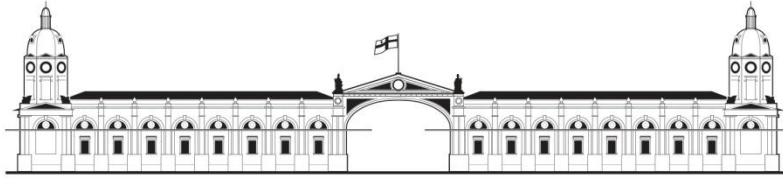


THE SMITHFIELD GAZETTE



EDITION 158

October 2016

“MY LORD MAYOR”

“We would do well to look to Smithfield as a bastion of adaptation”



“We must protect the diversity of international talent and trades on which the resilience of our city and nation depends”

“We could not be more proud of England’s flagship meat market and we are immensely grateful to the traders, Markets’ team and Committee for all they do to protect this institution”

*For a report on the Lord Mayor’s visit to the Market see page 3
For Alex Deane’s post-Brexit comment see ‘In My Opinion’ on page 2*

THE SMITHFIELD GAZETTE **COMMENT**

The City of London's Lord Mayor, Alderman the Lord Mountevans, spread joy and praise. His words ensure the bond between Smithfield Market and the City remains as strong as ever. How unlike the outgoing US President with his "end of the queue" threats. The Lord Mayor's visit to Smithfield will long be remembered.

BREXIT NEWS

The City forecasts a £30bn float frenzy, as private-equity giants and foreign owners seek to capitalise on the strength of the London stock market following the EU referendum. Half a dozen multi-billion-pound listings are being lined up over the next six months, according to City sources.

Britain's manufacturing sector has recorded the highest month-on-month increase for 25 years. The purchasing managers' index rose from 48.3 to 53.3 in August, signalling companies have returned to "business as usual" after the initial Brexit Referendum result.

Britain's economy is responding well to the Brexit referendum, according to early indications, as exports are rising, construction firms are landing big contracts, and even housing sales are relatively resilient.

The falling pound was taken as an indication that international investors were worried about the health of the economy after the vote, but the dive in sterling also has positive effects. Manufacturers reported the strongest export orders in two years in a survey by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), as the weak currency makes British goods more competitive abroad.

"If the UK votes to leave the EU, there would be significant consequences for the City of London's role as an international financial centre, as well as to London's world-leading property market." Policy & Resources Chairman Mark Boleat before the Referendum result.

"The City of London has thrived as a financial and trading centre for more than a thousand years and will continue to do so. There will be no mass exits of banks and financial institutions from the Square Mile." Policy & Resources Chairman Mark Boleat following the Referendum result.

IN MY OPINION

After all the pre-referendum negativity and nay saying about our great country, it's no surprise to those of us who had a little more confidence in our country to find after June's great vote for independence that the sky hasn't fallen in after all. Many apparently 'expert' predictions said that there would be an immediate effect if we voted to leave. Some predicted that there would already be a small recession. Our relatively long serving chancellor said that it would be bad enough that we would need an emergency budget. There were predictions that major companies would already be making moves to leave. None of these things have happened.

Instead, economic indicators like employment and retail spending, both significantly up, point the way to a bright future. The FTSE 100 is surging ahead. Total funds under management in the UK in July 2016 hit £988.6bn, a record high. We are, of course, in a peculiar environment in which – very sadly – some of our Remainer friends find this success for our country maddening!

Sterling is down, it's true. But a weaker currency isn't in and of itself bad – indeed, many of us have seen a bump in our income if we export as part of our business. Indeed, it was entirely predictable that our currency would be weaker in the short term after a vote for independence, and this isn't in and of itself a problem: it's really the only apparently negative thing that can be pointed to thus far and, especially as it had risen artificially before the vote, there's not much one can claim to read from sterling right now. Of course, we haven't actually left yet – so the nattering nabobs of negativism will claim that this is merely a case of pessimism postponed. But I prefer to look to the bright success around me, rather than the dark clouds some wish were here.

