



# THE TURNER



## NEWSLETTER OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON • 22 • September 2003

Dear Fellow Turners

On Ascension Day, 29th May, I was elected the 399th Master of the Worshipful Company of Turners, an honour that weighs heavily on my shoulders – as indeed does the weight of the Master's gold chain of office and fur-edged gown! My two principal objectives are to promote the craft of turning as a thriving viable business, and to celebrate our 400th anniversary.

The Lord Mayor is rightly keen to ensure that City Livery Companies are more than just wining and dining clubs. We need to be seen to play an important role in promoting the City and our crafts. The craft of turning is thriving and it is our role to promote it through giving bursaries, staging exhibitions and competitions, and supporting the turning bodies of the Register of Professional Turners, the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain and the Society of Ornamental Turners. Without the assistance of our Company, many potentially good turners would have to undertake some other line of business and their determination to be at the cutting edge (excuse the pun!) would be lost to us all. Through our charitable fund we are able to assist these turners and during my year you will all be asked to revisit your charitable donations to see whether we can raise more money.

Plans for the social side, including the 400th anniversary celebrations, are proceeding well. I am delighted that our visit to Windsor Castle very quickly became a sell-out (we may organise another visit in the future). Our float in The Lord Mayor's Show on 8th November is being superbly organised by Colin Field with considerable assistance from Rob Lucas and George Kieffer. I am indebted to them all and, as I will be on the float with no weather protection, I pray that it does not rain.

Our annual Patronal Service in St Bride's Church takes place on 26th November with their superb choir. On 10th December we shall join in the Carol Service of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in St Michael's Church, Cornhill, EC3 - a splendid occasion, with food afterwards at a local hostelry. At our Livery Dinner on 16th December the principal guest will be Sir David Howard, an active City stockbroker who, when Lord Mayor a couple of years ago, spoke extremely well at our Livery Dinner. In February, all members attending our Gardner Williams Dinner will be presented with an exquisitely turned screw-top box with an inscribed disc, to commemorate our 400th anniversary.

The Ladies' Dinner will be in the Mansion House on 20th April, with the Lord and Lady Mayoress, their Sheriffs and wives. The last time we dined there, to celebrate the Millennium, we filled the hall to its capacity of 320 people and I hope we will do so again. All members will be able to invite several guests. We have organised a new competition for the entire REME Regiment (as opposed to the Southern Craftsmen competition for the Territorial REME Regiment only) and the prize will be awarded for the first time at what promises to be a splendid Ladies' Dinner.

On 14th June there will be our bi-annual turning competition. From 15 – 17th June the prize-winning entries will be displayed at our first Turning Exhibition at Pewterers' Hall, together with other pieces of the finest turning, ancient and modern, lathes in operation, and beautiful pieces to buy or commission – I hope you, and your guests, will attend and purchase some of the items. The standard of work by the professional turners is quite outstanding and I am sure you will all be impressed. It will be a marvellous advertisement for our craft.



*Andrew and Pat Mayer at the Ladies' Dinner at Apothecaries' Hall in April*

Many people have asked me what I have been up to as Master. In June I attended the Worshipful Company of Pewterers' exhibition of modern pewter, and Pat and I spent a weekend at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum with 70 or so other Masters and their wives. In July we attended the prize-giving at the City of London Freeman's School in Ashted, where the Company gave three prizes; the Worshipful Company of Butchers entertained our Clerk and myself to breakfast prior to the election of the Sheriffs; the Spectacle Makers invited us to lunch; and the Apothecaries invited Pat and myself to dinner. The City Sheriffs and Records Fund, a charity we support, held its AGM at the Old Bailey followed by a reception; and in August Rob Lucas and I spent a day at the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain's bi-annual seminar at Loughborough University, where practising turners gave superb lectures on their work.

I am told that the diary will get considerably fuller in the autumn and spring with dining invitations from many other Companies. Clearly it is not only the diary that will be expanding but also my waistline!

I very much hope to meet each and every one of you at at least one of the functions during my year. It will clearly be a busy and important time for the Company and I am sure great fun.

