

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON



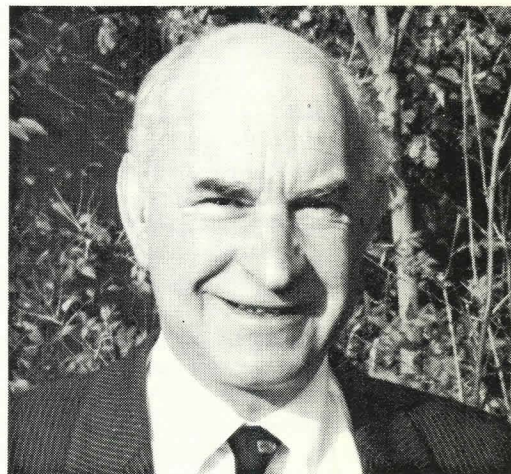
Newsletter Winter 1992 Issue 1

Dear Fellow Turner,

*This is the first issue of *The Turner*, your newsletter. Its purpose is to tell you more about the many and various activities of the Company and about events, places, organizations and individuals connected with the Company, the City and the Craft of Turning. It is the brainchild of the Livery Committee which was set up to see how Members and Freemen of the Livery might meet and communicate more often.*

In this issue, you will find out more about future events organized by the Company: about the lathe given by the Company to blind school children; the Company's register of Professional Turners; mazers; REME's 50th anniversary; Company ties; turning competitions and much, much more.

*Your contributions to *The Turner* are very welcome. Tony Crooks-Meredith, representing the Livery Committee, would like to hear of any news to do with the Company, the City or the Craft which would interest other Turners: courses, talks or exhibitions, magazines, books, buildings, institutions, people, partnerships or companies.*



There will be two newsletters a year, in December and June, sent to you free of charge. I hope they will inform, interest and entertain you.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas!

Master

COMING EVENTS

- Livery Dinner ~ Tuesday 15th December 1992
- Awards Court ~ Thursday 4th February 1993
- Visit to Central Criminal Court ~ Monday 15th February 1993
- Gardner Williams Dinner ~ Thursday 25th February 1993
- Court Luncheon & Meeting ~ Friday 19th March 1993
- Craft Meeting ~ Thursday 25th March 1993
- United Guilds Service ~ Friday 2nd April 1993
- Ladies Dinner ~ Friday 30th April 1993
- Election Court & Dinner ~ Thursday 20th May 1993
- Special Turning Competitions - Display of Items & Prizegiving ~ Friday June 18th 1993
- Election of Sheriffs in Guildhall ~ Thursday 24th June 1993
- Court Meeting (afternoon) ~ Thursday 22nd July 1993

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THE MASTER'S YEAR

The H.M.S. Sultan reception, the first event of my year as Master of the Company, held the day after my election, is the first of many occasions which stand out in my memory. The ship is the Navy's apprentice training centre and their annual reception culminated in a magnificent Beating the Retreat.

I have been invited to so many things over the last six months and have enjoyed each one very much. It is very difficult to pick out the highlights but here are a few:

The Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. What a privilege to see behind the facade.

Evensong in St Paul's Cathedral for the Council of Christians and Jews. Since 1942 the Council has encouraged all religions to work together towards greater unity. The fiftieth anniversary started with a celebration in the Synagogue and ended with a most moving service of evensong in St Paul's Cathedral, attended by many interesting people including the present and two past Speakers of the House of Commons.

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum. My wife Jennifer and I shall go back on our own to see the bits we missed.

Cart-marking Ceremony at the Guildhall: a very unusual event that I had never heard of. The Carmen controlled vehicles (mostly carts) in the City in the Middle Ages and licensed them by branding a City shield and the letter of that year's registration on a wooden board. This year, in Guildhall Yard, the Lord Mayor branded the year with a hot iron onto horse-drawn, vintage and modern vehicles, including a City Police Vehicle and one of HM the Queen's baggage vans.

Sheriffs and Records Fund AGM at the Old Bailey. The Fund, to which the Livery companies contribute, helps to rehabilitate ex-offenders and encourage them to re-join the community. One young man told us how an Outward Bound course has priced him away from drug-taking and the Governor and Assistant Governor of Brixton Prison gave us an insight into their work. The AGM takes place in No. 1 Court of the Central Criminal Courts. Many Masters were present and six of us decided to sit in the Dock, hoping to try it for a one and only experience!

REME's 50th anniversary celebrations at Arborfield. As always, superb Army organization and hospitality.

Swan Upping organized by the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers. We saw Dyers and Vintners and the Master of the Queen's Swans catching swans for marking: Dyers' birds have one nick in the beak, Vintners' two, while unmarked birds belong to the Queen. Zoologists were examining the swans for lead poisoning in particular.

