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SEE BACK COVER

This issue's cover star is Anthony Clear from A. Goodchild Ltd



Dorchester event connects chefs with wholesalers

Suppliers from across the UK attended The Chef's Forum Caviar, Cookery and Cava event at the end of January, held at Park Lane's The Dorchester Hotel.

Premium Food Service First Choice Fruit and Produce Ltd, based here at New Covent Garden's Fruit and Veg Market, were in attendance represented by Dan McCullough and Ron Maxfield, (pictured far right). For First Choice, the event is a chance to promote their offer as a wholesale supplier of fine food for the restaurant and hotel industry.

Guests at the prestigious hotel were treated to an amazing array of food and drink, prepared and served by students from Westminster Kingsway College, West London College (pictured near right), and the University of West London.

The Chef's Forum connects chefs and suppliers with catering colleges, to nurture and showcase UK talent.



Oppo launch new ice cream flavour and new partnerships

Food Exchange-based Oppo Ice Cream has just launched salted caramel as a new flavour and have a new distribution deal with Tesco.

Founded by brothers Harry and Charlie Thuillier in 2014, the business continues to go from strength to strength, with Oppo's delicious products proof that you don't need to compromise on taste to be healthy. Salted caramel sees traditional ingredients cream and sugar replaced with

virgin coconut oil and stevia leaf (naturally sweet with no calories), to create an indulgent, premium ice cream. Included by The Times in 2019's Fast Track 100 list, Oppo's ice cream is now sold in Waitrose, Sainsbury's, and Wholefoods, with the Tesco chain their latest customer.

To get £2 off a 500ml tub take the coupon on the back cover to your nearest Sainsbury's or Waitrose supermarket. See the back cover for more in our new 'Take Five' feature.

Simon Lycett, celebrity florist, set to appear on TV

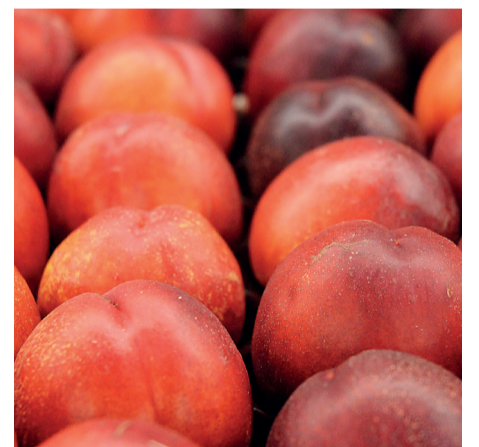
Friend of the Flower Market and celebrity florist Simon Lycett is set to appear in two new TV shows later this year.

Fresh from promoting his book *The Flower Market Year* (that captured a year in the life of the Flower Market before it relocated to its current interim site), Simon will be appearing on new Netflix and Home Box Office shows, currently wrapped in secrecy. Who knows, with Netflix's growing popularity Simon could be reality TV's next star.

Right: Simon Lycett with CGMA Director of Communications and Marketing Rebecca Barrett, promoting his book last year



British peaches and nectarines to be sold at NCGM



Above: Demand for British crops is growing

The Daily Telegraph has reported on New Covent Garden Market's plan to sell British peaches and nectarines.

The trial introduction of the home-grown fruit is being led by Vernon Mascarenhas and Martin Dykes from Nature's Choice, capitalising on the warm weather and extended UK growing season for peaches and nectarines.

This year Vernon and Martin plan to sell their first crop, aiming to be the "first commercial fruit dealer to sell peaches and nectarines grown on British soil." The decision is fuelled by the increasing desire of chefs to use 100% British produce, despite the often higher cost.



Met Police visit the Market to share safety advice

Three officers from the Metropolitan Police held a drop-in session at the end of January, following a request from CGMA to discuss Market security concerns.

PC Charley Shearing was one of three officers who listened to tenants' concerns and shared advice on how to remain vigilant as well as the best practice to ensure everyone has a part to play in tackling crime on the Market. "It was a constructive meeting," said Jo Breare, CGMA Operations Director, "with a small number of tenants raising points on behalf of the larger tenant community."

As always, the overarching police advice is to never put yourself in danger and to report all incidents to the police as soon as they happen by calling 999.

Left: PC Shearing attended the meeting alongside CGMA Director of Operations Jo Breare



Above: Peter Green from Smith and Green Wholesale Florists at the New Year's parade

Raising funds for charity and representing NCGM at New Year's Day parade

New Covent Garden Flower Market was proudly represented at London's New Year's Day Parade by Peter Green from Smith and Green Wholesale Florists Ltd.

Peter had the market's logo emblazoned across his chest and back as he rode the two-mile route between the Ritz Hotel and Parliament Square (pictured right).

