

# THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON

Newsletter Winter Issue 15



Dear Fellow Turners

I hope you enjoyed the Millennium Livery Dinner and have recovered from all the 'other end of the century' festivities. The Civic Party thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and it is clear that the reputation of the Turners as a friendly Company was well maintained. The Lord Mayor was delighted with the bowl turned in Cocobola by craftsman Bert Marsh, and at the opportunity to meet so many of the Livery. I am sure you would wish me to take this opportunity to thank all who contributed to the success of the occasion, in particular the Renter Warden, who chaired a small organisational committee, and our new Clerk, Edward Windsor Clive.

However, the Livery is not only about dining together. The Court and its Committees have been busy. The Howe Committee, comprising both Liverymen and professional turners, has been considering how best the Company can support the craft of turning in the 21st century. The Finance Committee has been nurturing our assets. The Livery Committee is planning social events for the Livery and their friends, and I hope many of you will participate in the visit to the Guildhall Art Gallery on March 22nd. The Livery Committee is also looking ahead to how we might celebrate the 400-year anniversary of our Charter in 2004 and I am sure the Chairman, Andrew Ciclitira, would be glad to hear of any ideas. The Standing Committee keeps the Company running on a day-to-day basis. The Company does of course rely on the time and expertise of the Livery to keep the committees running and the Clerk would be pleased to hear from any of the Livery who can contribute.

Both the Register of Professional Turners and the Society of Ornamental Turners



The Master greeting H.R.H. Prince Philip at the REME Museum of Technology

have established websites; these are well worth viewing. Thanks to the initiative and generosity of Assistant George Kieffer, the website [www.turnersco.com](http://www.turnersco.com) has been registered although it has yet to be developed. Any volunteers?

At the Gardner Williams Dinner, the Millennium Gift by the Company of a movable font to our parish church, St Bride's, will be dedicated by our Chaplain, Canon John Oates, and handed over to him as the current incumbent. And, of course, we look forward to our Millennium Turning Competition on June 28th. The Lord Mayor will present the prizes, and as many will recall from the history of the Company, it was a tradition at the end of the 19th century that the Lord Mayor presented the prizes at such competitions.

I look forward to meeting many of you at future Turners' events

*John M. Slater.*

## COMING EVENTS

**Court Meeting & Court Luncheon**  
Wednesday 1st March 2000

**Visit to Guildhall Art Gallery**  
Wednesday 22nd March 2000

**United Guilds Service**  
Friday 31st March 2000

**Craft Meeting - Register of Professional Turners**  
Wednesday 12th April 2000

**Ladies' Dinner**  
Thursday 27th April 2000

**Election Court & Dinner**  
Thursday 1st June 2000

**Election of Sheriffs in Guildhall**  
Monday 26th June 2000

**Millennium Turning Competition & Awards Court**  
Wednesday 28th June 2000

**Court Meeting**  
Tuesday 11th July 2000

The Turner

## THE MASTER'S YEAR

*John Slater reports on a memorable time*

It seems a long time since my installation as Master on Ascension Day last year. As I look back over my diary at the many and varied events, it is difficult to decide which are the most memorable.

In September, my wife Susan and I joined the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, and other Masters of Livery Companies, on a visit to the Lord Mayor Treloar National Specialist School and College. In 1906, Sir William Purdie Treloar, Lord Mayor of London, launched his 'Little Cripples Fund' for children suffering from non-pulmonary tuberculosis. The fund was over-subscribed within a year and a hospital was built at Alton in Hampshire. While the NHS took over the running of the hospital in 1948, the trustees bought nearby sites and a school was established at Froyle. This now provides boarding and day education for some 150 under-16s with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. A College on



*Colin Young (right) and David Sage, both 13, at the Lord Mayor Treloar School, with the Turners' lathe (a Boxford 160 CNC) and their Robot Wars prototype*

an adjoining site at Holybourne caters for over-16s. It was indeed a privilege to witness the achievements of the children and dedication of the staff. I was delighted to see the lathe, presented by the Turners' Company in 1994, being well used. The current project was the construction of robots for an entry to the TV programme *Robot Wars*. I am sure you will be pleased to know that the Master's nominated charity this year will be the Treloar Trust, to upgrade the operating systems of the 'Turner' lathe.

The Company has had connections with REME since the Corps was formed and the opening of the new Exhibition Hall of the REME Museum of Technology by Prince Philip proved another fascinating event. The vehicles on display included a Bedford QL 4-ton, 4x4 Type M Machinery Wagon complete with well-used lathe. The Museum at Arborfield is well worth a visit not least to see on display the medals of two previous Commandants and Past Masters of the Turners' Company, Sir Leonard Atkinson and Sir Leslie Tyler. It is planned that the Museum will be opened to the public in May this year.

The visit of the Chinese President, Jiang Zimen, was understandably controversial. I was privileged to be invited as the guest of the Chief Commoner and Liveryman of the Turners, Barbara Newman, to the Banquet at the Guildhall on October 20th. One could not but be impressed by the way such events are staged and how the City manages to assist in affairs of State while rising above politics. Barbara is to be congratulated on her award of the CBE in the New Year honours.

