

MARKET TIMES

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This issue's cover star is Paul Murphy of YesChef





A little girl just in time for Christmas

Congratulations to John Fay, of Whittingtons in the Flower Market, on the birth of his gorgeous daughter Wren Rhiannon Fay. Wren was born on September 18 weighing in at 7lb 9oz. It might be a few sleepless nights in the run up to Christmas but we doubt any other present could top a gift as beautiful as this one.



Clockwise from top:
Naomi Mwelwa, Sophie Nelmes, Sophonia Grant, Kirsty Jeram

Market community raising money for Macmillan Cancer

On 29 September, teams in the market took part in Macmillan's nationwide Coffee Morning, the charity's biggest annual fundraiser event for people facing cancer. We spoke to the women at I.A. Harris and County Supplies London who collectively raised over £320 through their sale of cakes, games and raffles.

Naomi Mwelwa, of I A Harris, has been organising Coffee Morning's for the team since 2013 and says it's a cause that sits close to their hearts: "Several members of staff at the time had family members who were affected by cancer and we wanted to show our support for the Macmillan nurses who do such a tremendous job. Everyone gets involved on the day from Directors down, and we let others know in the market so they can pop in to get a cake and make a donation."

Sophonia Grant, one of the organisers, at County Supplies London said: "Cancer doesn't discriminate. We all know someone who's been affected and this is a great cause we wanted to stand behind and support."



Left to right: Fabien Stoessel and Martin Dykes

Nature's Choice sign exclusive partnership with Andros, French producers of premium frozen fruit range

Nature's Choice have signed an exclusive partnership with Andros, the French company who founded *Bonne Maman* jam and are specialists in fruit processing, desserts, dairy and confectionary.

Nature's Choice is the company's sole distributor inside the market, and one of only three companies within the UK who Andros is working with to promote their new range of premium frozen coulis, purees and compotes. Nature's Choice will stock the full range of products (35 in total) and, as an exclusive partner, will have full discretion for distribution both inside and outside the market.

Their new frozen range is produced using fresh, fully-ripened fruits to maximise flavour and quality, and contains no additives or preservatives.

Martin Dykes, of Nature's Choice, says: "Natures choice are fully committed to this new and exciting partnership.

The feedback we have received so far has been amazing and customers are already re-ordering. This is very exciting, not only for us, but also for our chefs who have new premium products to work with."

Fabien Stoessel, Export Manager at Andros, says: "We want to keep our distributors portfolio small and work with Nature's Choice because they are a smaller company – it means more flexibility, which the chefs love."



Panzer Green joins the Fruit and Veg Market

David Joseph and Kamil Demir, along with their two other business partners Ali and Bora, have recently consolidated the wholesale side of their fruit and veg business, Panzer Green, onto New Covent Garden Market. They're looking to expand an already strong customer base by bringing more exotic produce, primarily Turkish and Asian, to the market.

It's exciting times ahead. "Being positioned on New Covent Garden Market highlights us more as a business, and gives us a larger platform to operate from that we didn't have previously," says David.

The Panzer team have been buying from wholesalers here for several years, and established strong relationships in the market. Find them on A Row in the Fruit and Veg Market.

And if you want to get your hands on some of the best smoked salmon and cream cheese bagels in town, head to Panzers Deli in St John's Wood!



Left to right: David Joseph and Kamil Demir

NB Flowers' Venetian Opera raises £13,000 for Alzheimer's Society



Left to right: Stephen Loakes and Neil Birks

Neil Birks, of NB Flowers in the Flower Market, and his friend Stephen Loakes organised a Venetian Opera Masquerade this summer where they managed to raise a staggering £13,000 for Alzheimer's Society.

Both Neil and Stephen have felt the pain that Alzheimer's can have on a family and its loved ones. The two friends wanted to find a positive way to contribute to a cause close to their hearts and so combined "a fun and entertaining evening" with "raising funds and awareness for a wonderful charity."

The event, rich with drama and passion, was held in an enchanted al fresco woodland with decorations coming from the Flower Market.