The parade is an annual charity festival that raises money for charities across all 32 London boroughs, and crosses the capital's West End. Millions of people crowd the route and the parade is shown live on BBC TV.

"I got a great reception along the route with lots of tourists cheering us on," says Peter, who took part in the parade in

memory of his daughter Molly who he lost several years ago. "Molly loved to ride and always took part in the New Year's Day parade, so I decided to keep Molly's horse and take part to honour her."

Molly had just qualified as a Level 5 florist, so decorating Molly's horse Rome, with a pretty assortment from the Flower Market made perfect sense.

"As I'm in the florist trade and New Covent Garden Market has a proud history within London, it was a great combination." It's the second time Peter's taken part, after learning to ride in his fifties. "It wasn't easy and I'd describe it as riding a motorbike with a brain! He's a fast horse and the parade is slow and steady with lots of stops, so it's a challenge but one I really enjoyed."

See p6-7 for Peter's views on what it means to hold a Royal Warrant.



New Covent Garden Market sponsors local school's advent calendar

A stunning outdoor advent calendar 'window' was created at nearby Griffin Primary School on Condell Road, thanks to a generous donation from New Covent Garden Flower Market and our redevelopment partners VSM.

Crafted by the staff and school children using flowers and fauna donated on behalf of the Flower Market and themed around Christmas carol The Holly and the Ivy, the window was part of the wider Nine Elms Advent Calendar Trail. A new window was revealed each December evening, up until Christmas Eve.

"The support of both the market and their developers, VSM, has enabled the school to utilise its creativity and create something the entire community can get pleasure from," says Revd Betsy Blatchley, Southwark's first Pioneer Minister in the Arts. Betsy created the calendar trail as part of her remit to explore arts, spirituality and social justice in the heart of the Nine Elms Development.

What's more, NCGM and VSM will be supporting a future event with nearby St. George's School to celebrate British Science Week (running between 6-15 March 2020).



Above: The advent calendar was created by students at Griffin Primary School, with products donated by NCGM

Below: The Soil Association symbol is the most trusted organic mark in the UK



Soil Association talk organic certification during Market visit

Representatives from the Soil Association visited New Covent Garden Market during February to talk about organic certification and how it can potentially boost trade for businesses across the Market.

The visit took the form of a presentation held in the Food Exchange, with an opportunity for questions.

The organic market is in its eighth year of steady growth. Sales through independent retail, selling loose product, online retailers, food service and restaurants have been rising well ahead of the industry, making it a great time to consider organic certification.

The Soil Association offers practical and efficient support from a dedicated Certification Officer, who can help develop a business's supply chain to reach new opportunities and connections.

Founded in 1946 as a charity, The Soil Association has become more prominent with increased demand for organic produce.

As well as highlighting and promoting the certification of organic food, its activities include campaign work on issues including opposition to intensive farming, support for local purchasing, and improving public education on nutrition.



Above: Artist Eyal Granit is now displaying his artwork back home in Israel, at Jerusalem's Mahne Yehuda market

First NCGM, now an Israeli market hosts artwork

The 'Still Life Citrus' artwork on NCGM's Nine Elms Lane façade has inspired a new market exhibition from the artist.

Israel-born artist Eyal Granit is now displaying his photography in Jerusalem's Mahne Yehuda Market, after being inspired by his London commission. "I'm Jerusalem born and wanted to present my art in my home habitat," says Eyal. "I approached the culture department of the Jerusalem Municipality and asked to present my photographs in the Mahne Yehuda Market. I was delighted when I received the support of the market traders and the works were hung with astonishing speed. I'm now working on eight new photos, in collaboration with market traders, that will present merchandise sold across Mahne Yehuda."

Eyal's artwork on Nine Elms Lane – reflecting nature of fruit – will remain on display until October.

News in Brief

Flower Market's new customer trolleys



A new trial aims to make shopping at the Flower Market easier than ever. Following a suggestion from Flower Market tenants, 12 shopping trolleys are now available for customers' use. Trolleys are stationed on the upper level and ground floor entrance and, just like supermarket trolleys, are unlocked using a pound coin which is returned when the trolley is docked. If the trial is successful then more trolleys may be purchased. The CGMA Operations team would love to hear any feedback about the trolleys and can be contacted at hello@cgma.co.uk.

New park for Nine Elms



Work to transform a 14-acre plot between Battersea Power Station and the new US Embassy is underway. The Nine Elms Park development - in the centre of the image above - will span 227 hectares and include a school within the park setting. The park itself will be open to the general public and run the length of the site from east to west. It's the largest regeneration zone in central London, aiming to deliver 20,000 new homes and 25,000 new jobs. It's a collaboration between the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, and the boroughs of Lambeth and Wandsworth.

