

My Year As Master

With the end of my magisterial year in sight, the Editor of *The Turner* presented me with the considerable challenge of compressing the high points of this very busy time into a thousand words. So what have been the ten “treasures” of my year as your Master?

1. Domestic Support

My wife Monica proved a loyal and indispensable partner as Mistress Turner. At the simplest level she not only kept me looking presentable at a succession of white tie dinners, but also ensured that at the end of a year of such fine dining I am lighter in weight and have lower cholesterol than when I began. Her contribution, however, extended far beyond that and I thank her for it. Whilst it was a wonderful and rewarding experience for both of us, her role now is to shoot me if I volunteer to do anything similar in the future.

2. My Colleagues

The burdens of office were also greatly lightened by being shared with some willing and talented colleagues. My Wardens, John Bridgeman and Nick Edwards, and the other Committee Chairmen, shouldered their tasks most effectively, and my Deputy Master, Peter Gibson, was a constant companion and source of guidance, as was his wife Di to Monica.

The Master's Steward, Nick Somers, discharged his duties with cheerful efficiency, despite himself serving with aplomb as the inaugural Master of the Arts Scholars as the 110th livery company. In the background ensuring the Company's affairs remain in order and that every event runs smoothly is the Clerk Alex Robertson ably backed by his assistant Becca Baker and the Beadle Steven Grundy. I thank them all for their service to me and our Company.

3. A Turner Lord Mayor

We have been fortunate to have a Turner in the Mansion House for the first time since 1949. The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Alderman Fiona Woolf CBE, has not only led the City with distinction, but because she is one of our Liverymen I was invited to a number of special events. I had the honour of sitting next to her on several occasions, and every time I saw her she expressed her pride in being a member of our Company.

4. The Craft

A focus for corporate pride is our living craft. This is both a privilege and a responsibility in that, as it is the foundation of our existence, we must use our resources to the best of our ability to foster and promote it for the future.

To that end I attended meetings of the AWGB, RPT and SOT and the Harrogate Woodworking Show, and met many practising turners, but the most rewarding visits were to present certificates to graduates of the youth training courses co-sponsored with the AWGB. It is indeed heartening to see the skills being passed on to the younger generation.

5. Charity

The Company's Charity raises funds and makes grants to aid many good causes but a major theme is supporting the craft of turning in educational establishments, including several schools for those with special needs. Visiting such schools is a most interesting and uplifting aspect of being Master.

The positive spirit and achievements of the pupils in the face of daunting disabilities, and the dedication of the teachers, carers and support staff are most impressive. An outstanding example of such a school is Treloar's in Alton, Hampshire, which caters for severely disabled pupils. They are holding a Gala Dinner in Mansion House on 8th October 2014, which promises to be an excellent evening and deserves support.

6. The Armed Services

The Company has long-standing connections with the apprentice training schools of the Navy at HMS Sultan, Gosport, REME at Arborfield, and the RAF at MOD St. Athan, where we award prizes. I visited each of these establishments during my year and the high level of expertise being acquired there will also be of benefit to the students when they return to civilian life.

I also attended a number of other events connected with service charities and reserve forces, where it was inspiring to see the dedication of young cadets and their leaders, who devote so much of their spare time to instilling discipline and leadership skills which will help their charges become good citizens.

7. Livery Traditions

Representing the Company at functions run by other livery companies is a significant and enjoyable part of the Master's role. Not only does one cement old corporate relationships and make new personal friendships but opportunities arise to see a range of livery halls and learn how things are done elsewhere. A number of events now take the form of a lecture, many of which have been fascinating, followed by a reception.

8. Our Own Events

These provide an opportunity to try out what one has learned elsewhere while respecting our Company's unique traditions. I have also been well served by the Livery



Love spoons carved in lime by Adam King
Left: Master's gift at Ladies' Dinner, Right: Mistress's spoon

Committee which has arranged several outstanding events at attractive venues during my year.

9. Looking to the Future

A Master's year speeds by so quickly that it is important to have an eye to the future. To that end I held a Strategy Day on 11th November, 2013, the fruits of which are currently being progressed through the Company's committees.

10. Welsh Themes

I promised a Welsh flavour to some of our activities and celebrated the Patronal Festival in November with rousing Welsh hymns. At the Ladies' Dinner the entertainment was provided by Rhodri Jones, a brilliant young Welsh tenor studying for an MA in Voice at the Guildhall School.

For the Master's gift I commissioned Adam King, the son of Freeman by Presentation Stuart King, to carve unique love spoons in the Welsh tradition for which he enjoys a worldwide reputation (www.adamking.co.uk).

As the event took place on the birthday of the Mistress, (bizarrely for the second year in succession), I also asked him to create a special spoon for her to commemorate that.

John Bridgeman is, of course, also Welsh. So I am happy to pass on the flame of promoting Welsh culture to him, and both Monica and I send the new Master and Lindy every good wish for their year.

PM Rhidian Jones, Master 2013-14