

The R G Williams sentiment for 27.02.2019 dinner, Delivered by Past-Master Nicholas Somers (5 minutes)

Master, Wardens, Ladies and Gentlemen.

This evening I have the honour of giving the sentiment to our Benefactor - Richard Gardner Williams.

As many of you know, the first commemoration dinner was held on the 22nd of April 1948. - 18 years after his death.

The dinner is 1st mentioned in the two page annual report for the years 1947 to 48, a copy of which I came across, while recording all the Company property. It mentions that the Master of the day, one Henry Wilding, a common councilman, proposed the toast to RGW and "*gave such facts as could be collected concerning the life and career of the benefactor*".

Every February, since that date, more and more facts have been gleaned and passed on to the Company members at each annual dinner.

I do not intend to repeat all these facts, but rather read the well expressed verse, penned by the Late Past-Master Alan Fagg, one time Chaplain and Father of the Company. He delivered the following at the Commemoration dinner in 1990.

As years go by, till we are old,
The tale will yet again be told,
A tale related loud and oft
In accents awed, sublime and soft
We'll never tire to bring to mind
How they surprised, were to find
A fortune waiting as a gift

For them to spend and save, and lift
The standard of an art and skill
To better use, more splendid still.
For RG Williams' full intent
In last bequest, was clearly meant
To raise the Craft from humble state,
Increase its fortunes 'fore too late,
Uphold the virtue of the lathe,
Support the Craft, its standard save.

Design and workmanship must rise,
Beauty and style of work surprise,
Former standards wisely taught
That finer forms and shapes be wrought.

The Turners' work, claims standards high,
To reach them craftsmen ever try,
With wheel and chuck and chisel bent,
The Bowl, the Bracket, Box invent,
With cutting threads of screw and pin
The oak and elm you shape and spin
With coil and collar, chucks and claws
Six in one expanding jaws.
You turn, adjust, and turn again
A splendid beauty to attain.

But pause, that work be not your only need;
You must have time to rest and feed

So, Dinner have, in lordly state,
My birthday kindly celebrate,
And come together, tell your name,
To know each other, tell your fame.
Dine well, of food and wine the best
And not because it's free be blessed,
But rather 'cos the table's laid
That lasting friendships may be made,

And recognition spread, regard exchanged,
A stronger bond of Liv'ry ranged,
The City, Company and Craft debated,
Each other's good intent related;
Far into the future gazing,
New thought, ideas and vision raising.
Know that what your forebears laid
Was foundation which has stayed.

The art and skill of yesterday
Which now is ours for work and play
Must yet become tomorrow's tool;
This is inheritance's rule,
That finer, greater works be turned
By citizens who from ourselves have learned
To aim for even finer art
That lathe and working tools can start.

And also pray, with fond lament

For those whom God has newly sent
Beyond our reach, yet still in mind
That they eternal joy will find.

Now, Master, if thy will it be
Let us stand and we shall see
Each other's joy and gratitude
For riches to our Comp'ny endued
By one who spreads our bread and marg, with jam,
To Richard *"IN PIAM MEMORIAM!"*