

THE TURNER



NEWSLETTER OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON December 2008

Turners witness the splendor of Garter Day at Windsor Castle



HRH The Prince of Wales
and Prince William

The Most Noble Order of the Garter was founded by King Edward III in 1348 and brought together the Sovereign and twenty five outstanding military leaders in a new fellowship of religious worship.

Each year at St George's-tide in April, the Sovereign and Knights met at Windsor Castle for a Festival lasting three days, when they met in Chapter, feasted and occupied their stalls in St George's Chapel for Mattins, the Eucharist, Evensong and a Requiem for departed Knights. This Festival was observed annually for two centuries and then with less frequency until the late 17th Century.

Occasional services were held for new Knights until 1805, but during the remainder of the 19th and earlier part of the 20th Century the life of the Order was restricted to Chapter meetings for elections and investitures, which were normally held in London.

On 23rd April 1948 to celebrate the 600th Anniversary of the Order, His late Majesty King George VI commanded the Knights to assemble at Windsor Castle for a Chapter meeting, procession through the Castle and a service in St George's Chapel. Since then a Garter Day of this type has been held regularly, usually in June and is a vital expression of the life of the Order.

Some members of the Company attended this year's event which marked the 660th anniversary of the Order at which Prince William was installed as the 1,000th Knight Companion on 16th June together with The Lord Luce and Sir Thomas Dunne.



The route was lined by detachments from the Household Division and bands of the Blues and Royals and the Grenadier Guards played during the procession.

This was led by the Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle, Surgeon Vice Admiral Ian Jenkins and followed by the Military Knights of Windsor (which included Liveryman Colonel David Axson), the Officers of Arms and then the Companions and Officers of the Order including HM

The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, HRH The Prince of Wales and seven other members of the Royal Family followed by a Detachment of The Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeoman of the Guard.

The Garter Service was broadcast from the Chapel and following the Service the Knights Companion returned to the Upper Ward by Ascot Landau drawn by Windsor Greys and motor car. Members of the Company then enjoyed tea in Vicars' Hall, which rounded off a day of great pageantry and spectacle. Garter Day is scheduled for 15th June 2009.



Her Majesty The Queen at Garter Day

Issue 32

Turners at Art in Action

The biggest lathes in Britain

George Kieffer reflects on his year as Master

Turners get behind the scenes at the Mary Rose in Portsmouth

Wizardry in Wood wrap up: words by Nick Edwards and pictures by Stuart King

A thought provoking visit to the battlefields of the Somme

Remembering Ronnie Rustin

Jumping in and out of tanks and more at REME

The operatic Charity Dinner

Art in Action

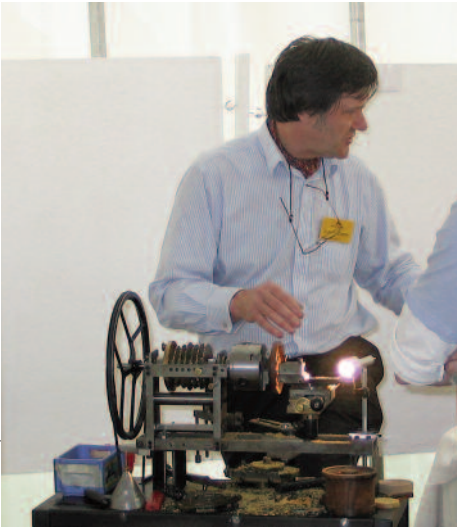


Art in Action was created out of a simple observation:- people are fascinated when artists and craftsmen openly demonstrate their skills and discuss their work. Over 30 years ago Bernard Saunders, then guardian of Waterperry Gardens, near Oxford, decided to organise such an event

based on this principle.

The event has expanded over the years to include practical classes (open to all ages and skill levels), performances of fine music and dance, dialogues on arts and crafts, and a craft market. Over 20,000 visitors now attend Art in Action every year.

This year the Wood Group (a triumvirate of the Companies of the Turners, the Upholders and the Furniture Makers) decided to have a marquee at this prestigious event, held in July. Three turners from our Register of Professional Turners took stands and a fine display they made.



