

CORDWAINER

WARD NEWS APRIL 2008

COMMUNICATING WITH THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK IN THE CITY OF LONDON

Sweetings, Victoria & Albert

"A half of BV? Certainly, Sir!" "And would you like a nibble whilst you are waiting?" "How about a bit to follow?"

Only aficionados of the City's most famous fish restaurant would understand the culinary "tick-tack" of the staff at Sweetings! (*Glossary below).

This popular lunch time haunt is right at the heart of our Cordwainer Ward and is the third in the series on our historic hostelries.

Although Sweetings – Fish & Oyster Merchants was established in 1830, it has been in Queen Victoria Street since 1889 - almost 120 years! Queen Victoria Street was created to echo a Parisian boulevard and cut diagonally right across the ancient Watling Street on its way to the Mansion House and Royal Exchange. It was opened on the 4th November 1871 and cost £1million to construct.



Simultaneously, buildings sprung up along its route, including the extraordinary Albert Buildings which houses many Ward businesses including Sweetings. The architect, F J Ward, ultimately had his own offices there in what was described as an arcaded Gothic, mixed English and Early French edifice. Building News in 1871 said "this is the sort of

pretentious medieval style against which the Queen Anne revival is intended as a protest"!

So Sweetings on the Queen Street corner of Albert Buildings reflects the Victorian atmosphere. Known originally as "Very Superior Oyster Rooms" they also had restaurants in Cheapside and Fleet Street until they were lost in the Blitz.

Dick Barfoot, a well-known fishmonger, has supplied Sweetings

over a long period and ultimately bought the business after the death of Graham Needham (another famous character who survived the IRA bombing of Scotts in 1975). So the consistent provenance and quality of the fish from Billingsgate has never been in doubt.

Little has changed in the style and ambience of Sweetings. It has always been full of character - and characters with great loyalty (your author recollects Otto Prager who dined there regularly for over 70 years). Likewise many of the staff have been there for a very long time – a mark of the particular success of the place. Impossible to name them all, but there are Alan & Angelo in the back room, Darren, Gosia, Jodi and Lee at the counters, Monika and Beata at the bar, the ubiquitous "runners", the welcoming figures of Nigel Field, the manager and Alison Perrott at the cash desk and, of course, the Chef, Miguel, and his colleagues downstairs.

Sweetings is a little idiosyncratic, however - it has its own house rules and, quite rightly, sees no need to change them. No bookings are taken, no coffee is served and until recently, no credit cards were accepted.

And as we try to leave, "Would that be a large port, Sir?"

* BV – Black Velvet : Guinness and champagne in a pewter mug
Nibble – Smoked Salmon on tiny brown bread squares.
Bit – Welsh Rarebit

This is the third of an occasional series of articles on famous landmarks in and around Cordwainer Ward.

Ward of Cordwainer Club

The Ward of Cordwainer Club annual general meeting is taking place on 15 April at the Tallow Chandlers' Hall. The meeting will be followed by a lunch at which the guest speaker is Hugh Freedburg, Head of Global Derivatives at NYSE Euronext. Details of the Club's activities and membership can be obtained from the Secretary, John Staniforth, on 020 7566 3644.



Building on a theme

Work continues throughout the City to provide the most modern property facilities for businesses and to offer retail outlets that residents, workers and visitors demand.

Construction has begun on the Leadenhall Building, also known as the 'Cheesegrater', which at more than 224 metres is the tallest building yet to be built in the City.

The most high profile of the retail developments is One New Change, opposite St Paul's Cathedral. This is due for completion in 2010 and will be mixed use – office and retail – with a viewing area on the top offering views of the Cathedral.

Readers may have seen press coverage in February about One New Change and how it is hoped it will form part of a change for the Square Mile with the possibility of seven days a week trading. Chairman of the City Corporation's Policy and Resources Committee, Michael Snyder believes this retail push "recognises both the

increase in tourist numbers in the Square Mile over the past few years and the expected increase in the City's working population in the next 10 years."

To view interactive maps of the City visit www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/maps/Interactive+City+maps



Serious sustainability

Creating a 'greener' city might be thought to be reward in itself but the City Corporation held its annual Sustainable City Awards ceremony in February to give extra recognition to those companies making the most progress in this area.

The Sustainable City Awards were held at Mansion House with guest

speaker Harriet Lamb, Director of the Fairtrade Foundation. The large number of entries was praised by the judges who also noted the high standard of those entries, making the judging process very difficult.

