

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON

Newsletter Summer 1998 Issue 12



Dear Fellow Turners

Ido not believe that I have drawn breath since my election to Master on Ascension Day May 21st.

It was a great joy to be introduced to the Election Court by my father, Past Master Edward Field, who I know shared my disappointment that my elder brother Barry was not making the declaration. However, it was a great joy to us all to have the company of Nigel Woodwark, at the meeting and at dinner. We are all delighted that he has agreed to appointment as honorary Assistant.

I have to report, with sadness, the death of the Father of the Company, Past Master the Reverend Alan Fagg; and of Past Master Sir David Pryke, and of Roger Davies, an excellent Turner and Freeman Prizeman of the Company. We give thanks for their contribution to the Company; but still we must look forward, which is exactly what the Court and its Committees are doing. We have placed in suspension the Charity and Education Committees, the former being now subsumed into the work of the Finance Committee, whilst Tony Sherred, the Master's Steward, maintains a watching brief and gives guidance. The Education Committee, according to its Chairman, Renter Warden Christopher Tyler, is time served, although he too is maintaining a watching brief. This gives more time to the other committees and work of the Company.

On the theme of looking forward, the Court is aiming to increase its membership as we have only four members without office at this

time. We need to look beyond the Millennium to the Company's own Quatracentenary in 2004, with proposals for celebrating both festivals in hand. It is important not just for the Company to have a ready and willing line of prospective Masters, but equally important, as I now know, for candidates to have had experience working on and with the Court.



The Master, outside Guildhall. But why the crash helmet? Is he a keen motorcyclist? Find out inside.

I am looking forward to the Company functions which lie ahead. Like my predecessors, I have received, on average, an invitation a week to dine as a guest of other Livery Companies. I look forward to welcoming you, your guests and friends, to lunch or dinner in the coming months. I hope that you will enjoy your time as much as I am enjoying mine, representing you and this Ancient Company of which we are all so proud, and of which I am so honoured to have been elected Master.

Yours sincerely

Colin Field

COMING EVENTS

- * **Court Meeting (morning) & Livery Luncheon**
Thursday 10th September 1998
- * **Election of Lord Mayor**
Tuesday 29th September 1998
- * **Court Meeting (afternoon)**
Monday 9th November 1998
- * **Patronal Service & Buffet Luncheon**
Wednesday 25th November 1998
- * **Livery Dinner**
Tuesday 15th December 1998
- * **Court Ladies' Dinner**
Wednesday 20th January 1999
- * **Awards Court - Prize Giving**
Tuesday 9th February 1999
- * **Gardner Williams Banquet**
Wednesday 24th February 1999
- * **United Guilds Service**
Friday 19th March 1999
- * **Craft Meeting - Register of Professional Turners**
Wednesday 7th April 1999
- * **Ladies' Dinner**
Thursday 29th April 1999
- * **Election Court & Dinner**
Thursday 13th May 1999

The Turner

The Turner

THE MASTER'S YEAR

Peter Worlidge reports

Looking back on my Master's year, my abiding feeling is of how great an honour and privilege it was to be Master of a Livery Company whose history since its charter spans nearly 400 years, and whose origins go back at least another 400 years. This was very humbling and quickly puts one's Master's year into perspective. It also emphasises the custodial duty and overriding responsibility each Master has to protect and enhance the well-being of the Company so as to ensure his successor inherits a healthy and vibrant organisation. Hopefully this has been achieved and with our new Master, Colin Field, and new Clerk, John Salmon, I can assure you all that the Company is in excellent hands.

