

# MARKET QUARTERLY

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**WE'RE  
BRITAIN'S BEST  
WHOLESALE  
MARKET!**  
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Clive Bournell's last pictures of the original Buyers' Walk





**M**y colleague Garin and I, who create this newspaper together, have now twice been lucky enough to pick up the NABMA award for Best British Wholesale Market on behalf of the entire NCGM community. Being just two of the roughly 2,500 people who work here every day, we wish you could all have been there to accept the accolade we believe this market richly deserves. In the citation read out in Birmingham, the judges recognised the passion and dedication of traders who are working through a redevelopment of the site, as well as the incredible ongoing work to maintain NCGM's position as a crucial link in the supply chain for fruit, veg, flowers and much more into London, the South East and increasingly, further afield.

As much as this is a badge of honour that we can all take great pride in, it underlines the continued excellence of NCGM to both existing and potential new customers, as well as highlighting this market as the leader of this country's wholesale market sector. It's the second time we've received the Best-in-Class award in three years and as no market is permitted to win in two successive years, it literally doesn't get any better than that! In all honesty though, while it is nice to be labelled 'Best', it is never front of mind here to compare the Market to our counterparts and colleagues around the country. We all know what a tough and at times uncompromising sector this has been over the last two or three decades and there is utmost respect here for every other market around the UK. We all have our specific strengths and as long as we continue to play to them, there is plenty of life left yet in a sector that has been written off plenty of times down the years...

...as you will find out by reading through the latest issue of Market Quarterly. Yet again, we've found plenty of positive stories to talk about – from interviews with the female lead of an all-female kimchi production team now based on Buyers' Walk, and a Vauxhall boy who has called time on a long and illustrious career in the Market, to features on a Kent farmer who is both a happy customer of and supplier to the Market, and an innovative Dutch grower that is cementing its position here and its commitment to the capital's chefs. We've also got a great piece on All Greens, a multi-faceted tenant of the Market that has added a Buyers' Walk arm to its trading options since the new section opened in January.

Anyone who follows the @marketfood or @marketflowers feeds on Instagram – if not, why not? – will have seen we've ramped up the market content to involve more firms here in telling the stories about the products, people, practices and innovation happening on this site every single day. It's significantly increased engagement and follower numbers – tag us in on your posts, these feeds represent you and we want to showcase what you're up to.

Enjoy the read.

**Tommy**

Tommy Leighton,  
Market Press Officer



## NCGM crowned Best British Wholesale Market

New Covent Garden Market has once again been crowned Britain's Best Wholesale Market.

The 2026 accolade was bestowed upon this Market's community during a ceremony at the NABMA Conference, in Birmingham, and presented by Julia Buckley MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Markets Group. It recognises NCGM's status as "the capital's unparalleled wholesale hub for world-class fruit, veg and flowers, and the best-located wholesale market for foodservice, hospitality and independent retail customers across London and the South East".

The Market's diverse mix of tenants of all shapes and sizes registered a combined turnover of around £944 million and employed in excess of 2,500 people in the last financial year, continued the citation. As the base for many of the UK's best and most experienced multigenerational fresh produce businesses – fruit, vegetables, flowers, plants and foliage, and fine food and ingredients, NCGM is home to suppliers you can trust to be there for you, whenever you need them.

It is also home to the Food Exchange, modern office space that has attracted a buzzy mix of entrepreneurial food businesses, and Mission Kitchen, whose start-up members share commercial kitchen and co-working spaces on their way to becoming the next generation of food industry leaders.

And soon (2028), it will be the UK's oldest and the newest wholesale market – a redevelopment programme, alongside regeneration of the local area, is creating a wholesale market fit to serve the independent retail and catering sectors for decades to come, within a new food, drink and flower quarter for London.

"We're absolutely thrilled that the Market has been awarded this honour for 2026," said Wanda Goldwag OBE, Chair of NCGM's landlord Covent Garden Market Authority. "The wholesale market sector continues to be crucial to the food and floral supply chains across the UK and to be recognised as best in class at a time when we are

making major upgrades and equipping our tenants for the future is especially gratifying.

"Thank you to the panel of judges and to NABMA for managing the award. It means a lot for a sector that often hides its brilliance under a bushel to receive recognition of this kind."

On behalf of the tenants of NCGM, Gary Marshall, Chairman of Covent Garden Tenants' Association, added: "The last few months have seen significant milestones reached in the redevelopment of the Market and the culmination of our celebrations of the Market's 50th anniversary in Nine Elms. More importantly though, the tenants here have continued to deliver premium quality fresh produce and world-class service levels, lifting the Market's turnover to unprecedented levels while working in partnership with some of the very best suppliers and customers around.

"We've already begun this year with the opening of a new Buyers' Walk that opens up new opportunities for the fruit and vegetable wholesalers here. So we will justifiably all feel proud of this accolade, while not only keeping our focus on living up to the standards required of Britain's Best Wholesale Market, but ensuring we evolve and adapt to maintain our position at the forefront of this great industry."

**Pictured, left to right:** Andy Pidgen, Operations Director, Market Place Europe, Julia Buckley MP, Tommy Leighton and Garin Auld, the NCGM/CGMA Comms team, and NABMA President Councillor Chris Poulter

### YOUR LINK TO OUR PAST

We often get asked for back issues of Market Quarterly (the newspaper formerly known as Market Times). Every one of our previous 29 issues is available on the Market website – [newcoventgardenmarket.com](http://newcoventgardenmarket.com) – via a link in the Site Map list at the bottom of each page. You can also scan this QR code if you have the immediate itch to access news, features and interviews from the last seven years at New Covent Garden Market!





## Trio of events boost floral trade

The Flower Market enjoyed a busy few weeks in the last quarter, as three calendar events followed each other in quick succession: Valentine's Day; International Women's Day (March 8th); and Mother's Day (March 15th).

As well as the usual trade traffic around Valentine's Day, as it fell on a Saturday this year, some wholesalers reported a noticeable increase in walk-in trade from the general public. "It was the busiest Valentine's Day I can remember in the 12 years that I've worked here at the Flower Market, the volume of trade was crazy," said Luke Gilbert of Green & Bloom. "We were busy in the run up and had a hectic and profitable end to the week for walk-in trade on the 14th. As we expected, roses were still the most purchased flower, especially in the classic red shade."

International Women's Day (IWD) has also become a far bigger event in terms of sales over the past few years, said Sam Hardcastle of Bloomfield Wholesale Florist. "It's a huge week for flower growers in the Netherlands, who will sell enormous quantities of flowers to the Eastern European countries where it has always been a big event in the calendar year," he explained.



The trend for men to buy flowers for every woman in their life has spread to London, sparked by the number of Eastern Europeans living in the capital, and the yellow mimosa is the main symbol of IWD. Cut stems in whites, yellows and pinks were also popular and there is a new wave of sales, according to florist Yamina Chaib – known in the trade by her alias 'Frenchie' – who said she was purchasing mimosas for all the women in her life. "Mimosas are such a unique flower," said Yamina, pictured with Green & Bloom's Terry Smith. "I sent mimosas to all of my wonderful friends to celebrate IWD this year."

Hot on the heels of IWD was Mother's Day and for Jon Hart of J Hart Flowers Ltd, brisk trade across the three calendar events more than made up for a slow start to the year due to the cold, wet, weather. "We had a fantastic Valentine's Day as well as a successful IWD and Mother's Day," he said. All cut stems were popular, with roses, tulips, and hyacinths making up more than 50% of sales. "January was so cold and wet that it really affected our trade, so we really needed a boost," Jon added. "Having three events so close together has been great for business."

## Heartbeat of festival for 90 minutes

New Covent Garden Market was the centre of an international piano festival for 90 minutes in March, as award-winning local jazz pianist Emile Hinton played in the Atrium of the Food Exchange

Inspired by the elm tree, a timeless symbol of our Nine Elms community, the Piano in The Elms international festival was created and run by local charity World Heart Beat. It is a celebration of connection through the captivating power of piano, featuring dazzling performances from world-class artists, intimate café concerts and inspiring masterclasses.