Above: The opera in action



Peter Green raises over £2,000 for charity in September fun run

Peter Green, of Smith & Green in the Flower Market, has been getting the mileage in for another great cause. Molly's Fun Run is an annual event organised by Peter and his family to raise money in aid of Clockwork, a local charity that aims to support young people with depression and anxiety.

In September 300 people took part in the 5km fun run, raising over £2,000 in total. Special thanks from Peter to the Covent Garden Tenants Association for their £500 donation.



Champions League: when the footballers just want flowers

What do you do when the biggest football event of the year asks you to create 2,000-plus floral arrangements for them using out-of-season produce? Sophie Hanna, of Sophie Hanna Flowers, found a solution to this conundrum.

She and her business partner for the event, Linda Cottee of Linda Cottee Flowers in the market, were tasked with transforming the gardens and sponsors marquee at The Champions League Final in Cardiff, June, with leeks and daffodil arrangements. Tricky, given daffodils were already two months out of season.

But where there's a will, there's a way. With the help of Martin Panter, at Arnott & Mason, who recommended speaking to Johnny Walker, at Taylors bulbs, Sophie was able to get her hands on over 7,000 daffodil bulbs. Johnny supplied and drove the load from Lincolnshire during one of the hottest week's that year, landing everything at the destination in tip top condition. Linda and Sophie then assembled the arrangements together.

Thanks to the help of everyone in the Flower Market, Sophie says: "It was the best result I've had in over 54 years in the business!"

Left: One of the floral arrangements

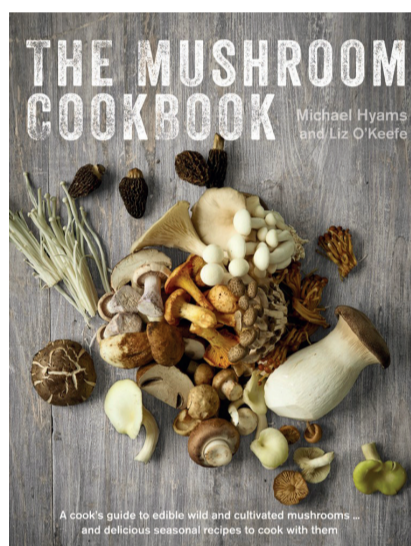
Martin Levy appointed as new MD for First Choice

Congratulations to Martin Levy who has just been appointed as new Managing Director at First Choice.

Speaking about his role, Martin says; "Many of you know me as I have had over 17 years of experience working in the 'Garden' and for the past 14 years have spent my time as Gourmet Sales Director at Fresh Direct. Together with CEO Dan McCullough, we have laid out our strategy and have an ambitious expansion plan for

First Choice which, over the next five years, will bring considerable growth to the company. I am fortunate to have an extremely knowledgeable, and highly motivated team around me and am confident that we have a very bright future ahead of us."

We wish Martin, Dan, and the rest of the team at First Choice all the best in this exciting new chapter.



The Mushroom Man releases his first cookbook

Michael Hyams, owner of The Mushroom Man in the Fruit and Veg Market, has released his first book: The Mushroom Cookbook. The book guides you through a whole host of edible, wild and cultivated fungi's with seasonal recipes to whet the appetite and sumptuous food-photography throughout. You can now order a copy on Amazon.



Don't miss the market's annual Dinner Dance

Where
Lancaster London Hotel
Lancaster Terrace, London W2 2TY

What
Reception: 6pm prompt
Carriages: 2am
Dress: Black Tie
Champagne Reception and Live Band

Buy a ticket:
Ann Harding: 07889 059919
Gary Marshall: 07973 227051
Damian Fowler: 07966 379888
Robert Hurren: 07985 309990

In memory of Darren Michael Payne (1970–2017)

The team at Greenhill Mushrooms pay tribute to their colleague and friend, Darren Michael Payne, who sadly passed away in July, aged 37 years.

"It is with great sadness and heavy hearts that we announce that Darren Michael Payne has passed away on Sunday 16th July 2017 at St Thomas' Hospital London due to multiple organ failure caused by cancer. Beloved husband of Tracy, devoted father of Alfie, Nancy, Daisy and a wonderful son to his mum Christine.

"Darren, a devoted Millwall fan, started work at New Covent Garden Market in March 1999 for Greenhill Mushrooms Limited and has worked here ever since. He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him and worked alongside him."