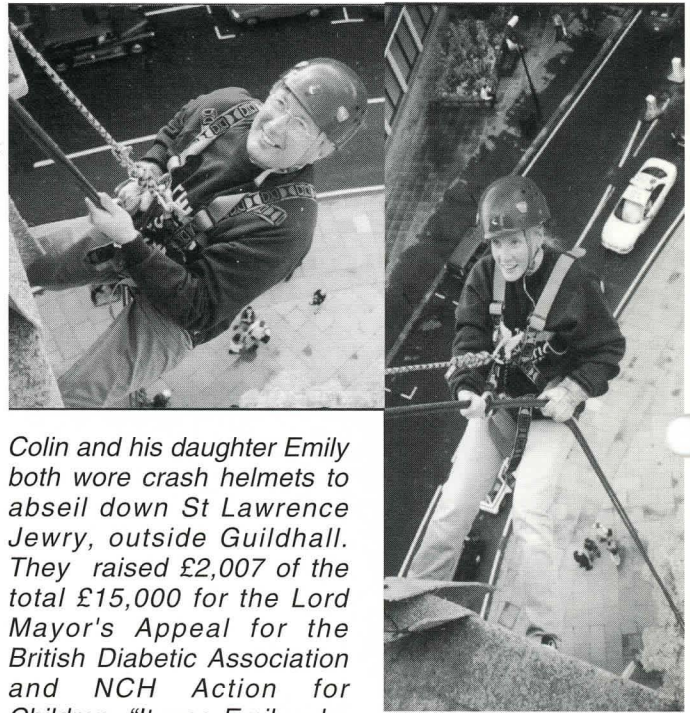
We in the Turners' Company, unlike the majority of Livery Companies, are very privileged in still having a strong link with our original craft, which has thrived in recent years. Each of us assumes responsibility to play our part in ensuring the Company's continuing health and prosperity. We surely owe this to our 800-year history.

This brings me to some observations. It is clear that a number of our members play little if any part in our events or in any form of financial support. Having attended many interviews of prospective new members, I know that probably every one of those to whom I refer promised "undying support" in both these areas at their admission interviews. As each member costs the Company at least £10 a year, is it really fair not to contribute in some form particularly as membership is free?

For many it is understandably difficult to get away from a busy office environment during the day. For those who occasionally can I recommend four events in particular. The United Guilds' Service in March where we are allocated 22 seats in a packed Cathedral - a very moving experience. Our Patronal Service in November at St. Bride's - more intimate and marvellous. Both services are followed by buffet lunch at Apothecaries' Hall and you can leave when you like. The third is our Turning Competition in June, open for viewing during the lunch hour and the only opportunity during the year to see our craft exhibited, from novices' work to the most exquisite exhibition pieces, including the hidden skills of some of our own members. Finally but by no means least the free Gardner Williams banquet - a superb evening. For those of you who have not attended any of these, I can only say you have missed something special.

For the Livery to better understand the work and activities of the Company, increased communication between the Court and Livery is essential. Our excellent Newsletter *The Turner*, edited by Penrose Halson, is most helpful in this area. Additionally in future each edition will include a brief report from one of our sub-committees, covering their recent work. Hopefully this will add to the information flow.

It was a thoroughly memorable year.



Colin and his daughter Emily both wore crash helmets to abseil down St Lawrence Jewry, outside Guildhall. They raised £2,007 of the total £15,000 for the Lord Mayor's Appeal for the British Diabetic Association and NCH Action for Children. "It was Emily who talked me into it," said Colin, "she learned the skill in the CCF at Lancing College and threatened to come down face first if I didn't overcome my fears and dangle!" Emily, the Turners' first Lady Apprentice, said: "The photo accurately represents Daddy's fear. Not a bad effort for an old-timer - who knows what I will get him to do next!"

THE NEW MASTER

Colin Field was born a South London boy, went to Bembridge School, Isle of Wight, and studied business at Wimbledon Technical College (they didn't call them universities in those days). He found accountancy in the City "too exciting" so joined, as the 6th generation, the family funeral business, J.D. Field & Sons Ltd. He became Managing Director; but in 1994 the American Funeral Service Company took over.

Colin developed new interests, within the Funeral Service and in a specialist engineering company making lobster pots. He holds appointments in both national and European associations of Funeral Directors, and in Cruse, is a JP and a governor of his prep school. His wife Christine is Chairman of the Mid Sussex NHS Trust and his children Jeremy 22, Emily 20 and Charlie 16 are all in full-time education.

Colin's interests are sailing, motor boating, water sports, wood turning, music, politics, field sports and skiing. As a practising Christian he enjoys time, of which there is always too little, with his family. He is a Freemason, a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Upholders and a member of the Castle Baynard Ward Club.

The Turner

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE CINEMA

Liveryman William Tyler works as a Production Accountant on British films. Penrose Halson talked to him.

* How did you get involved in film-making?

I'd always liked films and been interested in how they were made, so when I left Cambridge (with a degree in Classics) I applied to film companies. I didn't get anywhere, so I went to Lloyds as a graduate trainee. One client I dealt with was the BBC, and I started to get to know people in that world. Then Lloyds was asked to insure the film *The Jigsaw Man*, with Michael Caine. I met the brokers concerned, who specialised in films, and got a job with them.

