



THE WYRE DRAWER

EDITION 29

AUTUMN 2015



The magnificent setting of the lakeborne stage at Bregenz

The Master's Weekend - 'Turandot' on the lake

Four and twenty Liverymen, and their wives, partners and friends gathered expectantly outside our hotel near the city of Bregenz, on the Austrian shore of Lake Constance.

The Master's Weekend began with a performance of Turandot, the famous Puccini opera, performed on a spectacular stage built on the shore of the lake, which provided a further dramatic backdrop to the impressive set.

After a drinks reception the party then had a behind the scenes tour of the set. A four-course dinner in the Opera House restaurant overlooking the stage preceded the performance of Turandot, which was further dramatised by a heavy downpour, drenching the performers but not our gathering in the best seats in the house.

As the rain continued, the second part of the performance was transferred indoors to the adjoining Concert Hall with its superb acoustics where the performers continued to sing their hearts out, and stayed dry! A truly wonderful evening.

The next day we decamped, by coach, to the medieval German city of Lindau just across the Lake, for sightseeing, shopping and lunch, before returning to Bregenz by boat. In the evening after a coach journey through the Bregenz forest and numerous hairpin bends we arrived for dinner at the ancient Gasthof Hirschen restaurant high in the hills overlooking the city and the lake, where our party, spread over five long tables, enjoyed lively debate and superb food in delightful

EVENTS DIARY

14 November
Lord Mayor's Show

4 December
Livery Banquet
Mansion House

8 December
Carol Service
St James Garlickhythe
and Supper

11 January 2016
Court, Common Hall &
Installation Lunch
Skinner's Hall

1 March 2016
Exhibition & Reception
Goldsmith's Hall

surroundings.

Jeremy Ray



The audience gathers for the performance of Puccini's 'Turandot'



The Clerk in excellent company the next day

Charity Abseil

I once climbed up to the 30ft high diving board at a swimming pool and wished I had not. The abseiling platform at the top of the Arcelor Mittal Orbit structure at the Olympic Park is 260 feet above ground and was the venue for the Master's sponsored abseil to raise money for the North London hospice and Trinity hospice, Clapham Common.

I have survived on the high seas in a violent storm force 11 and jumped out of a perfectly serviceable RAF aircraft, but nothing prepared me for the terror of inching my way backwards over the lip of the abseiling platform. My ears received instructions to put my foot here, my hand there but my brain thought otherwise! However the Master and I overcame our fears and completed the descent with even a moment to admire the view of St Paul's, framed between two City blocks. After overcoming the fear of dangling freestyle from

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the rope, the Master then had to deal with the rope becoming twisted with the safety line, caused by the Master spinning round during the descent. The result of the two lines becoming tangled meant that for the last 10 metres the Master's descent was at a snail's pace and for a time he had visions of being stuck there for ever.



Words of encouragement floated up from the abyss where Helen Powell, Pat Hobday, Julius Oberegger and Nick Sillitoe waited and we were further motivated by the thought of the generous sponsorship received from Liverymen totalling £4500 – Liverymen who quite rightly feared for the sanity of the Master and Clerk!

The Clerk



Visit to Freemasons Hall

A group of men and women from the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers gathered talking avidly in the grand entrance area of Freemasons Hall at 11am on Wednesday 6th May. Freemasons Hall is a huge Art Deco building with 19 different levels, a floor area of 403,650 sq. ft. and a tower 70 ft. high.

We started the conducted tour of the premier parts of the building from the first floor, with our tour guide Stephen explaining in vivid detail what was being seen. Firstly we entered the splendour of the Grand Officers Robing Room where Stephen described the pictures of members of the Royal Family as Masons, and then we went via the visually impressive Processional Corridor to the WW1 Memorial which is the heart of the building.

Stephen explained that the building was originally called the Peace Memorial Building, as it was paid for by subscription by Masons as a memorial to all

those who had died in the First World War. Many Masons died in WW1, three of whom were half of the renowned “Six VC’s before Breakfast”. The six landed with others before breakfast on West Beach Gallipoli and were met with withering fire. The six battled on with their task to scale the cliff under heavy fire, taking and holding their objective. The example of the six was “unequalled by others” and they were awarded the VC following a ballot.

