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SHINING A
LIGHT ON THE
WOMEN WHO
WORK IN THE
MARKET

SEE PAGES 10-12



This International Women's Day, we profiled some of the increasing number of women working at NCGM



Editor's Message



Spring seemed to have very much sprung as I wrote this column in mid-April, just in time for the Easter holidays. Hopefully the sun is still out by the time you read this as from what I'm seeing and hearing, the improvement in the weather has signalled a resurgence in trade across London and the South East. As you'll read inside, this has led to an intensely busy period for a lot of our traders – and not before time. With Valentine's Day and Mother's Day having sparked things up for the Flower Market, it has to be said that things are looking much brighter as we now look forward to the onset of summer.

That's not to say life in the Market is without its challenges – when ITN and Sky cameras were here to talk to traders in both the Fruit and Vegetable Market and the Flower Market in the last quarter, their reporters were told that rising energy costs are having a big impact on trade and there have also been supply challenges to contend with. As readers of Market Times know, however, these are the times when this great Market is at its best; when the generations of experience and expertise come to the fore.

Talking of generations, the Covent Garden Tenants Association (CGTA) received a certificate from Companies House in April to mark 100 years since it was incorporated. It's a remarkable achievement for any organisation to thrive through ten decades and I'm sure you'll all join me in offering the CGTA hearty congratulations on its efforts to protect the interests of its members so well for so long. On pages 6-7, incumbent chairman for 17 years of that century Gary Marshall reflects on the milestone and we also give you a sneak peek back at the minutes of the very first meeting, in 1922!

International Women's Day took place in March and we thought we'd illustrate the fast-growing role of women in the Market. There's no denying that this has been a male-dominated trading environment down the years, but we asked what types of roles the women we interviewed have, why they enjoy working here and what they'd advise other women who think a career at New Covent Garden might suit them. It's a great read and on the back page, we've also featured Jo Breare, who is General Manager of Covent Garden Market Authority. One of Jo's wishes is to see the proportion of women working here increase and there will be more initiatives to promote the role of women in the Market in the coming months.

Also inside is a profile of another one of the Market's Happy Customers, Eric Lanlard, who also just happens to be one of the country's leading patissiers, as well as a regular at New Covent Garden for more than 30 years.

Sadly, we lost one of the legendary figures of the Market in the last quarter. Sham Grimshaw's obituary is opposite and Market Times offers condolences to his family and friends.

Tommy

Tommy Leighton,
Market Press Officer

50 and out for flower veteran Trevor

Trevor Clackett, a 50-year veteran of Covent Gardens old and new, is retiring in mid-May.

Having started out as a buck at Fyffes Monroe in 1972, aged 17, Trevor moved to SR Allen in 1984, where he was a director for 35 years. The last three years of his career in flowers have been spent with DG Flowers.

"It's one of those careers you get into and you don't seem to come out," laughed Trevor. "It's amazing how you've worked with some people for 40 years without realising it. Obviously, it's not a normal job, but there's been so much great fun and banter and I've made so many good friends.

"The last few years at DG have been brilliant; I've enjoyed myself immensely and they are a great bunch of guys. I feel a bit like Michael Corleone in The Godfather – "Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in", but now's definitely the time for me.

"Driving out of the Market for the last time is going to be strange. I'm going to miss the people, but not necessarily the job. I'm looking forward to the time when I don't wake up in the middle of the night. After this many years, it feels like you're permanently jet-lagged, but finishing at 10.30 has its benefits, especially when you like golf and pub gardens, like me!" he added.

Trevor is married, with three grown up boys and six grandchildren, and that golf handicap needs tending to. All the best for a long and happy retirement, from everyone at New Covent Garden Market.



Pictured above: Trevor is looking forward to more time in pub gardens!

Joint community effort supports British Red Cross in Ukraine

NEW
COVENT
GARDEN
MARKET



“Our thoughts are with the people in Ukraine and everyone affected by this terrible war.

Covent Garden Market Authority and The Covent Garden Tenants Association - on behalf of the entire Market community - set up a joint Just Giving Page to support the British Red Cross in its efforts in Ukraine.

Together, the organisations made a first donation of £4,000 (£2,000 each). The Market community was invited to make donations of their own, in order to help someone affected get food, water, first aid, medicines, warm clothes and shelter.

In a joint statement, Jo Breare, General Manager at Covent Garden Market Authority, and Gary Marshall, Chairman of the Covent Garden Tenants Association, said: "We are all deeply saddened and distressed by the horrific war and resulting humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

As a community we have proved, especially recently with Covid-19, how well we respond during times of crisis. When we can't be there, we will support those who can.

"Our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine and everyone affected by this terrible war."

If you would like to add to the efforts, the Just Giving page is: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/newcoventgardenmarketcommunityukraine

When Market Times went to press, the total raised was approaching £6,000. Thank you to everyone who has contributed already and to anyone else for any support you can give.

RIP Sham, a true legend of the Market

Sadly, Sham Grimshaw, who worked at both the Old and the New Covent Garden Markets, passed away recently aged 75.

He was born in Westminster and raised in Pimlico, where from a young age he would carry cases at Victoria Station before starting work on a fruit stand in Pimlico.

Sham was well known in the market during a career here that stretched back many years. He started at Mack & Edwards, followed by Pankhurst's before setting up his own business - D.D.P. - in the 1980s with son Kevin, who also sadly passed away, in 2019.

As well as supplying The House of Lords for 20 years, Sham achieved two Royal Warrants whilst in charge at D.D.P. - The Queen Mother and Her Majesty The Queen - the latter of which still remains today, unbroken after over 20 years of supplying The Royal Households. Sham was immensely proud of this and knew the importance of having reliable staff and suppliers around him. This has not changed and even since retiring, he still spoke to suppliers and constantly reminded his other son, Paul, of the importance of working with good people.

