

Meet our Members - The Cornish Duck Company



Roger Oliver

Award-winning local food producer the Cornish Duck Company is quietly confident it will see a bumper year of trading, despite the gloomy outlook on the global economy.

"I truly believe that local producers across Cornwall will win through the tough times" says co-owner of the business Tanya Dalton, "We have a dramatic coastline, wonderful facilities and some of the best eating establishments in the country. With the pound being weak against other currencies I'm sure people will see the benefits of spending their holiday in the South West."

The Cornish Duck Company, thought to be the first commercial duck farm in Cornwall, offers Cornish bred and reared duck to restaurants and the public across the South West. Roger Oliver and Tanya Dalton manage the enterprise on their 165-acre farm at Terras, just outside St Stephen.

"I thoroughly enjoy watching local businesses succeed and my Members grow their companies, building themselves up," says Cornish Mutual Insurance Inspector Joan Ball, who has worked for the South West insurer for over 33 years.

She continues, "My Members Roger and Tanya have done just that with the Cornish Duck Company. There have been a few transformations of Roger's business interests and we have been there every step of the way."

Cornish Mutual now insures the couple for loss of frozen stock, business interruption cover, public and products liability and buildings and contents insurance.

Roger adds, "We've been Cornish Mutual Members for well over 50 years because my father signed up to the firm and my grandfather was probably a Member previously. We were running a dairy farm up to 1999, and then moved into agricultural contracting until three years ago."

He wanted to get back into being a food producer, rather than leasing farm machinery and working as an agricultural contractor. Farmer's daughter Joan understood the couple's needs and spent time with both Roger and Tanya when they decided to diversify and change the direction of the business.

The Cornish Duck Company supplies most of the top class restaurants across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly including the Jamie Oliver-inspired Fifteen at Watergate Bay and Michael Caines' restaurant at Gidleigh Park. They also regularly attend Truro Farmers' Market to sell to the public. The Company, which won a 'Taste of the West' Gold award for their whole duck in 2007, hatches and dispatches around 10,000 free-range birds every year on-site.

Roger adds, "Being with Cornish Mutual is a tradition for us - we have been with the company for so long now, but it's about trust and we know they are there when we need to use them. When I was running the contracting business, we had to make two or three claims and they were sorted out efficiently in a fast, friendly and fair way."

Insurance Inspector Joan Ball, who has been on the road in mid-Cornwall since 2002, visits Roger and Tanya at least once a month and sometimes more often.

She laughs, "Roger makes a great cup of coffee! But seriously, I make myself available all the time and out-of-hours and that's the thing about Cornish Mutual - we're very accessible, it's not nine to five, they can call 24 hours a day."

Roger adds, "This is all about the personal service we get from Joan. It's part of Cornwall's business community interacting. Cornish Mutual has served the farming and agricultural industry and young farmers well over the years and it's about everyone meshing together and sharing the camaraderie of life."

Festival funds benefit Devon charity



Devon children's charity Farms for City Children has benefited from fundraising efforts by Cornish Mutual at this year's Exeter Festival of South West Food & Drink.

The charity was given all the money raised by the company, which sponsored the event held in Northernhay Gardens and Exeter Castle between Friday 17 and Sunday 19 April.

Visitors to Cornish Mutual's stand were asked to guess the number of farm animals in an illustration produced specially for the event. All correct answers were then entered into a prize draw to win a local produce hamper put together by Darts Farm near Exeter, with exhibitors at the Exeter Festival donating the products.

Farms for City Children helps youngsters from urban primary schools to visit Nethercott farmhouse just outside the village of Iddesleigh, close to the River Torridge. Children visit the farm all year round to learn where their food comes from and to get involved in feeding livestock, mucking out, grooming, milking and tending kitchen gardens.

Cornish Mutual insured the Exeter Festival of South West Food & Drink. Managing Director,

Continued on page 2

Insurance Inspector John Amery with Bryony & Matthew Blood Smyth

Votes for three new board members



Peter Beaumont, Leslie Baker & Ian Pawley

Members of Cornish Mutual voted to elect three new board members at the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 26 March 2009.

The company's finance director Peter Beaumont was officially appointed to the board at the AGM, alongside retired solicitor Ian Pawley and former insurance broker Leslie Baker. The meeting was held at the Falmouth Beach Resort Hotel at 2.30pm and was well attended – a number of proxy votes were also submitted ahead of the event.

A report on the accounts was given by Winter Rule, the company's auditors, followed by a directors' report, chairman's address, statement of accounts and investment report.

During the meeting, new finance director Peter Beaumont was welcomed and voted onto the board by Cornish Mutual Members. Peter has joined the company from corporate finance specialists Close Asset Finance Ltd where he was group financial controller.

Ian Pawley, former managing partner of regional legal firm Stephens Scown, also joined the Cornish Mutual board. Ian, who has lived and worked in Cornwall for all his professional life as a solicitor, understands the agricultural sector well having dealt with many issues around farms and inheritance tax.

Ian, who retired from Stephens Scown last year, holds non-executive director positions with Cornwall Care and Cornwall Partnership NHS Trust as well as being a trustee of the Duchy Health Charity and Cornwall Community Foundation.

