



HFMA UPDATE

by Graham Keen,
Executive Director

I am very much hoping that by the time you read this, you will be about to visit, or have just visited, our industry's great annual coming together – Natural & Organic Products Europe at ExCeL, in London. One of my favourite times of the year, I really look forward to meeting old friends (some of them now very old!), but perhaps even more so the huge number of younger people that are the lifeblood, and in whose hands this great industry is going to thrive and prosper going forward.

That's why I was very pleased this year to be invited onto the panel of judges for the new '30 under 30' awards, which will recognise 30 up-and-coming individuals working within the natural and organic products industry today, and all of them less than half my own age! There will be an event to celebrate the achievements of these 30 individuals on the Monday of the show, so why not come along and give them a pat on the back for a job well done. I know I am certainly looking forward to meeting them all.



One of my other favourite events of the year took place in March, and that was the Health Food Institute's annual meeting in London. There was a really great turnout and also a couple of super presentations by Sara Novakovic and Rupy Aujla. Sara was pretty nervous before she got up to speak, but you would not have thought so and she charmed

It's good to meet

everyone with tales from her life as one of our most prominent health food retailers. Rupy gave a fascinating presentation and was the epitome of suave as he told us of his super efforts, as a practising GP, to get the nation eating more healthily. I got some time with him for a chat and I think he can be a great advocate for our industry's products going forward.



And during the event, we saw the presentation of a number of awards, including the two awards sponsored annually by the HFMA, and the bestowal of Fellowships to some very worthy recipients. One of these is our old friend, Brian Halls, who, aside from being a great guy (even though he is a Chelsea supporter), has fought great personal adversity over recent years and has somehow managed along the way to maintain his great sense of humour and fun. I could not have been more happy for him, and I know a great many people in this industry feel exactly the same way.

I received my own Fellowship, along with my great friend Tom Moses, back in 1998 when the HFI, then known as the Institute of Health Food Retailing, held its annual bash up in Birmingham to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the first health food store there in 1898, an event commemorated in this photo (above). It was opened by



the forward-thinking James Henry Cook and it has always given both Tom and me a great sense of pride to have received our Fellowships from the wonderful daughter of James Henry Cook, Kathleen Keleny.

Another significant recent event, about which you will have read elsewhere in this magazine, was the latest meeting in March of the Micronutrients and Health All-Party Parliamentary Group, the secretariat for which is managed by the HFMA. Under the new Chair, Carolyn Harris, the MP for Swansea East, we had a really interesting meeting with several UK Parliamentarians and Government officials present on the subject of cardiovascular disease, the role of diet in reducing its incidence and the positive influence that health claims can make in encouraging this to happen. As you can see from this photograph, we were in the very elegant and historic surroundings of one of the House of Commons committee rooms, and I'm pleased to say we will be back for our second meeting of the year at the end of June.

Whilst I am on the subject of meetings, I will take this opportunity to say that I am looking forward to welcoming our members to our 2018

HFMA annual members' meeting, which will be held at the prestigious Parliament Chamber in Middle Temple Hall, on Tuesday, June 5.

If your company is not a member, why not think about changing that? As a member, you would be a part of by far the most vocal and proactive trade association in the sector, which always goes to extraordinary lengths to try to protect its members' interests. You will benefit from knowing what is happening and how you might be affected, and who to turn to for the best advice available. And last, but not least, you will have a great feeling of wellbeing that you are playing your part in standing shoulder to shoulder with a lot of companies and people who are doing all they can to protect, promote and defend our wonderful industry. **hfb**

Our strength as an industry comes from speaking with one voice and presenting a united front. So, to help us in our efforts to protect this industry and benefit from the gold-standard advice we provide, join the HFMA at the earliest opportunity. To learn more about our activities, please contact me at graham@hfma.co.uk, or visit www.hfma.co.uk

HFMA membership is vital to ensure that your company keeps abreast of the fast-changing regulatory environment. The HFMA is the UK's best source of information and most effective defender of our industry's interests. To help the HFMA defend your business at this most critical time contact hfma@hfma.co.uk or call 020 8481 7100.

