

## The Master's occasional Blog

### Master's Blog 13

On Monday some 40 of us attended our first Plumbers' lunch of the year. This time it was organised by our most recent Steward, Clive, who joined the Social Committee last year. He tells me he loves the job and that it is a great way to get to know everyone. You may have seen the latest email from Sharon or the advert on our website where we are looking for a further recruit. Do please apply to the Office if you think you would find fun and have the time to give. The lunch went very well – Ironmongers produce some very good food, and some of us stayed probably longer than we should. It's a very convivial occasion. Some of those attending on this occasion were the Water-Safe board. Do come along to the next one and bring your friends and colleagues. I went back with Paul to Ironmongers' the following day for their City Dinner. This is a splendid white tie occasion to which a number of other Masters and Clerks are invited. We ate in their Banqueting Hall, which is where the lunches also take place. The Hall was built in the 1920s and it has lovely stained glass windows and panelling with many (if not all) of their Past Masters' coats of arms. I always think it is a real treat to go down their alleyway off Aldersgate Street to find them tucked away. There are rumours going round of major redevelopment in the area though.... Before the dinner, I had a committee meeting with the Tax Advisers – I sit on their Membership committee (very largely because I am responsible for their Archives, something which I acquired when I was their Master some ten years ago). I particularly mention it now as, due to my link with that company (and also Fiona's as Nicholas is also a Past Master and she is an honorary liveryman), we have been invited to join them for a merry evening at the Players' Theatre. This is an old-time music hall event with plenty of opportunity to join in, and I do hope you will come. The leaflets are even now (Feb 8) being prepared.

Finally, on the general Livery front, I went to the House of Lords for dinner with the Lady Masters' Association. It is an enormous place... we seemed to walk for miles to get there (once we had found the right entrance and negotiated the heavy security). The event was organised through Baroness Garden of Frognall who was Master World Trader in 2008-2009. It was a very jolly occasion held in one of the private dining rooms.



On the support front, I think it is highly likely that we will be looking for help on some of our committees in addition to the new Steward currently being sought. Paul has slowly become the "maid of all work" due to his generous nature and commitment and really is doing far more than he should. So we are discussing ways of cutting down his time by passing down delegatable work to volunteers. Watch this space.

### Master's Blog 14

First, a meeting at Skinners' Hall in the company of many other Masters and Clerks. The invitation related to the Great Fire anniversary proposals in the City over the weekend of September 2-4. You may recall the light, etc, show in the West End in mid January. This was organised by a charity (Artichoke Trust) which specialises in spectacular events of this nature and they are proposing to do similar for that weekend. They outlined the possibilities, assuming they obtain the funding, of what they would like to do over the anniversary weekend. Unfortunately, their brief to us did not give any detailed information of what was hoped to happen where and when so I am not able to tell you now. But, on the assumption that the relevant funding is forthcoming from various sources, keep the dates free in your diary so that you can be in the City over that weekend.

Then there was the Pancake Race in Guildhall yard. This has been running for 16 years now and is very popular with the livery, unsurprisingly as it is such fun. Yours truly elected not to risk her pelvis (last time she slipped, she broke 5 bones in her pelvis and didn't think this was a suitable year

to tempt providence – and there were a couple of falls by others, fortunately, no-one appeared to be hurt) and so walked tossing the pancake. But our Clerk, wearing his Liveryman hat, did extremely well and our Steward, Ian Puddick, was in the shortlist for the fancy dress prize – though quite what a bishop (for such was his outfit) had to do with the Lord Mayor’s charities (which was the theme) was a little difficult to fathom!

Finally, in my official capacity, two evenings at educational establishments – one at City University where the format is that the winner has the opportunity to chat to the representative of the awarding body, and the other at the City of London Boys’ School, where we had the opportunity to be taken round the school by senior boys. It is an amazing place, overlooking the river, and has wonderful facilities. Our City University winner was an Ecuadorian, Miguel Telenchana, and we had a long conversation about his studies and what he hopes to do next. He was thrilled to receive the award. It seems likely that he will stay in Europe because he has now married a Pole, and also says that the prospects are much better in Europe than I South America.



We had a wonderful visit to the Pepys’ exhibition at the Nation Maritime Museum, ably organised by Michael Cooper, where we wandered at will round the excellent exhibits and finished with lunch in the bistro. Well worth visiting. The exhibition is on till the end of March.