Flats to be built above tube station



Transport for London (TfL) has shared proposals to build hundreds of new homes above the new Nine Elms Underground station on the corner of Wandsworth Road and Pascal Street. Construction of 450 homes, specifically for renters, will start once the station opens in 2021. Called 'Build to Rent', it's an idea that's being supported by the government as a way to provide new, decent quality, private-rented housing with assured three-year leases for tenants.

Below: Oddbox work with growers to sell excess produce to customers



Market-based charity reveal their recipe



Above: FoodCycle, based in the Food Exchange, have volunteers across the UK who prepare freshly-cooked meals for clients

Imagine a friendly club where you could pop-in each week for a three-course meal, completely free of charge. That's exactly what charity FoodCycle offer their guests, right across England.

Based at New Covent Garden Market's Food Exchange, FoodCycle combine surplus food, spare kitchen spaces and volunteers to create meals for people at risk of food poverty and social isolation.

They recently held an event in east London to share the charity's successes and ambitions. Called 'Building Communities One Meal at a Time: Our Recipe for Success', guests were treated to a tasty

breakfast before hearing from Mary McGrath, Chief Executive of FoodCycle, Project Leaders from FoodCycle Kilburn and Joanna de Koning, Director of Corporate Communications at corporate partner Just Eat.

In 2019 FoodCycle saved 178 tonnes of surplus food and supported 77,000 hungry or lonely diners in 41 projects across the country. Last year saw Just Eat team up with FoodCycle to raise money for meals.

If you're interested in working with FoodCycle or want to find out more, please get in touch by emailing hello@foodcycle.org.uk.

Welcome for wonky veg

Two new companies are joining the Food Exchange: sustainable food business Oddbox - new to NCGM - and returning innovation agency, Department 22.

Oddbox will move into the Food Exchange during March. Determined to battle food waste and give wonky veg (not the uniformly perfect veg we've become used to) a better, more beautiful future, the Oddbox team take delicious misshapen and surplus produce and deliver it straight to customers' doors. Growing from a handful of customers and suppliers, Oddbox now delivers 25,000 boxes across London.

Department 22 is an innovation agency offering circular economy planning, which provides businesses with society-wide benefits, substantial long-term savings, profit and growth. They wrote the Sainsbury's 'Future of Food' report and work with tiny start-ups through to global organisations such as Coca-Cola and Ikea.



Above: LAFIC aim to help small businesses

Free advice for food businesses on offer

If you're looking for advice in growing a start-up food business, then the London Agri Food Innovation Clinic (LAFIC) want to hear from companies located at New Covent Garden Market.

Based at London South Bank University, the LAFIC team is offering fully-funded access to a service that supports London's small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing innovative food products, processes and services.

It's open to new start-ups and existing businesses with fewer than 250 employees who are based in London. "Once you join, we tailor the programme to each participant, giving you the tools to grow your business and reach your potential," says Sam Ash, LAFIC Project Co-ordinator.

Co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and London South Bank University, the aim of the course is to ensure each participant has the right tools to maximise their experience and their time on the program.

Interested in applying or finding out more information? Contact Sam (ashs5@isbu.ac.uk) or visit www.lafic.co.uk.

YouTube 'stories' bring the Market to life

Below: Vernon Mascarenhas of Nature's Choice chats with chef Jesse Dunford Wood
Inset: Paul Grimshaw, Director of Direct Delivered Produce (DDP) Ltd

Below: Balkumar Khatri, CGMA Infringement Officer



Did you know New Covent Garden Market has its own YouTube channel? In December we released three new 'Stories from the Market' films, all well worth a view.

In the first film, Paul Grimshaw from Direct Delivered Produce (DDP) explains the pivotal role New Covent Garden Market plays in supplying London's restaurants with the finest quality ingredients.

In our second video, we meet Balkumar Khatri, who works at the Market as an Infringement Officer. With more than 200 food and flower businesses based on across the Market, Balkumar's always busy. However, his life as an Infringement Officer isn't all patrols and regulations. Balkumar arrived to the UK ten years ago, from Nepal, not knowing anyone. He reveals how he went from knowing

nobody to being one of the most recognisable market faces.

In the third instalment, watch chef and restaurant owner Jesse Dunford Wood sourcing a wide range of interesting ingredients from NCGM for his award-winning restaurant Parlour (thanks to help from Vernon at Nature's Choice).

Head over to <https://www.youtube.com/user/NewCoventGardenMrkt> to watch the videos.

Second anniversary for the Food Exchange

Congratulations are due to the Food Exchange, which celebrates its second anniversary in March this year, having opened for business in 2018.