Paul said: "I can't get anywhere near what he achieved over the years. Even though he retired from the business over 2 years ago, he still knew what was going on and we spoke virtually every day. I will miss his sense of humour every day and being a solid sounding board for business and life in general."

He was a true market man and loved the cut and thrust of the early morning trade and the obstacles it presented, and still presents, every day. He worked very hard all of his life

and was not one for lavish holidays, but enjoyed the peace and quiet of living in the country with wife, Carole.

With apologies to those who we may have missed out below - he enjoyed talking to many faces on Buyers' Walk, including Eddie (HG Walkers), Ian (French Garden), Bruce (Bruce White), Nick and Terry (London Fresh), Bart (Supreme), Robert Reid, Barry Damian (Gilgrove), Simon (Greenhills), Barry Grant, Roger Garber and last but not least, Gary (Bevingtons), who he grew very fond of, not only because of his support on a daily basis, but also the unenviable job of being Chairman of the Covent Garden Tenants' Association. Sham was keen to support Gary with regard to the proposed redevelopment and was a member of the CGTA Management Committee for over 10 years. He was well and truly in support of all the 'Phase One' Tenants sticking together. Gary Marshall, Chairman of CGTA commented on the bad news: "Sham was a great supporter of the Market, especially the CGTA and me as Chairman. His unbiased advice, wisdom and staunch support was priceless. He was a Man of his word and a Gentleman. He will be sadly missed"

Sham's funeral was held on Saturday 19th March at Chilterns Crematorium in Amersham and was fantastically well attended.

Pictured right: Sham was a true Market man and loved the cut and thrust of the early morning trade



Market stars in ITN and Sky News broadcasts

Two ITN news teams broadcast from the Flower Market around Valentine's Day.

The ITV Regional News and Weather filmed its interviews in the week running up to Valentine's Day and well-known weatherwoman and journalist Sally Williams gave traders and customers the opportunity to give London viewers an insight into the prevailing state of the flower trade, particularly to explain the reasons why cut flowers were more expensive this year than last. The rest of a relatively light-hearted segment also shone a light on the Market and the most popular products being sold for the annual day of

love, on February 14th.

On Valentine's Day itself, ITV's Good Morning Britain, which has around 3.3 million viewers, filmed six weather segments from the Market, again highlighting the range of product available and painting the picture of the Market as central to the celebrations.

Additionally, Sky News was also in the Market in February to talk to tenants of both the Fruit and Vegetable Market and the Flower Market about the combined impact on trade of Brexit, the pandemic and rising fuel and energy prices. Sky News has an estimated viewership of 340,000.

Happy Streets looking to expand street food offering

This year's free Happy Streets Festival for families living or working in Nine Elms is scheduled for Saturday July 9th, with indoor and outdoor entertainment for all ages.

Happy Streets is looking to expand its street food offering and would love to hear from any companies in the Market interested in trading at the event. Please contact info@nineelmsonthesouthbank.com if you are interested in getting involved.

Commissioned by Wandsworth Council, the event presents a varied programme of performances, creative activities and signposting to initiatives supporting happiness and wellbeing in the local community.

The annual festival was inspired by Happy Street, artist Yinka Ilori's colourful redesign of the nearby railway

bridge underpass on Thessaly Road. It takes place in community venues and outdoor spaces on either side of the bridge, with walkabout activity spilling out into the surrounding streets, entertaining residents from balconies and front doors.

Happy Streets showcases local artists and organisations and includes:

- Indoor and outdoor activities/performance
- live performance - music, dance, theatre, circus
- talks and debates
- workshops and classes
- arts & craft
- sports activities
- street theatre and walkabout acts.

Find out more at nineelmslondon.com/happystreets2022



Spot the difference



It had been a fixture in the Market for nearly 50 years and now it's gone! The Eastern Link Bridge demolition was completed in March and we thought you'd like to see the before and after pictures.

The next phase of the demolition work will begin on the half of A&B Block closest to the new buildings, on October 10th. This will remove all of the units down to what was the Eastern Link Bridge and cut-through and the construction of that phase is due for completion in mid-November 2023.



All of the tenants from the units that are being demolished will be moving into the new A2 Block, which remains on programme. All of the internal walls, flooring, toilets and electrics are in place and the electrical second fix – which sees things like sockets and sprinklers fitted – is under way.

Also in October, there will be a second exit available via the Southern Loop Road onto Carnation Way. The slip road by the security lodge will still be in operation and CGMA will provide more information and signposting in advance.

Emily hiking from Mexico to Canada

Emily Hayes, who works for Tonkin Products, a food supplier based in the Food Exchange, is hiking 2,663 miles on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), from Mexico to Canada, on her own, with everything she needs to survive carried on her back.

She took a sabbatical and began the five-month hike in March. She aims to complete the PCT for charity KOTO (Know One, Teach One). The trip is self-funded, so 100% of donations will go straight to her chosen charity.

Emily is a keen hiker and as well as raising money for a great cause, wants to inspire and give people confidence to get outdoors by sharing her experience.

Emily has been planning this trip for the last two years after the March 2020 lockdown inspired her to fully commit to the project. She plans to walk on average 20 miles a day and needs to eat around 4,000 calories to maintain her energy levels whilst carrying a 15kg backpack. Emily will be under pressure to source water whilst hiking across the Southern Californian desert and snowy conditions are a



real concern when hiking the Sierra Mountain range - not to mention wild animals.

KOTO is a foundation in Vietnam that empowers at-risk and disadvantaged youth to pursue a life of dignity by providing training, life skills and opportunity through its hospitality training programs. Emily has spent a lot of time working and living in Vietnam as part of her career in the food industry, so this cause is close to her heart. If you'd like to donate, go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/Emily-hikes-PCT> - every penny is sent straight to KOTO through the Global Giving platform.

Mission Kitchen launches private hire spaces

Mission Kitchen (MK) in the Food Exchange has launched its Development Kitchen, Glass Room and Terrace for private hire. The team at MK ran a showcase event on April 13th, to allow interested parties to check out the spaces, designed for industry professionals and hospitality groups.

