

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON



Newsletter Winter 1995 Issue 5

Dear Fellow Turners

I write this at the start of 1995 which gives the opportunity to review my Master's year so far. When I wrote my first "Master's Letter" in the Summer 1994 newsletter I set out the four areas that we, as a Livery Company, should support.

Firstly, the craft of turning. We mounted an excellent stand at the Livery Companies Exhibition in Guildhall in July. I know from the comments I had, both at the exhibition and subsequently, how interesting people found our display and how many, myself included, had their first sight, on our stand, of a working ornamental lathe. Many thanks to all those who helped organise and staff the stand.

We have reprinted the up-to-date Register of Professional Turners. This is a directory covering the whole country, listing the specialisation of professional, working, turners, and is very much worth consulting if you are interested in getting some turning done.

The second area was support for the City. I have tried to play my part in City civic affairs having attended both Common Halls at Guildhall, the Lord Mayor's briefing meeting in the Mansion House, numerous lunches and dinners; and participated, on foot, in the Lord Mayor's Show even if not officially on Turners' business.

Support for the Company is our mutual friendship. We have had an interesting visit to see the City's post at the Royal Mail, King Edward Building, a Livery Lunch, Patronal Service and lunch and Livery Dinner. More to come in 1995.



The Turners' stand at Guildhall: Philip Holden, Hon. Sec., Society of Ornamental Turners and Freeman by Presentation with Gordon Sloan, Upper Warden and chairman of the Howe Committee.

The final area was that of support for others. Our Charity Committee is debating how we should distribute our annual donations from the Charity Fund. At the Livery Dinner I was able to hand over to the Lord Mayor £1,000 for his Appeal, the British Heart Foundation. I do trust Turners are aware of the other opportunities within the City to support this excellent cause.

I hope that I will be able to help the Company continuing its work in all these four, and very important, areas. I am sincerely grateful for all your support.

With best wishes for 1995
Yours very sincerely

Andrew Hamilton

COMING EVENTS

- Gardner Williams Banquet - Friday 24th February 1995
- Court meeting (morning) & Court Luncheon - Thursday 16th March 1995
- Craft Meeting - Register of Professional Turners - Friday 24th March 1995
- United Guilds Service - Friday 31st March 1995
- Ladies Dinner - Friday 28th April 1995
- Golf: Turners v. Air Pilots & Navigators - Monday 1st May 1995
- Election Court & Dinner - Thursday 25th May 1995
- Election of Sheriffs in Guildhall - Monday 26th June 1995
- Golf Society Annual Meeting - Wednesday 21st June 1995
- Court meeting (afternoon) - Thursday 20th July 1995
- Court meeting (morning) & Livery Luncheon - Friday 6th October 1995
- Court meeting (afternoon) - Monday 13th November 1995
- Patronal Service & Buffet Lunch - Friday 24th November 1995
- Livery Dinner - Tuesday 19th December 1995

The Turner

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ANDREW HAMILTON'S YEAR

Our editor has asked me to do a page 2 look at my year in office (ED: sorry the pic is not up to page 3 standard).

My first away day, well looked after by our faithful Clerk, was to Sheffield, for the Annual Feast of the Worshipful Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire. With other City Livery Masters we joined local civic leaders and captains of industry in Cutlers' Hall for a strictly white tie occasion. The next morning we were bussed to the Master Cutlers' factory, Tinsley Wire Industries Ltd, who make everything from basic wire to weldmesh fencing. After a very interesting morning at the sharp end of British industry it was lunch in the Hall before catching the train back to London.

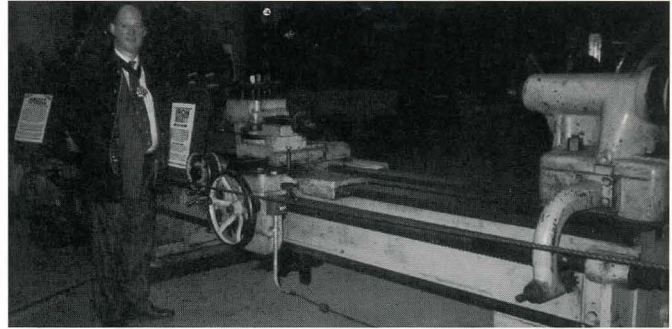
The next away day was to Ironbridge Gorge Museum, a World Heritage site in the very cradle of the Industrial Revolution. Through past Lord Mayor Alderman Sir Peter Gadsden, the Museum has strong links with the City and Livery Companies, many of whose crafts are well represented in the Blist Hill working village where buildings house everything from baker's and pie shops to a steam-driven hammer mill. But no turner's workshop (ED: why not?). There is a museum of industrial machine tools, a Coalport porcelain museum, one of the original iron furnaces and, of course, the Iron Bridge over the River Severn. A dinner in the evening and a reception on Sunday morning in the lovely gardens of Preen Manor made for a wonderful weekend.