Created as a workspace and food culture venue, the building spans three floors and three outdoor roof terraces. In just two years it's brought together more than 30 food entrepreneurs under one roof, giving them a unique place to create, innovate and collaborate.

In a sign of how integral it's been to the Market's redevelopment, Sheringham's and Premier Fruits also have their interim distribution units on the ground floor, with new start-up businesses based on the second and third floors.

"Fast Moving Consumer Goods [FMCG] are the main tenant businesses in the Food Exchange," explains Richard McAuley, Asset Manager for the Covent Garden Market Authority, who were the first tenants to move into the Food Exchange in March 2018.

"The relationship with one of our anchor tenants, Young Foodies, has been a real success story and we've facilitated their growth," adds Richard. "They're now on their third studio as they've increased in

size each year as their business has expanded, which demonstrates how the flexibility of the Food Exchange can help businesses grow."

David Gallagher Associates (DGA) are an established firm of architects who've been based at the Food Exchange since March 2018. "We love being part of the Food Exchange community and have made many friends here," explains Partner David Gallagher. DGA are a 'boomerang' tenant, as the firm's former office was located in the old Flower Market. Having moved to alternative premises when the old Flower Market closed, they missed the Market so much they moved back! They're now located on the Food Exchange's third floor.

So what is it about the Food Exchange that makes new businesses want to move to Nine Elms? "It's the epicentre of our new food community," says Richard, "and enables us to share skill sets from different categories of business. Going forward, we're looking for opportunities to further invest so that we can make it a real hub for all our businesses across the market, as a centre of collaboration for everyone."





BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

By Royal Appointment

Supplying a Royal Household and displaying a prestigious Royal Warrant is one of the highest accolades you can achieve within your trade. We met with Peter Green from Smith & Green Wholesale Florists, Freddie Heathcote at Arnott & Mason Horticulture and Paul Grimshaw at DDP to find out more.



Above: Freddie Heathcote at Arnott & Mason Horticulture (left) with Peter Green of Smith&Green Wholesale Florists Ltd (right). Peter's Royal Warrant can be seen proudly displayed at the entrance to Smith&Green, on the first floor of the Flower Market

Peter Green and his business partner Paul Winyard have more than 90 years of experience in the flower trade between them. Here, Peter tells us a little about himself and reveals why he was awarded the Royal Warrant from Her Majesty the Queen.

When did you start trading at NCGM?

I've been at the market for 44 years, working in lots of different jobs and roles over my career. My Dad worked in the Fruit & Veg Market at Sam Cooks for many years. It was in 1991 that I decided to start my own business – Smith and Green Wholesale Florists Ltd – when I was 31 years old. We were one of 10 so-called 'country order'

firms, who would buy flowers from the market and distribute them across the entire UK using the rail network. Today, we're the last country order business left. Luckily I didn't just rely on those orders and built up a business that supplied all the top London hotels, so I always had different options.

Two little words that are known the world over: Buckingham Palace. How did that relationship start?

A florist based at New Covent Garden called J&E Page originally had the Royal Warrant for Her Majesty the Queen, which they'd had for a long time. When they sadly went bankrupt in 2002, I was

recommended to the Palace by a client I had who supplied a floristry school. I started by supplying flowers for a summer opening at Buckingham Palace and it all grew from there! Now, as well as Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, I also supply St. James's Palace and St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

Is it true you have to supply a Royal Warrant holder for at least five years before you can apply for the Warrant?

I'm not a flash person, so it took me a little while to apply for the Royal Warrant. I'd actually supplied the Palace for more than eight years before I decided to apply. I'm

what they call 'the grantee' and the Warrant is issued in my name.

The Queen is probably your most famous client. How did you feel when you first got the Royal Warrant?

It's an honour and a privilege to hold a Royal Warrant and, for me, it's the highest accolade you can achieve within your trade."

How does it feel when you're delivering to Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle?

My son Jack does most of the deliveries now, but I do some as well when needed.

Continued on next column ►►

“ I look for flowers that meet Fairtrade principles and, as much as I possibly can, I try and buy British-grown. To me, it's not what the Royal Warrant brings in financial terms: it's so valuable for the prestige and kudos that it brings us as a company...



What does supplying a Royal Household mean to a family-run business? We met with Paul Grimshaw, Director of Direct Delivered Produce (DDP) to chat about their Royal Warrant and to determine exactly why British produce is so important (spoiler alert: it's the flavour).

Having Buckingham Palace as a customer - and as a proud Royal Warrant holder for more than 20 years - Paul Grimshaw knows the level of fresh produce that's expected to be able to display the words 'By Appointment to Her Majesty The Queen, Purveyors of fruit and vegetables' above his door.

