

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON

Newsletter Winter 2002 Issue 19



Fellow Turners, friends

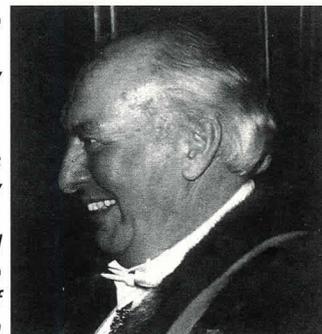
Every Master would like his year of office to be forward-looking, with worthwhile additions to the Company's activities, and I am no exception. One innovation is the Company's website, turnersco.com, for which thanks go to George Kieffer assisted by Christopher Crooks-Meredith.

To date there are eleven entries, all of an extremely high standard, for our new turning Bursary Competition. Peter Worlidge and the Howe Committee deserve unstinting praise for working so assiduously to design the format and rules of the competition. We all very much hope that the prizes will provide earnest turners with the opportunity to further their career, and will also enhance the Company's image and make the general public more aware of what we are doing.

The Howe Committee also organised a very successful 'brainstorming' in Apothecaries' Hall on ways of promoting our craft. Two more innovations are our informal lunches, and a new competition for regular and TA REME units. Arrangements for the celebration of our four hundredth anniversary are proceeding apace, led by the two Masters who will preside in 2004, Andrew Mayer and Richard Levy, and their committee.

The Court of Assistants is debating the composition of the Court, so that it consists of energetic and forceful Turners. We are discussing, inter alia, the age at which new entrants join the Company, and the age when suitable candidates are elected to the Court (and subsequently become Master).

We are considering how many Court Assistants, Past Masters and Honorary Assistants there should be, and the age of retirement from the Court.



In the year 2000, a group of Livery Companies produced Livery 2000 Initiative. This extremely important paper addresses the future of the Livery, good practice in the management of Companies, and the difficulty of most Companies in attracting suitable younger candidates. The Court will debate these matters. Very few applications have come from young people who came to our July reception.

Finally I believe we should make strenuous efforts for the greater involvement of the members of the Company in all we discuss and do, by greater dissemination of information between the Court and the Livery (? a bigger newsletter and our new website) and by including Livery members in our management committees.

I offer my sincere thanks to the Standing, Finance, Howe and Livery committees for their support and advice; and I wish you all continued enjoyment of your membership of the Company

Tony Sherred

COMING EVENTS

- * **Court Meeting (11.00 am) & 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
- * **Election Court (5.00 pm) & Dinner**
Thursday, 9 May 2002

- * **Election of Sheriffs in Guildhall**
Monday, 24 June 2002
- * **Court Meeting (4.00 pm)**
Wednesday, 10 July 2002

Also for your diary, two outstanding woodworking exhibitions:

International Woodworking and Turning Exhibition

NEC Hall 10 (Birmingham), 4th-6th October
Axminster ATME Tools 2002
Royal Bath and West Showground (Shepton Mallet, Somerset), 24th-27th October

The Turner

The Turner

THE MASTER'S YEAR

Tony Sherred tells about his life as Master

In the summer Newsletter I described my enjoyment of our visit to Ironbridge. Now the Company's donation of £3000.00 to the Ironbridge Trust has been well spent. It has enabled Reg Sherwin, a member of our Register of Professional Turners, to train the carpentry workshop instructor/tutor, Mark Deacon-Segal, in the art of turning. Mark now demonstrates our art to the visiting public, and exhibits his work. A new Record Power no. 2 lathe and a grinding jig have been purchased, the work station for the lathe is now more prominent, and the workshop has been substantially re-furbished. You will be very welcome if you visit - the Clerk has the details.

I greatly enjoyed the lectures of the City Management course. They covered the City's planning laws (followed by some provocative questioning from the audience about the more controversial planning applications and decisions), housing and sport development, the Barbican arts centre, public relations, the Corporation's library and its finance department, and the role of the City's Remembrancer. The talk about the Livery Consultative Committee was by fellow Turner Professor Alan Gillett.

