Potato Trade Topics

The Newsletter of the British Potato Trade Association

December 2015

Welcome ...

... to this Festive issue of *Potato Trade Topics* — the irregular e-newsletter for members of the British Potato Trade Association!

As we stand on the threshold of another year we, as an industry, face enormous challenges not least the depressed potato consumption situation. It is therefore heartening to see that AHDB Potatoes here in Britain and Europatat on the continent are planning important actions in an attempt to redress matters.

Of lesser import but still of interest is the fresh approach that your Association is taking to re-engage with the membership on our Education and Entertainment activities. These events are important networking opportunities and arguably are the glue that keeps the fabric of the Association together.

I am delighted that we have 2 new and vibrant Council members in the chairs of the Ware and the Education & Entertainment Committees to help us tackle these issues.

Your views on these and on any other issues of interest to you would be most welcome. I hope you find something of relevance to you in this issue of *Potato Trade Topics*. Please contact the BPTA Secretariat with your thoughts.

Russ Kelsey
BPTA President

Inside this issue:

Starch Wars: The Tattie Awakens	2
John Marshall - and The Haigh Trophy	2
Who's new on Council	3
BPTA Education & Entertainment - a Fresh Approach	3

How many faces do you recognize?

Forty years ago the Scottish Potato Trade Association, one of the BPTA's parent body, organized a visit to Germany.

The Group was photographed by Jamie Grant a retired member of SPTA and BPTA.

Can you name those that feature in the photograph? Answers can be found in column 3 on page 2. No cheating please!

Highlights:

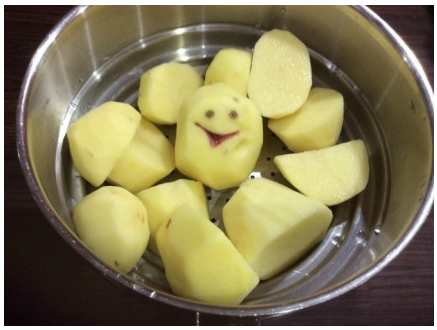
- Weel kent faces?
- May the Force be with Bud
- New chairs for Miriam and David
- Ice Ice Maybe?
- Tuber burials!

Starch Wars: The Tattie Awakens

As we enter 2016 and a possible referendum on whether the UK should exit the EU, we find uncommon unity with our European brethern. We are all suffering from the impact of falling consumption of potatoes. And we are united in making strenuous efforts to arrest this decline.

BPTA Council at its February 2014 meeting expressed concern about a dramatic collapse in potato consumption and later wrote to AHDB Potatoes, whose remit it is to promote potatoes in this country, to seek promotional activity and R&D focus on the health benefits of potato consumption.

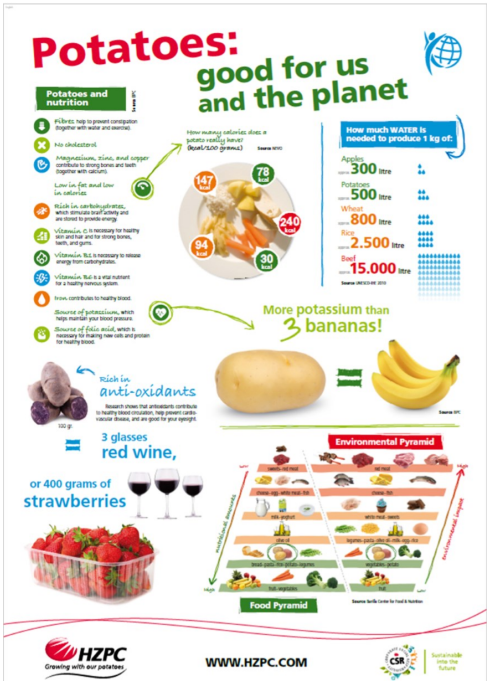
AHDB Potatoes in partnership with Bord Bia in Ireland launched in October 2015 a three-year, €3.6m EU co-financed joint venture campaign with the aim to change consumer attitudes towards potatoes being "More than a Bit on the Side". The programme introduced us to "Bud" a cool-looking potato dude and is designed to inform and educate consumers by demonstrating that potatoes are nutritious, convenient and versatile and can be used in innovative ways suitable for a busy, modern lifestyle.