As director at Direct Delivered Produce (DDP) Ltd, based on the Fruit and Vegetable Market, Paul and his team take pride

in everything they do. "We're a family-based business and we've been around since 1982 distributing fruit and vegetables within London," explains Paul.

"We're very proud to supply Her Majesty the Queen and we've held the Royal Warrant for around 20 years. Walking in every day and seeing the Royal Crest above our name is a reminder to our staff as they know the level and standard that we need our orders packed to."

What's more, Paul's a champion for British produce and reveals more in the latest 'Stories from the Market' film, available now on New Covent Garden Market's YouTube channel (see p5).

"We were championing British produce 30 years ago and even before I joined DDP I was proud to eat British apples, rhubarb and strawberries - not because it was local but because of the flavour - the flavour's always been there!"

Left: Paul Grimshaw, Director of Direct Delivered Produce (DDP) Ltd, with the sign displaying the Warrant.

► Continued from previous column
We deliver to Buckingham Palace between three and four times a week. Once we've cleared the Palace's security - which is very tight - Jack or me are often on our own at 3am in the morning! They've now moved the flower room at Buckingham Palace so that it's closer to the delivery bay. I remember having to make several trips and going through 26 doors with my trolley full of flowers. Windsor Castle's open to the public, so you work around the guard changes.

How does the Royal Warrant set you apart from the competition?

It's very difficult to secure a Warrant as there are checks to ensure everything is correct and in order. Each year I have to complete a questionnaire that demonstrates our green and sustainability credentials. It's important to show the provenance of the flowers. I look for flowers that meet Fairtrade principles and - as much as I possibly can - I try and buy British-grown. To me it's never been about what the Royal Warrant brings into the business in financial terms, as it's so valuable for the prestige and kudos that it brings us as a company.

Have you noticed any major trends over your years as a wholesaler?

Yes, the wholesale side is decreasing. When I started there were 65 wholesalers and now there are just 14. The other change is the majority of flowers are now imported rather than coming from British growers.

What's your favourite flower?

For me, it's always a rose. I also love a sweet pea and its wonderful aroma.

What are the main benefits of being a Royal Warrant holder?

I've been lucky enough to meet members of the Royal Family and have been invited to two garden parties at the Palace. However, I never trade on that. We're proud to display it but we never use it to build our reputation. All new trade comes via word of mouth. I'm a high-end florist and have supplied all the top hotels in London at one time or another. That's how I make my living - they're my day-to-day clients all year around.

Supplying Buckingham Palace and buying from Windsor Castle is all in a day's work for Arnott & Mason's Managing Director Freddie Heathcote.

Tell us a little about yourself: when did you start trading at NCGM?

I joined the business six-and-a-half years ago, although Arnott & Mason has been trading since the late 1970s. We specialise in tropical plants and houseplants and import from a pretty broad spectrum of growers around Europe, most notably Belgium, Holland, Italy, Spain and Denmark. We now specialise in plants and interiors, whereas traditionally the business used to be more bedding orientated.

Can you tell us how you originally got the contract to supply Buckingham Palace?

We've had the Royal Warrant for 16 years, since 2004. You have to be trading with one subsidiary of the Crown for at least five years and then you're able to apply. Once you've been approved then you can proudly display the Royal Warrant.

Are you allowed to tell us what kind of produce you supply?

We've supplied tropical plants for certain events. They might be feature pieces like Birds of Paradise or palms, to create a tropical feel. We supply Her Majesty the Queen, but it's actually a combination of supply and purchase, as we buy goods from the Royal Household as well.

We're in the highly-unique position where there is a nursery at the Windsor Castle estate that grows product for the estate, as well as the farm shop there. We have an agreement where we purchase any surplus stock that they have and then we wholesale it here at the Flower Market. We buy a combination of pelargoniums in the summer months and lots of poinsettias during the Christmas period. So customers buying from us may be getting plants that were grown in the grounds at Windsor Castle! However, we're not allowed to



state that on the product. Ordinarily it's Buckingham Palace that we supply regularly over the summer events period, although we may occasionally be asked to supply Windsor Castle. For example they may have a planting job and they need something specific that they haven't grown themselves.

How did you feel when you first started supplying the Royal Family and how do you keep in contact?

It's a great relationship and very straightforward. We supply for summer events there and deliver our plants to the Palace. If they're putting together a display then we supply the plants and work in conjunction with a contractor, who then does the installation work.

Does having the Royal Warrant set you apart from the competition and does it open doors to more clients?

We don't go around shouting about our Royal Warrant but it's obvious and part of our logo. I'd say it's a cornerstone for our business and instils a certain amount of confidence in our customers. When they see that you have a Royal Warrant

compared to our competitors then it gives you a slight edge. It's difficult to say how much of a difference it makes financially, but we've been trading with the Royal household for more than 16 years so it's one of the highest distinctions.