The GSWD group then entered the Grand Temple via a stunning pair of bronze doors, each weighing one and a quarter tons. The Grand Temple is a huge room located in the centre of the building, perfectly quiet though in the middle of London. Stephen described the room and told us in detail about Freemasonry and its central tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Relief is the old fashioned name for Charity, and he explained that charitable giving by Freemasons was the second largest in Britain, only surpassed by the National Lottery. The current campaign in London was to raise £2.5 million in the next couple of years for a second Air Ambulance.

During a question and answer session Robin House, the Clerk, asked about women in Freemasonry and Stephen confirmed that women did practise Freemasonry but there were no women’s lodges at Freemasons’ Hall.

Liveryman Roger Carter then took the group on a private tour of Lodge Rooms and other areas that were not normally seen by the general public. The group were particularly fascinated by Lodge Room 10 which resembled an Indian Temple. Roger explained about the use of the room and commented that it had been used in the film “Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy” to represent a space ship control room. We all then walked the short distance to enjoy a fine three course lunch with wine at Kingsway Hall Hotel afterwards.

Roger Carter



Some of the group in Lodge Room 10

The Court Dinner

What used to be called The Court Ladies Dinner has had its name changed to simply The Court Dinner, due to the fact that there are now two ladies on the Court. With 42 attending, it was an intimate evening at Innholders’ Hall, with a superb dinner cooked by our friend the Michelin star chef Herbert Burger. Champagne and musical entertainment by students from the Guildhall School of Music were arranged by the Master.



The gift to Court members’ Ladies and their Consorts was a framed cartoon painted by Jeremy Swan,



depicting the evening. In the Master’s speech, he complimented the ladies and consorts. My brave maiden speech (which was not vetted by the Master or

Clerk!) seemed to be well received and drew some laughter around the room. The evening finished with Senior Past Mistress Sheila Constantinidi thanking the Master for a wonderful evening; it all seemed to be over far too quickly.

Helen Powell

Gold & Silver Wyre Embroidery

Since moving to Skinners’ Hall in January 2012, the Livery has enjoyed the privilege of being able to show many of its Treasures in the large display cabinet situated behind the Top Table in the Dining Hall for all too see. This has not been possible in the previous Halls the Company has used. Surprisingly this covers a period of some 100 years. Another feature of moving to Skinners was that we were able for the first time to store our Treasures in the Hall we now use. The cleaning, display arrangement and subsequent replacing in the storage room on the occasion of a Court Function, requires a significant effort by the Company Stewards, The Beadle, The Clerk and Assistant Clerk and Past Master Ken Blundell.

Whilst the cabinet contains all the usual display of silver one might expect, at the top and centre is a

framed Embroidery, mainly in Gold and Silver Wyre. My interest was firstly drawn to the description of the tapestry having been executed to celebrate the Tri-centenary of the Company in 1923; a puzzle at first glance, as our present Royal Charter dates from 1693.



However, it is easy to forget that our first Royal Charter was granted by King James I in 1623 but not initially ratified by Parliament, largely because the Goldsmiths' Company quite understandably did not wish to lose hegemony over part of its trade and privileges.

A visit by Liverymen Liz Elvin (former Principal of the Royal School of Needlework), Roger Carter (Steward) and me, was arranged to allow Liz to examine and photograph the Embroidery to record the detail of the work. The first thing that became apparent, was an engraved brass plate let into the bottom of the frame. This records that:

“ This piece of Gold and Silver Embroidery represents the Art and Craft of the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawer, in its several branches. The Gold and Silver used were drawn from Gold Bar down to a fineness varying from 800 yards to 1400 yards to the ounce troy. These with the embroidery and lace were produced by Craftsmen Members of the Court of Assistants of the Worshipful Company and presented by them through R. Stafford Charles Esq. F.S.I. Master 1923, the Craftsmen, George Benton, Arthur Rochester Brown, Arthur William Smith, Stephen Simpson, Clarence Digby Stillwell “.

Following the visit, Liz produced a preliminary report for the Clerk, indicating that the cost of reproducing the Embroidery would be considerable and very complicated indeed. We concluded that not only does this Embroidery represent the five differing branches of the Trade and Craft but also includes examples of all the metals and materials used in the differing branches. It appears to be the only example of work in existence that shows all of our Trade and Craft in one comprehensive work and thus must be one of the most valuable artefacts the Company owns. Next time you attend a Livery Function at Skinners' Hall spare a moment to look at the Embroidery!