Food and drink was provided by some of MK's fabulous members, and the event also included some interactive workshops and of course a tour of the facilities.

MK's 16,000 sqft site is home to a community of more than 80 independent food start-ups. For anyone who couldn't make the launch, here's a little bit more about the venue hire opportunities:



Development Kitchen - The purpose built 450 sqft commercial development kitchen is spacious and bright, perfect to hire for half a day, full day or evening. The space is ideal to host a range of hires from cookery classes, training sessions, menu development and photoshoots.

The room includes 12 workstations that can be set up in a number of arrangements, as well as a table for meeting, dining or photography. The kitchen is fully equipped with cooking equipment including state of the art ovens, a range of counter-top units and all the utensils you may need for your event.

Glass Room and Terrace - The Glass Room is a bright and airy blank canvas, ideal for meetings, meals, team events, lectures, workshops and drinks receptions. It is linked to the Development Kitchen and the two spaces can be booked together for events that combine cooking with dining, learning or mingling. The Terrace offers additional outdoor space and is perfect for larger reception events, summer parties and open air breakout space.

"We are delighted to have these spaces up and running," said Rose Wilk-Mullis, Events and Sales Lead at MK. "We understand that some of the Market community may not have been able to attend on the evening and we'd love you to see the facilities, so if you'd like have a look around, please contact me at rose@missionkitchen.org for more information."

FoodCycle provides corporate volunteering opportunity

FoodCycle is running a series of Food Invention Challenges at the Food Exchange, providing a bespoke corporate volunteering opportunity for local businesses to give something back to the local community.

At the fun and interactive sessions, teams of up to 12 are challenged to work together and use their culinary creativity to produce 30 three-course meals from surplus food that would otherwise go to waste. Replicating the model of many FoodCycle Projects up and down the country, the resulting meals are donated to members of the local community (in this case, people staying in nearby supported housing projects, including St Mungo's Bondway in Vauxhall and Evolve Housing in Stockwell Gardens).

Ticking the boxes for a contemporary, socially-conscious take on the

classic corporate team building events and office get-togethers, FoodCycle's Food Invention Challenges are a great way for businesses to give back beyond simply donating to charity. From the finance sector to local food companies, lots of businesses have taken part since they launched. Martha from Rude Health, one of the businesses that has already taken up the challenge, said: "If you're a company looking for a meaningful way to give back, and bond as a team, then look no further. You'll leave feeling accomplished and full of innovative ideas to use up fruit and veg that would have otherwise gone to waste."

The challenges take place at Mission Kitchen's Development Kitchen. Events take 3.5 hours and run on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at a cost of £1,800. As a charity, FoodCycle relies on continued funding, to provide its essential services across the country, so this price includes event costs and staff time, plus a donation to support FoodCycle's work.

To get involved - contact Athene: athene@foodcycle.org.uk

Marie et Marcelle offers you a local lunchtime offer with a new twist

If you're looking for something a little out of the ordinary for your lunch, a meeting or to eat at home, you'll definitely be interested in a new lunchtime offer from one of the members at Mission Kitchen, on floor one of the Food Exchange.

Marie et Marcelle delivers fresh, homemade lunches to people at home or at work, lovingly prepared with carefully selected seasonal produce – and the fruit and vegetables are all sourced from New Covent Garden Market.

Pauline Acheron-Pintureau is the driving force behind the meals, which she describes as “a heartfelt, homemade taste of my French heritage that blossoms with the seasons”. The business is named after her great grandmother Marie and grandmother Marcelle, who ran the family farm, in Charente, France, which Pauline visited and was inspired by during her school holidays.

Pauline is determined to showcase seasonal local produce, as provenance and flavour are so close to her heart. “I want to source products that are as local and fresh as possible,” she told Market Times. “What is most important to me is the taste. When I visited my grandparents, all the great food I ate came from their garden, their farm or a neighbour's farm, so I know the value of locally sourced food.”

The Marie et Marcelle menu - comprising a meal and dessert that would complement each other well – changes each week and is currently available on two days only, Tuesdays and Thursdays, although if you're looking for something on a different day or even for a different dish for a team meeting or private event, please contact Pauline (details below) and find out whether she is able to meet your requirements.

Each meal is carefully packaged and refrigerated, guaranteeing a fresh and delicious dish ready for you to warm up and enjoy. And of course, it is being created on-site – if the food is being delivered to the Market, there is no delivery fee. If you're looking for a delicious dinner rather than lunch, that works too!



“The business is evolving and I now have a nice mix of individual customers and businesses,” said Pauline. “I also had my first private dining customer in April, which was very exciting. There is definitely lots of opportunity out there and the idea is for all of these strands to expand as I grow. I am focusing on South West London right now, but I eventually want the offer to be available across the city. Food delivery is currently undertaken by bike with the meals stored in insulated bags and boxes.”

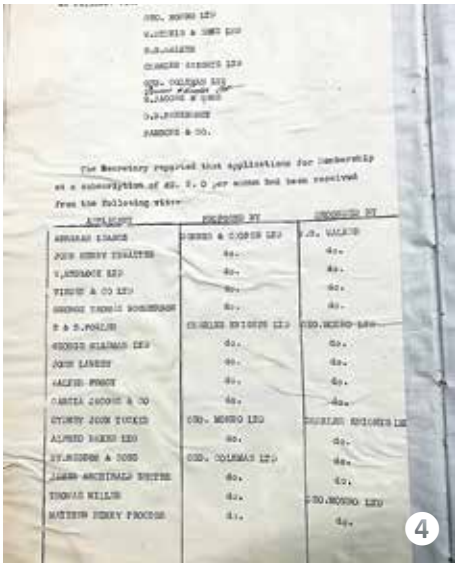
“I am still very small, so I am always open to discussing partnership opportunities, whether that be with growers or wholesalers who want to sell some wonky local produce for me to use in my recipes or even a distributor who thinks they might be able to deliver the meals into their network. I would love to be able to tell people that I have sourced my meals ‘fresh from New Covent Garden Market’ year round.”