Have you noticed any major trends over your years in the business?

It's unusual as our supply and purchase orders with the Royal Household remain the same each year. We supply the same events each year so the order is similar. The nursery always grows the same products for use across the estate and we're delighted to be able to take their surplus for sale to the public.

In terms of general trade it's a different answer - we've seen a major trend for houseplants over the past five or six years, which has resulted in a big increase in business over that period. Plants have become fashionable again in households and for design elements in magazines and shop displays, so we benefit from that. Everyone knows that plants are good for the environment and great from a psychological point of view to have in your house, as well as for oxygenation.

Getting to know: Café culture - faces behind NCGM food

With four cafés trading across New Covent Garden Market, we caught up with the faces behind the food to find out how long they've been working here and what their best-selling dishes are.

«
Whatever special we have on the menu – from pulled pork with sweet potato fries and coleslaw through to braised steak with vegetables – they're always one of our most popular dishes. We sell more than 50 every day.

Right: The team at the Market Café, located in the Fruit and Veg Market. Pictured left to right: Beata, Jade, Petra, Fabrizio, and owner Mehmet Yilmaz.



Market Café

With a 25-year history, the Market Café (located on A-Block next to Nature's Choice) is owned by Mehmet Yilmaz, who's also the Head Chef. "I've been here since we first opened 25 years ago and we haven't looked back," he explains, adding his history reaches even further as his Dad owned the pub that used to be located on the Fruit & Veg Market's mezzanine level.

Although they sell between 300-400 cups of tea and coffee a day, the Market Café is most famous for its food offer and their free-delivery service to businesses on the market. In an environment where everyone knows food, Mehmet's proud of his fresh ingredients, which he sources daily. "I visit Smithfield's meat market each day, emailing them my order the night before so everything's ready to collect each morning. We get our vegetables here at the market and for anything extra we pop out to Harrison's as they're open all day."

Mehmet uses seasonal produce and, based on previous sales, he pretty much knows the exact amounts needed. "I have a daily special on the menu, with the menu rotating every two weeks. Our daily specials always prove popular! Whatever we

have on the menu – from pulled pork with sweet potato fries and coleslaw through to braised steak with vegetables – they're always one of our most popular dishes. We sell at least 50 specials every day. But based on sales I'd say wraps are the biggest seller, with chicken everyone's favourite."

New to the specials menu is a salmon fillet served with a lemon and butternut sauce, asparagus and sweet-potato wedges. "Everything we sell is homemade, nothing's frozen. Our chicken pie we make with spinach and my own special secret recipe for the sauce – I don't just add chicken soup like some people do! I make homemade lasagnes and curries and we're now offering vegan dishes too. We have lots of choice."

With the market changing over the years, Mehmet's now welcoming a new generation of customers from Transport for London (TfL). "We get a lot of TfL builders working on the new Nine Elms Tube station coming to us for their lunch. They've got their own canteen but they prefer it here!"

Nellie's Café

For Ercan and Aydin (respectively owner and head chef at Nellie's Café), their aim is to provide tasty food that their Fruit &

Veg Market customers can eat on the go. Nellie's offer is all about providing filling food that hits the spot and enables regulars to enjoy a tasty bite to eat during a busy night shift.

"We open very early at 10pm and close at 10am, so we don't serve lunches," explains Ercan. "Our most popular takeaway is egg and bacon in a French stick as it fills you up. Our best sellers are cheeseburgers, quarter pounders and our chef's special – Turkish sausage in a roll. Our paninis are very popular and customers love our reasonable prices."

Premier Fruits are Nellie's biggest customers – due to their proximity – and Ercan says he sees the same faces every day. "I've been working at Nellie's for nearly 30 years and the café has been here on the same site since 1974, so we've created a lot of friendships and built good relationships."

So what's more popular, tea or coffee? "Nowadays we sell more coffee, hundreds each day, whereas in the old days it was all about tea. Things go in and out of fashion so I'm sure tea will come back."

There's a family connection with the Flower Market's Garden Café, which is now run by Ercan's niece Aycan (after she spent many years working at Nellie's).

"Aycan used to work with me and her Dad before he passed away. Now she's moved to the Garden Café and it's good to maintain our family traditions."

Garden Café

For Nurten and her daughter Aycan, it's all about teamwork. "I opened the Garden Café when the Flower Market moved to its interim site three years ago, and then stepped back to concentrate on running Nellie's with my husband Ercan," explains Nurten. "Now I've returned to the Garden Café and we're looking to introduce a few changes." Nurten's keen to add more plants and greenery and is looking to extend the menu with more hot dishes. "We have to be mindful that we're open from 2am to 11am, so not everyone wants a big meal. We're experimenting with a breakfast muffin – like they do at McDonald's – with sausage, egg and cheese and that's been going well."

