



Left: Butchers' Guild
sign, Český Krumlov,
Czech Republic

CARNIFEX*

The Newsletter of the York Butchers' Guild

in tempo Domini
R. Pearce

editio I
vernus MMV

Welcome to *Carnifex*

Welcome to editio I, vernus MV (*issue 1, spring 2005*) of *Carnifex*, our first attempt at a newsletter for the York Butchers' Guild. The idea was proposed by Rev. David Porter at the January Full Court and met with general approval, but with no actual decision on how to move forward. The Master has generously allowed this trial issue to gauge reaction and then to progress with thoughts, ideas and a decision on a proper editorial structure at the next Court of Assistants (May) and Full Court (August).

The spread of membership of the Guild has meant that it is now more difficult for freemen to meet and receive information about events, Guild management and Court news. This newsletter tries to fill that gap.

This first issue has simply taken a variety of suggestions from a totally unscientific survey of some current officers to see what would be of interest. It will be up to all members through the Full Court to make this letter work and for delivery through your letterbox to be eagerly awaited at whatever issue interval is agreed.

So, please get out your quills and start writing. What guild events have you attended? What guild activity did you happen across whilst last travelling in Europe, or other foreign places like London? What would you like to know about? Have you an issue that you wish to promote for deliberation in our letters' section *CHAJNMAJI* (possibly introduced in editio II, auctumnus MV)? Please give us your suggestions by writing or e-mailing to *Carnifex*, c/o the Clerk, (*addresses in your handbook*)

Scriptor Clunis

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A Message from The Master

I am pleased to welcome all members of Company of Butchers of the City of York to their first edition of *Carnifex*, which is intended to provide you all with information about Guild activities. There will be dates for your diary on forthcoming events and reports from the Court of Assistants and Full Court meetings.

We will also keep you up to date with the progress of the production of the Waggon Plays, due to be staged in July 2006. There will have snippets of news from the Worshipful Company of Butchers of the City of London. Finally I will let you know what I have been up to, as Master, in the previous six months and what I have planned for the future.

If you have any comments, ideas or thoughts please email me at roger@brandsby.com, or via the Clerk, or telephone me.

Roger Dominus

**Carnifex* – Latin term used for butcher in York Freemen's Rolls, last used in 1403

BOTCHERS* ALL

The Master 2005 – 2006

Roger Pearce

Asa Lancastrian born and bred in Liverpool, I consider it a great honour to be appointed Master of the Company of Butchers of the City of York. I was educated at Doverdale Road School (a year behind Paul McCartney) and Quarry Bank Grammar. I spent 2 years at the Lancashire College of Agriculture studying for an NDA. In 1961 I joined Thomas Fraser & Son Ltd. a company of wholesale butchers at the old Stanley Abattoir in Liverpool. I worked for them for 10 years buying livestock in markets and helping to sell meat to local butchers in the Wirral and Cheshire areas. In 1971 I moved to York and worked for J Bibby Agriculture selling animal feeds to farmers in the North Yorkshire area specialising in beef and dairy feeds. In 1980 I joined Stephenson & Son as a marketing officer for the York Livestock Centre which was then one of the largest livestock actions in the country. The BSE crisis and the Foot and Mouth epidemic of 2001 took its toll on livestock auctions but happily most have recovered and livestock auctions have once again become an essential part of livestock marketing chain.

Honorary Member for a Year and a Day

Colin Cullimore, C.B.E., D.L. London Master

Colin was educated at Westminster School and Grenoble University. He then attended the National College of Food Technology. He was commissioned into the Second Parachute Regiment of the Royal Scots Fusiliers and served in Cyprus and the Canal Zone. He joined J H Dewhurst's in 1965 and became Managing Director from 1973 to 1990. His Public Appointments include the Meat & Livestock Commission, British Retail Association, and a director of the Campaign for Hunting.

New Member 2005

Robin Cornforth

Robin (39) is a farmer from Easingwold. He has recently added groundsmanship and green keeping to his job profile, with successful NVQ training. He raises beef cattle and sheep on the farm originally bought by his grandfather in 1944. Raising animals is also his pastime as he shows rare poultry breeds around Yorkshire, his Indian Runner Duck (say that carefully!) winning 'Best in Show' at Egton last year. Robin has one son, aged three.