I also attended a History of Tax lecture evening – this is a twice-yearly event organised by the Tax Advisers. The discussion this time ranged over the extent to which exemptions in grants such as Royal Charters can be overridden by statute, and involved the old charters and rights granted to the Stannaries in Cornwall – the Cornish litigator inter alia arguing that they gave members of the Stannaries freedom from UK tax, and that Cornwall was a separate state. He lost, by the way, but in the process an enormous amount of fascinating and arcane law from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> was arrayed, discussed and considered.

## Master’s Blog no 15

Monday found me at the Livery Companies Skill Council awards which took place at Fishmongers’. This is a splendid occasion where people who have attained the appropriate level are awarded certificates. This year 12 livery companies had awards to give. The certificates are handed over by the Lord Mayor, but each award is announced by the relevant Master of the Company concerned. The Master Certificate scheme has been in place since 2001, in part thanks to the huge amount of work put in by the livery companies to get it set up and in



Liveryman Kevin Wellman, John Pashley, The Master, The Lord Mayor, Lay Sheriff, Dr Christine Rigden, Shaun Burrows, Past Master

particular our own PM Geoff Marsh was deeply involved, and was singled out to be thanked for his work. We had two Master Certificates to be awarded, the Masons 6, and others had mainly 2 or 3. Five journeyman certificates and one apprentice certificate were also awarded. After that there was not much going on for the rest of that week, which is worth reporting.

So the following Monday I was at the City Water Debate, along with a significant number of fellow Plumbers – we made up over 20% of the audience. The topic related to the problems of drought and how to circumvent them. There was much reference to the summer of 1976 where, I recall, not a cloud in the sky from the beginning of April to the end of August (when the heavens opened with enthusiasm). We saw pictures of empty reservoirs, etc. Interestingly, our speakers told us that 2012 threatened the same and there was deep concern for how we dealt with the influx of the Olympics, but fortunately we got the rains just in time. In London, we only have 100 days of average use at the

maximum, compared with about 600 days in part of Wales (the average consumption per person is about 160l per day). There is great need for more reservoir resources but the problem is that it is a rare occasion that would (on current weather statistics) pull it into use. The evening reminded us yet again, of how our country is run by short-termism, and how difficult it is to persuade the “powers that be” to get enthusiastic about long-term essential projects.

On Tuesday I spent the day at Carpenters, where our committee room is now fully operational. Committee days – this time, education, technical and freedom and livery. Much useful ground was covered.

Thursday we spent at the smoked salmon factory down the East End. It is now on Fish Island, most appropriately. It used to be on the site of what is now Olympic Park and there is a very good view of the stadium out of the factory windows. We had some delicious smoked salmon as part of our lunch, and watched the Guinness record-holder cut up a salmon into slices – he has a top speed of 1 minute 11 seconds! All in all a very enjoyable occasion and many of us came home with purchases.

After that, I caught the train to Chatham where Paul and I were guests of the Royal Engineers, along with two other Masters and their clerks. We regularly present prizes to their Plumbing trainees, the other companies have similar linkages. We were there for a regimental dinner – The Corps Guest Night and 173 RE TCC Batch Night, to give it its full title. It was a really good occasion and we were made very welcome indeed. It is clear that they hold us in high regard. We were fortunately given beds for the night too, which meant we didn't have to turn into pumpkins, and left after breakfast on Friday morning.

## Master's Blog 16

The 29<sup>th</sup> February found me lunching with the Old Bailey judges, courtesy of the non-Aldermanic Sheriff, Dr Christine Rigden. For those who don't know about this, the judges at the OB meet for lunch every day for the hour between 1 and 2. Part of the Sheriffs' responsibilities is to provide them with a range of different people to chat to over lunch. The guests are invited for 12.30 and enter via the back entrance to the courthouse. There they are introduced to each other in the Sheriff's flat (each Sheriff has a small one bed flat in which they live for the duration of their office). Masters of the livery companies are normally, but not always, invited once during the course of their year in office. Shortly before 1, we move into the luncheon room anteroom to meet the judges then, armed probably with a stiff tomato juice laced with Lee & Perrins (at least I was), we go into lunch, and sit in prearranged seats. My close neighbours included the Sheriff herself, the Common Sergeant (who explained that he was a freeman of the Cooks – the Cooks have a very small livery entitlement, only about 75, so freemen wait for “deadmen's shoes” or for existing liverymen to be sacked from the livery for failing to support it, if I have understood correctly), and a couple of recorders (a recorder, who is not, eg, the Recorder of London, is a part-time judge who otherwise will be a barrister or solicitor in practice and who gives so many days a year to HM Courts Service, they normally help out during the usual full-time judge's vacations or illnesses or training periods). After lunch, there is usually an option to go to sit in to listen to one of the trials. As I had a lot to do for the Plumbers, I decided not to on this occasion.