Europatat has also been proactive. The consumption conundrum featured heavily at the Congress in Düsseldorf in May 2015 including a presentation on how Opel cars turned around negative consumer perceptions. More practicably Europatat established a Working Group on Potato Promotion and is exploring the possibility of applying for EU funding under the promotion of agricultural products legislation for a multi national programme.

In the Starch Wars the Tattie Awakens! The fight back has begun in earnest! But none of us can afford to be complacent. It is incumbent on all who love potatoes to do everything we can to correct the misinformation that abounds about our wonderful, nutritious and incredibly versatile product.

Please do what you can to share the good news about potatoes on your websites, communications, social media, etc - link



John Marshall - and The Haigh Trophy 2016

BPTA Council is delighted to announce that it has unamiously decided to award The Haigh Trophy to John Marshall.

John retired on 1st May 2015 from his position as Seed Buyer at WCF Horticulture after a long career which included time as a potato inspector before taking a supervisory position with the Potato Marketing Board where he worked for 16 years. He then worked for Greenvale as a seed potato trader for 11 years.

However that doesn't tell a fraction of his passion for potatoes. He can now devote even more time to his celebrated *Tattie Talks* which he delivers to groups of all ages, to manning potato stands at shows such as the Chelsea Flower Show - where he is photographed (left) and in championing the potato here, there and everywhere!

John will be presented with The Haigh Trophy at the Curling Dinner on 26th February 2016.

Who's new on Council

Miriam Doe began her career in the potato industry as a temporary seed potato growing crop inspector for the Scottish Government based in the Angus area while on summer holidays from University. Following graduation, she started full time employment at Greenvale AP in 2006 as a fieldsperson and in 2010 she became Seed QC Manager. In February 2015 Miriam moved to WCF Horticulture as seed buyer, purchasing approximately 3000 tonnes for the horticultural market.

When she is not working Miriam enjoys curling for Dunsinane Curling Club and training her horse with a view to entering competitions next year.

Miriam is a Committee member of the Royal Highland Education Trust – a charity which promotes food and farming to school children. She is currently working on a new potato growing project for schools within Perth and Kinross.

Miriam is delighted to have been voted onto the BPTA Council and to the chair of its Education and Entertainment Committee. She hopes to see many members at the Curling and Dinner on the 26th February 2016.

Miriam Doe

David Burks

David Burks is the Marketing Director and one of the founder Shareholder Members at Whole Crop Marketing Limited based in the East Riding of Yorkshire. He has previously been a senior potato buyer at E Park & Sons and before that a potato buyer at MBM Produce Ltd.

David was co-opted to Council in October and immediately installed as Chair of its Ware Committee.

David grew up on a mixed farm in the heart of the Yorkshire wold where his company now concentrates its large operation of seed production. He is married to Rebecca and they have two children Jacob (9) and Jessica (7). His interests include golf, shooting and gardening, taking over from the hole left by quitting Cricket and Rugby for Driffield 5 years ago.

BPTA Education & Entertainment - a Fresh Approach

By any measure the last 12 months or so have not been vintage for the BPTA's Education and Entertainment activities! Our flagship event the BPTA Annual Dinner & Dance in November 2014 was cancelled due to insufficient interest. Also we had to abandon our plans for our annual golf tournament in August. To top that the Chair of the Committee had to step down from Council because of redundancy. The results of a membership survey on our activities was fairly inconclusive. There was a poor response rate, but a hard core of enthusiasts for each event.

As has been said before, our Education and Entertainment activities are viewed as a critical component of our *raison d'être*. Under the new leadership of Miriam Doe the Committee is focussed upon a new beginning for these activities.

The first event of the new approach is an informal dinner on the evening of Friday, 26th February 2016 in the Hay Suite at Perth Ice Rink. Proceedings start at 6.30 for 7pm and Jim Smith has been engaged to entertain us with his after dinner repartee. Jim is a local farmer and part time comedian who sold out his show at the Edinburgh Festival and was a finalist at the Scottish Comedian of the Year in 2014. The dinner takes place following the 2nd leg of the annual BPTA Curling Competition and there will be an opportunity for non-curlers to try the sport during the afternoon if they so wish. More details will follow soon - get the date in your diary now!

