



## The Master's Blogs 2017 - 18

### BLOGS 11 –

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##### **FUNERAL OF LIVERYMAN RICHARD MURDOCH: 23 JANUARY 2018**

Although I don't think I ever met the late Richard Murdoch, his was a name that I have always associated with excellence in the use of lead sheet. Richard worked for the Lead Sheet Association and helped to form the Lead Contractors' Association in 1984. He had been a Liveryman of the Plumbers' Company since 1980 and was awarded the Company's St Michael Medallion in 1996. He was a very loyal and active demonstrator of leadwork at the Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton. There were many references to the Company during the funeral service at Guildford Crematorium, with one of the tributes being paid by Liveryman Phil Mead (who worked with Richard over many years at Singleton).

##### **PLUMBERS' COMPANY COURT MEETING AND LUNCH: 24 JANUARY 2018**



As Master, I have to chair 4 Court meetings and today sees the first of these, which takes place in Furniture Makers' Hall, one of the more modern City Livery Halls. The Court meeting discusses a wide range of issues and approves the Annual Accounts for the year to 29 September 2017. It is a privilege to see six new Liverymen being clothed as of the Livery today. This is really encouraging and is a positive move in the Company's current recruitment drive.

After the lunch which follows the meeting, we hear from the Master Furniture Maker, Dr Tony Smart, MBE who outlines the history of his

Company and pays tribute to the support which he and his Company received from our Past Master, Geoff Marsh in relation to education, training and qualifications.

##### **COACHMAKERS' AWARD TO INDUSTRY DINNER: 24 JANUARY 2018**

As seems to be so often the case, lunch today is followed by an industry dinner and tonight sees me at Vintners' Hall for the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers' Award to Industry Dinner. Granted its Royal Charter in 1677, the Coachmakers was originally the sole governing body of the coach making trade. When the horse drawn coach

was replaced by the motor vehicle, enterprising artisans transferred their skills to fashion the curved ash wood frames for cars. When aircraft burst onto the transport scene, Coachmakers again transferred their skills to the fashioning of wood in well-defined curves for aircraft.

Tonight's award, which is presented by Master Coachmaker Tony Edwards, is given to British company Dowty Propellers Ltd which has a long and proud history and whose products are used in many aircraft today.

## **BLOG: 12**

### **CITY UNIVERSITY GRADUATION: 29 JANUARY 2018**

It is some 40 years since my own graduation ceremonies (two in consecutive years) from Heriot Watt University. Apart from a couple of subsequent graduations of friends and family, today sees me at a graduation ceremony of the City University, London in the magnificent setting of the Barbican Centre.



After a delightful lunch in the Barbican's Garden Room (an oasis on the third floor of the centre), the Livery Masters in attendance are gowned and chained and lined up in order of precedence for the procession through the gathered company of students and their families onto the stage. After seeing the installation of the Lord Mayor, Alderman Charles Bowman, as Rector and the conferment on him of an Honorary Degree, we witness the joy on the faces of almost 400 graduands as they cross the stage to receive their degrees from the newly- appointed Rector. Although I have to "shuffle" my position on the seat on the stage several times during the two-hour long ceremony to remain comfortable, I have to say that it was a huge honour to witness so many young (and not so young) people being recognised for the hard work they have undertaken during their period of study.

### **OFFICE CATCH-UP: 31 JANUARY 2018**

After last week's Court meeting and Luncheon, the attention of the Plumbers' office now moves to the Annual Banquet- one of the premier events in the Livery year. This year's event will take place in the Mansion House (the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London) on Wednesday 21 March 2018 and today sees me in the Company offices with the Clerk discussing the details of that event in order that the invitations and flyers can be issued. During our discussions, we also review a number of other future events.

## **BLOG: 13**

### **VISIT TO TRELOAR'S SCHOOL, ALTON: 5 FEBRUARY 2018**

Established in 1908 following a mayoral appeal by Lord Mayor Sir William Purdie Treloar, Treloar's School and College in Alton, Hampshire has become one of the country's leading providers of education, care, therapy, medical support and independence training for disabled young people. Today sees us both making the train journey from Clapham Junction to Alton to join the annual visit to Treloar's by the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs and Livery Company Masters. There is apparently a record attendance by some 50 Masters, their consorts and other supporters of the School. We are introduced to the concept behind Treloar's (the first specialist college to have been awarded "outstanding" for the quality of its provision, leadership and management by OFSTED). We have a guided tour and get to chat with staff and students, all of whom give us the impression that this is a special place undertaking really valuable work.

The visit concludes with a musical concert by students and staff and the Master Plumber was seen to participate in a bell-ringing rendition of "Greensleeves" along with students, the Lord Mayor and several other Livery Company Masters. He came in on cue (as indeed did everyone else!).



Chatting with several other Masters on the return train journey, we all agree that we have been fortunate to witness something rather special today.