View website here:
<https://marieetmarcelle.com>
 Email Pauline here:
bonjour@marieetmarcelle.com



CGTA celebrates a century serving Market tenants

April 6th was a red letter day for Covent Garden Tenants Association, as it received a certificate from Companies House to commemorate its 100th anniversary on their register. The tenants association has been front and centre of all of the major events that have impacted the Market in that time, including a World War, several painful recessions, a relocation from W1 to SW8 and in more recent times, the redevelopment of the Market and a pandemic.



Gary Marshall is the longest serving of 24 chairmen who have served the CGTA since 1922, having been in the position for 17 years. “I certainly didn’t intend or expect to be chairman for so long,” Gary says. “To a certain extent, circumstances have dictated that it made sense for one person to see through this period in the Market’s history and I am extremely proud to be that person. Representing the tenants of this magnificent Market and working with my dedicated executive team has been an absolute privilege, even if not a pleasure every single day!”

Gary served as deputy chairman for almost a decade before he became chairman, so has been integral to the CGTA for more than a quarter of its existence. “During the first few years I was involved, our main role (as it had been since the foundation of CGTA) was to negotiate rent, leases and service charge on behalf of our members with the landlord. We were also involved in lengthy discussions with the Transport & General Workers Union around salaries and working conditions and those were extremely robust negotiations, every year.

Other than protecting the interests of its members, there has also been an expectation on the CGTA chair and his exec committee to represent the Market at industry functions, such as dinners and trade exhibitions and conferences. “The demise of the unions looked like it was going to reduce the burden on the association and its exec team,” says Gary. “But before we had the chance to get complacent, the first news about the Market’s redevelopment began to emerge.

“We weren’t consulted on the plans at the very start and that’s where a lot of the problems began,” says Gary. “When we were part of the discussion, we were told that

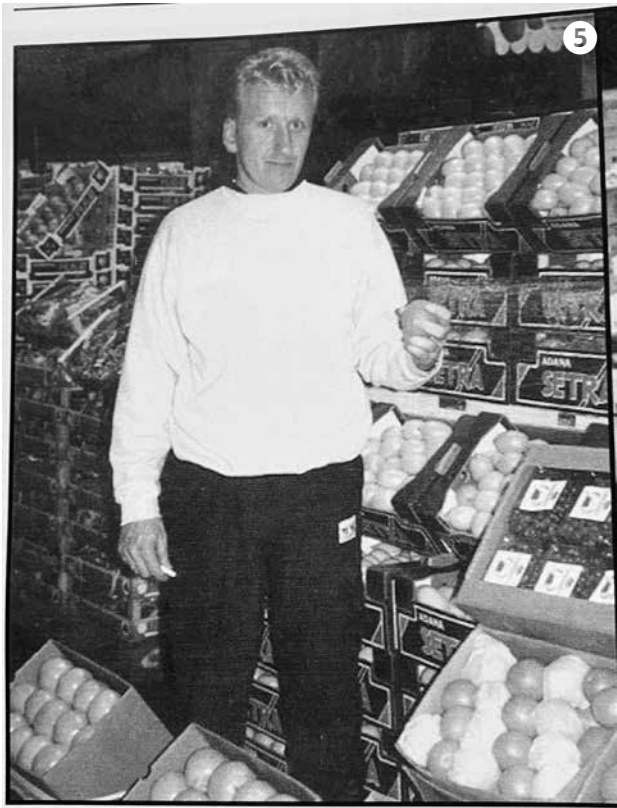
the redeveloped Market would be smaller than the existing site, but that we would have a Market that would be fit for purpose, sustainable and work logistically. I don’t need to go into the whole story again, but suffice to say, if it weren’t for the tireless dedication of myself and my executive team, who have put thousands and thousands of unpaid hours into meetings over the last decade and more, I don’t think we would have ever got to that point.

“The committed support of the CGTA by its members, the fantastic tenants of this Market has been invaluable through that time, as it had for the 90 years before it,” continues Gary. “We reached a landmark settlement agreement with CGMA in 2020, but that does not mean the work stops for CGTA. I’m happy to say that our relationship with the landlord has never been in a better place than it is now, but the unity of our tenant community will continue to be integral to our ongoing dealings with CGMA as we negotiate our way through the final few years of the redevelopment programme.

“If you look back through the minutes of CGTA meetings, which are saved for posterity in the CGTA office, there have been plenty of times over the years when it has been said on the record that it’s ‘game over’ for the Market and it ‘won’t be here in 50 years,’” says Gary. “There have been several seismic UK and global events that have negatively affected trade for lengthy periods, but we have got through them all and once the redevelopment is complete, in 2027, I truly believe that we’ll have a market that’s the envy of the rest of the world and set up to deliver us a long and successful future.”

“It has long been on record that our intention is to begin negotiations with the landlord on their disengagement from the Market, with the tenants taking full ownership of the New Covent Garden Market site. That has always been my vision and I believe it is the only way we can ensure this Market is fully protected way into the future.”