Over the next couple of years, we will have to negotiate our new relationship with the EU. This will happen in a calm and orderly fashion thanks to Theresa May's leadership. She may not have backed Brexit, but if you were picking the right person to deliver it in a suitably mature fashion it would be her. David Davis is the right man to negotiate with the Europeans, too – and his job, whilst complicated, is much easier than his counterpart Michel Barnier, since his shifting mandate comes from 27 countries not one!

Whilst we won't know the outcome of those negotiations for some time, we should be confident that a good deal emerges – and that any deal post-Brexit is better than the deal of remaining in would have been. In the meantime, compare how the UK's economic fundamentals compare to those of the Eurozone nations – when you do so, you're likely to thank heaven that we won't be attached to that sinking ship any more. France and Italy are caught in classic debt traps. Their GDP can never catch up with the debt they've accumulated. They're not far behind Portugal and Spain. Which are not far behind Greece. We are still in for now: but this point means that the sooner we can hasten ourselves away from any liability for post-crash Eurozone fallout the better.

Alex Deane CC

Alex Deane works for the global advisory firm FTI Consulting and is an elected representative for this Ward (Farringdon Without)

LORD MAYOR'S VISIT TO SMITHFIELD 26TH JULY 2016

The Lord Mayor, Alderman the Lord Mountevans, and his party, was welcomed for the annual visit to Smithfield Market on 26th July. The official party was taken on a tour of the Market, conducted by Derek Berry, deputy chairman of the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association and at the end of the tour the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress were presented with a selection of Market produce by the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association at David Andrade and Sons Ltd. After the tour, the official party and invited guests were entertained to breakfast at Haberdashers' Hall.

In response to Derek Berry's speech, the Lord Mayor said the following: "It's important not to forget that the cosmopolitan commerce of today was born from the hustle and bustle of market traders. Wholesale markets preceded financial markets by a good few hundred years, and both are the beating heart of capitalism; on which our economy thrives."

"We would do well to look to Smithfield as a bastion of adaptation and resilience over the centuries, and we must protect the diversity of international talent and trades on which the resilience of our City and nation depends."

"Following the referendum, I have been asked many times by our global partners "What next?". Well "What's next" is a period of consultation – to which the City's financial and professional services have requested representation. We hope that, by the time the Butchers move back into their home in 2019, the way forward will be much clearer! And like Smithfield, we hope the right solutions are found for all stakeholders."

"Meanwhile, we could not be more proud of England's flagship meat market, and we are immensely grateful to the traders, Markets' team and Committee, for all they do to protect this institution."

COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL EU DEBATE IN MARCH 2016

Not all Aldermen are the same. I greatly value being an independent member of an authority with no party politics, and use my own judgement on each matter which comes before us. I spoke in favour of the proposal that the City Corporation should retain its traditional independence during the period of the Referendum campaign. How beneficial would it have been for an apolitical non partisan City to have published authentic, accurate information on what was known about EU membership and what were the known advantages and the known and unknown risks of departure. I argued that we should publish information, and make Guildhall available for informed debate (perhaps even televised) whilst remaining above the fray. I urged colleagues that whatever their personal view, this would have been the right course of action. I was not a lone Aldermanic voice of this view, but sadly a majority of the Common Council did not agree, and we became just one voice in an angry and messy debate. It was an opportunity which the City missed.

Ian D Luder
Alderman for Castle Baynard

SMITHFIELD MEMORIES 2

Great memories, especially of our tutors like Chris Simmons who taught biochemistry. A former bomber pilot he was a great but sophisticated teacher who related the physical characteristics of some chemicals to the female form, which stuck the knowledge firmly in the brain and was not considered inappropriate as there were no females at the college at that time. The tutors were meat men first and academics second and won the respect of students. Ken Farlow, once employed by Baxter's butchers, was the small goods lecturer. One day my friend Micky Bristow came in late. "Where have you been, Mr Bristow?" "In the back garden sir, where's your bin?" Ken took it in the spirit in which it was meant. Days out from the college, especially working in Smithfield, were a treat and we students, though teased unmercifully, were welcomed by all. We also used to visit Ziff's abattoir which I remember being in Silvertown, or Beckton. I guess it was near the Thames where a hundred years earlier the river would have taken the waste. We did meat inspection there and I was intrigued to find that they had the contract for the old horses of the Household Cavalry.

