



The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths

Newsletter

26th Issue

May 2005

Chairman:
Assistant Don Barker FWCB

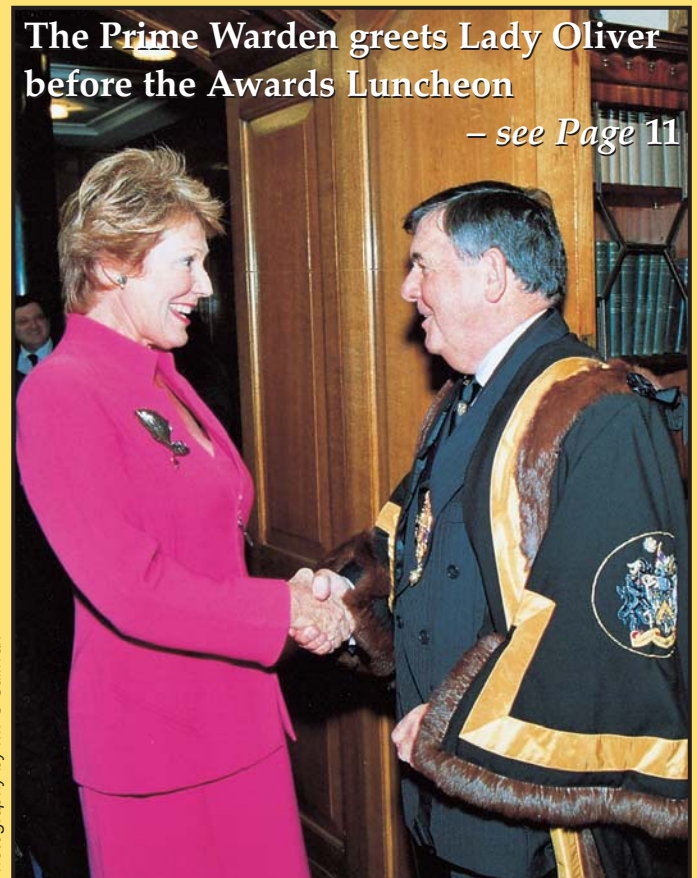
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The Coat
of Arms on the
Blacksmiths Restored Chest – see Page 3

Photography by M. O'Sullivan



The Prime Warden greets Lady Oliver
before the Awards Luncheon
– see Page 11

Photography by M. O'Sullivan

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Photography by R. K. C. Bole

Prime Warden's Commentary

Reflections by the Prime Warden

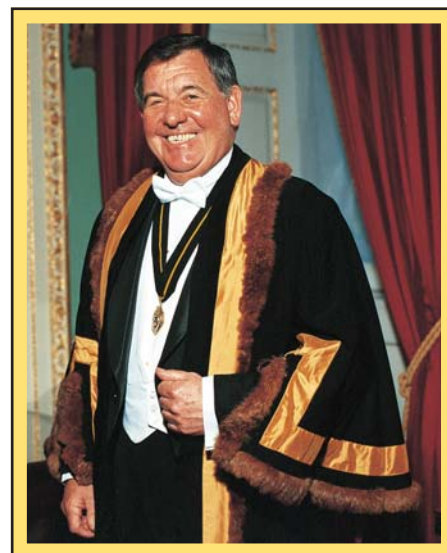
As I write this the Banquet at Mansion House is eagerly awaited and I am delighted that we will be able to greet the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs and their escorts as well as a number of senior figures from the City and the Masters of many Livery Companies. That evening will capture the essence of the main strands of the Prime Warden's year of office.

I was asked by the Editor to share some thoughts of my first eight months as the principle representative of this ancient Company. I appreciate that looking at the list (see below) of events attended makes it seem that wining and dining are the sole purpose.

Our links with other Livery Companies are vital and every Company tends to have its 'circle' of Companies, quite often in affiliated or

comparable trades, where specific contacts are maintained, generally at dinners or luncheons. For our part, we reciprocate hospitality at our Quarterly luncheons and the Banquet. In this way links are re-affirmed and, for the Prime Warden, friendships are made that will last as each year the Past Masters and Prime Wardens form a specific Association for their year.

My year in office already has some outstanding moments, and there are more to come, but to be part of the great City events, such as the Election of the Lord Mayor, Election of the Sheriffs and the great services at St. Paul's remain in the memory. To be part of the procession, gowned and wearing the Prime Warden's badge – which always excites comment – in the company of the Masters, Prime Wardens and Upper Bailiff is a



John Shreeves

Photography by M. O'Sullivan

humbling occasion but also one full of pride representing this Company and all that is best in the City of London.

I most sincerely thank the Wardens, Court and Liverymen who support the Company so enthusiastically and contribute so much to an outstanding year that I will be able to revisit thanks to my scrap-book.

John Shreeves

The Prime Warden's Diary

The Prime Warden has represented the Company at the following events:

Edenbridge and Oxted Show	Presentation of prizes
Apothecaries Company	Installation Dinner
Insurers Company	25th Anniversary Dinner
Vintners Company	Wine lecture and dinner
Election of the Lord Mayor	
Musicians Company	Evensong
Wheelwrights Company	Dinner
Reeds School Appeal	Luncheon
City University School of Arts	Reception at Mansion House
REME	Dinner
Furniture Makers Company	Luncheon
Actuaries Company	Reception
Royal British Legion 'Poppy' ceremony	St Paul's Cathedral
Member of Guard of Honour to greet the Lord Mayor upon his return to Mansion House after the Lord Mayor's Show	
Cutlers Company of London	Dinner
Pewterers Company	Dinner
Dedication of Churchill Screen	St Paul's Cathedral
City University Awards Ceremony	Guildhall
Masters and Clerks address by the Lord Mayor	Mansion House
Farriers Company	Luncheon

The Company Carol Service, held on 17th December, was well attended and we thank The Hon. Chaplain for its content and all the readers for their participation.

