

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON



Newsletter Summer 1996 Issue 8

Dear Fellow Turners

After many years of slowly climbing the ladder, I am very proud to have been elected Master of the Turners' Company. We are a very small Company but I feel a very close and friendly set of people who enjoy each other's company and knowledge at our various functions throughout the year.

I have been groomed for the job for 28 years as a Liveryman and seven years on the Court, and finally the more responsible posts of Renter Warden and Upper Warden. I have very little first-hand knowledge of the art of wood turning, although I have every interest in promoting the Company with this art and mystery in today's modern world. The ancient craft has in the last few years caught the imagination and interest, and is now an "in thing" ready for expansion and a giant leap forward to be enjoyed and helped by my successors.

I am a City merchant and have for the past 40 years spent my working time as a commodity importer working in the same city environment in the City of London as my predecessors, the original Craftsmen and Turners who joined together to form this Livery.

For me the three "C's" - the City, the Craft and Charity - are the important factors and the reason for the Company's existence. We look to increase our Charity funds and have recently increased the total by over £80,000 spent year by year on various worthwhile projects. The Craft you will know about and we will try and tell you more about the Company's progress year by year. The City is possibly where we have room to increase our activities and I would like to see this very much in my year. Who knows, we may again over the turn

of the century see a Turner as Lord Mayor to follow Sir Frederick Rowland who last managed this success in 1949.

I would like finally to thank my fellow Turners for placing their trust in me over the coming year and, with the help and assistance of the Court and our

guiding committees, I will do my best to look to their interests and traditions in the words of the Turners' Loving Cup: "I will drink to thee as my friend, wilt though drink to thy friend as I drink to thee".

Possibly, I should end with the Clerk's toast: "To the pretty maids, the merry wives and the buxom widows of the Turners of London!" giving the good humour and good fellowship passed down the years.

Yours sincerely



COMING EVENTS

- Turners' Golf Day, East Berks Club - Friday 5th July 1996
- Visit to Middle Temple Hall - Friday 12th July 1996
- Court Meeting (afternoon) - Thursday 18th July 1996
- Guided tour of Apothecaries' Hall - Friday 27th September 1996
- Court meeting (morning) & Livery Luncheon - Thursday 3rd October
- Lord Mayor's Show from HQS Wellington - Saturday 9th November 1996
- Court Meeting (afternoon) - Thursday 14th November 1996
- Patronal Service & Buffet Lunch - Monday 25th November 1996
- Livery Dinner - Tuesday 17th December 1996

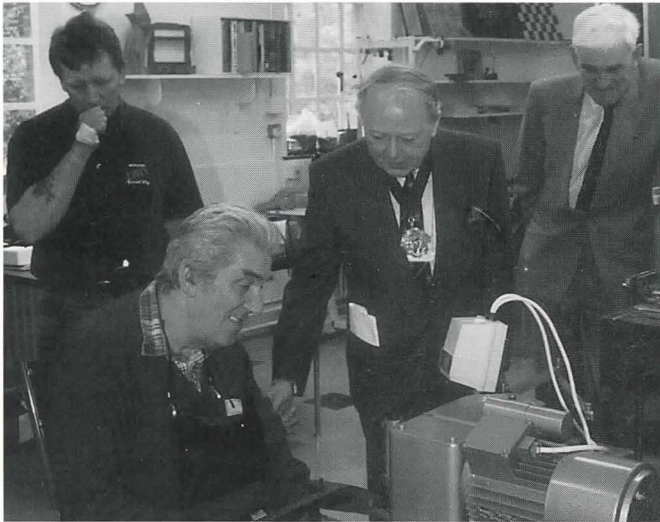
The Turner

The Turner

THE MASTER'S YEAR

Gordon Sloan reports on his busy and tremendously enjoyable year:

At Mansion House in January I attended the 80th Anniversary Reception of the Royal Star and Garter Home, Richmond, famous for its excellent care of severely disabled ex-servicemen and women. Commandant Ian Lashbrooke told me the Home's Occupational Therapy unit possessed a lathe which residents could only use with difficulty, most being wheelchair-bound. Discussions with OT staff and lathe designer/manufacturer 'Turnstyler' of Wolverhampton led to our presentation to the Home in May of a purpose-built lathe and accessories. Hopefully, friends in the Society of Ornamental Turners and AWGB will soon give tuition and encouragement to aspiring turners such as Terry O'Dwyer (in the photograph with Richard Woodwark and myself).