Stuart Mortimer showed his unique large urns with the twisted tops and indeed one of his pieces was displayed in the special “Best of the Show” marquee. Tobias Kaye (photograph below) showed an eclectic mix of work including his stringed instruments. Paul Coker (left) gave a display of ornamental turning and showed samples of his work to an appreciative audience.

There was a front desk handling the steady stream of enquiries from visitors about the City of London Guilds and their role today. Peter Gibson, Chairman of the Howe Committee, was in attendance for the full four days of Art in Action with support from various members of the Committee. His comment afterwards was “This is a unique Show and our Turners and Liverymen did us proud in demonstrating our commitment to our Craft and giving a City perspective”.

Photos from **Peter Gibson**

More information: www.artinaction.org.uk



The Biggest Lathes in Britain

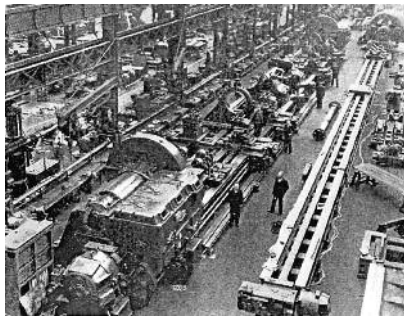
The lathe has developed over thousands of years but while it remained driven by human hand (or foot) it could only to grow to modest proportions. It was only during the Industrial Revolution that a significant amount of power from water-wheels or steam-engines was available to enable larger lathes to be developed..

Suddenly bigger lathes meant bigger power machines could be manufactured to provide more power to the lathes – a virtuous circle. The interesting question then is how big these lathes have eventually become.

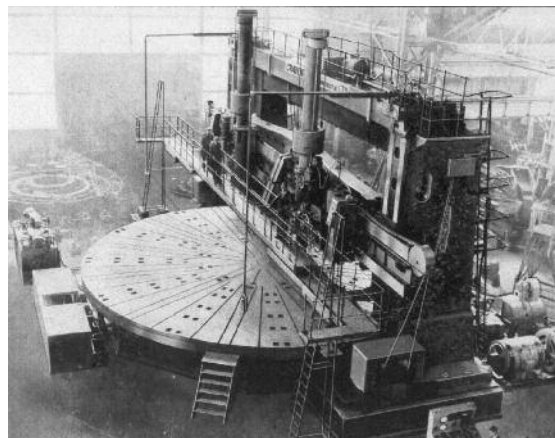
There are actually several ways to measure how “big” a lathe is. The biggest lathes were either long and skinny or short and fat.

In the UK the manufacturer of the largest lathes in the country was Craven Brothers Ltd of Reddish, Greater Manchester. Founded in 1853 they remained in business supplying the largest of machine tools to an empire and world-market until 1970, reflecting the disenchantment of governments for a stable manufacturing industry against boom-bust economic cycles.

The longest lathe produced in the UK was for boring tubes up to 100 feet long and up to 6 feet in diameter (left photograph). To handle the boring bar to go down the tube the whole machine measured a staggering 260 feet long. They were typically used for boring gun-barrels for battle-ships or turning ships’ propeller shafts.



There are actually several ways to measure how “big” a lathe is. The biggest lathes were either long and skinny or short and fat.



The fatter lathes were for handling ingots or rolls for steel mills and the largest produced by Cravens handled work-pieces up to 16 feet in diameter, up to 60 feet long and weighing up to 100 tons. This vies in world record terms with a slightly bigger lathe produced in Germany for South Africa in the Guinness Book of Records which can handle the same diameter but up to 70 feet long.

If the work-piece was larger still in diameter but relatively short, then this was mounted on a lathe with a vertical spindle called a Vertical

Boring Mill. The largest supplied by Cravens in 1953 was to Canada to handle a diameter of up to 43 feet and 15 feet long.

This behemoth weighed in at 650 tons with a 300 HP main drive and was the largest machine tool ever produced in the UK (right photograph).