The course included a tour of the Mansion House, with a talk by the Lord Mayor, Michael Oliver. We also toured Smithfield's refurbished market, whose site in 1174 was "a smooth field where every Friday there is a celebrated rendezvous of fine horses to be sold, and in another quarter are placed vendibles of the peasant, swine with their deep flanks, and cows and oxen of immense bulk." At the Old Bailey we viewed the Roman wall in the basement, and the cell from which Ruth Ellis, the "crime of passion" murderess, was taken to be hanged.

Pat and I went to the opening of the refurbished City of London museum, which concentrates on such aspects of history as domestic plumbing, shops, and clothes, with artists' pictures and lithographs. For children or grandchildren there is much of interest: contemporary newspaper articles about thieves and robbers, and the goriest reports on murderers.

At the Carpenters' Company's awards ceremony we were amazed by the college tutors' abilities to train raw students in carpentry, joinery and stonework. It is hardly believable that after only one year, and sometimes less, the students achieve such a high level of competence, and indeed artistry.

The Patronal Service, the Company's corporate act of worship, was attended by a large gathering of Turners, their wives and friends. The music and singing by the very talented choir was so uplifting and the readings were favourite texts. The sermon preached by the Company's chaplain was challenging and thought-provoking. We enjoyed lunch, served at our tables rather than the usual buffet.

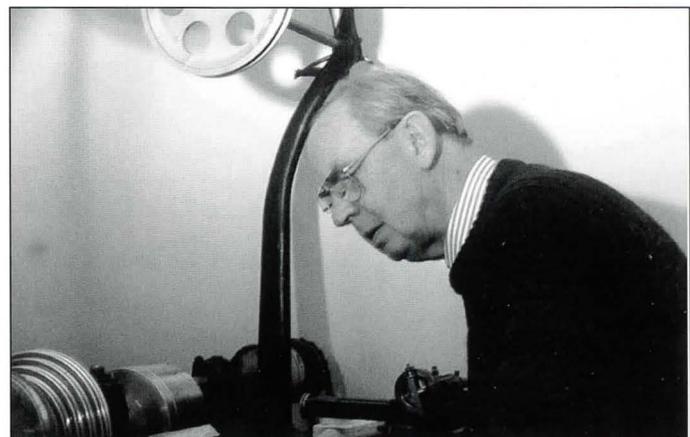


The Master escorting the Lord Mayor into the Livery Dinner

Thank you all for your support and kindnesses, especially for the large attendance at the Livery Dinner. It was a privilege and pleasure for us to be honoured again by the presence of the Lord Mayor, his Sheriffs and the civic party. My greatest pleasure was to present the Lord Mayor with a circular turned covered box with threaded lid of African Blackwood, with inlaid silver and presentation disc, exquisitely made by fellow Turner Cecil Jordan. It is a great shame on these occasions that only very few of the Company are able to handle the gift, and we must try to rectify this. We do hope that because of representations to the Lord Mayor, examples of our craft will go on display in the Mansion House.

I hope you will continue to support the Company's functions and I look forward to meeting you, your wives and partners, at the Ladies' Dinner.

Cecil Jordan turning the beautiful box presented to the Lord Mayor at the Livery Dinner. His lathe has been in his family since early in the 20th century, and was used by his relative, H.W. Smith, Citizen and Turner, to turn the wedding present given to the Queen Mother by the Turners' Company. Cecil's stunningly skilful work can be seen in the Victoria & Albert museum, the Crafts Council, various Regional Art collections, the Holbourne Museum, Bath University and many other public and private collections all over the world



The Turner

GOING TO WORK ON AN EGG

Assistant Robert Lucas went on a turning course and came home with an egg

When I joined the Howe Committee, I thought I should renew my acquaintance with wood turning. The last time I turned a piece of wood was at school. I still have one of my bowls: so sturdy that an elephant could stand on it!

Geoff Brandon, also on the Howe Committee and a brilliant turner, told me about the two- and three-day courses run by Craft Supplies at Millers Dale in Derbyshire. There is accommodation, but I was very lucky: Past Master Edward Sawney lives on the edge of the Peak District National Park, said he would like to do the course too, and why not come and stay?

