

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON



Newsletter Summer 2001 Issue 18

Fellow Turners, friends,

This year it is my privilege to be Master of our Company, a privilege I am keenly aware of. I hope to carry out the duties and privileges of my year of office with dedication and also delectation! The Turners' Company has always given me a sense of pride in belonging and the delight of good fellowship.

It is now two months since my election and I have already enjoyed hospitality from the Apothecaries, the Pewterers, the Wheelwrights and the Innholders. The very first engagement of my Master's year, accompanied by my wife Pat, was a weekend visit to Ironbridge, along with other Masters, some new and others well versed in the excitement and pleasures of Mastership. A real must for anyone, the tours and general friendliness made for a marvellous time. Of course not long enough, and we shall certainly enjoy a second visit. I made a presentation to Mark Deakin-Segal in the surrounds of his workshop, and the 'hope' boxes on display were a very good example of his skill and knowledge of wood.

My wife and I were invited to the City of London Freeman's School for their annual prize-giving day. The school proved to be most impressive, particularly since our day coincided with a perfect English summer's day and the thwack of the cricket ball on bat and the general air of well-being made it all seem perfect. The accomplishments of the school are quite remarkable and we felt very proud to see our donated Turners' prizes awarded to such very skilful pupils.



The Master, Tony Sherred, talks to a member of the Chelmer Valley Wood-turners

It was a rare opportunity to be invited to the Queen's Garden Party in July. Another superb summer day with a splendid tea and the opportunity to mingle with ladies presenting a cacophony of colour and the gentlemen all smartly dressed. We would have been overwhelmed to be presented to Her Majesty but were content to view the Royal Party from the close sidelines. The garden is not formal but a true country garden with a lake and wildfowl, masses of high trees and shrubs around the perimeter, surrounding close-cut undulating lawns. A day to remember.

I have made the decision to split my nominated charity into two, Cystic fibrosis and Doctor Barnardo's. Both charities are particularly of interest to us as we have family and friends who have connections and indeed need of their help.

Tony Sherred

COMING EVENTS

- * **Court Meeting (11.00 a.m.) & Livery Luncheon**
Wednesday, 12 September 2001
- * **Election of Lord Mayor in Guildhall**
Monday, 1 October 2001
- * **Company Golf Day (Beaconsfield Golf Club)**
Wednesday, 3 October 2001
- * **Court Meeting (4.00 p.m.)**
Wednesday, 7 November 2001
- * **Lord Mayor's Day**
Saturday, 11 November 2001
- * **Patronal Service & Buffet Luncheon**
Wednesday, 21 November 2001
- * **Livery Dinner**
Tuesday, 18 December 2001
- * **Court Ladies' Dinner**
Thursday, 17 January 2002
- * **Gardner Williams Banquet**
Tuesday, 26 February 2002
- * **Court Meeting & Court Luncheon**
Wednesday, 6 March 2002
- * **United Guilds Service**
Friday, 15 March 2002
- * **Craft Meeting - Register of Professional Turners**
Wednesday, 10 April 2002
- * **Ladies' Dinner**
Wednesday, 24 April 2002

The Turner

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THE MASTER'S YEAR

Christopher Tyler sums up at the end of his year as Master

There are just two topics I would like to mention about the privilege of being your Master for the second six months of my term of office.

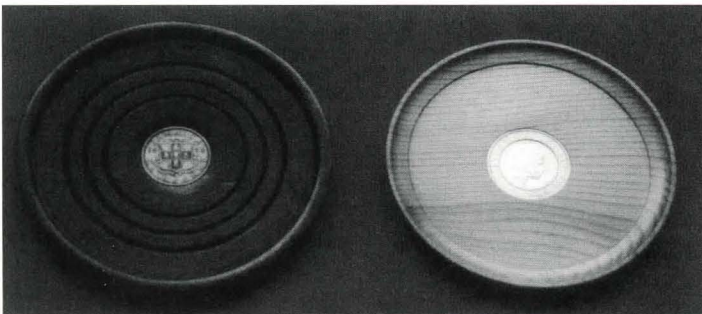
Firstly, I use the word 'privilege' deliberately. Not only do we have nearly 400 years behind us but we have, in my view, an extremely fine membership of the Livery today and a very healthy outlook for the future. Each Livery sets its own criteria and its aims: some are exclusively for those qualified in a particular trade or profession and others exist solely for their social and charitable activities.

