

Feeling inspired Rob Amar, Managing Director, writes:



Normally at the start of a new year, we are emerging from the excesses of the festive period, looking forward to the year ahead filled with new hopes, aspirations, and positive intentions. This year is obviously a bit different.

I was fortunate enough to get to Finland on 17 December before they suspended flights from the UK, which was a welcome change of scene for a couple of weeks, blessed with snow, sauna, and the annual visit of the real Joulupukki (Father Christmas).

While Santa was generous as always, I suppose the best Christmas present was the UK-EU trade deal. As we edged towards 31 December, with deadlines missed but talks continuing, did we really think there wouldn't be something of a deal? Nevertheless, the trade deal announced on Christmas Eve was a relief, removing the uncertainty of tariffs and all the extra work and cost that would have brought.

But as we've discovered in the first two weeks of January, tariff-free does not mean hassle-free, with additional paperwork, delays and uncertainty. It may be a while before we understand the full implications of leaving the EU, what's in the deal, and what isn't.

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Mutti's strong growth is hardly surprising

There has been a huge amount of marketing activity for Mutti in recent months so that it is no surprise that the brand's sales grew +194% in the most recent quarter.

Between 19th October and 22nd November, there was a nationwide outdoor advertising campaign with a reach of approximately 115 million. The advertisements were close to stores stocking Mutti products, and featured the brand's core products: Polpa, Peeled tomatoes, Puree, Passata and Pizza sauce.

Mutti has formed a partnership with The Great British Chefs, with Paul Foster developing three recipes using Mutti's core products with a campaign reach of 1.8 million. <https://www.greatbritishchefs.com/features/mutti-tomatoes#>

Mutti also partnered with The Grocer who featured Mutti with a homepage takeover, a full-page advertisement, and an email to its database, with a reach of over 240,000.



To introduce the brand to key media, whose reach would be around 10 million, VIP press and blogger packs were sent out.

UK Facebook and Instagram media accounts were set up towards the end of October. Mutti now has over 4,200 followers on UK Instagram and there has been considerable very positive engagement from fans sharing their recipes and love for the brand. (See @MuttiPomodoroUK)



Throughout the fourth quarter, RH Amar ran promotions supported with instore and online marketing activity as well as geo-targeted social media advertising close to key stores.

If all this activity has produced the results we referred to above, then the plans we have for 2021 should see further growth for this already popular brand.

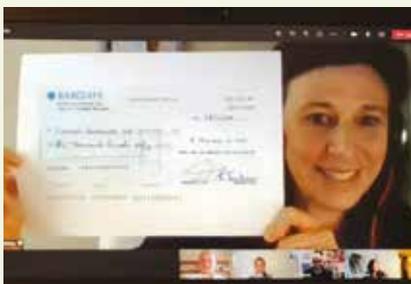
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Feeling inspired

Lockdown 3 also brings a gloomy start to the year, with further restrictions on our everyday freedoms, and yet more pressure on the hospitality sector, among many others. But beyond the gloom there is hope. The tunnel may be longer than we expected, but there is light at the end. Meanwhile, we have a role to play as key workers keeping our small part of the food supply chain moving – and I'm sure our premium brands and products are helping British households enjoy lockdown a little bit more than they might otherwise have done.

Over the past couple of weeks, we have organised virtual cheque presentations with the five charities who shared the £75,000 donations we offered as part of our 75th Anniversary Charity Draw back in November, the highlight of our anniversary year. We had planned to do these in person, but thankfully technology has triumphed and actually allowed more people to participate in these presentations. These have been both truly inspiring, uplifting, and at times emotional events, learning about the great work the charities do, and how our donations will make a difference.

Originally we planned the draw to be a one-off to mark our milestone anniversary. My daughter, Sofia, asked why we don't run it every year, and I thought "Indeed, why not?". So we now plan to hold a charity draw involving customers and brand partners every year. A little inspiration from a 10-year-old.



