

THE SMITHFIELD GAZETTE



EDITION 164

April 2018

REMEMBERING THE POULTRY MARKET FIRE

Early on 23 January 1958 a fire broke out in the basement of the old Poultry Market building at Smithfield Market. It was to be one of the worst fires London had seen since the Blitz. The old Poultry Market was similar in style to the two remaining Victorian buildings – it was also designed by Sir Horace Jones and opened in 1875.

In a moving ceremony held in Grand Avenue exactly sixty years after the fire started, the two firefighters who died were remembered by the unveiling of one of the Fire Brigades Union's new red plaques. Wreaths were laid by Matt Wrack, General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, Greg Lawrence, Chairman of the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association and Mark Sherlock, Superintendent of Smithfield Market. Serving and retired firefighters attended as well as Market tenants and representatives of the City of London. Two fire engines were also there.

The fire burned for three days in the two and a half acre basement, which was full of crates of poultry as well as being lined with wooden match boarding which had become soaked with fat over a period of years – this meant that the fire spread exceptionally quickly. Reports of the time state that by dawn the stalls and market contents had been destroyed, the roof had collapsed and what was left was a blackened shell enclosing a twisted heap of ironwork and broken masonry. Flames 100 feet high lit the night sky. Firefighters from Clerkenwell fire station were the first to arrive on the scene, including Station Officer Jack Fourt-Wells, aged 46, and Firefighter Richard Stocking, 31, the two who lost their lives. In total, fire stations from all over London sent a total of 1,700 firefighters and over 389 fire engines and other support vehicles were either deployed to the fire or were relocated to provide relief and cover elsewhere.

The first firefighters on the scene had gone straight into the basement. Although they were wearing oxygen sets, the basement was full of thick smoke and was a confusing space with many small rooms and corridors. The two men who died were trapped and unable to get out before their oxygen ran out, or their colleagues could find them. Failures identified at this fire led directly to major safety improvements in firefighting. This included improved breathing apparatus and keeping records of who has gone into a fire, how much oxygen they have and how long they can last before needing to come out.

This was the second unveiling of a red plaque being funded by the Firefighters 100 Lottery. The plaque will be permanently located in the near future in Grand Avenue near the Smithfield Market War Memorial.



THE SMITHFIELD GAZETTE COMMENT

Just when you think you can start looking forward to spring, what happens? It snows. It has felt like a very long, cold winter, although the lighter mornings are a lift to the spirit.

This year we can see the end of the Crossrail works in sight. It is interesting to note that some of our concerns at the outset of the work have not been a problem at all – dust contamination being one of them. Through extensive monitoring we know that the mitigation measures worked. We are thankful, however, that we managed to get undertakings under the Crossrail Act to maintain the circulation of traffic along the streets surrounding the Market. There have been several times when Crossrail would have liked to close a road but have had to find alternative means to carry out the necessary works.

What we will be seeing over the next few months is public realm works in connection with the Eastern Ticket Hall, the Culture Mile and the Cycle Superhighway – we will continue to be vigilant to ensure that vehicles delivering to and collecting from the Market can still continue to do so.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“We are just an advanced breed of monkeys on a minor planet of a very average star. But we can understand the universe. That makes us something very special.”

Stephen Hawking, 1942-2018

“Laughter is the greatest music in the world and audiences come to my shows to escape the cares of life. They don’t want to be embarrassed or insulted. They want to laugh and so do I – which is probably why it works.”