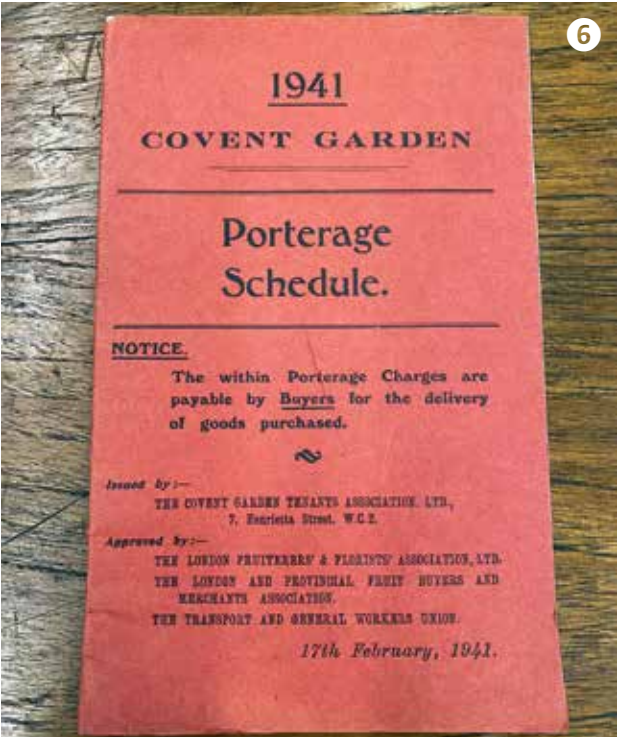
The settlement agreement was signed during the latest challenge to confront the Market and its tenants association. Gary says: “Our generations didn’t live through World Wars and we’ve just been through the most difficult period of our own working and personal lives. As always, our community stood tall and refused to lay down and let the pandemic ride roughshod over their businesses. The biggest and smallest firms, the family and corporate firms and people who had



Above: "I had a row with a guy the other day because he said this market was dying," says Gary Marshall of Bevington Salads. "I said this was still THE market, the one where the big players are. I am on Western too, and this market sells far in excess of it. I think most of the things that need to be done to ensure the future already have been - for example, management skills are better, and overheads are down. There will always be a living here. I believe we will definitely see a 30th anniversary."



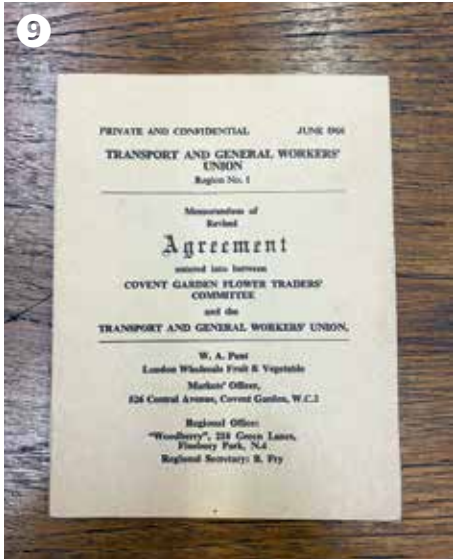
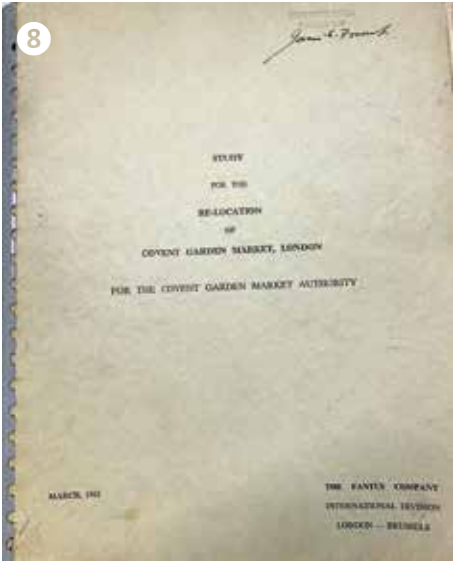
Pictured above: Ann Harding has worked for CGTA since 1993 and in the Market since the first day it opened in Vauxhall, in 1974. Having previously worked long-term for Banco Español in Market Towers and then briefly for JB Thomas, Ann answered the call when Peter Fowler was looking for a new association secretary nearly 30 years ago. "I know we were the first of our accountant's customers to get to 100, so it's definitely an achievement," she says. "I was really surprised when we received the certificate though, I didn't know they did things like that for companies. I've got to go out and get a frame now!"



been around for decades or a matter of months were all faced with the largest challenge ever thrown at them. It's been difficult emotionally, financially and mentally for everyone, but people across the Market never forgot those who were worse off than themselves.

"Once again, we showed the value of a real community and now we're starting to see things come back to life. The Market is buzzing; people are telling me across different sectors of foodservice that they are busier now than they were pre-Covid. Lots of firms have invested in their premises – or soon will when they move to new units – and in their fleets and we're taking premium to another level. The professionalism and the quality of our product and service are being talked about throughout the catering trade and we're seeing many people coming back to the Market," he adds proudly.

"It seems what we did during the pandemic has made our customers realise how good we are at what we do – that's why they are coming back in their droves and long may it continue."



Start as you mean to go on

The minutes of the first meeting of the committee of the Covent Garden Tenants Association Ltd were taken at the registered office of the Association, at 113 Long Acre, on Wednesday 3rd May 1922. The meeting, for the record, began at 2.15pm.

It was chaired by the first incumbent as Chair of the CGTA, Major EG Monro and also present were HG Walker, SG Coleman, E Parsons, D Cooper and EP Champion. A letter was received from Mr Samuel Jacobs, regretting his inability to attend as he was overseas at the time of the meeting.

The first meeting was largely taken up with the formalities of declaring the association up, running and ready for business. The secretary produced a print of the Memorandum and Articles of Association and it was agreed that he should obtain 100 prints of the document, the cover of one of which is featured on the opposite page. The secretary was then advised to obtain "a Minute Book, a Register of Members, Account Books and other such books and things", to "frame the certification of incorporation and hang it in the office" and to have the name of the association "painted up at the entrance".

In slightly less trivial matters, the first serious business the CGTA saw to was to discuss the Notice which had been served to a Mr Kauffman by a member of the Covent Garden Estate Co. On the advice of the chairman and secretary of CGTA, Mr Kauffman had been instructed to retain possession of the stand, which he had done, and the CGTA had written to the Covent Garden Estate Co. to request a meeting to discuss the matter further. It was agreed at the meeting that the matter should now be left in the hands of the chairman, whose meeting request had been granted.