Andrew Mayer



## THE PAST MASTER'S YEAR

*Tony Crooks-Meredith reports on his action-packed year*

The most striking thing about my year as Master is how fast it passed. No sooner had the Election Court taken place and my installation as Master of the Turners' Company than I was handing over to my successor, Andrew Mayer. But it is a wonderful experience to be Master of an old and thriving Livery Company and quite unlike any other. Looking back over the list of 398 Past Masters of the Company brings home what a privilege and an honour it has been for me, and is for every



**Tony Crooks-Meredith in Apothecaries' Hall after the Patronal Service**

future Master. As a young man starting out in the City, I was aware of these august bodies known as Livery Companies, whose influence reached every aspect of City life. Little did I think then that one day I would lead one of them.

Looking back over my year, as in all things

there were highs and lows, but the highs far outweighed the few lows. Most Masters probably say that Ironbridge is the high point and I would not disagree, but there are others just as good – the day visit to HMS *Sultan* which Jan enjoyed as much as I, climbing in and out of helicopters and being taken on a high speed jaunt round Southampton Water; the garden party at Buckingham Palace where we met John Nettles of all people, and many new friends recently made at Ironbridge; the Trafalgar Night dinner at HMS *Sultan* with the "Ships of the Line" being passed down the table; the REME Corps dinner at Arborfield with musical entertainment by four soldiers each playing on a different model of rifle (with a trumpet mouthpiece fitted to the end of the barrel!); the Patronal Service at St. Bride's and remembering our late friends and colleagues; our own Livery Dinner in December when the Lord Mayor had to cry off in order to entertain President Assad of Syria; the visit to Lord Mayor Treloar College in Hampshire where Jan and I met two most captivating young girls, both badly stricken by cerebral palsy, but who delighted in explaining to us their part in producing a sketch for the Treloar theatre; our Ladies' night when my sister responded for the guests in excellent style; and the magnificent dinner given by the Master Cutler of Hallamshire in Sheffield.

On this page, Assistant George Kieffer writes about the Turners' Float. My thanks to all concerned for their hard and creative work.

Many thanks also to REME for lending us a tractor unit and trailer, and to Hegner Ltd who at Stoneleigh Park (see *Coming Events*) will turn the giant wassail bowl in which our Master, dressed in all his finery, will recline, waving idly to the crowds! The debate is still ongoing concerning which of our female Liverymen is going to be tied to St. Catherine's wheel – watch this space!

I thank all those whose help through the year proved invaluable:

- \* the members of the Standing Committee and Past Master Andrew Hamilton and the Finance Committee for all their erudite input
- \* Assistant George Kieffer and the Livery Committee for their hard work
- \* Assistant Rob Lucas and the Howe Committee whose prodigious efforts do so much towards furthering the aims of the Turners' Company
- \* Assistant Penrose Halson and Liveryman Michael Steinbeck-Reeves for their unstinting work on the newsletter
- \* Liveryman Chris Crooks-Meredith for his excellent work in producing an improved high-quality web-site: [www.turnersco.com](http://www.turnersco.com)
- \* Edward Windsor Clive, our stalwart Clerk, without whose skill and hard work the Company could not manage
- \* Our new Beadle, Stephen Grundy, for his ability in seamlessly slotting into the gap left by Douglas Baker.

Long may our grand old Company flourish!

## WHAT IS 68' LONG AND SNARLS UP THE CITY?

*Assistant George Kieffer gives the answer: the Turners' Float*

Turners do not often enter a float into the Lord Mayor's Show, but it seemed a fitting way to mark the start of the celebrations for the 400th Anniversary of the granting of our Royal Charter in 1604.

The Lord Mayor's Show took its rise in 1215, five weeks before King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta, when the City was granted the right to hold elections on condition that the Lord Mayor present himself and swear fealty to the King or his justices. By 1401 minstrels were recorded as accompanying the Lord Mayor, but it was in the 16th and 17th centuries that pageants became an important feature of the procession, which extended to include artificial decoration-laden islands in the Thames and exotic participants such as a lion and a camel in 1602. In 1663 Samuel Pepys thought it all "very silly".