With my Advanced Certificate of Meat from the Institute of Meat, I applied for jobs. FMC in St John Street offered me £750 a year, Harrisons of Calne warned me that all trainees started in their toughest sausage factory in Liverpool. I settled for £850 working for Thos Borthwick and Sons in St John's Lane working under Jack Mead, son of the legendary Jack Mead at Reading. Jack Junior's number one was the fantastic Roy Thompson from Northern Ireland. What a trader he was! I loved working on the Market at that time, especially with the marvellous Bill Church at Borthwick's 36 shop.

One day Fred Mallion asked me to give an evening lecture at the college on the "Real Meat Trade" as he put it. He wanted students to realise that there was quite a gap between the academic world of the college and the arduous and stressful trading world on Smithfield and the like. A reporter from the Meat Trades Journal, Tony Dutton, asked me after the lecture if he could have my notes. I told him I didn't have any, but could send him some. A week later the editor, Ron Lickorish, rang me and asked if I had dictated the notes to my secretary who had typed them? I had not and he was also surprised that the text was in journalistic style and clean typed. I then revealed that was because, before changing to work for Lloyd Maunder's, I had been a trainee journalist on the Devon and Somerset News and could type with eight fingers and two thumbs! Ron offered me a job on the spot as technical editor. As he offered £1100 a year, giving me a rise of nearly 30%, it was as they say today a "no brainer".

John Bolt

WILL THERE BE ANOTHER REFERENDUM?

I'm in a helicopter looking down on the aftermath of the battle of Waterloo or something like it. Perhaps Napoleon didn't notice me, he didn't know about helicopters; probably thought we were a flock of hungry vulture claws awaiting a feast day. Wellington was having a drink congratulating himself on the last minute goal delivered by the Austrians and the referee was in the bar with his assistants congratulating themselves - only one red card and 10 yellows!

"Let's get lower and see the field of play. Has the Portuguese manager let the medics on, is it too soon to help the wounded?. Hurry before the TV "experts" start asking boring questions." "Wally with the wellie" is man of the match with an assist from the Austrians who scored just before the final whistle.

"Wait. All I can see are dead cows, bulls, pigs, calves, sheep, lambs, turkeys and chickens" - suddenly the radio (Napoleon doesn't know about this either) sounds a bugle call, "hear this". The so called "vegans of the world" claim to have committed this atrocious act. The vegans have ruled we should all be vegans, that means no fish allowed either.

ITALY GETS TOUGH ON "DANGEROUS" VEGAN DIETS FOR CHILDREN

"I have nothing against vegans or veganism as long as it is a free choice by adults." Elvira Savino, an Italian lawmaker, told Reuters. "I just find it absurd that some parents are allowed to impose their will on children in an almost fanatical, religious way, often without proper scientific knowledge or medical consultation." "These children are literally underfed, put in mortal danger from unwary parents who have decided to follow a philosophical movement."

The Washington Post

These cared for beautiful animals (greens please note) are no more. The world is starving, teeth are history, butchers are suicidal. Lack of B12 is causing fragile bones, dogs and horses are whimpering with fear of slaughter, cats have disappeared, only hedgehogs bristle in their battle with the badgers.

The meat eaters with secret facilities are underground awaiting salvation. Give us this day our daily steak. Can the butchers of the world fight back for freedom? Can UKMP (United Kingdom Meat Party) force another referendum?

SID'S LAW

I am 19 and standing, half awake, at 4am on a cold winter morning in 1957 trying to convince my Lambretta to start at this ungodly hour. The scooter's reluctance is matched only by my own misgivings about sacrificing a cushy number in Weddel's head office for a journey into the unknown as a trainee offal salesman in one of their many Smithfield shops.