The following day found me at a working party discussing how best to process the many applications we have received for our new clerk's appointment. The preliminary mechanism was agreed, and we all went home to print out copies of all the applications and study them, etc. We will be meeting again shortly.

We had hoped to go to Lancaster House on Wednesday, but the visit was sadly cancelled at short notice. Fairly inevitably, the premises were wanted for Government purposes. I hope we can get back there. It is beautiful inside. I visited once several years ago as a result of my involvement with

the Czechs in the period leading up to their accession to the EU, but only for dinner, and tantalisingly no trip round.

For the rest of the week, much time was devoted to our Banquet, the job applications, drafting suggested revisions of the booklet we give to Assistants and Officers, and further time being spent on other matters relating to our Company.

## Master's Blog 17

A very busy week. We started with the Banquet at Mansion House. There are loads of things the Office, the Upper Warden and the Master have to do in preparation. For UW and M there is of course the speech they have to give, but generally the things which have to be done include choosing the meal – Paul and I had done that sometime earlier when we went on a tasting at the Mansion House one lunchtime a few weeks ago; then there is the table plan and the printing thereof along with the pour memoires for everyone who is coming; the musicians and the stair guard from Richmond Sea Cadets need their instructions; Paul did an amazing almost minute by minute timetable we had to adhere to and we had been to the Mansion House the previous week to go through it with our stand-in Toastmaster (whilst our beloved Beadle was off sick, we hear he is now beginning to get better, which is good news) and the Mansion House staff – the timetable is critical as if the event goes over, there are potentially swingeing additional payments to be made to cover, eg overtime payments to the staff. There were discussions as to what to give the guest speakers, to say thank you; and so on. I was at our office before 9 on the Monday to make sure that if the Office still needed help I was there to do it, and I know that Steve, our IPM, did the same during the previous week. And then different people come to the MH at different times to get our contribution to the event organised. The tables have to have the name cards set out, the presents must be checked with the relevant speaker and the toastmaster, our guests are allocated members of the court to ensure that they are not left stranded, and the stewards and some of the Sea Cadets take the guests (whose pour memoires have been prestamped so they are easily identifiable) to the relevant person, and the meet and greet team of your officers are put into place. Phew, I hope you all enjoyed it as much as we did.



There was a further APHC meeting at an offshoot of the House of Lords discussing enforcement of building regulations. We agreed the format of a Freedom of Information questionnaire to be sent to local authorities and the timetable to go with it. Our next meeting is roughly scheduled for July.

Paul and I had dinner with the President of CIPHE on HQS Wellington. That was a very warm and friendly occasion with about 50 people there, and we sat on round tables which I always think makes for a really good chat. We also had a meeting with the President and Chief Executive of IHEEM earlier in the day.

Then there was the Lord Mayor's Banquet for the Masters, etc, of the livery. We more or less sit in order of precedence, and the Plumbers' place is usually at the top of the central sprig. This year we were opposite the Masons and had a very merry chat. The speeches are from the Mercers, Grocers and of course the LM himself. The Mercers presented a gift of roller skis with a suggestion that they might be useful for getting round the city! Watch this space, it may be that that dare is taken up for charity. It was a very good occasion and I eventually tore myself away at about 11.30 but I know others stayed for far longer.

The LM's Banquet is the day before United Guilds Service. Paul had been invited with guest (he asked me) to breakfast at Stationers for 0830 which I managed despite the shortish night, and I found him having his shoes polished by a boot black – he did a wonderful job. Breakfast was



amazing. After that, Paul went back to Carpenters for our gowns and I met him in the crypt at St Paul's for the service. Super hymns, wonderful music and a very good sermon from the Bishop of London. All followed by lunch at Carpenters with about 24 of us mixing with the other liveries also there.