New Member 2005

Robert White

Robert (52) is a Master Butcher from Moreton-on-Swale near Northallerton, following in the 125 year-old family business from his father, uncle and grandfather. He was educated locally and joined the business straight from school. Just before the millennium, he successfully branched out into hog roasting.

Robert has a wife, Angela, three children and two grandchildren. He enjoys shooting, both clay and for rabbits for the pot.

New Member 2005

Ian D. Wright

Ian (41) comes from W.R. Wright & Sons (Butchers' Supplies and Ingredients) of Liverpool, joining after his 'O' levels and a short period with a retail butcher. The well known family business was started in 1923 by his grandfather and is currently directed by his father. The business exports one product, RiteKleen Scabbards, across the world.

Ian is a keen sportsman, batting for his team in Merseyside competitions. He is married to Debbie and they have two sons and a daughter.

Changes to Gild Officers

Wardens

On Shrove Tuesday, Andrew Stobart was sworn in as Junior Warden, immediately following his brother Phillip, who takes on the role of Senior Warden. This is the first time that this position of brothers in tandem as Robed Officers has happened in over forty years.

Treasurer, Providitor and Registrar

On the same date, Richard Hudson retired as Treasurer, (feast organiser and membership controller), a position he has held for over twenty years. The role is a demanding one and the Gild acclaimed the conferring of status of Honorary Searcher on Richard at the Shrove Tuesday Court. The Master mirrored the mediaeval role of Searcher by asking Richard to inspect the Baron of Beef at the Shrove Tuesday Feast, to ensure that it was 'wholesome for men to eat'.

In replacement, and to broaden managerial capability, the Gild has appointed three officers. Stephen Wilkinson takes on the financial side of Treasurer, Mandy Sowray is the new Providitor, looking after Feasts and Receptions, and Nigel Wright will be Registrar, maintaining the membership files and handbook. The Gild breaks with tradition by the appointment of Stephen and Mandy to executive roles without being members of the Court of Assistants, but each has volunteered from the membership ranks with enthusiasm.

'Butcher' – variation of term used in the York Freemens' Rolls, derived from Anglo-Norman-French *boucher* or *bocher*, fortunately used only once in this spelling, for Thomas Petty in 1547

Did You Know?

The Importance of the Butcher in the Mediterranean in the 14th Century

The contacts between the Arab Levant and the Christian Mediterranean increased, not only because of the Crusades that began in the late 11th century, but also because of mercantile interests. The West was a culture of meat-eaters as well as grain and the Arabs introduced culinary concepts based on lots of vegetables and legumes, such as those represented in the wide range of vegetable recipes. But in both the Arab Levant and the West, cereal crops began to recede by the mid-14th century, mostly owing to the effects of the Black Death. The massive scale of death in both the Muslim and Christian Mediterranean led to the expansion of a sylvan-pastoral economy because of the reversion of farm land to pasture. This phenomenon manifested itself in two ways: the appearance of more meat on the peasant's table and the rising political importance of the butcher. The meat may have been dry-salted for preservation but it was still meat. This was particularly true in the hills, mountains, and upper plains where the diet had consisted almost entirely of vegetables because of the lack of area devoted to stock-rearing and hunting.

The importance of meat is reflected in the relative political importance of the butcher. In Jerusalem of the 16th century, members of the butcher's guild filled the hisba office, one of the oldest institutions of the Islamic state, responsible for promoting good and forbidding evil as proscribed in the Koran (Sura 3: v, 100). The muhtasib, the head of the hisba office, inspected market activities and collected taxes, such as the 'butcher's seal tax' guaranteeing the quality of meat. Jerusalem at this time was under Ottoman rule, and the supply of meat to the towns was an important facet of economic activity. Since butchers knew their meat, they often filled these positions as witnessed by their frequent mention in sijill records (Ottoman court documents). The butcher was also an important and highly politicized profession in fourteenth-century Provence. The covered markets of Provence were filled with small butcher stalls where they plied their trade over the counters of their taula, an Old Provençal word for 'table.' The word taula appears to be adopted from the Arabic word for 'table,' although that word is thought to derive itself from the Italian word for table, tavola.