The Gardner Williams Dinner was well attended and much enjoyed. It was unusual this year because at a brief Court prior to the Dinner, eight Freedom candidates swore their declarations and then socialized with Court members before dining with us. During dinner committee chairmen reported briefly to the gathering, and I was glad to be told by several afterwards of how much Liverymen appreciated learning of our activities.

Each year the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress invite Masters, Prime Wardens and the Upper Bailiff of the Livery Companies of London and their wives to dinner in the Mansion House. This is the highlight of the Livery social calendar, very elegant and dignified yet very friendly. The Lord Mayor, Alderman John Chalstrey, Past Master Apothecary, delivered a fine speech and reminded us of the high standards and importance worldwide of British medicine and pharmaceuticals; and reiterated his theme: **Good health to the City and Nation.**

At the Court Luncheon we entertained the Masters of fellow 'wood working' Companies, with whom I have tried to strengthen relations, and others. The Master Scrivener gave us a most entertaining speech.

Our Craft Meeting in March, with a full agenda and interesting lecture organised by Liveryman Dr Malcolm

Cobb, went very well. Nowadays this event is well attended by our Registered Professional Turners.

I represented the Company at two important services in St Paul's Cathedral, the United Guilds Service attended by all the Liveries and Companies without Livery; and the even more impressive Festival of the Sons of the Clergy. The Corporation, Livery representatives and a substantial congregation were led in singing by no fewer than three cathedral choirs, accompanied by the organ and London Brass Ensemble. What a sound!

No other Company has happier social events than the Turners! At the Ladies' Dinner I sat back and looked around at one of the most attractive scenes I can remember. I listened too to the friendly hubbub and thought "Why don't we do this every evening - or at least more often; we deserve it!"

I enjoyed immensely representing our Company at lunches and dinners with the Master Mariners, Spectacle-makers, Carpenters, Wheelwrights, Constructors, Cutlers of Hallamshire and Furniture-makers.

My wife Patsy has been a great support all the way through my year. Our retiring Clerk, Richard Woodwark, has kept me on the rails as I am sure will his successor Dennis Shaw for many who follow me.

Thank you all very much for your support and friendship during my Mastership.

HAIL & FAREWELL

Gordon Sloan writes for the Company:

Liveryman 1944, Assistant 1955, Renter Warden 1959, Upper Warden 1960, Master 1961 and 1972, Clerk 1985-1996; a uniquely distinguished record by a much respected Turner, Richard Woodwark. Our learned and hard-working Clerk has now retired. The Court and Company have benefitted greatly from his wisdom, effort and guidance which we pray we will enjoy for many years to come. There is no Master, past or present, known to me but has cause to be thankful for the support and friendship he has given each during their year in office.

Richard, we all thank you most sincerely for your outstanding contribution to the Company's well-being, and wish you a long and happy retirement.

Welcome to our new Clerk, Major-General Dennis Shaw, whose office is in Apothecaries' Hall (telephone: 0171 329 2533); and to Canon John Oates, Honorary Chaplain to the Company and vicar of Saint Bride's, Fleet Street, where we hold our patronal service.



In retirement Richard is learning practical turning and is developing a new line in Stanly Holloway impersonations! Here: reciting Albert and the Lion to a startled but delighted audience at the Gardner Williams dinner, observed by Liveryman and cartoonist Alan Gillett.

The Turner

THE WOODWARK LECTERN

Malcolm Cobb, Honorary Secretary of the Register of Professional Turners, writes:

At the Company's annual Craft Meeting, turners on the Register meet members of the Company to discuss how to benefit the Craft, and to enjoy a lecture by an eminent craftsman or specialist in matters relating to turning.

The eighteenth Craft Meeting, held last March, will be remembered especially because of a simple post-prandial ceremony that took place.

While the Turners and the Professionals were taking coffee in the Middle Room at Apothecaries' Hall, Allan Beecham presented to the Master, Gordon Sloan, on behalf of the Register, a fine oak lectern of his own making.



As Honorary Secretary I said in a short introduction that this beautiful piece of craftsmanship signified the gratitude felt to the Company, and in particular commemorated the retirement of the Clerk, Richard Woodwark, who had been of enormous help to the fledgling Register. The timber had been supplied by another Register member, Neil Jarvis.

