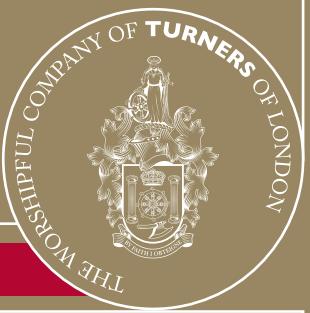


# The Worshipful Company of Turners of London

# Celebrating 50 Issues of The Turner (1992-2025)



- 3** The Master's Letter
- 5** REME and the Turners Sign the Armed Forces Covenant
- 6** My Year as Master
- 8** A Year in the Life of a Mistress Turner
- 9** The Sheriffs' Challenge
- 10** Four Centuries of Charity
- 11** The Turners' Company Annual Patronal Service, St Bride's Church, Fleet Street
- 14** Bursary Awardees
- 18** Cockpit Arts Awardee 2025
- 19** QEST Awardees
- 20** Niall's Trip to Ukraine
- 23** Craft Committee
- 24** Events
- 30** Master's Weekend
- 30** Turners' Contribution to Charles II Coronation in 1661
- 31** New Freemen
- 36** Wizardry in Wood 2025
- 40** Turning Competitions Prize Winners
- 43** Our New Master's Steward
- 44** New Court Assistants
- 45** New Livermen
- 46** John Calvert Legacies
- 50** In Conversation with Stuart King
- 55** Peter Bradwick's MBE and Bill Morris's Emmy
- 56** First Couple in History to be Awarded QVRM and KVRM
- 57** Richard Gardner Williams Sentiment 27 February 2025
- 60** A New Chapter for the AWGB's Festival of Woodturning
- 62** Obituaries

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*Andy Ewens was elected Master of the Company in May. Here he reflects on his year ahead.*

It is an immense honour to have been confirmed as Master of the Worshipful Company of Turners at our Election Court on 29th May 2025.

My first encounter with the Company and the wider Livery movement was in 1990, when I was a subaltern in REMETA and led a team in an annual military and technical skills competition. At the prize-giving ceremony, a group of interesting characters in lavish blue gowns and spectacular regalia presented the awards. That moment left a lasting impression.

With a young family, a civilian career as an engineer in the energy industry, and ongoing military commitments, it took some time before I could consider joining the Company. In 2004, I was appointed Colonel REMETA. By then, I had come to appreciate the deep links between the Company and the Corps and resolved, if they would have me, that this was an organisation

I wanted to be part of. I have not been disappointed. The values we hold dear - duty, loyalty, care, charity, respect, camaraderie, and tradition - mean a great deal to me, and I have seen them in abundance over the years.

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to serve as Master, and I commit to upholding the values and traditions that define the Company, while also looking confidently to the future.

The year ahead promises to be personally rewarding, and I hope to leave something of enduring value behind. I could not have reached this point without the support and encouragement of my colleagues on the Court and the wider Livery. There are too many to name individually, but I must extend particular thanks to my predecessor, and now our Deputy Master, Christopher Scott. Christopher has been instrumental in guiding me through my journey on the Court and preparing me for the Committees that underpin the day-to-day life of the Company. His advice has always been

thoughtful, well-intentioned, and grounded in a deep knowledge of the Company, the Livery, and the craft. At the same time, he has encouraged me to stay true to my own values and aspirations. I hope to build on his legacy and those of other Past Masters, many of whom I am fortunate to count as friends.

My focus this year will reflect both our heritage and our future, centred around three key pillars: Culture, Craft, and Community.

## CULTURE

Our culture is steeped in tradition, not only within the Turners' Company but also within the broader Livery movement in the City of London. We are custodians of a history that stretches back over six centuries. The Guild of Turners was a key part of the City from the 14th century, and on 12th June 2025, we celebrated the 421st anniversary of the granting of our Royal Charter by James I.

Our history is important and exerts a powerful influence on the Company. But culture cannot remain static. For our Livery Company to thrive in the 21st century, we must embrace change while honouring our foundations. Nothing illustrates this better than the cover of this issue of the Turner Magazine. This is the 50th issue of the Turner over the last 33 years and you can see how the Company has evolved over that period as we have chosen to reprint the covers of the last 49 issues. I would like to thank Past Master Matthew Gaved for designing the cover and for his sterling efforts as editor of many of the previous issues as well as developing the template we still use to today. Respecting our traditions and values, while adapting to new challenges and opportunities, will be a constant theme of my year.

## CRAFT

If there is one thing that defines us above all else, it is the craft of woodturning - arguably the reason we exist. One of the wonderful things about the craft is its accessibility. Our relationships with organisations representing woodturners at all levels across the country are vital, and I feel so strongly about these connections that I will list them here:

Register of Professional Turners

[www.registerofprofessionaltturners.co.uk](http://www.registerofprofessionaltturners.co.uk)

Association of Woodturners of Great Britain

[www.awgb.co.uk](http://www.awgb.co.uk)

Association of Pole Lathe Turners and Green Woodworkers

[www.bodgers.org.uk](http://www.bodgers.org.uk)

Society of Ornamental Turners

[www.the-sot.org](http://www.the-sot.org)

Our commitment to the craft was showcased this year with our flagship quadrennial event: Wizardry in Wood. The very best of the craft, and all that we do to support the mystery and mastery of turning, was on show.

## COMMUNITY

We are all individuals with unique strengths and skills, but when we come together, we create something greater than the sum of our parts. That is what I mean by Community. It is from community that we derive the cohesion, camaraderie, and shared purpose that bind us. Our charitable work sits firmly in this space. Each of us can make an individual impact, but collectively, through our contributions to the Turners' Charitable Trust and other causes, and through the time we dedicate to service, we can do so much more. This area also connects naturally to the others. Our culture shapes the communities we are part of, and one could even view the craft as a community in itself.

## MY MISSION

In summary, my mission for my Master's year is: Celebrating the Worshipful Company of Turners and our shared bonds, championing the mystery and mastery of the turner's craft, honouring our heritage, enriching our present, and shaping a future together. There is much to look forward to in the year ahead. The highlight is Wizardry in Wood, and I am excited by the opportunity to show the City and our visitors from across the UK and beyond what a vibrant and varied craft woodturning is. Through our programme of formal and informal social events, we will also continue to demonstrate that we are a warm, welcoming, and friendly Company.



On 8th July 2025 the Worshipful Company of Turners signed the Armed Forces Covenant in a landmark event at the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall. This was another step for the Company in its long relationship with the Armed Forces, particularly REME. Back in February 1943, the Court granted honorary freedom to Major General Eric Rowcroft, the first Director of the newly formed Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Since then, REME has remained the principal service affiliate, alongside close ties with HMS Sultan, the Royal Navy's marine and air engineering school, and the RAF No.4 School of Technical Training at MOD Lyneham.

The covenant was signed by the Master, Col Andrew Ewens TD (late REME) and by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff and Master General REME, Lt Gen David Eastman MBE. It was countersigned by the Commanding Officer HMS Sultan, Captain Mark Hamilton, the Deputy Corps Colonel REME, Col Lex Agathangelou (also a member of the Court the Turners' Company) and the Commanding Officer No.4 School of Technical Training, RAF, Wing Commander Michelle Parker, demonstrating the tri service approach to supporting the Armed Forces. What is an Armed Forces Covenant?

“The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise that together we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, including the bereaved, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy, and society they serve with their lives.”



Christopher Scott, now Deputy Master, reflects on his year.

People often ask if I enjoyed my time as Master.



I say 'yes, hugely'; but I always add that it was such a privilege. I have to pinch myself that after a lifetime working in the City, I would return in retirement to lead a 420-year-old institution. Although it was for just twelve short months, I savoured every moment.

Building on the excellent work of my predecessor Nigel Luson, I said at the outset that I would try to steer the ship so that we enlarged the membership, engaged more with them, and with the craft of turning, and that we enhanced the way we do things. People will judge from what follows how well we achieved these things, but I think we did make some progress.

Welcoming new people into the Company was always a pleasure and to see their pride as they read their declarations was moving; and it was great to get to know several of them at special event in October at a Chinese restaurant. It was also good to see Renter Warden Bill Morris take on the newly created role of Membership Steward to further engage with our members. My last Livery ceremony was particularly special as we welcomed our Chaplain, Alison Joyce, as a Liveryman by Presentation. Her leading of our Patronal Service in November was, as always, very special and I enjoyed helping to prepare the liturgy and music - the latter led magnificently by the St Bride's choir.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was my Master's weekend in Normandy. We had such

fun at the farmhouse of friend of the Company Jean Claude Charpignon who taught us intricate turning techniques.



The day contrasted with our reflective mood at earlier visits to World War II battle sites, especially near Caen where Past Master the late Sir Brian Neill fought and was wounded.

I loved being on the road as ambassador for the Company, be it presenting a lathe to a community workshop,



awarding the Turners' trophy to the best REME battalion, giving certificates to teenage turners after their Youth Training days or presenting sporting awards for golf. And it was good to actually take part in a couple of sporting events: the inter Livery croquet and the Livery pancake race, though no prizes came my way in either!



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On a sad a sad note, it was moving to represent the Company at the funerals of members who passed away, and to hear many remarkable stories about their lives.

Chairing Standing Committee and Court was a real privilege, and I'm grateful for the careful thought that members bring to the meetings and the good humour in which we conduct business. The committees who report to Court all do magnificent work in organising social events, liaising with the craft, running the Charity, keeping a careful watch on our finances, developing membership policy and Livery matters, and making sure our communications are sharp and engaging. On this last point, I was particularly pleased to see the Company website revamped to project an attractive and modern branding.

And then there were the civic events. Supporting the Lord Mayor is always a key responsibility of a Livery Master. I was glad to attend fund raising dinners at Mansion House, serve on the Curry Lunch committee, march in the Lord Mayor's show, and to go to Liverpool to celebrate the Brigantes' Breakfast with the Livery movement in the north of the country. Another trip north was to Sheffield for a dinner and a fascinating industrial visit courtesy of the Cutlers of Hallamshire. Back in the City there were moving services at St Paul's Cathedral, all the fun of the Sheep Drive on Southwark Bridge, the Lady Mayoress's Bavarian Ball in Mansion House and the Lord Mayor's 'Grand Finale' bash at Guildhall. It was also special to take my granddaughter to Mansion House for the Lord Mayor's children's party. But of course, the civic highlight was the Lord Mayor's weekend for Masters which he held in London, during which Angela and I got to know our fellow Masters and their consorts.

Entertaining other Liveries and being entertained is always a great pleasure. I managed avoid putting on the pounds (I'm lucky in my physiology) and to not overdo the wine (having to give a speech is a good moderator!). The Livery Dinner at Goldsmiths' Hall was very special, as was the Court Dinner at the House of Lords.



Promoting the craft is a key aspect of any Master's year, which was bookended by the 2024 Association of Pole Lathe Turners' 'Bodgers' Ball in Sussex and their 2025 event in the West Midlands. They champion the original craft of turning when there was no electricity and artisans had to use a treadle lathe. We also support the Register of Professional Turners which goes from strength to strength, and their annual craft day in the City was very special. It was good to liaise with the Society of Ornamental Turners and to see the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain thrive under their new leadership. At the AWGB seminar in Staffordshire, I saw some of the very best turners demonstrating the craft. And at the Company's turning weekend at the Max Carey Centre in Portishead I received some much needed tuition.

The Company has close links with the Armed Services, and during my year, I was proud that the Court agreed to sign the Armed Forces Covenant. This is a Government initiative for employers to commit to respect and support serving military and veterans, and we join many other Livery Companies in making this commitment with a series of events during each year.

Our gallant clerk Niall, learned Assistant Clerk Becca and indomitable Beadle Terry have all been a huge support, and I thank them. Each year they have a new Master to deal with, so they have seen it all before. Yet their enthusiasm is as fresh as ever!

Finally, I must thank Angela who, as Mistress Turner, has thoroughly enjoyed the year. Between us, we have had some 180 engagements, many of which we attended together and some of which were consorts events that she went to by herself. As we hand over to Andy and Gerry we wish them well and hope they will have a wonderful year, just as we have had.

# A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A MISTRESS TURNER

Angela Scott was Mistress Turner from 9 May 2024 to 29 May 2025. Here she reflects in verse on her year.

2024 Bodgers' Ball was the first event  
To which, as consort/mistress, I duly went.  
Not a fine dine and dress affair;  
But more rustic, in sunny open air.

Then mudlarking on Thames's shore  
With finds washed up, and mud galore.  
And sensible, waterproof, walking shoes.  
A long way from more glamorous do's.

At Livery croquet near Brighton Town,  
We failed to win the final crown.  
Then Lord Mayor's weekend with BBQ,  
And hidden London for us to view.

Livery invites, some grand, some small:  
Goldsmiths, Vintners, and Butchers' Hall.  
Wax Chandlers, Stationers, all a dream.  
Plus Mansion House Ball with Bavarian theme.

A walking tour in London Town,  
Visiting churches of Wren's renown.  
Summer reception with wooden bowls.  
A City treasure hunt 'fore August unfolds.

In September, Liz Sindall's memorial lunch.  
And the Master's weekend in Normandy, France.  
A tour of Theobald's Garden was pure delight  
Then the Sheep Drive, such a marvellous sight.

Stunning demos at the AWGB seminar  
Then a Mail Rail trip that set a high bar.  
Lunch with the Fanmakers' delightful Consort  
When catch up time was all too short.

A Young Turners' day at Les's shop  
With Stuart Mortimer's our very next stop.  
The skill displayed was just excessive  
A willingness to share was so impressive.

With dinners interspersed at will  
I learnt a new basket making skill.  
Lunch, tea, a last dinner at Mansion House  
An evening farewell to Lord Mayor and spouse.  
Patronal service then formal lunch,  
a contrast to Cockpit's bunch  
of Turners, who toured the premises new  
in Deptford: apprentices' work to view.

Christmas carols: St Michael's Cornhill.  
Then white tie dinner at Goldsmiths' Hall.  
A lull as festivities and New Year passed,  
Five more months, I hope we'll last!

Court Dinner: the House of Lords, what fun  
The Asquith room was second to none.  
The champagne flowed with food divine  
Their cellars produced some tip top wine.

The Furniture Makers' bed factory tour  
A Broderers' exhibition with designs so pure.  
Pancake racing in Guildhall's square;  
Feltmakers' lunch: posh hats were there.

At Armourers' Hall an impressive tour;  
Then Mansion House, with food galore.  
United Guilds at St Paul's was fine  
Then to Apothecary's we repaired to dine

My Consort's event packed a punch  
With Les Thorne's demo and a rustic lunch.  
An Easter break was a welcome call  
Before our spring dinner in Butchers' Hall.

Moving VE Day service in St Paul's before  
The Bodgers' Ball came round once more.  
Clergy Support service and Plaisterers' dinner.  
Christ's Hospital school visit was a winner.

A Palace garden party went so fast  
385 days gone, Ascension Day at last!  
86 events covered in my Mistress year,  
All the memories I'll hold so dear.

The final Court dinner and handover day,  
To Andy and Gerry on the 29th of May.  
An amazing year we've had. What a blast!  
Now we're Master and Mistress Turner past.



In 2025 the Worshipful Company of Turners once again sponsored The City Academy, Hackney at the annual Sheriffs' Challenge. Supported as their Livery lead by Liveryman Col Lex Agathangelou for the second year running, the team came a respected second place in the final heats. Unfortunately, it was not enough to get them to the grand final at the Old Bailey but was a great effort by the 17-year-olds who delivered with style and professionalism.

In 2017, Sir Peter Estlin, then serving as a Sheriff of the City of London, initiated the Sheriffs' Challenge. Knowing the power of education can transform lives, he created an opportunity for students from challenging backgrounds to develop skills such as resilience, tenacity and social confidence, alongside the ability to work in teams and be able to articulate ideas and concepts. They do this through a team-work presentation, competitively, on a topic relating to the City of London or the business and wider world.

Shortly after the Challenge was launched, the Worshipful Company of Educators was asked to administer the project. Each team is sponsored by a Livery Company, which also nominates a 'Livery Lead' to coach them and introduce them to life and work in the City of London. Participating schools convene teams of no more than six Year 12 students who must prepare and deliver an oral argument on the specified subject of up to eight minutes. This year the topic was selected by the Master Educator and was:

"Which "doors" would you like the City of London to help open to improve your educational and career opportunities?"

The judging panel assess each team on three criteria:

- Organisation of the team and the structure of the material
- Content and knowledge of the subject
- Presentation skills to engage and inspire the audience



The event is in two parts:

**Heats:** take place in front of a selection of Livery judges (including Liveryman Col Lex Agathangelou) and other schools at Anglia Ruskin University in February.

**The Final:** held in March at the Old Bailey and judged by the Sheriffs themselves and Old Bailey judges.

The principle of the Sheriffs' Challenge is to give teams in London schools the chance:

- Develop and practice their public speaking skills in a formal setting
- Develop confidence that would be normally well outside their comfort zone
- Prepare and present material as a team
- gain an insight into the world of work in the City of London
- Consider that a career in the City is achievable for them
- Consider the event to be a significant, valuable experience;
- Allow Livery Companies to forge links with the participating schools, adding value to the pupils' experience.