Sir Ken Dodd, 1927-2018

2018 ANNIVERSARIES

- 50 years since the Prague Spring
- 50 years since the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr
- 50 years since the assassination of Robert F Kennedy
- 75 years since the Dambuster Raid
- 75 years since the invasion of Sicily and Italy
- 75 years since the unveiling of the Colossus computer – the world’s first totally electronic programmable computing device
- 100 years since the formation of the RAF
- 100 years since the end of World War I
- 100 years since women were given the right to vote in the UK
- 100 years since Stonehenge donated to the nation
- 150 years since the opening of the Victorian meat market buildings at Smithfield**
- 150 years since the last public hanging in Britain
- 150 years since the world’s first traffic lights installed at Parliament Square in London
- 150 years since Charles Rennie Mackintosh’s birth
- 175 years since the opening of the world’s first underwater tunnel between Rotherhithe and Wapping
- 175 years since the launch of the SS Great Britain
- 175 years since the first publication of the Economist
- 200 years since the birth of Karl Marx
- 200 years since the birth of Emily Bronte
- 200 years since the publication of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein
- 200 years since the first human blood transfusion
- 250 years since Captain James Cook set sail on HMS Endeavour
- 250 years since the first publication of Encyclopaedia Britannica
- 275 years since a British monarch last led troops into battle – King George II at the Battle of Dettingen
- 375 years since the birth of Isaac Newton
- 400 years since Sir Walter Raleigh was executed

BILLINGSGATE ROMAN HOUSE AND BATHS

Located under 101 Lower Thames Street, these remains were discovered in 1848. They date to the late second century and offer a glimpse into life in the ancient Roman city. Guided tours lasting 45 minutes are available at 11am, noon and 1pm every Saturday from 31 March until 24 November 2018. Bookings can be made via the City of London's website – www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/visit-the-city/attractions

WHAT'S IN A NAME? HATTON GARDEN

Ely Place, just off Holborn Circus, was from 1390 the city residence of the Bishops of Ely. It consisted of a hall, chapel, a gatehouse opening onto Holborn and extensive gardens. Queen Elizabeth I obliged the Bishop to let the property to a favourite of hers, her Lord Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton, 1540-1591. Subsequently, Sir Christopher became the owner of the estate and renamed it Hatton House. The house had gone by the early 1700s and the name Hatton Garden was used for several streets that were built on the former estate as it was developed as a genteel and stylish residential area, but by about 1800 it had become less exclusive and various trades had moved in. Eventually, only the street we now know as Hatton Garden remained. During the 1800s, Johnson Matthey was developing their gold and platinum business in the area and the diamond trade expanded massively after the Kimberley diamond rush in South Africa. This led to an expansion of jewellery businesses from the Clerkenwell area to Hatton Garden.

St Etheldreda's Church in Ely Place is all that survives of the original Bishop's palace and is one of only two remaining buildings in London dating to the reign of Edward I. It is one of the oldest churches in England used for Roman Catholic worship.

Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'

Robin Williams

EASTER EGGS

The decorating of eggs is an ancient practice – 60,000 year old engraved ostrich eggs have been found in Africa and examples are found in the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Sumerian and Cretan cultures, associated with death and rebirth as well as kingship.

The Christian custom of Easter eggs started with the early Christians of Mesopotamia who stained eggs red to represent the blood of Christ. The church adopted the practice, regarding the eggs as symbols of the resurrection of Christ.

It appears that the tradition spread through the Orthodox churches and then on to the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, spreading throughout Europe.

There is also an old German springtime tradition involving eggs for a goddess called Eostre (or Ostara) – where the names of Easter in English and Ostern in German come from.

There are many folk customs linked to Easter eggs –

Egg rolling – where eggs are rolled down hills by children.