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Ref: <http://www.cliffordawright.com/history/butcher.html>

Hot Off The Press – News Only 500 Years Old!

from our Carlisle correspondent

Joe Natrass reports on some interesting research into our annals. The book, 'The York Butchers Guild', page 14, reports on a victualling dispute in 1495 between York butchers and the Easter ecclesiastical synod. This resulted in the imprisonment of the butchers until Christmas when the Bishop of Carlisle, thought to be Richard Bell, intervened on their behalf. At face value, such intervention from Carlisle seems improbable. However, it now transpires that the actual intervention came from William Stenhouse, Abbot of St. Mary's, York, and Bishop Elect of Carlisle (consecrated 1496) and possibly already acting Bishop at the time of the incident.

Research by Revd. Canon David W. V. Weston, Canon Warden & Canon Librarian, Carlisle Cathedral

It was good to hear from Joe (Master 1994-95) who has been poorly over recent years. He says that he has now substantially recovered and is looking forward to returning to Gild life.

The Breeches Bible - Tony Wright takes a look at one of our Artefacts

The Company owns a Breeches Bible. This may surprise some members, as we have not used it for some time and we don't know how it came to the Gild.

In a Breeches Bible, Genesis, Chapter 3, Verse 7 says that Adam and Eve made themselves 'Breeches' from fig leaves (as opposed to 'Aprons' in the King James version). These bibles were mainly for household use. Our copy is small, printed in 1613, and has been much defaced and repaired, so it is not valuable as an antique.

Inside the front cover is written 'Y. Libris Gulii B. Cuttler'. After I read this, I used the International Genealogical Index to look up anyone in Yorkshire called William B. Cuttler, as the line is Latin for 'from the library of William B. Cuttler'. No one turned up, so I looked further.

Below, the inscription is written, in pencil: 'On being rebound, part missing, not replaced' (the cover is not the original). On the first flyleaf, someone has stuck a piece of paper, with a history of Breeches Bibles and I didn't notice something written underneath it. Further into the Bible, a family of children have practised writing so that much of the repair work is to hide scribbling. However, the restorer has tried not to cover The Word and a lot of the scribble is still readable. **John, Jasper, Mary, Hannah and George Barnsley** occur and a 'John Ask...' or 'Ash...' I looked up the name of Barnsley and soon found their baptisms in Sheffield in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, with a 'William Barnsley, cutler', in another list from the 1640s.

I then read the inscriptions under the piece of paper stuck to the flyleaf:

J. M. Guest, 24, Filey Street, Sheffield

and

Kate R. Guest, Christmas 1923

So, our Bible belonged to the Barnsley family of Sheffield, Cutlers in the 17th and 18th centuries, came to the Guest family by the early 20th century, and later to us. All I now have to do is complete the connections. Can anyone shed any further light on this chain of owners?

A Message from All Saints

Our Christian Tradition

Part of my job, as Chaplain to the Company of Butchers is to 'Keep the Gild mindful of its Christian tradition'. (As described in the Company Handbook)

In the olden days (and we go back in our Gild to the thirteenth century) a high proportion of the population in York would have been regular worshippers, including the city's butchers. That tradition is long gone and there are few things that bind church and commerce together now. So what is the Gild's 'Christian tradition'? What is it I'm supposed to keep you 'mindful' of? Two things strike me straight away.

First, the Gilds began, at least in part, with the purpose of supporting the poor and needy. This would have included butchers who had fallen on hard times as well as widows and orphans of butchers who had died. But it would also have stretched to the poor of the community a large. Charity may begin at home but needs to go far beyond our own immediate circle. Generosity was the byword of our founders, and should be ours too.

I have benefited from the generosity of the Company of Butchers a number of times since I became Chaplain eighteen months ago or so. The feasts have been jolly occasions. And that's a second tradition of the Guild that exactly reflects what Christian faith requires – hospitality. Our hospitality, again, needs to stretch far and wide if it is to reflect God's hospitality. For instance, 40% of the world's population survive without sufficient food to feed themselves or their children adequately. As purveyors of food this might be a particular concern to us.

So, generosity and hospitality – twin virtues that appeal to our finer feelings through the life and priorities of our Gild. To fulfil our Christian tradition we need to keep reviewing how we are living up to them.

Simon Stanley
Chaplain

On The Waggon!

