

## **MASTER'S LETTER – MATTHEW GAVED – 13 July 2022**

It is a great honour to have been elected Master of the Turners' Company on Ascension Day, Thursday 26 May, in the Company's 418th year. The Election Court included Master Emeritus Richard Levy, who introduced me to the Turners' Company in 2006. I am very grateful that he did so and, as my Court Mentor, I continue to benefit from his valuable counsel and advice.

The Court was followed by the Election Court Dinner, also at Apothecaries' Hall. It was most pleasing that this could be shared with some of our recent Masters. These included Ilan Krieger, our newly appointed Master Emeritus, and Master Emeritus John Slater, who was my sponsor at the Election Court.

In my speech at the Election Court Dinner, I reflected on the two exceptional Master's years which had just been completed with the appointment of Melissa Scott as our new Deputy Master. During this time, she made an extraordinary contribution to the Company.

Two-year Masters were the norm in the first hundred years of the Company. Illustrious "Double Masters" included, in the 17th century, William Shaw and William Whitehill and, in the 18th century, Thomas Stanesby Junior - all renowned makers of woodwind instruments.

They are known to us through the research of Past Master John Bridgeman, and the research for the Turners' Consort and Pepys Recorder projects led by the Deputy Master over the last four years.

The last "Double Master" was Felix Fighiera, just before the First World War. He energetically raised funds to start the Company's scheme of providing lathes to schools. The programme continues to this day; lathes are loaned by the Company's Charity to training and rehabilitation centres, schools, and community workshops.

Before Felix Fighiera, the previous "Double Master" was William Burdett Coutts, husband of Community, City and Company benefactor Angela Burdett Coutts. One of her notable donations, in 1878, was the funding of four of the St Paul's bells in the name of the Turners' Company. We also made a significant contribution to their refurbishment in 2018.

The last three "Double Masters", Melissa Scott, Felix Fighiera and William Burdett Coutts, each played a pivotal role in setting the direction and ambition of the Company.

Over the last year, I enjoyed working with Melissa on the Pepys Recorder project, launched at an amazing concert at the Old Bailey on 3 May, at the invitation of Aldermanic Sheriffs Alison Gowman and Nicholas Lyons. Then, on 5 May, the Pepys Recorder was showcased to our Company and guests at our delayed '2021' Livery Dinner at Trinity House.

The Old Bailey concert combined our Company's interests in turning and music, with a fund-raising event for the Sheriffs and Recorder's Fund. The City-wide audience of over 150 was completely wowed by the programme, created and presented by Professor Ian Wilson of the

Guildhall School of Music & Drama. To further increase the reputation of the Turners' Company in the City, Livery and more widely, we hope that this music can be recorded and reach a much wider audience.

It has become traditional in Master's Letters to highlight the three 'C's of the Company: City, Craft and Charity. I would like also to make my 'C' contribution to the Turners' lexicon: "Connections".

One connection, bridging hundreds of years, is that Samuel Pepys, who knew 'everyone who was anyone' in late 17th century London, was introduced in February 1671 to Grinling Gibbons by that other great London diarist, John Evelyn.

In 2021, the Turners' Company sponsored exhibitions celebrating Gibbons' 300th anniversary. These were organised by the Master Carvers Association and the Grinling Gibbons Society and held in the City at St Mary Abchurch and the Dutch Church, and at Compton Verney.

The most important connections we make are contemporary; amongst our Company's various communities, including events like our very successful Wizardry in Wood exhibition last October, and the launch of the Pepys Recorder.

These shared experiences play a very important role in connecting our Freemen and Liverymen, their families and guests, and the wider Livery, Civic and craft communities, to the Turners' Company.

After two disconnecting Covid-19 years, a key objective for my year as Master is to help strengthen our connections within the Company - and externally to continue building our relationships in the City, in the Livery world and with our craft.

We are building a very strong team to support this ambition; through our Committees, the Wardens, and other members of the Court and our Company.

But all this depends on the crucial contribution made by our new Clerk, Niall Macnaughton, and our long-established Assistant Clerk, Rebecca Baker. As I experience almost daily, neither the Company nor the Master could function without their time, commitment and good humour.

Thank you to all.

**Matthew Gaved**

Master 2022-23