



THE TURNER



NEWSLETTER OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON • 21 • March 2003

Dear Fellow Turners

My year as Master of this ancient Company is passing with great celerity and it is now time for a retrospect of the past eight months.

In general terms, the Company is progressing well although life would have been easier without the current bear market. But, like all good things, it will come to an end and exhaust itself. The Finance Committee will, no doubt, hear the bell ring.

The Howe Committee is charged with all aspects of the Company to do with the craft of turning and, as such, has been very active this year. The Bursary Competitions are proving very successful: last year's eight applicants have increased to fourteen this year. The three winners will be awarded their bursaries at the Craft Meeting of the Register of Professional Turners in April. Preparations are in hand for our big Turning Exhibition and Craft Competitions in 2004.

The Livery Committee arranges visits to interesting places and institutions in and around the City and is heavily involved with the forthcoming celebrations for our 400th anniversary in 2004. It also produces *The Turner* which has been successfully revamped and which, thanks to Penrose Halson's efforts, is always worth reading.

Both the Howe and the Livery Committees will be very actively involved in setting up and arranging a float for the Turners' Company in the Lord Mayor's procession. We will be needing much help from all Liverymen as a good deal of sponsorship is necessary if it is to be a success. I am keen that Liverymen's children should be involved on and around the float as it will be a most memorable day for them.

I want to bring more emphasis on the raising of funds for charitable purposes. We are one of the few Liveries that do not levy quarterage and I am keen that we stay that way. However, I am sure that we could do better and I would like to see more effort being applied in that direction, possibly by appointing a semi-permanent Almoner or Charity Steward who would be tasked with making the most of our donations.

As I said in the last issue of *The Turner*, I am honoured and proud to have been elected Master of this ancient Company and will continue to do what I can to keep us moving forward.

Tony Crooks-Meredith



The Master and Lynette Ellis, wife of Assistant Peter Ellis, at the Court Ladies' Dinner in January. The dinner is held annually for members of the Court and their ladies (or gentlemen).

COMING EVENTS

United Guilds Service

Friday 28 March 2003

Craft Meeting - Register of Professional Turners

Wednesday 2 April 2003

Ladies' Dinner

Wednesday 23 April 2003

Prince Arthur Cup

Thursday 15 May 2003 (Walton Heath Golf Club)

Election Court (5:00pm) & Dinner

Thursday 29 May 2003

Newsome-Smith Trophy

Tuesday 8 July 2003
(Chartham Park Golf Club)

Court Meeting (4:00pm)

Wednesday 9 July 2003

Turners' Golf Day

Tuesday 7 October 2003

THEO FABERGÉ, HONORARY LIVERYMAN

Assistant Penrose Halson reports.

At the Court meeting in November 2002, Freeman Prizeman Theo Fabergé was presented by Master Tony Crooks-Meredith with the Honorary Liverydom of the Company. The award was made shortly after Theo's eightieth birthday, in honour of his contribution to the Craft of turning.



Theo Fabergé receiving his Honorary Liverydom - including a copy of Roland Champness' History of the Company, which is being updated for our Quater-centenary by Past Master Brian Burnett.

The last time that this award was made was in 1920 when the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable David Lloyd

George, was created an Honorary Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Turners of London. He was the last of a series of distinguished men given this honour in the previous fifty years.

The policy of awarding the Honorary Freedom and Liverydom was started in 1872, by a small group of Turners who were determined to revive the Company from the torpor into which it had fallen. The Company no longer had any regulatory power over its ancient Craft, and so had lost its *raison d'être*. Company finances were in a parlous state, new members were few and far between, current ones sometimes turned out to be dead, and those alive were often reluctant to take on any responsibilities.

By 1850 the Company had hit rock bottom. Luckily, a few energetic members saved it. Perhaps the most energetic, and certainly the most colourful, was John Jones, a great and fearless reformer and oratorical giant, who died aged 94 in 1909 after seventy years as a Liveryman.