As is fitting for the occasion the Turners'

Float will be one of the longest in the Show at 68', courtesy of REME (TA). The float will display examples of our time-honoured craft with a giant turned wassail bowl, generously sponsored by the lathe manufacturer Hegner, in pride of place. Instead of liquid this will contain the Master. A medieval pole-lathe in its woodman's hut and a modern electric lathe will illustrate the evolution of the turner's tools through the centuries. The display would not be complete without a representation of our Patron Saint, St Catherine, tied to the torture wheel.

The 31' long CL 20-tonne flatbed Recovery Trailer will be towed by a 6 x 6 Foden Recovery Tractor, powered by a 290 bhp Rolls Royce turbo-charged diesel engine. The Turners started their planning before the Ministry of Defence's adventure into Iraq and as a result the original trailer promised to us is now kicking up dust around the Southern Iraqi deserts. A replacement was found by Assistant Col Rob Lucas in the nick of time.

Many Liverymen, Freeman and turners have toiled for a year now to make sure that our Float will be something you can be proud of. Under the leadership of Past Master Colin Field as Project Director, the enthusiasm of turner Stuart King, who has made real personal sacrifices to work on the project, has been an inspiration to us all. His first freehand illustration of the theme and composition of the Float will be worthy of the Company's archives. Freeman Dave Eager secured for us the scaffolding from his friend George Henderson of D & R Scaffold Group PLC and much-needed labour to erect it. Assistant Col Rob Lucas smoothed the paths of military bureaucracy and coped admirably with unforeseen events, such as a war, and Liveryman Andrea Cenci di Bello worked up Stuart's artistic rendering to technical working drawings which impressed even the Pageantmaster.

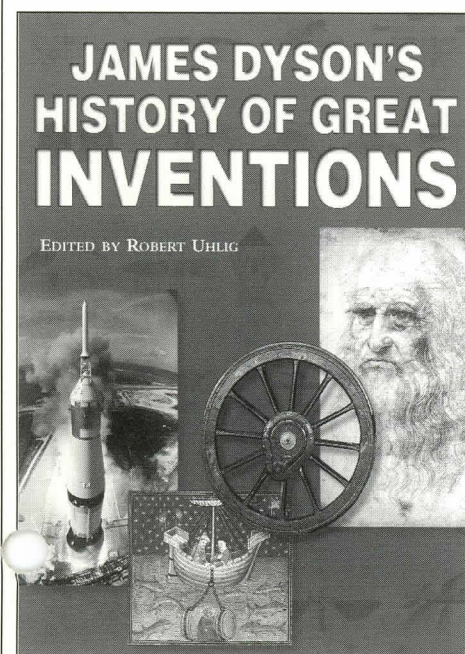
If you want to find out who St Catherine will be, you will have to come along on Saturday 8th November.



## SIMPLE BUT DEADLY

In the mid-1990s, vacuum cleaners stopped being known as "Hoovers" and became "Dyson's" - thanks to James Dyson, who perfected his idea for a bagless vacuum cleaner which would not lose suction by working for fifteen years on 5,127 prototypes. He agrees with Edison that a successful invention takes one per cent inspiration and 99 per cent perspiration.

Dyson had earlier designed his Sea Truck boat and the revolutionary Ballbarrow, after training as a furniture designer at the Royal College of Art. He has since designed a two-drum washing machine. Underpinning all his inventions is a solid knowledge of practical engineering. This he started to acquire at school, where he learned how to use a lathe. In his *History of Great Inventions* he writes:



*James Dyson's History of Great Inventions traces the inventions which have shaped civilisation: domestic ones such as the toothbrush, the flushing toilet and the perpetual mousetrap, and ones with such massive social and political repercussions as printing, the steam engine, computers and the genome project. It is published in paperback by Constable, ISBN 1-84119-617-7. The extract is reproduced by kind permission of the publishers*