And thus, 100 years of protecting the interests of tenants of the Market began...



- Pictured:**
1. The Memorandums & Articles of Association booklet on the day of incorporation in 1922
 2. The Centenary Certificate issued by Companies House
 3. There have been 24 chairmen over the first century. Two served on two separate occasions.
 4. Some of the founding members of CGTA in 1922
 5. Gary Marshall said there was a long-term future in 1994 and he's still saying it now!
 6. The CGTA issues the wartime Portage Schedule in 1941
 7. Ann Harding, Secretary of the CGTA
 8. The foundation of negotiations on the Market's relocation from Covent Gardens old to New
 9. A 1966 agreement between the Flower Traders' Committee of the CGTA and the TGWU
 10. CGTA welcomes people to the new market in 1974
 11. Peter Fowler MBE, seen here being bestowed with the Honour by Her Majesty The Queen, was a distinguished chairman of the CGTA and was also recognised at a recent CGTA annual dinner and dance with a lifetime achievement award. Peter is Lifetime President of the CGTA



Eric evolves Cake Boy with support of Market

Customers of New Covent Garden Market come from near and far and in all shapes and sizes. Master Pâtissier Eric Lanlard has been buying fruit, vegetables and flowers from the Market for more than 30 years and tells us how his relationship with the trade has evolved with his business

Happy
Customer
★★★★★

Eric arrived in London in 1989 to work as a pastry chef with Roux Brothers, who at the time had a business called Roux Lamartine in the Market. “I ran the production kitchen for Michel on Wandsworth Road and as well as the Roux restaurants, we supplied other high-end restaurants and Harrods,” he says. “I would go into the Market on my way to work every day and pick up the fruit and vegetables.”

When the Roux empire restructured in 1995, Eric opened up a cake wholesaling business called Lab 2000 on the outskirts of New Covent Garden Market. “The business [model] was very similar to what I had been doing with the Roux brothers; in fact one of my first customers was Michel Roux Jr, who bought birthday cakes from me for Le Gavroche, which I thought represented a good endorsement.”

Lab 2000 traded from just outside the Market for several years and when that unit became too small, moved to a unit twice the size at the back of Wandsworth Town train station. A few years on and it was time to move again, says Eric. “The

landlord there decided to take advantage of the property market surge and didn’t renew our lease, but we’d been thinking about a move in a different direction and moved to a recently constructed area in Battersea Reach, near Wandsworth Bridge. Rather than wholesaling from our production kitchen, we began retailing from an outlet in Juniper Drive.”

The front-end of the business is a glamorous lounge-café, under the name Cake Boy, but there is more to it than would immediately meet the eye. “Now we’re a multi-faceted business,” Eric explains. “We have the retail side, which includes the café, with plenty of seating space inside and outside. We also run classes from a kitchen that can be seen from the café – I wanted it to be visible and for people to be able to see and smell what we’re doing and hear the fun and laughter. It works really well and we’re generating our own publicity.”

“People can also rent that space for private functions, team building exercises or hands-on professional demos and that has proved very popular.”



Pictured: Eric has become a celebrity pâtissier over the years and NCGM was there right at the start of that journey too. “The first time I ever did primetime TV was in the Market. I was filmed with Charlie Dimmock and Anna Ryder-Richardson and interviewed while I selected my fruit and vegetables one morning,” he recalls.

Eric is patron of a small local charity – Back-Up, which supports people who have suffered life-changing spinal chord injuries. We have a dinner every year in London to raise funds and DDP could not be more supportive of that.



“We make everything fresh, every day in our kitchen here and we still do plenty of wedding and birthday cakes for people. A lot of our customers are regulars. Some come as often as three times a day,” Eric says. “We need to give them something different and change things so they don’t start looking elsewhere.”

Stand out offer

The seasonality of the Market plays a huge part in the search for differentials, of course. “I used to use the Market in the traditional way – turning up with a bundle of cash in my pocket, going from one trader to the next negotiating prices. I used to buy a lot – it was normal for me to have at least a pallet of strawberries each weekend for example. When the business started doing a lot of wedding cakes, flowers became a big part of things and I have been a regular at New Covent Garden Flower Market for many years too,” Eric explains.

“I love the mix of generations at New Covent Garden – from the older guys who’ve been working there for decades, through the 30s and 40s generation and down into the younger guys who are making their way. It really makes for an interesting environment. I really miss the buzz and banter I used to enjoy when I was a regular at the fruit and vegetable market, but I still get that in the flower market, and as the business evolved, the volume of fruit and vegetables

that we bought on a daily basis was reduced so I started to buy from less people before eventually deciding to work through one company, DDP Ltd.

“I’m nostalgic and I like the fact that Paul [Grimshaw at DDP Ltd] shops the Market for me. He has always looked after me very well – I only go to the Market to see him now. He knows what we need, both in terms of product and information. We have a few key products and we are pretty good with the seasons, but sometimes you can forget and we can rely on Paul to always be there with up-to-date details on what’s happening with Yorkshire rhubarb, for example. He’s very dynamic and sometimes just adds a product into our order because he knows we’ll like them. He sent me some ‘Chocolate’ oranges the other day, which were fantastic.

“Paul’s always looking for a challenge too. Most people who come to our classes have no idea where chocolate comes from and I asked Paul if he could get me some cocoa pods. It wasn’t straightforward and they are pretty expensive, but he found them and every time we do a chocolate class now he

“ I used to use the Market in the traditional way. Now I just have one supplier who shops the Market for me.

gets me a couple of boxes. I also wanted white strawberries, which are far more widely used on the continent, because there are certain products that just work so well on our Instagram. He got them for me, even though we were only looking for a small volume, then I told him I’d heard there were some great black strawberries out there... Paul’s commitment and support is really important to us – if we forget things, which does sometimes happen, we know he’ll pop down with a delivery for us. He’s our link to the Market – it’s great to know some of the cheeky things that are going on!