The Greenhill Mushrooms Team.

Getting to know London Dairies

We chat to Maxine O'Mahoney, Company Co-Director, and Faye Cupples, Office Manager, about their experience working at London Dairies, a family run business that's been going for 22 years.



From left to right: Maxine O'Mahoney and Faye Cupples

“ I always thought of the night shift as a man's world but it wasn't

“People say *Ring London Dairies, they'll probably have it*,” says Faye. That's the reputation the business has established on a market that, several years ago, was predominantly supplying only fruit and veg to its customers. Now, Faye explains, demand has changed. In fact, half of the London Dairies customer base comes from businesses right here on the market.

A little bit of this, a little bit of that
“At first our customers would ask for just little bit of this, a little bit of that. But as their businesses have grown, so has ours. People say we're a really important part of what they do. It's nice because we're sort of building this together, us and the fruit and veg side,” says Maxine.

Stand-out customer service
Thanks to the amount of new business they've established on the market, it's now a 30-strong team and has doubled in size. They attribute the success of the business to their “personal service” and commitment to always delivering “110%” to customers. For example, although they stock around 200 different cheeses, Maxine explains

that “if a customer wants an unusual cheese which we don't have, then we'll find it and get it to them within 24 hours.”

Word of mouth

It seems to be working. Some customers have been with them over 20 years. They don't have a sales rep, either. Most of their business comes through word of mouth recommendations. “We're a friendly company, we provide a speedy service, and we always have the stock,” says Faye. “If someone goes to our customers with different prices, their loyalty sits with us because we go that extra mile. Most of the time they don't even mention the price thing to us. They'll just say *no - we're not moving*.”

Nocturnal world

For Faye and Maxine, their recent two-month stint doing nights gave them a whole new perspective on the market. “You can't describe it until you've done it,” Faye says. “It comes to life at night.”

The sheer volume of produce and the tight turnarounds staggered them both.

“After 20 years in the business, I was still shocked at how busy it gets,” says Maxine. “No-one would believe how much fresh food comes in and out of this market. It'd be a big loss to London if it wasn't here.”

Challenging stereotypes

Admittedly, they both had some perceptions about the market that proved not to be true: “I always thought of the night shift as a man's world but it wasn't. We were surprised to see so many women down there, and everyone was so friendly,” says Faye. Equally, they challenged a few of the blokes' misconceptions about women on the market. She adds, “I'd go to pick something up and the boys would say *don't worry, I've got it. I'd go No. It's fine. I can carry!*”

“Our attitude was *if you guys can do it, we can do it*,” says Maxine. “But they're protective. And quite old school. It's a traditional environment here.” Although teasingly referred to as Pinky & Perky by Simon (Maxine's husband and Company Co-Director), they think it was refreshing for a lot of the wholesalers and customers

to have a female presence out on the market. “I think it calmed the blokes. They said we were much more polite to deal with!” says Maxine.

Family and community

Their sense of humour and can-do approach have them firmly embedded into the market ways. “We're one big family and we try to bring our customers into that,” says Maxine. In a statement that seems to epitomise what it's all about, Maxine says “we're part of a community. We treat everyone the same” and - perhaps most tellingly - “we all laugh and have fun!”

Life of the market through the lens

One's been photographing the market for more than 50 years, the other for two, each capturing its stories in their own unique visual form.

We share Clive Bournsell and Alex Taylor's perspectives of the market, as seen through a camera lens.

For London-born Clive Bournsell, photography was never part of the plan. "I thought I was going to be a dancer," he says. He trained in classical ballet for 10 years then moved into fashion photography at the age of 22, followed by a spell in Canada's High Arctic.

The transition from the world of fashion to a wholesale market seems stark. Yet, he's been photographing this place for more than 50 years - longer than most people have worked here. The market is well and truly in his blood.

Clive explains where it first began. "Summer, 1968. I was stood at the top of James Street, looking down at this whole hubbub of activity - the early morning sun lighting the western side of James Street, guys standing outside with their cigars and smoking, lorry fumes, people criss-crossing. I thought - this is a beautiful human activity, I've got to photograph this."