Emile is a pianist and composer emerging from the heart of the London jazz scene. A mentee of renowned UK pianist Julian Joseph, he graduated with first-class honours from Trinity Laban Conservatoire and recently spent three months at the Tribeca Jazz Institute in NYC, studying with some of New York's top musicians. In 2023, Emile was honoured with the Tina May Musician's Company Young Jazz Musician of the Year.

As the pianist for jazz legends Ricky Ford (Charles Mingus, Ellington Orchestra) and Jazz Messenger Jean Toussaint (Art Blakey, McCoy Tyner), Emile has performed at top venues across the UK and Europe. And now he can

add the Food Exchange to his CV, after performing for our 100 guests from the Market and the local community!

The free-to-attend event featured food provided by The Noble Spread, a member of Mission Kitchen, and coldpressed juice from Fresh Union, which inspired Emile to improvise a tune dedicated to "the best orange juice I have ever tasted!"

Alongside the solo piano concert and in the spirit of truly celebrating our own community with the people of Nine Elms, there was another chance to enjoy the exhibition and photographs of New Covent Garden that were first unveiled last September at our exhibition - Wholesale Market Life Through the Lens of Clive Boursnell.

World Heart Beat (WHB) is a registered charity founded by Sahana Gero, MBE in 2009. It is a place where a five-year-old can walk through the door and feel like a musician, and a world-class performer can know and feel that it is a place for them too, truly a community where music makes a difference.

As a cultural destination, WHB at Embassy Gardens bridges cultures and generations through music, celebrating global diversity while providing a platform for great artists and uplifting humanity.

## Rushton's is Food Brand of the Year

Rushton's, the Market-based fresh produce supplier to the catering and foodservice sectors, was named Food Brand of the Year at the Caterer Supplier Awards, in recognition of its leadership in quality, sustainability and supplier-chef collaboration within the hospitality sector.

Judges of the awards praised the business for combining ethical enterprise and measurable sustainability with a modern, chef-focused approach to fresh produce supply.

Operating from BRC-accredited units at the Market, Rushton's supplies more than 375 restaurants, pubs, bars, hotels and caterers across London, specialising in seasonal British produce alongside premium Italian specialities. The business is owned by S Thorogood and Sons, a family farming company with roots dating back to 1922.

Central to the award win was Rushton's sustainability strategy. Judges recognised the company's market leadership and growth, achieved despite ongoing challenges in the hospitality sector. Rushton's has strengthened its brand presence, improved digital traceability and expanded its offer, including the acquisition of Mushroom Man, creating a specialist mushroom range it claims is unmatched in quality and consistency.

The recognition reflects a shared achievement across its growers, customers and team, said Rushton's Director Will



Thorogood: "Winning [this award] is a huge moment for us, but it's also just part of a bigger journey. With over a century of heritage behind us, a clear focus on sustainability and a deep connection to London's hospitality sector, we're continuing to evolve what it means to be a modern fresh produce supplier.

"Our focus remains the same; to support chefs with the best possible produce, to strengthen the link between farm and kitchen and to keep pushing standards forward across the industry. This award belongs to our team, our growers and the chefs we work with every day. We're just getting started."

For more on these stories and to keep up-to-date with news from NCGM, scan the QR code



# CGMA Project Director retires

Tony O'Reilly retired in April, after nine years as Covent Garden Market Authority's Project Director, overseeing the redevelopment of New Covent Garden Market.

Tony, who had previously worked for Grosvenor Group, Get Living London and headed the development team responsible for the Athletes Village at the 2012 London Olympics, said that while the final phase of his career has included some of his most challenging periods, he feels he is able to leave the Market in a far better position than when he took on the role.

"This has become a far bigger project than I think even the people here at the Market recognised at the outset," said Tony. "At Grosvenor Group, we would have termed it a Large Complex Project and any project of this size is going to throw up obstacles and difficulties to overcome. We've had our fair share!

"The opening of the second and final section of the Buyers' Walk in the Fruit and Vegetable Market in January felt like a seminal moment though; an occasion that I think really signified that the project is both working for the tenants and nearing its successful end," he continued.

"I'd be lying if I said there haven't been bumps in the road, but overall, I will look back on the friendships with my colleagues at CGMA and the increasingly good relationships I have developed with many of the tenants at the Market. I've also worked closely with the team from



the developer Vinci St Modwen and I wish everyone at the Market all the very best with the remainder of the redevelopment and for the exciting times that lie ahead once the final phase is completed in around two years."

# Thornicrofts gets gras openers



New Covent Garden Market trader Thornicrofts, which specialises in supplying the fine-dining sector, was one of a select bunch of British wholesalers that purchased the much sought-after first British asparagus of the year, in support of children's charity Hope Support Services.

Several wholesalers around the country

bought two bunches of the landmark 2026 spears from Wye Valley Asparagus grower Chris Chinn. Each year, Chris sells small volumes from the first batch of asparagus grown on his Cobrey Farm, in Herefordshire, to raise funds for good causes.

The traditional official launch of the English season has coincided with St George's Day – April 23rd. However, changing climatic conditions and growing methods that are adapting to match the unusual weather patterns, have brought the crop forward in recent times, so much so that Thornicrofts supplied this year's openers, the second earliest ever, to The Goring, on January 30th.

At Thornicrofts, Vernon Mascarenhas has worked with Chris Chinn for more than 20 years. "I've always championed Wye Valley asparagus and restaurants love to put the source on their menus to promote the English crop, so it was exciting to get the first bunches so early this year," said Vernon. "It helps our customers to keep their menus fresh and draw in diners.

"We're also delighted to be able to support Hope Support Services; thank you to Chris for giving us that opportunity."

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) appointed Penny Alexander and Christopher Carter Keall as Non-Executive Directors (NED) on the Board of Covent Garden Market Authority (CGMA). Both will serve four-year terms, from May 5th 2026 to May 4th 2030.

## Penny Alexander

Penny is a Stakeholder Engagement specialist NED; a strategic leader and board member skilled at building relationships and consensus with a broad range of stakeholders across different sectors and communities. She has more than 20 years' experience in setting-up and leading urban, place-based partnership companies and has held board roles in a range of sectors and bodies. Penny delivers high-level direction and creative thinking backed by strong governance and process and is adept at effecting change to drive places forward.



## Christopher Carter Keall

Christopher joins the Board as a Business Development specialist NED; a senior real estate executive with more than 35 years' experience leading investment, asset management, and development strategies across real estate portfolios. He has a proven track record of board-level governance across institutional, private equity, and public market contexts, with expertise in strategic transformation, ESG integration, and stakeholder management.

At the same time as announcing these appointments, Defra reappointed David Fison, from June 22nd 2026 to December 21st 2027.



# Obituary

## Roger Emms 1945-2026

Roger Emms, who was a popular customer at the Market for more than half a century, sadly passed away in February, aged 80.

Roger was born in Charlton, near Hitchin, Hertfordshire, and from a very early age worked with brother Geoffrey on Hitchin retail market, for fruiterer George Watkins. George was a regular customer at the old Covent Garden with his son Roy.

The fresh produce industry seeds had no doubt already been sewn when both Roger and Geoffrey left school and took jobs in the building trade; Roger as a scaffolder. When those jobs finished, the brothers started their own fruit and vegetable business – Emms Bros – in the late '60s, buying fresh produce from the old Covent Garden and wholesaling it across Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. Each Saturday, they also ran a busy fruit stall in Sandy market square.

They switched their buying to Nine Elms when the Market relocated and remained in partnership until the early '90s when they amicably decided to split the partnership and go their separate ways within the industry. Roger continued to buy from the Market and continued his eponymous secondary wholesale firm Roger Emms until recently, remaining a well-liked personality on Buyers' Walk.