We were then privileged to attend a reception given by King George's Fund for Sailors, which the Company has supported, on board HMS *Britannia* moored in the Pool of London. The reception was hosted by HRH Prince Andrew who now knows what a Turner does!

Another privilege is to go to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party. Fortunately we found the parking and queue to get in not as bad as we had been led to believe. However the gardens are vast and, unless you happen to meet someone you know, it is very difficult to talk to other guests. The day turned into a double bill as we went on to the Innholders for dinner. The timing problem was solved by us both changing from morning clothes in the Mall by our parked car (ED: our page 3 pics?).

The Election of the Sheriffs and the Lord Mayor at Guildhall are important events in the Livery calendar when all Liverymen have the chance to vote on these important offices. This past year neither was straightforward, which added to the interest.

On the Monday after the Lord Mayor's Show we were invited to the Lord Mayor's Banquet. Not officially as Master of the Turners, as only those companies of which the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs are members are formally invited. However I wore my badge and felt that I was representing the Turners on one of the great Civic occasions at which the Prime Minister, the Lord High Chancellor and the Archbishop of Canterbury also speak. A memorable evening catered for the first time by Party Ingredients, who look after us so well at Apothecaries' Hall.



The Master gets ready for turning at Ironbridge

AN OLD MASTER

Every Freeman and Liveryman now has *An introduction to the Worshipful Company of Turners*, in which you will read of the moribund state of the Company in the early 19th century and its remarkable recovery after the 1850's. This revival was largely due to John Jones, Master in 1852 and in 1861, who was the first to realise the need for closer interest in the turners' craft. He was largely responsible for our turning competitions and for the distribution of lathes. He died in 1909 aged 94.

The Clerk has very recently received a letter from the churchwarden of St Mary-le-Strand with St Clement Danes, to say that John Jones was a churchwarden and a trustee of the St Mary-le-Strand Charity. In 1887 his portrait was presented to the Charity by his friends and now hangs in the Church. However, it is in urgent need of cleaning, and the Turners' Court have unanimously agreed that the Company will foot the bill - the least we can do for such an illustrious "Old Master"!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

It is now some years since the Worshipful Company of Turners decided to admit ladies to the Livery, and we continue to be delighted with that decision.

Probably not as old as the formation of the Company is the Clerk's Toast: "To the pretty maids, the merry wives and the buxom widows of the Turners of London!" (Incidentally, the Clerk is to be congratulated on both the style and the brevity with which he always recites this.) I would think our lady Liverymen must feel a little neglected by not being mentioned; perhaps you can advise on this.

I would not favour the modern technique of de-gendering: "The good-looking offspring, the merry spouses and the well-built deceased partners" does not have the right atmosphere. However, I do feel that there is a case for rectifying the omission. How about: "To the pretty maids, the merry wives, the buxom widows and the handsome toy-boys of the Turners of London"? Perhaps your readers have alternative suggestions!

Yours faithfully,
Christopher Tyler

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FABERGÉ TODAY

The name Fabergé evokes a glittering world of fabulous wealth and extravagant display, of Romanoff princesses exchanging Easter eggs decorated with glowing enamels, precious metals and rare jewels, containing a tiny, exquisite surprise, the work of Peter Carl Fabergé, jeweller to the Czars. His grandson, Theo Fabergé, Freeman Prizeman of the Turners' Company, told Penrose Halson his story:

Were you expected to follow in the family footsteps?