Del Monte® partners Jack Monroe

Del Monte® is very excited to announce its new partnership with award-winning food writer and cook, Jack Monroe. She will be highlighting the versatility, cost value and nutritional benefits of canned fruit. Del Monte® is the category leader in this market with a 32.6% share at total market level, and 39.6% within the impulse convenience channel.*

There are many mouth-watering fruit recipes on the Del Monte® website, and on Facebook and Instagram:

<http://www.delmonteeurope.com/recipes.htm>

<https://m.facebook.com/delmonteuk/>

<https://www.instagram.com/delmonteeurope/>

* Nielsen 52 weeks, 3.10.20



Nifty teamwork, says IT Manager, John Lilleystone



John

The period between Christmas and New Year is typically a quiet time. However, on one of these days, the fact that I missed three calls from the office before 8am was a bad sign. It turned out half the phones in the office were not working, and there was no internet or network connection. And I was 80 miles away! A critical piece of hardware had failed and we needed a new unit - pronto. I called our supplier who managed to source one - but it was

140 miles away! So I rang our Logistics Manager, Mody (Modestas Rupkus) who jumped in his car to go and get it whilst I was driving to the office. By the time I reached the office, Mody was back with the hardware. I installed it, and thankfully everything was working again before midday. Some nifty teamwork I'd say!

(Ed: Needless to say, John, Mody and our supplier, Paul Murana, were commended and thanked for their efforts)



Mody

Cooks&Co on TV

Cooks&Co Roasted Red Peppers were featured on Jamie Oliver's latest TV show, "Keep Cooking: Family Favourites". The Peppers also appear in several recipes in his new book, "7 Ways", which sits alongside the TV show.

To celebrate the product's appearance on TV, a competition was run on social media for Cooks&Co followers. They stood to win a copy of the cookbook by sharing their creative ways on how the Roasted Red Peppers can be used.

The latest brand updates can be found on Instagram - @Cooksandcouk



Camp Coffee and Veganuary

To celebrate Veganuary this year, Camp Coffee shared new and exclusive plant-based recipes throughout the month. It also offered a very special competition which gave followers the chance to win a hamper by sharing their vegan bakes using #BakerOfTheMonth.

Camp Coffee is Vegan Approved and is also gluten-free.

The latest brand updates can be found on Instagram - @campcoffeeuk



Stock up for Pancake Day

Shrove Tuesday is on 16th February this year, and it is never too late to stock up with Lazy Lemon. Whether consumers enjoy their pancakes thick (the American way) or the traditional thinly rolled pancake, a squeeze of Lazy Lemon, made with 100% concentrate, offers a convenient and easy substitute for fresh lemons and is a store cupboard staple.



RANGE EXTENSIONS

Still more products from Cooks&Co

There are more exciting products joining the Cooks&Co range this year:

Lotus Root – This is the latest addition to the plant-based range of ingredients. The Lotus Root has a mild sweet flavour and crunchy texture making it perfect for adding to stir fries and curries. It is Vegan Approved and contains no artificial flavours, colours, or preservatives.



Tri-Colour Jalapenos – These are ideal for adding spice and colour to dishes. They are traditionally used in Mexican cuisine, particularly in nachos and salsas. The product is Vegan Approved.



New size from Nando's

RH Amar has extended its range of the very popular Nando's chilli sauces by adding a 500ml Nando's PERi-PERi sauce.



New range of olives – Three new olive products have also joined the range this year: Whole Kalamata Olives 250g, Mixed Pitted Greek Olives 240g, and Green Halkidiki Olives stuffed with Sun-Dried Tomatoes 230g. All these olives are Vegetarian Society approved.





Balsamic vinegar – new label legislation

During 2021, the official governing body for Balsamic Vinegar of Modena PGI will be introducing changes to the legislation for the labelling of this product.

In 2021, all members of the Consortium of Producers of Balsamic Vinegar of Modena will implement a new **authenticity seal** with a hologram of the Consortium logo. This will appear on the neck of each bottle. The special code within the hologram will provide not only manufacturing information with a clear indication of the whole supply chain, but also useful information for consumers so that they can be sure the producer is a certified member of the Consortium.