John Jones and a handful of others saw clearly that unless the Company found a new role, it would die. He initiated a revival of the Company's interest in the Craft, awarding prizes for fine turning, from which grew well-attended Turning Competitions held in the Mansion House, with medals presented by the Lord Mayor. Prizes helped to promote

education in the art of turning, and the Company became further involved in technical education, then burgeoning, by giving lathes to industrial, reformatory and other schools.

In parallel, the Company's standing was revived by the policy of making Honorary Freemen and Liverymen of distinguished public people: the explorer H.M. Stanley, the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone, Sir Frederick Leighton (President of the Royal Academy), King Leopold II (a keen amateur turner), Sir Henry Bessemer, Angela Georgina, first Baroness Coutts, among many others.

Some of these illustrious personages had links with the Craft, but none had such a powerful connection as Theo Fabergé, virtuoso turner and designer. In 1979 the Company made Theo a Freeman Prizeman. Now he is an Honorary Liveryman; and in 2004 the winner of the Master's Competition at the Company's Quater-centenary Turning Competitions will be awarded a new prize: the Theo Fabergé prize, for a turned egg.

The winning entries in all the Competitions will be displayed at our Exhibition in Pewterers' Hall. It will be an unmissable occasion.

TURNING TO YOU FOR HELP!

Assistant George Kieffer, Chairman of the Livery Committee, is making the Company's Quater-centenary a year to remember.

As you know, 2004 will be the 400th anniversary of the granting of our Royal Charter by James I, and we shall be celebrating this Quater-centenary with a programme of events that will appeal to you, and will mark the history and the future of our ancient Company.

Our celebrations kick off in November this year, with a float in the Lord Mayor's Show. The Ladies' Dinner will see us feasting in the Mansion House. In June, our Turning Competitions will feature a new prize and will be followed by a three-day Turning Exhibition. There are plans for dinners, boat trips (with fireworks) and visits of all kinds. It will be a year to remember.

Our success will depend on your help!

Help has already been offered in the form of materials, architectural drawings and design for the float in the Lord Mayor's

procession. We need members who know about working with fibreglass to construct a giant loving cup. We need a member to supply scaffolding. We need craftsmen (amateur or professional) to help with the construction of the float on the tank transporter flatbed.

Sponsorship is always uppermost in my mind. We shall be having up to fifty Turners accompanying the float, dressed in the most attractive turners' smocks that money can buy. Would you like to join? The entry fee will be £50 per person to defray some of the costs involved (designer smocks do not come cheap) and to raise money for the Master's charity.

We may need sponsors for some events, so if your company or your connections would like to be involved, we want to hear from you.

Similarly, we shall need help for the Exhibition at Pewterers' Hall in June 2004, to set up the displays, act as stewards, and then dismantle the

exhibition. Please spare a day to support your Company. No offers of help will be turned down. There are jobs big and small, of all kinds - we shall be delighted to find just the job for you. Please contact the Clerk in the first instance. Remember:



DOUGLAS BAKER – BEADLE FOR 19 YEARS

Douglas Baker, Beadle to the Company, has retired. Born in 1919, his first jobs were as a sewing machine engineer and a craftsman in a leather works. He spent most of the War as a POW in Germany and Poland, and back in London, was struck by the beauty and atmosphere of the Law Courts, so got a job there doing night security and cleaning. Soon he fell into helping to serve at luncheons and receptions, and to looking after some of the judges - he was Lord Denning's trainbearer. And he worked for Livery Companies, becoming Beadle to both the Bowyers and the Turners in 1984. In 1995 Douglas was unanimously elected Freeman by Presentation, in recognition of his cheerful cooperation, loyalty and efficiency.