No, because I didn't even know I was a Fabergé until I was 47, I thought my step-mother and step-father, Mr and Mrs Woodall, were my parents. My father Nicholas was sent over from Russia to London to help run the Dover Street branch of Fabergé. After the Revolution he stayed, and had a fashion salon in the Fulham Road. He was a fashion photographer, especially of jewellery, my mother was his favourite model. His wife was in Paris. I had slight suspicions, and one day I wrote off for my birth certificate. I found my father had died in 1939, but I remembered seeing him several times until I was about five.

But you had the Fabergé genius in your blood.

Well, I'd always done handicrafts, and I served my apprenticeship in the aircraft industry, did tool-making and instrument-making and learned all sorts of useful things. In 1969 I was 47, and I'd just started my own instrument-making firm (I'd been a works manager in a factory for twelve years). My marriage was breaking up, I couldn't think of other things, like finding I was a Fabergé. But eventually I took the name.

What effect did that have?

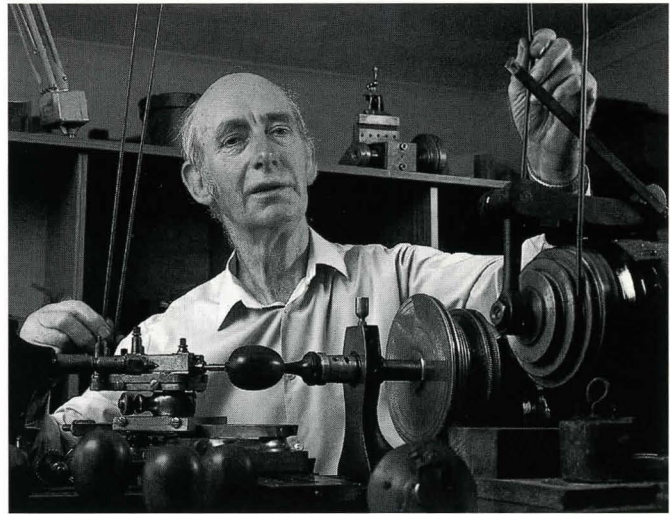
People started saying "You're a Fabergé, you should be making eggs." I said "Don't be silly." Then Fred Howe came and showed me a lapidary machine he'd made, because I wanted to make one. He admired my grandfather as a craftsman, knew a lot about him. Howe introduced me to ornamental turning, we got on very well.

And he introduced you to the Turners' Company?

Yes, and eventually I was made a Freeman Prizeman through turning, Felix Levy put me forward. I won the Gertrude Crawford medal one year.

You make a lot of eggs now. When did you start on them?

One day a little boy asked me to make him a wooden egg on my lathe, an ordinary little egg, nothing special. Then a lady came in and said "You're making eggs, I saw one, it looked like a door knob, I'd like one." So I made her a wooden egg with engraving and brass and gem stones. Then for an exhibition at Goldsmiths Hall I put in a very simple egg, on a stand. To my surprise people started buying. Next someone wanted a ruby wedding egg: I made one which had a nice ruby in the finial, and from inside the lid a log popped out with an owl and a pussy cat playing violins. There were ivory rings round the log, we used ivory then. I did a 30th wedding



Theo Fabergé turning on a Holtzappfel lathe. His work is available through the St Petersburg Collection. Photo Copyright St Petersburg Collection.

anniversary egg for Mr Smith, a master of the Turners, it had 30 pearls around it with two locket with butterfly wings.

Did you feel in your element making wonderful eggs?

Oh yes, I felt it was in the blood, I felt as though I was meant to do it. I design an egg and make a prototype. I started making eight only, three of exotic material such as rosewood, then five of lead crystal - my grandfather used to use rock crystal. Now we make 45 items including boxes, photo frames and clocks, and I design 3-4 new creations a year, sold worldwide, mainly in America.

Are your eggs similar to your grandfather's?

His were mostly imperial for the Romanoffs, very expensive. Mine are about £600 to £5,000. My daughter is now starting her own collection of smaller eggs, she does Zodiac eggs, and tableware and other things, She and my grandson and I are the only remaining Fabergés who make objets d'art.

Which are your favourite eggs?

My little Scribe's egg, a wooden egg with a gilded base, with a finial and a ruby. You pull the finial and it's a ballpoint pen. And my Encore egg because I'm keen on ballet. It's of cranberry crystal with decorations incised in gold leaf, and swags, and it has an open part with a silver gilt Romanoff crown. You turn the crown and a little curtain goes round and inside you see two ballet dancers doing a pas de deux from Swan Lake.