The Consortium has recently stated their intention to implement a new, uniform **quality system**, using the existing leaf system as its base. This will become the standard identification method for all producers who are Consortium members. RH Amar is pleased to note that Acetum, producers of the Mazetti brand, has worked closely with the Consortium to contribute to this much needed development. The intention is to make balsamic vinegar more “shoppable” for consumers, and to help them to identify the differences between the products more easily. It will clearly identify the four different leaf qualities with usage indications. Changes to this system and the logo are expected to be introduced in the Spring.

Following a grace period during 2020, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture has confirmed the **mandatory removal of any % grape must references** on the labels of Balsamic Vinegar of Modena. This change is effective immediately. The percentage of grape must or density is not an indicator of quality in Balsamic Vinegar. As there are different types and qualities of grape must and wine vinegar, declaring the percentage is misleading to the trade and most importantly, to consumers. The same goes for density level. The reason for this is that two products with the exact same density and percentage of grape must can taste very different.

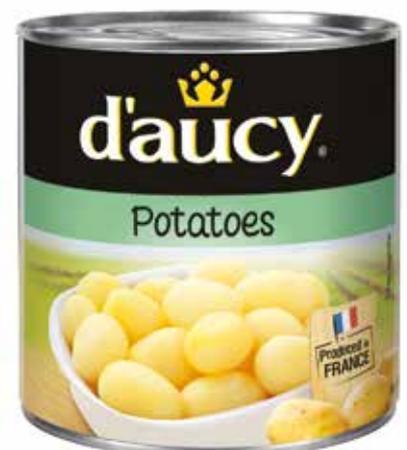
D'Aucy vegetable shortages

2020 has been an extraordinary year for canned vegetables with global demand sky-rocketing due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The seasonality of the crops has compounded the issue, meaning that we are going into 2021 with shortages across the range. The two vegetables worst affected are potatoes and peas.

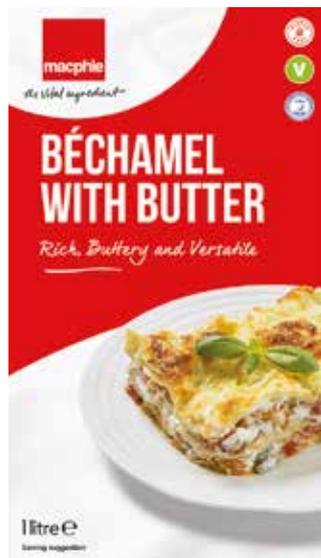
The pandemic continues to play havoc in potato markets across Europe.

November saw the introduction of stricter lockdown measures across the EU and the UK, which have been further extended in both December and January. This has hampered processed potato markets in particular, for example, chip and French fry production.

Potatoes used in the tinning process are those that are too small for processed potato manufacture. Because this has



Macphie launches new "simply clever" branding



Before

Macphie felt that a packaging refresh was also required to ensure that important messages such as "gluten-free" or "vegan" have strong stand out.

The brand roll-out will continue throughout 2021 across all core products.

For more details, please visit <https://www.macphie.com/macphie-launches-new-simply-clever-branding>.

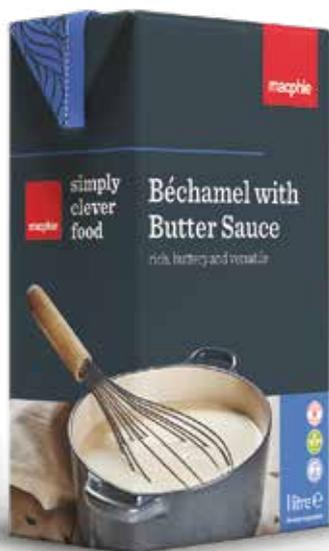
The advertising was well received by UK audiences and reached over 12m people. Plans are already in place for another burst of TV activity early next year.

You can watch the advert at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1BCM_xXRf4

November 2020 saw the first phase of MacPhie's "simply clever" new brand launch. The redesign will build on Macphie's ethos of providing just that - simply clever food.

Macphie CEO Andy Stapley said: "I once asked someone what made Macphie different and their response was, 'Macphie does the clever stuff'. That stuck with me and became a key building block when we were thinking about how to communicate our brand foundations.

"Our products are high quality, and our brand and packaging should reflect this. We do all the science and research to take the pain out of cooking complicated recipes and create quick and consistent solutions for our customers."