Its maximum speed was a stately 3.5 revolutions per

minute and was used for machining the casings of the huge impellers or “water-wheels” used in hydro-electric power stations.

For even larger work-pieces there are floor mounted “single column” machines but having no bed as such lack the weight, rigidity and accuracy of the Craven.

These monster lathes are a far cry indeed from the simple machines of our medieval turners from which they evolved.

Nick Edwards

My Year as Master

When I became a Freeman and Liveryman of the Turners some 20 years ago with the encouragement of my late great-uncle, Lt Col Francis Griffin, I had no expectation that one day I would lead this great Company as your Master. The honour you have done me is palpable and it was a year that both Maureen and I enjoyed tremendously. Our enjoyment was immeasurably enhanced by your support, be it privately with advice or at our functions, or dare I say for kindly laughing at some of my appalling jokes, for which I thank you all.

The tribute to you all is best expressed in the words of one of our guests at the Livery Dinner, The Earl of Iveagh: "Now I realise that there are Livery Company functions which are truly impressive; and your evening was the most impressive that I ever have had the pleasure to attend. I met some lovely people on the evening." It really confirms that it is you who make our functions so special and the warmth you show to our guests is a constant subject for comment.

It goes without saying that I could not have discharged my duties during the year without the assistance and guidance of the Court and the great support given to me by the Upper Warden, Rob Lucas, the Renter Warden, Christopher Roberts, the Deputy Master, my predecessor, Penrose Halson, and last but by no means least, our

learned and gallant Clerk, Edward Windsor Clive. Peter Ellis, Peter Gibson, Penrose and many others took on the responsibility of organising Wizards in Wood and the more recent Wizardry in Wood exhibition and these successes are entirely theirs.

There are a number of events that stick in my mind, and I was proud to raise our son William to the Livery during my year. I got my come-uppance when the Lord Mayor and I were guests of a mutual friend at Twickenham to watch Wales thrash England to the great surprise of all of us, including the Lord Mayor who left considerably richer, having had to accept the bets of the rest of us on an English victory.

At the Gunmakers' lunch they allowed me to proof a gun, before a further firing summoned us to table. To hear gun-fire in the Commercial Road must be a trifle disconcerting for local residents and businesses.

It has been a privilege to serve you all during the last year and to represent our Company in the City and elsewhere. I look forward to supporting my successor, Rob Lucas, the next in the unbroken line of Masters going back to 1604.

George Kieffer

The Mary Rose



In January the Heritage Lottery Fund announced that it had earmarked a £21 million grant to complete the conservation of the Mary Rose and build a permanent museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to house the hull and its artefacts.

Some project. Some artefacts! Not only was the Mary Rose

the first true warship to be built for England, but her recovery has given us over 20,000 artefacts which provide a truly amazing snapshot of life in Henry VIII's navy of July 1545.

On 12th August a group of 20 members and guests of the Turners' Company visited the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard at the invitation of the Mary Rose Trust.

As well as seeing the museum and work in progress on the preservation of the hull, we were allowed the rare privilege of being taken behind the scenes to see the reserve collection and particularly the many turned items.



What treasures of the turners' art we saw: pulleys and pulley blocks, bowls and buckets, cups and dishes, beads and toys and instruments for both musicians and the ship's surgeon. All witness to the skill of the 16th century turner's art. We could have spent days there.

Over lunch in the Board Room we were told that the long period of preservation with polyethylene glycol will come to an end in 2011



and the hull will then be slowly dried out with conservation complete in 2016. In a new museum the public will be able to enjoy a much closer and fully illuminated look at the ship. Over 14,000 of the artefacts will be displayed – shown in their original

positions and in relation to their owners – presenting a vivid illustration of life on board a Tudor warship.

The Mary Rose Trust is a wonderfully good cause with a major educational outreach programme for children of all ages. It is certainly worthy of Turners Company support and we shall be organising another visit in 2009. Some members of the Livery have put their names down already.

Michael Bridgeman

More information: www.maryrose.org

What Really Sank the Mary Rose?

