



THE TURNER



NEWSLETTER OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON

NOVEMBER 2005
ISSUE 25

THE MASTER'S LETTER

I well remember the day when I attended an interview at Serjeant's Inn, off Fleet Street, which at that time housed the offices of the then Clerk of the Company, Tony Reed. I was impressed not only by Tony's stature and bearing, being a little taller than me, but also by the air of formality, which of course was quite right and proper.

Some twenty-five years later I am very proud to have been elected as your Master, having served an apprenticeship first as a member and then Chairman of the Livery Committee and then as a member of the Court. Our Company's strength comes from its diversity. It is 51st in the order of precedence in the list of Livery Companies, making us virtually mid way as there are now over one hundred Companies listed. Our 400th anniversary celebration showed however, using the now immortal phrase, that we are capable of "punching above our weight" and I congratulate my immediate two predecessors Andrew Mayer and Richard Levy for the fine way they led the Company during that important year.

Strength in diversity comes with our own membership. We are lucky for instance to have many established families within our Livery. When I joined the Company Brian Neill was Master and today is one of our most venerable Past Masters with two sons as Liverymen. The Tylers, the Fields and the Foords are all well known names in the Turners. I am grateful too for the support of my father John, who was Master some nine years ago and of my brother David, who is also a Liveryman.

We are fortunate to be a part of a living and growing craft and I am especially pleased to welcome Peter Ellis as the new Chairman of the Howe Committee. Peter will I know build on the many links we have with the various amateur and professional bodies and continue to encourage them to propose leading Turners to become members of our Company.

Our links with The City are important too. I have worked in The City all my working life, first as a barrister and then within our family company. It is therefore particularly important for me to see our company encourage young professionals to become members of the Livery. On looking back in history at a time when turning as a profession was in decline, it was these City folk that kept alive the spirit and mystery of the art of Turning so that we can all enjoy its legacy today.

I am pleased to have set up a Communications Committee whose role under the stewardship of John Bridgeman, will be to encourage and develop the Company's profile both within its own membership and in the wider world beyond. On this theme we will hold a "Common Hall" before our next Gardner Williams Dinner, an event which I hope will become an annual part of our calendar and which will give our membership the opportunity to put forward their own views and ideas. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our Gardner Williams dinner on 24th February.

Finally I would like to thank Andrea Cenci Di Bello for helping to update our current Clerk's office and meeting room, improvements that were long overdue, and also David Axson for taking on the role as Archivist, something which should reveal some fascinating insights into our history. The Turners' Company is in good heart, thanks to you members of the Livery and as Master I will do my best to maintain its traditions and strengthen its position for the future.

Andrew Ciclitira



Sarah Fabergé's Profile of a Turner: Stuart King

Stuart is a man of many hats: he turns imaginative pieces, gives turning demonstrations and lectures, and writes for Woodturning magazine. In 2004 he was made a Freeman by Presentation of the Company for his contribution to our Craft. Sarah Fabergé talked to him:

How did you become involved in wood turning?

My father was a professional chair-maker, working in a shed in the garden. I therefore grew up with wood, sawdust and shavings! In the furniture-making industry I trained as a marquetry cutter. I spent my spare time talking to chair bodgers and old traditional woodturners, and learned how to make my own pole lathe.

What were the first objects you turned?

Garden dibbers. I did demonstrations of turning at craft exhibitions, and sold them to the people watching!

How did you become involved with The Worshipful Company of Turners?

I joined the Register of Professional Turners, and then a member of WCT asked me to help design the Company's float in the Lord Mayor's Show.

How did you feel when you were made a Freeman by Presentation?

I was really taken aback to receive this great honour, and very proud, especially as I am self-taught. I look forward to being an active member in promoting the art of turning.

What is your latest project?

The Company is sponsoring a week of historical turning at the museum on London Wall from 13th to 19th February 2006. I will be there to demonstrate the Leonardo Da Vinci lathe I created last year.

A sense of humour is important to you. Have you needed it recently?

I was using a blowtorch to texture a piece at a demonstration. Unbeknown to me, the hall had a smoke detector connected to the local fire station. Of course the alarm went off and before

long a fire engine with flashing lights arrived. Two burly fireman stormed in to find me looking sheepish with said blowtorch. Luckily they were very understanding and I managed to incorporate them into the demonstration. I think I got away with it!

If you want to know more about Stuart's work, you can visit his website at:- www.stuartking.co.uk



At the Royal Norfolk show, HM the Queen talks to Stuart King (wearing his trademark hat circled in flowers) about his work .

Museum of London

In conjunction with the opening of the Medieval Gallery at The Museum of London, the Company is sponsoring a week of historical turning at the museum on London Wall. The event will take place from 13th to 19th February 2006 between 10am and 4pm daily. This coincides with school half term when the museum sees a significant increase in the attendance of young people.