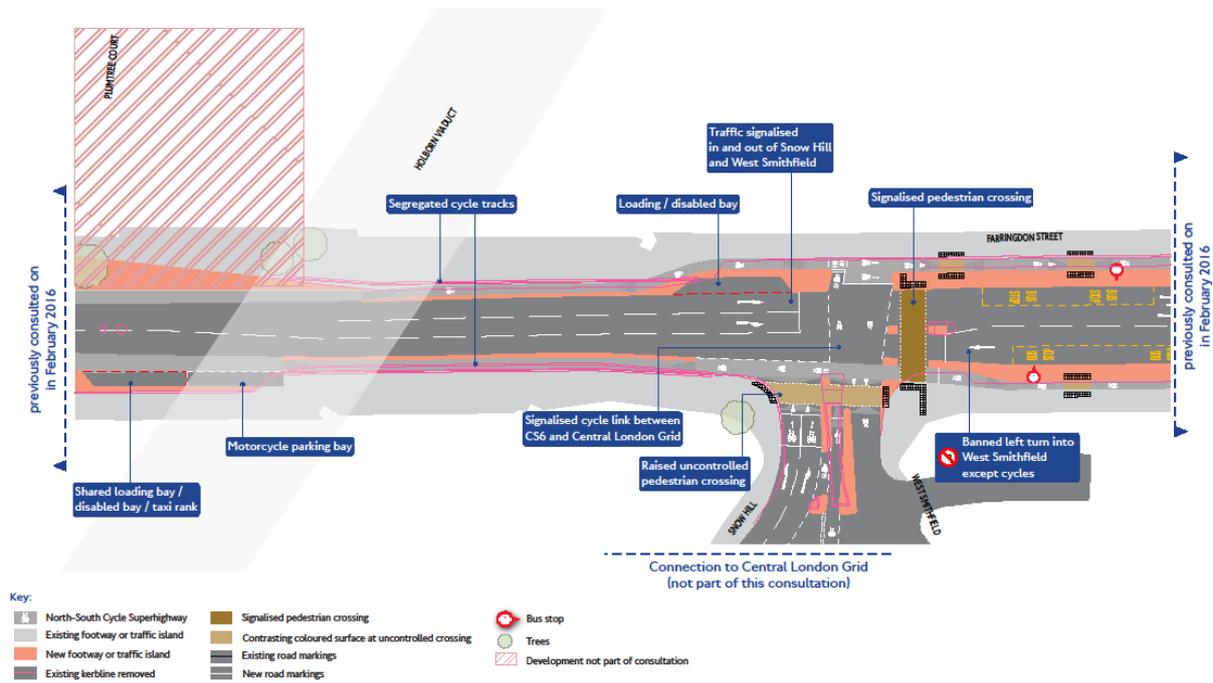
Egg tapping (or dumping or jarping) – a bit like conkers – the winner is the last one with an intact egg. The annual egg jarping world championship is held in Peterlee, County Durham.

Egg dance, or hop-egg – eggs are placed on the ground and people dance among them attempting not to damage them

Chocolate Easter eggs were introduced in Britain by JS Fry & Sons in 1873.



**North-South Cycle Superhighway (CS6)
Farringdon Street/West Smithfield/Snow Hill**



NORTH-SOUTH CYCLE SUPERHIGHWAY EXTENSION

Contractors for TfL are currently working in Farringdon Street on the extension to the cycle superhighway from Shoe Lane northwards. The scheme incorporates considerable changes at the West Smithfield junction – see the diagram above. The cycle lane divides at Shoe Lane, so there will be a separate cycle lane on either side of the road going past West Smithfield.

Following representations made by the Smithfield Market Tenants’ Association the scheme retains two lanes from West Smithfield on to Farringdon Street instead of the originally planned single lane. This is important because of the amount of traffic that turns right there.

However, no alternative was found for the proposed banned left turn from Farringdon Street into West Smithfield – this was considered too dangerous to cyclists to retain and so the ban will be implemented from immediately after Easter. Traffic wishing to access the Market from the north will need to turn left at Charterhouse Street or find an alternative route.

The main access to the Market from the south, the northbound right turn from Farringdon Street has been retained.

Traffic signals at the junction are to be installed by the end of April

The Smithfield Gazette

wishes all its readers a

Happy Easter

Smithfield Meat Market

open to the trade and the public all year round
for top quality meat at unbelievable prices

poultry – game – pork – lamb – beef – offal
sausages – bacon – other provisions – halal

open 2am to 8am Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays

(Closed on Good Friday 30 March and Easter Monday 2 April)

Parking will be free in the Smithfield car park from 9pm to 10am on the nights of Tuesday
27 March and Wednesday 28 March



www.smithfieldmarket.com

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THE CHANGING FEEL OF SMITHFIELD

Between April and October 2017, a team of researchers from Brunel University London analysed the changing place identity of the Smithfield area. Against the background announcement of London's Culture Mile - the City of London's largest urban regeneration project in a decade – and the planned relocation of the Museum of London to West Smithfield, the study examined the sensory transformation of the area over time. In other words, how smells, sounds, textures, tastes and looks play an important role in shaping Smithfield's character in the past, present and future. Over a 4 month period, the research team mapped and recorded the area's sounds and practises over a 24-hour cycle, interviewed over 20 key local stakeholders and 150 people passing through and conducted detailed observations as well as conducting extensive historical research.