He said: "I am committed to expanding the Company's business and increasing profitability for Members. The Company will never overlook its

roots in the farming and rural community, and will seek to preserve and enhance them. Cornish Mutual must not only look after its existing Members and satisfy their needs, but also seek new opportunities to hold its market position against competitors.

I hope my knowledge of modern legal and business requirements including those of corporate governance will be of service to Cornish Mutual. I believe its mutual status holds great benefits for its business as well as its Members; it's something of which the West Country should be very proud."

Former insurance broker, Leslie Baker was the third appointment to the board of Cornish Mutual. With over 45 years experience of the insurance industry under his belt, Leslie retired in 2007 after selling the Newquay - based firm, Walmsley, Baker and Co., in which he was a partner, in 2005. He comes from a farming family and was born and raised in Cornwall.

Leslie, who lives in St Austell, explained: "I understand the insurance business and the needs of the rural community. All my family are in farming, I've been a Cornish Mutual Member for over five years but have a long-standing professional relationship with the company as a former insurance broker."

He continued: "I want to help grow the company which has a unique product, local service with hands-on management. This is a Members' insurance company and not a shareholders' company and if you're a Member, you will benefit from that."

To see the results of proxy votes for the Annual General Meeting please visit our website at <http://www.cornishmutual.co.uk/index.php/annual-general-meeting-2009>.

Cover story continued

Alan Goddard said: "Farms for City Children is a really worthwhile charity and one which fits well with our values as a company. Our roots are firmly within the rural community across the south west and this further demonstrates our commitment to supporting such important local causes."

Insurance Inspectors from Cornish Mutual manned the charity stand at the Exeter Food & Drink Festival throughout the event and raised £150 which the company matched so that £300 was donated to Farms for City Children.

Your questions answered

Thank you to all those Members who took the time to fill in our feedback form in the AGM packs. We have decided that some of our answers would be of benefit to all Members so in future issues of the Newsletter we will be publishing comments on some of the issues that you have raised.

We appreciate hearing from our Members at any time of the year so if you would like to give us your thoughts or views please contact Melissa Ward on **01872 277151** or email mward@cornishmutual.co.uk

Comment: Please don't send us more than one AGM pack

Many Members tell us that they do not wish to receive more than one AGM pack. We acknowledge that a number of Members are frustrated by the number of AGM packs they receive. This is because we have to send the packs to all Members individually including those who have insurances in their own name, joint names or a business name at the same address. This is a legal requirement in adhering to our Company Memorandum and Articles of Association, and we are currently unable to change this process.

Comment: Should Cornish Mutual Directors be more evenly spread across Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset so they represent geographical areas and influence potential business?

Whilst, historically, Non-Executive Directors provided local representation, the increasing demands of modern business and regulation have meant that they have needed to stand back from becoming involved with the insurance needs and issues of individual Members and prospective Members.

Non-Executive Directors, who are all Cornish Mutual Members, are selected for their capability to set and direct the delivery of business strategy which ensures the needs of all Members today and in the future are met in an effective and personalised manner. The role of Insurance Inspectors has broadened so that, supported by considerable training and development, they can fulfil local requirements and business needs.



Cornish Mutual support Farm Business Awards

Cornish Mutual is pleased to be sponsoring the 'Best Farm Diversification Award' at the Western Morning News Cornwall Farm Business Awards. This is in association with the Cornish Landowners Association, Coodes and BBC Cornwall who are supporting the ARC-Addington Fund.

This is an exciting new venture rewarding innovation and enterprise in the county. The awards were launched in the CLA marquee at the Royal Cornwall Show and winners of the eight categories - which range from the best woman in farming and best commercial farmer to the best diversification and the best Cornish product - will be announced at an exclusive dinner in February 2010. Look out for details of the award scheme in the Western Morning News. We hope that many of our Members will take part and would love to see you win.

Cornish Mutual Annual Golf Day



The Cornish Mutual Annual Golf day is now in its sixteenth year and will take place on 7 October 2009 at Bude Golf Club. Members and guests are invited to take part in the competition. This has always been a popular day with many prizes.

The cost is £30, to include green fees, coffee and a bacon sandwich on arrival and carvery after the golf. If you would like any further information or to book a place please contact either:

Edwin Stanbury 01288 356774
Tony Rounsevell 01208 813293
Jim Martin 01208 813119
Cornish Mutual 0845 900 1288

Motor Insurance Certificate Amendments

In July 2007 Cornish Mutual joined with the majority of motor insurers in amending their private car certificates to help stop the recovery of seized, uninsured vehicles 'by the backdoor' where some persons were using their 'driving other cars' extension to recover seized vehicles. This practice appears to have occurred in other parts of the country and we are unaware of any Cornish Mutual Members being involved.

As from 1 May 2009 we have been helping further by imposing a similar exclusion on all our Motor Trade and Motor Fleet policies and this will make it even more difficult for uninsured persons to recover any seized vehicle. This may not solve the problem entirely but it will mean that there will be less uninsured vehicles on the roads which, in turn, will reduce the number of claims involving uninsured vehicles.

As always Cornish Mutual will continue to work with the authorities and other insurers to reduce fraud and illegal practices affecting our Members.