all – they can give expert advice. Happy Easter!

Anne Krebiehl MW

2015 ANNIVERSARIES

Several major historical anniversaries fall in 2015. Here is a selection.

1215 – MAGNA CARTA

On 15th June 2015, it will be 800 years since King John put his seal to Magna Carta (great charter) at Runnymede. Magna Carta established the principle that everybody, including the king, was subject to the law. Nearly a third of the text was deleted or substantially rewritten within ten years, and almost all the clauses have now been repealed but it remains a cornerstone of the British constitution.

1265 – FIRST ENGLISH PARLIAMENT

20th January 2015 was the 750th anniversary of a meeting of elected representatives from England called by Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester. It was the first meeting to include representatives of towns and shires as well as knights to discuss matters of national concern and so is regarded as the first meeting of the commons.

1415 – BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

25th October 1415 will be the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt. Part of the Hundred Years War over the French succession between England and France, the battle took place in northern France between King Henry V of England leading an English and Welsh army and the Constable of France leading the French army. Henry's army is thought to have been around 5,000 strong, considerably smaller than the French. However, due to effectiveness of the English archers, the constrained nature of the battleground and the muddy conditions, the English army won a famous victory and many of the French nobility present were killed.

1815 – BATTLE OF WATERLOO

Two hundred years ago on 18th June 1815, the Duke of Wellington's combined forces of British, Dutch, Belgian and Prussian forces beat Napoleon Bonaparte's Grande Armee near Waterloo, a small village in Belgium, close to the French border. Wellington's victory was in the balance until the arrival of the Prussian forces under Marshall Blucher, they having been delayed by French forces attempting to prevent the Prussians reinforcing Wellington and conditions on the ground, which was muddy following heavy rain on 17th June and made any travelling difficult.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tyler Goodjohn, English light-welterweight champion, who has been sponsored by James Burden Ltd since he turned professional, visited Smithfield Market in January to talk to supporters.

Smithfield employers – the meat traders at Smithfield Market are working with the City of London to set up an apprenticeship scheme from September. In advance of this, several will be taking trainees from the spring.

“You must learn to let go. Release the stress. You were never in control anyway.”

Steve Maraboli
Life, the Truth and Being Free

The Smithfield Gazette invites readers to submit their personal views for consideration and, after vetting, publication.

The Smithfield Gazette invites tenants, staff and others to forward information regarding personal news and events for inclusion in the Gazette. Your stories are of great interest to your colleagues and will go unnoticed without your input. Who's getting married? Is there a new baby? Are you looking for sponsorship for a charity event? Let us know by email smta.smithfield@btconnect.com, telephone 020 7248 3151, or by mail to 225 Central Markets, London, EC1A 9LH.

GAZETTE BY EMAIL

If you would prefer to receive the Gazette by email, please email us to request this at smta.smithfield@btconnect.com

DIARY

15 Apr SMTA AGM
22 Apr SMTA Council Meeting
13 May Markets Committee
21 May SMTA Council Meeting
17 Jun SMTA Council Meeting

TAIL PIECE

You know this column loathes certain cliches of the day. Nothing infuriates more than a TV interview when some "celebrity" is asked a question to which he or she constantly says "you know" - how very stupid – no, I don't know, if I knew why would I ask you the question?

Let's tell these "celebrities" - sportsmen, politicians, journalists, entertainers, they are lucky indeed to have achieved their fame because of the gullible "you know" public who applauded famous people many of whom have now been revealed as abusers and criminals.

Smithfield and the City continue to wonder at Winston Churchill's remarkable oratory, courage and vision, but when TV moguls decided to re-create his funeral, so-called "historians" asked to comment on this marvellous man spent their TV time trying to cut him down by concentrating on his human faults interlaced with "you know".

Are we so naive as to allow these nobodies the platform to diminish the man who saved the world from Nazis and disaster? So now "you know" and all I ask is that you know Great Britain remains the greatest country in the world and Winston Churchill certainly did know that.

When I hear an American pundit born after WWII was won saying "you know" while extolling the virtue of the American war effort I frizzle - the great special relationship was a nonsense - the Americans saw us as an empirical power standing in their way to world dominance and they used our precarious weak position to profit and diminish our empire. It took "you know" the horrific attack on Pearl Harbour to get America to fight.

I doubt Churchill ever said "you know" but if he did he would have said it like this: "You know we will never surrender" "You know we will fight them on the beaches" "You know if you give us the tools we will finish the job" You know that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth lasts for a thousand years, men will say "This was their finest hour".

I would be pleased if you could remember that.

Yours as ever,

Fred