The winning team is given individual trophies and certificates, and their school a Winners Cup with the name of the school inscribed on it, which they keep for a year. Every student receives feedback on its performance. The range of schools and Livery Companies has broadened over the years, helping to ensure the Challenge has a healthy future.

We look forward to 2026 where the City Academy, Hackney will submit a new team with renewed effort to make it to the Old Bailey!

Liveryman Lex Agathangelou

Assistant Mark Kermack, Chair of the Charity Committee, gives an update.

From the granting of its Royal Charter in 1604, the Turners' Company has supported many charitable causes, from distributing 'bread to the poor of Ludgate' in the 1600s to supporting turners through Covid 19. For most of this time it was the Company itself that gave this support, but in 1974 the Worshipful Company Turners' Charitable Trust was set up. The Trust is overseen by a board of Trustees comprising the Master, Deputy Master, the two Wardens and the Chair of the Charity Committee.

In 2023 the Charity became essentially administered under two arms. All matters craft related (bursaries, competition prizes, supply of lathes and so on) are administered by the Craft Committee. This accounts for some 75% of total donations. Other charitable causes (the City, the armed services, the Lord Mayor's and the Master's charities as well as other causes) are administered by the Charity Committee. Both arms are overseen by the Chair of the Charity Committee.

## CRAFT

In the past year, the Charity made some £65,000 of craft grants, which represents around 75% of total giving. This includes lathes loaned to schools and training establishments where the charity feels there would be a benefit. The latest donation was to Queens Park Arts Centre in Aylesbury where the loaned lathe will make a real difference to their ability to offer viable class sizes and the ability to turn larger items.

## OTHER CHARITIES

Some £4,000 was given to the Lord Mayor's Charities, and some £5,000 to various City causes including the Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund, Treloars School, the Magical Taxi Tour to Paris Disney, St Paul's Cathedral, the Guildhall's garden of remembrance, the Musicians' and Turners' carol service, Bridge Watch and St Bart's Hospital.

The Charity also supported military causes to the tune of £5,000, including the Army Benevolent Fund, RAF Benevolent Fund, Royal

Navy and Royal Marines Benevolent Fund and the REME Benevolent Fund.

## MORE CHARITABLE INVOLVEMENT

Besides giving money, members of the Company give a lot of time to good causes. For example, The Sheriffs' Challenge. This was initiated in 2017 by Sir Peter Estlin, then serving as a Sheriff of the City of London. An advocate of the power of education to transform lives, he wanted to give students from challenging backgrounds the opportunity to develop skills such as resilience, tenacity and social confidence, alongside the ability to work in teams and be able to articulate ideas and intellectual concepts. They do this by delivering a team presentation, competitively, on a topic relating to the City of London or the business/wider world.

2025 saw the Worshipful Company of Turners once again sponsor and mentor The City Academy, Hackney at the annual Sheriffs' Challenge. The team performed extremely well in the final heats, gaining a respected second place. Unfortunately it was not enough to get them to the grand final at the Old Bailey, but was a great effort by the 17-year-olds in the team who delivered with style and professionalism.

The Master found time to participate in the annual City charity pancake race between the livery companies. He was not the fastest Master in Guildhall Yard, but he had a great time!

The Charity Committee also organises the Company's involvement in City events such as the Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch where we have a prominent stall selling turned items that raises hundreds of pounds towards Services charities, and the annual Sheep Drive across London Bridge where we also have a stall and live pole lathe demonstrations.

## THE FUTURE

This coming year the guidelines have been broadened to invite members of the Company to suggest other charitable causes to be considered which will then be reviewed by the Charity Committee. The committee is keen to provide meaningful financial assistance to

relatively small organisations. We are looking for new committee members to co-ordinate this as well as help in arranging fund raising events with the Events committee.

My thanks to those current members of the committee who have provided their time and advice over the year.

Pictured are Sarah Lewis, Artistic Director, and Phil Francis, woodworking tutor at QPAC along with company members Peter Bradwick MBE with Paul Ferguson MBE alongside Ian Adkins chair of the Craft Committee.



## THANK YOU FROM THE EAST SURREY WOODTURNERS!

On behalf of the East Surrey Woodturners, I would like to thank the Worshipful Company of Turners. In 2024 we celebrated our 30th anniversary and one of the demonstrators we booked to help us celebrate was AWGB President and Upper Warden of the Turners' Company, Joey Richardson. Joey mentioned this in passing to your Master at the time, Nigel Luson, who as it happens lives within our area. Nigel contacted us as a result and has very generously donated a grant of £500 to the club from the Master's Discretionary Fund.



We were delighted by this wonderful gesture, coming out of the blue as it did. We invited Nigel and his wife Marilyn to attend our Anniversary Barbecue – you can see him here, with me (in yellow) and our Chairman, Graham Mee. I hope he and Marilyn enjoyed the day!

We are still debating exactly what we will use the money for. We are looking to improve our audio-visual equipment for demonstrators, but it is taking a while to work out exactly what we need, and to find something that is fairly foolproof to set up.

Richard Peers, Treasurer, East Surrey Woodturners

# THE TURNERS' COMPANY ANNUAL PATRONAL SERVICE, ST BRIDE'S CHURCH, FLEET STREET

In November 2024, our Chaplain Alison gave this inspiring sermon.

In the name of the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

One of the more unexpected delights that I have come to appreciate since moving back to London just over ten years ago, is the joy of travelling by bus. Because for me, there is nothing quite like sitting on the top deck of a good old London bus to give you a quite different perspective on the world around you – especially those things that you would otherwise regard as entirely familiar – because it is not very often that any of us get to view things from that height.

And one thing that never ceases to amaze me when I am seated on the top deck, is the extraordinary and exquisite detail that you can observe in the architecture of some of our historic buildings, when seen above shop level. Very often they are embellished with the most phenomenal and intricate stone carvings in their upper stories – yet so far from ground

level that they are effectively invisible to the people walking below. Isn't it strange that such an extraordinary amount of care, time, effort and craftsmanship should have been dedicated to producing works of art at that kind of height, which the craftsmen themselves must surely have known that they were unlikely ever to be seen or appreciated by anyone close up.

When I was first ordained, back in the 1980s, my curacy was in a parish in rural Oxfordshire. One day while I was there, I went on a guided tour of a local mediaeval manor house, which had been lovingly restored by its owners.

During our tour, the owner took us right up into the roof of the building, telling us that he had something remarkable to show us. When we eventually climbed into the roof space, we were slightly perplexed, because there appeared to be nothing there at all. But it turned out that what he wanted to show us was the original mediaeval roof timbers: because those very ordinary, and entirely functional pieces of wood which, once installed, would remain largely hidden from view, had been finished by



their mediaeval carpenter with such astonishing craftsmanship and care, that you could almost feel the pride that he took in his work. Every single beam was beautifully smoothed and crafted, and subtly embellished, with the corners rounded, and each beam fitted perfectly and immaculately into its allotted place. And yet the craftsman who took such care over that task, will himself have known all along that the results of his diligent labour would remain unseen and, in that sense, unappreciated.

I can't help thinking that there is something incredibly important here about the true significance of craftsmanship, which our own era – an era which so readily prioritises functionality and cost-cutting above all else – would do well to heed. I suspect we all recognise that in most areas of life cheapest is seldom best – but beyond that, it seems to me that there is something even deeper going on here – which is to do with the true nature, and the worth, and purpose, and the source, of human creativity.

Human beings are unique in their capacity for creativity – which is why, I suspect, the verses we heard earlier from Psalm 8 describe us as being 'little lower than the angels'. Because, as a species we are uniquely blessed with the intelligence; the ingenuity; the curiosity; and the dexterity to create; to design things; to produce artefacts of extraordinary wonder and beauty. Ours is a Creator God – and we are invited to share in God's creativity, and we are given the gifts to do so.

Sadly, of course, not all human creativity is channelled to the good. Far from it. That very same ingenuity and curiosity can create monsters as well as things of great beauty and worth. And the more that we aspire to exercise control over the world we inhabit, the more we have to face the fact that, actually, we are not really in control of it at all. Nor will we ever be.

It was human artifice that created the weapons that are currently devastating lives in Ukraine and Russia, and Gaza, and Lebanon. The negative consequences of certain kinds of human creative activity are threatening the long-term survival of our planet and systematically destroying the natural world that is essential to our own

continued existence. And there does not seem to be much that we are willing, or able, to do about it.

I am no naive biblical fundamentalist – far from it – but the older I get, the wiser and more profound I find the insights of the biblical story of the Garden of Eden and the fall of Adam and Eve, to be, in shedding light on the human psyche, past and present. Because that story gives us the perfect metaphor through which to observe how, even when we have everything we could possibly want, or need, in order to flourish, we still desire more. Because we want to be like God – we wanted to be in control. And in reaching for more in that way, and for that reason, we ended up unleashing forces that will inevitably bring about our own destruction. Because, ultimately, we remain creatures, not the Creator.

But returning to the theme of human creativity: what is it, then, that makes the difference between our ability to create things of wonder and beauty – and things that blight and destroy?

I find it very interesting that when we are trying to describe an amazing work of art, or piece of music, or object of craftsmanship, we often find ourselves reaching for the language of 'inspiration' – we describe something as being 'inspired'. Which is a word that means 'breathed in', suggesting that there was some kind of external creative impulse that generated that vision and energy; something spiritual (the words 'inspired' and 'spiritual' are connected etymologically). And it seems to me that, whether or not you would regard yourself as a person of faith in any conventional way, you might recognise the truth of that kind of human experience. I certainly find that there are times when sermons seem to 'write themselves'; when suddenly connections emerge within the text that I am not conscious of making myself – it can be quite a mysterious process at times.

And there is an appropriate humility that comes with recognising that the very best of our human creative outpouring has something of the spirit within it; something that is gifted or graced by God; because sometimes what emerges feels as if it transcends anything that we could have achieved by our own efforts alone. Hence the

humility that should rightly accompany that act of recognition.

The mastering of any craft, turning included, can require years of human effort, and the overcoming of countless disappointments and failed attempts at learning the skill. But over time, with patience and application, these can be overcome. Yet the truly extraordinary emerges when something is created that possesses something that goes beyond simple human mastery. It is when human skill, ingenuity and craftsmanship are woven together with something of the spirit. Something of the transcendent; something sublime.

Because when that happens, the creative endeavour is no longer simply a means to an end; but a gift; and an offering; a celebration; something that is worth doing supremely well simply because it is worth doing at all.

I wonder whether that is why we can sometimes see evidence of glorious craftsmanship in the most hidden of locations – creations that were never intended for show, or to impress – but simply as a celebration of the craft.

When we strive to cultivate the gifts we have been given to the very best of our abilities – whatever those gifts may be; and when we offer those same gifts in the service of others – there is something of the divine woven through all of that. Because God takes whatever we have, and inspires it, and transforms it, and uses it for the good.

And in the process, it becomes in turn both a gift and a blessing. And thanks be to God for that.

Amen.

Chaplain and Liveryman of the Company, the Reverend Canon Dr Alison Joyce

## BURSARY AWARDEES

### ALEXANDER POPE

Congratulations to Alexander Pope on his award of a bursary from the Company. Alexander graduated with distinction from Central Saint Martins' MA Design programme in July 2023. During the course, he discovered a fascination for vessel forms which naturally led him to the lathe. Since then, he has dedicated himself to refining his craft and developing collections that connect the human self to the vessel, both as a sculptural object and a symbolic form.

Alexander has a background in cabinetmaking, having trained and worked at Robinson House Studio and Silverlining Furniture, and has a deep understanding of both the making processes and of wood as a material. Yet it is in woodturning that he finds his true creative voice. The immediacy of the process allows him to fuse design, exploration and craftsmanship, resulting in works that feel fresh, tactile and instinctive. He works in his Wiltshire studio and upcoming collections will feature light, contemporary pieces that balance precision, colour and expression.



## **GLENN CORNISH**

Glenn's woodturning started after a visit to a local sawmill where turning was being demonstrated. Initially it was a balance to a stressful medical career, but it has since evolved into a deep passion both for the craft and teaching it to others. Retiring from medicine because of a stroke enabled him to immerse himself in developing his own style in locally sourced waste English hardwoods, often using colour, carving, gilding and other techniques to produce elegant decorative work, some of which have whimsical themes. He carries out a variety of commissions, both decorative and functional, and his work is for sale on his website, at craft fairs and in local galleries and design studios. With his background in medical education, he tutors at the Dorking Turnery and at the Dorking Men's Shed where he has been teaching since 2019. After he has attended the course that his bursary has paid for, he aims to open a woodturning studio to teach turning to groups. Self-taught for several years, the bursary means he can get more formal training to develop his making and teaching. He is very grateful for the bursary, mentoring and the links with the Company.



## **JACK WHEELER**

Jack is a professional woodworker and artist with a unique practical skill set and wealth of experience in traditional woodworking, handcraft and sculpture. He graduated from Norwich School of Art and Design in 2003 with a BA Hons in Sculpture. Through a visceral connection with wood, trees and landscape, Jack pursues craft skills into unfamiliar territory, opening a dialogue between the natural world and the cultural and historical aspects of object making. Inspired by craft traditions and wood cultures from around the world, he uses locally grown timber to give pleasure and meaning through a direct connection between the natural world and the hand of the maker. Jack shares his love of woodworking and craft by running workshops for young people and in individual tuition. He's active in the UK's vibrant green woodworking community and enjoys sharing skills and knowledge through teaching. His woodturning journey began in earnest in 2020, when he built a pole lathe in the corner of his workshop and set about teaching himself how to use it, exploring the unique possibilities it brings to the objects he makes.

## JASON LOCK

Jason started working with wood through a carpenter and joinery apprenticeship straight after school in Colchester, which is where he first started woodturning. He finished his apprenticeship with City and Guilds but after ten years as a carpenter he had an accident where he fell through a roof and fractured his spine in four places which left him in wheelchair. Not wanting to give up working with wood, Jason taught himself to turn sitting down. Doing this gave him a reason to keep waking up and pushing forward. It was a type of therapy, helping him to block out the pain and providing a place to go where everything felt normal. Jason started working with resin and discovered a way of pouring the resin so that it is more like painting so that the wood and resin creates planets, space and oceans. This technique gave him more creative licence as well as helping him use smaller pieces of wood.



## JEFFREY HART

My work is rooted in traditional craft, bridging the past and present together through a deep connection with natural materials such as wood, clay, and fibre. My journey into woodturning grew from a broader exploration of heritage skills, seeking methods that not only create functional objects but also strengthen our relationship with the natural world. I was drawn to the pole lathe for its simplicity and rhythm, discovering it after exploring green woodworking through spoon carving. The physicality of foot-powered turning, the sound of a sharp tool meeting fresh timber, and the direct engagement with raw material make it an intuitive and meditative practice. Lately, I've been refining my technique, exploring advanced forms such as nesting bowls and locking lidded boxes, while working from my woodland workshop, a place where craft and nature are inseparable. Alongside my personal practice, I established Nettlecombe Craft School, dedicated to teaching green woodworking and other heritage crafts. As a 2024 Turners' Company Bursary recipient, I will deepen my knowledge by training with a master turner and developing new courses at Nettlecombe, ensuring that these time-honoured skills continue to inspire and equip future generations of makers.

## KIRSTY DALTON

Kirsty started her woodturning journey with a bee! A bee sculpture that is. She created an outdoor sculpture for the Woodland Trust in her third year at university studying fine art. She chose wood as a sustainable and biodegradable material and approached local wood turner Jack Anderson for lessons. She caught the bug, and Jack took her on as an apprentice to learn and understand the craft. After graduating in fine art from Dundee in 2015, wood became her main medium. In 2016 she completed an internship with local art collective Tin Roof and had her first solo exhibition before working for VinSpace art studios in Vietnam for six months, teaching art and traveling in the north of the country. Returning to Scotland filled with inspiration, she launched her own 'Primitive woodland line' focusing on wood-turned items with highly decorative finishes. In lock down there was a lack of workshop access and she rediscovered her love of colour and painting and adapted some of her bowls with hand painted finishes. That led to her first live stream demonstration with Chestnut products and then to her taking part in a Woodturners Worldwide online symposium in January 2022. More demonstrations and collaborative opportunities followed, including the Emerging Turners programme where she learnt

from a range of professional woodturners and networked with turners of her own age.

Kirsty exhibits her work throughout Scotland and works part time for the National Galleries of Scotland. She looks forward to furthering her knowledge and career by doing a specialised course with professional turner Emma Cook.



## NICHOLAS FISHER



Nicholas is a Midlands-based pole lathe turner, artist, and greenwood craftsperson. His introduction to pole lathe turning came in his early teens at a local Civil War re-enactment though, at the time, he was too immersed in teenage apathy to appreciate his father's interest in the craft. Nearly a decade later, at Bowl Gathering in Herefordshire, he re-connected with turning, this time with the tools in his own hands. Nicholas has since honed his skills through self-directed learning and an apprenticeship in coppicing. He is dedicated to upholding the regenerative principles of his coppicing education in every aspect of his practice. Sourcing materials through sustainable woodland management, his work focuses on human powered pole-lathe turning and hand tool green woodworking. Beyond making, Nicholas is passionate about sharing his craft with others. Through workshops, he shares his knowledge of coppicing, green woodworking and pole lathe turning to a diverse range of people, helping them connect with these traditional skills.