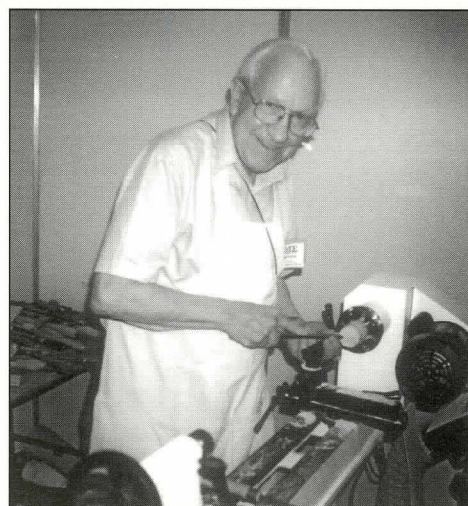
The lathe is an invention of deceptive simplicity: ultimately, all it does is turn components steadily while tools go to work on them. But few inventions have played so big a role in so many others: everything from self-tapping screws to jet engine shafts are made on them. They are truly an engineer's right arm.

I've used them at every stage of my career. At school I used a foot-operated treadle lathe to turn lamp stands, and when I started work on my vacuum cleaner I was desperate to buy a Colchester lathe to make prototypes - one of the most useful functions of any lathe. Even now, my company routinely uses lathes linked to computer-aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM) systems to make prototype parts for new products we're working on.

While foot-operated wood lathes have been around in Europe since at least the mid-16th century, it was the emergence of precision lathes that unleashed their potential. John Harrison famously used precision lathes to make the components for his exquisitely accurate chronometers. The invention of the precision screw-cutting lathe by Henry Maudslay in 1810 revolutionised engineering by turning out nuts and bolts with perfect threads. (One of Maudslay's other crucial "products" was the family of engineers he trained, including Joseph Whitworth, of screw standard fame, and Joseph Clement, who became chief engineer to Charles Babbage, grandfather of the computer.)

The simplicity of lathes also masks another of their traits: they are among the most potentially dangerous bits of kit in the engineering machine-shop. Anything that gets caught up in them - the silk ties of visiting dignitaries, for example - will be dragged in towards the rotating metal with appalling relentlessness. Components being turned can also fly off at lethal speed. I still recall with a shudder how a coffee table top I was working on at school flew off and thudded into someone's chest.

Even the stuff that lathes produce has its dangers. Metal-turning produces razor-sharp swarf. When I lived in Bath, a machinist at a local firm unwittingly became surrounded by a coil of swarf. It pulled tight, and sliced through his legs.



*Bill Jones, long-time member of the Company's Register of Professional Turners, endorses James Dyson's feelings about safety. "Every lathe should be foot-controlled, like a sewing machine," he says. "It lessens the danger, and gives you more confidence because you can stop the lathe in seconds just by taking your foot off. And you can work more efficaciously with a foot-controlled lathe because you can alter the speed as you work. It's like a pianist controlling the volume. But most modern lathes have to be turned off, then you alter the speed and switch on again."*

*Bill has turning in his blood. "My great-grandfather and my grandfather were turners, and my father too - he had a treadle lathe in the coal cellar in the house in Stoke Newington where I was born. My daughter would have liked to be a turner, but she never had enough time and she was too short to reach the lathe - she had to stand on a box! But a lot of friends follow my advice and my principles"*

## TURNERS IN AMBRIDGE

In an age where pressure groups and voluntary organisations employ lobbyists to monitor soap operas and bombard editors to include their particular message, it is encouraging to note that the Turners have arrived in Ambridge without such pressure.

At a recent Craft Fair at Loxley Hall some green wood turners, whom Nigel Pargetter prefers to call by their time-honoured name of 'bodgers', have demonstrated their craft to such enthusiasm from Phil Archer and Nigel that they have decided to enrol in training courses, with Phil already aspiring to make his own hayrick.

It is in the nature of a soap that this will mean many future references to 'turning' in *The Archers* as the characters' prowess in turning is commented upon. I am sure that there are many Turners who will not need this incentive to tune in to Radio 4 to listen to the BBC's longest-running soap, first broadcast 53 years ago in 1951.

