

## THE MASTER'S BLOG 28

### ROYAL MARINES BEATING RETREAT: WEDNESDAY 30 MAY 2018



We are delighted to sit in the stands at Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall this evening (with not a drop of rain in sight) for the biennial Beating Retreat Musical Spectacular performed by the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines. It is an evening of superb music and precision marching and we are given an excellent commentary explaining the origins of Beating Retreat and Sunset. Much of the music has been composed in the last year or so and two pieces pay tribute to Prince Philip who stood down last year as the Captain General Royal Marines. The salute is

taken by Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff. We leave the parade ground humming some of the songs which we have just heard.

### BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDEN PARTY: THURSDAY 31 MAY 2018

Weather forecasting has become more accurate but there are occasions when we are delighted that the forecast proves to be wrong. For over a week before our visit to Buckingham Palace, the forecast for today has been thunder and lightning. Even this morning, it was predicted that there was a 70% chance of storms between the critical hours of 3pm and 6pm.

We meet a group of five other Masters and their consorts at The Goring Hotel for lunch in advance of the afternoon's Garden Party. It is hard not to look out of the window to see how the weather is doing and we are all delighted when the chance of thunder and lightning reduces from 70% to 0%.

It takes a little while to move our way up the queue into the Palace (during which process we meet the Mayor and Mayoress of Ramsgate whom we had met last week on the parade ground at Chatham and a couple from Dunbar, near our home in Scotland). By the time we are strolling through the garden, the sun is shining, and this remains the case for the rest of our visit.



Aided by what is now beautiful weather (sunscreen and sunglasses would have been useful) we have an excellent afternoon and find ourselves in a prime spot to see Her Majesty the Queen, Prince William, Princess Eugenie and other members of the Royal Family as they stroll back to the Palace.

Returning to the Goring (where iced water is the drink of choice), we all agree that this has been yet another special occasion in the life of the Master and Mistress Plumber.

## PLAYING THE ORGAN AT MERCHANT TAYLORS' HALL: FRIDAY 1 JUNE 2018



This morning's outing isn't an official Livery visit but comes as a direct result of two such occasions when I have dined at Merchant Taylors' Hall. On both occasions, I spotted the pipe organ in the Hall's gallery and, after contacting the Clerk of the Company, I have been given the opportunity to play this instrument. Although the organ has only been in situ since 1966 (a relatively short time in the history of these instruments), large parts of it date back to 1722 when it was installed in the Church of Dionis Backchurch.

I enjoy an hour playing a new (to me) instrument and am told on my way out by the Beadle that if I want to return, I just need to ask.