My week finished with a trip to Hackney Empire to see one of our former students at GSMD sing in Don Giovanni. It was terrific. Very well done, she sang beautifully. It was a real treat to be there.

## Master's Blog 18

This week started with another lunch at Ironmongers, not with us but with the Lady Masters' group, which was set up a little while back to support Fiona in her Mayoralty and which now has Aldermanic Court backing (if that is the right expression). A good chat was had by all, and I particularly enjoyed hearing about the PM Turner's new book on marriage bureaux (Marriages are made in Bond Street) from which you may have seen extracts in some of the papers or on line.

Tuesday was a super dinner at Apothecaries with the Tinsplate Workers alias Wire Workers, and on Wednesday, I was at the Mansion House celebrating with the Solicitors, of course Fiona was in the chair as the Master Solicitor (and also stand-in Lord Mayor). All excellent events.

Thursday saw me at the Reserved Forces and Cadets Association Lord Lieutenant's awards event at Yeomanry House which is just off the Brunswick Centre in Bloomsbury. This was a super event and it was particularly pleasing to see just how well the cadets have done and to hear about their exploits and derring do. Afterwards there was a curry supper.



That apart, I have been working on various admin matters for the Plumbers whilst Paul was away enjoying a much-needed skiing trip.

My next blog will also be short as I have events Monday to Wednesday and am then away for Easter.

## Master's Blog 19

We had a wonderful holiday in Beirut, visiting, ia, archaeological sites such as Baalbek, wineries such as Ixsir and Belle Vue, museums including a fabulous minerals museum, and of course family, and delicious food from the Beka'ar valley.

So now I am back and up to my eyes in various Plumbers' activities. Before I went, I did not have time to tell you details of my doings in those last 3 days before Maundy Thursday, so this blog will include those too.

First, there was the Spring Livery dinner in Merchant Taylors' hall with the Chartered Surveyors. A very happy and warming event. The Master is Lady (Jenna) Davies whom I first met at a livery dinner at my Club last summer. We agreed, with others, that it would make our respective years much more enjoyable if we started to get to know each other earlier and so it has, as a group of us meet regularly for a light lunch and exchange of views. One of my dinner neighbours was a PM from my PM year group in 2005-6 which was a real treat for me, and my other neighbour was equally good company.

Then our clerk and I attended the Scientific Instrument Makers' informal livery lunch at Glaziers. Alas, the Master had been taken ill, but in his stead was the Senior Warden, and we discovered we had lots of common contacts. It was strictly a no speech event, but the two visiting Masters (Firefighters and self) and the SW made short off the cuff speeches, in part because it was the Master Firefighter's birthday.

We also had a long day at the office in further discussions over the new clerk interviews.

Since my return from Beirut, I have attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the Great Fire Rebuilding London lectures organized by the Chartered Architects, this particular one was at Carpenters Hall, and I went in to the office beforehand to deal with those matters that were waiting me on my return. I also took the staff out for their somewhat belated Christmas lunch (at my club). Why so late? Well, we were in the throes of the move just before Christmas, also Sharon was ill, and after Christmas Peter our Beadle became ill with his back and has only recently been able to start work again. I enjoyed it, and I think the staff did too. And it's a lovely way to say thank you to them for their hard work.

I couldn't make the Big Curry lunch as I was handing out prizes for achievement in last year's diet of tax exams, but the IPM and the clerk did. I understand a most enjoyable time was had, and presumably a suitable amount of money raised.



I was invited to the "Cheesegrater" in Leadenhall Street for the City of London Building of the Year award, which was awarded for the building itself. After the short reception and speeches, we were allowed up to the 42<sup>nd</sup> floor from which we were able to look over the "Gherkin" and had spectacular views on a sunny day over the London scene.

Finally, there was the first Fish & Chips City Livery Club lunch. There is a full report elsewhere from our steward Clive Sofaer, but suffice to say that those of us who went had a good time, and have agreed to go back again on June 3. Why don't you join us?

## Master's Blog 20

A busy Plumbing week, much of which was connected with the processes of choosing and appointing our new clerk. Meetings for that (and work before and after) were on Monday where we discussed in depth the types of information we wanted to extract at interview and who would do what, and Wednesday was devoted to the interview process and the before and after, with several further discussions. I also had a day of committee meetings – membership, investments, finance), and was invited to sit in on the Charity Trustees' committee.