The lectern was 'christened' that afternoon by Ian Audsley, when he gave a talk on the subject of design.

It was decided that the Company's new acquisition should be known as the Woodwark Lectern, with a suitably inscribed brass plate to record the event.

Photo: The Woodwark Lectern: a magnificent piece to be used for lectures, speeches and monologues

POTTERS AS TURNERS?

At the Turners' Exhibition in 1886 Doulton craftsmen-potters secured fourteen out of the eighteen awards.

"The standard at the Doulton Potteries in both Lambeth and Burslem was unsurpassed by any other in the country and Doulton Throwers and Turners consistently won the highest awards, usually for their own original designs, in competitions organised by the Society of Arts, the Worshipful Company of Turners and other bodies. . . .

The majority of the thrown pots after they had partly dried to the state which potters call "green hard" were then shaved or turned on a lathe to give them the precise dimensions required. The turning process also gave them the fine smooth surface necessary for the decorative process." (Extract from Doulton Lambeth Wares by Desmond Eyles.)

Our new Master finds the above very exciting and is interested to expand the Company's present activities to cover pottery.

THE NEW MASTER

John Ciclitira, born 19th May 1926, has always lived in Leigh-on-Sea on the mouth of the Thames. Married to Miriam (Mim). Sons David & Andrew, both Liverymen.

Joined Army 1944, Sandhurst 1946, gazetted to Essex regiment. Demobilised, joined family company of City merchants. Still attends daily as Joint Chairman, waiting to hand over to younger generation.

Liveryman, Worshipful Company of Turners, for 28 years. Member East India Club. Life member City Livery Club. Royal Yachting Association. National Trust.

Sports interest: sailing. Previously raced his Essex One Design at Essex Yacht Club, these days watches races rather than taking part. Appreciates architecture & antiques, enjoys thought of exploring overseas countries which grow and export produce imported by his company.

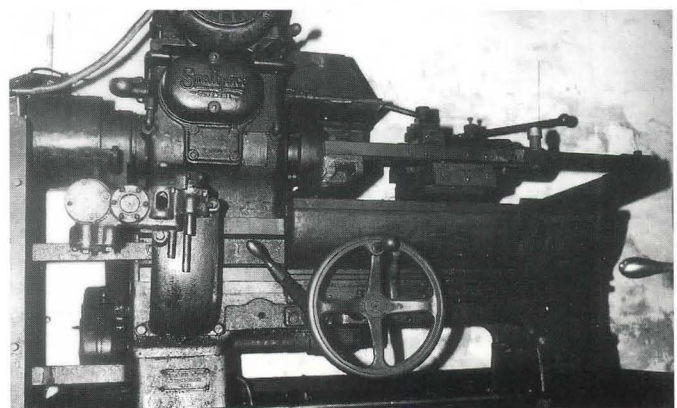
THE SMALLPEICE TRUST

In February Philip Goward, General Manager of the Smallpeice Trust, became a Freeman of the Company. The Trust and the Company already have links, developed from the Trust's administration of our Design Competition.

The Smallpeice Trust is an educational charity which runs courses for industry promoting the philosophy of its founder, Dr Cosby Smallpeice. The courses give students aged 13-20 an awareness of industry, and skills in both engineering and management.

Cosby Smallpeice won a Classical Scholarship, but instead of going to Cambridge he joined the Forces and was badly gassed in France in the First World War. While recovering he taught himself engineering drawing, and set up an engineering company in a shed. There he developed the remarkably ingenious, simple and reliable Smallpeice Lathe.

The company expanded, despite the factory being virtually destroyed by Second World War bombs. Smallpeice produced modular pneumatic equipment for the machine-tool industry, using highly efficient design and production methods. In 1966 the company was the subject of a 15-million pound stock flotation, and Dr Smallpeice retired to set up the Trust promoting his philosophy of "simplicity in design, economy in production".