* As an accountant?

As an assistant accountant, starting on a film about John Lennon. I ran around paying people out of petty cash! Then I did two Ken Russell films, and became Production Accountant. Now I work with various producers and directors, doing one or two films a year,

* What are you doing at the moment?

A film about Gilbert and Sullivan directed by Mike Leigh, whose last big film, *Secrets and lies*, got the top prizes at Cannes, and was nominated for five Oscars. I very much like working with him, it's fascinating because there's no prescribed script. He gets the actors to collaborate with him to produce the script.

* And what part do you play?

My role is graphically shown in the drawing! I'm in charge of the film's budget, which you can see under the table. I have to allocate it to the piles sitting on the table: **Design** is the construction of the sets, **Costume** is the clothes,

which for the G & S film are very expensive as they're period costumes, for *The Mikado*. We've imported some stunning silk from California, and at the end we'll sell the costumes to recoup a bit. More ordinary clothes we hire. **Catering** needs a big chunk, as the production crew and the actors march on their stomachs. **Camera** is all the technical equipment, which we hire. Then the **Director** and **Producer** need salaries. The actors too - that's **Etc!** There's also **Locations** to be paid for - for G & S we're taking over the Richmond Theatre for five weeks - and masses of **Stationery**.

* You have a marvellously unusual job!

Yes! I like the financial and logistical side, and I'm fascinated by the people I deal with, anyone from a producer with a City or military background to creatives from Art School. The accountancy side is quite basic: proper auditors come and audit when I've finished, My job is largely to assess the financial needs of the different components, and to persuade people to accept them. There's a lot of powerful creative egos around to be cajoled and soothed! When the film goes into production I keep a daily check on the budgets, and re-allocate if necessary - it's all very fluid and varied, and I love it.

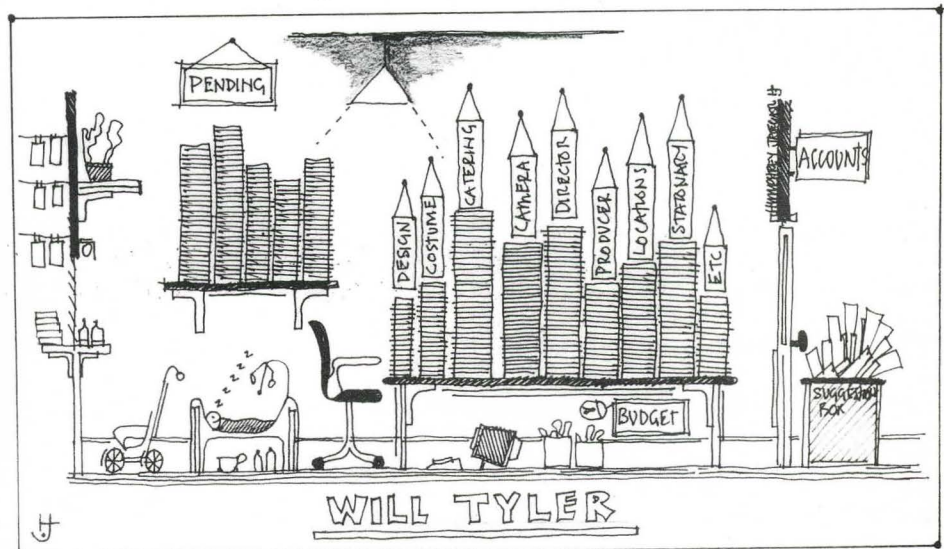
* You don't miss the City?

No, though I liked the environment very much when I worked there, for the same reasons as I enjoy being a Turner: the tradition and the history. When I'm older I hope to spend more time involved with the Company - it's difficult now because films are very demanding. Great fun, but hard task-masters - and unfortunately we carry on shooting after the Lloyds market has closed.

Will Tyler's job as seen by Humphrey Jaeger, Production Designer on Wing and a Prayer, a TV series about barristers. The little sleeping 'tadpole' on the left is Will's daughter Venetia!



Will Tyler (right) on location for the film of DH Lawrence's *The Rainbow*



The Turner

A DAZZLING DISPLAY

Penrose Halson marvelled at the quality and variety of the turnery displayed at the Turning Competitions in Apothecaries' Hall in June

"You really are craftsmen to be congratulated!" said Master Colin Field, beaming as he presented the prizes to the winners in Plain and Ornamental Turning.