We also had an excellent wine tasting of Loire wines at Davy's Wine bar which is just off the rear of the Guildhall. You will see the report elsewhere on this site.

On Thursday I went to the offices to assist in the swearing of a new international freeman, and then went to my Club for lunch where they had a talk on the City Churches and music. The main speaker was former Sheriff Alderman Andrew Parmley. There were many people from the Livery there, including our very own PM John Rae who was in fine form. The talk was interesting and relatively light-hearted. Afterwards I went to Insurance Hall for a meeting, ostensibly for clerks, organised



by the Ironbridge trust designed to encourage clerks (a) to attend at least once especially during the early years of their clerkship (b) to enthuse about the annual trip of the Masters (etc) which takes place each June. I went because it was, at least in theory, Paul's day off. I met a couple of other Masters there too.

In our Membership Committee we studied the responses to our Members' survey. One of the many pleasant items to emerge was just how many of you are prepared to give time to the Company. If you were one of those who volunteered, would you please email the clerk as not everyone who volunteered gave their name so whilst we know who some of the volunteers are we don't know all of you.

## Master's Blog 21

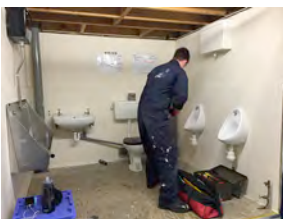
Another busy week. Monday was a two event day (as also was Tuesday). At lunchtime I was to be found at Innholders' for the AGM of my past masters' association from 2005. An excellent occasion. I left there in the company of the PM Tyler and Bricklayer to go to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama for the Tylers and Bricklayers 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the appointment of the first recorded Master of their Company in 1416. The School organised the concert at which the players were students. It was a well-balanced musical evening, all were good and I was particularly impressed with the pianist and the violinist both of whom performed incredibly difficult pieces extremely well. After the concert there was a reception which gave a great opportunity to meet friends old and new.

Tuesday saw the clerk, Paul, and I on the train to Chatham just after 9am. Why? It was the day appointed for the award given to the best student in the plumbing department at the Royal School of Military Engineering. We were treated to a wonderful tour and explanation of their model bridge museum, which is also a working tool. The various styles of bridges are there to be taken apart, practised with, and so on in order to make errors (if any) whilst learning and not out in the field. We looked at an old Roman bridge which had straddled the Thames, then moved to a model Inglis bridge, before moving on to Bailey bridges which were an adaptation of Inglis to enable heavier machinery to be transported. I found the prefab mechanisms, which were essentially simple but tough in structure and the way in which they could be doubled or tripled in width and/or height to accommodate different levels of weight and gap to be covered, fascinating. I learnt that some of our Bailey bridge pieces were used after the war by German farmers, and we used some of ours as the rocket bases at Woomera. We also saw a gift by the Tsar to Wellington following the defeat of Napoleon.



For the ceremony of the award itself, the students were called in and the winner called up. Paul and I gave a little history of what livery companies were, why they were still needed and linked them to the specifics of the Plumbers' Company and the benefits of belonging. The student concerned, Lt Cpl Freemantle, was handed his medal, a cheque and sworn in as a Freeman of the Company.

After the ceremony, we were treated to a buffet lunch and then given a tour of the Plumbing section of the college. I was very impressed to see that they teach the old-style leadwork and have all the old tools there, in addition to the standard items one would expect to see for modern plumbing qualifications. Each student has access to a specific space for practice – we watched some fitting out a men's toilet facility with basin, lavatory, urinals, etc. They were being timed, and had 19 hours to complete the work having started with the units to be installed laid out in a heap on the floor, together with relevant pipework. There are also facilities for learning about plumbing and wiring in air conditioning, central heating, tracing faults, etc.



Wednesday was a workday catching up and preparing for the following week's court meeting, whilst Thursday was spent mainly at Charterhouse (see report elsewhere). Friday I had been expecting to enjoy the Master Mariners' curry lunch with my brother-in-law (a liveryman of that company) but he was suffering from food poisoning so instead I spent a long time with him over coffee at the Victory Services Club near Marble Arch.