After

Winner of 75th anniversary charity draw

As we announced in the October issue of Fine Food News, we decided to donate £75,000 to charity to mark our 75th anniversary. Our customers and brand partners were invited to nominate a charity, and the winners were revealed on 13th November when Henry Amar drew the names from a revolving drum.

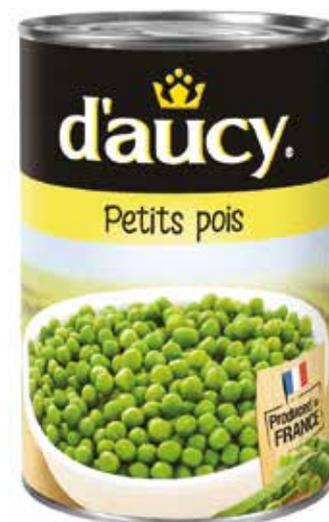
And the winning charities and those who nominated them were:

- Southern Area Hospice Services – nominated by Savage & Whitten – received £5,000
- Sussex Wildlife Trust – nominated by Infinity Wholefoods – received £5,000
- CLIC Sargent – nominated by Morrisons – received £5,000
- Great Ormond Street Hospital – nominated by Whitbread – received £10,000
- Cancer Research UK – nominated by Knighton Foods – received £50,000



declined due to lockdown, since pubs and restaurants cannot operate at full capacity, the factories are operating at a lower capacity. This has led to an output shortage of small potatoes. As a result, many tinned vegetable producers, including D'Aucy, are not receiving the volumes required for tinned potatoes as they do not sort the potato harvest themselves but contract volumes to the processing factories.

The availability of tinned peas has also been badly affected. The 2020 pea harvests were down 45% with no carry over stock due to the demands that the pandemic created. This has led to a shortage of tinned peas until new season harvest commences in June 2021.





Jenny Shipton joins as Marketing and Brand Controller

Jenny joined the Company in mid-January. She has many years' experience within the world of FMCG, having been Brand Manager at Diageo, Senior Innovation Manager at H.J. Heinz, and most recently Brand Director at Pernod Ricard. Jenny will be heading up our own brand team working with Anne-Marie Cannon and Rebecca Cook to put in place new marketing strategies to deliver growth for the brands we own: Cooks&Co, Mary Berry's, Camp Coffee, and The Original Waffle Company. When we are able to return to the office, Jenny will have a short commute as she lives in Marlow!

And we also welcome.....

..... John Jarvis and Simona Jotkeviciute.

John is part of the warehouse team, and drives our van for local deliveries. Between deliveries he also acts as an order picker.

Simona acts as the Company's receptionist, but also job shares with Lisa Ryan in a demand planning role.

Sustainability update

We announced in the last issue of Fine Food News that we had replaced plastic bubble wrap with paper honeycomb wrap. Since then, Operations Director, Tim Brady, has reported that we are investing in a cardboard shredder. This will allow us to produce honeycomb and void packaging from our own surplus cardboard, rather than buy it in.



Congratulations to.....



Ed Cheadle who has been promoted to the role of National Account Executive for the Convenience channel. Ed joined the Company in October 2018 as Area Account Manager for the Midlands and the North West.

And to....

Zara Schultz who has been with RH Amar for five years working in the Customer Services team and has been a supportive colleague to everyone in the Operations team and beyond.



Karen helps the horses

As well as continuing with our charitable donations, RH Amar has now launched a new initiative encouraging each member of staff to spend one day a year volunteering at a charity of their choice.

This of course was difficult to implement during 2020 due to the pandemic. However, Karen Jones, our Wholesale and Convenience Controller, did manage to spend a day in August at the Mane Chance Horse Sanctuary in Godalming, Surrey. The mission of the Sanctuary is to rescue and rehabilitate abused, abandoned, and old horses, integrating them into the local community. Many of the horses initially lack trust because of their terrible experiences – but they eventually find peace at the sanctuary and their health is restored. Karen spent a most enjoyable day on field maintenance, grooming, welfare tasks, and health checks.