The study found that Smithfield has a unique identity defined by the history of the meat market as well as the juxtaposition of diverse working practices, and flows of people which produce a particular vibrant, and at times, discordant character. The meat market, with its distinctive atmosphere, smells and visual appearance was identified by most people interviewed as an integral sensory feature and the idiosyncratic mix of market life, creative working hub, rich history and modern popular restaurants produces strong feelings of attachments among multiple distinct social groups.

The findings show that while there is a great sense of optimism about the future, simultaneously there is concern about how the proposed regeneration could irrevocably change the feel of the area. There is an especially strong sense of nostalgia about the market and its place in London's history, and a general agreement that regeneration should be sensitive to the multiple needs of the area. Likewise, Smithfield's exceptional built environment (encompassing various architectural styles dating back to the 13th century), provides a strong sense of continuity with the past. The end result of this is an area of the City of London which has managed to withhold and contest wider processes of urban change compared to other areas of the City that have been rapidly developed and arguably lost much of their unique character.

The research findings have been presented to the Museum of London and the architects involved in the

redesign of the area who were both interested in finding out what the current feel of the area is and how this can be included in the design and curation of the new Museum of London.

For further details of the research and recommendations for those involved in the regeneration of the area please see www.sensorysmithfield.com

For further discussion or enquires about the research, please contact:

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Dr Camilla Lewis: camilla.lewis@manchester.ac.uk



"I believe alien life is quite common in the universe, although intelligent life is less so. Some say it has yet to appear on planet Earth."

Stephen Hawking

NEWS IN BRIEF

Easter concessionary parking – Markets Committee has approved two nights of free parking in the Rotunda Car Park for the nights of 27 and 28 March.

Shakespeare in Charterhouse Square – The Handlebards will be performing Twelfth Night in Charterhouse Square on 4 and 5 September starting at 7pm. For more details and to book go to www.handlebards.com

OBITUARIES

Alan Sawford, who had worked at Keevil & Keevil for 28 years, has died. His funeral was held on 31 January.

The Smithfield Gazette invites tenants, staff and others to forward items for inclusion in the Gazette. These could be personal or company news and events or anything else you might care to write about. Your stories are of great interest to your colleagues and will go unnoticed without your input. Who's getting married? Is there a new baby? Are you looking for sponsorship for a charity event?

Let us know by email

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telephone 020 7248 3151

or by mail to

225 Central Markets, London, EC1A 9LH

GAZETTE BY EMAIL

If you would prefer to receive the Gazette by email, please email us to request this at

smta.smithfield@btconnect.com

DIARY

11 Apr SMTA AGM
25 Apr SMTA Council
9 May Markets Committee
16 May SMTA Council
20 Jun SMTA Council

WHY DOES EASTER MOVE?

The Christian Church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ on a date representing the first full moon of spring in the Jewish calendar.

In the UK we use the Gregorian calendar and Easter is celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon that occurs after the first day of spring. Traditionally, the first day of spring is the date of the vernal equinox – the day in March when day and night are of equal length – generally this is taken as being 21 March, although it can actually vary by a day or two either way.

So Easter Day is the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after 21 March. If the full moon is on a Sunday, Easter Day is the following Sunday. In practice, this means that Easter can fall between 22 March and 25 April.

Don't be confused by the Meteorological Office's recent tendency to describe 1 March as the start of meteorological spring – this appears to be nothing but a bureaucratic convenience!

The Gregorian calendar was introduced in the UK in 1753. It is named after Pope Gregory XIII who devised it in 1582 to replace the Julian calendar. Although the Gregorian calendar is now the most widely used calendar, some Orthodox churches still use the Julian calendar and this can lead to a difference in the dates of Easter in the same year. Last year, Easter fell on the same date under both calendars. This year Easter will be celebrated generally on 1 April and by the Orthodox churches on 8 April.