His catalogue of images capture the humour, character, nostalgia and realism of the market and its people, and by opening up his photography to the public, he offers a privileged glimpse into a world that most people will never know what it's like to experience.

Clive Bournsell's photos of the market



Clive Bournsell

Alex Taylor





The sets might have changed, but the characters and the camaraderie haven't



We asked Clive some questions to find out more about his fascinating journey.

You've been photographing the market for over 50 years and watched it evolve. What is it that's stayed the same?

The clientele has changed. Demand has changed. Equipment and facilities have changed. But the people have stayed the same. As people, we still like to meet and chat over things. The sets might have changed, but the characters and the camaraderie haven't.

You've established yourself as a regular on the market. Did it take time to be accepted?

I was accepted as I wasn't a fair-weather photographer. I came when it was wet, dark and cold and they knew I loved and respected the people and market for themselves. The market was not there for my benefit.

What characterizes the people in the market?

A sense of fair play. The sellers don't like being ripped off and nor do the buyers. Nobody minds paying the right price when it's a fair deal. It's as simple as that. There is still a very high degree of honesty.

How has your photography of the market changed over the years?

I've had the chains of photography thrown away by digital. It's set me free. I'd be bankrupt if I was shooting on film! Now, I never have to worry about lighting - I can take greater risks. But I still shoot not to crop. If I have to crop, a picture has failed.

How do you capture the perfect shot?

It's about learning the salient moment of when to take the photo. When people are really looking at the produce, when they're engaged with what's in front of them, then you can see it on their face. You don't get that when you ask someone to pose for a shot.

I have an obsession with getting under the skin of things. I still want people to say, even 50 years on, 'you got it.' I always knew the best review of my book (*Covent Market Then vs Now*) would come from the people in the market.

Three words to describe the market.

Produce. Work. Camaraderie.

Continued on the next page...

Alex Taylor's photos of the market



Alex Taylor is a photography graduate from Coventry University and the son of Ian Taylor, Director at P&I Fruits. He's been visiting the market with his dad since he was 10 years old.

Whilst his image catalogue might not be quite the size of Clive's (yet), Alex has amassed thousands of shots since he began photographing the market in 2015. He's drawn in by the detail, the little things that, in their entirety, create that unmistakable market essence.

"It's the rubbish on the floor, the tickets on the table, those details and the bits going on behind the scenes that make the market so unique. It's what makes it feel...wholesome. You're not going to get something like this anywhere else," he says.

So why else did he choose the market as his final year photography project? People don't realise the market is this beating heart of London. If it wasn't there, people would soon realise. I'm trying to raise awareness of it. I want people to see something they wouldn't otherwise see.

And now it's finished, what's kept him coming back?

There's always something different happening. No one night is the same. What pulls me in is the people. There's something about the market that you don't get in other markets. What you see is what you get. There are no false impressions, and the people stay the same.

Favourite thing about the market?

One of the things I always look forward to is the smell when I first walk through the blocks. The fresh palletes. It's warming. And then you hear people and everything blends together. It feels like home.

Three words to describe the market?

Family. Dedication. Energetic.



People don't realise the market is this beating heart of London



You can see the full collection of Alex's work at: www.alexataylorphotography.co.uk

The market community: a pretty sociable bunch

Given there are over 2.4 billion social media users worldwide, are you missing a trick if your business isn't on social?

According to a recent survey, over 50% of customers now prefer to contact companies via social instead of phone. And arguably, if your customers are on social, you need to be there with them – engaging where they want to meet you.

The joy of social is that it offers free platform for any business, big or small, to increase its visibility and show the personality behind a brand. After all, we're human - and people like to see that! Here's a roundup of stellar social examples from the market. Why not have some fun joining in yourself?

Why are you on social?



Posting on social has definitely helped me sell more flowers. Every day I get requests to save items I've posted.

Dennis Edwards
Dennis Edwards Flowers

People's perception of my company is shaped by what I put on social media – our product and service. It tells another type of story.