In a television programme on 24th November, Dr Dominic Fontana of the University of Portsmouth argued that the Mary Rose sank because she was hit by a French cannon ball below the waterline. This is certainly fits with the well known Cowdry painting of the battle (above), which also shows an oar powered French galley firing towards the Mary Rose (insert). This version of events is also consistent with a French picture of the battle, but Dr Fontana thinks that although the crew failed to seal the hole, it is likely that the combination of attempting the turn to deliver a broadside attack on the galley and having already taken on extra water caused the sudden capsizing, taking the lives of 400 crew with her.

Wizardry in Wood

Art • Beauty • Skill • Mystery



The background to the stunning Wizardry in Wood 2008 Exhibition (June 4-6th) was the resounding success of its predecessor held in 2004. The latter event was to celebrate the 400th Anniversary of the granting of the Royal Charter to the Company.

The two events are a reflection of the increasing support the Company is giving to our Craft. They are also perhaps an echo of the renaissance in the fortunes of the Company in the late 19th Century when exhibitions and competitions started to be run at the Mansion House.

The theme of Wizardry in Wood 2008 was to promote excellence in the art and craft of wood-turning. Judging by the comments of visitors we certainly achieved that goal. The ambience of the magnificent Carpenters' Hall provided a fitting backdrop to the Exhibition..

Wide range of work

The exhibitors were chosen to show the best contemporary work as a counterpoint to examples from the finest historic collections of the last 400 years. So it was possible to see on display the latest techniques and combinations of design and decorative styles from some 25 turners on our Professional Registry. In contrast to this modernity was that unique patina of aged artefacts.

Items from the Pinto Collection were kindly loaned by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery with some early wooden roundels dating to the 16th Century. In addition there was a collection of early turned wooden furniture and other items on the stand of the Guild of Art Scholars, Dealers and Collectors. To round off the historic element of the show there was a pole-lathe in operation by Katy Abbott, a member of our Livery.

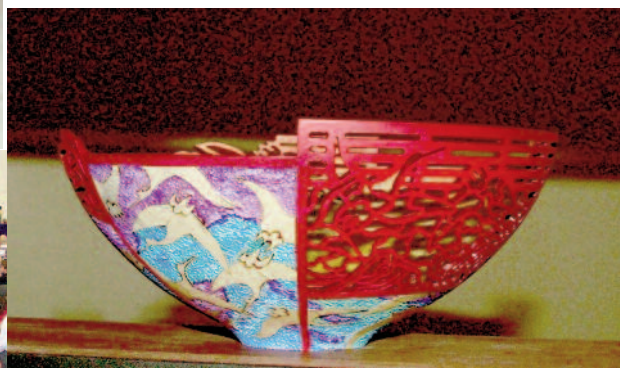
More modern items from the UK and further afield were represented by the beautiful displays from the Smouha Collection, the St Petersburg Collection, the Daniel Collection, the Craft Council and the Bin Pho Collection.

The work of the Association of Wood-turners of Great Britain and the Society of Ornamental Turners were also on display reflecting the tie we have with these organisations.

“A stunning exhibition
our Company is giving



tion reflecting the increasing support ing to the Craft of woodturning”



The recent recipients of our Bursaries had a stand and it was particularly gratifying to see how, in the work they showed, they had made use of their grants. Some had taken courses with master turners both here and overseas, whilst others had used the opportunity to develop their own ideas.

A centre piece for the Exhibition was the Angel Lathe created from a historic manuscript held at the University of Louvaine. This mystic artefact was bedecked with icons and religious symbology and had been specially shipped over accompanied by several members of a woodturning Guild in Belgium, the historic equivalent of our own Company.

Exhibition programme

The Programme for the event started on the Tuesday evening with the bi-ennial turning competitions organised by the Howe Committee, chaired by Peter Gibson. On Wednesday the Exhibition was formally opening with a reception by Geoffrey Bond, Chairman of the City Livery Committee, who spoke enthusiastically of the Craft

There was another reception held in the evening of that day attended by some 250 people being Liverymen and their guests, with a real buzz about the proceedings. On the Thursday evening there was another reception for members of other City Companies and was also well attended; the common theme of the subsequent thank-you letters was envy of the link the Company has retained with the Craft.