Edward Sawney

DON'T FORGET YOUR TURNERS TIE

The Clerk has ties in navy blue or wine red with the Company's coat of arms, for £6

LATHE FOR DORTON HOUSE SCHOOL

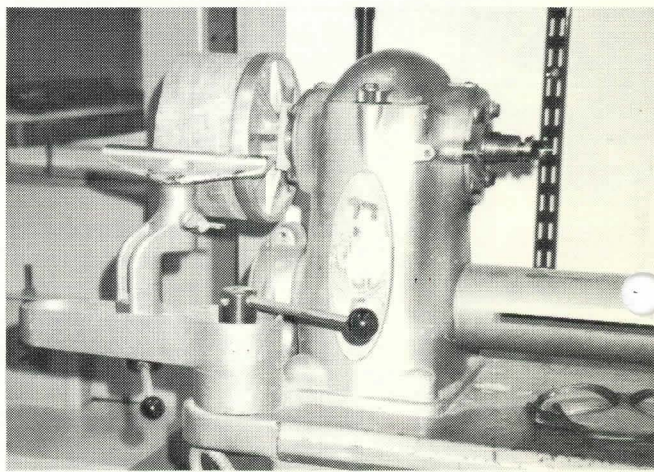
On May 12th, the then Master Michael Simmonds, presented Dorton House School for blind and partially-sighted children with a lathe and a full set of tools.

Since then a boy taking GCSE in Woodwork has made a chess set, using the lathe to turn all the pieces. He designed them for other blind people; like braille, they are identifiable by touch. They are of smooth basic shapes, of varying heights and diameters, with distinguishing marks carved or gouged in. For example, the king is a very large piece with a circular band cut all round the top to symbolize his crown.

The children have also turned samples of wood into ball or cone-shaped pieces which help in identifying different woods. By touching the samples of different woods, children learn to tell them apart e.g. beechwood, which has a fine grain, from coarse-grained oak.

Pupils are unlikely to become professional wood turners but having used a lathe some may well go on to metal turning in the workshops of The Royal London Society for the Blind. There, seventy blind people make finely engineered metal objects, to British Standards specifications. They usually do small runs, such as engineering valves for the North Sea oil industry and valves for Carlsberg beer barrels. A more interesting prospect for skilled pupils than making cane furniture or operating a switchboard.

Penrose Halson



The lathe: a Myford ML8. It is a standard lathe, not modified for its new users. Specially adapted machinery is sometimes necessary, but is always very expensive.

CALLING COMPANY BRIDGE PLAYERS

Every March the Company enters a pair or pairs in the Inter-Livery Bridge Competition organized by the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards. Are there any potential representatives for 1993?

Please telephone John Slater on 071 270-8549 daytime.

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WHAT IS A MAZER?

At the Company's Livery Dinner in recent years, the Lord Mayor of London has been presented with an unusual example of the turner's craft, a mazer.

A mazer is a type of drinking vessel made mostly from the 13th to the 16th centuries. It has a broad, flat foot of wood, often maple, and is ornamented with a silver lip (the *Band*) and a boss in the centre of the inside carrying a silver disc (the *Print* or *Target*), which might be inscribed with a coat of arms or Biblical text.

Few mazers have been made since the 16th century but very ornate examples made by Omar Ramsden in the 1920s and 1930s are in the collection at Goldsmiths' Hall which also houses older and simpler examples. There is a fine 18th century maple mazer on loan to the Company from the Victoria and Albert Museum on show in Apothecaries' Hall. Antique examples may command high prices; the Saffron Walden Mazer mentioned by Samuel Pepys in 1659, with a shallow maplewood bowl and plain silver-gilt mounts to the Band, was sold at auction in 1971 for £22,000.

The name is thought to derive from the British word *masarm* (maple) or from the Dutch word *maeser*, (a knot of maple) or from the German *masa/maser* (a spot or marking especially on wood) relating to the spots or knots of burr maple, c.f. "measles".

A drinking vessel made from burr wood is likely to be better than one made from plank wood since the expansion and contraction caused by liquid can be in several directions in burr wood but is mostly across the grain in plank wood causing more strain to the joint between wood and silver. A burr or burl is a wart-like lump on the side of a tree made up of numerous knotty growths. The cause of this distortion is uncertain but is probably not animal irritation. A burr displays a decorative grain pattern in whichever direction it is cut and well-known examples of burr wood are alnut, oak and maple.

Cecil Colyer



A pair of mazers made of walnut with sterling silver Bands and Targets, and inscription.



The then Master, Michael Simmonds, presenting a mazer to the Lord Mayor, Sir Brian Jenkins at the Livery Dinner, December 1991.

REME'S 50th ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday July 4th nearly 15,000 spectators watched the most ambitious Corps Weekend and Open Day ever put on by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, in celebration of their fiftieth anniversary.

The representative Colonel Commandant Major-General Shaw, a Liveryman of the Company, opened the proceedings. Trumpeters of the Corps Staff Band heralded more music, a drop by the Corps parachute team, a parade of the standards of REME Association Branches, a drive-past depicting REME's history, and finally Beating the Retreat by the massed bands.