Michael Hyams
The Mushroom Man

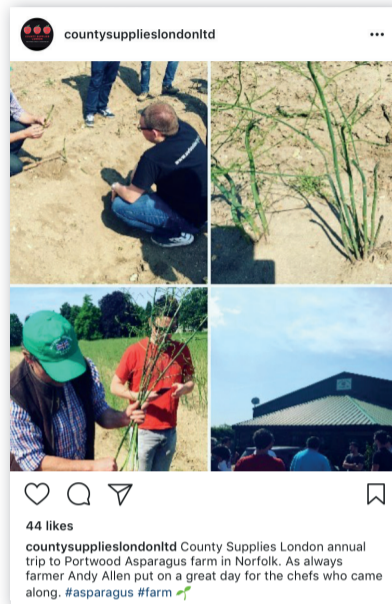
Social media is free advertising to anyone who's interested in flowers! It's expanded our reach to people overseas, too.

Graeme Diplock
Zest Flowers

It's a quick and fluid way for us to let customers know what we have at different times of year - and a great way to show new and foreign products.

Bryan Porter
Porters Foliage

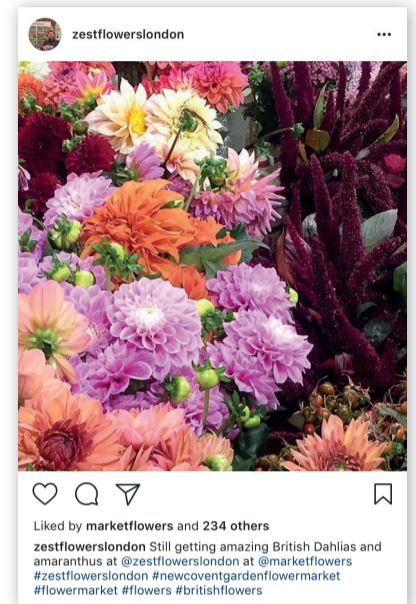
Some of the market's most followed accounts



Great at: showing how CSL works with its growers and customers



Great at: sharing pics of the latest seasonal and foreign produce



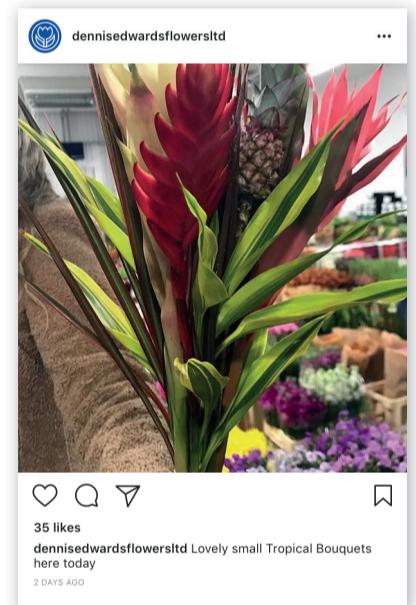
Great at: posting quality content and using hashtags to broaden reach



Great at: varying content, from posting what's in season to sharing videos



Great at: creating a point of difference – check out the infamous rap lyrics



Great at: posting about new produce as soon as it comes in

— RONA'S TOP TIPS —

Flower Market blogger and social media expert Rona Wheeldon shares her three tips:
**“Educate your following by imparting product knowledge.
 Inform by showcasing your merchandise. Inspire by sharing new offerings.”**



Promoting Buyers' Walk to new customers from Oct 3 – Nov 5

We're offering new secondary wholesalers, greengrocers, deli's, food stores and market stall holders free entry, free market breakfast and a free guided tour.

Look out for new faces to welcome to the market. For more info call 020 7501 3489

Left: Leslie Singh, buyer at Pomona's greengrocer



Win a BOSE Wireless Bluetooth Speaker worth £100

We're giving away a Bose Wireless Soundlink Colour Bluetooth Speaker to one lucky winner in this issue. To win, just submit your answer to the following: How many times has the BBC's The Apprentice been filmed in the market (and aired)?

Email charlotte.cowling@cgma.co.uk or call 020 7501 3494 with your answer. Make sure you give your full name and contact details. A winner will be selected and contacted before Oct 31.

Well-seasoned vs fresh faced: the market



It never ceases to surprise me what comes into this market



We get a glimpse of the market through the eyes of one of our most seasoned traders, Alfie Lay, 64, who works at Lays of Chelsea in the Fruit and Veg Market.

