



Janet Reuter

July / August 2019

This newsletter is for July and August together as it is now Summer break until the courses start again in September.

All the most important outdoor events in Summer include an afternoon tea in a picnic hamper.

The season includes sports and cultural events.

Ascot races, then Henley on Thames rowing, Wimbledon tennis and of course cricket at Lords. Glyndebourne Opera and outdoor pop concerts. And of course Shakespeare is a favourite.

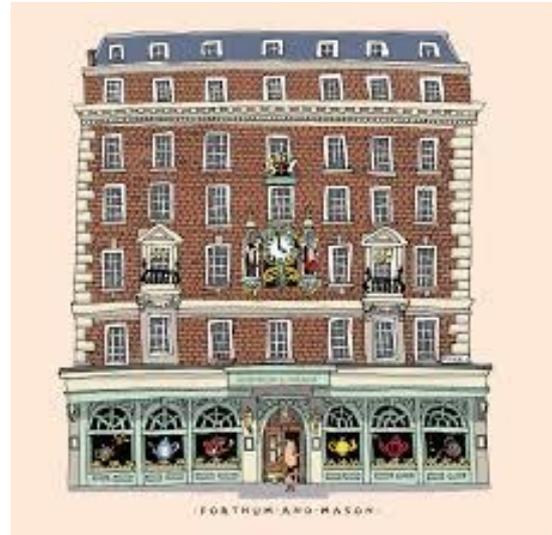
Champagne is essential and many very special culinary treats that you can pack into a smart picnic basket with all the essential cutlery, fine bone china and crystal glasses, table cloth and napkins.

The luxury store Fortnum & Mason founded in 1707 in Duke Street, London, was the very first to realise the business potential of making food hampers for the rich Londoners of the time.

The story began in 1705 when Hugh Mason had a small store in St James Market and a spare room in his house, and the Fortnum family who had arrived in London as high class builders reinvigorating Mayfair in the wake of the Great Fire in 1666, rented a room from him. William Fortnum, who was quite the entrepreneur, also took a post as Footman in Queen Anne's household. Fortnum's ingenious idea for selling Queen Anne's half used wax candles, at a profit, to the palace staff, paved the way for the beginning of a profitable and respectable business when the two men went into partnership. This partnership was the foundation in 1707 of the luxury store in Piccadilly, London, that we know today, although it took two more generations before it really got going.

In 1761 Charles Fortnum, the grandson of William got a post as a Footman of George III and Queen Charlotte. Now there were not only candles to be sold to the staff but also food, coal, house linen and wine. It was not only St. James's palace servants who bought from him but he sold to all the great private houses that had sprung up around the palace. The store in Piccadilly was booming and ready to take on the fast growing trade of selling to the local nobility who were keen on lavish home entertaining. Home delivery became a great success as it included all the fine essentials to make a dinner party special and very individual.

Finding itself perfectly placed in London for travelers heading west, our young enterprise set itself the task to capitalise on creating food that was easily portable for long distance journeys. Coming up with numerous ideas, Mr Fortnum and his creative staff developed the clever idea of wrapping a hard-boiled egg in sausage meat and coating it in fried breadcrumbs, the world's first Scotch Egg. Tasty, filling and portable, it proved to be just as popular then as it is today.



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Fortnum & Mason (continued)

Business boomed! In 1794 the store became a Post Office. The business of sending and receiving mail was open to anyone, another opportunity quickly seized by Fortnum's. Providing letterboxes that were collected six times a day, this arrangement attracted all sorts of people, who were captivated by the unique and magnificent windows and spent money in the store. The arrangement lasted until 1839, when the General Post Office was founded.

Leading the trend in ready-to-eat luxury foods, such as poultry and game in aspic, hard-boiled eggs in forcemeat (the famous 'Scotch Egg'), boars head, truffles and mangoes, Fortnum's won first prize as importers of dried fruits and dessert goods at London's Great Exhibition of 1851. The British Empire provided many new and exotic foods and spices especially from India.

In fact the store's influence on the nation's changing eating habits was by then thought to be very strong. Charles Dickens wrote of one Epsom Derby, "Look where I will.... I see Fortnum & Mason. All the hampers fly wide open and the green downs burst into a blossom of lobster salad!" Similar references and to the prevalence of food hampers at Ascot, Henley, Wimbledon, Lord's and Twickenham meant that Fortnum's had become a most famous name in catering.

In 1854 Queen Victoria who had taken a personal interest in the Crimean War, ordered Fortnum's "to dispatch without delay to Miss Nightingale in Scutari a huge consignment of concentrated beef tea", after the scandal of the hospital conditions there became known in England. In 1872 Fortnum's donated London's Kew Gardens its 'Old Men's Eyebrows' China Tea. The tea became a great fashion!

Mr H.J. Heinz brought Baked Beans to Piccadilly in 1886. Since the middle of the century Fortnum's had been the leading provider in tinned goods, which made the store the obvious first stop for a young entrepreneur lugging five cases of samples from the USA. Recognising a future potential, Fortnum's introduced the mighty baked bean to Britain for the first time. Whilst baked beans were one of the most successful entries in their ever-expanding list of historic gastronomic firsts, Fortnum's was considered as the premier supplier of exotic edibles to the gentry of the time. Fortnum's sent hampers to the suffragettes in prison in 1911 although they were imprisoned for breaking their windows. A very generous gesture to show they supported the Votes for Women Movement.