He had an immense passion for the Market and in return the people of the Market had huge respect and love for Roger. He was a great character who will always be remembered for his ubiquitous smile and infectious laughter, as well as a singing voice that often rang through the Market hall. His singing voice was good enough, in fact, to have got him onto Opportunity Knocks in the '60s!

Roger's passing was much lamented by traders and friends here, but the memories and stories will live long. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

He leaves wife Janet, their children Steven, Richard and Anthony and grandchildren Erin, Charlie, Brooke, Matthew and Luke.

His nephew Gary Emms works in the flower industry and has supplied both the flower and fruit and vegetable markets here in his time in those sectors.



## NICK BOWS OUT

Nick Fenner of R French retired after 47 years in the Market. Nick, from Brixton, added: "I started when I was a boy of 19. I was a trainee accountant with Charlie Knights in the Fruit and Vegetable Market before I came to the Flower Market to work for W Moss – for a week – and then for Baker Duguid for a few years and I came to work here many years ago for Mr French's father and then Mr French."

Best of luck, Nick.



# 25% off at El Pastor

Mexican restaurant El Pastor (at Battersea Power Station) is offering everyone at New Covent Garden Market and all readers of Market Quarterly a 25% discount off their total bill for bookings up to a table of four, every Monday to Friday until Friday May 29th.

El Pastor is a family of Mexican restaurants in London. Set on the riverfront, El Pastor Battersea pays tribute to the area's industrial heritage with a wall-size mural inspired by Diego Rivera's celebrated public artworks. Famed for its tacos and margaritas, the menu showcases a host of bold Mexican flavours, corn tortillas made daily in-house from heirloom Mexican corn.

You can find El Pastor at Unit 21-22, Circus Road West, Battersea Power Station, London SW11 8EZ.

Scan the QR code for details and Ts and Cs and let your server know on arrival that you intend to take advantage of the offer.



# All-female kimchi producer on Buyers' Walk

As Market Quarterly went to press, on-site kimchi brand Fermary was busy relocating its production from the arches to a bespoke facility above Thorogoods wholesale units on Buyers' Walk. We talked to brand founder Elena Deminska about the latest developments for Fermary, why it has special meaning for her personally and her pride at being the female lead of an all-female firm at the Market

Fermary had been producing kimchi in the arches of the Market since it began its association with S Thorogood & Sons in 2024, but the relocation of its production facility to the upper level of units B327-329, on Buyers' Walk, has special personal meaning for Elena.

She said: "We began moving production in the last week of March and we're still very much in the transition phase, and were settling in throughout April. The brand's founder added: "What feels especially meaningful about Fermary being located on Buyers' Walk at New Covent Garden Market is that this is not a new world to me. I have known the Market for more than 15 years through different chapters of my work in food. They include: working at Borough Market and buying from NCGM to supply some of London's top restaurants; building my own retail business; and subsequently creating my first fermentation brand from the ground up.

"For many years therefore, I knew this Market and the people here as a customer, so it feels genuinely special to now be part of the community but on the other side of the fence, with Fermary. There is something powerful in that evolution, building an understanding of the Market from different angles over the years, and now building a brand here that transforms exceptional produce into something with added life, value, and purpose."



The tie-up with Thorogoods, the only traditional wholesale name that has been in the fruit and vegetable market since the day it opened in Nine Elms in 1974, added an extra layer to the practical side of the Fermary story. "Being part of the Thorogood group gives us direct access to fresh produce, better traceability, and reduced logistical challenges, which all supports the quality and integrity of what we make," said Elena.

"Our all-female production team has worked with me for a long time and they are all incredibly skilled and dedicated," added Elena. "We are very proud to have an experienced in-house team and it is a big part of what enables Fermary to feel so special and be consistent quality-wise.



**Far left:** Elena is proudly part of the She Built This movement  
**Left:** With two varieties of Fermary kimchi

"Being at the heart of London's food hub, we're very proud now to be part of New Covent Garden Market's evolution into a more dynamic and modern food market."

March was International Women's Month and Elena and her team at Fermary were equally proud to be part of Buy Women Built, alongside Whole Foods Market UK and Planet Organic, a movement that celebrated female founders and women in business across the entire month. "It matters to us because Fermary is a female-led brand, built around care and craft — and because we believe food can be one of the most practical forms of support. Not in a preachy way. In the simplest way: food that helps you feel better, steadier, more alive with flavours that heal!" Elena said.

"Fermentation is often spoken about as function - gut health, digestion, immunity - and yes, all of that matters. But fermentation is also a philosophy. It's the long game.

It's the decision to make something slowly, to trust time, to let life transform life. Many women build that way too. Patiently. Persistently. With a kind of intelligence that doesn't always get credited in the moment, but changes everything over time."

That all-female team stepping into a new chapter in a Market with a long history shaped by night trading and early hours is a landmark moment, she said. "It's the kind of world that, traditionally, was naturally male-heavy. But like everything that stays alive, it evolves. More modern producers are arriving. More new businesses are taking space. More women are part of the story. Bringing a female-led brand into that environment doesn't mean pushing anyone out - it simply widens the picture. Adding new energy. Adding diversity. Making room for what comes next.

"For us, this move isn't just operational. It feels symbolic in a very organic way: more space, more light, more possibility. A fresh foundation for the next season of Fermary and a reminder that the future is more often than not shaped through small, steady shifts, not grand declarations.

"So, here's to women. Here's to the Market. And here's to new beginnings that feel like light."



# Backpacker to MD: Jason Glass and the rise of All Greens Wholesale

**At first glance, the career of Jason Glass appears almost accidental. However, the Managing Director of All Greens, based on Buyers' Walk at New Covent Garden (NCGM), has racked up more than 30 years in the fresh produce trade, merging the worlds of retail and wholesale. It's his love for fresh produce that keeps both Jason, and the businesses he supplies, at the top of their game**

## Exotic to everyday

All Greens wholesales, imports and retails premium produce, supplying more than 1,500 lines sourced from small farms and specialist growers locally and around the world. From exotic fruits to everyday staples, the company delivers to hundreds of restaurants and offices while also operating a handful of successful London greengrocery stores. At the centre of it all is NCGM, the essential 'hub' that connects all the areas of the business.

"It was a backpacking trip to Europe and a shared house in London that started me on my journey, by way of a job stacking apples in a north London greengrocer," recalls Jason, whose enthusiasm remains unmistakably hands-on. Jump forward three decades and that filler job has grown into a thriving produce career connecting chefs, retailers, and offices across London with some of the finest fruit and vegetables available.

Jason grew up in South Africa, where he worked in the restaurant trade until a childhood friend suggested an adventure backpacking around the world. "I thought that's a great idea," says Jason, who soon made London his base with a British passport thanks to his Liverpool-born father. "I moved into a house filled with travellers who all worked

at the well-known deli and greengrocer Panzer's, in St John's Wood," says Jason, "and that's where I first gained a taste for food and the retail and foodservice industries. Fortunately, a job fell in my lap. I started stacking apples and podding peas, and that's where I learned the core trade."

The plan had been to work three months, travel three months, but the fresh produce business took hold. Over time Jason's experience grew in buying, merchandising and retail management, eventually becoming the manager of Panzer's fruit and vegetable department working for his well-respected bosses John Batey and Duncan Quigley. He'd remain there for more than two decades. "You pick up a huge amount of knowledge when you work in a retail environment" he says. "And with a bit of hard work, you start growing."

Taking over the office fruit delivery company from retiring bosses John and Duncan, rebranding to Ripe.London Ltd, moving into NCGM, developing Ripe to the thriving name it is today and eventually merging with All Greens Wholesale, is how Jason became established and known in the Market.