The Company makes regular awards of studio space at Cockpit Arts, a creative incubation hub in Deptford, South London. Randon Burns is our latest winner.

American born, Randon has lived in London for some 20 years and is now a British citizen. His journey into woodturning began in 2023 after it became clear that his previous career as a translator was being reshaped by advances in AI. Moving away from screen based work, Randon explored various crafts including woodcarving, stone carving and silversmithing, before discovering woodturning, which quickly became a passion. Throughout 2024, Randon honed his skills at Blackhorse Workshop in

Walthamstow, a space supported by the Company, where he found not only excellent facilities but also a supportive community of fellow turners. By the end of 2024, he had come full circle, going from taking his first course in woodturning at Blackhorse to teaching woodturning there himself, a role he continues today. He takes great pleasure in introducing new people to the craft. Randon's rapid progress in turning, and the Company's Cockpit Arts Studio award for 2025, led him to move into a dedicated studio at Cockpit, where he is now developing his practice. With a keen interest in pushing the boundaries of contemporary woodturning and incorporating his other craft skills, he continues to refine his techniques and explore new creative possibilities within the medium.



**CARLYN LINDSAY**

Carlyn lives and works in North Essex, has a degree in 3D art and design and a turning career spanning 35 years. But she was looking for professional development so decided to apply to QEST for funding and is thrilled to have been awarded the Turners' Company QEST Scholarship. Carlyn's work is distinctive, laminating British sycamore with veneers, then turning by hand on the lathe to reveal graphic lines and bold forms. The funding will enable her to move forward, confidently incorporating other materials into her pieces. The funding includes a valuable Professional Development Programme with Cockpit Arts; and five training sessions are planned with Colwin Way (a skew day), Lilo Pisano (silver/ metal skills), Richard Walker at Watergild Studios (gilding) Richard Findley (a skew day), and Ulf Jansson (ring tool skills).

**GREG KENT**

For Greg the scholarship enables him to do four things. First, he wanted to make sure his basic turning techniques are as sound as possible. Second, he wanted to challenge his creativity and think beyond the accepted in woodturning. Third, he wanted to incorporate techniques from different disciplines to his approach to turning. The style he is trying to develop is unique, so he is having to look outside traditional training providers.

Greg worked with renowned turner Phil Irons and has also visited Keith Clark in the USA who has developed a deep hollowing tool which is ideal for his work. He has attended two courses at the London School of Furniture. One of the courses helped him to understand finishes that will protect the surface of the wood while showing off the beauty of the grain. The second course involved steam bending. Finally, he had a day's training with a fossil preparator who uses sandblasting to reveal fossils. By using techniques that are not usually associated with wood turning, such as steam bending and sand blasting, Greg wants to push the boundaries of the craft. Finally, he will be visiting Alain Mailand in France to explore various sculpting techniques to create organic forms from his wood turned pieces.



## A TRIP TO UKRAINE

Our Clerk, Niall Macnaughton, reports on his trip to Ukraine with a 4x4 vehicle and medical supplies as part of a 12-vehicle convoy taking aid east of Sumy.

We set off on the 8th February 2025 and drove through France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Poland in a convoy of twelve 4x4 pick-up trucks and an estate car, all loaded with medical supplies specifically requested by the Ukrainians. This included an eye-scanner used for detecting tiny pieces of shrapnel lodged in the eyes of injured soldiers and civilians.



The leg from Dortmund to Gliwice in Poland was around 800km. Crossing into Ukraine on the 10th of February at a minor border point, Budomierz, avoided the huge queues of lorries on the main routes. A few hours of bureaucracy and border checks was followed by a two-hour drive to Lviv. Here we spent two days meeting hospital staff, handing over aid and six vehicles. We also visited a drone factory, a camouflage netting site, a veterans' rehabilitation centre and a very moving visit to the military cemetery. Those who had done the trip before commented on how many more graves there were since their last trip in September 2024. However, overall Lviv felt very normal, and bar one air raid warning, life seemed to go on as you would expect in any modern European city.



One lighter aspect was when we visited a Lviv restaurant. They had incorporated a shooting range into the venue and here you could take pot shots at a target with Putin's face on it. Very satisfying.



We then left half the team behind who were returning to the UK and the remainder of us, seven vehicles and aid, then headed east about 500km to Kyiv. Here we had a chance to wander around Maidan Square where the revolution began, and the beautiful St Michael's Church which has a memorial wall covered with the names and photos of those who have died in the fighting since 2014. Kyiv again felt a very normal, bustling modern city.





We stayed overnight in a small town east of Kyiv and then drove a further 300km east to Sumy, about 40km from the Russian border, where we were slowed up at various checkpoints as the military traffic increased.

On arrival in Sumy we met up with a brigade commander and his team and unloaded more supplies, including a huge fishing net now a vital part of the anti-drone defences on roads and fixed positions. Most of the vehicles in the compound had drone jamming equipment mounted on the cabin roofs.

The sound of military aircraft overhead made everyone look up nervously, but we took some comfort knowing they must be Ukrainian as the Russian air force does not cross into Ukrainian air space.

We then had to navigate across Sumy to another drop-off point and here we encountered another feature of life in the border country as the GPS signal was jammed, we were not sure by who. We had to return to old fashioned map-reading, using the streets still showing on the satnav screens. Luckily one of our team, a former SBS commander was in his element; he soon had us back on track. After handing over another 4x4 it was then on further east towards the front-line under cover of darkness.

Meeting the Ukrainian soldiers east of Sumy was very sobering. Some had been fighting for three years. Most had lost friends. We stayed with them in an abandoned house in the brigade rear area, out of range of FPV drones and conventional artillery. We could hear the rumble of Russian guns in the distance and the Ukrainian air defences quite close by, trying to shoot down incoming Shahid drones. It was very cold, minus 10-15 degrees at

night, minus 3-5 during the day. A tough place to fight in. We told them that although there weren't many of us on the team, over 2,000 people had donated to support us and thus them, on this trip alone. They were quite emotional; they feel very alone in this fight. We cheered them up by cracking open two bottles of whisky and a bottle of rum. They were very hospitable and fed us very well. We had an excellent evening with them. Lovely blokes and a very nutty, but great fun female combat medic. An amazing woman who spends her life trying to save the lives of her wounded fellow soldiers.

The reality of this conflict came home when I was sleeping on a mat in the corridor. At 0500hrs a group of soldiers trudged past me, picking up their body armour and assault rifles and heading out to the front line in one of the vehicles we had driven out. Our day with the soldiers reminded us that this was not just something you see on TV. Real people, citizen soldiers, an IT worker and a car salesman amongst others, are fighting and dying in this completely unnecessary war. The average life of the vehicles is generally around 3-4 weeks before they are destroyed by drones, often with all on board being killed or wounded. Hence there is an almost continuous need for modern medical aid and replacement vehicles.



As we left early the following morning, again the reality hit home as they encouraged us to get into the vehicles quickly and drive away immediately as high-altitude Russian drones were often overhead reporting on anything that may be a potential target. We then drove back into Sumy with our last two vehicles to meet up with a young Ukrainian

lieutenant who gave us a sobering insight into the regular use of chemical weapons by the Russians against fortified Ukrainian positions. CS gas was commonplace but also the use of Chloropicrin, a WWI era choking agent. It was Valentine's Day which made the discussion all the sadder.

What did make us proud, in a small way, was that of all the foreign number plates in Sumy, British ones were the most prevalent, followed interestingly by those from Latvia, who of course know what it's like to live next door to the Russian bear. We had now handed over all our vehicles and aid and had a few hours to kill in Sumy before catching a train back to Kyiv. Sumy is poor, like much of Ukraine east of Kyiv, and filled with characterless Soviet housing blocks. A rather gloomy place even when the sun broke through. Our walk was punctuated by air raid warnings from phone apps which advised you to head for the nearest shelter, followed almost immediately by the wail of the siren. A glide bomb had killed two people the day before and nine were killed in the preceding week. Again, life went on in Sumy, traffic flowed, shops were open and although less busy than Lviv and Kyiv, people went about their daily business.

Our train from Sumy to Kyiv was straight out of the Soviet era with a babushka delivering tea to each compartment, boiled on a coal stove in her "kitchen". We grabbed a quick bite at our stopover in Kyiv before catching our overnight train to Lviv. This time a very modern version with comfortable bunks and all the mod cons. A clear indication of the wealth gap between eastern and western Ukraine. On Saturday morning (16th) we then caught taxis from Lviv to the Polish border and spent a cold hour or so standing in the snow as we were processed through Ukrainian and then Polish border control.

Once through we caught a very modern and punctual train from Przemysl to Krakow, stayed overnight in this beautiful city and then flew home.

The organiser, Paul Parsons is always looking for drivers and donations for future trips. Please contact him on [paul@southfieldshouse.co.uk](mailto:paul@southfieldshouse.co.uk)



Assistant Ian Adkins, Chairman of the Craft Committee, gives an update.

The Craft Committee has now fully settled into its revised structure, working across four portfolios: Training, Awards, Resources, and Events. The past year has been one of steady progress, with a particular emphasis on strengthening partnerships with the wider turning community and ensuring that Company support reaches turners of all levels and backgrounds.

## TRAINING

The Certificate in Woodturning continues to expand, with additional accredited centres bringing the total to eight, including the recently established programme at Workbridge Workshops in Northampton. The Diploma in Woodturning now has fifteen candidates, while youth training, run in collaboration with the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain, has regained momentum with more than thirty places being taken up this year. The programme is set to grow further, with new initiatives under development to provide a pathway for young people into turning.

## AWARDS AND BURSARIES

The Cockpit Arts Award was granted to Randon Burns, while bursary awards were made to seven individuals from fourteen applicants. A stronger process of follow-up and mentoring is being established to ensure recipients make the most of these opportunities. We were also pleased to see Carlyn Lyndsay selected as a Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST) scholar, representing another step forward in the Company's support for emerging talent.

## YEOMAN SCHEME

A major focus this year has been the refresh of the Yeoman Scheme, designed to strengthen engagement and ensure Yeomen feel more closely connected to the Company. Eleven Yeomen attended the Summer Reception, and new proposals have been developed to enhance mentoring, networking, and opportunities to contribute to Company events. The refreshed scheme will provide a clearer pathway for

emerging turners to grow within the craft community and the Company.

## RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

The Company continues to maintain and distribute a significant pool of lathes and associated equipment on loan to institutions and clubs. Over the past year, this has included the provision of a wheelchair-accessible lathe to Workbridge and the delivery of a new lathe to Queens Park Arts Centre in Aylesbury. The Building Crafts College and Woking College have returned lathes due to curriculum changes, but these will be redeployed, with HMS Sultan already confirmed as the home for two machines in support of a new woodworking club.

## EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT

The Committee has continued to nurture strong relationships with the major woodturning associations and has seen a good Company turnout at their events. This year, the Bodgers' Ball and AGM of the Register of Professional Turners were particular highlights.

Taken together, these achievements demonstrate a year of practical delivery, stronger collaboration, and continued investment in the future of turning.





## THE BODGERS' BALL 2025

Master's Steward Richard Lucas reports on bodgers, bowls and butties at the pole lathe turners' annual festival.

This year I decided to do the Bodgers' Ball properly. Not just turn up for the day, but camp on site, soak up the atmosphere, and maybe even turn my first bowl on a pole lathe. I attended the Bodgers Ball in 2024 as a camper at the Weald and Downland Museum in Sussex and enjoyed myself so much that I decided to do the whole event this year at the Avoncroft Museum of Historical Buildings in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

Ever since I heard about the annual gathering of Pole Lathe Turners and Green Wood Workers, the Bodgers' Ball has been on my list as the place to meet people who keep those skills alive.

Add to that the inspiration I've taken from two notable Liverymen of the Turners' Company, John Warwicker and Stuart King, and I was all in.

Now, let's be clear: I'm a glamper, not a camper. I arrived early to secure a prime spot, near the hot showers, right by the coffee and bacon butty stand, and just a short hop to Morrisons for essential supplies. My oversized tent and proper bed meant I was in no danger of suffering from cold nights and a sore back. And there was plenty of local accommodation for those of a more delicate constitution!

The Ball itself is part festival, part competition, part social, and entirely about green woodcraft. There are many opportunities to sign up for classes in chair making, spoon whittling, health

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and safety(!), basket weaving and all manner of craft. I was lucky to be taught by master pole lathe turner James Pumfrey to make my first bowl. I can't claim to have fully "made" it, but I now understand exactly what's involved, and I'm looking forward to the day I graduate from rolling pins, through bowls to mugs.

The Turners' Company had a presence in the competition tent, with our sponsored competition showing outstanding work. The quality of the competition entries across the board was impressive, from delicate treen to robust working pieces, each one showing the skill and dedication of the maker. The judging is a very fair double data entry process where everyone can vote and every vote counts!

And then there's the joy of wandering around meeting bodgers. These are dedicated craftspeople from around the country who you can watch at work, learn from and buy pieces to take home. My favourite find this year was an ingenious turned candle holder that fits into a wine bottle.

In the evenings, there's time for a drink, a chat, a song and swapping of stories around the braziers. The location at the historic Avoncroft Museum was perfect and gave the whole event the feeling of stepping back in time with craft echoing all around, bringing life to these bygone buildings.

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## CEREMONY OF THE KEYS

On 7th August 2025, the Turners' Company enjoyed a rare, after-hours visit to the Tower of London for the 700-year-old Ceremony of the Keys. Master's Steward Richard Lucas reports.

Thanks to friends in the Honourable Artillery Company, our evening began with a short tour and a convivial, invitation-only gathering at The Keys pub inside the fortress, already a pinch-me moment before the gates were even locked.

Escorted in by an unusual route due to works on the main gate and Chapel, we skirted the Yeoman Warders' pet cemetery and passed close by Traitors' Gate, with the Thames glinting beyond. That short walk set the tone: everywhere we

So my challenge to fellow members is to visit the Ball in 2026. There are five reasons to put in in your diary:

**Hands-on learning.** Try your hand at turning on a pole lathe, spoon carving, or other green woodworking skills under the guidance of true masters.

**Meet the makers.** This is one of the few times you'll meet so many skilled bodgers in one place, watch them work, and buy from them directly.

**Competition Inspiration.** From beginner pieces to jaw-dropping showstoppers, the competition tent is a showcase of craftsmanship at its best.

**The setting.** Each Ball is held at an historic, often beautiful venue that feels like stepping back in time.

**Community & Camaraderie.** Campfires, conversations, and coffee over wood shavings, you'll leave with new friends and a head full of ideas.

Come for the day or the weekend and support the community keeping heritage turning alive. And if nothing else, come for the bacon butties.

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turned, layers of history pressed close, Norman stone, Tudor intrigue, and Victorian ritual all elbow-to-elbow.

The ravens were very much in evidence, and the Raven Master's dry humour loosened shoulders while our Yeoman Warder guide, immaculately drilled yet wonderfully animated, stitched places and people together in a way that felt like time travel.

Although the Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula was closed that night, stories of its royal burials, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard among them, cast a thoughtful hush. Recent archaeology



within the precincts has also peeled back the centuries: dig down and you touch Tudor then Roman and then Saxon London. Standing on the cobbles, it was easy to feel those strata underfoot.

And then the ceremony itself, the measured tread of boots on stone, the challenge and countersign, the keys raised and the gates secured. It is crisp, brief, and deeply evocative, no cameras allowed! For many of us, details we'd only ever glimpsed on television suddenly made visceral sense in the cool evening air. The professionalism of the Warders and Guards shone through, honed to perfection, yet delivered with crisp precision.

We learned that on only one night in the last 700 years has the ceremony been delayed: during The Blitz. A bomb fell close to the Tower and the Chief Yeoman Warder was blown off his feet but was otherwise unhurt. After dusting himself

off though, the ceremony continued. A letter was sent to the King, advising him that with deepest regret the ceremony had been delayed by 7 minutes. His response? 'Never let it happen again.'

The format worked beautifully. Those who wished arrived early for a drink; after the ceremony some slipped away for trains while others drifted back to the pub. It was flexible, sociable, and perfectly sized. Our group helped fill spare capacity for the HAC on the night, a genuine win-win. Judging by the smiling faces and breathless post-event chatter, the verdict was unanimous: a rare privilege superbly delivered.

Particular thanks go to our HAC contact, Hamish, for opening the door, and to our own Liveryman Mark Turner who made this idea a reality. On this showing, a repeat visit next year would be very welcome, there is more to see, and plenty of appetite to see it.

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## THE TURNERS' COMPANY WELCOMES NEW FREEMEN AT A TRADITIONAL CHINESE DINNER

In a spirit of camaraderie and celebration, the Worshipful Company of Turners gathered on 10th October 2024 at an elegant Chinese restaurant to welcome the latest Freemen into our ancient and esteemed Livery. The evening was marked by warmth, rich conversation, and sharing the opportunities that Freemen have to get the most out of their association with the Company.