Fortnum's is the only store to have a department dedicated to "Expeditions", huge consignments of home comforts accompanied the English into the heart of Africa and up the Himalayas, right down to such non essentials as butter knives and sauce boats. The 1922 Everest expedition, for example, simply couldn't start without 60 tins of quail in foie gras and four dozen bottles of champagne. No expense was spared for the brave Brits conquering the world.

King George V's Jubilee in 1935 drew so many princes and rulers from all corners of the Empire that Fortnum & Mason, having long imported the best from all the continents, created a special department to accommodate their dietary requirements. They offered Muslim and Hindu readily-prepared meals, complete with liveried Indian servants where required. To whom else might one possibly have turned to take on this very special and difficult event?



The Fountain Restaurant was opened in 1955, one of the most beautiful and exciting restaurant in London. Now you could enjoy the best lunch or afternoon tea in elegant surroundings.

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Fortnum & Masons (continued)

1964 saw a new landmark added to the front of the store, the famous Fortnum's clock, with bells from the same foundry as Big Ben.

Every fifteen minutes a selection of airs is played on eighteen bells, and once an hour Messrs F&M themselves appear to check that standards are being upkept.

This creates an enormous amount of attention from passers by walking down Piccadilly.

In 2012 Her Majesty the Queen visited with HRH the Duchess of Cornwall and the Duchess of Cambridge. The Queen formally opened the Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon.

The Fortnum and Mason's color has always been turquoise which gives the hampers a bright Summer feeling. But what's in one of these wonderful baskets and how much does one cost today?



The Windsor Hamper costs £1,000 plus delivery.



“No matter the celebration, it is best to begin with a bottle of our sparkling Vintage Champagne, followed by our traditionally fruity Dundee Fruitcake, indulgent Marc de Champagne Truffle Drum, a box of Dark Chocolates, a tin of Pâte de Fruits, with some of our truly Magnificent Florentine Selection. Carrying on the sweet theme, we have packed our crumbly Pistachio & Clotted Cream Biscuits, Chocolate Pearl Shortbread Rounds and Piccadilly Biscuit Selection. These biscuits make for perfect pairing with our Rwanda OP Loose Leaf, Assam TGfop Loose Leaf and Ceylon Orange Pekoe Loose Leaf teas.

Matched in deliciousness is our Old English Hunt Marmalade, zingy Lemon Curd, our rich Raspberry Preserve and Acacia Chunk Comb Honey Amphora.

If savoury pleasures are more your thing, then included within this hamper is our Whole Decorated York Ham, Organic Smoked Salmon, plus jars of our Piccadilly Piccalilli, Fortnum's Pickle, Fig Cheese, Green Tomato Chutney and the essential Fig & Almond Foie Gras. For your cheeseboard selection, we have included our Somerset Reserve Cheddar and Traditional Stilton Jar, which makes for a perfect keepsake.

No celebration is complete without the addition of some delightful tipples including our Vintage Port, Pomerol, our Vacherin, with a bottle of our Meursault Les Narvaux and our Barolo Le Albe. The result is a banquet fit for royalty. No expense spared!

There are of course less expensive hampers, The Highgrove Hamper is for only £85 or The Honeymoon Hamper for £300 . You can also put one of your own choice together.

Starting at £50 the sky's the limit!

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News about and for the English ladies

Some new films for Summer evenings

Royal Corgi. The Queen's Favourite.

Since his arrival at Buckingham Palace, Rex lives a life of luxury. Top dog, he has superseded his three fellow Corgis in Her Majesty's heart. His arrogance can be quite irritating. When he causes a diplomatic incident during an official



dinner with the President of the United States, he falls into disgrace. Betrayed by one of his peers, Rex becomes a stray dog in the streets of London. How can he find his way back into royal favour? There is a hilarious sequence starring Donald Trump, his wife Melania, and their dog Mitzy, who they're looking to marry off, maybe to a Queen's corgi? However, Mitzy turns out to be highly skilled in the art of bullying – echoing the rude statements often uttered by her master. In his new world Rex falls in love and has to find the resources to save himself in the face of great danger. However, I am not sure from reading the reviews if it **is** only a childrens film or for adults because of the clear political undertones. Lets say a family film with a clear message!

Rocketman. The story of Elton John



“Rocketman, about the life and music of Elton John.”

It begins at a moment of crucial emotion and change in the singer's life, then backtracks to show us how his life developed to this important stage. It is like a jukebox musical fantasia, packed with toe-tapping sing-alongs you've known and loved for decades. Songs spring from significant moments in John's life, or so we're led to believe. And of course, there are depictions of John's hits rising up the charts and winning gold records, the concerts, headlines and the adoring fans. John's bizarre shopping sprees are shown when he spends his incredible riches. He is shown trying-on various ornate hats, glasses and spangled get-ups and all the sex and drugs that go along with the rock 'n' roll.

Elton John also spent his fortune on wonderful houses and gardens. He loved flowers and there is a lovely book by Caroline Cass about his Flower Phantasy

Birthdays in July and August

Helga Müller- Lorenz, Petra Schorr

Christa Henritzi, and Birgit Haubold

Happy Birthday Ladies !!