## The All Greens' connection

Meanwhile, another story was unfolding in London's independent food scene. Entrepreneurs Kamil Demir and David Josephs had launched All Greens, beginning with a shop in Stoke Newington, followed by the opening of a second outlet in Maida Vale. Their businesses soon expanded to several locations including Clapham. Some stores thrived more than others, eventually a profitable core group emerged: All Greens Newington, All Greens Clifton and All Greens Abbeville being the most recent.

Kamil and David also own the famous Panzer's deli and grocery in St John's Wood, renowned for its world-famous hand-sliced smoked salmon and iconic bagels. Since the ownership of Kamil and David, Panzer's is now so much more than a deli, it's a world of delights and a special place to visit, shop, eat and drink.

## Market move

As the retail side grew, so did demand from restaurants. The shops began supplying chefs, but space was limited. The solution was to establish a central hub at NCGM, which the team saw as an essential part of the jigsaw to be able to supply London's hospitality industry with top-notch produce.

"The shops were doing a lot of business with restaurants," Jason says. "But each shop was short on space. So, the decision was made to take some units at NCGM and make Nine Elms our central hub. From here, we knew All Greens Wholesale could supply our retail stores while also building a dedicated foodservice operation."

For All Greens, the move was both practical and symbolic. Jason remembers visits to NCGM in the decades past, where almost anything could be found. "In the old days you could get absolutely everything here," he says. "John and Duncan from Panzer's only used NCGM due to its quality and choice."

Over time, the Fruit and Vegetable Market evolved and became increasingly focused on catering and hospitality, a shift that suited All Greens perfectly as its wholesale business expanded. "Today we supply between 200 and 300 restaurants across London as well as around 300-400 office

**Top:** Jason, left, and Kadir Mulla  
**Top right:** All Greens team line-up



clients, delivering fresh fruit and vegetables throughout the week," says Jason. "That volume allows us to split boxes and move product quickly. It keeps everything fresh."

### A community reborn

Jason says the sense of community between businesses at the Market has been boosted by the opening of the new Buyers' Walk at the start of this year, which he's used as a catalyst to grow trade to new levels. "For the first week on the new Buyers' Walk everyone was watching what everyone else was doing," says Jason. "But now the community we had before is coming back. The Market has always been collaborative as well as competitive and as traders we all borrow stock, swap produce and help each other fill orders. One day I might need some baby carrots. I make a phone call, walk across Buyers' Walk and grab them. Then I'll replace them tomorrow. We've created an ecosystem where even friendly rivals can depend on one another."

### Tradition meets technology

Reflecting the rise of technology seen across society, All Greens has embraced modern systems to keep pace with the scale of its operation. The company has moved largely away from paper-based ordering, introducing tablets and digital order-management systems that allow staff to process orders more accurately and efficiently. The business also uses AI-assisted tools to help capture orders left via voicemail or messaging services. "Chefs might send a WhatsApp or leave a voice message," Jason explains. "AI converts that into an order and the team checks it. It saves a lot of time."

The shift has reduced errors caused by handwritten notes and streamlined invoicing, an essential improvement when dealing with thousands of individual items and fluctuating prices. "Our fruit and vegetable prices can change daily," says Jason, "so when the supplier invoice comes in, we can update our system and the price changes straight away."



### Exceptional produce

At its core, however, All Greens remains driven by the quality of the produce itself, with Jason and the team specialising in finding ingredients that chefs struggle to find elsewhere, be that seasonal British vegetables or exotic fruits from around the world. Among All Greens' more unusual lines are grenadillos [a golden variety of passion fruit], mangosteens and rambutans [often described as a hairy lychee], and a selection of premium Japanese products.

All Greens' interest in exotics began several years ago when it took a gamble importing premium mango varieties. "We started bringing in Kent mangoes and were soon moving eight to ten pallets a week," Jason says. "Six months later everyone in the Market had them, albeit from different suppliers." Competition grew, but the category remained strong. Today exotic fruits are a significant part of All Greens' offer. "It's about finding something different," he says. "We want to offer something chefs can get excited about, so we'll import it and deliver it to our clients."

### Retail roots

Although the wholesale side of the business has continued to grow, the company's retail heritage remains central to its



identity. Panzer's deli is widely considered one of London's best delicatessens and is stocked by the very best produce from All Greens. Jason highlights Panzer's premium groceries and exceptional produce selection, attracting devoted customers who visit daily. "People do their entire basket shop there every day as everything is premium, from fresh to ambient, says Jason. "There might be eight different peanut butters on the shelf from around the world, for example."

All Greens' shops cater to similarly food-focused neighbourhoods, where independent bakers, cheesemongers and wine merchants are thriving. "You get these pockets across London where people really care about food," says Jason. "Our shops fit right into that."

### Opening the Market to the public

One unexpected development has been the growing number of members of the public visiting the Fruit and Vegetable Market itself. Traditionally a strictly trade environment, this side of NCGM is increasingly attracting curious shoppers, many from the fast-expanding local population. "At All Greens we have embraced the change," says Jason. "If someone wants to buy one mango, I'll sell them one mango. Why not?"

Jason sees each sale as an opportunity to showcase his business, thinking about future visits. "I enjoy showing visitors around and explaining where our fresh produce comes from," he says. "I had a couple come in one Sunday night just to see what the Market was about. They spent half an hour walking around with me. The next week they came back with their friends and now visit our stand regularly for their weekly shop." It may never be the company's main business, but Jason believes the exposure benefits the entire Market community. "Walk in customers spread the word about what we do."

### Freshness above all

Ultimately, freshness remains the greatest selling point of All Greens' produce. Many visitors are struck by the difference between fruit and vegetables bought directly from wholesalers and those purchased through supermarkets. "The parsley you're buying here might have come off the truck half an hour ago," Jason says. "In a supermarket you're buying it two days after it's been packed and moved through a distribution centre. For our chefs and increasingly for our food-obsessed customers in our retail shops, that difference is everything."

After more than three decades in the trade, Jason still finds excitement in the daily rhythms of the Market: the arrival of new produce, the unpredictability of weather and harvests, and the relationships he's spent years building across the fresh produce supply chain.

From a backpacking adventure to a thriving wholesale operation at the heart of NCGM, All Greens has grown organically, like the ingredients it champions. And if Jason has his way, the connection between growers, traders, chefs, and customers will just keep getting stronger. "It's a great place to be," he concludes.

# Eddie shares his Market memories

**Vauxhall boy Eddie Barrett had worked at the Market for 42 years when he hung up his notepad and pen at the end of 2025. For the last quarter of a century he had first run and then owned HG Walker, which officially closed at the end of March. He looks back on a highly successful career forged on his own doorstep**



**Photos:** Eddie with a selection of the people he has worked (and played) with over the 43 years he spent in the Market

**Eddie, you've recently stepped away from the business after more than four decades. How does it feel a few months down the line?**

It's a strange one, Tom. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little bit sad. The company was still technically open for the three months to the end of March, while we wrapped everything up – paying suppliers, settling accounts, making sure everyone's looked after. But after that, that's it. After 42 or 43 years, it's not something you just switch off overnight. It's been a big part of my life, really my whole working life.

At the same time, I'm 64, going on 65 and the business has changed. The investment needed to continue was going to be significant and although we'd budgeted for it, Michael, my son, is just starting a family and decided it wasn't for him at this time. The hours have only got tougher over the years, not easier. So when you weigh it all up, it was the right time for me too, even if it doesn't feel easy.

**You mention the hours – you probably don't miss them, do you?**

Not a lot, if I'm honest! The hours in the Market have always been tough, but they've got harder. Since the Olympics especially, everything seemed to shift. Earlier starts, longer trading days, six days a week and it felt like there was much less downtime.

But I've moved out and when you're nearly 40 miles away, that's a long drive when you're tired. Especially with all the changes on the roads – the 20-mile-an-hour speed limits and everything. In the end, it didn't really matter if you left early, it would still take as long to get home. You probably don't notice it so much day to day, but over decades, it starts to wear you down.

