



Master's Blog #4

I hope you all had a great festive break, wherever you celebrated it. It seems like ages ago; well I suppose it was last year!



January kicked off with the 22/23 Masters' Group lunch at Ironmongers' Hall ((we've still got to choose a name!)), having borrowed the idea from our own Plumbers' Table lunches. As ever, great value in more ways than one.

One of the highlights of the Livery Calendar is the excellent Plaisterers' Masters' & Clerks' New Year dinner. For those who know it, the splendidly decorated Plaisterers' Hall is large enough to accommodate all of us, and 70 Masters and 70 Clerks with our hosts and other guests, nearly 300 in total, sat down to a great dinner, with everyone in fine form. This year, however, the Worshipful Company of Masons decided to hold a Masters' & Clerks' Lunch of their own beforehand at Mercers' Hall, to which Adrian and I were also invited. We were well fed and watered that day!

Another highlight of the Master's year is the tasting at the Mansion House to select the menu for our banquet. Sue, Adrian and I had a most enjoyable time with the catering team. I hope you like what we've selected!

The following Monday it was up bright and early to join the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress at the Barbican Centre for his installation as Rector of the City University, a post the Mayor holds for his/her year in office. The ceremony was followed by the degree presentations from the University Business School. It was interesting to note that the vast majority of recipients were overseas students. And poignantly the last degree was awarded posthumously to the widower of a student, also attended by her parents and her three young children. She had battled with cancer through much of her studies. A standing ovation and not many dry eyes when he came up onto the stage.



The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, City University President and Masters at the Mayor's installation as Rector

The next day was our Court meeting and lunch at the RAF Club. I think it's fair to say we all had a thoroughly enjoyable day, not least Senior Steward Malvern Tippings mother, Eileen, who became our newest Freeman at the grand age of 95 years. Many congratulations Eileen.

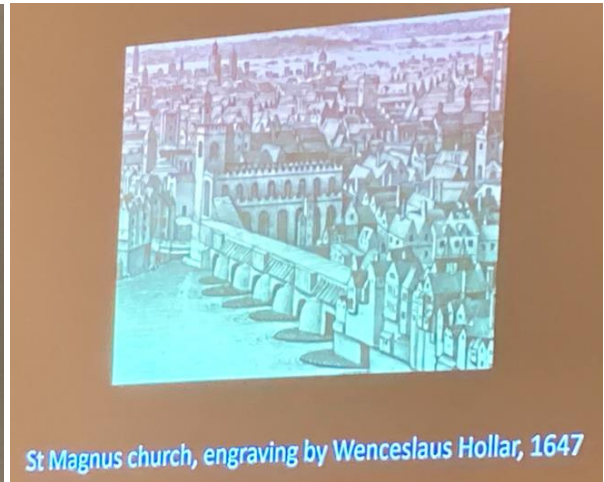
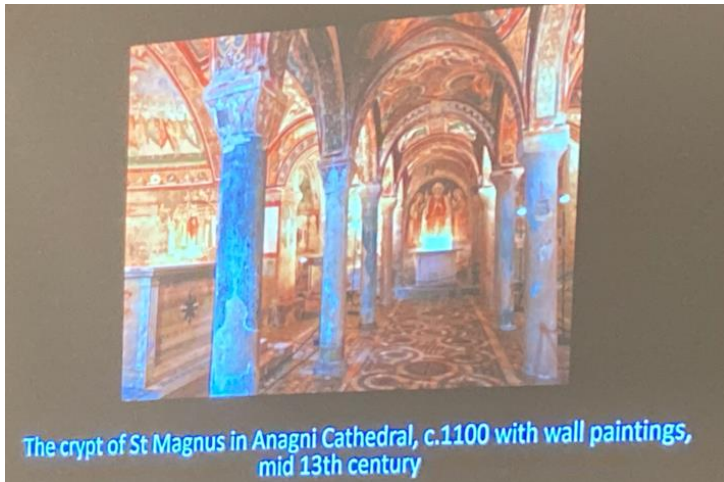


We also admitted five new Liverymen, including a long-term friend of mine Air Cdre Barbara Cooper, who is one of the Trustees of the RAF Club. The hospitality offer by the Club was excellent, not least the stirrup cup after lunch, which finished at 10:30 that evening!

The next day Sue enjoyed a lovely Masters' Consorts' Lunch hosted by the Master Mariner's Consort on HQS Wellington, a unique and iconic Livery Hall moored at the embankment by Temple. That evening I attended the launch of the City of London Chamber of Commerce at the Guildhall Art Gallery. The lead for this initiative is our own Liveryman, Alderman Prem Goyal. I have to say how fascinating it is that the City hasn't had a Chamber of Commerce until now.

My next event was also fascinating, a presentation by Dr Matthew Payne, the Keeper of the Muniments at Westminster Abbey, on the history of our Company Church, St Magnus the Martyr, in the Middle Ages. It was given in the church and streamed live. St Magnus has a fine pre-Wren

history dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. Whilst the church is currently dedicated to St Magnus of Orkney Islands' fame, it was originally dedicated to the Italian St Magnus of Anagni and the St Magnus Crypt in Anagni Cathedral can still be visited. St Magnus of Anagni was "forgotten" during the reformation and the church didn't have a "patron saint" until the current St Magnus was "appointed" in the 18th/19th Century (apologies to Father Philip if my terminology in describing the succession is a little awry). The original pre-Wren church was a fine building too, as we saw from what was described as a very accurate engraving of it from just before the Great Fire of 1666.



SSAFA, the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, one of the main Service Charities held a reception at the Honourable Artillery Company Barracks to thank the Livery movement for its support and to publicise its significant support it gives to our serving and retired Service personnel and their families. It's mentoring and care work costs £18 million a year, and rising!

January finished with as it began with another thoroughly enjoyable social event, our own Lebanese Dinner Party at the Chamisse Lebanese restaurant on Gray's Inn Road, organised by Steward Philippa Stary, and ably assisted by her husband Raed. The restaurant lived up to its excellent reputation and 30 of us enjoyed a wonderfully relaxing evening, with delicious Lebanese fare and drink.



I'm now over a quarter of the way through my year, where's it going? In fun and fellowship! I hope to see you at one of more of our forthcoming events. All the details are on the website on the news and events pages. By the time you read this I will be on my annual skiing holiday, so I look forward to catching up with you in February.

Paul