All around the arena were military displays, trade stands, side-shows and a large fairground, where children enjoyed themselves enormously. The Master, Edward Sawney was a special guest invited because of the Company's close association with the Corps. Other Turners were present and an enjoyable day was had by all.

Peter Ellis

ST CATHERINE'S LODGE

St. Catherine's Lodge was formed in 1914 by the then Master of the Company, F.C.C. Figiera. This forward-looking Turner appealed to the Livery for help in purchasing lathes for use in Industrial and Reformatory Schools. The giving of a lathe to the Royal Masonic School for Boys revealed that many Liverymen (who in those days rarely dined together) were also Masons. This led to the formation of the Lodge, which now meets quarterly at Innholders' Hall. Masons and non-Masons wanting information please contact

Malcolm Slaughter: 0483 715573

CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

Please send ideas and photographs for future issues of the Newsletter to Tony Crooks-Meredith, Fieldways, Bagshot Road, West End, Woking, Surrey GU24 9QR.

If you would like material returned, please enclose a SAE.

The Turner

VISIT TO R.A.F. ST. ATHAN

In September, invited by Freeman Air Marshall Sir John Thompson, a party led by Peter Venn visited RAF St Athan in South Glamorgan.

A marketing presentation by the station Commander, Air Commodore Pat O'Riley, came before dinner, when the Company was presented with a magnificent pair of brass and ebony candlesticks made by the apprentices. We presented the Station with a history of the Company.



We were particularly interested to see No. 4 School of Technical Training with whom the Livery has a special affiliation. The workshops have a huge range of lathes, grinders, milling, broaching and routing machines, with welding and sheet metal shops, heat treatment of all types, GRP and fabric bays. We were greatly impressed by the diversity and very high standard of workmanship and by the fact that only 40% of the workforce are service personnel.

Tony Crooks-Meredith

THE REGISTER OF PROFESSIONAL TURNERS

The late Past Master Felix Levy wanted to enable turners to meet members of the public who needed their skills, so in 1978 he invited known craftsmen-turners to a Craft Meeting, which is now an annual event.

From this there grew a system whereby competent turners who earned a substantial part of their living from turning were assessed; and a Register of Professional Turners, all approved by the Company, was published in 1986. It is available from the Clerk and now gives the names, addresses and specialities of nearly 100 turners of wood, metal (particularly silver) or ivory substitutes. So if you need a newel post near Newbury, a bowl near Bournemouth, a candlestick near Canterbury, a presentation piece near Prestbury or a special commission anywhere, consult the Register.

Malcolm Cobb

THE FIRST TURNERS' GOLF DAY IN 30 YEARS!

Thanks to Peter Venn's persistence, the first Company Golf Day since 1961 took place on September 7th at Leatherhead Golf Club. Ten Liverymen and eight guests assembled, all fired with great enthusiasm.

The competition was over two rounds stableford. The Harvey Barton Cup and first prize for best all-day score went to Rob Lucas with the superb total of 69 points. The morning prizes were won by Peter Ellis and Dennis Shaw, the afternoon's by Nigel Woodwork and Nigel Simmonds. Guest prizes went to Paul Sellars (guest of Peter Ellis) and John Hardie (Michael Simmonds' guest).

Presenting the prizes the Master, Edward Sawney, talked of the cup and of the need to make this event a permanent fixture. Those who agree please contact me.

Peter Ellis: 071-486 4477

TURNING COMPETITIONS

The Company maintains contact with its origins by furthering the craft of turning and by supporting related technical and technological education. With the Society of Ornamental Turners and the Association of Wood Turners of Great Britain, the Company now organizes annual competitions for practising turners.

On June 18th 1993, all Freeman and Liverymen are most welcome to a veritable feast of craftsmanship at Apothecaries' Hall. Items of plain and ornamental turning will be competing for the Company's gold, silver and bronze medals, certificates of merit and prizes awarded by the major turning and woodworking magazines. A plain turning competition will be open only to members of the Company. SOT members may enter a competition for the design and making, to the Company's specification, of a coaster for use on the Master's table.

For entry forms and rules, please write to the Secretary, SOT, 17 Chichester Drive East, Saltdean, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 8LD (to be returned by May 15th 1993 to the Clerk of the Worshipful Company of Turners).

Gordon Sloan

LORD MAYOR'S SHOW

On Saturday 14th November 1992, the Turners' Company was pleased to be the host at a Buffet Luncheon held on board HQS Wellington, the Livery Hall of the Worshipful Company of Master Mariners.

The Master, together with over 130 Liverymen and their guests from the Turners', Apothecaries' and Spectacle Makers' Companies watched the Annual Lord Mayor's procession from the comfort of this unique floating Livery Hall.

Liverymen were able to explore this historic vessel. This event, being the first to be organized by the Livery Committee, was thoroughly enjoyed by all those present.

Andrew Ciclitira.

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