I have enjoyed the opportunities to meet practising turners, and have been very impressed by their enthusiasm and skill and, in particular, their willingness to help others to learn their skills. Sadly, my own experience relates only to machine turning a brass paperweight at SEME, Borden, under the watchful eye of our instructor, Mr Turner. However, I do hope to take up some of the offers to try my hand at turning in wood. You never know, I might even follow in the Field tradition and enter the Livery turning competition.

Finally, the Lord Mayor's nominated charity, which this year is Barnardo's. An events calendar is available from the Appeals Office (020 7403 2555). While Bungee Leaping may not appeal to members of the Court, I trust that they and the Livery will support at least some of the wide range of events. By the time you have read this, I hope that your Master, suitably sponsored will have participated in the City Dip with the Lord Mayor.

## THE WOODWARK MISTERIES

*Can you solve the mysteries set by Past Master Richard Woodwark? If you can't, answers are on page 4.*

**Misterie 1:** I have two 18-inch lengths of fuse. Each takes one hour to burn from end to end. (N.B. The speed of burning along each length varies from inch to inch.) I want to know when forty-five minutes have elapsed. I have a box of matches. Can you help?

**Misterie 2:** The verger asked: "How old are your three children?" The vicar answered: "The product of their ages is 36, and the sum of their ages is the number of your house." The verger asked: "Can you tell me some more?" The vicar said: "Your son is older than all of mine." "O.K.," said the verger, "your kids are \* and \* and \*!" What was the verger's reply?

# The Turner

## NEW COURT MEMBERS

Assistants Robert Lucas and Christopher Roberts were elected to the Court in 1999. Penrose Halson talked to them, first to Robert Lucas

### How did you come to be a Turner?

In 1990 I became Commander Maintenance of South East & London District, looking after all REME units - and running Exercise Southern Craftsman (the annual military skills competition. The winning unit is presented with the Turners' Shield at our Livery Dinner.) So I met Richard Woodwork (like me, a member of Beaconsfield Golf Club) and other Turners. At the Corps' Guest Night I always wanted to sit

next to the Turners' Master to thank him for supporting Exercise Southern Craftsman. When I sat next to Barrie Johnston, a most entertaining chap, I asked



Robert Lucas with his family at the Livery Dinner in the Mansion House. Watching the Lord Mayor present the Turners' Shield gave him particular pleasure since the winners, 128 Reclamation Workshop Company, are part of 103 Battalion, of which he is Honorary Colonel.

When about joining the Company. "My boy," he said, "it's dead easy if I sponsor you!"

### Is the REME/Turners connection growing?

Yes, it's been developing since 1947, when the Company



2nd Lieutenant Simon Hunt receiving the Turners' Shield

presented REME (formed in 1942) with a silver porringer bowl (still placed in front of the Master when he visits). Brigadier Croucher,

the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who is concerned with all REME external contacts, came to our splendid Livery Dinner.

### Do you know how to turn?

I learned as a young officer, and to qualify for the Institute of Mechanical Engineering I spent nine months with Vickers Armstrong. In the apprentice shop I made a poker with a handle turned in copper, brass, steel and plastic. I presented it to my girlfriend's mother, and her father said "My God, that boy must be serious!" (he was right!) But I haven't done much turning since.

Next, Penrose Halson talked to Christopher Roberts who worked for the D.T.I. on international economic issues, becoming Director General of Trade Policy. He also spent 31/2 years as a private secretary to Edward Heath at 10 Downing Street.

### Your father was a Turner, wasn't he?

Yes, he was introduced to the Company by Felix Levy, whom he knew professionally (my father was a bank manager in the City). He became Master in 1972. I already belonged to the Vintners' Company, and I thought I couldn't do justice to two Companies. But when my father died in 1983 the Turners asked me if I'd like to keep up the family tradition and join. I was very glad, I thought it very nice that they should put it that way.



### Are the Vintners and the Turners quite different?

Yes. The Vintners' is one of the twelve great Companies, it's bigger and more formal. But both Vintners and Turners have a connection with their historic origins, and any Company which has that has a real raison d'être. To the extent that Livery Companies need to justify themselves, it's important that they are seen to take a constructive role in the development of whatever skill it may be. That's why the Vintners meet about a quarter of the costs of the Wine Standards Board.

### What is the Wine Standards Board?

It's one of the Ministry of Agriculture's many quangos. It enforces the EU's wine regulations on vineyards, importers and wholesalers in this country, and has a team of eight inspectors. It's one of the five employers I now have (after leaving the D.T.I.). The others are Covington & Burling, a law practice which I advise on international trade; the National House-building Council, of which I am a non-executive director; the London and European Advisory Committee of the Industrial Bank of Japan; and shortly, a City committee on the liberalisation of trade in services.