The Kirin restaurant is on College Hill in the heart of the City of London. It is a popular destination for lovers of traditional Chinese cuisine and is noted for its flavourful, authentic cooking. The decor in our private dining room was clean and modern, providing a comfortable dining atmosphere ideal for new Freemen to get to know some of the older hands.

The evening's festivities began with a few words of welcome from the Master, Christopher Scott, who noted our pivotal role as custodians of this ancient craft. His words resonated with the group as he emphasised the importance of our role in the City, our charitable activities and how the Company advances the art of turning and fosters a bond of mentorship, creativity, and camaraderie among its members.

Others then shared their thoughts. Past Master John Bridgeman, one of our leading orators, spoke with pride about the history of the Company, sharing many anecdotes. John had

only a few minutes to entertain, which he did admirably, and I am sure whetted the appetite of the Freemen to listen to more of his monologues which we have enjoyed so much over the years. This was followed by what the Master referred to as a double act - Past Master Andrew Neill and Master's Steward Bill Morris speaking about the benefits of being engaged, championing the craft, giving back, and progressing to Livery. Then our gallant Clerk Niall Macnaughton ran through the programme of events for the coming months. Niall may have done the talking but we all know that our Assistant Clerk Becca Baker, who enjoyed the evening with us, does much of the work on events! Finally, yours truly Andy Ewens spoke about the delights to come at Wizardry in Wood 2025.

As the evening came to a close it was clear that our new Freemen will continue the fine traditions of our ancient Company where history, craftsmanship and culture converge, reminding all in attendance how important tradition is and how friendship in the Company sustains it. The new Freemen left the dinner not only feeling welcomed but also inspired, ready to take their place in the long line of men and women who have shaped the Company's prestigious legacy. As it happens, the Company's last Hall was in College Hill and as we wandered back up the hill, we saw the blue plaque marking the location.

Upper Warden Andy Ewens (now Master)

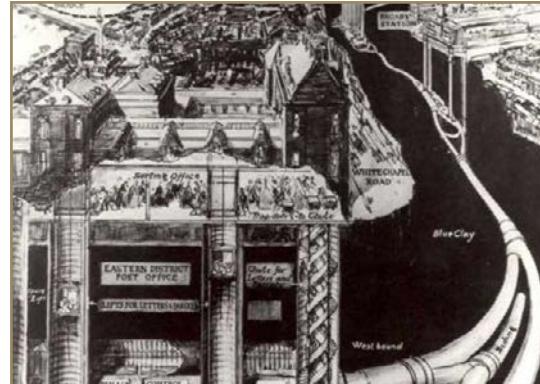
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## A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY: A VISIT TO MAIL RAIL

In October 2024, in a delightful blend of history, engineering marvels, and London nostalgia, the Turners' Company embarked on a fascinating visit to Mail Rail at Mount Pleasant. This hidden gem in London's transport history is a unique underground postal train, once a vital artery for the Royal Mail system, which offers a day of discovery.

The day begins: a full Smithfield Market breakfast and a walk

The day kicked off in true Smithfield style, with a hearty breakfast at the renowned Smiths of Smithfield. With appetites satisfied, the group took a leisurely walk to Mount Pleasant for an exciting journey into the past.



## Mail Rail: an ingenious postal solution

Conceived in the early 20th century, Mail Rail solved a growing postal problem. London's streets were congested and delivering mail efficiently had become a challenge. The idea of an underground railway dedicated solely to mail was proposed as early as 1910, and after years of planning and construction, the Post Office Railway (later known as Mail Rail) officially opened in 1927. Running beneath the city's streets, Mail Rail stretched from Paddington in the west to Whitechapel in the east, covering some of the busiest postal hubs of the era. Its route passed key landmarks like Oxford Street, Saint Paul's Cathedral and Liverpool Street Station, making it an essential part of London's postal infrastructure for nearly 76 years.

### A ride on the Mail Rail

The highlight of the visit was the chance to ride on the smallest, and perhaps least known, underground train in London. It covers part of the original route, which takes visitors through the still-operational Mount Pleasant Sorting Office. The ride on Mail Rail is not only a trip through a tunnel but a journey back in time. There were interactive displays showing how the system of chutes, conveyor belts and signal lights once regulated the flow of mail through this subterranean world. At Liverpool Street Station, for example, postmen would sort the mail on conveyors while keeping an eye on the signal lights, ensuring the smooth transit of letters and parcels across the city.

## Wartime Secrets

Mount Pleasant had a special significance during the First World War. In 1917, even before Mail Rail officially opened, its tunnels were used to store treasures from the British Museum and the National Portrait Gallery, keeping them safe from Zeppelin raids. This was quite a leap given the fact that the area was ironically named 'Mount Pleasant' due to it originally being used as a rubbish tip by medieval Londoners.

### From peak to closure

Mail Rail served London for decades. However, by 2003 changes in postal logistics and the rise of road transport led to its closure. The last train ran in May 2003, marking the end of an era for this subterranean service.

### A visit for all ages

Today, the Postal Museum and Mail Rail offer a perfect outing for families, especially those with young children who enjoy interactive exhibitions. The train ride is a unique experience, a genuine blast from the past that brings to life the story of London's mail and the world of postal engineering. To avoid queues and noisy parties, then a weekday visit is the best option.

For those who couldn't join us, don't miss out on future opportunities to explore London's hidden treasures with the Worshipful Company of Turners. Our events are not just educational but full of fun, great food, and unique experiences—and we'd love to have you with us next time!

Richard Lucas, Master's Steward

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## TURNERS VISIT TO HMS SULTAN

On 25 July 2025 the Company was invited to the Engineers' Passing Out Parade at HMS Sultan in Gosport, continuing the relationship between the Company and the Armed Forces, particularly in engineering disciplines.

The Guest of Honour at the parade was Vice Admiral P Marshall CB CBE, supported by VIP guests from several Livery Companies, professional registration institutes, STEM Ambassadors, local community organisations and educational establishments. The Turners were represented by Col Lex Agathangelou, Court Assistant and Deputy Corps Colonel REME.

The day included a tour of the facilities, the parade itself and lunch afterwards in the Officers' mess. The guests were asked to perform an inspection of the troops on parade after which a drill demonstration was witnessed. Awards were then presented by the Guest of Honour, which included a special 95th birthday award to the HMS Sultan Sentinel Steam Wagon, a traditional steam vehicle that has been restored and is maintained by the establishment.

The invitation to the parade was to support the Company's continued links with the Royal Navy School of Marine Engineering (RNSME) and the Royal Navy Air Engineering and Survival School (RNAESS) both located within HMS Sultan. The two schools, each commanded by a Captain RN, provide all training for Surface, Submarine and Air Engineering engineers and technicians including instruction in gas turbine, electrical and nuclear propulsion systems, hull systems, air frames, air engines and many other related skills. The schools also train personnel from the navies of many foreign and Commonwealth countries.

HMS Sultan is now the Royal Navy's largest, by a third, training establishment in terms of both people and budgets. Their mission is "To deliver the required number of competent and highly motivated technicians and engineers to the Armed Forces". Today, the establishment covers an area of 180 acres with a perimeter of over three miles.



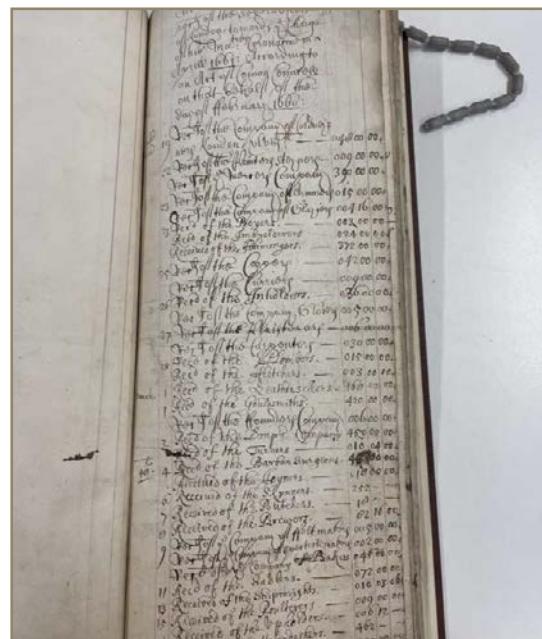


The Master and his consort, Andy and Gerry Ewens, led a memorable Company weekend in September to Cambridge. They secured first class accommodation in the Möller Institute attached to Churchill College and some thirty five of us enjoyed lots of fun, excellent food, educational visits and a chance to practice the ancient craft of pole lathe turning. A splendid dinner at King's College was perhaps the highlight; and a lunch at St Catherine's College brought us close to our shared patron saint whose wheel is on both of our logos. A visit to Cambridge would be incomplete without punting on the Cam, and choral evensong at St Mary's University Church rounded off a wonderful time together.

Christopher Scott

## TURNERS' CONTRIBUTION TO CHARLES II CORONATION IN 1661

Our Deputy Master, Christopher Scott, recently discovered a ledger in the London Archives that lists donations by the Livery Companies towards the cost of the coronation of Charles II in 1661. The image shows that the Turners' Company contributed £10/4/0, which is rather less than some of the wealthier Companies but even so, shows that the Turners did their bit in welcoming back the monarchy after Cromwell's Commonwealth. Livery Companies were largely pro Parliament during the Civil War, and were a major source of funding for the cause. They also controlled the City Militia which was used to defend Parliament's authority. Perhaps Livery Companies felt obliged to dig deep to bring them back into royal favour. We do not know what oath of allegiance was sworn during the Commonwealth by new Freemen in the Turners' Company. To the Crown or to Parliament? More research is needed!



|   |  |           |
|---|--|-----------|
| 2 | Received of the Drap <sup>rs</sup> . Company | 450 00 00 |
| 2 | Received of the Turners                      | 010 04 00 |
| 2 | Received of the Barber Surgeons.             | 40 00 00  |
| 4 | Received of the Coynes.                      | 010 00 00 |
|   | Received of the Skinners.                    | 252 - -   |



### DARREN BREEZE

Darren is a full time professional woodturner, maker, restorer and designer. He has his own gallery, shop and workshops known as Art & Craft in Wood on the historic High Street in Lowestoft, Suffolk. He is well known on the

demonstrator circuit, appearing all over the UK and Europe, and a regular at shows and events. He is on the Register of Professional Turners, serving on their committee. He was awarded a Company bursary and subsequently became a Yeoman and was elected to the Freedom of the Worshipful Company of Turners in September 2024.

Born in Norfolk, Darren spent most of his working life in the construction industry, taking up woodturning as a hobby in 2008. With his passion and natural flair for the craft, he soon started selling his work and now has collectors all over the world. Although he makes a vast array of work, both commissioned and speculative, he is probably best known for his large heraldic wall art pieces. In 2019 he was commissioned by the University of Suffolk to create a Ceremonial Mace, the design of which portrayed various aspects of Suffolk life and its rich history.



### JOHN DILLEY

John is a dedicated woodturner whose studio, Chesil Woodcraft, operates from Clevedon Craft Centre in North Somerset. Based on the name he adopted when living near Dorset's Chesil Beach, the studio embodies his lifelong connection to craft and place. John's journey with woodturning began during his

school days and took on new meaning after a serious workplace accident left him paralysed and battling PTSD. Woodturning became a cornerstone of his physical and psychological recovery, helping him regain strength, resilience, and a sense of accomplishment through years of surgery and rehabilitation.

While working as Operations Manager for a canoe and kayak manufacturer, John pursues his woodturning passion at weekends. In 2017, he was awarded a Company bursary in recognition of his potential. He went on to complete prestigious qualifications, including the Turners' Company Certificate, and then the Diploma, in Turning and the AWGB's Demonstrator & Tutor qualification. He also earned a place on the Register of Professional Turners. Today, John's Chesil Woodcraft studio welcomes visitors at weekends where he showcases his handcrafted creations. He provides demonstrations around the Southwest and offers personalised introductory woodturning tuition, sharing the healing power of the craft.



### NICK FARROW

Nick was born and brought up in Hong Kong. After studying fine art, he worked for three years with a well-known photographic company, learning all aspects of running a photography business. In 1979

he left to start his own studio and over the last 46 years Farrows in Norwich has grown to cover all disciplines within the creative industry. It is now run by his daughter and son, with Nick as Chairman. In 2003 Farrows were awarded HM The Queen's Royal Warrant. This has been renewed four times and is now a Royal Warrant to HM King Charles III. It is not only a quality benchmark but also a sustainability one. In 2010 Nick was elected as a trustee of The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST) a charity giving educational scholarships to crafts people in all fields, and he became Chairman in 2012. In 2017 Nick took up the one-year role of National President of the Royal Warrant Holders Association (RWHA) representing the 600 companies who supply the Royal Households. He was then asked to be Chairman of the RWHA Charity which donates to charitable causes nationally. It has grown enormously becoming a real force for good, nationwide, on behalf of the Royal Warrant Holders. Since 2013 Nick has been Chair of the RWHA Plowden Award for Conservation which makes prestigious awards across all disciplines in the field of conservation.



### COLIN FISHWICK

Growing up in a small mining village in north Durham gave me a wonderful start in life with an enormous degree of independence. This, together with an abundance of energy, curiosity and the freedom to explore my surroundings, gave me a wider view of the world. The Northeast of England had a very narrowing influence at that time. Future employment

seemed to be limited to coal mining, railways, ship building or armed services. None of these appealed to me. Fortunately, a scholarship to Chester-le-Street Grammar School opened a new avenue. I could say I grasped the opportunity with both hands, but the reality was very different. I wasted too much time playing football and other games instead of studying. Thanks to a very perceptive teacher I got my act together in time to make a difference. I studied hard for eight months in year five, passed eight of nine O levels and won the year prize for achievement. I learned several lessons in the process, particularly 'it's never too late to change' and 'hard work does pay'. Being the first from my family to become a student and gaining a Bachelor of Education degree at Matlock College of Education, I embarked on a teaching career reaching acting Assistant Head Teacher just before being made redundant at 41 years old. Looking for other work, I tried a few things including cabinet making but soon realised I could not earn enough to keep my family. Then met professional turner Jimmy Clewes who was a source of inspiration. Early success encouraged me to pursue the craft more seriously, becoming a registered professional turner and thereafter I was introduced to the Worshipful Company of Turners.



### STEVEN GORDON

Steve started woodturning as a small boy in his grandad's shed. He wasn't an enthusiastic pupil at school, but his woodwork skills were recognised by staff. At college, he continued to study woodwork and was introduced to antique restoration. At 17, he became a self-employed professional woodturner,

taking commissions from antique dealers in Buckinghamshire and London. Early in his career he was fortunate to be taken under the wing of master craftsman, Dennis White. Over the years, Steve's work has been seen in many historical and government buildings such as Portcullis House. He receives commissions from the MOD, churches and the automotive, aerospace and yachting sectors, and makes bespoke furniture and kitchens for architects, retailers and for his own clients. He also set up an apprenticeship scheme for youngsters with a talent for woodwork or who need a break in life because of early trauma or a poor school experience. In 2020 during the pandemic, he discussed with his family the work/life balance quandary and realised he needed to take stock. He got back on the lathe and his workshop became his therapeutic space. He has a passion for sharing his skills and decided to do some voluntary work promoting woodturning. He is an advocate for the therapeutic benefits of turning and he now works with mental health services, youth offenders, veterans, and other charities. Steve really enjoys his woodturning clubs and is committee member of the Heart of England Woodturners. He is a tutor and assessor; and is on the Company's Craft Committee, focusing on training. He also belongs to the Association of Woodturners for Great Britain where he has been their Training & Development Officer, and more recently has become the AWGB vice chair.



### TOM McCONNELL

Tom lives in Clapham with his wife and two sons. Weekends are spent around the workbench mending toys, building furniture, or practicing dovetails - usually with his beloved Liverpool FC in the background. Between projects he usually takes to his bike or the kitchen, or the cellar where supply never quite keeps up with demand. Professionally, he works in the city in asset management, is a charity trustee, and a board member of a technology company.



### ANNA SPRATLEY

Anna says she is delighted to become a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Turners and looks forward to becoming involved in supporting the craft. Professionally, she has worked in corporate communications for 25 years, initially supporting

large listed and privately held companies whilst working at Brunswick Group for a decade. After the birth of her children (Oscar, 16 and Linnea, 13) she focused on early-stage businesses, and now works at FieldHouse Associates where she advises founders and investors in the fast growth sector. She says that one of the most rewarding parts of her work is seeing groundbreaking innovation emerge from the lab into real world commercial applications, such as breakthroughs in healthcare and cutting-edge technologies like quantum computing.

Outside of work, Anna has a particular interest in lifelong learning and skills and was a school governor for five years. Now that her children are older, she enjoys regular reading again (mostly fiction and history), as well as yoga and weight training. The family moved to Marlow from London nine years ago and they added two dogs to their household (Poppy and Doris), who they enjoy walking in the Buckinghamshire countryside.



### MIKE WILSON

Mike has always been interested in wood since his school days a long time ago, but things never go as planned and he ended up working in the food industry as a commercial manager/director earning a living, he says, with his brain and mouth hopefully in that order. He is still involved as trustee director of his 14,000-member company pension fund which meets regularly in the City.