The original Smallpeice Lathe

The Turner

A TRUE TURNER

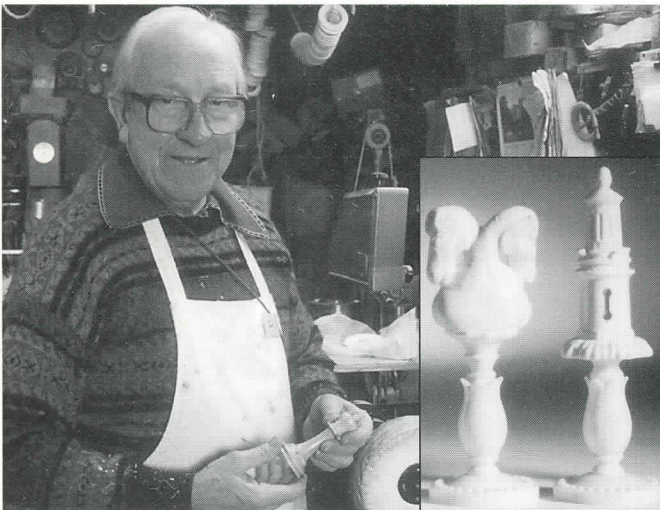
The questionnaire sent out to Turners produced some fascinating replies. None was more interesting than that from Freeman Prizeman Bill Jones, a happy man and true turner, who wrote:

I always say my education began in my father's workshop 3 months before I should have left school (at 13 ³/₄). Bertram said: "You're learning nothing there - so come and start doing something useful!" He was right. I began my real education then!

I have run a happy one-man turning business since 1947, written more on turning than most living turners, won four Company medals including the H. Twentyman and G. Crawford. I belong to the Society of Ornamental Turners, the Association of Wood-turners of Great Britain and the Thameside Woodturners Association. I regularly demonstrate - have twice performed at AWGB international seminars. "Them's me qualifications - 'andsomer you couldn't look to get!" (as Long John Silver said).

In World War 11 I did five years in the RAF as Engine Fitter/Oxygen Plant Operator & baritone (known as "the golden voice of oxygen"!) finishing - when volunteers were requested - with one year as a drill instructor! What times we had, by thunder! As the bard said, "Gentlemen now abed shall think themselves accursed they were not here!"

While others were grumbling when Monday came round and the poor beggars had perforce to go to their slave labour to pay for big cars etc, I awoke and said "Ah! good old Monday". For I was the most enviable of all fellows, a turner in his own workshop. It didn't pay for many luxuries (it never did!) but I had my freedom, was my own master and had work I loved.



Bill Jones was born in 1920, within sound of Bow bells, into a family whose connections with hardwood and ivory turning go back two centuries. In January this year he and his wife Olive celebrated their emerald wedding anniversary (55 years). Inset: Part of Bill's Copenhagen Ivory Tulip chess set, thought by chess aficionados to be one of the most beautiful sets made this century.

I still do the same except that, having outlived the rest in my trade, the publishers of *Woodturning* magazine print everything I write, thus making me world famous (I am just off to a seminar in Utah!) and busier than ever. Retirement is a euphemism for being busier than at any other period in life. When I told the OAP department I wasn't retiring - ever - they said I was INELIGIBLE for a retirement pension!! My MP Bernard Braine "mighty well told 'em!" and I got my pension pronto - ten years ago!

This is very sad: I would like to be a fine water-colour artist but have seldom been able to justify taking up the brush because so many people are waiting for all kinds of work from me. Another enjoyment of mine is italic handwriting, which makes ALL writing the greatest fun. It is ill-mannered and inconsiderate to write badly. Many even appropriate a trade mark (forsooth!) for their unreadable signatures, but NOT, of course,

*Your old friend,
Bill Jones*

THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY

To mark the 70th birthday of H.M. the Queen, the Company commissioned Freeman Paul Coker to turn a fine piece. The bowl of the tazza he made is plain-turned of English burr elm, the base of burr poplar. The top, bottom and vertical edges of the base are in walnut. The neck, feet and decorative roses on the sides of the base are engine-turned of African blackwood.



The tazza stands almost 18 inches high and is a very fine example of the turner's craft.

Paul Coker's tazza. Paul is on the Company's Register of Professional Turners, is a former prize-winner in our turning competitions, and made the beautiful door-stops given to Turners' ladies by Andrew Hamilton when he was Master

THANK YOU... & PLEASE

Many thanks to all contributors to this newsletter. Please send contributions - words, pictures, suggestions - to: Penrose Halson, 18 Thayer Street, London W1M 5LD; telephone 0171 935 6408, fax 0171 486 3817.

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