## Master's Blog 22

Two weeks to report this time. The first week opened with enthusiasm! Lunch with the Founders' Court and dinner with the Glaziers. Both were super events which I attended with Paul. We had our April court on the 26<sup>th</sup> and, *ia*, approved the appointment of the new clerk Pieter Cox; and swore in four new liverymen. After the meeting, we had a splendid lunch at Carpenters to which we had invited liverymen on a more general basis than hitherto, because Carpenters' is so much larger than Wax Chandlers' where numbers perforce had to be severely limited. Our speaker was the Queen's Remembrancer who gave us an excellent outline of the many arcane areas of her post and how they came to be lodged in the hands of one person.

Then some 26 of us joined a group of Tax Advisers (and three judges) at the Players' Theatre for an evening of great fun, much singing, lots of innuendo, a brilliant illusionist, etc. I think it fair to say we all had a jolly good time there.

On the Wednesday a group of us visited Lancaster House, extremely well organised by our steward Daphne and you will have seen the report elsewhere.

Thursday was "catchup" day until the evening when Paul and I attended the Paviers dinner at Fishmongers'. And on Friday I was lucky enough to have been invited to the conclusion hearing of the Trial of the Pyx (which trial had been started in February when a selection of our coinage had been handed to a jury of assayers to test), at Goldsmiths'. The Queen's Remembrancer having been read the report of the jury declared the coinage met (more or less) the standards laid down but in doing so gave a splendid peroration linking the testing of the coinage with Shakespeare and his anniversary. Afterwards we were treated to an excellent luncheon and speeches from the Prime Warden and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.



The second week has been quieter and sadder. I travelled down to Shaftesbury on the Tuesday to attend the funeral of Jim Guyton., a long-term liveryman It was extremely well attended, and easy to work out why. Jim was generous with his time and skills in all walks of his life, be it family, the Plumbers, the college where he taught, Singleton. There were three moving tributes to him, including one from our own Phil Mead. Several of our colleagues were in attendance.

I also had an invite from the Tax Advisers' clerk (who happens to be a PM Cook) to the Cooks' dinner at Innholders'. Since their Hall burnt down (for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time) in the late 1700s, the Cooks determined not to rebuild (cooking clearly being dangerous) but instead to let out the land which they retained. They currently live at Innholders', an obvious choice since the two liveries are very closely related in terms of the provision of hospitality. Plus, the added attraction of a Michelin-starred chef. It was an evening where some of the Cook apprentices have also worked in the kitchens to gain experience, then come out to chat to the livery in the reception – I found that fascinating. The Cooks wine and dine in style and we were rather late in leaving.....

My last item to report was a wonderful visit to the Mansion House to view the Dutch and Flemish paintings bequeathed by the late Harold Samuel (he who founded Land Securities). Our guide was one of the Guildhall team from the Gallery there. Normally, when one goes to the MH, one is at a function and there is little time, or space, to view the works of art on the walls. But they really do deserve attention, and they were extremely well described to us.



## Master's Blog 23

The week started with a visit to Wilton's Music Hall, courtesy of PM Lockyer who invited me to join the Actuaries' trip. A fascinating place set in the East End close to the docks and Commercial Road and in the liberty (that is free of the jurisdiction of the local Lord of the Manor, in this case the Bishop of London) of Well Close. Definitely well worth a visit.

Then I had a meeting to discuss possible designs for new badges for the Assistants, Stewards and Consort (ie a male mistress which we are likely to have when Fiona takes over in a few years' time). Inevitably, these cost money so I suspect there will be much scratching of heads over them. But the designs look super and are a considerable uplift from the current scruffy bits of felt behind our livery badge. So, fingers crossed, money will be found for them. Our new clerk, Pieter, also came in to chat to Paul about various aspects of the job.

I have been to two services this week, one at St Paul's for the Sons and Friends of the Clergy and the other at Barts, for the Barts View Day celebrations. Our preacher at St Paul's was no less than the Archbishop of Canterbury and at Barts the Bishop of London. So we were treated to two exceptional and thoughtful sermons. We were clearly luckier than Samuel Pepys in 1669, who commented "a dull sermon". We also had good hymns and thus good, rousing singing. The Masters, etc, of the Liveries attending, are part of the procession at the SFC event which has been



on-going for 362 years and was started in order to find funds to support those of the clergy who lost their livings due to having supported the wrong side in the Civil War. It is an event I love attending and have been several times. Barts View Day has also a long history going back to 1546 following the refoundation of the hospital by Henry VIII (this was after he had sacked the monasteries there). Afterwards, there was a reception in the magnificent Great Hall at the hospital and a limited opportunity to view which I eschewed.