**Have you adjusted to "normal life" yet?**

Not really, no. The body clock's completely out of sync. You wake up every few hours thinking you should be somewhere or doing something. It's going to take time; obviously over 40 years of working those hours doesn't just disappear. I'm sure it'll settle eventually, but right now it's still a bit all over the place.

**Let's go back to the beginning. How did you first get into the Market?**

I grew up on Wandsworth Road in Vauxhall. I watched the Market being built on what had been railway sidings and waste land in the early '70s – we were little Herberts trying to play on the site getting chased off by the big Irish labourers.

My uncle George had stalls and shops, and we all worked for him when we were kids. I used to go to Covent Garden as a kid in school holidays with him, and have vague memories of the old market, but he used The Borough more as it was closer at the time.

Funnily enough, the Fruit and Vegetable Market wasn't even my plan. I was about 21 or 22 and actually wanted to go into the Flower Market. A lot of my friends worked there and I was keen to join them. But through a family connection – someone who knew my parents – I got offered a job in an office upstairs at Gilgrove, for a company called Kilgate, run by Tony Goldsmith, with Sidney Hart, Joe Keeling and Gerry Martin all involved.

That's how it started. Fate, really. And once you're in, you're in. It gets into your blood.

**What was Kilgate like?**

It was a fairly small operation, but a good one. While I was there, I completed a City & Guilds in fresh produce – a course you could do back in the day. I had to attend Market Towers every Wednesday.

We were importers and commission buyers, mainly working with Irish companies like Keelings. Back then, we had a lot of Irish lorries coming into Covent Garden. They'd come over from the continent, either with produce or empty, and we'd load them up for Ireland. Keelings supplied all the Quinn's stores at the time and it was a huge order as there was a reluctance for shippers to send direct into Dublin.

We were importing from all over – Brazil, South Africa, New Zealand, France, Italy. It was a proper international trade, even then. It was a great grounding because you learned everything, buying, selling, logistics. You got thrown in at the deep end, sink or swim.

“ The Fruit and Veg market wasn't my plan, but once you're in, you're in. It gets in your blood



### **You were obviously a good swimmer! What happened next?**

I moved downstairs to Gilgrove. Tony persuaded me to stay rather than leave for another firm and that was a big step. I went from being in a small upstairs office to working on the Market floor as a junior salesman. That's where you really learn the trade - dealing with customers face-to-face, understanding the rhythm of the Market, building relationships. I stayed there until the early '90s.

### **It was while you were at Gilgrove that you met your future wife, as well as several other interesting people? Tell us about that.**

I was a junior salesman at Gilgrove and saw a young lady walking along the corridor above us a few times. I tried to track where she was going, but never quite managed it. I then saw an advert in the post office for a part-time job at Allison's, a shop on the bridge run by Allison Risebro, which had a warehouse on D Block then. When I went to talk to Tony Allison, there was Jan - the young lady in question! That would have been around 1986 and we've been happily married for 37 years. Jan left the Market when our second child came along and it all became a bit too much to juggle, but we stayed close to Tony and his wife Mandy - Tony always looked after Jan; he was a bit of a father figure to her.

It may seem a bit odd that I took on a part-time role when I already had a job, but I wanted to get on and we worked from 2am to roughly 11 or 11.30am, after which I would work in the shop until about 4pm. I did that for about two and a half years. I also did a Saturday job for a while, working for Sonny Bussey on his stall in Tatchbrook Street, Pimlico. Sonny was a larger than life character, always recognisable by his £30-a-pop Monte Cristo or Romeo & Juliet cigars. He was a customer and when he told me he was short of staff one Saturday, I offered to give him a hand. I ended up doing it for quite a while. I was young and only lived in Streatham at the time, so it was 20 minutes in and 20 minutes to get home - so it never felt too long a day.

Two more memorable people I met were from different ends of the spectrum, you could say! When HRH Princess Anne visited the Market in 2003, she took a very keen interest in the English strawberries we had at HG Walker. She was charming and very well versed on English fruit.

And in the '80s, the popular actor George Cole was filming in the market - not in his guise as Arthur Daley, but as one of the characters in *The Bounder*. I chatted to him at the tea stall and he was off to Billingsgate and Smithfield too, but said he never knew which bits of filming would actually make the cut. This Market didn't, on that occasion, but I got to meet one of my favourite actors.

### **Back to the Market journey. You then moved to the Growers Pavilion, which I know is a period that holds fond memories.**

The Growers was something else. Everyone said, 'wow, you have to start early there' and 'you have to work Saturdays' but what business there was there. It was like a little village, but incredibly busy. I went to work for What 4, for David Heaton-Harris and you'd get in and it was just non-stop - we were always so busy. You'd have a book in your hand, constantly taking orders, calling out what was sold, what was clear.

On Buyers' Walk at the time there were much bigger operators, but they could be snippy about people buying less than a pallet. We didn't care about that and we had everything - fruit, veg and salad - and because of that, customers would come to us and buy the lot. It was a brilliant atmosphere. Hard work, but great days. Some of the best, I'd say.

### **And what eventually led you to HG Walker?**

You know, I've never been one for job hopping or changing jobs because someone offers you £10 a week more or whatever. You've got to look at what's best for you and have a look and see the surroundings you're in and what environment you're in and how good the company is and how good the staff are and the people you work with, the comrades you've got.

In the early 2000s. I wasn't looking to move, but I was told Michael Walker was looking to retire and asked if I'd go and have a chat. He was stepping out of the business and his brother Nick needed someone to run it for him. It felt like a good opportunity - something new. HG Walker specialised in English produce, which I hadn't really done on that scale before, so it was also a challenge and I thought that would be good for me at that time of my life.

I joined, became a director, and eventually took over the business. Looking back, you'd have to say it was the right move.

### **You spent the final 25 years of your NCGM career there. What are you most proud of from that time?**

I'm very proud of what we achieved as a firm. Out of all those years, we only really had one bad year and that was connected to Covid. That says a lot in a business like this.

Running a company gives you a completely different perspective. When you're a salesman, you focus on the buying, selling, day-to-day margins. But when you're a director, you see everything, taxes, leases, wages, bills. It's constant. You don't switch off when you go home - it's with you 24/7.

It always fascinated me that although I was always on top of things, I never really knew whether we'd had a good year >



or a bad year until I spoke to the accountant and he told me what he had up his sleeve! You can't be in this industry for the short term, you have to be committed long term.

I've got a lot of respect for everyone running a business in the Market. It's not easy. There's a lot more to it than people realise, particularly when you're one of the smaller firms.

**What kept you going through the harder times?**

The people, really. The camaraderie. The characters. New Covent Garden is full of them and you meet them all; some good, some bad, but all part of the place.

And the trading itself - it's unpredictable. One day you're up, the next you're down. You're always trying to get ahead, always trying to make the right call. I loved the thrill of knowing we'd made the right calls and had a good day.

**You also had the experience of working with your son, Michael.**

That's the highlight of it all, if I'm honest. Although I have to admit, I didn't want him to come into the business at first! He'd just finished his A-levels and didn't want to go to university, despite being very well suited to it, so I said, "You can't sit there playing on your X-Box, come and work for me for a few weeks."

Those few weeks turned into 15 years.

And it turns out I was wrong. I'm glad Michael joined the company and I'm delighted he spent all those years alongside me. He has learned such a lot from working in the Market that he couldn't have learned elsewhere, not just about business, but about people. As I said earlier, you meet all sorts here - from highly educated, multilingual people from all corners of the globe, to Londoners who might struggle to read or write but run incredibly successful businesses and have made themselves multi-millionaires.

The Market teaches you not to judge people at face value. That's an invaluable life lesson for anyone.

**You've welcomed two new grandchildren into the family since January - that was good timing!**

It's been brilliant. A new chapter. My daughter already had one and just had her second and Michael's wife just had their first - a little boy called Oakley.