How long have you worked on this market?

I've worked on the catering side of the business for 35 years, then 25 years on this market. We used to buy from the old Covent Garden market when we had wholesale stores in Chelsea.

What's your earliest memory of the market?

Standing inside the doorways of the pubs in the old market watching my dad drink his scotch and coffees in the morning. Anyone who knows about the old market will know that – it's what people did.

How has the market changed over the years?

Supermarkets have changed the face of the market. It used to be all wholesalers. Nothing but them, all around the sides. There are a lot more catering businesses on the market now.

What's your favourite thing about the market?

It's like a big family. Like all families – sometimes you hate each other! But there aren't many days that go by when I don't have a good time doing it. I think anyone who knows me would say that too. I couldn't imagine going into an office, there's no way you'd get away with half the things that get said around here.

What's kept you committed all these years?

It's the whole thing. It's a job I really, really enjoy. Working with fruit and veg and seeing the change of seasons – it never ceases to surprise me what comes into this market. This year was an unbelievable cherry season.

I haven't seen one like that for donkey's years. It just shows you what we can produce in this country when we have luck with the weather.

What's something you can share about the market that nobody else would know?

The bidding side has gone. Back in the day you'd go around and bid on stuff, and there'd be high fluctuations in price. That part's gone. They don't gamble like they used to on the market, either – guys used to buy lorry loads of stuff, just hoping they sold it. Now when they buy it, most of it goes. People know their customers and what they want.

Yours is a fifth-generation family run business.

What's it been like to work together?

We're very close but we're quite freakish. A lot of people can't work out how we work with each other all these hours and never row, which we don't. We have a few golden rules we follow; we all take the same position, and we all take the same dough. We keep it fair. We're all in the same boat. The biggest falling outs between people in these kinds of businesses are usually around money.

If you could be remembered for one thing what would it be?

Having a positive attitude and an open mind. And always paying our bills on time.

If you could be any fruit or veg what would you be and why?

An avocado because I'm always getting squeezed!

through two different lenses



Now all my friends are the ones asking for jobs here!

We get a glimpse of the market through the eyes of a fresher faced trader, Jack Lyall, 28, who works at Bloomfield in the Flower Market.

How long have you worked in the market?

10 years. But I've been coming down since I was 12. I used to work on the fruit side with my uncle (Malcolm Lyall, of County Supplies London) before I started working here. I'd go down every Saturday to earn a bit of money.

I was studying carpentry at the same time so I'd do three night shifts and three days at college. It got a bit much though so I started just doing Saturdays and then eventually I stopped.

What did you start off doing?

Emptying out all the water and rubbish, and keeping everything clean and tidy. Now I'm a salesman. A friend who used to work here got me the job. It was meant to just be for Christmas to help sell the Christmas trees!

What's your favourite thing about the market?

The people I work with. We all have a laugh and a joke and, as long as you get the work done, there's freedom to do what you like.

What's the biggest challenge?

Peak seasons like Christmas time when there are thousands of trees to sell as well as flowers. It's so busy. Wedding season can be intense, too.

What's kept you committed to the job?

I'm used to the early starts now. And once you finish, you get the whole day to yourself. Plus, I like the people I work with. Everyone here's alright, you know?

What's the most stressful part of the job?

It isn't that stressful. When there are lots of customers and you're standing there, with numbers going through your head, trying to serve lots of people and remember lots of price – that can be, at times. But part of why I enjoy it is because it isn't high stress. Now all my friends are the ones asking for jobs here!

How has the market changed over the years?

When I first started, it was really busy and then it went really quiet through the recession. It's picked up since. We're a lot busier in the new market too. I see new faces every week, with people buying flowers for photoshoots, weddings and events.

If you could be any flower what would you be and why?

Hydrangea because they add a lot of character to the stand – like me!

We'd love to hear from you

What did you think of Issue Two?
It would be great to get your feedback.

And if there's something you'd like to
share or see featured in our next quarterly
newsletter, just let Charlotte know.
It's your news and your stories.

Email: charlotte.cowling@cgma.co.uk
Tel: 020 7501 3494



NEW   
COVENT
GARDEN
MARKET

Above: Squashes on Buyers' Walk, September