I have always held that the Turners maintain a healthy balance between these two extremes with the Livery having a broad range of professions, all taking an interest in our Guild or Craft origins. In recent years, the Court of Assistants have felt that it perhaps needed a slight 'pull on the rudder' in the direction of greater support for the Craft and the appeal launched by my predecessor started this process.

I would like to thank the Livery for its very generous response, either with immediate support or with pledges for the future. This has enabled the Howe Committee to plan and budget for a number of initiatives.

My second topic is to say that the social highlight for my family and me was my last social event, the Ladies' Dinner on 26th April. Not everything went quite right! I had not realised the dangers of letting one's youngest brother off his reins, and our young musicians would have been more at home with Brahms and Liszt rather than Coward and Novello. However, it was a great family occasion and I hope the ladies enjoyed their coasters made by Paul Coker, one of our leading Professional Turners. (They were deliberately made large enough for the ladies to kindly lend them to their menfolk for a good-sized tumbler of whisky!)

Readers might be interested to see pictures of the coasters from which I developed the idea. The dark one belongs to a friend; it is stamped on the back "TEMPLE GALLERIES, MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA W.I." and is thought to have been made in the middle of the 19th century. However, the coin cannot be seen from both sides. The pale one was Paul Coker's prototype, made so that the two-metal coin can be seen on both heads and tails faces. The most difficult part was getting hold of



Model for the Master's gift at the Ladies' Dinner beside the final result; and admiration at the Dinner

the coins with the 2000 date, but that remains a classified story!

All best wishes and please give the new Master as much support as you all kindly gave me.

THANKS FOR THE LIVERY

Chairman of the Howe Committee Peter Worlidge sends a cheering report

The Court has recently granted the Howe Committee an additional £15,000 annually to implement some exciting new initiatives put forward by the Committee to further the Company's support of the Craft. It was strongly felt that, as indicated in the Company accounts, the level of financial commitment to the Company's key objective of supporting the Craft of Turning in every aspect had fallen to an unacceptable level for a company of our standing and reputation.

This marvellous development has only been made possible by the splendid response to the appeal made to the Livery by Past Master Slater and enthusiastically carried forward by Deputy Master Tyler.

The new initiatives are as follows:

- 1 An annual Bursary Competition to attract talented new turners: **Up to £8,000**
- 2 Inspection and maintenance of lathes presented by the Company and arrangements to provide instruction for their safe and expert use in the future: **£3,000**
- 3 Awards to Universities and Colleges for special projects: **£2,000**
- 4 Support for the Craft in various aspects to include instruction and teaching, demonstrations and the awarding of small grants: **£2,000**

Publicity for this new Bursary, which is being carefully drawn up to encourage maximum appeal, will be sent out in September/October with entries closing on 31st December 2001. Judging will take place during January/February and we aim to make the award at the Gardner Williams Dinner on 26th February 2002.

This is certainly a very exciting project. Well done the Livery who have made it all possible.



The Turner

THE CRAFT MEETING

Penrose Halson reports on a fascinating day

At the annual Craft Meeting members of the Company's *Register of Professional Turners* spend the day at Apothecaries' Hall. On April 11th 2001 the hall was crowded with turners, including David Bryant, who wrote *Classic Country Chairs* and Fraser Burchill, who works for the National Theatre and recently made fake Irish bagpipes for *The Playboys of the Western World*.