They all live quite close to us, which is lovely. My daughter's just a few minutes' walk away, and Michael's around 10 miles - with only one traffic light between here and there! So I'll get to spend time with them, which I certainly wouldn't have been able to do to the same extent if I was still working those hours.

That's definitely one of the positives of stepping away. You can start to look forward to different things.

**You came back for the unveiling of the clock in Buyers' Walk. What did you think of the new facilities?**

New Covent Garden Market needed change. People don't like change, but it was absolutely necessary. When I first started people were already saying that, and that was less than 10 years after it had been built. The new facilities look fantastic - clean, modern, bright. It's what the Market and the wholesalers needed to move forward and I hope every one of them can find success in their new units.

But it's not just about the buildings. It's down to the people as well. You can build the best facilities in the world, but if people don't look after them, it won't last. There had been



a gradual erosion of pride in the old facilities, which came to a head in the last few years. Hopefully, there'll be a bit more pride now.

**Finally, when you look back over your career, how would you sum it up?**

Fantastic. There were ups and downs of course, but you would get that wherever you worked for such a long time. Overall, I wouldn't change it. I've worked with great people, I worked with my son, made many friends, learned a lot, and ran a successful business that I will forever be proud of.

Now I'll see what the rest of my life brings.

**Above left:** Working with Michael was a career highlight  
**Above right:** With Michael and customer Stevie Wells  
**Above bottom:** HG Walker specialised in English apples

# Koppert reaffirms commitment to chefs and Market customers

For Koppert Cress, building a stronger foothold in London's restaurant and hospitality scene increasingly means strengthening ties with traders in the unique wholesale ecosystem at New Covent Garden Market



Franck Pontais has led Koppert Cress's sales and marketing efforts in the UK in recent years, building relationships across the country with people at all stages of the supply chain. As the company launches a renewed push into the Market, Franck has been joined by a face familiar to NCGM: Jade Dye, whose history in the wholesale trade gives her both credibility and connections.

Jade joined Koppert Cress as UK National Account Manager, at the start of this year, but her return to the Market feels, in her own words, "like a homecoming". Before moving into the grower side of the industry, she spent years working in and around the Market — first with AC Produce and later in sales roles at Covent Garden Supply and Smith & Brock. That experience gives Jade an invaluable understanding of the rhythms of Buyers' Walk and many of the traders who operate there.

She is fast becoming a regular back at NCGM again. "It's been eight years since I worked in the Market," Jade says. "A lot of the old faces I know from before, so it's been nice going around and seeing them again." The difference now is that she represents a grower supplying into the wholesalers, rather than a buyer who was effectively competing for restaurant customers, and this is a shift that has required a period of rebuilding trust. "Some of these guys were competitors not that long ago," she explains. "Now I'm here for Koppert Cress, with a completely different agenda."

Her immediate challenge is straightforward: how best to increase visibility and accessibility of the Dutch producer's range within the Market's network. Although Koppert Cress products are widely available in London, they have historically moved through a relatively small number of routes. "The relationships we already have here are hugely important to us," said Jade. "Everyone we work with would tell you that for the Koppert Cress team, ours is a labour of love and the support and service we offer customers is on another level to our competitors."

One of the company's longest-standing and most effective relationships in the capital is with Jim Dew at Harwoods of London, who was among the



Left: Jade and Franck

London wholesalers, often alongside other fresh produce lines such as salads, cucumbers or peppers.

That arrangement means that products are available daily, but Jade believes awareness of where to find them still needs building. "It's about people understanding who they can get our products from," she says. "Ideally they'll have an A, B and C option, so on any given day, they can get it from Jim, from Neil, or from another supplier."

Ease of access is a key part of the strategy. Buyers at NCGM often arrive with a tightly defined shopping list, and if a product is not easy to source it can quickly disappear from the conscience. "Everyone's busy," Jade says. "Whether it's a chef or a supplier, nobody wants to go out of their way unless they really have to. We know chefs want to use our products, so we have to make sure we play a role in ensuring they can get hold of them."

While price is always a factor to consider, she believes the more significant barriers to growth lie elsewhere. Chef habits and the presence of competing formats within the cress category can strongly influence purchasing decisions. Koppert Cress

specialises in living cresses grown in substrate, which offer an extended shelf life and, according to Jade, greater consistency in quality. However, this format can occasionally require chefs to invest a little more effort during preparation in the kitchen.

"Supporting chefs remains at the core of the Koppert Cress DNA," Jade says. "The company is committed to assisting culinary professionals and actively exploring ways to offer high-quality cut cress as well." By doing so,

Koppert Cress aims to become the leading grower across both formats, expanding its offering while maintaining its dedication to excellence.

To increase the brand's momentum in the UK and enhance understanding of the premium Koppert Cress offer, Jade is therefore focusing on wider collaboration with wholesalers. The company is known for providing samples, tastings and technical support,

something she hopes to extend to her clients' customers as well. "I can go out with any of them to see their customers, organise samples and do tastings," she says. "You don't typically get that level of support from a grower."

As the Market itself continues to evolve, with new layouts and businesses settling into place, Jade believes the opportunity is there; to ultimately cement a stronger presence for Koppert Cress at the heart of London's fresh produce trade.

first traders to take a chance on the brand in London. That partnership with a leading catering supplier remains central to Koppert Cress's strategic thinking, but Jade is keen to cast the net wider by establishing the range more prominently on Buyers' Walk.

"The aim is to establish a firm footing on Buyers' Walk," she says. "You've got some people who will go to Jim at Harwoods, some who go to Neil Brown Herbs, and they will work together too. I'd like more traders being given the opportunity to buy our products in the Market for their customers."

In practice, the route to market in the UK necessarily reflects Koppert Cress's wider European supply model. The company does not supply wholesalers directly; instead, its products are distributed via Dutch traders located close to its headquarters in Monster in the Netherlands. Those traders supply the



# Andrew takes Gibson's to new levels

**Farming is only part of the story. For fifth generation farmer Andrew Gibson, the family business combines traditional agriculture with a thriving farm shop and café that relies on some of the freshest produce available. Making the early hours journey to New Covent Garden Market (NCGM) twice a week, Andrew sources fruit, vegetables and flowers to complement the meat and potatoes produced on the family's 200-year-old farm. Built out of passion for seasonal, quality food, Gibson's Farm has grown into Kent's largest farm shop**

Based in Wingham, near Canterbury, Kent, Andrew's family has been farming for 200 years and supplies all of the beef, pork and potatoes for the farm shop. The 300-acre farm is home to 300 free-range pigs, 120 cattle and grows 2,000 tonnes of potatoes a year. Andrew's family has visited NCGM for more than 50 years; weekly visits since their farm shop opened in 2006. "My father visited the Fruit and Vegetable Market for around 35 years, and I've been coming for the last 16," explains Andrew.

"The farm shop is the newest part of the business," he adds, revealing that the shop only opened to the public during the summer months at first, selling just apples and soft fruit. "The turning point was when my father and grandparents were offered a few bags of onions to sell by a neighbouring farmer," says Andrew. "Demand grew and we quickly shifted from bringing a van to a lorry for our multiple weekly visits."

The farm's redevelopment in 2010 saw construction of a new café and shop, incorporating a bakery, butchery, and florist. "We've grown quickly," says Andrew, "and we're now the largest farm shop in Kent, employing 55 people. UK and local produce is our passion, and we support more than 100 UK suppliers. From local wines, beers and ciders to jams and ice cream, we've got it all."

## New Buyers' Walk is impressive

Andrew highlights the new Buyers' Walk as a fantastic addition to the Market, making his visits much easier. "It's light and clean, and everything is accessible," he says, adding: "It's somewhere to be very proud of and I'm delighted to be a regular customer."