I also attended a Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund reception (at Rothschilds' Sky Pavilion in St Swithin's Lane) which was held in conjunction with the Worshipful Company of Needle-makers. The views from the building were wonderful, but alas not photographable as there are mechanisms to stop the sun coming in and whilst I tried to take photos they are messed up by the screening. I was lucky enough to be introduced to the Royal guests who tried to work out the livery from our badge and recalled our statue at Cannon Street. The S&R Fund is a small charity which helps former prisoners following their release, and is a charity very worthy of support.

There was also a dinner at Skinners, for the Tin Plate Workers als Wire Workers (they have a joint charter, hence their name). A good evening, where those with strong heads apparently stayed till about midnight quaffing champagne before moving on elsewhere – oh to be young and foolish again!

I also spent quite some time in preparing for next week's committees and putting some of the finishing touches to the weekend in the Isle of Man,

Finally, I dragged myself out of bed on Friday morning to get to Fishmongers, begowned and badged, by 7.15am in order to collect money for Red Cross. My bus journey which usually takes about 50 minutes to get there, lasted a mere 12 – it's amazing how quickly one can get around before the traffic begins to build up. I did my stint outside London Bridge station. It is quite interesting to see just how invisible one becomes when holding out a charity bucket, also there are fascinating dynamics – it is clear each does better if there is more than one collector at the same place as the second emphasises and encourages giving. We were rewarded with bucks fizz and a

belated breakfast.

## Master's Blog 24

There has been a lot happening in the last couple of weeks, hence no blog last week. We started our work on revising and updating the website and its facilities - a working party with two very good liverymen, Dusan Hamlin and Paul Roche, to assist.

Then the Solicitors had their annual Saint's Day (St. Yves) service at the Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower, followed by a meal at Trinity House. The chapel is well worth a visit. It has two saints (Thomas More and John Fisher) buried there along with three queens (Anne Boleyn, Jane Grey and Catherine Howard) and other historically important persons, and the choir and music are sublime.

We had one of our regular committee days - that is several different committees meet at different times throughout the day. We also had a WET 10 committee.

I've been to two lectures, the first with the Marketors at the Shard where the lecturer was the chairman of, ia, B&Q, who gave a brilliant talk, and the second at the Leadenhall Building was organised by the Architects. That topic was essentially about planning in the City, sightline protection and the City strategy relating to skyscraper buildings. It was fascinating.

Four of us had lunch (courtesy PM Charles Yuill) as a pleasant way of discussing ways of enhancing our charitable activities and encouraging the young.

I dined at Pewterers' where, ia, the late Lord Mayor, Sir Alan Yarrow, spoke about his year in office, attended an excellent lunch at Armourers with the Environmental Cleaners, also a superb dinner at Fishmongers with the Joiners and Ceilers.

Finally, on the eating front, I was invited to help celebrate the Guild of Young Freemen's 40th Anniversary at the Mansion House. So it has been a good time for cementing our links with other liveries and guilds.



In addition to all of the above, I spent a splendid afternoon at a Buckingham Palace garden party. We made it even more fun by lunching at the Athenaeum with several other Masters and their consorts and we finished our day with a civic reception at Pewter Live, which is the Pewterers' annual exhibition of modern pewterers showing their craftsmanship. There were some really stunning items there and I succumbed to temptation with two or three purchases.

The Royal School of Military Engineering at Chatham held its annual reception and beating retreat. We are invited because of our links with the plumbing section where we present an award each year. The ceremony, on the parade ground, was stunning: precision marching and beautiful playing. We were made extremely welcome.

Finally, there was the joyous weekend in Cowes for the Inter-Livery Yacht Match. Our arrangements are organised by PM Mike Swallow. Our entry this year was skippered by the grandson of our PM Chris Sneath, who very creditably pushed his crew into crossing the line second (though we were not in the top three places on handicap) and a cup was awarded for his efforts. It would be good if he were to return to join us next year with his beautiful yacht.