Woodworking was a switch off from the daily pressures of the week. A highlight was when he recovered a sunken boat whilst diving off Anglesey, and he raised the boat and started a three-year project to rebuild it. No two pieces of wood are the same in boat.

After visiting a woodturning exhibition at a local club, he bought a lathe and joined the club. His greatest excitement was when he entered a few pieces in the exhibition the following year and someone bought one. He couldn't believe that someone would pay for what he made. Mike spends most days in his workshop overlooking the Snowdon range trying not to make expensive firewood. His wife Christine is a great supporter of his workshop as she says it stops him coming in the house; though when he does, she moans about the sawdust and shavings which aren't good for the carpet.

Mike is Chairman of the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain which has 130 branches and clubs throughout the country and is also a tutor and assessor for the AWGB.



### GINA YOUENS

I believe that you take at least one skill from every experience or job. I have taken curiosity, creativity and the desire to keep learning from mine. I grew up in rural Devon and had the freedom to explore and learn from my surroundings. I had to fill my days in the school holidays with nature as my guide. This is quoted a lot today but was a normal activity for me. After school I was always drawing,

painting and learning how to make toys, a campfire or fashion clothes. This thirst for creativity has stayed with me through life even when I had administrative jobs in a school and at various companies.

After studying calligraphy and art in my spare time, I gained a teaching qualification from the City and Guilds Institution. I used this knowledge to teach workshops in traditional skills: calligraphy, illuminated letters, drawing, painting and sewing at Exeter Cathedral, The Royal Albert Museum Exeter, U3A and at primary schools around the country. I continue to teach in Devon.

I enjoy teaching children and adults and passing on my skills. I believe that making things with our hands is part of our DNA. My job is to inspire and encourage adults and children to learn these skills.

I am currently teaching Lettering in a Men's Shed and will certainly be having a go at woodturning while I'm there. Crafts such as woodturning are very therapeutic and are definitely needed in the fast-moving world which we live in.

### Wizardry in Wood, 2025





## WIZARDRY IN WOOD

Woodturning art and craft takes centre stage in the City

Every four years, the Worshipful Company of Turners opens a window onto the full breadth of woodturning – British, and this year, Irish too. Wizardry in Wood returned this autumn to Plasterers' Hall, drawing around 2,000 visitors across four days and reminding the City of London how deep the craft's well of skill and imagination runs. The praise was warm, the numbers strong, and the atmosphere electric: remarkable for an exhibition delivered almost entirely by volunteers.

### Why this show matters

The Turners' Company is one of the City's oldest livery companies, with roots as a medieval guild and a Royal Charter granted in 1604. Its purpose has barely shifted: to support and celebrate the "art or mysterie" of turning across the craft, the City, and charity. Wizardry in Wood began in 2004 as a one-off to mark the Charter's 400th anniversary; its success made it a quadrennial fixture and the UK's pre-eminent showcase of turned work, historic and contemporary.



### A show of many parts

Visitors moved from the Master's Exhibition, museum-quality contemporary work by leading makers, to a lively marketplace of individual exhibitors, association stands (including the Register of Professional Turners, the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain, the Society of Ornamental Turners and the Association of Pole-lathe & Greenwood Turners), daily demonstrations, and a packed talks programme. Two evening receptions bookended the week, giving the Livery and invited City guests a close look at current practice. It was a particular joy to host the Irish Woodturning Guild and its stunning display, called Turning Turns 40.

Training and Development were prominent this year, with opportunities to meet tutors, explore training opportunities, including the Company's bursary scheme, and watch turning demonstrations. Add to that, curated displays; competitions, the Master's Exhibition and special interest showcases, Plasterers' Hall became an energetic learning space as well as an exhibition.



## The numbers and what they tell us

Ninety-eight competitors submitted 233 entries to this year's competitions. Purchases from competition pieces alone came to £7,790, and total sales recorded across Wizardry in Wood reached £22,460, not including those of the 14 stallholders. For a show designed first to inspire, not as a trade fair, the figures are a useful proxy for health: the audience is engaged, collectors are curious, and new buyers, including collectors, are crossing the threshold.

Feedback mirrored that picture. Visitor surveys praised the range and quality of work, the friendliness of exhibitors and stewards, and the sheer variety on offer from green-wood bowls still singing with tool-marks to refined ornamental turning and sculptural forms.

## Competitions: celebrating skill, honouring friends

Competitions have been part of the Company's DNA for generations and, in Wizardry years, they shine. Alongside established categories, two awards were newly titled to honour much-loved figures in our community. The Nic Somers trophy (an established competition now carrying Nic's name; a way to remember a much loved Past Master who passed away last year) and the Julian Scott competition created for our Yeomen. Both drew strong entries that embodied the ethos of each man: generosity, rigour and delight in the art of turning. (The Yeomen are the Company's cohort of early- and mid-career makers supported through mentoring, visibility and bursaries; they also held a dedicated Yeomen's Day during the show to connect, learn and meet visitors.)

A crowd-pleasing finish: the People's Choice Awards. Visitors voted in their thousands and crowned Carlyn Lindsay as the Master's Exhibition People's Choice for her vivid laminated turning, produced in her North Essex studio; and Geoff Hannis as the Competitions People's Choice for green-wood



Ellen Wheatley and Nick Humphrey from the V&A with their Choice Award, 'Offering Bowl' by Max Bainbridge

## Master's Exhibition: a curator's eye

The theme 'responding to the environment' is based upon the Company's commitment to sustainability and the environment. As in previous years, the V&A Museum sent curators to make a Curators' Choice from the Master's Exhibition. Their 2025 selection was Max Bainbridge for the Offering Bowl - a work that balances carved mass and turned form to powerful effect. Bainbridge, co-founder of Forest + Found and now Somerset-based (born in London), bridges sculpture and turning with pieces cut from fallen trees and finished with an almost geological patience.

## Masters, makers, partners

The Master's Exhibition again displayed the field's range: refined vessels, architectural forms, meticulous ornamental work and bold experiments that stretch the language of the lathe. Association stands and partner groups anchored the wider community, while demonstrations let visitors see cuts, jigs and work-holding up close. That transparency, seeing a tool presented and a shaving fly, remains one of Wizardry's great strengths.



## Master's Exhibition Gallery

**Top row, L-R:** Ammonite, Sally Burnett. Collection of Mills, Louise Hibbert. Elements, Stewart Furini. Eroded Psykter, Barnaby Ash. **Second row L-R:** Fractured Hope, Joey Richardson. Fusion, Mick Hanbury. Harmony in Nature, Margaret Garrard. Mark Sanger, Symbiosis. **Third row L-R:** Mobius, Jason Breach. Mother and Child, Gerry Marlow. Peigne Noirci, Emmet Kane. Reflecting the Future, Maggie Wright. **Bottom row L-R:** Struck Gold, Stuart Mortimer. Trees, Reg Hawthorne. Wizard in wood!, Greg Kent. Woodwind, Seamus Cassidy, photo credit Roland Paschhoff



## Three names to note

### Max Bainbridge

V&A Curators' Choice in the Master's Exhibition. Sculptor and turner; Forest + Found co-founder; Somerset-based; born in London. Piece: Offering Bowl.

### Carlyn Lindsay

People's Choice (Master's Exhibition). Known for laminated turning; works from North Essex/Coggeshall. Piece: Fifteen Millimetres.

### Geoff Hannis

People's Choice (Competitions). Pole-lathe turner; Bristol-based; founder of Tree to Treen. Piece: 'Chandelier'

### What visitors found

If you asked ten visitors what they enjoyed most, you'd get eleven answers. Some came for the technical fireworks, some for the stories told in timber, some to commission a wedding bowl or choose a gift no one else will find. Many left with something practical, a Christmas

present or piece for their collection, and others with a change of heart about what wood can be. That mix of beauty, skill and approachability is why Wizardry works.

### Looking ahead

The Company's purpose is steady, but our programmes evolve. Between Wizardries, we run biennial competitions (WoodTurning Connect), support the Register of Professional Turners, awards and bursaries, and collaborate with associations nationwide. The next Wizardry will be here before we know it. If 2025 is any guide, it will be bigger in imagination, sharper in curation and just as welcoming.

Wizardry in Wood is presented by the Worshipful Company of Turners, a City of London livery company supporting the craft, the City and charity. The exhibition takes place every four years and is organised by volunteers with professional partners.

Ian Adkins, Chair WIW25 Committee and Craft Committee

## The Master's Competition



First Prize  
**Ghenadi Vasiliev**



Second Prize  
**Greg Kent**



Third Prize  
**Rodney Page**

## Open Competition (Felix Levy)



First Prize  
**Alicja Mazur**



Second Prize  
**Ian Ethell**



Third Prize  
**Jason Breach**

## Members Competition (Bert Marsh Plate)



First Prize  
**Masuma Rahim**



Second Prize  
**Christopher Scott**



Third Prize  
**Andy Ewens**

## Certificate Competition (Nic Somers Bowl)



First Prize  
**Jane Parker**



Second Prize  
**Catherine Hunt**



Third Prize  
**Rod Tester**

## Yeomen's Competition (Julian Scott Trophy)



First Prize **Margaret Garrard**



Second Prize **Jason Breach**



Third Prize **Louise Hibbert**

## Lady Gertrude Crawford Ornamental Turning Competition 2025



First Prize  
**Malcolm Arthur Thorpe**



Second Prize  
**Arthur Kingdon**



Third Prize  
**Gerry Marlow**

## The Fred Howe Ornamental Turning Competition 2025



First Prize  
**Jean Claude Charpignon**



Second Prize  
**Arthur Kingdon**



Third Prize  
**Gerry Marlow**

## H E Twentyman Ornamental Turning Competition 2025



First Prize  
**Steven Gordon**

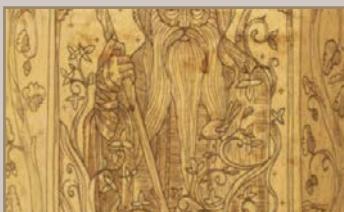


Second Prize  
**Gerry Marlow**



Third Prize  
**Jean Claude Charpignon**

## Pole Lathe Turning Competition



First Prize  
**Nico de Wispelaera**



Second Prize  
**Geoff Hannis**



Third Prize  
**Matt Whittaker**

## AWGB Senior



First Prize  
**Rodney Page**



Second Prize  
**Stephen Madden**



Third Prize  
**Ian Ethell**

## AWGB Junior



First Prize  
**Oliver Secker**

Also commended across the competitions are:

Steven Gordon  
Tom Barker  
Glenn Cornish  
Jason Breach  
David Watson  
Roberto Brambilla,  
Marcel van Berkel  
Nick Jones  
Malcolm Arthur Thorpe

With thanks to Nathan Savory photography Noble Roots,  
Niki Gorick photography and the makers themselves for all the wonderful exhibition photos.

Richard Lucas was elected Master's Steward for 2025/26. His connection to the Company is deeply personal: he became Free and took Livery in 2009, the year his father, Colonel Rob Lucas, served as Master. That family legacy continues to shape his service.

He chaired the Events Committee from 2019 to 2024 throughout the Covid crisis, served on the Communications Committee, and is on the Craft Committee with responsibility for the Shows portfolio, and the Wizardry in Wood committee.

He recently begun his own journey at the pole lathe, starting with turning rolling pins and bowls, and he is grateful to fellow turners for sharing their knowledge. He is keen to encourage new members by matching core turning skills with appropriate technology.

Richard's career is in IT, which began at the dawn of the internet. He started at The Multimedia Corporation, the BBC's former interactive television unit, programming in C and Lingo. In that pioneering environment he delivered interactive CD-ROMs and early digital applications, including the first digital edition of The Spotlight actors' directory. He went on to found businesses delivering presentation graphics and interactive experiences for events, film and online, working on major exhibitions across Europe, the United States and Asia. Highlights include contributing to visual effects and on-set technology for Goldeneye, The Da Vinci Code, United 93 and Hellboy II. During this period, he patented a system for the digital

delivery of content at congresses.

In 2009 Richard became a founding director of Tangent 90. The company helps the life sciences sector share scientific and clinical content with healthcare professionals in a way that is copyright-compliant, auditable and aligned to regulation. As Innovation Director he leads the evolution of platforms such as Trustrack, Resource Centre and SalesPro. He credits the company's culture for its progress: a team that challenges ideas, improves processes and ships better products. He innovates by watching where workflows break down, then builds tools that remove friction. That approach proved its worth during Covid, when consent, compliance and timely content sharing became critical for both treatment and rehabilitation.

Today Richard focuses on Artificial Intelligence applications for life sciences and business innovation, automating processes to help teams, and supporting initiatives such as Veracit.ai that bring transparency to citations within AI outputs.

Outside work, Richard is a trustee of Thames Valley Positive Support, a charity supporting people living with HIV, including those in later life. Richard is married to Lindsey, who holds a BA in Business Enterprise and recently founded GivingBagsOfHope.com, a community-focused initiative. Their daughters are Sophie, who works in new product development at Huel, and Elisabeth, a town planner at Black Box Planning. A keen skier, Richard also enjoys participating in Livery sport, from the Inter-Livery Shoot to Real Tennis.



John was born and raised in Mumbai. He graduated with a BSc in computer science, later earning a Masters in software engineering from Queen Mary, University of London. After graduating, he began his career as a software programmer at Citibank.

He worked for various companies as a Senior Technical Consultant and after ten years of experience, he established his own consultancy in 2010, specialising in Enterprise Content Management and Data Migration. The company serves clients across the UK and Europe in the banking, energy, and education sectors.

John has been a member of the Coleman Street Ward Club in the City of London since 2013, where is currently a committee member, merchandise officer, and webmaster. He is also a member of the City Livery Club.

John has a keen interest in cricket. He is a level one cricket coach and an official ECB umpire. He is a member of Kenley Cricket Club, where he volunteers as a junior coach and umpires league matches. When he is not playing cricket, he enjoys target and clay pigeon shooting at NRA Bisley and other clubs. He also trains in various martial arts and is currently practicing taekwondo with his children.

He is married to Uzma, who transitioned from a career in human resources to teaching at a local secondary school, a role she finds more fulfilling than her previous one. They have three sons: Harris, Ryan, and Idris.

John became a Freeman in 2015 and a Liveryman in 2016. He served on the Communications Committee from 2018 to 2019 and is now a member of the Events Committee. He looks forward to making further contributions to the Company in the years to come.

Colonel Lex Agathangelou was born in London and joined the Army at 16 in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME). After ten years regular service he left and transferred to the Army Reserve where he still serves today as the Corps Colonel for the REME Reserves. In his civilian career he is a Chartered Engineer specialising in telecommunications, currently working for Network Rail. Lex joined the Livery in 2016 and became a member of the Court in 2025. He still lives in London with his wife Monique and his two children, Sienna and Ashton.



**COLONEL LEX AGATHANGELOU**  
**NEW COURT ASSISTANT**



**JOHN KHAN,**  
**NEW COURT ASSISTANT**

**The REV'D CANON DR ALISON JOYCE**

Alison Joyce was born in Greater London and grew up in Sussex. After studying classics at university, she trained for ordination. Following a curacy in rural Oxfordshire, she lectured in Christian Ethics at Queen's College (now The Queen's Foundation), Birmingham. She was Associate Priest at St Anne's Church, Moseley for eight years, before joining the staff of Birmingham Cathedral. In 2005 she became Vicar of Edgbaston Old Church, combining this with the roles of Chaplain to Elmhurst School for Dance (the feeder school for Birmingham Royal Ballet), and Chaplaincy work at Birmingham University. She was appointed to her present post, Rector of St Bride's, Fleet Street, the Journalists' Church, in 2014.

Alison's book, *Richard Hooker and Anglican Moral Theology*, was published by OUP in 2012, and she contributes columns to a range of national newspapers. In 2019 she was one of 100 women to be granted the Freedom of the City of London in an initiative marking the centenary of women being granted the vote in this country. She has two adult daughters and two very large Maine Coon cats. She plays the cello rather badly and is rumoured to have once been the lead guitarist in a punk band.

Alison has had the privilege of being Honorary Chaplain to the Turners' Company since 2014, of which she is immensely proud!

**ANNE SOMERS**

Anne was raised in Bromley, Kent and educated at Bromley High School for Girls. Her first ambition was to become a sound technician in the theatre, and she spent two years working as a lighting technician on shows such as *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*; but it was hard to make progress, so she decided on a career change.

In the late 1970s she went into publishing, joining a privately owned business producing trade journals for the Art and Antiques industry. This was subsequently bought in 1994 by the Daily Mail Group, and Anne was made Commercial Director. In 2008 Anne led a management buyout and became the CEO of ATG that same year. From a publishing company, Anne transformed ATG into a tech business, launching TheSaleroom.com, a website that pioneered live bidding at auction via the internet. She acquired similar companies in the USA and Europe, turning ATG into a global business, before retiring from the Board in 2020.

In 1995, through their career paths, she met Nic Somers and has been involved with wood ever since. Anne supported Nic as Mistress Turner during his year as Master (2016-17) and is delighted to now be a Liveryman in her own right. Anne is also on the Court of the Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars, a Liveryman of Stationers and Newspaper Makers and runs several organisations that serve the Livery.