He purchases 90% of the fresh produce sold in the shop from NCGM, with staples including all the veggies needed for a traditional roast dinner: parsnips, carrots, and Brussels sprouts at Christmas. "Demand changes depending on the time of year and seasonality is very important to us," he says. To put it simply, when produce is in season - with an abundant, quality crop - then prices go down and the shop can offer better value and keep customers happy. "Summer sees beautiful Nutbourne tomatoes bought through Supreme Salads, which are really popular with our customers," says Andrew. "Throughout the winter months Spanish citrus fruit is always a customer favourite, especially new season Nadorcotts, from Bevington Salads. Because the produce is so good, we make big displays of it in the shop, with sample tasters, to encourage people to try something new. When we know a product is good at a specific time of year, we'll really push it."

“ Covid was terrible, but it did expose the complicated supply chains of the major supermarkets



## Relationships with wholesalers

As anyone who visits the Market already knows, having a great relationship with your wholesalers is a key to open a lot of doors. "I've been able to build my relationships through common interests such as rugby, skiing or shooting, which means we all go the extra mile to help each other," says Andrew. "If lines are short, I get a call to put some aside. If I need additional produce, much of this can be arranged at short notice - they are more than happy to go the extra mile to keep me happy. My customers demand their produce is the freshest and of the highest quality."

Andrew's seen huge growth in both his shop and café businesses over the last five years or so, with customers asking more questions about the provenance of their food and taking a real interest in the processes involved to get it to the shop. "Covid was a terrible time for many people, but what it did do was expose the complicated supply chains of the major supermarkets," says Andrew. "As a result of that, it brought a lot of customers to our shop, and many of those people have continued to shop with us. Jeremy Clarkson's TV show 'Clarkson's Farm' has also helped greatly, by giving viewers an understanding of how tough farming is. I believe this has brought more customers through our door."

## A 'local' first approach

Andrew's approach is to purchase local whenever he can, followed by British, then European produce in that order. Sometimes he has to buy things from further afield, but he'll always try and push seasonal produce based on its locality. "We push hard for the English asparagus season and purple sprouting broccoli in the spring," he says. "We're seeing restaurateurs working in

partnership with their suppliers and recommending, for example, British asparagus and how they can include it within their menus. If you eat seasonal, your food miles are much lower."

Andrew says his farm shop customers are surprised to find out how he sources his fresh produce, in particular how he goes the extra mile to get up in the middle of the night to visit NCGM to ensure the best quality. "I speak to our customers about visiting NCGM at 1am and some people know already, while some don't even realise there's a market trading during the night," he laughs. "They say 'What, you go up to London in the middle of the night?'. It's quite a shock to them. So, every now and then we will post a picture of our lorry saying: 'This weekend we've been up in the night to get you the freshest produce from New Covent Garden'. It's nice for people to see all the product on the lorry and helps paint a picture for people that we're going over and above to get the best produce for their plate."

## Visit NCGM for the very best produce

Travelling from Kent to Nine Elms twice a week isn't easy, especially arriving on Buyers' Walk at 1am, but when you want the very best, Andrew says only NCGM produce will do. "Our customers demand the best of the best and that's why we visit the Fruit and Vegetable Market and Flower Market multiple times each week." With flowers and plants making up 10% of the shop's sales, Andrew employs three full-time florists. "We sell cut flowers and pot plants at the shop, so NCGM works really well for us because we can get everything we need," he says.



## Happy Customer

★★★★★

### Supplying the Market

Andrew is also a supplier to NCGM, delivering Gibson's branded red and white potatoes exclusively to Supreme Salads, which then sells them to a number of wholesalers. Andrew praises traders at NCGM for giving him an opportunity to market his potatoes, meaning his lorry carries produce in both directions and helps generate a positive return for the farm. "It's something we've grown more over the last six or seven years," he explains. "We put our own washing plant in to wash the potatoes six years ago. And we've doubled our acreage from 40 acres to about 80 acres. With the investment in the washing plant, we're expanding the potato farm and have plans to introduce a thousand-tonne cold store this year to help keep the potatoes better, meaning they retain their quality and arrive to customers in a better condition."

It's a significant investment in machinery: the washing plant cost £70,000 and Andrew's spending another £300,000 this year for the new cold store. But, it's an investment in the future, he explains: "It's a lot of money but we're thinking long-term. As farmers, we're not in it for the short term. It's always a legacy thing for our kids and we're looking at the next 20 years. We're not trying to earn a quick buck. If you spend thousands you say, okay, that's going to last us 25 years. You're spreading that cost out down the line. We're looking forward to the next generation."

### Full English breakfast bestseller

Gibson's Farm café is a popular destination, with Andrew estimating he sells more than 25,000 breakfasts each year. "A full English is one of the most popular items on our breakfast

menu," he adds. "Full English, yes, but better quality. It's like farmhouse dining done well, really. It's nothing fancy, just good, honest food. We've got our own sausages on there, we've got free-range eggs, plus really good bacon. The tomatoes and mushrooms come from NCGM. Because we've got a few different departments, we can keep our fruit and veg display here really fresh as we're turning things over and using things really well, which helps. By buying from NCGM so regularly, it keeps the shelves rejuvenated, looking good, and it gives our customers the freshest product."

### Protesting to protect the supply chain

It's been well documented that life for British farmers hasn't been easy over the past few years, but Andrew sees positive changes on the horizon. "My brother and I started the first protest down in Dover about two and a half years ago," recalls Andrew. "We've continued to be part of the farmers' protests in London," he explains. "The public can see how difficult farming is, and the huge costs involved with no guarantee of a successful crop at the end of the year. I think there's a push back from people, with more discerning customers visiting decent food shops or farm shops like ours. Our customers really care about what they're eating, what's on their plate, the food miles and the traceability and what's in it."

"The number one thing we need as people is food. You should rely on your own country and have the strongest agricultural sector you could possibly have. It's counter intuitive, isn't it? You'd think that food security and being able to be self-sufficient would be one of the top priorities."

### Educating the next generation

Making sure children understand where their food comes from is another message Andrew's keen to push. Gibson's Farm arranges visits for local schools and is looking to increase that. "We're really keen on primary school visits so that we can educate the kids and show them around the farm," says Andrew. "It's important to get them to understand where their food comes from, educate them a bit, get them involved with it, get their hands in some crops, so they can really understand what's going on. The food just doesn't come from a supermarket. Giving back means a lot to us. When we built this farm shop, my brother said it's really important to educate people, and it's something we want to continue doing. We've had discussions with the National Farmers' Union around this, people's education around food, where it comes from, low food miles, trying to buy British, and trying to get seasonal produce on Britain's menus."

### Looking ahead

With energy and fuel costs spiralling over the last few years, the cost of doing business has increased for everyone, but Andrew remains confident his strong relationships with Market wholesalers will help navigate the stormy waters. "We have undoubtedly got a tough time ahead, as our business costs have increased greatly," he says, adding: "We have to strive to get better and make sure we shout about how good we are. A great relationship with NCGM will help continue to raise standards for our shop and for our loyal customers. Traders at the Market really help educate and push people's knowledge of food further and we're glad to be a part of their ecosystem."

# Clive shows off Market snaps in Berlin

New Covent Garden Market's favourite photographer was in Berlin recently to show off the Market and its long history to an audience of almost 100,000 people.

Clive Boursnell was invited to exhibit a selection of his favourite photographs of this Market at FRUIT LOGISTICA, the three-day trade show that's been hosted in the German capital since 1993.

Fifty of Clive's favourite shots were on display and got maximum visibility close to one of the two main entrances of the trade show. He made a selection from his huge archive, choosing photographs from the Market as it is today and from Covent Garden back in the 1970s.

"Berlin is a city close to my heart so it was very special to be able to show my Market photos at FRUIT LOGISTICA," said Clive. "And the trade show was a huge revelation to me, with so many things to see from all over the world."

The idea to bring Clive's photographs to FRUIT LOGISTICA belongs to Chris White, publisher of the Fresh Produce Journal, the magazine that's been based at the Market since its first issue in 1895 and now, more than 130 years later, located at the Food Exchange.