Vernon Knapper

July Dinner - Stories and Music

On 6th July 165 Liverymen, their ladies and guests gathered on the sunny upper terrace of Skinner's Hall. We were to dine and be entertained by a raconteur and an aspiring young bass-baritone.

Third Warden, John Walsham, first introduced and welcomed our principal guests, the Prime Wardens of the Goldsmiths and the Basketmakers, and the Master Pewterer and the Master Playing Card Maker, as well as the Chief Executive of the Royal School of Needlework and Prizewinner, Laura Baverstock, (pictured right) who was presented with her prize for gold work by The Master.



Also Jewellery Award Prizewinners Nan Nan Liu, Hazel Thorn and Karen Donovan. (pictured below)



From our services affiliates he welcomed Flt. Lieut. Mark Bowdon of the RAF Queen's Colour Squadron.

Three strands of the Livery's support of the arts, the Royal School of Needlework and the Jewellery Award, were completed by our Guildhall School of Music Bursary Student, David Ireland, (right) who sang superbly for us after dinner. He was accompanied by Edward Whitehead.



Guest Speaker, Mr Jeremy Swan, former TV producer, painter and raconteur then regaled us with stories and anecdotes

involving a film set in Dublin with Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor and untold film making chaos, as well as tales from behind



the scenes at the BBC's famous Television Centre in London, spiced by pithy comments from Sybil Thorndike.

The Master responded and thanked him for a very entertaining and colourful speech. The Master then reviewed, at the halfway point of his year, achievements thus far, including the sponsored abseil down the Olympic Park tower, and looked ahead to the Master's Weekend in Austria at the end of July.

The evening was rounded off by a much enjoyed glass of madeira.

Jeremy Ray

October Dinner

The October Livery Dinner took place on 5 October in the splendid Barber-Surgeons' Hall near the Barbican. The Master, Michael Powell, hosted 130 Liverymen, guests and Service affiliated personnel, who enjoyed an evening of fine food, excellent speeches and good company.

The 4th Warden Malcolm Craig proposed a toast to the guests, and introduced the newly clothed Liverymen, James Turnbull, Henry Hobson and Ben Hayler (seen right)

The principal speaker was Captain Ian McNaight, Deputy Master of Trinity House and the last Captain of the



Cunard liner Queen Elizabeth II, who entertained everyone with stories from his wide-ranging seafaring days. At the earlier Court meeting, Liveryman Catherine Carr had been invested as a Company Steward, and Liveryman Anneliese Edgcumbe, daughter of Past Master John Edgcumbe, was unanimously elected as a new Court Assistant from January 2016. Past Master Emeritus James Walker presented the Walker Cup for golf to Club Captain Assistant Cynthia Fowler.

Nick Sillitoe

Royal Ballet School

Getting tickets to attend the end of year performance at the Royal Opera House this summer was very much a lottery. With demand so dramatically increasing over the last few years the Box Office suggested they could have filled the Theatre several times over.

Happily those lucky enough to attend were not disappointed. For sheer exuberance, energy, ability, and precision, this was another memorable presentation. With offerings ranging from exotic Temple dancers in La Bayadere, to an emotive pas de deux beautifully interpreted to the evocative and wistful strains of "Chants d'Auvergne", and a witty Sechs Tanze offering, we were all once again captured by the range of talent on display. Former Alumnus Liam Scarlett took time from his current role as the "Royal Ballet artist in residence" to choreograph a piece for the younger students who accepted the challenge with relish. Indeed each successive performance was applauded with much appreciation to climax as always with the "Grand Defile", bringing on stage all the students in one final display of precision and talent.



*Royal Ballet School winners with the Master and Bill McConnell
Photo by Brian Slater*

Their standing ovation was richly deserved.

