

## **THE MASTER'S BLOG 17**

### **CITY GUIDES' LECTURE: MONDAY 5 MARCH 2018**

There are some magnificent buildings in the City of London- both old and new. Tonight, I attend the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Derek Melliush Memorial Lecture organised by the City of London Guide Lecturers' Association in the historic Church of St Lawrence Jewry, has the title "Ancient Monuments for a Modern City". Dr Jane Sidell , Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England, is the lecturer and she gives both a fascinating and entertaining talk about magnificent buildings- some with a history of some 2000 years- which can be seen today. This is yet another fascinating and educational evening and I add a few more buildings to my "Must Visit" list.

### **TECHNICAL AND EDUCATION COMMITTEES: TUESDAY 6 MARCH 2018**

Some years ago, the Company decided that the agenda for its Technical Committee had grown unmanageably large and the decision was taken to split the work into two separate Committees- Technical and Education. It is always good to review and reform and we are currently considering whether it might be better to revert to a single Committee, with clearly defined objectives. Today, as part of that review process, we have arranged a joint meeting of the two Committees which takes place in one of the Committee rooms at Mansion House.

The joint meeting is taking place during National Apprenticeship Week and we have invited several guests, with an interest in apprenticeships to join us. Neil Weller, a partner in the building engineering services design firm Troup Bywaters Anders, talks about his firm's approach to the recruitment of engineers through an apprenticeship, rather than a graduate route and the considerable success which this approach has brought. One of the firm's apprentices, Pierce Ronan (now an Engineer) talks about his experience from joining the firm at age 17. We are left in absolutely no doubt that the apprenticeship approach works well. We then receive a presentation from Paul Johnson, Chief Executive of BPEC, on the new "T" level qualifications and some members express concern that this latest Government initiative might have a negative, rather than complimentary, impact on apprenticeship training at craft level in the industry. All agree that we hope this proves not to be the case.

The consensus as the meeting ends is that the experiment to combine two Committees in one meeting has today worked well and the focus on apprenticeships was an excellent way for the Company to acknowledge National Apprenticeship Week.

### **SOCIAL COMMITTEE; TUESDAY 6 MARCH 2018**

A short walk from Guildhall to Carpenters' Hall (and after a quick sandwich lunch) I attend the meeting of the Social Committee which reviews Company events since the last meeting and reviews progress and plans for forthcoming events including the Annual Banquet on 21 March, the Annual Lecture on 21 May and the programme of social visits which has recently started.

### **MANSION HOUSE RECCE: WEDNESDAY 7 MARCH 2018**

Although I might have attended more than 20 (maybe even more than that) Mansion House Banquets over the years, this year will be the first (and only) occasion that I will attend Master. This morning, the Clerk, one of our Stewards and I visit Mansion House for a meeting with Mansion House staff to discuss arrangements in advance of our visit for the Plumbers' Annual Banquet in two weeks' time. It is a useful visit and I am sure that all arrangements on the night will be up to the usual high standards.

### **DINNER WITH THE PRESIDENT: WEDNESDAY 7 MARCH 2018**

Many years ago, when attending a European meeting in Paris, I was invited to "Dinner with the President". Noting the raised eyebrows on the faces of those to whom I mentioned this, I had to admit that the meal was with the President of the French Building Federation rather than the President of the country. Tonight's delightful "Dinner with the President" is hosted by the President of the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (CIPHE) and takes place in the lovely setting of Founders' Hall (near Smithfield Market). The principal speaker this evening is CEO of Worcester Bosch, Carl Arntzen, and he refers to many issues currently facing the plumbing and heating industry, particularly those relating to skills.

It is good to meet some people whom I have known for many years and to meet some new people. In an unexpected turn of events, towards the end of the evening, I am asked if I would be willing to propose the Toast to the CIPHE and I accept this invitation.

#### **THE MUSICAL MUSEUM, BRENTFORD: THURSDAY 8 MARCH 2018**

The second of the Plumbers' Company social visits this year takes place today and a group of Liverymen and friends gather at the Musical Museum in Brentford, north London. This contains an amazing collection of mechanical musical instruments and guide Marcus demonstrated several of them on our guided tour. The collection includes a Wurlitzer organ which was formerly in a cinema in Richmond and at the end of the visit, I am allowed to play it. I described it as transitioning from a pushbike (my usual 2 manual instrument) to a Harley Davidson motorbike and it would have been good if I had several hours to work out all of the sounds which this amazing instrument can produce.

#### **FURNITURE MAKERS' ELECTION COURT DINNER: THURSDAY 8 MARCH 2018**

A return visit to Furniture Makers' Hall this evening where I am one of several Livery Masters attending as guests of the Furniture Makers' Company whose Spring Election Court takes place immediately before Dinner. This is Master Tony Smart's last Court Dinner before his term ends and I am pleased to hear him pay tribute, during the Toast to the Guests, to the role of the Plumbers' Company, and notably Past Master Geoff Marsh, in setting up the Master Certificate Scheme. Liverymen of this Company must have an involvement in the furniture or furnishings industry and it is fascinating to chat to a few their Past Masters at Dinner about the work which they have done in that field.

#### **LIVERY HALL RECCE: FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2018**

One of the advantages of being a Livery Company without its own hall is that we get to meet and dine in a variety of the Livery Halls in the City. This morning sees the Mistress and I on an early morning visit to check out one of the Halls which is being considered for a future event.

#### **FIREFIGHTERS' COURT LUNCHEON: FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2018**

It was lovely to be invited to join the Firefighters' Company Court (and one other Livery Master) at their lunch today in the Aldermen's Dining Room at Guildhall. While a small function, it is a delightful event and it is good to chat with members of the Court of another Livery Company. A new Liveryman of the Company was clothed today and I discover that he is a Registered Plumber with a long career in public health. As a regular attendee at the Society of Public Health Engineers' Annual Dinner, he recognised me from the evening I was presented with the Honorary Fellowship of that organisation several years ago. Another of those small world coincidences!