The scooter splutters into life and I make it to the Market to be greeted by my new boss, Sid, who gives me a white coat and a handful of wooden skewers before imparting the following pearls of wisdom that masquerade as an intensive training course. "This is a simple job," Sid says, "the Market opens for business at 5am and closes at 1pm. We have no cold storage so we need to empty the shop by the closing bell." "Furthermore," Sid says, "there are only two prices you need to keep in mind. There's the asking price and the taking price and somewhere between the two a deal can be struck." "Now," Sid says, "because every other offal stall on the Market has similar products the key to the job is not knowing how to sell but when to sell."

With that Sid saunters off on a tour to see who's got what and returns half an hour later and declares his strategy as follows. "Until 9 o'clock," Sid says "we hold firm on hearts and kidneys and take sensible offers on liver." For the next few hours I watch Sid work his magic on a multitude of butchers and buyers and he even feeds me a couple of tame ones to get my feet wet. After breakfast at the Cock Sid surveys the market again and modifies his strategy to ensure we are poised to clear the shop by the closing bell.

I am in awe of Sid and feel privileged to be learning at the feet of a seasoned trader. Fast forward seven years and I've honed my skills under other traders in beef, lamb and pork but decide to leave the Market to seek my fortune in a different sales arena with more sociable hours. Sid's simple philosophy travels with me and continues to serve me well regardless of what products I need to trade. In all commerce a good price today can be a bad price tomorrow and vice versa so knowing when to buy and when to sell is one of the best weapons in any salesman's armoury.

Nomad

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Every utterance from Europe's leaders since 23rd June has reinforced this newspaper's belief that the historic referendum result was the right one for this country's future."

The Daily Telegraph

SMTA PRESIDENT

The office of the president of the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association is an honorary position and has not always been filled. The president is elected annually and may serve for up to three years either consecutively or not. For the past three years until July 2016 the office has been held by John William Brewster OBE.

Many readers will know John Brewster and may even be aware of his fascinating background and history. For those of you who do not, here is a potted version:

John Brewster was born in 1930 near Paris and was educated at St George's College, Buenos Aires, Argentina. He served a short term commission in the Royal Tank Regiment from 1948 to 1950 and served in the Territorial Army from 1950 to 1967 reaching the rank of Major. He worked for Canada Meat Packers, Toronto, from 1952 to 1954 and on the de-control of meat in 1954 joined Gee & Webb Ltd at Smithfield becoming managing director in 1968.

From 1971 to 1979 he was chairman of the Smithfield Market Fresh Meat Traders' Association, festival chairman of the Butchers' Charitable Institution 1971-1972 and chairman of the National Council of Associations of Fresh Meat Wholesalers. He served on the Meat and Livestock Commission Distribution Committee from 1972 to 1977 and on various consultative committees for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now DEFRA).

John was elected master of the Worshipful Company of Butchers in 1983. In 1994 he was elected to the Court of Common Council as a member for the ward of Bassishaw in the City of London. As chairman of the City's Port Health and Environmental Services committee, the Evening Standard named him in their list of 1,000 most influential people in London.

John became chairman of the SMTA in 1987 and served for 10 years until 1997. He guided the SMTA to its robust post-war position with diplomatic skills and his knowledge of the international meat trade. The government recognised his contribution and awarded him the honour of an OBE.

John Brewster's successor as president of the SMTA is John Absalom, former deputy chairman of the SMTA and recently retired managing director of Absalom & Tribe. John also currently serves as an elected member of the Court of Common Council for the ward of Farringdon Without.

LIBERTY OF LONDON AND INDIAN NATIVES AT THE MANSION HOUSE

Liberty has always specialised in oriental goods — as far back as the 1880s, Indian silks were imported to the store, and the rug department is well-known still today. In 1885, Arthur Lasenby Liberty brought a village of 42 Indians to London and staged a 'living village' of Indian artisan producers in Battersea Park, with the aim of selling more of these products. However, the public were concerned about the way the villagers were being put on display, and the stunt backfired. But the Indian visitors did get a trip to Mansion House while they were here as reported in a newspaper article of the time, reproduced below.