Once again our Master was kindly invited to present our Livery prize at the School Leavers' Ceremony. This year he had the pleasure to award the prize shared between a pair of graduating students. Seen in the photo above, they were Miss Brooke Ray who takes up her first role with the Birmingham Royal Ballet, and Mr Gareth Haw who travels to Germany to take his place with the Dresden Ballet Company. We wish them both every success with their future careers

Bill MacConnol

Visit to Apsley House

Our Master Michael Powell had determined that we should mark the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo by a visit to Apsley House, the Duke of Wellington's London home. Thus, on September 9th, a group of liverymen and their partners were ushered into No1 London (a resounding address by any standards!), for a private visit.

One of our greatest heroes, Arthur Wellesley, had fought the French in India, Spain and Portugal; his final and most decisive encounter awaited him in Belgium. Ten years after the Battle of Trafalgar, where Admiral Lord Nelson fought, and died, but established the Royal Navy's undisputed mastery of the seas, Wellington (with some timely help from the Prussians under the command of General Blucher) fought and finally defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. Acknowledging his military service to Britain, the Government endowed the Duke with a financial award which allowed him to buy Apsley House.

The Curators showed us an absolute treasure-house of art, porcelain and furniture, every piece with its own story to tell. Standing in the main stairwell is Canova's statue of Napoleon, originally commissioned by Napoleon, in the classical Greek format of David; subsequently, after



Napoleon's final defeat and banishment to St. Helena, the Prince Regent gave this fine statue to Wellington. It was pointed out that Wellington and Napoleon shared many parallel traits; though the red-coated Wellington was a monarchist and Napoleon a revolutionary they were, for instance, both very much 'ladies' men'!

There were many personal tales of Wellington, not least how despite being a popular hero and later Prime Minister, he was nonetheless beaten to the hand of his favourite lady by his elder brother - the erstwhile Governor of India and by all accounts a mean and miserable man. Wellington was very upset by this, but no doubt found solace elsewhere.

As we toured the fine rooms all the main characters of the day were on display from William Pitt the Younger to Marshal Soult who commanded the French forces during Wellington's Spanish campaign. There were also many paintings and artefacts abandoned by General Joseph Bonaparte (Napoleon's less able brother) as he tried to escape. Wellington offered to return these treasures to the King of Spain but the offer was turned down.

After this delightful exposure to some 3000 artefacts, we walked down Piccadilly to a Tapas bar – a fitting end to a delightful visit which deserves a return.

Cynthia Fowler

Golfing Society

The year started with our regular visit to Tandridge at the end of April under our continued captaincy of Cynthia Fowler. Again we were joined by the Masons' Company and some of our newer members all of whom are most welcome. Mark Cockburn was the winner of the Company Trophy with 34 points closely followed by Ken Needham with 33. The Masons' prize was won by Neil Barnes and the guests had the best scores with winner, Paul Day, having 37 and Tim Davies with 35. I am afraid we did not fare well at the Prince Arthur Cup in May but we are told we will survive until next year. It can only get better!

We then moved on to Huntercombe in July. The "gross" trophy was won again by John Kenyon-Muir with 86 and the "net" by Ron Smith with a 73. Paul Day again had 37 points and won for the guests and the members know next meeting he too will be a member so the guests are safer but the members must try harder! Dennis Lockhart came second. We had lovely weather and a very enjoyable day. Captain's Day at Ashridge was well attended by 8 teams but also a lot of heavy rain. After about 4 holes the greens were flooding so we had to go into the clubhouse and wait for the rain to stop and clear from the greens. We therefore finished up with only 9 holes in the competition; by the time we finished an excellent lunch the sun was shining - typical British Summer! Greg Wright's team with Chris Kneller and Giles Payne won with a net 31 and George Constantinidi's and my team shared second with 33.

We finished the year in style on a glorious day at Swinley Forest.

We had 17 players in the morning and that was won by Ken Needham with 35 points followed by Henry Hobson with 34. Ken therefore won the Henry Cotton



Cup for combined Spring and Autumn

The Walker Cup presented to Cynthia Fowler

scores and he followed that up by coming second in the afternoon with his partner Stuart Clinton with 31 points being pipped to the Trophy by Lui Hui and Clive Buckley. This involved the first ever presentation of the Walker Cup given by Past Master James Walker in memory of his father, Marshall, who was one of the founders of the Society.

Please come one and all to our AGM (very brief) followed by lunch in Jamie's Wine Bar on Ludgate Hill on Thursday 3rd December at 12.30. Please let me know if you would like to join us so that I can arrange your menu.