The Exhibition was also open during the day to members of the public as an all-ticket event and over 800 attended from Wednesday afternoon through to early Friday afternoon. There was a mix of potential customers for the work on display, and also other turners who came to see how the Company was supporting the Craft; they were not disappointed.

Organisation

The Exhibition was a major event for the Company and a huge amount of work was done by a dedicated group. Led by Renter Warden, Peter Ellis, the team consisted of the Master, Rob Lucas, Peter Gibson, Penrose Halson, Nick Edwards, Nic Somers, Sarah Faberge, Alan Mitchell and Matthew Gaved. Planning for this event started as long ago as March 2007. The Company was fortunate in the support given by many friends in the turning community and also by the family members of the team.

The question now is when we are going to do the next one. It will certainly require another huge effort to cap the outstanding success of this year's show.

Nick Edwards

Photographs: Stuart King

Visit to the Somme

The first weekend of October saw a group of Turners, partners and friends visit the battlefields of the Somme, on a tour led by Colonel Peter Hewlett-Smith and organised by him and the Master.



The Somme lasted from 1st July 1916 until that November, with a terrible loss of life, particularly over the first few days. The attack on the entrenched German front lines was often over completely open and rising ground, which compounded the many strategic and tactical errors that were made, no more so than on the first fateful day.



Serre (bottom right) with bright blue skies - providing the same clear visibility that the Germans had of our soldiers as they walked across no-man's land on the first day of the Somme, over 90 years ago.

By Sunday afternoon the conditions had entirely changed, cold, rain and wind. At the massive Thiepval memorial, which commemorates tens of thousands of Allied deaths, Past Master Michael Simmons lay a wreath at the end of a service led by Peter, a military Chaplain.



Peter was thoughtful, well informed and emphasised the impact of the terrain on the course of events; all too often leading to massive casualties and failed assaults.

After a delayed sea crossing, courtesy of French Fishermen blockading Calais, the tour started on the Saturday morning at one of the cemeteries at

Ronald E. Rustin 1927-2008

Affectionately known as Ronnie by all those who knew him, from top business executives to workers on his factory floor.

He was born in 1927 and was the third-generation of a Jewish family from Lithuania who moved to London around 1900. His paternal grandfather was a cabinet maker who settled in Whitechapel and then moved to Stoke Newington with his wife and ten children. Ronnie's father was the eldest son and he started a businesses making chemicals for the furniture trade.

Ronnie was born in Wembley, where he lived with his wife. He went to Preston Manor school and then studied at technical colleges in High Wycombe, Acton and Hendon.

He served in the Royal Army Service Corps in Burma and India between 1944 and 1947. On his return he joined and later took over his father's business and in 1951 he married Lena, who became well known as a leading speech therapist.

Rustins quickly became a household name when he built his father's business into a thriving woodcare company in north-west London with his wood furnishing products being distributed far and wide, from the small hardware shop on the corner to the largest DIY superstore.



Despite this tremendous manufacturing and marketing achievements Ronnie always found time for his staff and took great pride in his relationship with them which spanned many ethnic backgrounds.

For many years he took a commercial stand selling woodcare products at the Practical Woodworking Exhibition at Wembley and enthralled many visitors to the show by providing lectures on wood furnishing in the lecture theatre. He always used to say to me 'once again I've had to cancel my skiing holiday for your October Exhibition, why don't you change the date?'

His generosity to the Worshipful Company of Turners was considerable. For the past eight years he has provided prizes for our turning competitions and he even provided the finishing materials for the giant wassail bowl, turned by Stephen Cooper which formed an important element on the Turners Float in the Lord Mayors Procession.

He regularly used to sponsor turners to demonstrate at Exhibitions and will be sorely missed by all of his many friends.

Alan Mitchell

Company visit to the home of REME

As members of the Company may be aware, the Worshipful Company of Turners has had a very close relationship with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Corps (REME) since it was formed in 1942.