Robin Fawcett will demonstrate the use of the pole lathe and recreate bowls and artefacts of the medieval period.

Stuart King, a Freeman of the Company, will demonstrate the Leonardo Da Vinci lathe he created from Da Vinci sketches for the Company's 400th anniversary and, during the lunchtime period on Friday the 17th of February, he will conduct a 40-minute presentation on the history of turning in the Museum Theatre.

Entry to the museum and the museum theatre is free and members of the Turners' Company are urged to attend and support this event, which provides a practical demonstration of the work of the Company to achieve its aim of fostering the art and mystery of turning.

Trafalgar Dinner

The important factor of this dinner was the date, the 21st October 2005, exactly 200 years from the date of the Victory at the Naval Battle of Trafalgar, which cost Admiral Lord Nelson his life. For this reason the 75 people who attended were pleased to pay their respects to Nelson at his resting place in St. Paul's Cathedral and were given an excellent guided tour led by Mr. Maurice Sills.

On leaving the Cathedral all the bells rang out including numbers, 3, 4 and 5 presented and recast in 1879 with a donation from The Worshipful Company of Turners, in conjunction with Baroness Coutts, an Honorary Liveryman.

Onward then to the East India Club, St. James's, where under the White Ensign, presented by the Captain of H M S Victory, the Master and his guests sat down to an excellent dinner. Guests were then presented with a scroll showing details of Nelson's Victory at Trafalgar and accompanied Mr. Maurice Sills who actually served on H M S Victory during his time in the Navy during the last war. What better way to end a memorable evening, joined by our Toast-master for the evening Mr. Rhidian Jones, than to have the Master splice the main brace and toast "The Immortal Memory".

The Wooden Bowl written by Robin Wood - 'In Search of Turners Past'

When I first started researching the history of turning I had no idea how far it would lead. As a practising bowl turner I was simply fascinated by each little discovery particularly by the simple bowls that have been found from numerous excavations which give us an insight into the work of turners long past.

Years later talking with archaeologists I first understood the crucial role turners played in medieval society. I was told that from 500-1500 AD virtually all the tableware was wooden. Whilst vast quantities of pots and jugs survive from this period, nearly all are for cooking and storage. The dishes and bowls were made of wood. As my interest grew into an obsession I was given a grant by the Turners Company to pull my research together for a publication.

I was given unprecedented access to photograph important collections many of which have never been put on public display. Some of the highlights for me were handling the gilt-mounted mazers in the British Museum stores, I even photographed one which Pepys recorded drinking from in 1660. I also love the simpler sailors' bowls and dishes from the Mary Rose.

I think my favourite vessels however would have to be the simple medieval bowls from excavations around the City of London. I studied nearly 200 vessels excavated over the last 30 years and these have added meaning since we also have the documentary history of the early activities of the Turners' Company. Some of the bowls I have studied were marked with brands, possibly makers' marks. I also photographed the earliest recorded turners' marks in a 14th-century vellum manuscript in the Corporation of London's archives. Putting these together with records from manorial account books giving orders for woodware and the earliest illustrations of lathes I feel has given me a real insight into the lives of turners in the past.

I hope that people reading the book enjoy coming across each of these records and old vessels as much as I have done and that the book helps to raise awareness of the crucial role the turner has in the history of European material culture.

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The Wooden Bowl - Published by Stobart Davies To order your copy visit: www.stobartdavies.com ISBN No. 0-85442-130-0 Price: £24.95

The publishers have agreed that for all livery members buying the book they will make a donation of £5 to the charity Practical Action. (The new name for the charity which was until recently called Intermediate Technology). Members ordering the book from Stobart Davies before the livery launch should let the publishers know when they order so we can make the appropriate donation.

Bursary Winner



Joey with her latest 2 winning platters.

After gaining 1st place with my filigree platter in the International Woodworking and Turning Exhibition at Alexandra Palace I felt that I wanted to elaborate my platter theme by exploring new ideas and skills. Through my membership of the American Association of Woodturners, I realised that woodturners in America were experimenting with piercing, carving and colouring, transforming their work into art.

I applied to The Worshipful Company Of Turners for their 2005 Bursary and was highly delighted when they generously gave me funds to travel to America and to buy a compressor for my piercing. In America I attended the American Association of Woodturners annual symposium, the largest woodturning event in the world, and had the opportunity to choose between 32 demonstrators over 3 days picking up ideas all the time.

Following this I travelled in the States and had private tuition with Trent Bosch (www.trentbosch.com) and David Nittmann (www.davidnittmann.com) where I learnt new turning, carving and texturing techniques.