Waggon Plays, 2006

Following initial uncertainty over the likelihood of the next production of the Waggon Plays taking place, the Waggon Plays Board has confirmed its intention to once again produce a cycle of plays in traditional and historical manner through the streets of York. The production, as in 2002, will take to the streets of the City on two consecutive Sundays in July. The dates have been set for the 9th and 16th, coinciding, as previously, with the York Early Music Festival and the Leeds Mediaeval Congress. Following the decision to proceed, Board members have been actively involved in the essential organization that a production of this nature requires.

Not surprisingly, once again the requirement for sponsorship is essential and a target figure of £25k has been set as a key to the success of the event. The role of the Guilds is, again, fundamental to the production's success, alongside the local businesses and organisations who kindly contributed in 2002. Initial indications are encouraging, but new sponsors are always welcome.

The production's pageant master has recently been appointed and once again Mike Tyler is the successful choice. I am sure those of you who saw Mike's cycle and performance of 2002 witnessed an excellent production that was acknowledged not only by Board and Guilds, but also by academics and critics.

The venues and number of plays have, as yet, to be finalized, but initial preferences appear to favour a cycle of twelve plays, embracing a performance time of approximately two hours, (for any round of twelve plays at one 'station'). Initially, four stations have been selected, starting in Deans Park and finishing in the Museum Gardens with additional performances to be confirmed at College Green, St Helen's Square or St Sampson's Square. Given the number of plays and waggon movements needed, it is anticipated that the production will commence at noon and finish around 6.15 p.m.

Gild members are asked to be prepared for various voluntary activities before, during and after the production and to make time available in their diaries. We will require set builders during the two or three weeks prior to the first Sunday, waggon pullers / pushers during the event, and possibly some need to help clear up afterwards. There may be a need for programme sellers and other roles during the production. And if any Gild member, relative or friend wishes to actually 'tread the boards' in our play, then please make themselves known to me and I will forward names to our appointed play director. Robed Gild Officers will be processing in front of our waggon on performance days.

David Clapham
Waggon Master

Editor's Note The Waggon Plays Board has appointed David as the Programme Manager for the event. This is an arduous task, involving the production and distribution of the programme before, and sales during, the event. Here is one role that will need real support from other Gild members. Please be prepared to help David in any role possible, in particular as programme sellers on one or both production Sundays.

Discussions with people in the trade, and labour market research conducted by the Meat Training Council, indicates that butchers are hard to recruit and retain. Some reasons for this include:

- Full employment, in 2004 there was around 620,000 unfilled vacancies, of which around a quarter were hard-to-fill because of skill shortages.
- Low image of the sector, due to BSE, E. Coli, etc.
- Increased number of school leavers going into further and higher education.

This problem is not restricted to independent retail butchers. Many large meat and poultry processing plants have severe operative shortages and are employing labour from all over Europe to fill the skills gaps.

Historically, the training of butchers has taken place in the workplace with less than 20% of their time in college or other types of formal learning while an apprentice. The retail-trading environment is increasingly competitive, resulting in fewer trainee butchers being released to go to college in order to train and become qualified. Many of these butchers would have become the next generation of shop owners or manager. Those that do support their staff working towards a meat qualification are doing it in the workplace: government funding for most training and qualifications is targeted at delivery in the workplace. This and the significant reduction in retail butchers shops have contributed to the decline in colleges training retail butchers, apprentices, supervisors and managers.

In the past, the availability of labour has been better therefore staff shortages have not been so acute. In the current climate there is a need for butchers to take action to encourage both young and experienced workers to join their business. Some approaches, successfully used with school leavers and mature workers, include:

School leavers

- Meet the local schools careers representative, and inform them of the vacancies and types of candidates who do well in the industry. Those fed up with school may grab the opportunity to earn some money and develop practical skills.
- Offer schools the opportunity for work placements, this will give business the chance to assess any young people who come forward as future employees. In addition, this provides the opportunity for those young people to become advocates of your business and butchery when they return home, school and in the local community.
- Offer training, recognised by formal qualifications, this can assist with staff retention by up to 27%.
- Break them in easy; change their initial working hours.

Mature workers

- Contact companies making redundancies and inform them that you have a vacancy, especially those businesses in the food, hospitality and retail sectors or those requiring practical skills.