High profile

“The other side of my business is that I’m a consultant to Virgin Atlantic – on any flight leaving the UK you’ll get an Eric Lanlard Afternoon Tea wherever you’re sitting,” Eric says. “Pre-Covid, that amounted to five million afternoon teas a year, which included a large volume of fruit and vegetables. I also work with lots of London hotels creating their afternoon tea menus and with several clients out in the Middle East, as well as P&O Cruises, which serves the signature Eric Lanlard Afternoon Tea on all of their ships, including the flagship Britannia.

“My work at Royal Ascot also took a bit of a hit during the pandemic. In the last year we worked there, more than 30,000 of our teas were served there over the five days. We’ll be back this year, with the Eric Lanlard Platinum Jubilee Afternoon Tea, which will be served in all of the corporate hospitality boxes and the Royal Enclosure, so the Queen will hopefully enjoy one herself.”



Celebrating the growing female community at NCGM

To mark International Women's Day 2022, which was celebrated on March 8th, we put together a series of online profiles on some of the women who work at New Covent Garden Market. There are more women working each year in what has traditionally been a male-dominated environment and we're sharing their stories again in Market Times to encourage more women to consider the wide and varied opportunities for them to be amongst that growing number



Jennifer Irvine, The Pure Package

I am the founder of The Pure Package, and Balance Box - which are bespoke food delivery services. I enjoy being an entrepreneur. I started The Pure Package over 18 years ago because I had a desire to help busy people, including myself, ensure that their nutritional needs were being taken care of effortlessly and to the highest standard. I am fascinated by how food can change a person not only physically, but emotionally, too. I absolutely love hearing about people whose lives have changed as a result of our meal deliveries, people who have felt transformed and have been living greater and more fulfilled lives.

Every time we launch a new menu I get to trial it and that's brilliant! I am only as strong as my team, and I have a wonderful group of nutritionists and chefs who work together to create fantastic meals for our clients. I am the person who got the ball rolling, but they are the consistent heroes.

What do you love about working here?

The best thing about the Market is all the fresh produce, it's like being inside the world's kitchen garden! Our company relies on delicious, fresh produce, so to have it on our doorstep is an incredible thing. I also love the people; we have a wonderful group of colourful individuals in the Market who make every day interesting.

What advice would you give to women who might want to come and work at NCGM?

Prepare to be made very welcome. NCGM is a wonderful community in the heart of London.



Darcy Shah-Ashworth, Head of Marketing & Media at Porters Foliage

My role at Porters is ever growing as I originally started with the expectation of being social and digital until I stepped into market life and met fabulous people and started serving them! Now I'm fortunate enough to be here every day interacting with customers while still being the creative lead on social media and photography for the webshop.

What advice would you give to women who might want to come and work at NCGM?

I would say as it's a very male dominated place we need more women to step in and add a fresh mindset to the Market! Finding my flare here amongst it all has been the best push in my career so far.



Veronica Benson, DDP Ltd

I have worked in sales at DDP Ltd for 14 years. I love the excitement of meeting a new customer and following through from the initial meeting, to receiving the order to delivery and finally the follow-up call. It is a great sense of achievement for all involved to be told delivery was on time and the produce was first class.

What's the best thing about working here?

The camaraderie is second to none. When I first went to the Buyer's Walk to explore what fruit and vegetables were available and gather information, I was terrified I would be ridiculed. Instead, I was welcomed with open arms by Bob at P&I Veg, who not only gave me fabulous information on produce in terms of seasonality, countries of origin etc.. but also introduced me to other suppliers who in turn, made me feel very welcome and did not hesitate to answer any questions.

What advice would you give to women who might want to come and work at NCGM?

Prepare yourself for the buzz along Buyer's Walk, which is an absolute pleasure to experience. The feeling of inclusivity is sensational. The variety of produce from around the world is amazing and to be able to share that with your customers, for me, brings great satisfaction.



**Denise Palmer,
The B&D Flower Company**

We are a two ‘man’ business, Bob and I are married and work very happily together. I’m head of design, he’s head of finance!! We originally sold wholesale cut flowers like the rest of the market with the addition of hand tied bouquets for resale by shops and stalls. We realised that we were making a better margin on the bouquets and my outside work so have concentrated on that.

We are the only people offering this type of wholesale bouquets in the market.

How long have you worked at New Covent Garden Market?

I’m a relative newbie at 15 years. I’ve been a self employed florist buying from the Market for 27 years.

What do you love about working here?

I cannot imagine working anywhere else. The last two years have been extremely tough but I have always felt we are all in the same wobbly boat. I know that some may think it’s a male dominated environment but I love that most of these guys literally grew up together, many with their fathers.

What advice would you give to women who might want to come and work at NCGM?

My experiences of working in the market are all good. I would definitely encourage any woman to join the market community. These guys have a wealth of knowledge! I marvel every day at the beauty of some of the amazing flowers that arrive through our doors, I never tire of it.



**Mary Brunning,
Neil Brown Herbs**

What’s your role in New Covent Garden Market?

I’m Stand Manager for Neil Brown Herbs. I’ve been here for 3 years. I do everything: day-to-day ordering; making sure everything is out on time and correct. There are so many different micro herbs - more than you can imagine. That’s what fascinates me. Now we do 40 or so edible flowers. I’m into flower arranging.

How long have you worked here?

I’ve been on the Market for 22 years. I started with R&G Herbs. In Surrey, where I lived, I saw an advert in the local paper. It was the 17th May 2000 to be precise. I was working in an office for a taxi company but got bored with it. R&G was a grower and a had a stand in the old Growers’ Pavilion at the Market. For the first few months, I thought I was mad to consider working nights. I still think that! But I do love that during the day I can do all those things you need to do - the doctor and dentist. The shops are empty. I care for my mum as well.