John Edgcumbe

Affiliations

RAF Northolt visit

In late April, the Master led a group of twenty Liverymen and guests on a fascinating tour of RAF Northolt, where we fostered our association with two affiliated units. We were privileged to be hosted by Group Captain Andy Bacon, the out-going Station Commander, who presented all guests with an RAF Northolt coin, designed to celebrate RAF Northolt's 100 year anniversary since its creation; in fact, it is the longest serving operational RAF base.

We were thrilled to listen to a concert rehearsal by the RAF Regiment Band, under the direction of Flying Officer Chris l'Anson; rehearsal...sounded more like the finished product! We were also briefed on the role of the Station and the Queen's Colour Squadron and, with the support of the Officer Commanding, Squadron

L e a d e r
Rick Evans, the Master presented the Airman of the Year Award to Corporal France for his outstanding performance.



After lunch, we went to the No 11 (Fighter) Group Operations Bunker at the former



RAF Uxbridge bunker

RAF Uxbridge (which both Cynthia Fowler and Paul Hughesdon had the privilege of commanding) where Cynthia, as Chairman of the Bunker and her team provided us with an excellent guided tour of this quite remarkable WWII facility. Overall, an excellent day that served to reinforce the Livery's strong links with the Royal Air Force.

Assistant Air Commodore Paul Hughesdon

RLC Marchwood visit



The Master and Mistress aboard a Combat Support Boat with our RLC hosts

A small group of Liverymen, led by the Master and Helen, spent a magnificent day with our affiliated military team, the Royal Logistic Corps, on Friday 31st July.

After a succinct briefing on the RLC and its aims and aspirations, we were led to a display of their equipment, most importantly meeting the men and women who give all to the essential business of supporting our troops in the field, and indeed the Royal Navy. We then embarked in a variety of assault boats, thundering up to the northern perimeter of Southampton Water and back! A wonderful day with a quite exceptional team of people. I was allowed to have one of my grandsons with me on the day and he was, and remains, overwhelmed by the experience. Tomorrow's RLC recruit?

Following the invigorating exposure to frontline equipment, we were quietly transmitted to the Mess, where we sat out in the sunshine and had a delightful and relaxed buffet lunch in the company of our hosts.

As a military man, it is difficult to encapsulate the simple ethos of the Services without exaggeration. But this day, spent with the Army, persuaded me beyond doubt that we still recruit and train the best of the best. The Royal Navy has always had a soft spot for the Army; after all, when man (or was it woman?) first clambered, wide-eyed and accidentally, into a passing hollow log and drifted into the middle of a prehistoric lake, and discovered power projection, the RN was born – simply to ensure the safe, expedient delivery ashore, and support, of our troops during any war that our elected Government chooses for us.

Editor

Clerk's Corner

Communications

Have you seen the new website recently at:

www.gswd.co.uk ?

Thanks to much hard work by Lesley and Ken Blundell, the photographic coverage of events is now complete. You will also be fascinated to look into the photographic archive which covers personalities going back to 1836.

Win a prize in the 200 Club draw! Contact the Clerk or Assistant Brian Turner to buy a ticket or increase your holding.

Liveryman Anneliese Edgcumbe has been elected to the Court of Assistants.

New Admissions

New Liverymen admitted recently are:

Bruna Colombo-Otten (Fundraiser)
Andrew Pettitt (Consultant)
Gareth Collett (RLC)
Amanda MacEachen (Theatre Wardrobe)
Spencer Down (Orchestral Conductor)
James Turnbull (Business Consultant)
Ben Hayler (Surveyor)
Henry Hobson (Managing Director)

Charities Supported

Felix Fund

Docklands Sinfonia

Shine

Forces Support

Douglas Bader Foundation

Defence Medical Welfare Service

RLC Memorial at National Memorial Arboretum

Lord Mayors Charity 2015/2016 (Diabetes & Sea Cadets)

St Mary's Centre Community Trust

High Ground Projects

London Youth

N.B. The Haven fundraising Lunch on September 13th raised in excess of £3,500 for the Charitable Trust. Our thanks to Liveryman Julius Oberegger for his continuing generosity in allowing us to use his restaurant.

Deaths

The Company regrets to inform Liverymen of the death of Assistant Richard Stillwell.

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