Do you trade under RUCIP (Rules and Practices of the Inter-European Trade in Potatoes)? If you think you don't - are you certain? If you do - do you know what your obligations are? If you answer 'no' to either of the last 2 questions you need to consider very carefully your need for training before your business finds itself exposed to serious financial risks.

If there is sufficient demand from members BPTA will organise a training event during 2016 to explain the opportunities and risks of trading under RUCIP Rules. A trawl of members' interest will be conducted shortly.

Potato Trade Topics

The Newsletter of the British Potato Trade Association

British Potato Trade Association
12 Buckstone Hill
Edinburgh
EH10 6TH
Phone: 0131 623 0183 Fax: 0131 623 5295
E-mail: charlie.greenslade@bpta.org.uk Website: www.bpta.org.uk
Visit and like the BPTA on Facebook
The BPTA Office is open Mon-Thurs between the hours of 8.30am & 1.30pm

The British Potato Trade Association (BPTA) was created from the merger of the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants (NASPM) and the Scottish Potato Trade Association (SPTA) in July 2006. This union has resulted in an Association with the widest UK potato industry representation possible.

The bulk of the tonnage of seed potatoes traded in Great Britain for both the home and export markets (between 250,000 & 300,000 tonnes annually) is handled by the 120 members of the new Association. This gives the Association greater negotiating power on behalf of its members. The BPTA covers all aspects of potato production and sales, both at home and for the export trade.

Charlie Greenslade
BPTA Secretary

Hello. I am Charlie Greenslade, Secretary of the British Potato Trade Association. If you have any questions about the Association or your membership then please do not hesitate to contact me at the times and address noted above.

Be Part of The Association

Antoine-Augustin Parmentier

Friends of mine were enjoying a romantic break in Paris earlier this year - thankfully before the terrible events of recent weeks. During their stay they wandered into Père Lachaise Cemetery - burial place of many notables including Oscar Wilde, Frédéric Chopin, Édith Piaf, Marcel Proust and Jim Morrison.

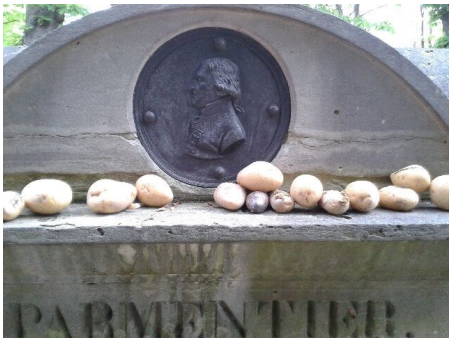
They were astonished to come across a tomb that was festooned with potato tubers.

It transpired that this is the last resting place of Antoine-Augustin Parmentier - the champion of the potato in France. He is so well regarded in France that people still bring a potato tuber and place it on his tomb some 200 years after his death in 1813!

Apparently his potato journey began when Parmentier then serving in the French army during the 7 years war was captured by Prussia. In prison he was fed on potatoes, which at that time was, throughout most of Europe, considered as fit for animal feed only. Indeed at that time French law prohibited the cultivation of the potato as it was considered a risk to human health!

On his return to France he pursued an interest in nutritional chemistry and remembered his experiences in jail with potatoes. Due largely to his efforts, the Paris Faculty of Medicine declared potatoes edible in 1772. However there remained resistance which he sought to overcome with a series of publicity stunts.

The turning point arrived in 1785 when a poor harvest resulted in the potato contributing to staving off famine in northern France. In 1789 Parmentier published *Treatise on the Culture and Use of the Potato, Sweet Potato, and Jerusalem Artichoke.* During the French Revolution which began that year potatoes became a staple for the populace at large.



Parmentier survived *La Terreur* and died in 1813, aged 76. His legacy is marked today by several potato dishes bearing his name such as *Hachis Parmentier* which is not unlike cottage or shepherd's pie, and by casual visitors to a Paris cemetery having a potato tuber in their pocket!