## HELP, WE NEED SOMEBODY

We need somebody - or some bodies - to help produce *The Turner*. In 2004, for the Company's quater-centenary, there will be two 8-page issues of the newsletter. If you can prepare articles, organise photographs, edit etc please contact Penrose Halson, 020 7935-6408. Enthusiasm as important as previous experience.



## COMING EVENTS

**Election of Lord Mayor in Guildhall**  
Monday 29 September 2003

**Company Golf Day, Beaconsfield**  
Tuesday 7 October 2003

**International Woodworking and Turning Exhibition, Stoneleigh Park**  
Friday 17– Sunday 19 October 2003 (see the wassail bowl for our float being turned!)

**Lord Mayor's Show**  
Saturday 8 November 2003

**Court Meeting (4.00 p.m.)**  
Wednesday 12 November 2003

**Patronal Service & Buffet Luncheon**  
Wednesday 26 November 2003

**Carol Service of the Worshipful Company of Musicians, St Michael's Cornhill**  
Wednesday 10 December 2003, Turners welcome

**Livery Dinner**  
Tuesday 16 December 2003

**Court Ladies' Dinner**  
Wednesday 21 January 2004

**International Woodworking Exhibition, Alexandra Palace**  
Friday 20 – Sunday 22 February 2004

**Gardner Williams Banquet**  
Tuesday 24 February 2004

**Court (11.00 a.m.) & Court Luncheon**  
Wednesday 10 March

**United Guilds Service**  
Friday 26 March 2004

**Craft Meeting – Register of Professional Turners**  
Wednesday 7 April 2004

**Ladies' Dinner, Mansion House**  
Thursday 22 April 2004

## THAT WONDERFUL FONT

*"He's going to be christened in that wonderful font!" said a godparent at a recent baptism in St Bride's. The font which the Company presented to the church is often in use, and much admired. In the photograph is Canon David Meara, Rector of Saint Bride's and the Company's Honorary Chaplain.*



## THE NEW MASTER

Andrew Mayer is a chartered surveyor and runs his own firm in the City of London advising commercial property investors. His working life started in the City in 1966 with the small but highly respected firm of Vigers. In 1991 Vigers merged with the Birmingham-based firm of Grimley and Andrew was responsible for much of their work in the City of London. However he left the firm at the end of 1995 to set up his own practice. He decided that "small is beautiful" and, besides him, his firm comprises only one other partner and a secretary.

Andrew's wife Pat is a magistrate on the West Kent Bench and sits on the Magistrates Association Council in London. She is also a trained nurse and works on the medical ward at Sevenoaks Hospital. His daughter Katherine has just trained in Leicester as a doctor and son Charles, having read Economics at Nottingham University, is two-thirds of the way through his accountancy training at KPMG in London.

Andrew is a keen golfer, an ex-rugby player and a member of the MCC. His other interests are gardening and the history of the City of London.

## CLERK'S NOTES

### New Liverymen & Freemen

The Company has welcomed Jonathan Hamilton as a Liveryman, and new Freemen Michael Pittaway, Helen Wells, Fred Bain and Brian Guile.

### British Red Cross Christmas Market

Guildhall, 25th November, (11am – 6.30pm) and 26th November (11am – 4.00pm), entrance fee £3.00 (senior citizens free). A great opportunity to do all your Christmas shopping, from bargain second-hand designer items to beautiful hand-crafted gifts.

### Court Meetings

A major subject has been the 400th Anniversary celebrations. You have all received notification of the Company float at the Lord Mayor's Show on 8th November, which looks like a highly entertaining day.

Following the success of two successive Bursaries awarded to develop the craft of turning, the Howe Committee has presented, by kind permission of Topsy Woodwork, the Woodwork Lathe to City of London Freeman's School to develop their turning skills.

A sub-committee of Past Masters feels that a priority is our charitable fund, and suggests appointing an almoner to encourage donation and possibly introducing a minimum charitable donation for new members (with encouragement for existing members to come into line with this figure).

### Be a Master Cook

In October and November Party Ingredients are giving Master Classes in cookery. The entire proceeds will go to Macmillan Cancer Relief and the Lord Mayor's appeal for Save the Children. Telephone 020 727 3800.

© The Worshipful Company of Turners, 2003  
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