What advice would you give to women who might want to come and work at NCGM?

As a woman you need to be strong - it’s like a big family and a unique environment. It’s good fun.



Pictured left to right:
Lindsay, Mandy, Mel, Olivia and Faye

Last, but no means least, we talk to five women who work at Whittingtons, in the Flower Market, and its parent company APAC Group – Lindsay Brown, Mandy Daily, Melanie (Mel) Walton, Olivia Gerard and Faye Lavender

What’s your Job title and can you pick out some of the interesting parts of your role?

Mel: General Manager of Wilfrid Whittingtons Ltd. I work with all the great team at APAC Group Ltd and a fun Whittingtons team. It really is a team effort. Our 16 wonderful branches are all very different and unique in their own ways, and Lavenders of Covent Garden and Lavenders of London are no exception to that rule. I love getting out and about and hands on in branches, whether it’s helping stock count or clear out old stock or set out new stock. I love a shop floor feeling.

Lindsay: I work for Mel as Office/Accounts Manager. Staff and customers bring different challenges each day.

Faye: I’m responsible for buying, product design and development, merchandising and managing the Southern Branches. What I find interesting is the travelling, designing layouts and displaying.

Mandy: I’m responsible for buying, product design and development, merchandising and managing the Northern branches. I like travelling around meeting lots of people, problem solving staff issues and when I get the chance, making lovely displays with the Whittingtons products in store.

Olivia: I work as a Marketing Manager for Whittingtons; there are lot of aspects I love about my role. The typical response of ‘every day is different’ applies, it’s very fast paced, and I can switch between different tasks at any point in the day, meaning I don’t get bored too quickly, which suits me perfectly. I work with a lovely bunch, but also have a fair share of work to do on my own, which I really enjoy too.

What did you like about New Covent Garden Flower Market?

Mel: The hustle and bustle, the smell and the café.

Faye: I’ve been going for over 20 years. I still love seeing the variety of flowers.

Mandy: I like the buzz it has about it, and the fast morning pace.

Olivia: It’s a busy, friendly, and colourful environment. Its so much more than just flowers – there are elements that everyone will fall in love with. Not only open for Trade customers, but also retail; it’s a place in London that shouldn’t be missed, even if that does mean setting your alarm a bit too early!

What advice would you give to women who might want to get into the Wholesale sector?

Mel: Go for it if you love flowers, it’s so creative and ever changing.

Faye: Be prepared to do any aspect of the job, early starts, long hours, but very rewarding.

Mandy: Don’t be put off by thinking it’s a male orientated business. It’s really not, but there are some big characters out there. Once you get to know them and the trade they give you full respect.

Lindsay: This is the place to be If you have a creative flair - it will keep you up to date with the latest trends.

Olivia: Be prepared to work hard, stay on your toes and be prepared to learn from others and also learn from your mistakes.

Jo's mission to break the bias

Jo Breare is General Manager of Covent Garden Market Authority. Like the women on the previous two pages, Jo took part in our International Women’s Day coverage and would love to see more women working here at the Market

What is your background?

I didn’t take the traditional route to management by leaving school and going to university. I left school after my GCSEs at 16 years old and started in the mail room of an aerospace company. A few years later I started my career in facilities management at Aer Lingus before moving to my next role at Hounslow Council. Hounslow own Western International Market, which is a smaller version of NCGM and while I was there I did a professional qualification with the British Institute of Facilities and Workplace Management. I’ve had three roles here at NCGM. The first was as Facilities Manager, next I was the Operations Director and now I’m the General Manager.

What does the job of General Manager involve?

Covent Garden Market Authority are the landlord who operate the market and I’m the General Manager of a team of 23 staff with 85 more contracted to help us with the very important day to day running of the market. Probably the best thing about my job is that I work across all areas of the business and Market.

I’ve had my role since mid-2020 and like every role before it I am always learning, which is interesting for me. I love the variety of tasks and the challenges of the multiple priorities. I also love that I get to work with a variety of people who are work at or are involved with NCGM.

How long have you worked at New Covent Garden Market?

I moved to New Covent Garden Market in 2008 so this is my 14th year! So much has changed and improved since I started and I’m proud to have been part of it all.

What do you love about working here?

I’m still here after 14 years so I must love it! Mostly it’s the people, the continuous challenge, the variety of the work I do and the way the business and community of the Market works.

What advice would you give to women who might want to come and work at NCGM?

Anyone can come here!

The theme for IWD this year was ‘break the bias’. It’s about a gender equal world, free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. A world that is diverse, equitable and inclusive. These are all things that matter to me personally and it’s what I want for NCGM.

You don’t need any qualifications to come to NCGM and start what could be an amazing career and I want to see more young women starting their careers here. We have 175 different successful businesses here and between them the variety of interesting jobs is immense.

Personal Fact File

Place of Birth
Staines

Family:
I don’t have any children, but I do have 5 nieces and nephews who are wonderful.

Favourite holiday destination?
I have been to New York and love to walk the length and breadth of it (as anyone who has been with me has found out!). I also love anywhere warm, as long as there is somewhere for me to run and preferably a gym too.

What’s your favourite pastime outside work?
I’d describe myself as an active relaxer - it’s walking, running and enjoying the great outdoors. I also love baking cakes.

What are your favourite fruit, vegetable and flowers?
I love all the summer fruits and almost every vegetable (although not asparagus). I am ashamed to say I am fairly ignorant on flowers – though my mum loves carnations so I have a soft spot for them.



For any young woman starting out, my advice would be put together a simple CV, look at our website to see the list of businesses based here, then select some to write to personally to say you’re looking for work. Then when you get here, do like I’ve done. Be interested and enthusiastic, work hard, be a good colleague and put yourself forward for new challenges so that you learn on the job.

Then opportunities may well come your way.

“ We have 175 different successful businesses here and between them the variety of jobs is immense.

Market Times – a sustainable future

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