Having seen Clive's work exhibited here in the Market, Chris said: "Our partners at Messe Berlin needed no persuasion, they loved my idea and went with it right from the off," Chris explained. "FRUIT LOGISTICA has always been about people and produce, and Clive's photographs show that combination so well."

Chris is taking the idea one step further too. The plan is now to take Clive and his cameras to photograph other major markets in Europe through this year. They'll soon be packing their bags for Seville and Paris and hope to add in at least one more market before the year is out.



Lots more people were capturing produce innovation



Photobombed by the 1960s!



Have camera, will travel - Clive in the Berlin snow



Clive and his photos at FRUIT LOGISTICA



Long lens on Italian fruit



Chris White with FRUIT LOGISTICA visitors



A trip to Berlin would not be complete without the beer..



...or the sausages



Clive was not the only snapper in town



The world's largest fruit and veg industry show has been held at Messe Berlin since the mid-1990s



The TV cameras were also in town

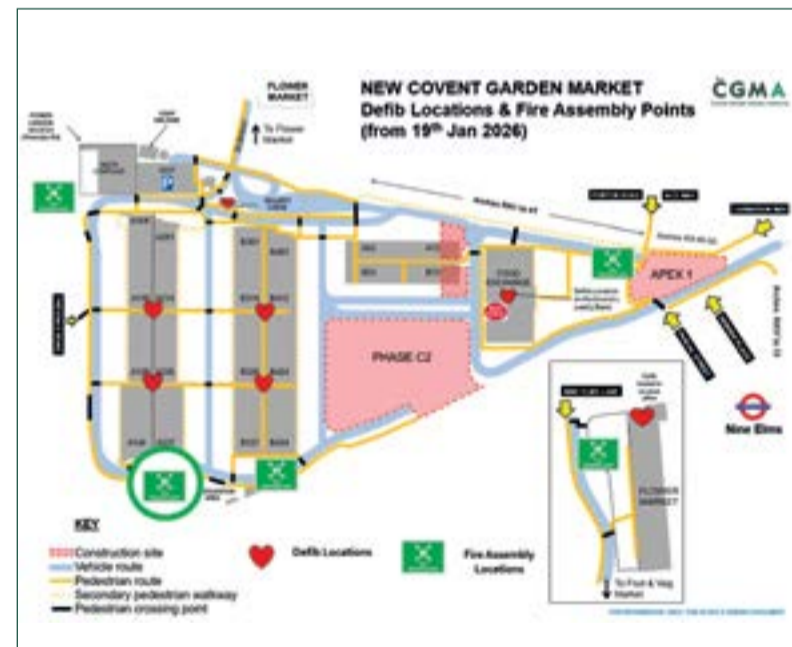
# Defibrillators installed across both Markets and the Food Exchange

**Life-saving defibrillator devices, commonly referred to as 'defibs', have been installed across New Covent Garden Market, potentially helping save the life of anyone using the site who is suffering cardiac arrest**

If you've ever seen a film or show where one of the characters is receiving shocks to their chest through a device, that's defibrillation. When someone's in cardiac arrest and their heart has stopped, the defib sends a jolt of energy to the heart to help it start beating again.

Anyone can use a defib, and you don't need training. Modern defibs 'speak' to you and give you clear step-by-step voice instructions.

As illustrated on the map below, a total of nine defibs are now prominently positioned across the following locations: four in the Fruit and Vegetable Market; three in the Food Exchange (in the stairwells); one in the Flower Market (located in the loading dock office); and one at the Security Lodge.



Covent Garden Market Authority's Senior Operations Manager Colin Corderoy said that purchasing and positioning the defibs across the estate was just the first step. "What's equally as important is ensuring that everyone across the Market knows where their nearest defib is located. Regardless of where you work, you'll have a defib close to you. Please ensure you share the locations with your colleagues, suppliers and customers so that everyone's aware and prominently display the map on your Health and Safety noticeboard."

The defib should be used in conjunction with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (known as CPR), a life-saving technique that involves a combination of chest compressions and rescue breaths to maintain blood circulation and oxygenation until professional medical help arrives.

If someone is in cardiac arrest, you should call 999 straight away and start CPR. If you're on your own, do not interrupt CPR to go and locate your nearest defib. Wherever possible, send someone to collect it. The defib will only tell you to give the person a shock if it's needed. It is not possible to shock yourself or someone else accidentally.

Free CPR training is offered by the British Heart Foundation charity, which you and your colleagues can learn in just 15 minutes. Find out more at <https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/how-to-save-a-life>



## ON THE MAP

# Kamil loves unique Market quality

Our latest operator putting the Market On The Map series is Kamil Demir, co-founder of All Greens, who explains why his business is located at the UK's largest wholesale market

### What does New Covent Garden Market mean to you?

It's a really vibrant community, locally situated in central London with a great network between chefs, traders and wholesalers. All NCGM businesses offer fresh new produce, which is very different to other market offerings. I know the best quality French and Italian produce are found here for instance. Those are just two examples, but I could give you many more.

### What was your first job working with fresh produce?

I've been in the sector since I was little. I grew up in Turkey and was always visiting markets as my dad was a greengrocer and I'd go along with him before school started. When we moved to the UK in 1992, because of our family's greengrocer background I thought this world would be easy. I knew it would mean hard work, but it was something that I loved.

### What was your first business?

My first business was a fruit shop in Stoke Newington called Newington Green. I became a buyer for the shop and that's how I learned the trade and expanded my knowledge over the years. Eventually, that first small shop has grown into the All Greens Group, offering a mix of wholesale and retail.

### How did All Greens start?

Because my first shop was in east London, I bought all my fresh produce from New Spitalfields Market in Leyton, which was on my doorstep. I had a lot of loyal customers, including David Josephs, who's now my business partner. David had a non-food business in east London so that's why he shopped with me, but he lived in St John's Wood. We became friends and he opened my eyes to a different way of doing business. One day he took me to

St. John's Wood, where we visited a local shop, Panzer's Deli, that has had a special connection with the neighbourhood for more than 50 years. They offer the very best produce all sourced from NCGM. After seeing what we could achieve, that's when we agreed to work together.

David found a shop in Clifton Road in Maida Vale which had been a Blockbuster Video shop, and we took it over. The funny thing was that it had been a greengrocer before becoming a Blockbuster, so we were taking it back to its roots. The shop was a success, and we followed that with shops in Camden Parkway and Crouch End.

### When was the first time you visited NCGM?

I visited for the first time around 2005, when I learned that Panzer's was buying from NCGM. I was looking for different offerings to New Spitalfields Market and Western International Market. Slowly, I started buying from all three markets although I can say that NCGM is definitely the best. Even now, I shop for Turkish produce at New Spitalfields and Chinese produce at Western International, but the majority of our produce is bought here at NCGM. We've also established relationships with suppliers and growers, who we directly source from.

### What's changed the most in your Market career?

The variety of produce available and the technology side of the business. The new tech has helped with up-to-date pricing, availability, and transport, which is now six days a week. The AI tech creates picking notes, delivery notes and invoices, which means that we can employ staff in other areas and be more efficient.

### What's the secret of your success?

I feel it is down to hard work, and good knowledge of produce. Following trends,



“ There are lots of opportunities at NCGM as long as you are prepared to work hard

buying well and always offering great service. When I say hard work, it's not just physical but mental too. When you're a business owner, you can't switch off and you have to work all hours. For example, my delivery of Kenyan herbs was delayed at the airport this weekend. So, I drove to Heathrow to collect them myself so that we'd be ready for Monday morning. You have to make sacrifices with your social life and your family life.

If someone wants to work at NCGM I'd say go for it – there are always lots of opportunities as long as you're prepared to work hard. If you enjoy what you do and can see the rewards of your efforts, it's a great way of life.

**Photo:** Kamil Demir, right, with co-owner David Josephs