Earlier this year the Corps invited members of the Company to visit the home of REME at Arborfield, so, on 22nd July this year, a beautiful hot Summer's day, a group from the Company met in Arborfield, near Reading to enjoy a fascinating day learning about REME.

The visit, centred on the REME Museum of Technology, was attended by fourteen members of the Company (some accompanied by their wives) and led by the Master. One member of the group was Assistant Peter Gibson who is currently the Museum's "Corps Historian".

After a very interesting introductory talk by Colonel Richard Bennett, one of the senior officers on the staff of the headquarters and questions, the group split into two parties for a tour of the museum, starting in the reproduction 1930s wooden guardroom (seen in the background of the photograph).

One of the first displays featured General Bertram Rowcroft, the first Director of the Corps and a member of the Turners Company.

The Museum is fascinating, but sadly, only a little under 2 hours was available for the tour and in that time we were able to see, only briefly, historical displays of uniforms, equipment from radios through weapons to armoured recovery vehicles (tanks with cranes rather than guns) and to visit behind the scenes store rooms and document archives not normally accessible.

Although the primary aim of the Museum is to collect and safeguard the documentary and physical history of the Corps, it is also open to the public, and specialises in educational visits from school parties.

From the Museum, the Group moved to West Court, the REME Headquarters Officers' Mess where we were entertained most generously by a number of officers of the Corps and provided with an excellent lunch.

Once lunch was over (taken at a more leisurely pace than perhaps our hosts had anticipated – we were so well looked after!), we proceeded on to the next item on our programme; the School of Electrical and Aeronautical Engineering (SEAE).

“As soon as one of us was persuaded to get out of the turret of a main battle tank, another jumped in ...”

The first half of the afternoon concentrated on ground-based equipment whilst during the second we looked at the aircraft. As we progressed, the interest of the visitors was such that the programme slipped further and further behind.

We were shown some fascinating items of equipment used to train the Corps' technicians and members of the group were particularly captivated by the opportunity to clamber over and into the tanks.

As soon as one of us was persuaded to get out of the turret of a main battle tank, another jumped in, inevitably slowing our progress through the site!



By the time we arrived at the main aircraft hanger we were about an hour behind schedule (and then delayed further while we searched for Past Master Penrose Halson and Bert Marsh who had found something else worthy of investigation somewhere along the way!).

The enormous hanger was filled by large numbers of helicopters with various pieces missing from them! Here was a further opportunity for members of the group to indulge themselves and a number leapt into various pilots' seats and allowed their imaginations to fly them away.

We were only persuaded to leave this most interesting part of the visit when it became clear that our hosts needed to lock up and go home.

Finally, much later than scheduled, a hot, tired but thoroughly satisfied group returned to the Museum (which had to stay open late to wait for us). One or two members of the group had to rush to their cars and depart, however the majority refreshed themselves with ice creams from the Museum shop and posed for the group photograph.

A fascinating and thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all and it is hoped that the Company may be invited back again.

Peter Gibson

Planning ahead? ... for the Company Golf Day: 25th August 2009

The Company's Golf Day in 2009 will be held at Knole Park Golf Club, Sevenoaks, Kent on Tuesday 25th August. Knole Park is a traditional parkland course in the grounds of Knole House, the family seat of the Sackville Family with several species of deer and other wildlife making it a very attractive setting.

The course is easily accessible from the M25.



Despite an increasing number new members saying they play golf, the turnout for the past two years has been poor and it is hoped that a change of venue and date might reverse that trend. So, all golfers are encouraged to place the date in their diaries NOW and are encouraged to bring guests if they so wish. Further details will be announced nearer the time.

The Clerk's Notes and new Freemen of the Company

The Court has been enhanced by two new assistants, Andrew Castell who was sworn in at the March Court and David Batchelor who was sworn in at the September Court.

At the September Court we had the pleasure of raising James Dunn, Tony Howard, Richard Jordan, Michael Todd and Stuart Mortimer to the Livery. Stuart has very kindly presented a piece of work to the Company, which was on show at the Livery Lunch that followed.