My diary already includes attendance at an event in London in support of the School on 28 March 2018 and I arrange on my return to promote this event to our Liverymen as a way of raising awareness of Treloar's. Details of the Treloar Talks now appear on the news section of the website and it would be good to meet up with fellow Plumbers that evening.

### **MEETING AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS: 6 FEBRUARY 2018**

After a brisk walk along the River Thames, I arrive in time for my meeting with Lord Martin O'Neill of Clackmannan at the House of Lords. Martin, with whom I worked on the Specialist Engineering Contractors' Group, is to be my guest speaker at the Plumbers' Annual Banquet in Mansion House on 21 March 2018 and our meeting today is to discuss that role and the likely content of his speech. It is lovely to have coffee and cake in the Pugin Room in the House of Commons (and hard not to "spot" well-known politicians both there and in the corridors).

### **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING: 6 FEBRUARY 2018**

The Plumbers' Company's Membership Committee plays a key role in ensuring the ongoing development of membership, both through the recruitment of new Liverymen and the retention of existing members. Today's meeting receives reports on current initiatives and makes plans for the future.

### **RECEPTION FOR NEW LIVERYMEN: 6 FEBRUARY 2018**

Some time ago, the Membership Committee decided to arrange a drinks reception for new Liverymen who have become part of the organisation over the last year. Tonight, members of the Committee and Officers of the Company meet a number of these people in the magnificent setting of Carpenters' Hall. It is a good opportunity to get to know some of our

Liverymen better and to encourage them to play a full part in the organisation which they have joined.

### **MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS' TECHNICAL SYMPOSIUM: 6 FEBRUARY 2018**

Having made an early exit from our new Liverymen Reception, I make the short walk to Middlesex Street to the University of Coventry's London Campus where I attend the inaugural Technical Symposium organised by the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants. The title of the event is "Is your organisation predictably vulnerable?" and Anthony Fitzsimmons delivers a thought-provoking talk on reputational risk. The talk, which is attended by members of the Livery Company, a number of visiting Masters and University students, gives rise to many questions from the audience and is followed by a reception during which the discussion continues.

### **PLUMBERS' COMPANY ADMISSION INTERVIEW: 7 FEBRUARY 2018**

As Master, I help out with an interview of a prospective new Liveryman at Carpenters' Hall today. It is always encouraging to meet the people who are likely to become a future part of the Company and today is no exception.

### **IRONMONGERS' COMPANY CITY DINNER: 7 FEBRUARY 2018**



The Worshipful Company of Ironmongers is one of the Great Twelve Livery Companies (number 10 in the order of precedence) and the Clerk and I are guests tonight at their City Dinner in Ironmongers' Hall. It is indeed a City function with the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, several other City officials, the Acting Bishop of London and the

Dean of St Paul's Cathedral among the guests. I am seated between two ladies deeply involved in the almshouse movement and learn a lot about this form of housing, about which I knew relatively little. The music is excellent (the Brass Quintet of the Band of the Grenadier Guards) and there is a particularly interesting after dinner speech by the CEO of the London Symphony Orchestra, Mrs Kathryn McDowell. The LSO is due to move in the future to a new home virtually next door to Ironmongers' Hall, which makes her contribution all the more relevant.

## **BLOG: 14**

### **14<sup>TH</sup> SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE RACE: 13 FEBRUARY 2018**

Organised by the Worshipful Company of Poulterers (in collaboration with "The Cook and Butler"), the Inter Livery Race was something that the Mistress Plumber and I were looking forward to. However, it was only a few weeks ago that the organisers confirmed that the Plumbers could enter a full team this year (we had not participated last year).

Unfortunately, the weather forecast proved to be accurate this morning and we arrive at the Guildhall Yard in rather damp and extremely cold conditions to be advised that there would be no running this year. For the first time in the history of the race, the "British Weather Clause" is invoked and the race around the Guildhall Yard is replaced by the alternative competition of seeing how many pancakes can be tossed in a fixed time.

The Plumbers' team is ably led and organised by Clerk's Assistant Sharon Sibthorpe and consists of the Master, the Mistress (who participates in the ladies' event), Assistant Janet Rivers, who competes in the Liverymen "race" and Steward Damon Reynolds who bravely agreed to participate in the Novelty Race. Damon offered a choice of costumes (which either had to reflect the Lord Mayors' charities or his Livery Company, both of which are shown in the photos attached. Damon is shown in the group photo as the most famous plumber in the world, Super Mario. His other outfit, which he wore in the competition, represents the "Sugar Plumber Fairy".

It is good to report that all members of the Plumbers' team demonstrate appropriate skill in the art of tossing pancakes (some of which disintegrate during the competition). None of us are winners in our respective groups but we all have a great time and are glad that we have had the chance to participate. It was also good to be cheered on by Past Master Antony Paterson-Fox and his wife, Diana, Steward Clive Sofaer and his wife Sheila, our Clerk Pieter and Liveryman Joe Sibthorpe.

The "Race" is followed by a lovely buffet lunch in the Guildhall Crypts.