Many members of the Company recall Douglas:

Past Master Edward Sawney: "Douglas has been a good friend to us all over many years, and I am particularly grateful to him for the excellent way in which he looked after and guided me during "my" year. He was always there and smiling whenever needed. The only time I really got him worried was when I arranged for a delivery company to take him a Christmas present of a Stilton and some port. Said company turned up at his house late at night and he, quite rightly, refused to open the door. Luckily they did manage to persuade him to accept the present in the end!

Douglas is always very good company, and always quietly on hand when needed. We will be eternally grateful for the magnificent supply of boxes, cases and other containers which he made for our treasures and other valuables. Without this protection we would not manage to keep anything properly. We will really miss his skill and generosity in this area."

Past Master John Ciclitira: "Douglas was my man in 1996-97 when I was Master, and after helping me with my robes was busy photographing the proceedings. When asked by the general company 'Who is he?', I told them 'Our man from the Daily Express' which caused a certain amount of excitement. The Turners have been lucky to have Douglas to look after them, and we hope he will remain a Freeman of the Company for many a year to come."

Liveryman & Hon. Secretary of the Register of Professional Turners Malcolm Cobb: "At a Company function it is imperative to keep a wary eye on Douglas, especially if he is carrying his long black staff, so that one can try to predict what he is going to do with it, and when. With glass in hand and engrossed in some profound discussion, I have often been brought, within a millisecond, to a state of instant combat readiness. He never gives a preparatory tap, to establish whether that piece of floor can withstand his mighty smiting, nor has he hit someone's foot or got the staff wedged between floorboards. In the field of percussion between two pieces of wood, as in so many others, he has no equal!

Douglas' kindness and consideration to candidates is well known. He piloted me through the preamble to the Freedom, but when it came to those nervous moments before the Livery, he chided me for not having said anything at the earlier occasion. 'What sort of thing?' I asked anxiously. 'Oh, anything that comes to mind,' said he.

Fortified with this, I proceeded into the inner sanctum. After the ceremony, the members of the Court looked at me with bright expectant faces, so I launched into an amusing, not entirely inappropriate and perfectly respectable tale. After a minute or two I realised I had made a severe misjudgement, and the punch line seemed a very long way off. To scurry off, like an unsuccessful music-hall turn? To continue (bravely)? Or to succumb to a sudden attack of lockjaw? I duly finished the story and retreated to the ante-room, where Douglas asked 'What was all that about?' I was just relieved that I was now a Liveryman."

Past Master Christopher Tyler: "During my year as Master, it was evident that Douglas had difficulty in hearing the name each person gave as they arrived at the head of the queue to be announced to the Master. The climax came when one whole queue came to a grinding halt, with only Douglas' voice shouting 'What did you say?!' So I asked the Clerk, for ever more, to print the name of each person on their seating plan large enough for them simply to show it to Douglas, who was delighted with the solution!"



Douglas Baker at the Gardner Williams Banquet. The Master is presenting him with an inscribed silver gavel and block.

Past Master Michael Simmonds: "In the days of old when we had cigars at dinner, Douglas always used to find the best for me or send the port around with more haste than now - I imagine he did the same for many others, but he gave a personal service which was much appreciated."

Past Master Gordon Sloan: "A ready smile, a friendly handshake and a cheerful 'Hello, sir!' typify meeting Douglas, no matter what the occasion. Correctness in procedure and attention to detail are his hallmarks. When Master, I was grateful for his brief inspections to see that I was properly dressed - particularly in our 'one size fits all' robes in which, being a bit altitudinally challenged, comfort with dignity was difficult to achieve.

Until he gave me some photos he'd taken at our events I wasn't aware of his photographic skills. Our small collection of Fred Howe's works is housed in fine, portable cases tailor-made by Douglas. In the 1930s he worked as a craftsman making luxury, bespoke luggage. The then Prince of Wales had the good fortune to be equipped by Douglas. We all respect and will miss him. We look forward to seeing him at future events at which he can relax, free of the need to 'keep his eye on things'."

The last word comes from Douglas: "I will of course miss those most pleasant gatherings where I met so many fine people, past and present, whom I feel I can count as friends, who made those times for me something of great happiness and accomplishment as beadle."