**WE ALSO WELCOME TO THE LIVERY**

Michael Johnson, Morris Lockwood, Ken McIntosh, Lee Winter-Dean

## THE ENDURING LEGACIES OF JOHN CALVERT, MASTER OF THE TURNERS' COMPANY IN 1819

Canadian academic Kristina Guiguet PhD reports on the fascinating life of a true craftsman. It was a pleasure to welcome Kristina on a visit to the Turners' Company in 2024.

Artistic ivory turner John Calvert (1764-1822) rose from grinding poverty to prosperity, achieving prominence as the Master of the Worshipful Company of Turners, and lasting fame as an innovative designer of chess sets. According to chess expert Jon Crumiller, John and his wife Dorothy Calvert were “possibly the most influential manufacturers of chess sets” of their time. Their sets remain highly collectible today. In 2007, Christie’s sold an ivory Calvert chess set for £3,500.

John Calvert’s career shows turning as a pathway into an exciting world of artistry and international travel, as he expanded into importing ivory. This article outlines his background, his turning career, his participation in the Worshipful Company of Turners, and his legacies. Remarkably, after he died at age 58, his widow Dorothy kept the business running until her death, partly by building astonishing client networks. While at least two of their sons learned to turn, none made turning their life’s work. John Calvert’s career and contributions to the Worshipful Company of Turners show us the turning profession as a springboard to a delightful life and rising social standing for a family, with glimpses of women turners thriving in a man’s world.

The sources for this article include Court Minutes of the Worshipful Company of Turners, period newspapers and publications, tax records, a 1928 account by his granddaughter, Lily Calvert, and several histories, including Roland Champness, *The Worshipful Company Turners*, revised by Brian Burnett (2004) and Jon Crumiller (2016) “The Collector: 189 Fleet St., an important address in chess history.” My thanks to the Calvert family, distinguished turner and Past Master Nicholas Edwards, and Jon Crumiller for sharing sources and discussion. Unattributed quotations are from newspapers.

## Background and family

John Calvert was born in the grim, mountainous hamlet of Low Row, Yorkshire, to Solomon Calvert (1722-1794) and Mary Alderson Calvert (1727-1772), stout Methodists who heard John Wesley himself preach while they helped him found the local Methodist church.

Both of John’s parents were impoverished lead miners who risked early death from lung disease. Few escaped this bleak prospect, but in 1773, after his wife and youngest son died, Solomon got out, moving to the London Charterhouse residence for the indigent where he later died. Wesley, who had been educated at the Charterhouse School, may have helped him. How else could Solomon have found and entered the Charterhouse, so far away?

## Turning Career

Solomon also brought John to London, and in 1778 apprenticed him to ivory turner Hannah Porter, of nearby Long Lane. Porter, the widow of turner Richard Porter, trained at least five apprentices. She was so successful that within 13 years she had moved to 446 Strand, “one of the best situations for any trade requiring show and publicity.” In her will, she left the property and a respectable £400 to family – and £10 to John Calvert. But her greater legacy was Calvert’s training in artistic ivory turning.

In 1786, his apprenticeship done, Calvert gained the freedom of the Company and of the City, giving him the right to trade in London’s Square Mile. He immediately married Hannah’s daughter Mary. Three years later, in 1789, he established his double-fronted shop and six-bedroom residence at 189 Fleet Street, “fitted up with every convenience for carrying on an extensive fancy … business.” The window displays drew customers into a parlour-style salesroom where, some years later, a woman shop assistant handled walk-in sales. From the beginning, Calvert also had a “substantial building … for manufacturing purposes” in the adjoining Bull’s Head Court, for which the tax was initially paid by “John Calvert late master’s charity £26.” That was Hannah Porter giving her son-in-law a handsome start. He never moved.

Mary died nine years later, in 1795. Eleven years after that, in 1806, John married Dorothy Bradberry (1780-1840), daughter of an Independent minister, with whom he had six children. They may have met through her brother, Gervas Bradberry, who was a turner by 1805 and later joined the Turners' Company Court of Assistants.

Trade directories show Calvert expanding his business from "Ivory Turner and Toy-man" in 1790, to "Turner and Warehouseman" in 1797, then in 1806 to "Turner and Dealer in Ivory." Calvert family lore, supported by a cache of his passports, says he became a major ivory importer, travelling to Paris and possibly to South Africa. He certainly knew the Cape Town brokerage firm of Borradaile, Thompson and Pillans: his widow Dorothy sent two sons there for two-year stints to gain business experience.

Typical of the time, Calvert's apprentices lived with him for seven years, while he trained but also fed and clothed them. So masters usually charged an apprenticeship premium, but not always. In the early days, Calvert found apprentices useful enough that he charged nothing or only £4 charity money for his first three (1791, 1792, 1800). He taught them well. One of them, Thomas Pais, who had learned carving as well as turning, could later charge a hefty £70 premium. Calvert himself charged an eye-watering £100 for his last known apprentice, George Merrifield.

Chess sets were Calvert's great artistic achievement. According to Crumiller, Calvert developed new patterns for chess sets, notably a fancy gallery style for kings and queens (Figure 1: John Calvert Gallery Style Chess Set, ca. 1790. Photograph courtesy Jon Crumiller) that influenced later chess set makers - including George Merrifield.

Crumiller also traces stylistic continuities through knight-heads, suggesting that a 1790s set by John Calvert influenced knight-heads produced after his death by Dorothy Calvert's workshop (Figure 2: Calvert Knight-heads ca. 1790 (left) and mid-1820s. Photograph courtesy Jon Crumiller).

Given this timing, it was Hannah Porter, his teacher, who sparked the chain of stylistic development from Calvert to Merriweather, continued by Dorothy Calvert. (Dorothy identified herself as an ivory turner, but may not have turned.)

The Calverts offered their chess clients complete chess kits. In 1810, John sold "Sett solid Ivory Chess men in Mahogany box with lock, Mahogany board, chess book, and chess board" for £5.7.0, to St. Paul's Cathedral. In 1820, the Calverts were promoting Mrs. and Miss Sarratt as chess teachers for ladies. John himself taught their children chess.



Dorothy Calvert, networker extraordinaire, became friends with Princess Sophia, daughter of George III and Queen Charlotte. It was surely Princess Sophia who arranged for D. Calvert and Son to be "By Royal Appointment, Ivory Turners to their Royal Highnesses the Duchess of Kent, Princess Victoria, and Princess Sophia," and who had John Calvert junior appointed their "Bowyer and Fletcher" while recreational archery was in

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vogue in the 1830s. The appointments ended after Victoria became Queen.

King George III was an amateur turning enthusiast. In 1833, long after his death, Princess Sophia entrusted Dorothy Calvert with selling the turning equipment “made for and used by” her father. It included “a large and handsome ROSE ENGINE, in mahogany frame, with oval and eccentric chuck, slide-rest, box of tools; also a mahogany Turning Lathe, with screw motion, tools, &c.; and a Machine of curious and elaborate construction, for ornamenting ivory, wood, or metal, in complete repair; and an imperfect Profile Machine, for copying a profile, either larger or smaller ....” Bracing for curious visitors, the astute Dorothy limited viewings to “between the hours of ten and three.”

John Calvert made and sold a range of goods in ivory, boxwood, ebony, rosewood, and tortoise-shell, including ivory sheets for painting, and games such as Pope-Joan and backgammon. When Dorothy took over the business, she added cheaper items including combs and coloured horn shavings for stoves. She also retailed goffering irons for pressing frills, and an ominous-sounding machine to cure stuttering. She and her son John were business partners until her death, only briefly interrupted by his short-lived luxurious retail shop in Pall Mall. After she died, John left turning to sing professionally. (Figure 3: John Calvert junior 1837 Trade Card. Photograph © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge)

### Calvert at the Turners’ Company

John Calvert left the Turners’ Company as he had found it: professional, charitable, and financially respectable, if a little dull. He had to “go on” the Livery to be eligible to join the Court of Assistants, the Company’s governing body, but joining meant paying fees. Calvert resisted until he was well established, declining invitations to join in 1789 and 1796. He was serious about the Company from his first recorded appearance on the Court in 1813, attending regularly, serving as an auditor three times (1813, 1814, 1820), and Renter Warden twice (1815, 1816). In 1817, busy as “a large ivory turner” with four young children, he paid a £6 fine to decline becoming Upper Warden, and finally served as Master in 1819. His last recorded appearance was at the Quarter

Court of October 1821, four months before he died in January 1822. The press marked his passing; the Court last mentions him in October 1822, when replacing him with John Carter.

The Company was in the doldrums during his time, but Calvert helped to tidy up minor administrative issues and encourage participation. For example, Court attendance was often too low to do business, so as Renter Warden in 1816, Calvert seconded a pragmatic motion by Abraham Young to pay those who did attend. Alas, attendance remained patchy. That year, he was also on a committee to determine whether the Company had acted properly in selling its Hall 50 years before, to answer a solicitor fussing about a pending resale of the property.

The Company usually balanced its books, but under Calvert as Master in 1820, with revenue of £215.18.2, there was a modest deficit of £7.1.9. Nevertheless, they distributed £1.11 from the Poor Box to five “poor widows,” about the same amount as the previous year’s £1.14.6.

It’s an educated guess, but a Calvert kindness may explain the curious case of Margaret Bowen, a tavernkeeper made free of the Company and the City, by redemption in 1813. Bowen was Calvert’s neighbour; her Crown Tavern backed onto Bull’s Head Court where he had his workshop. As a member of the Court of Assistants that year, he might well have arranged the required nominations and Court approval for her freedom.

While many turners routinely apprenticed their own sons, Calvert’s were too young when he died. Neither Dorothy nor their children appear in the Company records of apprenticeships or charity.

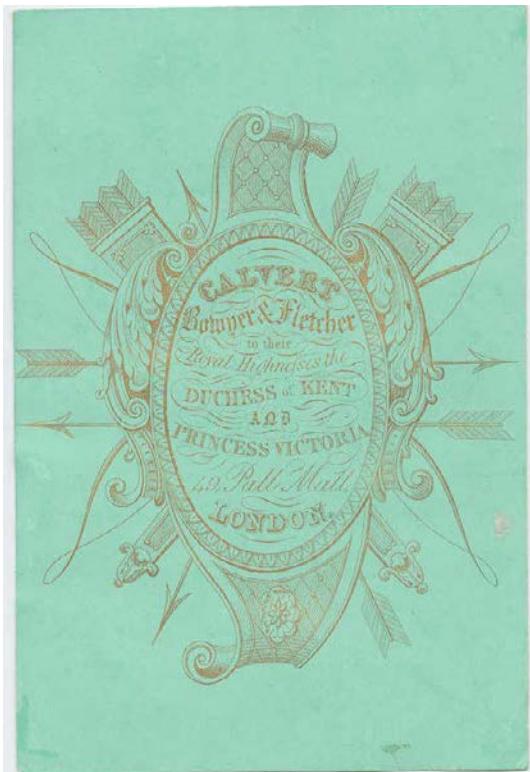
### Legacies

In 1778, penniless, probably ill, but fueled by faith and imagination, Solomon Calvert had whisked John Calvert far away from the confines of rural lead mining to the metropolis of London and the chance to turn ivory. John seized the chance with gusto.

After a brilliant career and travelling the world, John Calvert left an impressive estate of £4,400 in 4% consols (worth about £250,000 today), the

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leasehold of 189 Fleet Street, rentable for £120 in 1840, and the freehold of 2 Bull's Head Court. It was ample to enable Dorothy to move her sons out of trade and into professions. While John lived, the children had been baptized in Independent chapels, but after his death, Dorothy rebaptized them all in the Church of England, essential for university and some careers.



Two of their six children died young. Dorothy educated the four survivors at grammar school, then sent two to Cape Town for business training. Two sons went on to Cambridge: Christopher became a barrister at the Middle Temple Law Society, and William a Minor Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral. John junior turned ivory, but as soon as Dorothy died, he became a professional musician. These three were devoted to the Church of England, William as priest, Christopher studying divinity at Oxford while practising law, and John junior as the first choir master for the Temple Church of London.

John and Dorothy gave their children the confidence to explore new paths and see the world. In mid-life, son Christopher suddenly gave

up a fine legal career to move to New Zealand on the staff of a new Bishop designate. Edward stayed in Africa, becoming Harbour Master of Port Elizabeth. The Reverend William sang a little, wrote extremely long religious poems, and ran many charities. John junior ultimately left music to roam the Empire first as a church architect, then as a mineral prospector in India.

Two sons inherited Calvert's artistic talent. Son John drew Indian temples for his 1871 book, *Kulu*: its beauties, antiquities and silver mines, and applied the engineering eye needed for fancy turning to designing cathedrals in Jamaica and South Africa. The Reverend William Calvert painted frescos inside his London church; his son Lionel Delapierre Calvert became a professional sculptor.

John Calvert passed on the key elements of his successful ivory turning career: artistic ability, solid skills, business acumen, and the confident risk-taking needed for international importing. His career took fire with his innovative chess sets, but women turners made it possible: Hannah Porter fostering his artistry and giving him a solid financial start; and Dorothy Calvert providing effective networking and management support. He had come a long way from the lead mines. The life and legacies of artistic ivory turner John Calvert were fully worthy of a Master of the Worshipful Company of Turners.

Thank you to Kristina Guiguet for this article

Liveryman Helen Wells interviews Freeman and Company Gold Medal winner Stuart King.

It is my privilege to be in conversation with Stuart King - artist, craftsman, turner par excellence - but also craft historian, photojournalist, and life member of the Society of Ornamental Turners and of the Association of Pole-Lathe and Green Woodworkers. He is a man of many talents and rich interests, some chippings of which he shares with us as he takes us through his journey of a life lived in company with wood.



**Helen:** Stuart, can you take us back to the very start of your career, the acorn of the great oak of your experience?

**Stuart:** I attended the local village school but, struggling with formal learning, I left without qualifications at the age of 15 and started work in one of the many furniture factories in High Wycombe, the centre of furniture making for over 200 years. There I trained in marquetry which was going out of fashion, so was an increasingly rare skill. We had two marquetry businesses in the town, one started by a German émigré in 1846, supplying the furniture trade. This linked in with the development of both the railways and of the great shipping lines where there was a call for inlaid panels. If you think of the Orient Express and all the decorative internal coachwork you have the idea. This was drying up by the First World War, but every ship launched on the Clyde had at least one panel in the captain's cabin, so craftsmen were still needed not least for repairs and restoration. Unlike most of the furniture making, which when I joined involved operating a machine, I was lucky to learn a genuine and specialised craft. This came to the fore again in later life when, in addition to other things, I spent a good twenty years restoring antique furniture. So my marquetry training was key.

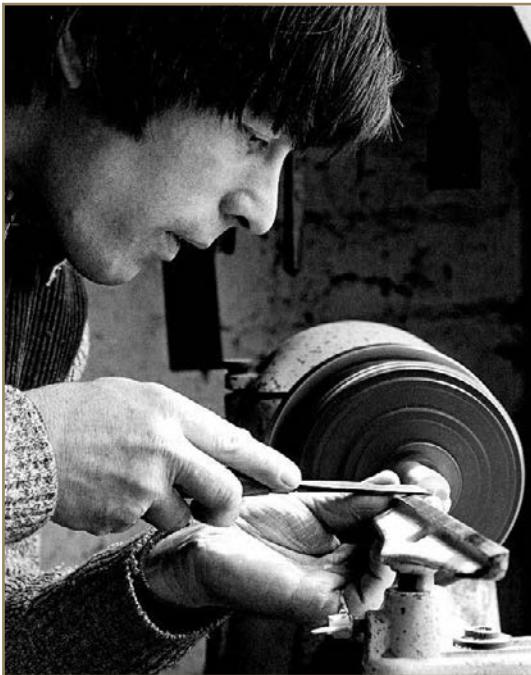
**Helen:** You must have found it quite a challenge going straight from a school desk to the world of work?

**Stuart:** You could put it that way! I just hated the factory environment, the people, the man-banter, the limited conversation. I really didn't like most of the people and they used language that I'd never come across, straight out of school as I was. So I couldn't wait to leave, but I had to stick with it as it was a training. This was important as my dyslexia had made school difficult and as I said, I had left without formal qualifications. It would be different today when these things are more understood. Back then, all I could do was work hard at the practical skills. What I was interested in was High Wycombe's history of chair making - Windsor chairs - and particularly the chair bodgers who worked in the woods turning green beech into tens of thousands, even millions of chair legs for the rapidly expanding industry. That fascinated me so I began researching and visiting these independent workers who were using foot operated lathes and hand tools. That began my journalism and historical recording as I wanted to discover all I could, about not just the process, but the social history too, before it was lost. The last three bodgers retired in 1959 so it was a dying craft. I bought myself a good quality tape recorder and set about recording conversations over tea and biscuits in workshops, sheds, and front rooms - wherever I could secure an introduction to a retired craftsman. That also began my collection of tools because if they wanted to sell off tools, I'd buy them, so they were preserved. They also shared photographs and documents like accounts books in addition to their personal stories and from this I built an archive and an extensive collection of tools, all of which still need a permanent home!

