

Master's Letter



It is a huge honour to be elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Turners, the 350th in an unbroken line going back to the aptly named John Turner in 1604.

As a keen genealogist myself, I have traced my own family stretching back thirteen generations to my earliest known ancestor, Tom Sendall who, at around the same time that John was swearing his oath to be Master, was farming land in the Cambridgeshire Fens near Ely. I value these connections with the past and the reassuring sense of continuity they bring.

When I first began my career in London as a young chartered accountant with Neville Russell in 1983, I had a rather sketchy understanding of what a livery company was. Somehow, however, I felt I would enjoy belonging to one - it chimed with my desire to give something back to the City in which I hoped I would spend my professional life.

The opportunity arose in 1994 when I joined Past Master Ilan Krieger as Finance Director of Guest Krieger Ltd and he introduced me to the Turners Company. I was then able to gain a better appreciation of the livery movement and the great force for good it is. I shall always be grateful for this.

We are living through some difficult and unpredictable times. The nation is divided, and our political system seems to be struggling to respond adequately to the concerns of many. However, before we become too despondent, let us remember that many of our livery forebears lived through far more challenging times – a civil war ending with the execution of their monarch in 1649, the destruction of their homes and livelihoods in 1666, and for many again during the two world wars.

The City of London is, of course, a resilient place. It has changed enormously over the thirty-six years I have worked here – deregulation of the financial services sector, increased global competition, the rapid pace of technological progress – and it continues to adapt to the changing environment around it. What is heartening, however, is that it continues to value its historical roots and anyone attending the Election of Sheriffs or the Silent Ceremony will bear witness to this.

As a historical livery company, we must do the same and it is to the credit of so many recent Past Masters that the Company, whilst respecting the traditions of the past, has adapted so effectively to promote our craft in new and enterprising ways. With social media changing the way we communicate, we must always be alert to future innovation, and embrace it.

In the recent United Guilds Service at St Paul's Cathedral, I was struck by some words which I felt encapsulated exactly what our collective purpose should be: *to carry the memory of times past into the future with confidence; to promote skills and talents in each generation and beyond; to be generous in our charitable work and provide opportunities for others to share the many blessings that we enjoy.*

So here, in a nutshell, is our call to promote the three C's – City, Craft, Charity. In the coming year I will do all I can to build on the work of my predecessors to continue to raise the profile of the Company in the City and beyond.

We will shortly be offering our biennial bursary awards to those who wish to pursue a particular line of training to help enhance their turning skills. We will continue to provide financial support to a wide range of needs, particularly those where the craft of turning can provide real and lasting benefit. And we will be continuing to prepare for Wizardry in Wood 2020, our fifth such exhibition, which takes place in October next year.

Over the past few years, I have had the pleasure of interviewing a number of new Freemen, many of whom have moved on to become Liverymen. The variety of different skills and talents they bring to the Company is greatly encouraging and gives every indication that our Livery will continue to be as vibrant and appealing in the future as it is today.

I would like to encourage all new Liverymen to attend as many events as they can, to get to know others, and to enjoy every moment of their membership. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible, supporting the Company's activities, in the coming year.

In closing I would like to thank our Clerk, Alex Robertson, our Assistant Clerk, Becca Baker, and our Beadle, Stephen Grundy who do so much to ensure the office runs so efficiently. Sadly, Stephen is having to step down through ill health and we wish him a happy and peaceful retirement, with our grateful thanks for his many years of service. I would also like to thank our committee members and all those who give up their time to support the Company's activities and promote the craft in so many different ways.

Finally, I would like to thank the outgoing Master, David Batchelor, for leading the Company so effectively over the past year, with the tireless support of his wife, Lesley. Their commitment and enthusiasm to all aspects of the City and the Company's activities, has been an example to us all.

Andrew Sindall

Master 2019-20