I was then privileged to stay with Binh Pho (www.wondersofwood.net) and his family in Chicago for three days and learn the secrets of airbrushing. These days with Binh were some of the most inspirational days of my life. He helped me find my identity. Opening my eyes to new horizons he showed me how to focus all my ideas, feelings and enthusiasm into creating what I now feel are art forms which reflect my inner self. Thus my feelings and inspiration are now reproduced in my work.

Since returning from America my new and distinctive work has been very much admired by both the judges and public. 'Autumn Butterfly' gained 1st place at Craft Supplies Show. 'Autumn Reflection' won 1st place and the 'Visitors Choice Trophy' at Stoneleigh where my three day demonstrations on piercing and airbrushing attracted much interest and were very well attended.

A full account of my trip is to be published in 'The Woodworker and Turner Magazine' and I am hoping to find new gallery outlets for my work. All of this has been made possible by the generosity of The Worshipful Company of Turners and I thank you all very much. Joey Richardson RPT

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'Autumn Butterfly'.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Patronal Service and Buffet Luncheon
Tuesday 22 November 2005

Court Meeting (4.00pm)
Tuesday 29 November 2005

Musicians' Carol Service and Dinner
Wednesday 7 December 2005

Livery Dinner
Tuesday 20 December 2005

Court Ladies Dinner
Tuesday 17 January 2006

Museum of London Event
13 to 19 February 2006

Alexandra Palace Exhibition
17 to 19 February 2006

**Gardner Williams Banquet
and Common Hall**
Wednesday 22 February 2006

Court (11.00am) and Court Luncheon
Wednesday 8 March 2006

United Guilds Service
Friday 31 March 2006

**Craft Meeting - Register of
Professional Turners**
Wednesday 5 April 2006

Ladies' Dinner
Wednesday 19 April 2006

Election Court (5.00pm) and Dinner
Thursday 25 May 2006

Court Meeting (4.00pm)
Wednesday 12 July 2006

PLEASE CONTACT

If you would like to receive

- Rules and entry forms for the Company's **Bursaries or Turning Competitions.**
- General information about the **Company and membership**

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CLERK'S NOTES

The Company has been happy to welcome Roger George, Matthew Gaved and Chris Scott as Freemen of the Company.

We have also had the pleasure of raising William Bracher, Graham Eustance, William Harris and Stephen Matthews to the Livery.

Colin Field has agreed to act as Almoner for the Company Charity, while David Axson has kindly agreed to be Company Archivist.

The Court also felt that the custom of wearing Livery Badges had begun to lapse; it is felt therefore that a £10 fine to the Charity for failing to wear the Badge would be appropriate for the Livery Dinner, the Gardner Williams Dinner and the Ladies' Dinner, though proper warning will be given.

Your Clerk has joined the City Livery Committee as a representative of the Fellowship of Clerks. This does give him some opportunity to influence the relationship between Livery Companies and the Guildhall, but also, to his surprise, means that he has to parade at the election of the Sheriffs and of the Lord Mayor. He was therefore present on 29 September when David Brewer, who spoke so well at the Company Livery Dinner in 2002, was elected Lord Mayor for this year.

The Master's Letter announces a Common Hall, to be held before the Gardner Williams Dinner, so that the Court can pass on what the company is doing. The draft plan is that those able to attend would come at 6.15, receive a short description of the way the Company felt it should go forward, leaving a small time for questions from the floor. We would then move to the normal reception at which point those who were unable to attend the meeting would join.

EDITORIAL

The team contributing to The Turner continues to grow and for this issue we are pleased to welcome articles from Sarah Fabergé, Joey Richardson and Robin Wood.

The Clerk continues to provide his invaluable column, several Past Masters have agreed to contribute articles on the Company's Treasures and a number of members of the company have offered articles on "Why I became a Turner" and on "Famous Turners".

This edition will be made available on the Company's website at www.turnersco.com but we will still produce a printed version. For some people this remains the most convenient way to keep abreast of Company news and of course a printed version is much more suitable to help promote the Company to a wider public.

WEBSITES TO WATCH

Worshipful Company of Turners of Londonwww.turnersco.com
Worshipful Company of Fishmongers of Londonwww.fishhall.co.uk
(Useful gateway into the London Livery Companies)
Association of Woodturners of Great Britainwww.woodturners.co.uk
Society of Ornamental Turnerswww.the-SOT.com
Association of Pole-lathe Turners and Greenwood Workers.... www.bodgers.org.uk
Register of Professional Turnerswww.RPTurners.co.uk
Corporation of Londonwww.cityoflondon.gov.uk

The Company thanks the Corporation of London for permission to use photographs of Turners Marks, Joey Richardson for permission to use photographs of her award winning bowls on the front cover and on page 3 and all other contributors.