Everyone agreed. The tables were spread with intricately inlaid bowls, goblets with twisted barley sugar stems that surely must have been cast in a mould for how could anyone turn such things on a lathe? The skill was unimaginable. There were spoons with graceful tapering handles, an astrolabe cunningly suspended between black pillars on a honey-gold base, gloriously simple bowls in woods of many colours, the pattern of the grain dramatized by ingenious turning.

Prize-winner Paul Coker was in R & D in the food industry, but Weetabix palled and for twelve years he has been a professional turner. He made the beautiful and practical door-wedges presented by then-Master Andrew Hamilton at the Ladies' Dinner and the tazza presented by the Company to the Queen. Current commissions include two mounted ostrich eggs on columns, and two little ornamental temples based on an 1814 design.

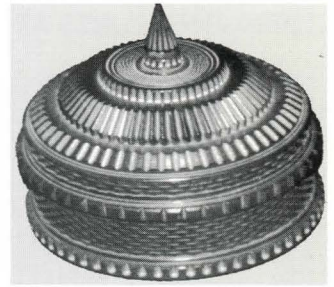
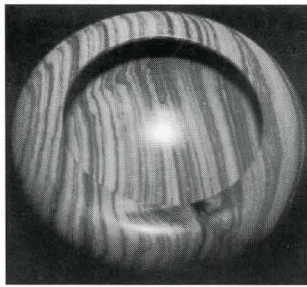
Geoffrey Brandon showed me beautiful and delicate objects he has turned out of synthetic tortoiseshell and ivory, made from polyester. The materials are brittle,



The Master congratulating his father, to the delight of Renter Warden Christopher Tyler, Upper Warden John Slater (obscured by certificate) and Past Master Peter Worlidge

shatter easily and so are more difficult to turn than the real thing. He found a bit of real ivory at an auction - "It was only £30 but nobody wanted it because it had a crack running round, but I thought I could cut it out. I did, and got a perfect tazza!"

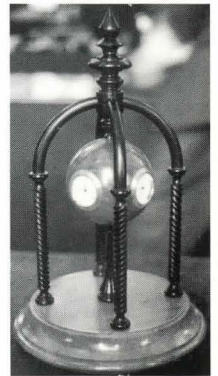
Stephen Copestake won the gold Gertrude Crawford medal, the silver Twentyman medal and two other prizes. A highly talented young turner, he started "because my father baby-sat me in his workshop at the age of 2½!" He spent his student grant on a lathe and lived off an overdraft. He took his degree in Chemistry but spent a lot of time restoring and using an antique lathe "while I should have been reading more science books".



A virtuoso piece of ornamental turning by Geoffrey Brandon; and a plain-turned bowl

There were amateur entries too - turning is a craft enjoyed by learners as well as by experienced craftsmen. The tireless organiser of the Competitions, Past Master Gordon Sloan, was the popular winner of the novice prize, with Past Master Richard Woodwark slipping into second place just ahead of great favourite Past Master Edward Field. Presenting his father with his prize, Master Colin Field whispered (loudly enough for us all to hear) "You must try harder!"

An astrolabe set on a plain-turned base with ornamental pillars. Photograph by Mike Dennis, Vice Chairman of the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain



FATHER OF THE COMPANY

With great sadness we record the death of the Reverend Alan Fagg, Past Master, former Chaplain, Father of the Company and man of remarkable energy, kindness, vision, humour and engaging eccentricity.

He was active in scouting, boys' clubs and ToCh, and while working in shipping, he set up in Southwark two hostels for working boys, who knew him as "Skipper". He came to feel that he had to devote more of his time to people, and became a C of E priest, serving in parishes and in Maidstone prison, where he was known as "Twinkle" for his smile and amusing stories. He will be remembered as Master for his hard work, his charm and thoughtfulness, and for his impromptu graces before formal dinners and very entertaining speeches.

In the words of Immanuel Kant, "Whose life lives on in memory, he is not dead, he is only distant; death is only when one is forgotten."

WANTED

A volunteer to catalogue and value the Turners' Company's books which are held in Apothecaries' Hall, and to advise the Court (through the Standing Committee) as to their disposal. If qualified and willing to undertake this task, please contact the Clerk at the Company's office.