CHARITY STAYS AT HOME

In January, the members of St Catherine's Lodge entertained the Master, Upper Warden, Renter Warden and Clerk at dinner following their regular meeting.

The Company was welcomed by the Worshipful Master of the Lodge, Liveryman Brian Farminer and his Wardens. Proposing the toast to the Turners of London, he reflected on the many similarities between the ancient

guilds of the City of London and Freemasonry. He stressed that charity was a thread common to both and presented the Master with a cheque for £1,000 for the Turners' Charitable Trust.

In response the Master said that he was delighted that the Turners were one of only 20 Livery Companies with an associated City Livery Freemasons' Lodge. He recalled that many distinguished Past

Masters had been members of St Catherine's during its 87-year history. Thanking the Lodge and its members for their generosity, he wished them continued success and prosperity.

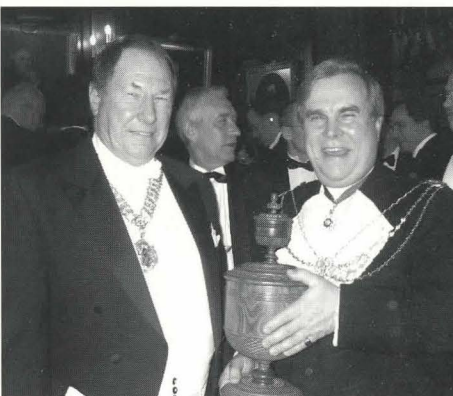
Those who are interested in learning more are invited to contact the Lodge Secretary, Liveryman Peter Johnson on 01707 656020.

SURGICAL PRECISION



Elaine Taylor, Master Apothecary, with the crest she embroidered for the Master's Lectern in memory of Richard Woodwark. The finished article was first displayed at the Gardner Williams dinner (see photograph on p3).

WASS HEIL! DRINC HEIL!



The Master, Tony Crooks-Meredith, with Alderman and Sheriff David Brewer CMG, holding the wassail bowl with which he was presented during our Livery Dinner. The wassail bowl, made by Jeremy Soulsby, won first prize in our Millennium turning competition.

TURNERS' GOLF DAY



The Turners' Golf Day was held on 2nd October at Beaconsfield Golf Club. 20 Liveryman, Freeman and guests attended. The Master presented the Turners' Trophy to Freeman Bill O'Leary after an outstanding score – 45 Stableford points.

CLERK'S NOTES

New Liverymen

The Company has welcomed seven new Liverymen: Bob Bewick, Andrea Cenci di Bello, Emily Field, Bert Marsh, Roger Owen, Brian Wilde, Lionel Anderson and one Honorary Liveryman, Theo Fabergé.

Reception for new members

The Company held a reception in July 2001 for potential new members of the Company. Of the guests, seven are now Freeman or Liverymen and one is an apprentice. Encouraged by this, a repeat reception is hoped for.

Lunch with other Companies

Butcher's Hall on most Wednesdays. Cost is £20.56. Book on 020 7606 4106.

Master Mariners' Curry lunch on HQS Wellington the last Friday of each month. Cost is £22. Book on 020 7836 8179.

The City Livery Yacht Club

This is open to boat owners and boating enthusiasts alike. Among its activities are social functions at the Royal Thames YC. The Secretary, Janet Walker, may be contacted on 08700 664232.

Publications

The Woodworker had three mentions of the Company in the Jan/Feb issue. The *Woodworker* is published by Nexus who may be contacted on 01322 660070.

103 London Livery Companies

Total Freeman and Liverymen.....40,741
Companies that admit women.....96
Companies with their own Halls.....41
Active, present-day trade link.....85
Units of the armed forces supported....171
Churches supported.....61
Charitable giving in 2001.....£42.8million

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Except where specifically stated, none of the material in this issue is to be taken as expressing the opinion of the Court of the Company