Beales Hotels won the top prize not least for achieving a 60% reduction in landfill waste and a 40% reduction

in water use. The judges felt that the firm was a shining example of what could be achieved when small businesses take their environmental responsibilities seriously.

- Winners in each category were
- Resources Conservation** – *Reed*
 - Sustainable Travel and Transport** – *The London Borough of Bromley*
 - Access to Goods and Services for Disadvantaged Communities** – *New Horizon Youth Centre*
 - Sustainable Procurement** – *One Planet Products*
 - Sustainable Buildings** – *White Young Green*
 - Sustainable and Responsible Investment** – *Opportunity International*
 - Adapting to and Mitigating Climate Change** – *The Berkeley Group*
 - Environmental Improvements to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises** – *Bovince*
 - Sustainable City Award Trophy** – *Beales Hotels.*

More information www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/sustainability



Finding a quiet moment



With so much building development work ongoing throughout the City at present (see the retail story on this spread), finding a quiet spot to relax is more important than ever.

People may not realise it, because many are hidden from immediate sight, but there are more than 150 areas of open space in the Square Mile with around 1,400 trees and 250,000 bedding plants.

Wherever your location you'll find one of these oases of calm within easy walking distance. One way to get to know these open spaces better is to take part in a City Gardens walk.

The first is 'St Paul's and beyond' which winds down from St Paul's through Cleary Garden, Whittington Gardens to St Magnus the Martyr to St Dunstan and finally Monument. Trail 2 starts at Barbican Tube station through Smithfield, Postman's Park and Aldermanbury Gardens and then St Paul's. Trail 3 begins at Moorgate Tube station goes through Finsbury Circus, round St Andrew Undershaft and ends at Tower Hill.

Maps of these walks are available to download from www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/living_environment/open_spaces/City+Gardens+publications

Other opportunities to get to know the City

The City Corporation is keen to broaden businesses' knowledge of the City as a way of encouraging participation in City elections and can arrange a tour of an area of the Square Mile led by an experienced City Guide for groups that may be interested.

More information
electoralservices@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Guide to the Gallery

Why not get to know the treasures in Guildhall Art Gallery by booking a tour for a group of colleagues or friends with a knowledgeable and friendly guide?

Tours are provided by qualified City of London Guides. A group of up to 25 people can take an hour and a half tour for £75 and that tour can be tailored for any group.

The Gallery has a painting collection spanning from the Great Fire of 1666 to the present including the Defeat of the Floating Batteries at Gibraltar by John Singleton Copley (pictured). It also has the remains of Roman London's Amphitheatre in its basement.

Since the Gallery's foundation it has added to the collection paintings which include works by well known painters such as Landseer, Leighton, Millais, Rossetti, and Tissot. It acquires paintings with a London theme thus enabling you to see the changing face of the metropolis not just the City itself.

Entry charges are £2.50 per person; concessions £1; entry for Art Fund members, City residents and workers and on every Friday is free.

To book a tour call 020 7332 1856 or email: guildhall.artgallery@cityoflondon.gov.uk

More information
www.guildhall-art-gallery.org.uk





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Street scene improvements

The second stage of the resurfacing of Bow Lane, covering the northern section up to Cheapside, has been severely frustrated by the utilities. The replacement of the water mains has not gone as smoothly as was the case for the first phase of the work. Worse still, at little notice National Grid decided to

replace the gas main that runs along Bow Lane from Watling Street to Cheapside. In doing this work they severed the electricity cable causing considerable inconvenience to local businesses. The City of London Corporation has no power over the utilities which have a right to dig up roads as they wish. It is deeply

frustrating that the work to enhance Bow Lane has been spoilt by the activities of others. The work to replace the gas main should be completed at the end of March. The repaving work will then recommence and be completed by the end of May.

Meanwhile, plans are being finalised for the resurfacing of Bow Churchyard and the planting of new trees. This will complete the enhancement of the whole of the Bow Lane, Watling Street and Bow Churchyard area.

Cheapside

Cheapside is gradually being transformed into a major office and retail centre. The various developments on the north side of the street are now nearing completion and some new retail outlets have opened. Work is beginning on the old One New Change site which will include substantial retail space.

The section 106 agreement for One New Change provides for the enhancement of Cheapside itself. The intention is to enhance the retail character of Cheapside and to create a high quality physical environment. The plans are likely to include widening the footways and narrowing the roadway. There will be a public consultation of the proposals in the summer.

Ward Constable

Gavin Seabrook, the Cordwainer Ward Constable, is always keen to hear directly from residents and workers about any problems. He can be contacted on 07809 689495 and at gavin.seabrook@cityoflondon.police.uk.