So the connection with Fred Howe was quite significant.

Oh yes. I wish I could devote more time to the Turners' Company, they help people who don't have access to a lathe, they have an engineering prize too, and the Register of Plain Turners. They're doing more for working turners now than they've done for years. But I'm 72, and still working, so I don't have much time!

The Turner

THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW

Andrew Hamilton had a new and different view of the Show:

Whilst Turners and their ladies were feasting upon HQS *Wellington* your Master was munching WRVS sandwiches in Surrey Street, dressed as a Sherlock Holmes look-alike, carrying an over-sized pipe and looking for a corkscrew!

How did this strange occasion arise? For some years I have been the Honorary Secretary of the Farringdon Ward Club which serves the City wards of Farringdon Within and Farringdon Without. Founded in 1894, it now has about 400 members who either live, work or are interested in the wards. One of our two Patrons, Christopher Walford of Farringdon Within, took office as the 667th Lord Mayor on November 12th 1994, and celebrated in the customary way of entertaining the citizens of London with the longest unrehearsed street procession anywhere in the world.

A couple of years ago a small committee was formed to raise the necessary funds to put a Club float in the Show. Early in 1994 we committed ourselves by paying the entrance of £2,700. We were very fortunate in being able to borrow a tractor unit and trailer together with a World Champion driver and colleague. However, we had to pay for the float to be built and decorated.

Our float cost the Club about £15,000. We had been saving since 1979 knowing we would have our centenary and a Lord Mayor. We asked our members for help, we held fundraising events and we sent out 600 letters to businesses and others. The response was small but some good cheques came, including ones from the Turners and other Livery Companies.

Saturday 12th November 1994 broke wet and windy as we made our way to St Botolph's Church to don the costumes of 100 years ago. Besides several Sherlock Holmes we had various ladies, lawyers, clerics and (genuine) Smithfield bummarees. As we left the church to join the float in London Wall the rain ceased and soon we were at the start of the procession proper in Gresham Street. The pace was keen and the shouting and cheering loud. Past the Lord Mayor and other dignitaries outside Guildhall, into Cheapside, around St Pauls and the climb up Fleet Street to our lunch break by the Aldwych. Then back into procession along the Embankment (remembering to cheer and wave to those on board HQS *Wellington*) past Blackfriars Station, up Queen Victoria Street, back past Mansion House and up into Moorgate before dispersing into London Wall, by which time it had started to rain again. We went back to change whilst the float went back to Waltham Abbey to be scrapped. Very much a one-day stand!

And this all explains why I was in Surrey Street rather than on board HQS *Wellington*. Oh yes, the missing corkscrew: my son had gone off to get his lunch with it in his pocket! As one colleague put it, "No Livery Company Master will ever be able to live down not having a corkscrew!"

KNOW YOUR CITY

Q: Why do caterpillars in the City wither away and die?

A: Because the Corporation's Parks and Gardens Department feeds them bacteria which make them feel full and uninterested in eating.

Q: What do you do if royalty are going to visit you in the City?

A: Telephone the City Cleansing Department, who will come and tidy up round your building before the visit.

Whatever you want to know about the City you will find out on the ten-evening City Managers' Course. Visit the nerve centre of the City Police, see the barges which take away the City's waste, be entertained by students from the Guildhall School, have your every question answered, make friends, enjoy food and drink into the bargain. More details of this marvellous experience from the PR Department of Guildhall.



Keeping the City blooming: the Parks & Gardens Department uses only six out of a possible 506 possible chemicals. Photo courtesy of the Corporation of London

FREEMEN IN NORTH AMERICA

The Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America was born in 1979, in Toronto. Its members are currently drawn from 42 of the City Livery Companies. When he visited the Company in Niagara, Sir Paul Newall stressed the increased significance of international connections in trade and public service between North America and the City.

UK Freemen with a special relationship or association with North America can become Associate Members. Contact the Hon. London Clerk, Godfrey Jacobs FSVA, 25 Retreat Road, Richmond on Thames, Surrey TW9 1NN; phone 0181-332 2245, fax 0181-332 2246.

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