Our Hero brands

Ella's Kitchen

This year RH Amar will be celebrating 10 years of partnership with Ella's Kitchen, the UK's No.1 baby food brand*. We are very proud of this long-standing relationship with a brand that has had such a positive impact on the lives of so many parents and their babies.

Ella's Kitchen was founded by Paul Lindley (Ella's Dad) back in 2006 with the aim of providing good, nutritional, fun food for babies and toddlers. He was alarmed by the rise in childhood obesity and the lack of natural and nutritious baby food in the market at the time, so he decided to create a range to overcome these deficiencies. He made a promise to his children that he would only ever use ingredients that were pure, natural, and healthy. This still forms a central part of Ella's Kitchen's mission today - to improve children's lives through developing healthy relationships with food.

He also wanted to make the products easy to use, so in preference to traditional jars, he developed his range using resealable pouches, perfect for use both in and out of the home.

Fast forward to the present day and Ella's Kitchen is the UK's No.1 baby food brand, with a range of health driven, natural, additive-free recipes for all stages of a baby's weaning journey. These range from simple first taste purées to toddler meals, all developed to create a fun food journey. There is also constant product development to make sure that the products are as relevant as possible, in terms of flavour, ingredients and dietary needs. For example, Ella's Kitchen has recently launched a



dairy-free range in pouches, plus a new range of snacking products with new flavours to excite the toddlers.

In addition to offering great products, Ella's Kitchen guides parents throughout the entire weaning journey. It offers help from experts in the field of childhood nutrition, and hints and tips to make mealtimes fun and interactive.

RH Amar has seen great growth within the areas we manage on behalf of Ella's Kitchen. The convenience, wholesale and foodservice channels, as well as the retailers understand the importance of having a core baby food range in-store to offer parents. This includes meal solutions as well as nutritious snacking products aimed specifically at babies. With more parents shopping locally, it is important that retailers become a one-stop shop for all their needs. As Ella's Kitchen is delivering twice as much value to the retailer than its closest competitor*, now is the time to be creating a baby food range in-store.



Confex Supplier of the Month



Karen Williams, National Account Manager for foodservice, is the proud possessor of two letters from Confex, both with congratulations on RH Amar having been voted Supplier of the Month. The first relates to December 2019 and the second to September 2020. Karen pays tribute to the efforts of the Area Account Manager team in increasing sales, and to colleagues in the office who ensure on-time and hassle-free deliveries. Confex offers a reward of a bottle of champagne. Pictured is Karen with the December 2019 bottle. However, she may need to wait until the days of Covid-19 are over before receiving that for 2020!

In the Spotlight – Nick Ash

In the next few issues of Fine Food News, we will be asking some of our colleagues to respond to the questions below. The first to be “In the Spotlight” is Nick Ash, National Account Manager, Foodservice.

What job would you have liked to do had you not been in the food business?

The house renovation/development/rental business. My wife and I have developed a few houses in the UK over the years which we have renovated and sold.

What is your favourite leisure time activity?

Watching the kids’ various sports activities. Ben has travelled as far as Gothenburg for his football tournaments and Charlotte has had gymnastics competitions around the country. This has somewhat stopped due to Covid but Ben and I have started to play golf when restrictions allow.

Which film have you most enjoyed?

Any James Bond or “The Big Short” - and “The Hangover” always makes me laugh.

Describe your perfect meal.

I have simple tastes. Steak and chips.

What luxury would you take to a desert island?

If I can call my dog a luxury, I would take her. Otherwise a football or rugby ball to kick around.



How have you responded to the coronavirus epidemic?

There has been lots of shopping for grandparents and we set up a village network for delivering local meats, vegetables and bakery products from local farmers. I have had more time to reflect on and prioritise the important things in life.

What advice would you give to a young person starting out in the world of work?

Find something you enjoy. It’s important to enjoy what you do. Reflect honestly at the end of each year and set yourself goals. Don’t just follow the crowd - be brave and follow your own path.

We hope you enjoy reading our Fine Food News publication. If you wish to stop receiving future editions, please email Rebecca De Ascencao at rdeascencao@rhamar.com, or write to: Fine Food News, RH Amar, Turnpike Way, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 3TF.