There have been two meetings for new Freemen to make their declaration and we are delighted to welcome Andrew Ewens, Nic Gibson, Richard Lucas, Peter Mitchell, William Morris and James Young to the Freedom and hope they enjoy membership of the Company.

As more people are now using Email as a way of communication the Company has begun to send out information in this way. It is not planned to overload your computer but there will be a learning curve so please feel free to delete all non-relevant information.

We are sorry to have to report the deaths of Liverymen Brian Cuzner and John Power who joined the Company in 1958 and 1964 respectively.

The Broderers have an annual competition for a hand embroidered piece no larger than 20" x 20". Please contact me if you are interested.



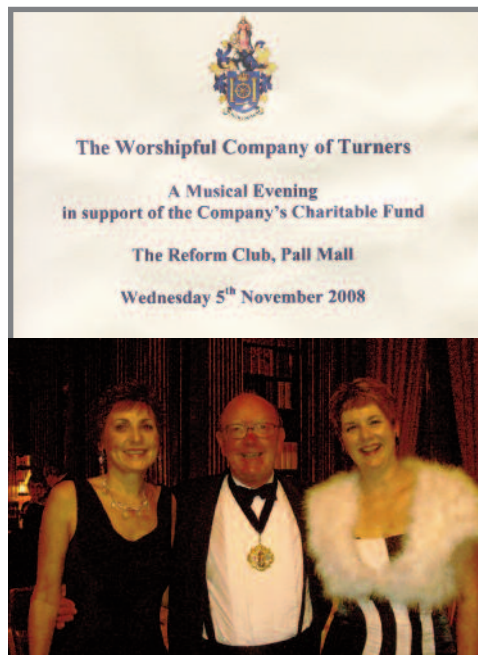
Charity Dinner at the Reform Club

On 5th November, one hundred members of the Company and their guests attended a wonderful and memorable Musical evening in support of the Company's Charitable Fund. The evening had been donated by a member of the Company to the Charitable Fund and all the proceeds of the evening also benefited the Fund.



The evening was held in the Library of the Reform Club in Pall Mall, a stunning location for an evening of operatic arias and other pieces sung by a group led by Soprano Shirley Pilgrim.

At the end of the concert, Past Master Andrew Mayer, Chairman of the Charity Committee explained that the funds raised by the evening would almost exactly match the cost of a numerically controlled lathe that had already been donated by the Company's Charitable Fund to Valence School in Kent (see panel on right).



In addition to Shirley, other members of the operatic ensemble included Lee Mason (Soprano), Jeff Stewart (Tenor), Alex Poulton (Baritone), accompanied by Stephan Hofkes on Piano. Nicolas Shipman was also a member of the group and gave a virtuoso performance of [anyone remember the piece??] on the Clarinet.

Members of the ensemble joined the Company for dinner, much to The Master's delight at the end of the evening (Shirley on the right)!

At the Charity Dinner, Andrew Mayer, Chairman of the Company's Charity Committee, said:

"As you know, it is the Company's intention to increase its Charity Fund activities by installing lathes in schools, colleges and other suitable establishments where they can be of real benefit to organisations that cannot afford to purchase them.

In particular, we are looking at schools that cater for pupils with severe physical disabilities and also with autism and related complex learning difficulties. In addition we have been asked to look into schools for severely disabled servicemen.

Valence School in Westerham, Kent has about 100 students between the ages of 4 and 19, all of which are severely disabled.

The School provides the full National Curriculum entitlement for its students, the Design and Technology requirements being that every student experiences producing something by the use of a computer controlled machine.

The Design & Technology courses are very popular and almost all their students gain a great deal of both experience and pleasure in designing their own products.

Our donation of a numerically controlled lathe means that the children's designs can now be produced in-house for the first time."

Please contact the Editor of the Newsletter, Matthew Gaved, if you would like to suggest a contribution to a future issue: email: gaved@btconnect.com.

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182 Temple Chambers, Temple Avenue, London EC4Y 0HP Tel: 020 7353 9595 email: clerk@turnersco.com website: www.turnersco.com