At Millers Dale we met our fellow students, a computer buff and an ex-RAF female cook, and our instructor, Ken Allen. We were allocated overalls, a lathe and a piece of wood. A little instruction and we were off. Shavings flew all over the place as we turned our rectangular piece into a tube and then practised putting in coves, beads, thin cuts, fat cuts, catastrophic cuts with our different cutting tools. After coffee-break we were expert enough to start making a candlestick, out of Ash. Ken roughed out a design, but told us to let our imaginations flow.

After lunch across the road we learned the art of polishing and finishing, and discovered how easy it is to ruin that beautiful edge by overuse of sandpaper. Bases for the candlestick were quickly mastered with a little help from Ken. Then it was on to a bowl or round dish. I chose mahogany, Edward chose walnut.

Next day we were straight into our projects, learning new techniques and tricks of the trade. Ken was a kind and encouraging instructor whose helping hand miraculously turned our rough efforts into smooth designs. I completed my bowl, then turned an egg in "Pink Ivory" wood, while Edward finished his bowl to a superior standard. Ken warned me that getting the curves and proportions of an egg correct is more difficult than it sounds. So it proved. My egg was definitely a "double-yolker"!

The practical, hands-on course gave us an appreciation of the properties and different colours of wood, and of the woodturner's skill. Budding turners should telephone Craft Supplies: 01298 871636. I'm off to France this summer for a five-day course at Craft Supplies' lovely old mill on the edge of the Pyrenees. Watch this space.

WHOSE NEWSLETTER IS IT?

It's YOUR newsletter. So please send YOUR news, views, requests, photographs, drawings to a grateful Penrose Halson,
18 Thayer Street, London W1U 3JY
telephone 020 7935-6408
e-mail penrose@halson.com

TWO NEW INITIATIVES

Assistant Robert Lucas tells us about a new trophy

Since the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers was formed in 1942, the Worshipful Company of Turners has given very strong support to many of its activities and several officers have joined the Livery, three having become Master. In 2004, the Company wishes to mark the 400th Anniversary of our foundation with the creation of a lasting record to enhance relationships between the Company and the Corps.

The Company is to create an annual prize for the best REME Battalion judged against a number of key factors. These range from its contribution to esprit de corps, excellence (the application of engineering quality including total quality management and quality assurance principles), local manufacture (particularly the craft of turning) to operational and training performance and support to the local community. The prize, to be entitled 'The Turners' Trophy', will be a turned wassail bowl taken from the Company's collection, with a plinth engraved with each winner. The winning Battalion will retain an appropriate turned memento. The competition will be open to all seven Regular and four TA REME Battalions. The first competition is to take place in 2003 in order that the award may be made in our 400th Year.

The Master reports on the new informal lunches

On becoming Master of the Company, after thirty years as a Turner, it was disappointing to discover that I knew little more than half the membership. With only four or five functions each year, the opportunity of becoming acquainted with more than a few of the 200 fellow Turners on each occasion is limited. So, determined to do more to introduce Turners to one another, I started the informal lunches which are now held in the Clerk's offices on a bi-monthly basis. Six or so members, along with the Master, a member of the Court and the Clerk, have a simple lunch of pizza with wine or soft drinks provided by the Company. Each lunch has a theme to start discussion going, but the conversation ranges over any subject that anyone cares to introduce. It is an opportunity to meet the Master and a Court member and to visit the Company's administrative centre.

The themes of the lunches in September, December and February were the Company's new website, the ways in which new younger members can be introduced to the Company, and the Newsletter. Those who have already attended confirm their pleasure at the chance to make new friends, and to have informal discussions on matters that are at the forefront of the agenda under discussion by the Court of Assistants in its various committees.

The lunches have been regarded as a success and I hope that my successors will continue to hold them. Future lunches are in March and May. If you would like to come, and perhaps suggest a subject for discussion, please contact our Clerk.