NEWSPAPER REPORT OF 1885

On the invitation of the Lord Mayor, the Indian artificers who were brought over to this country by Messrs. Liberty & Co., East India agents, and who are about to take part in an exhibition of an Indian Village at the Albert Palace, were received at the Mansion House on Monday afternoon. A small company of ladies and gentlemen were admitted to the reception. The artificers are accompanied by some Indian jugglers, snake charmers, and nautch girls, each of whom exhibited their skill in juggling, snake charming, and dancing before his lordship and the Lady Mayoress, and their guests. The performances began with the snake charmers, whose cobras excited much interest, especially among the ladies who were present, many of whom had to touch and handle the animals, who have been rendered quite harmless by the abstraction of their fangs. The juggling was extremely clever, and was frequently applauded. The dancing and singing of the nautch girls was a novelty to most of those present and was seen and listened to with curiosity and satisfaction. Sir Edward Lee, the manager of the Albert Palace, introduced the natives to the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, and the former, in expressing satisfaction at the visit, hoped their reception in this country would do something to cement the bonds between this country and our great Indian empire. When the performance was concluded, the Indian girls were supplied with fruit and sweetmeats and (for those who drank it, like the Mahomedans and Parsees) wine. The Europeans were also entertained with cake and wine, and the company separated, after an expression of satisfaction by the Lord Mayor at the visit.

John Todd
Councillor, London Borough of Hounslow

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



RESPONSE TO PETER MARTINELLI'S ARTICLE 'WHO WAS THE ARCHITECT' IN THE JULY EDITION

I was surprised to read the contents of this article. I have studied the work of Sir Horace Jones and wrote my postgraduate thesis on the subject.

The **General Market** as designed by Sir Horace Jones, Architect to the City Corporation, formed part of his vast re-planning and rebuilding of Smithfield Market -- comprising the well known Meat Market, Poultry Market, General Market on Farringdon Road and the Annexe (former Fish Market). The General Market was completed in 1883 and is in itself a remarkable achievement, as described in my recent report for Save Britain's Heritage. (1)

The General Market's amazing, glazed lantern-domed roof structure with its complex system of moveable louvres to control temperatures throughout the year, was regrettably removed after the war (pictured above, before and after) but replaced with today's elegant, concrete shell dome. This stands on the original Phoenix Columns (whose importance is described in the report). The landmark Harts Corner, which stood where Farringdon Road meets Charterhouse Street, was a victim of wartime

destruction. The replacement buildings on the site are simpler and cheaper, reflecting the financial stringencies of the post-war period.

I have examined the architectural output of Sir Horace Jones in detail and formed some impressions of his character. He was without doubt the architect of Billingsgate Market, Leadenhall Market and all the Smithfield Market buildings. Although an earlier Billingsgate Market existed on the same site and a little of it was incorporated into Jones' work (Jones was not wasteful!), Billingsgate was undoubtedly redesigned and rebuilt by Jones.

Records, accounts and detailed drawings of Jones' work can be examined at the City Corporation, in the London Metropolitan Archives, in the contemporary architectural press and at the RIBA, of which he became President. He was a frequent writer and lecturer -- including a considered article on his City Markets for the RIBA Transactions (2).

The designs for Smithfield Market were entirely Jones' work from start to finish and it is fascinating to follow the development of his ideas for the site from his surviving drawings and reports to the City Corporation. Only the small, ingeniously planned Annexe on Smithfield Street was completed to his designs by his assistant after his death.

Sir Horace Jones was the architect of Tower Bridge. His was the idea of constructing a *bascule* or double drawbridge, an idea he may have taken from smaller scale examples on the continent or from proposals for bascule bridges in the US that were never implemented, but published widely. Drawings exist from his earliest schemes through to the completed Tower Bridge which employed a very early example of structural steel within its stone-clad towers. Sir John Wolfe Barry, engineer, designed the machinery. Sir Horace Jones received a knighthood while Tower Bridge was under construction but died before its completion. The bridge was opened by Queen Victoria in 1893. Many publications describe the genesis and realisation of this famous bridge.