# The Turner

## A PLEASANT SURPRISE IN SOMERSET

*Malcolm Cobb, Liveryman and Honorary Secretary of the Register of Professional Turners, tells of a semi-expected and warmly welcomed visit*

Throughout the year, amateur and professional woodworkers attend Shows whose purpose is to sell more tools, more machines and the always more elaborate gizmos. They also enable woodworkers to meet friends, and clubs and societies to reach the public.

The Axminster Power Tool Centre's annual Show runs for four days in November at the Royal Bath & West showground near Shepton Mallet. Last year there were over ninety commercial stands. Most of the demonstrators on stands selling wood-turning lathes and tools were members of the Company's Register of Professional Turners. Other members - 38 in all - were doing dextrous things on their lathes and answering technical questions from the thousands of visitors.

On the Register stand was a demonstration lathe operated by Oliver Plant (featured in Newsletter 10), and several relief turners, and a glass case crammed full of examples of modern turning. On the Sunday morning I was on duty answering questions about the case when I found myself looking into the smiling faces of the Master and his wife. We had been 'warned' that, if they came, it would be on the Sunday, but it is a daunting journey from Highgate to Somerset, particularly in mid-November.

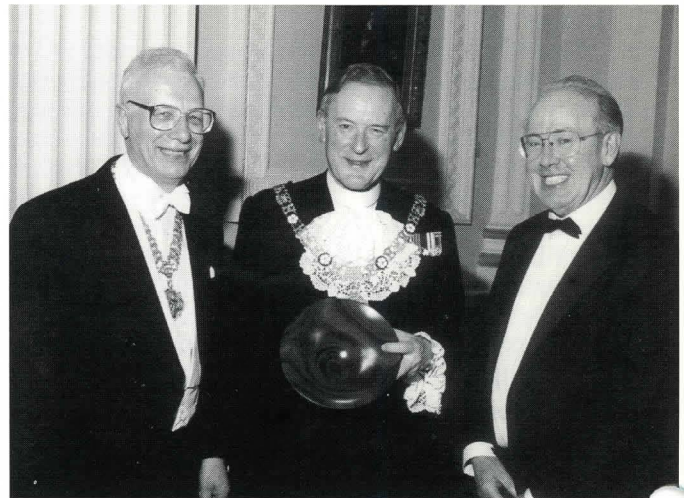
I then had the pleasure of giving John and Susan a tour of the Show, introducing them to Register members and giving a concentrated introduction to the 'misteries and arts' of the modern-day turner. Small, choice items of turnery changed hands, and one member presented the Master with a recently-made instructional video. After lunch I left John and Susan to tour stands that had caught their eye, including the traditional and avant-garde entries in the furniture competition. They returned to Highgate after exposure to more woodturning than most people experience in a lifetime, and I think they enjoyed it. From the Register's point of view their visit was very encouraging and greatly appreciated.

## YOUR CRAFT NEEDS YOU

*The Master appeals to all members of the Company*

The Company's objectives are to support the three C's: the Craft, the City and Charity. "Its main purpose is to encourage the craft of turning in every aspect". This it has done over the last century via design awards and competitions, e.g. the Millennium Turning Competition.

The Howe Committee has been considering, however, a more systematic approach to supporting the Craft in the 21st century. It has suggested three main routes to supplement its traditional role. The first is to provide support, through bursaries, particularly for young professional turners trying to get established. The second



*Bert Marsh at the Mansion House with the Master and the Lord Mayor, who was presented with Bert's beautiful turned bowl. Bert, a superb craftsman, is listed in the Company's Register of Professional Turners, whose work has been approved by competent assessors. For a copy, please contact the Clerk. Registered turners have many specialities, e.g. restoration of antiques, carving, presentation pieces and ornamental turning. They live all over the country so you can never be far from at least one. So contact a Register turner, find something lovely and useful, and support your Craft!*

is to help organisations to use lathes safely and expertly, especially where the Turners' Company has provided a lathe. The third area covers a number of other aspects, including encouragement to professional (or amateur) turners to demonstrate their craft.

The minimum amount needed for such a programme is around £15,000 a year. Currently our finances are sound although heavily dependent on dividend income; we have increased support for charities, and have set aside money for Millennium events and the 400-year anniversary of our charter in 2004. However, given current economic policy, the growth in investment income is slowing - and the cost of running a more active Company is increasing. The Court has concluded that, rather than move to quarterage, we should try to increase covenanted income. Currently this is disappointingly low, only £5,000-£6,000, contributed by less than 25% of the Livery.

Please respond to the appeal. Make a Millennium resolution to come to the aid of the Company, and of the Craft on which it is founded.

*Richard Woodmark cogitating on a mystery*

2 The seven groups of 3 factors of 36 add up to 10, 11, 13, 13, 14, 21 & 38. Only if he lives at No. 13 will the verger need more information. The fact that he can eliminate one group (ie 9, 2, 2) on learning his son is older than all the vicar's children, means his son must be 7 or 8 and thus the vicar's family are 6, 6 and 11



1 Light both ends of fuse A and one end of fuse B. When A burns out (1/2 hour), light the other end of B, which will burn out after a further 15 minutes.

**SOLUTIONS TO THE WOODMARK MYSTERIES**