The Turner

HOW DOES IT WORK? THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Past Master Andrew Hamilton explains the workings of the Finance Committee, of which he is Chairman

We have considerable investments spread between the Company and the Charity Fund. Although these are managed for us by Newton, the consequent financial spin-off, together with the managing of bank balances, paying bills and receiving monies, all have to be administered and controlled. Our Clerk keeps our basic financial books and records, the majority of which are computer-based. We also have an accountant, John Andrew, and a Finance Committee. John Andrew analyses the basic records and from these produces budgets and periodic accounts which cumulate in our annual accounts. These are ultimately approved by the Court, and a shortened version is sent to all Liverymen.

The Finance Committee, on which the Master, Wardens, and certain members of the Company experienced in financial matters sit, meets four times a year together with the Clerk and the Accountant, to review the budgets and accounts and future financial policy. Each meeting also reviews expenditure and income since the last meeting keeping, hopefully, a friendly eye on the level of subsidy we are fortunately able to give on function costs.

At each meeting a full report is received from Newton on the investments, and there are regular meetings with their personnel to debate matters such as future income requirements as part of the total return, diversification and overseas investment percentage. Although the Charity Fund is exempt the Company has to pay tax on computed investment gains and, in recent years, this has very much restricted our investment switching ability.

As a further safeguard, both sets of annual accounts are audited by professional auditors, whose report and any comments are considered and acted on by the Finance Committee and, if appropriate, the Standing Committee and Court. For this reason the Chairman of the Finance Committee is also a member of the Standing Committee.

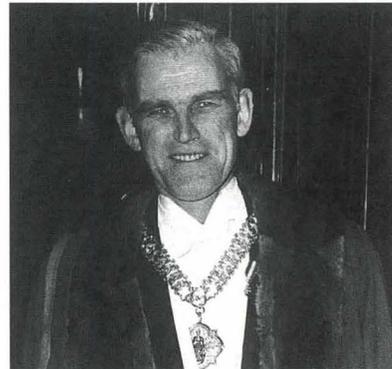
All this might sound rather dull and boring but it is important that the Company, which is about to celebrate 400 years of formal existence (for which celebrations the Finance Committee is charged to find funds), continues to be around for at least the next 400 years. We are fortunate, thanks to Richard Gardner Williams and others, that we have a fund to enable the Company to continue and expand its activities. All this needs regular consideration and advice and I am extremely grateful to all my past and present colleagues for doing this.

AMERICAN AWARD TO TOP TURNER

Ray Key, President of the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain, and Freeman by presentation of the Company, has been given the Lifetime Award of the American Association of Woodturners. Never before has this honour been given to a non-American

R.I.P: RICHARD WOODWARK

We announce with great sadness the death of Richard Woodwark. Some of the many tributes to him are enclosed.



THE MASTER'S TREATS & TRIBULATIONS

Tony Sherred had a tempting time.

On 1st October 2001, at the Guildhall, the new Lord Mayor was elected, and I attended the Church service before processing to the very crowded and hot Guildhall for the election. There seemed to be some compensation when Alexanders, the catering company, invited all Company Masters and their Clerks (I have found out just how indulged Clerks are!) to breakfast at the Salters' Hall in Fore Street. On the train to London I had decided to have a fairly abstemious day, so I refused the champagne with freshly squeezed orange juice.

As we chatted, we perused the menu. It was impressive! Scrambled eggs with smoked salmon, a favourite of mine, was followed by a list of delicious temptations but, keeping to my resolve, I decided on the eggs and salmon accompanied by lightly buttered toast and black coffee. However, as my eyes wandered down the table I spied crispy grilled bacon and was too weak to refuse the two rashers the chef placed on my plate. He immediately offered two grilled kidneys! I bravely refused Cumberland sausages, honey-roasted ham, plum tomatoes and fried mushrooms, but was completely undone by a large bowl of bubble and squeak - how could I refuse such a favourite? Then came a selection of warm breads, mini croissants, Danish pastries, white and wholemeal toast with butter and preserves. Is it any wonder that my resolve failed so miserably?