Sir Horace Jones had unimpeachable architectural integrity and in his writings gave credit elsewhere for ideas he had adopted. He worked successfully with other professionals including engineers, and this enabled him to take on complex, mighty projects which would have daunted lesser mortals. He deserves to be more widely recognised.

Dr Jennifer M Freeman OBE

(1) Dr Jennifer M. Freeman, The Curious Case of the Phoenix Columns in Smithfield General Market Save Britain's Heritage, 2015

(2) Horace Jones, On The New City Markets RIBA Transactions, 1877-8, p 113

THE GENERAL MARKET - PETER MARTINELLI'S RESPONSE TO DR FREEMAN

It is always a great pleasure for any newspaper to receive correspondence from readers, but more so when a reader is as well-informed and as learned a student of the subject of the debate as indeed Dr Jennifer Freeman seems to be. I confess there are times when Save Britain's Heritage appears arrogant in its views, brooking no argument. For example, Dr Freeman states: "the designs for Smithfield Market were entirely Jones' work from start to finish" that is almost certainly not the case.

Without doubt Dr Freeman wrote her thesis on this subject but possibly no other person was in a position to criticise it. I, however, can and do because her work on the history of the roof is completely wrong. How am I qualified to say that? Because I've spent a lifetime working, trading and living there. When the Market re-opened 9 years after WWII ended (in 1954), the work force contained many men from pre-war years and their knowledge was absorbed by the new workers. The General Market was not referred to - the building was known as "the Village" and always had been.

The reason for its nickname was the tall tower in the centre of the roof which resembled the Japanese towers at Kew, thus "the Japanese Village" shortened finally to "the Village" which definitely was a Horace Jones creation, louvred from top to bottom to help the air-flow as the General Market, unlike the other buildings, was sunk in a valley. The much vaunted "dome" was built after the tower was destroyed by enemy action long after Horace Jones died."

THANK YOU

I have just received the Gazette by email and I wanted to say a **BIG THANK YOU** to you and all who participate in the Smithfield Gazette.

I really look forward each time to receive the Gazette as it makes for truly honest reading with points of view incredibly well expressed. It is also a great source of knowledge provider, especially for the likes of me that live outside London.

Keep up the good work. Best Regards, Arthur Ebejer

"Vegetarians have got a few things wrong. They aren't saving animals, they're killing them. When humans give up meat, they rely on grains for the bulk of their food. Grains require large amounts of acreage; take that land away from grazing animals, they lose their natural habitat."

Dr Al Sears MD, CNS

THE BATTLE THAT CHANGED HISTORY

If there's a date every child remembers, it's 1066. The Battle of Hastings and the death of King Harold is the event they won't shrug off as they follow their teacher's enthusiasm which in turn has been inherited. This October, 950 years will have passed since this great battle that changed the course of England's history so significantly.

Edward, King of England died, childless, in 1066 and according to William Duke of Normandy, his cousin, Edward had promised him the throne. When the throne was given to Harold Godwinson, an English Earl, the fight was on. While Harold had had to march his army north to fight off a Norwegian attack led by his brother Tostig and King Harald Hardrada at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, in the East Riding of Yorkshire on 25th September 1066, William landed some 7,000 troops at Pevensey on 28th September and set up camp. Harold had to march his army back south to confront William and the battle took place on 14th October 1066, somewhat inland from where the Norman forces had landed as they had marched north to intercept Harold. The battle lasted from 9am until dusk and as we all know, Harold and his army were defeated, although it was apparently a close-run thing.

On Christmas Day 1066 in Westminster Abbey, William was crowned King and immediately stripped out the rights of the Saxons and changed the entire governmental system of law. Before William, many officials called "Earls" were equal to the King and enjoyed certain freedoms which William removed. Under William, the King was the absolute power. He served as collective executive and judicial authority. This prevented the people from having any voice in government, their early attempts to rebel were swiftly defeated. A new language and culture were adopted. Out went the Anglo Saxon customs of 300 years and a French culture and dialect were adopted.

William had previously established a feudal state in Normandy which allowed him to offer his warriors plots of land called "fiefs" in return for their loyalty. Now he took lands from the Anglo Saxons and gave it to his Norman followers. We live in a country based on the outcome of the Battle of Hastings.