The first speaker, the Master, Christopher Tyler, described the Company as one which holds a good balance between the Craft and social activities. Thirty years ago interest in turning was a bit thin, but the *Register* has greatly improved the



Members of the Company's Register enjoying themselves

Malcolm Cobb, tireless and indefatigable Honorary Secretary of the *Register*, told us that the *Register* has had a website for three years. "Are you Luddites?" he challenged those who had not yet looked at it.

"The website is your shop window to the world. It's your site: use it!" (some shuffling and muttering).

Malcolm auctioned bowls made by the famous George Lailey (Newsletter 17). Turner Robin Wood told us Lailey's work resembles medieval and Roman bowls, made with a pole lathe and green or part-dried wood. Profits from the auction are now in the Company's charitable fund, to buy special equipment for turners beginning their career, or in difficulties.

Turner Frank Clark told of selling his work via National Trust shops and doing restoration at Hampton Court Palace. Tom Pockley taught chemistry but at 22 thought teachers over 45 were past it, so retired early to make baroque oboes and cors anglais - from a black bag he produced one, showing us the tricky bend. Complex instruments did not earn much, but luckily music stands did - and didn't need tuning. Tom said the *Register's* website had brought him work.

Clive Martin ran a fish and chip shop before becoming a furniture restorer. He taught himself turning by reading all Bill Jones's articles which he found absolutely fantastic. He was on tenterhooks about being assessed by the Company for inclusion on the *Register*, as working on your own you have no barometer of whether your work is good or bad.

Theo Fabergé was in the USA talking about his work, so Sarah Johnson told us of the Emperor of Russia who commissioned a decorative egg - symbol of re-birth - for his wife. Fabergé eggs became fashion objects: if not sold in six months, they were broken up. In 1906 Carl Fabergé

sent over a collection, shown in Oxford Street, and in 1910 Carl's fashion photographer son Nicholas opened a Fabergé shop in Dover Street. By his favourite model Nicholas had an illegitimate son, Theo.

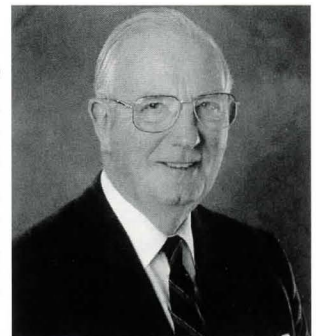
Aged four Theo banged his thumb in his efforts to make a little wooden bowl, but did not know he was a Fabergé until he was 47. Working as a furniture restorer he met Fred Howe, who taught him ornamental turning, which led to his designing a collection of eggs. Theo now uses thirty craftsmen, making limited editions. His creations are fantastical, intricate and superb: an egg turned in oak from Peter the Great's forest, with a crown on top and anchor and compass inside. Another of crystal with a gilded dragon and paintings of palaces, set on a base turned on a Holtzappfel lathe.

Sarah Johnson told us that the line continues: Theo's daughter Sarah is a silversmith and goldsmith, making such wonders as her blue Neva egg, which contains an angel like the one above the cathedral in St Petersburg.

We gazed in admiration at the display of Fabergé eggs, handled George Lailey's simple bowls, listened, talked, ate and drank - a wonderful day.

LIFE'S A LOTTERY

LIFE'S A LOTTERY - Or is it? is the title of Past Master Barrie Johnston's forthcoming autobiography. It tells the story of Barrie's long, high-profile and occasionally stormy City career, and of his more than forty years of charity-fund management.



Barrie Johnston: his book is published in November, a perfect Christmas present!

In his preface, Sir Peter Baldwin KCB talks of Barrie's "cultivated competence in making money grow". Sir Peter concludes: "It is typical of his lifelong service to charities, and doubtless in wider personal circles, that he has seen his book as an opportunity to offer practical advice in lucid terms to the uninitiated, inexpert or pre-occupied multitude, for the potential value in money that it may be to them. Including Government, we can all listen with advantage."