Garden Café favourites such as ham and cheese croissants, salmon and cream cheese bagels, and grilled chicken wraps now face new competition, with Nurten and Aycan looking to bring in more Turkish-Cypriot influences. "Customers

have asked for shish dishes as they're grilled and quite healthy. It goes straight onto the grill, isn't being fried and is full of flavour. We add halloumi cheese in a wrap or pitta bread, or serve it with rice."

Nurten wants to entice new customers to try their menu and sees differences between the two café's she's run. "On the fruit and veg side it's always busy whereas here at the Flower Market it's much more seasonal. We were busy in the run up to Valentine's Day and Pancake Day and it'll be busy again in the weeks before Mother's Day."

However, there's already one thing that sets the Garden Café apart from the completion – a dedicated bean-to-cup coffee machine. "We're the only café on the Market where you can get a proper coffee that isn't instant. We serve all the varieties of coffee and grind our beans fresh each day so everyone can keep up as they work through the night."

Ultimately, the café wouldn't exist without customers so they're seeking feedback. "We want traders to tell us how we can improve our offer," says Nurten, "as we're one-big team in the Flower Market."

Tony's Café

When the sign outside your door reads 'Serving New Covent Garden with great food for 30 years' then you know you've got a recipe for success.

Making a 134-mile round trip to travel in from Cambridge every day, owner and Head Chef Duncan Easto knows exactly what his hungry customers want to keep them going during a busy night shift.

"In all my years working at the café I've seen a lot of changes," says Duncan, explaining that he now opens earlier than ever before. "Ever since the London 2012 Olympic Games, when we first started trading earlier, the Market adapted to that and now we're busy as soon as we open at 10pm. It also means we finish earlier, and most days we've served our last customer and closed the café by 5.30am."

It's not just the Market's trading hours that have changed, with people's tastes constantly evolving too, as Duncan explains. "I've adapted our menu over the years to become healthier. We offer several

herbal teas now and sales of tea outnumber coffee. Our customers are always asking for healthier options and that's reflected in our offer. We sell fewer fry-ups than ever before and we're constantly moving with the times to evolve. Lots of our customers don't necessarily take a break so we give them snacks on the go."

So what's the best selling dish on the menu at Tony's Café? You just might be surprised with the answer. "It has to be our home-made soup, as we offer a different daily special. We were going to take it off the menu in the summer months but it's proved so popular that our customers ask us to make it all year around!"



Clockwise from top right:
 > Duncan Easto (centre) and two happy customers at Tony's Café. > Aycan makes a bean-to-cup coffee for a customer at the Garden Café. > Preparing food on the grill at the Garden Café. > Aydin (head chef) and Ercan (owner) at Nellie's Café (inset: the sign that hangs over the door at Nellie's shows the original nine elm trees that gave the area its name). > Signage outside Tony's Café highlights its 30-year history on the Fruit & Veg Market (inset: the Flower Café's board of daily specials).

Fresh faced vs well-seasoned: the market

We get a glimpse of the market through the eyes of one of our fresh-faced tenants, Paul Luff, a partner in The London Herb Company based on the Fruit & Veg Market.



Above: Paul sells everything from thyme and rosemary through to more unusual herbs such as edible pansy flowers and wheatgrass (inset), often juiced by customers and sold by the shot.

“ Technology has transformed the way the market works. Years ago it was all hand-written now it's all digital.



Congratulations on your first anniversary as a new company at New Covent Garden Market! Tell us a little about your background.

Although we're a new business, I've been involved with New Covent Garden Market since I was a four-year old kid. My Granddad and my Dad had a fruit stall on the Walworth Road. When I left school I started working for my uncle's catering company, called Cream of the Crop.

Did it feel scary when you started out on your own?

No it didn't, as I'd learned my trade in the market and worked for long enough to be confident that we'd be successful. Life's all about evolution and trying new things. We've seen our trade grow rapidly since we opened in February 2019, and we're moving in the right direction.

What's the biggest change you've seen?

The market has adapted, with fewer wholesalers and more caterers now. When we started, there were a lot more independent greengrocer shops and stallholders, but now this is mainly a catering market. The other major change is in the hours that we work – it's now getting earlier and earlier as people realise they can beat the traffic and get their drivers in and out of the market really quickly. Our

packers arrive at 9pm and we start taking phone orders from 10.30pm. Our busiest time is between 10.30pm and 2.30am. I'd say 80% of our business is taken before 3am.