In the early 1980s, I also became aware of the Chesham woodware industry. I started going into those factories too and taking pictures, but when I learned that the last firm was closing, the owner allowed me to keep a watching brief on the bonfire so I could salvage whatever I liked! It cost me because he was a wily owner and wouldn't let things go for nothing. I was also able to collect artefacts from around the factory walls and under the benches. In the end, I had amassed a huge collection and spent six

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months or so interviewing retired workers. I then collaborated with the Chiltern Open Air Museum who had restored an 1880s former chair factory, and it seemed an appropriate location for what, I think, is a unique collection and a window into Chesham's long woodworking history.



**Helen:** Where did your skills and interests lead you as a young craftsman?

**Stuart:** Well, as I said I couldn't wait to leave the factory environment. Ironically, the firm I was working for went bust after a couple of years, so I took a job in a small village chair making factory in Winchmore Hill. There, I continued veneering. I loved working in that wonderful little weatherboarded ramshackle workshop where there were old boys making chairs exactly as they were made 120 years ago. When this firm sadly shut, I took my veneering skills to Richard Graefe's as a veneer matcher. Wanting to get married and put money down for a mortgage drove the next stage and ultimately, I became self-employed in 1974. Everyone expected that I'd be back soon enough, but I had been building a business in restoring antique furniture in my spare time and found that I already had a demand for my miniature chairs.



**Helen (as Stuart takes from the windowsill the most perfectly proportioned and exquisitely crafted miniature Windsor chair):** Stuart, that chair is simply beautiful! I had no idea that you made miniature furniture as well!



**Stuart:** Ah! By the time I was 18 I was giving slideshows and talks to the local WI on the history of the Windsor chair amongst other topics. To illustrate what I was describing, I made some miniatures which could be passed around as I was talking. I had no idea at the start that this would lead to another aspect of my career, but it did, as it built into a business. People loved the little chairs and commissioned them, so I found myself sending the Windsor chair around the world! Margaret Thatcher asked for one, the Queen too, as well as Princess Anne... the resulting publicity led to a television appearance in 1974 on The Generation Game. I demonstrated assembling a Windsor chair and then the contestants had to do the same... you can still see it on my YouTube channel. Looking back, it's interesting how one thing leads to another and a fresh and unexpected direction emerges.



**Helen:** Well, the young lad who started out learning marquetry is now an entrepreneur in his own right! What else lay in store for you?

**Stuart:** Crossroads! I've had plenty of those in my time but one that was life-changing was being awarded a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship specifically to research and record wooden folk art. It was the most amazing opportunity. This was in 1991 and I travelled throughout Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. Romania, particularly, was a fascinating country where in the north I found that time seemed to have stood still. Life there was still very much as it would have been in mediaeval times. This chimed with all my historical interests - vernacular architecture, farming, how people made a living and the role that crafts, tools, and artefacts played in daily life. They were still ploughing fields with oxen...

**Helen:** Just as you would see in the margins of mediaeval manuscripts giving the labours of the months?

**Stuart:** Exactly! Open fields, strip farming systems and villagers working the land. The village houses were all made of wood as that was the readily available material. It was amazing! That trip changed my life – and my outlook on life.

**Helen:** This was clearly a most important time for you. An epiphany of sorts?

**Stuart:** Well yes, because the Fellowship gave me the freedom and the means for research. In practical terms, it paid the mortgage! But it was

so much more than that. Remember, this is all before the convenience of the internet! Also, politically, these countries were just emerging from communism, so it wasn't as simple as just picking up a phone and booking, even without language barriers. No, what meant so much was that I was given logistical support - accommodation, food as well as a driver and interpreter - which freed me for the research. Food could be an issue as there were still shortages, but it was all part of the experience. The driver and interpreter found me a great disappointment because they thought they would be taking me to all their big cities and to their museums. Instead, they were driving me into the countryside, through to remote villages and stopping whenever I found something interesting- a cooper say, or a wheelwright. And I'll never forget the incredible painted monasteries. In Bulgaria, I met someone who had connections with Romany culture, and they introduced me to two villages. The communist regime had resulted in enforced settlement, so each village had its individual ethos and traditions. One group, the 'Koshnitchari', were basket makers and while the men weaved, the women harvested. The others, the 'Lingurai', were spoon makers. I will always remember my visit coinciding with one of their big celebrations for which they had crafted a special five-foot spoon for stirring a huge cauldron. This was so new and fascinating and there I was recording it all! It was life changing in the sense of personal opportunity, but also in that it broadened my respect for crafts and the people who pursued them in their daily life.

**Helen:** If you had to encapsulate what inspires you as a researcher as well as craftsman, what would you say?

**Stuart:** I've always been fundamentally moved by four things: why things are made, how things are made, who are the makers, and what materials are used. I mean, thinking about it, going back to the Chilterns, the chairs were of beech because it's in the local woodlands and it's a superb material for that purpose. Hence the area is famous for chair and furniture making. It all comes together. And that's what you notice too about regional architecture and crafts: they have a link to the landscape and the people living in it.

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**Helen:** You seem to be not only a student but master of many crafts including writing and lecturing!

**Stuart:** I spent a good twenty years in the '80s and '90s as a photojournalist. I wrote about the countryside, traditional woodwork including turning for a range of country and craft magazines - probably over 100 articles. I also experimented with poetry as that was another interest. But I was serious about my wood craft. My first one-man show was in 1974, the same year that I packed in the factory day job. Demonstrating the traditional pole lathe of the chair bodgers was more to my liking. I had been lucky enough to acquire all the parts of an original lathe and people were interested because pole lathes were largely unknown, operated as they were on site in woodlands. From this it was a step to being invited to demonstrate at bigger woodworking shows - Alexandra Palace and Wembley. By this time, I had also made a good start on my chairmaking collection. I remember filling the town hall at High Wycombe and giving tours to students and school children, again in 1974. I couldn't afford to promote myself by advertising, so I seized every opportunity that came my way including features in magazines and recommendations. Once you get known you get invitations to travel abroad to demonstrate and lecture. I once enjoyed ten days in Hong Kong all for two demonstrations and two lectures! And then there was an invitation to South Africa just because someone had read my articles. That was an amazing four-week experience because I was turning new and unusual woods as I demonstrated. And we even had a safari thrown in!

**Helen:** And how did the connection with the Turners' Company come about?

**Stuart:** Well, that was just before the first Wizardry in Wood in 2004. The Company was looking for a central focus to what would be a fantastic exhibition of turning. I was invited to one of the early meetings because of my research on lathes and mentioned that in 1480, Leonardo da Vinci sketched a treadle lathe, but I was certain no one had actually built it. So I constructed the da Vinci lathe and demonstrated it as the centrepiece of the inaugural Wizardry in Wood. I have been involved in every exhibition since and in 2025 my lecture subject will be "A Bodger's Eye View". But

to finish my answer to your question, it was after that first exhibition that I was made Freeman by Presentation, as I am today.



**Helen:** During our conversation, you've ranged over a wide time frame of personal experience and research. What conclusions would you draw about the health of crafts and craftsmanship today?

**Stuart:** I have to say I have reservations. Looking back at the big craft shows and demonstrations of the '80s and '90s, you really got true craftsmanship. Exhibitors were vetted and you had to be skilled at what you did. I'm not sure it's quite the same today - a sign of the times perhaps and the internet culture. What I mean is, you find people jumping on the band wagon, not really trained, putting out videos which, to put it plainly, could be dangerous if a novice were using them to educate themselves. I've even seen people demonstrating turning with the wrong tools! I also think that while there are many true and talented craftsmen out there, there are others whose approach is to make it up as they go along and they aren't ready to invest the time or the learning. It takes time and patience to learn a skill. I've been doing it all my life and am still learning. This is where organisations such as the Turners' Company have excelled in promoting their ancient craft, both in professional training and ensuring our craft has the public exposure it richly deserves.



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**Helen:** Stuart, I know this is a personal question but what would you say are the qualities that have driven your life, varied career, and your success in so many fields?

**Stuart:** Well, I've always been lucky. People say you make your own luck and that's largely true, but you also have to recognise it when it comes knocking. For example, I had an invitation to Pasadena in 1982 all on the back of a cheese and pickle sandwich! At the time, I was making miniature furniture. Picture this - my workshop is at the bottom of the garden, and it's pouring with rain. An American comes to visit out of the blue and he is really interested so he stays. We get soaked walking back to the house and all I have to offer him is coffee and a cheese sandwich with Branston pickle – a humble enough lunch. But he loves it and before I know where I am, I have an invitation to demonstrate and put on an exhibition in Pasadena and that spawns the making of dolls house furniture for an American collectors' market. So, that's what I mean - life is funny and it throws up these chance moments, but it's the taking of them which counts.

Luck apart, I've always had an enquiring mind. I might not have had a conventional education, but I took opportunities. For example, after the working day, I went to evening classes on local history, architecture and antique restoration. Next thing you know, I'm being asked to lead my own classes, not because I was a trained teacher, but because I had built the knowledge and enthusiasm. And I'm still speaking to audiences and learners now. My biggest audience was over 1,000 in Los Angeles. Not bad for the boy who left school at 14 unable to add up or spell!

And I suppose that takes me back to just before I left school when an education officer came round to talk to us all about our futures. I said I'd like to be a naturalist, or a film cameraman, or maybe an archaeologist but because I didn't have any qualifications those seemed only far-fetched dreams. So off I went to the factory and learned marquetry and veneering. But looking back, I've in fact achieved all of those in later life: wildlife photography, short films about the countryside and since retiring I've been involved with practical archaeology and local history.

**Helen:** ... and so much else besides! Thank you Stuart for sharing your rich and fascinating experiences: from a young journeyman trainee to an experienced craftsman in your own right; from a recorder of crafts and craftsmen to a researcher and journalist; from practitioner to lecturer; from the furniture factories of the old High Wycombe to the jet setting traveller; yours has truly been a life with craftsmanship at its heart and with roots firmly planted in those murmurous beechwoods of the Chiltern Hills where the shadows reach long and the glades remember the echoes of the lathe.



## PETER BRADWICK'S MBE AND BILL MORRIS'S EMMY



Liveryman and Company Gold Medal winner Peter Bradwick was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours for services to the craft of woodturning. Congratulations! Peter is on the Craft Committee, co-ordinating and moderating the Company's Certificate and Diploma in Turning.

I attended an Investiture at Windsor Castle held by The Princess Royal on the 22nd July 2025. What an incredible day! Her Royal Highness Princess Anne was wonderful, and although there were a large number of other recipients on the day, she had specific knowledge of my work, congratulating me saying that I had achieved what the City and Guilds had not, referring to establishing a national woodturning qualification. This achievement would not have been possible without the support of The Worshipful Company of Turners, and in particular the unwavering support and encouragement of Master Emeritus Peter Ellis and Liveryman Reg Hawthorne, and of course the constant support of my wife Susan.

The memory of the day at Windsor Castle will stay with me and my family for ever. I feel very honoured and privileged to have received the MBE on behalf of woodturning from Her Royal Highness Princess Anne.

At an informal dinner in New York City in December 2024, I was presented with my second Emmy award by Patty Power, Senior Vice President of Operations at CBS. This was for my work as Technical Supervisor for the Super-Bowl 58 in Las Vegas. My first Emmy was for my role as Technical Supervisor for Super-Bowl 50 in Atlanta.

These awards are in the great scheme of things wholly unimportant; however, I must admit that occasionally it is nice to be recognised for a job well done, especially for the second time, as it proves to oneself that perhaps the first time wasn't just a fluke! My mantlepiece is now at last symmetrical.

Bill Morris, Renter Warden



## FIRST COUPLE IN HISTORY TO BE AWARDED QVRM AND KVRM



Anita Newcourt, wife of Liveryman Bill O'Leary, was privileged to be awarded the King's Volunteer Reserve Medal (KVRM) by HM The King at an investiture in Buckingham Palace recently. This was in recognition for her service in the Army Reserve spanning 42 years.

Bill O'Leary was himself awarded the same medal, then named the Queen's Volunteer Reserve Medal (QVRM) by HM The Queen back in 2015.

The QVRM and now the KVRM is a meritorious award given to members of the Volunteer Reserve Forces, for devotion to duty and exemplary service over a period of at least ten years that has been of particular value and an outstanding example to others. In its 26 years, the medal has only been awarded to some 300 reservists from across the three services with Bill and Anita being the first 'his and her' couple to be graciously honoured with this award.



Delivered by the Deputy Master, Nigel A J H Luson  
Master, and Members of this Ancient Company,

Allow me to open in somewhat unusual fashion  
by wishing you not just Good Evening, but  
Buenas Noches for reasons that will become  
clear very shortly.

On this special evening of Turners dining in  
fellowship, we celebrate the life of Richard  
Gardner Williams, born 159 years ago in the  
Victorian days of Empire. Past sentiments have  
gradually provided us with fascinating aspects  
of his life and times so that year by year we  
can add a little more colour and depth to our  
understanding of a relatively undistinguished, but  
extraordinarily generous liveryman.

I have chosen to focus on a chapter of his  
life that resonates above others with me  
on account of my own working life and  
experiences. This has to do with his time  
travelling on business in South America,  
particularly in his case, Argentina. I want to try  
to evoke over a few minutes something of what  
he would have encountered and felt, the strange  
and brave new world that he, a little-travelled  
man from Birkenhead, would have stepped into  
in the earliest days of the 20th century.

We know that he joined the company CC  
Wakefield & Co at its founding in 1899. Williams  
was 33 years of age, and had already worked  
under the owner Charles Wakefield at another  
company for several years. Wakefield was an  
engineer who specialised in oil-based lubricants,  
and after developing and successfully patenting  
something called the 'Wakefield Lubricator for  
Steam Engines' he set up his own company in  
London, bringing our man Williams with him.  
That Wakefield was a successful businessman is  
not in doubt – he was to become Lord Mayor  
of London and his company's most successful  
product was a motor lubricant called Castrol –  
which of course enjoyed worldwide success and  
eventually became the name of the company.

Now in 1899 the railway industry was already  
70 years old, but it was in a period of massive  
expansion all around the world, and particularly  
in the New World countries of North and

South America. British-forged steel was making  
the tracks, British manufacturers were building  
locomotives and carriages, and British capital was  
financing the boom.

Enter Argentina, at this time the most advanced  
and receptive country in the New World for  
railway investment. Receptive because of the  
strongly European flavour of its population,  
born out of Spanish Empire but for decades  
independent and a favoured destination for  
waves of European immigrants, who brought  
culture, business and an appetite for expansion  
in all areas. Geographically the 10th largest  
country in the world, it was the perfect seedbed  
for railways to provide the transport needed to  
harness the country's economic potential – and  
Victorian Britain's railway entrepreneurs had  
quite literally piled in.

In 1900 Argentina had 21 rail companies, 16  
founded with British capital, each with lines and  
locomotives spreading out from a Buenos Aires  
hub. 15,000 miles of track were about to double  
to 30,000; 17,000 engines, trucks, carriages and  
other vehicles would multiply in proportion.

It was into this maelstrom of industrial  
development that Richard Gardner Williams  
stepped in 1901. His Chairman and mentor  
Wakefield needed someone he could trust to  
secure the place of his lubricant and lubricating  
equipment in this burgeoning market. But with a  
travel time by boat of 25 days each way to and  
from London, this was a veritable expedition to  
the other end of the world.

Can we imagine what – let's now call him  
Richard – would have felt leaving behind all that  
he knew in England – this is a little-travelled man,  
used to commuting in 3-piece suit and derby hat  
to work in London, a London of choking smog  
and Jack the Ripper, contemporaneous with the  
Thames freezing over in winter, leaving his wife  
Edith behind him and quite alone – and arriving  
in the magnificent Latin hubbub of Buenos Aires?

Let me try to paint you a picture – one that  
may surprise you, as I suspect it surely surprised  
Richard. Buenos Aires in 1900 was one of the  
most elegant cities in the world. Although its

history started as a Spanish colony, between 1850 and 1900 there was an explosion of city building in the neo-classical style deliberately imitating some of the best in the world. European architects were commissioned to build streets modelled on the boulevards of Paris, grand open public squares hailed a democratic society and exquisite public and private palacios mirrored Paris or Rome. The famous Casa Rosada, the presidential palace, was just finished in 1898, the Cathedral had just been rebuilt and the Art Nouveau style was just making its mark.

The city was the restaurant and entertainment capital of South America, loud, buzzing and multi-cultural. What on earth would Richard have made of it? You might well think that he was out of his depth, assailed by Spanish-speaking hoteliers and officials, Italian dockers and restauranteurs – but actually no, because that would be to forget how anglophilic Argentina also was at this time. There was an enclave of some 25,000 British residents, mostly in Buenos Aires, alongside a formidable array of British assets, not just in railways, but in port installations, meat-packing plants, grain elevators and, very crucially, in finance and banking.

Richard would have been met and welcomed by his firm's local representatives, installed in a comfortable hotel, doubtless taken out to the Hurlingham Club – yes a branch had been opened 15 years previously. He was just too early to see the grand opening of Harrods department store in the centre of BA – a store which still exists today, albeit, like the railways, now under local ownership. Feted perhaps above his station as the representative of an important supplier for those railway companies, whose directors in London included or were to include the likes of some familiar names – Frederick Smithers, Felix Fighiera, Charles Buckler and others – all then or later to become liverymen of the Turners' Company.