THE NEW MASTER

Anthony Sherred was born in 1935, educated at Brentwood School and was Head Chorister of St Thomas' Brentwood. He did National Service in the Royal Artillery. In 2000 he retired from his career as Chartered Surveyor. His wife Pat runs the office for a Radio Doctor; they have three children and five grandchildren. He is a keen sailor, and likes cooking, gardening, horse racing and cricket. Formerly Chairman of the Executive Association of Great Britain and member of the Worshipful Company of Constructors and the Queenhythe Ward Club, his clubs are the RAC, MCC and East India.

The Turner

LIVERY WEEKEND AT IRONBRIDGE

The Master describes a high spot

My wife Pat and I, accompanied by the Clerk and his lady, spent the weekend of June 8 - 10 at the Ironbridge Museum with a group of Masters and Clerks invited by the Ironbridge Trust to view the work and exhibits on its various museum sites.

Shortly after lunch on the Saturday, at Blists Hill, in front of a small gathering, I presented a cheque for £3,000.00 to Ruth Denison representing the Ironbridge Trust. The money is for two specific purposes, first to renovate the sawmill and carpentry area in which the lathe presented by us stands, and to refurbish the lathe. The second, and perhaps more important purpose, is to provide a fund for payment to a member of the *Register of Professional Turners* who will train Mark Deakin-Segal, who oversees the sawmill and carpentry area, in the mystery or art of Turning. It is our hope that when Mark becomes proficient, the bench on which the lathe stands will be moved to a more prominent position so that the public can view the lathe in use.



The Master pays his rent to the Wicked Land Agent (Liveryman Professor Alan Gillett) in the estate office at Blists Mill

Also present was Alan Gillett who, as chairman of the London Committee of the Trust, had helped identify the best ways in which our donation could be used. Thanks are also due to Andrew Hamilton and Andrew Mayer, who both helped in promoting the donation.



Mark Deakin - Segal with the horizontal plane in the sawmill refurbished by the Company

The visit is a must for all Masters. The visitor will be enthralled not only by the history of the exhibits but also by the many practical demonstrations. It affords the Master the opportunity to meet and come to know his contemporaries, most of whom will be present at the many Livery functions during the year of office.



CANON OATES, HONORARY FREEMAN

Following his retirement from St Bride's, Canon John Oates relinquished his Honorary Chaplaincy of the Company. However, he has accepted an invitation to become an Honorary Freeman, and we are delighted that we shall still have his company on as many occasions as his busy retirement will allow.



Canon Oates at lunch after our Patronal Service

ODDS & ENDS

For Sale: John Edwards has a Holtzappfel ornamental turning lathe for sale. Contact him on 01732 355479.

Turners who lunch: The Master is organising small informal lunches at the Clerk's office, for Freeman and Liverymen to get to know one another and to discuss particular topics. If you would like to attend, please contact the Clerk.

Photos: Andrew Mayer kindly took photographs specially for this issue. Other budding David Baileys please volunteer to Penrose Halson.

PIMMS IN THE COURTYARD

Thunder, lightning and rail strikes all threatened, but did not trouble the Turners and guests assembled in the enchanting cream-coloured courtyard of Apothecaries' Hall on July 4th. The evening sun shone on members of the Livery who had invited young (and some not-so-young) friends and relations to give them a flavour of what a Livery Company is and does. The Pimms flowed, delicious canapés were consumed, introductions made, questions asked and answered. The Apothecaries' Beadle led a tour of the inside of the Hall, which members and guests found fascinating and revealing.

Factual information about Livery Companies in general and the Turners in particular was given to each guest in a handsome blue pack provided by Livery Committee Chairman Andrew Ciclitira. One of the pack's components was the little leaflet *Livery Profile* recently published by the Mercers' Company. It is full of facts about Livery Companies, for example: 38 Companies have their own Halls, there is a total of 23,921 Liverymen, and (in 1999) Livery Companies gave to charities the staggering sum of £38.1 million.

Turners and their guests at the first-ever Turners' reception in the courtyard of Apothecaries' Hall