The other major change is that technology has transformed the way the market works. Years ago it was all about hand-written tickets, whereas now all our orders are captured digitally. We send out our invoices direct to customers via email, so it's all very efficient.

Tell us about the London Herb Company – why did you choose to sell herbs?

Herbs aren't a product that everyone wants to sell as you have to order from our suppliers three or four days in advance and herbs have a short shelf life. Lots of businesses on the market don't want that risk. It's not like selling tomatoes or peppers which are box-in, box-out! Our trade involves weighing, pre-packaging and creating bespoke orders for customers and we're selling thousands of little split items that need a lot of work. It's far from easy but that means I've got less competition.

What's your best-selling product?

Basil and chives are the biggest sellers. Basil is our most popular as it's used in so many recipes.

How does the business work, as you're dealing with so many small orders each day?

Everything is delivered fresh daily and most of our stock gets turned around within 24 hours. Our catering trade is really valuable as we deal in large volumes, with bigger turnovers and fewer customers, who are all caterers. Everything is delivered to us in kilos and we pre-pack 50g and 100g packets – whatever anyone wants we'll supply.

What's your favourite thing about the market?

I love the people to be honest. You get on so well with each other and you see your customers every day – more than your family or friends. Even if you have an argument with a customer, five minutes later it's all sorted and you've got your order. Everyone knows the pressure of working in the market, so we have a laugh and support each other.

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

For being very efficient. We get our orders out fast.

If you could be any herb from your assortment, what would you be and why?

Has to be lemon thyme, it's got the most wonderful aroma.

through two different lenses



We get a glimpse of the market through the eyes of well-seasoned tenant David Gallagher (pictured third from left), who's a partner at DGA architects based in the Food Exchange.



For architects to be based in the middle of a huge building site in central London is an inspiration



Above: The team at DGA architects - previously based at the old Flower Market - were among the first tenants at the Food Exchange. **Inset:** A mixed-use development in Clerkenwell, EC1.

Tell us about DGA – how did you get started and what kind of projects have you worked on?

DGA (David Gallagher Associates LLP) is headed by myself, David Gallagher, and my business partner Tom Berndorfer. I founded the practice in 1993, with Tom joining in 1999. I'd previously been an associate in a Dublin/London firm of architects before starting DGA on the back of my first solo commission, the conversion of a listed East End brewery to a community health centre, bank and 48 apartments.

Where is your work located?

We've worked throughout the UK, Ireland and abroad, but most of our projects are in London. We've designed buildings ranging from commercial, industrial and retail schemes to schools, art galleries and places of worship. The majority of our work is residential, from individual houses to multi-storey blocks of apartments. We work on both new-build and historic buildings.

We heard that you were a tenant at the original flower market. How did that come about?

For more than 15 years our offices were just across the Thames at Crown Reach, looking south over the river

towards the old Flower Market. When the Crown Estate redeveloped our premises in 2013 and we needed to move, we happened quite by chance to talk to the property manager of Covent Garden Market Authority who offered us office space in the old Flower Market. Thus started our relationship with New Covent Garden Market!

Is it strange being a firm of architects working among so many food businesses? How do you interact with your neighbours?

We love being part of the Food Exchange community and have made many friends. Our close neighbour since moving in, Oppo [see Take Five, back cover], use us for ice-cream tasting tests and we get samples to try out!

Why did you decide return to New Covent Garden?

The Flower Market was our home for more than three years. When it relocated and we had to vacate, we became aware that a new market building was in the pipeline but not yet built. We were in any case keen to stay nearby so moved to a studio near Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens for a year and a half. When the Food Exchange was nearing completion we contacted the market and were delighted when they said they'd consider letting us space in the new

building, despite not being a foodie company. So we became the first tenant - after the Covent Garden Market Authority team - to move into the brand new Food Exchange building on 1 March 2018.

What's your favourite thing about the market?

We enjoy not only being close to the regeneration of this historic market, but also the surrounding Nine Elms area from Vauxhall to Battersea Power Station. For architects to be in the middle of a huge building site in central London is an inspiration. We also love the Market Café [see p8-9], not only eating there but also getting deliveries from their amazing menu for our in-house working lunches.

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

Making a tiny contribution to the vitality of our great city.

Fruit, vegetable or flower: what would you choose to be and why?

Artichokes and pineapples are very architectural! We're into natural structure and geometry, so to be surrounded by the variety of plant life here in the market provides a stimulating environment.



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Take Five

Brothers Harry and Charlie Thuillier run Oppo Ice Cream (founded in 2014), based in the Food Exchange at NCGM. Here they share five facts about their business but one is a deliberate fake. Can you guess the fake fact?

Answer upside down at the foot of the page.



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