ROYAL PR-WAS IT AN ARROW?

Royal deaths, historical signposts, often need cleansing. Many of us were taught that Harold was killed by an arrow in the eye, but contemporary accounts do not mention this and many historians now believe this to be a PR invention by the defeated royal family and, in fact, that the body was so mutilated that the King's mother had to order that the corpse be made less gruesome.

NEWS IN BRIEF

British meat back on the menu in the US after 20 years – British beef and lamb will be exported to the US by January after a draft deal was recently struck between the two governments in what could be the UK's first major foreign trade agreement since the referendum. According to DEFRA this will boost the economy by £35 million a year.

London's Burning – the Great Fire of London, which started on Sunday 2nd September 1666 and burned for four days, was commemorated by a number of events in London culminating in the finale on Sunday 4th September when a 120 metre long wooden representation of the City was set on fire on the River Thames. The fire of 1666 destroyed 13,200 houses, 87 parish churches, St Paul's Cathedral and most of the buildings of the City authorities.

Major City Elections, 23rd March 2017 – the four yearly elections for Common Council take place on 23rd March 2017.

Stuart Thompson of Peter Thompson Group has been elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Butchers.

Smithfield Market 150th Anniversary in 2018 – discussions are taking place between the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association, the Market Superintendent and the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection on plans for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Victorian Market buildings in 1868.

GAZETTE BY EMAIL

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

The Smithfield Gazette invites tenants, staff and others to forward items for inclusion in the Gazette. These could be personal or company news and events or anything else you might care to write about. 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

DIARY

19 Oct SMTA Council Meeting
23 Nov SMTA Council Meeting
30 Nov Markets Committee Meeting

TAIL PIECE

Heads or tails by coin is used to determine who goes first and who tails. To 'tail' should describe following someone without being seen, but I know you're there, we're old friends. Tails also make me think of Fred (no relation) Astaire. Spun the coin and it came up tails.

Tails: my first tale is of a cold winter in Great Britain when our tails became diamonds. Everyone wanted them. Every trader had sold out. Young, eager and a novice meat trader, but determined to satisfy my tail-hungry clients, I contacted my agent and accepted an offer of a 'parcel' of kangaroo tails yet to be shipped but worthy of my newly emerging (or so I imagined) enterprise skills. When the forward purchase finally arrived, the demand had long since evaporated and tails had tucked themselves away perhaps becoming aware of their potential value for another season. They were wise. Kangaroo tails, designed by nature to leap, jump and propel, were concrete to human teeth. My brilliant move was laid bare, an exposure of my lack of experience and knowledge.

Heads: my second story is of tail gunners – rear gunners braving death in appalling conditions. These men have been my heroes ever since I sat in the tail turret of a Sunderland flying boat as a conscript airman. At the end of WWII, when the death toll of gunners reached terrible levels, one of them volunteered to serve as tail gunner on bombing missions to Germany. This tail end piece is to salute this remarkable man who lived to tell the tale.

The man was Ernest Groeger, who celebrated his 95th birthday in July, lunching at the 'Brockley Jack' in Brockley in the borough of Lewisham with his partner Sylvie and later his family and friends. In WWII, as RAF losses grew, Ernie, not trained as a gunner, responded to a plea to fly as a tail end gunner, flew a number of missions over Germany and survived.

Ernie was once Sergeant Armourer on 617 Squadron serving under Guy Gibson, the pilot who led the Dambusters raid on the Mohne Dam. Today Ernest is Vice President of 97 Squadron and travels regularly to Lincolnshire by staff car to chair meetings and give his support to the airmen of today.

A great friend of Smithfield and the City, he spent his working life in textiles, his office a few yards from Guildhall. He is probably Millwall Football Club's longest ever supporter and still retains his seat in the directors' box to spur them on. To disappointed 'Remainers' please remember those who defied Germany and Vichy France to defeat a Nazi world and grant you the freedom you now have.

I would be pleased if you could remember that.

Yours as ever,

Fred