Once you have recruited staff you make should of one of Yorkshire's advantages: Thomas Danby College, Leeds. This college is uniquely equipped, both in terms of staff and facilities to help retail butchers. Many butchers, shop managers and owners have passed through its doors and still contact its staff for advice and support. Thomas Danby can train your staff to meet legal and business requirements such as risk and hazard analysis, HACCP, new product ideas, recipe ideas, and much more. Having staff trained and then getting them to apply the learning means that employers are getting more benefit from their personnel from satisfying EHO requirements for training through to possible reduction in insurance premiums because of the lower risks associated with qualified staff. A 4% increase in training budget can yield up to 5% increase in turnover, (SSDA, 1994).

As managers or owners of our businesses we too have to raise our own game. Staff will no longer have to tolerate long hours, low pay, minimal holidays or management not dealing with them in a fair, reasonable or understanding manner. They can 'up sticks' and go get one of the many unfilled jobs on offer. We need to periodically develop our skills to ensure that we are not falling behind in the recruitment and retention of good staff. Not doing so could help to contribute the culture of litigation and compensation.

If there was ever a time we needed to train our staff and ourselves it is now.

The Annual Meat Trades Golf Tournament

at Hessele Golf Club on Wednesday, 7th September, 2005, from 1:30 p.m. onwards

followed by Evening Meal and Presentation of Cups, Trophies and Prizes

Teams of 1, 2 or 4

Entry fee £40 per head.

Details, entry forms from Peter Imison (B) (01482) 507014 (H) (01482) 509979 (M) (07790) 470006

All members of the Company of Butchers of the City of York are welcome to compete in this year's competition. Please contact Peter with your handicap and he will arrange a starting time to suit. There are many Cups, Trophies and Prizes to compete for so please come and support Hull Butchers in their annual tournament, especially as Peter is this year's Captain of Hessele Golf Club.

Recipe of the Day, 1899

Truffled Sausage

Mince fairly fine 1lb. 4oz. of fat and $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. of lean pork, seasoning this with $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. of salt, and three or four good pinches of the *quatre épices*; for this quantity stir in 6oz. sliced truffles, and mix it to a paste with about a gill of new milk or single cream.

Saucisse au Vin

Prepare a farce as for the truffled sausage, only moistening it with champagne, Madeira, or any good Rhine wine as you please. A variation of this is made by mincing two parts lean to one of fat pork, and seasoning this with a pinch of saltpetre, pepper, salt and a fairly strong flavouring of aromatics, such as juniper berries, marjoram, thyme, coriander &c.

Work these ingredients well together, moistening them with half a pint of light white wine, or best white wine vinegar; fill, and tie in the usual way, and then hang them up for five days in a cool dry place; even in summer these sausages require keeping forty-eight hours before eating them

From the cookery column of 'Queen' newspaper, reprinted in 'The Queen Cookery Books, No. 3, Pickles and Preserves', Editor S. Beaty-Powell, 1899

Dates for Your Diary

2005

8th May **United Guilds of the City of York Parade and Church Service**
(hosted by the Builders' Guild)
9.45 am - Merchant Adventurers' Hall for 10.30 am - All Saints' Church

10th May **Court of Assistants** 7.00 pm - Jacob's Well

tba **Master's Day Out**

The Master requests the presence of all officers and members (or apologies) on
9th August **Full Court** **7.00 pm - Jacob's Well**

5th November **Ladies' Feast** 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm **NOTE**

6th November **Butchers' Gild Annual Church Service** 10.00 am - St. Crux, Shambles for
10.30 am - All Saints' Church

6th December **Court of Assistants (with supper)** 7.00 pm - Jacob's Well

2006

The Master requests the presence of all officers and members (or apologies) on
10th January **Full Court** **7.00 pm - Jacob's Well**

The Master requests the presence of all officers and members (or apologies) on
28th February **Shrove Tuesday Court** **6.00 pm - All Saints' Church**

28th February **Shrove Tuesday Feast** 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm - Merchant Taylors' Hall

Note Now in your Diary – York Mystery Plays - *contact David Clapham*

June and early July 2006 **Waggon Play preparation**
(join in the fun of set construction or volunteer for other important jobs that need to be fulfilled for another successful production)

9th & 16th July **Waggon Plays in the streets of York**