By 1910, which was the centenary year of Argentine independence, Argentina had the 7th largest rail network in the world, spurring its economy to become the 10th largest. As the network expanded, it is probable that Richard went further as well, in all likelihood being one of the first to make the crossing by rail of the

Andes from BA to Antofagasta in Chile, and from there up the Pacific coast to Bolivia. He would have been just one of hundreds of British merchants selling every imaginable manufactured good, buying up agricultural produce, and leaving two indelible footprints behind.



One was financial services, which continues to be the City of London's calling card today, the same that took me to South America early in my banking career, though in my case it was Brazil, and the year 1985. But I too remember a similar shock of encountering a massively boisterous economy after the longest flight of my life, but soon settling down to make a rewarding living from seeds planted many years earlier.

I was working for the successor bank of the Bank of London and South America, which like the railways had spread British banking expertise and capital to every country in that continent, including of course, Argentina. Richard would undoubtedly have been living off a letter of credit at that bank established by Wakefields in London in his favour, and as his trips were repeated throughout the 1900 – 1910 period, quite possibly he opened a bank account of his own there too.

When I alluded to two footprints, I could have been referring to the abundance of English style houses that sprang up in neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires with names like Banfield, Temperley or Munro (all still there), the Anglican churches, English-language newspapers, or the custom of taking afternoon tea; but no, there was another far more penetrating and which made a huge impact

on local culture – which was of course football, which the British brought, played, set up a league, and was rapidly adopted as Argentina's own. So the Argentina that Richard experienced would have been a cultural shock at first, but very rapidly a shock made comfortable, welcoming and reassuring by an established and still thriving British presence in a city arguably approaching the apogée of its existence. Despite all this, I wonder if we can read something more of his character from how his life and career moved on in his 40's and 50's. As far as we know, he did not, like many did, ever contemplate settling and starting a new life abroad; quite possibly he never mastered speaking Spanish besides the pleasantries and the lengthy absences would gradually have lost their appeal.

But that his work was appreciated by Charles Wakefield and the railway 'set' I have mentioned is not in doubt. In 1913 it was the same Felix Fighiera, Master of the day, who proposed him for the Turners Company, and he attended his first Company functions. He was fairly clearly being drawn into a London set that he obviously decided was more to his character. Although travel times to South America more than halved with the advent of modern ships, the allure would have been fading, the time away from home life too stressful, for any other possible life to have been an option. Equally, it is more than likely that the very successful Wakefield company would by this time have set up its own office and staff in Buenos Aires accumulating many of what had been Richard's duties.

As for Gardner Williams himself, records have him back in London and employed at Wakefields up until 1913, at that time striking out in his own right to set up the Lea Valley Engineering Company, which tried to profit from the emerging technology of commercial refrigeration – with early, but it has to be said, not enduring success. That particular business stalled 10 years later, and finally folded in 1926, by which time Richard was 60 years old, and he died 5 years later. He was, we may surmise, a textbook engineer rather than entrepreneur; someone whom the exotic brilliance of Argentina would have stirred but not shaken from his mould, and his life ended up tracing a path which was true to his fundamental nature.

I can only imagine, however, as someone who also spent a good part of his working life in South America, how memories of what he encountered would have stayed with Richard after his travels had ceased. How the colour and vivacity of Buenos Aires must have left their impression on this quiet man, how the gifts and memorabilia he would have brought back from each trip would have filled corners of his London home, what personal memories of a single man's travels to South America's cities and vast countryside he would have harboured – and perhaps sadly, been unable to share.

Quite clearly, in the fullness of time he did find it within himself to share the personal estate that he accumulated with the fellowship he came to know and value in the Turners' Company, and for that he earns and deserves every minute of sentiment that we make in his memory at this time every year.

Fellow Turners, please join me in toasting, by the title that local custom would have given him in Argentina 125 years ago, el Señor Ingeniero Richard Gardner Williams – In Piam Memoriam.

Nigel A J H Luson





# Much Ado About Lathing

**AWGB Festival of Woodturning  
Stratford-Upon-Avon  
10th - 11th October 2026**

Steven Gordon RPT, Vice Chairman of the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain, and a Freeman of the Turners' Company, reports on a new chapter for the AWGB's seminar.

It falls to me to oversee the organisation of our seminar, now the 'Festival of Woodturning'. As the turning world ever evolves, so does our beloved Festival of Woodturning. This year, the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain (AWGB) is delighted that our biannual festival will be in an exciting new setting: the historic town of Stratford-upon-Avon. Mark your calendars! It's at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on the 10th and 11th of October 2026.

For years, the festival has been a cornerstone of the woodturning calendar, drawing together turners, enthusiasts, and artisans from all corners of the world. Yet, as with every good turned piece of work, improvement is always possible, bringing a fresh sheen to time-honoured grain. Our move to Stratford-upon-Avon as an inviting new venue is just such an enhancement.

A Festival woven into the fabric of Stratford-upon-Avon

Few places in Britain can rival Stratford's charm and cultural richness. The birthplace of William Shakespeare, the town offers a picturesque

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setting and a wealth of attractions. With the Crowne Plaza as our hub, our festival is even more enticing, especially for partners and families. While turners immerse themselves in the artistry and technique of woodturning, companions can stroll along the banks of the Avon, explore the enchanting shops, or take in a performance at the world-renowned theatres.

The decision to relocate was made with an eye to inclusivity. We wanted to create an event that is as rewarding for partners as it is for practitioners. Stratford's bustling town centre, delightful cafés, and historic sites offer more than just a backdrop. The town has welcomed us with open arms and plans to extend invitations to visit local crafts people and shows.

#### Looking to our future

As we prepare for the 2026 festival, we do so with a spirit of innovation. The AWGB always encourages creativity, and this event is no exception. Among the most exciting developments is a renewed focus on our Young Turners' Programme. The future of our craft depends on inspiring and nurturing the next generation, and this festival will shine a spotlight on their talent. Expect engaging demonstrations, competitions, hands-on sessions, and infectious enthusiasm.

Equally important is our relationships with our fellow organisations, and I offer an invitation to them to represent themselves at the festival. After all we're all branches on the same tree! The festival will have collaborative events, joint workshops, and the chance to learn from each other's unique approaches to the craft.

We've also worked with our friends the Irish Woodturners' Guild to schedule our festival,

so you can visit both Stratford and hop over to Ireland and attend their fantastic seminar.

#### Celebration, Connection, and Craft

Of course, the heart of the festival remains unchanged: the joy of turning, the warmth of fellowship, and the celebration of skill. Attendees can look forward to a dazzling array of demonstrations by some of the world's finest turners, a marketplace bustling with tools and timber, and the unique camaraderie that our gathering always inspires.

At the same time, we're embracing new ideas. Whether you're a seasoned turner, a curious beginner, or a partner exploring the treasures of Stratford, this festival promises something memorable for all.

I am pleased that the festival falls in the year of our current President, Joey Richardson's time as Master of the Company, subject to election; so we'll be celebrating this at the Festival and making it a memorable part of her year of office. Joey has been and remains a steadfast advocate of the AWGB and we look forward to offering her our support.

#### An Invitation

On behalf of the AWGB and our organising committee, I extend a heartfelt invitation to all readers of *The Turner* magazine and members of the Worshipful Company of Turners. Join us at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon on the 10th and 11th of October 2026 as we turn a new chapter in the story of British woodturning. Let's celebrate our craft, our connections, and our community in a setting as inspiring as the work we create.



### GRAHAM GEORGE EUSTACE OBE, DL.

Graham died peacefully at home in Stow Bedon, Norfolk, on 13 January 2025, aged 86.

Graham's ancestry is deeply embedded in London. His parents moved to Enfield from Tollington Park in the 1930s, and Graham was born and bred there. He was one of the first pupils to attend Chace Secondary Modern School for Boys (formed following the 1944 Education Act). He readily admitted that he was not particularly academic and that he wanted to go there because the holidays were longer. At one point, he drove a moped and enjoyed a spell as a 'mod'. Then again, he was made Head Boy in his final year, so presumably he was doing something right! After leaving school, Graham joined his family's greengrocer business and later opened a café before moving into property development. He continued to live in Enfield, where he married and raised his three daughters, Sally, Helen and Claire.

Graham devoted much of his long life to public service: he served as a councillor in Enfield for more than 40 years, acting as Mayor twice, as Leader of Enfield Council from 1988 to 1994, and later as Deputy Lieutenant for Enfield. He served on numerous other committees in the London area, including several linked to London's waterways. This work inspired him in some rather surprising ways. For instance, there was the time he launched his tiny boat from the Isle of Dogs onto a very choppy River Thames to visit one of his daughters in Greenwich!

Graham cherished London's rich heritage and traditions, and he was immensely proud and honoured to be awarded the Freedom of the City of London in 1991 and equally so when he was admitted to the Turners' Company in 2004. In 2002, Graham took on the duties of a Wandsman of St Paul's Cathedral with characteristic enthusiasm and reverence. After he retired to Norfolk in 2006, he enjoyed making regular trips back to his beloved London, often by train into Liverpool Street and staying overnight at his club. It was here, too, in 1996, that Graham celebrated with friends and family after receiving his OBE.

Transport and history were two of Graham's lifelong passions and ones that he enjoyed sharing with his four grandchildren, Eleanor, Charlie, Milo and Scarlett. He put his vast knowledge to good use during his time as a volunteer guide at the London Transport Museum in what was, by then, a rather 'trendy' Covent Garden. He must have felt the passage of time keenly since, as a young man, he had made many early morning trips to the old Covent Garden market to purchase fruit and vegetables for the family business in Enfield.

Graham is dearly missed. However, his family is incredibly proud of the positive contributions he made during his long and interesting life, and they are deeply grateful to the Turners' Company for their invitation to share this glimpse into his life story.

Dr Claire Eustance

## NICK AGAR, WOODTURNING ARTIST

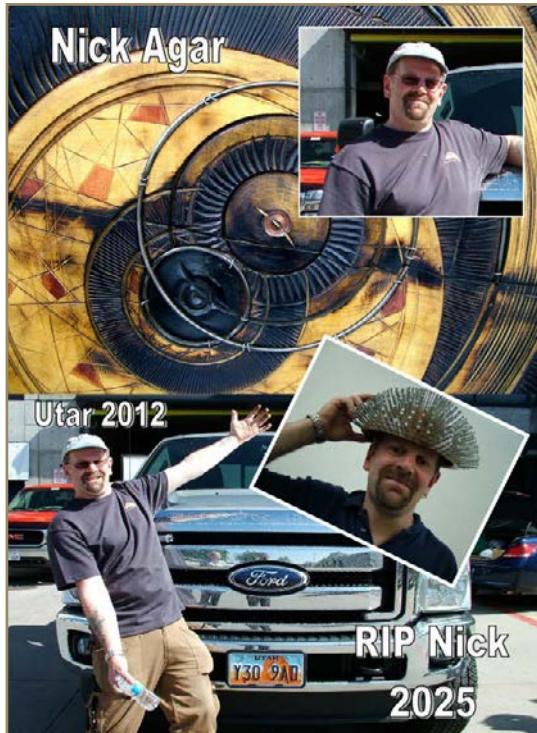
In May 2025 we lost one of the world's leading turners in Liveryman Nick Agar. He was a one off and a legend of our time. A naturally gifted woodturner and artist at the top of his craft, he produced unique art to the highest standard.

I worked with Nick from the early 1990's when he said to me, 'where have you been Dad?' The name stuck and we became very close friends. He was fun and a joy to be with - like a son to Linda and me.

His enthusiasm for the craft was infectious and inspiring. At that time, he was producing large, sculpted wall hangings which showed great knowledge of wood selection and impressive turning and carving. I told him that he had a great eye for technique and design, but he brushed my comments aside with a smile. Later he was excited to let me know that the then Prince Charles had purchased two of his wall hangings.

He was a star in the making, and his tooling skills became instinctive which allowed him to concentrate on design and development. It was fun for Linda and me to have him visit, and we also worked abroad together. He was an instant hit wherever he went.

On his first visit to the Utah Symposium, Dale Nish (a godfather of woodturning) had no hesitation in inviting Nick back to the US. His presentations drew large crowds who recognised they were witnessing a master at work. It was no surprise when he eventually ended up working permanently in the US. We missed him and hoped that we would see him retire back to the UK. His design was totally unique. His mind was mechanically creative, and he would produce tools and equipment to deliver his decorative ideas. His creativity



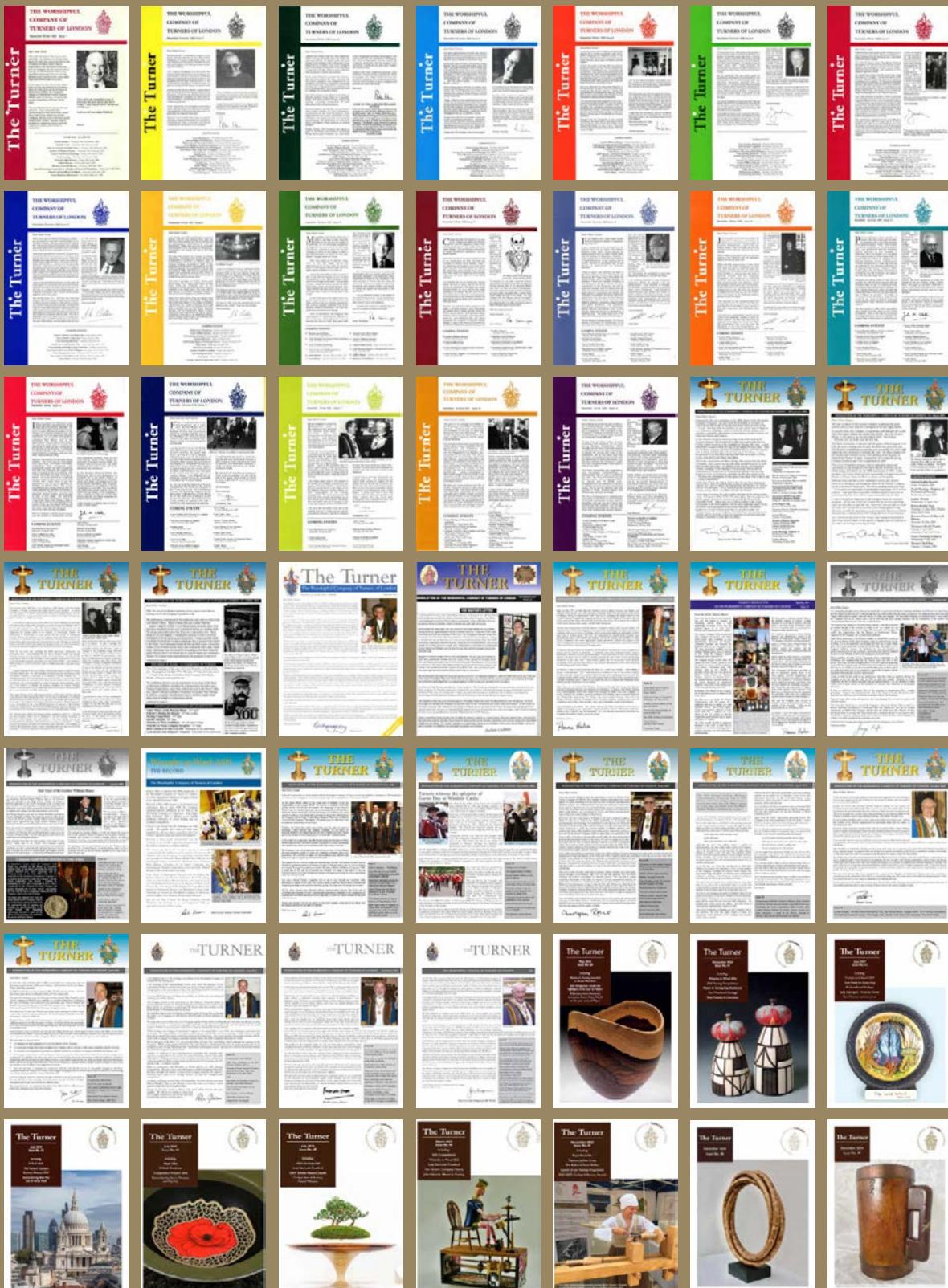
was a gift, and the woodturning world will never witness similar work. Turners around the world admired Nick's creativity and many will strive to copy his techniques.

Shortly before he died, he visited London where he presented the Company with a stunning piece of his work which is displayed in pride of place in the office. On his way home, he visited me saying 'I've a lot more to GIVE'. I agreed and told him he had given so, so much and will still be GIVING when we are both gone. Nick was only 59 years old. We will never see his like again. We have lost a great friend, artist and innovator. He leaves behind a loving family and they and the woodturning world are broken hearted. God bless Nick.

Liveryman Stuart Mortimer, Master in Turning.

**WE REMEMBER MEMBERS OF THE COMPANY  
WHO PASSED AWAY IN 2024 / 25**

Nicholas Agar, Livery 2017, Robert Coleman, Livery 1993, Graham Eustance, Livery 2004, Sir Robert Reid, Livery 1986, Nicholas Somers, Master 2016, Mike Windsor, Livery 2016



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