The Company's presence, through the Prime Warden, at all these events is very important in maintaining our relationships with the other Livery Companies and supporting the Mayoralty.

The Blacksmiths Chest An important historical artefact restored

I am sure that many Liverymen will have admired the restored Blacksmiths Chest that is now proudly housed at Painter Stainers' Hall. Liveryman Paul Allen carried out the restoration with great care and devotion. The Company is greatly in debt to Paul for his achievement.

It has prompted the Hon Archivist, Past Prime Warden Peter Rayner, to examine the Company's records to try and establish something of its history. The comments that follow are based upon his research and Paul Allen's notes about the restoration.

It can be safely assumed that from a very early date the Company possessed a Chest in which to keep cash and other valuables. The Exchequer used to be a chest, or chests, that accompanied the King everywhere into which collected taxes were put; and out of which payments were made.

One Chest was probably lost in the Great Fire as it would have been too bulky to move easily and quickly. The iron bindings locks etc. probably being among the iron and pewter dug for in the ruins of the Hall after the fire.

There is an entry in the accounts for 1667/68:

"Paid for a chest with three locks and a till (*sic*) in it with a lock, wherein to put the plate, money and writings".

The cost is shown as £7. 5. 0d. and this describes our present Chest.

The three locks are undoubtedly the main features of the chest. Rust had taken hold causing the keyhole cover plates to seize and it was necessary to soak each one in fine oil for three days in order to free them up. They were then dismantled, cleaned and reassembled. Each lock has a different key and although these are no longer available, the wards into which the keys turn are still intact.

They each depict a very different and complex character, consisting of cross and step wards. The pins into which the pinhole at the end of each

key shank fits are very unusual. Normally these are round but on the chest they depict an upside down 'Y', triangle and cross. There is a similar lock plate fixing and keyhole cover plate at Hardwick Hall in Yorkshire. That also dates from the 17th Century.

The Chest, which was placed in the care of the Wardens, three in number (hence the three different locks each requiring a distinct key) could only be opened in the presence of an assembled body of the members.

The woodwork and crest of the

Photography by M. O'Sullivan



The Blacksmiths Chest

Company's coat of arms were cleaned with fine wire wool. It was during this cleaning that the original lettering on the front of the chest became visible and, although somewhat indistinct, it was possible to define the outline of each letter. The woodworm holes were filled and the whole chest was treated.

The Arms on the Chest are post 1610 and when being restored the Company's crest, which is carved from oak, needed repair to the top of the wing and end of the beak. This was then painted with the correct contemporary colours and the letters on the front of the chest were sign written with yellow ochre.

We may have kept the Chest at Guildhall for some years, as there is an entry for 6th October 1701 for:

"Porter removing chest at Guildhall, one shilling".

While in the accounts for 26th August 1786 there is an entry

"Mr Inston, Guildhall, for fixing Company's Chest 18 shillings".

This is, presumably, a repair. On June 28th 1787 we see a further entry relating to the Chest

"Mr Gilbert Howard's bill for painting the chest, £1. 3. 6d."

There is a puzzling entry on 2nd May 1810:

"Gratuity to the men putting locks on company chest 2/6d"

We can only guess that this might have been a repair. Possibly the fixings had come loose or something similar. Whatever the reason the Wardens lost the keys for in 1811 there was paid:

"for opening locks of Company chest 16/6d".

A few entries later:

"for two new keys £1. 16. 0d."

On first inspection the ironwork of the chest seemed in good order. The straps that hold the main body of the chest together were slightly pitted with rust but the iron rivets securing the straps to the chest were still doing their job in holding the chest together. The straps and hinges were cleaned with a

fine wire brush and oiled. The handles at the ends of the chest were also pitted with rust but still in good working order.

Finally, the chest and ironwork were wiped over inside and out with raw linseed oil and polished with wax. While carrying out this work it could be seen that the sides of the chest are made from a single piece of pine and this must have been from a tree of considerable size. It has been estimated that for a piece of pine of that size the tree would have had to be 150-200 years old.

The Chest is a startling reminder of our history and we are grateful to the Master and Wardens of The Worshipful Company of Painter Stainers for allowing it to be so prominently displayed in their Hall.

Christopher Jeal

The Churchill Screen

Spectacular addition to St. Paul's Cathedral

Three great funerals of defenders of Great Britain have taken place at St Paul's Cathedral. They were Admiral Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington and, most recently, Sir Winston Churchill. In the Crypt of the Cathedral there were memorials to Lord Nelson and the Duke but not for Sir Winston. The Dean and Chapter decided to rectify this omission.

A commission was drawn up and the design of Silver Medallist blacksmith James Horrobin, and his team at Doverhay Forge, was successful. The work was executed by James and his fellow blacksmiths and as the photograph shows the Screen is, essentially, a series of gates incorporating the armorial devices relevant to the life of Sir Winston Churchill.

On Tuesday 30th November 2004, the 130th anniversary of his birth, the Screen was dedicated in a short Service attended by HRH The Duke of Kent, Past Prime Ministers, members of the Churchill family and other dignitaries. The Prime Warden represented the Worshipful Company.

The Souvenir Programme was evocative containing some of the most famous words from his wartime speeches including a Motet, composed specially, of the words:

In War: resolution In defeat: defiance
In victory: magnanimity In peace: goodwill

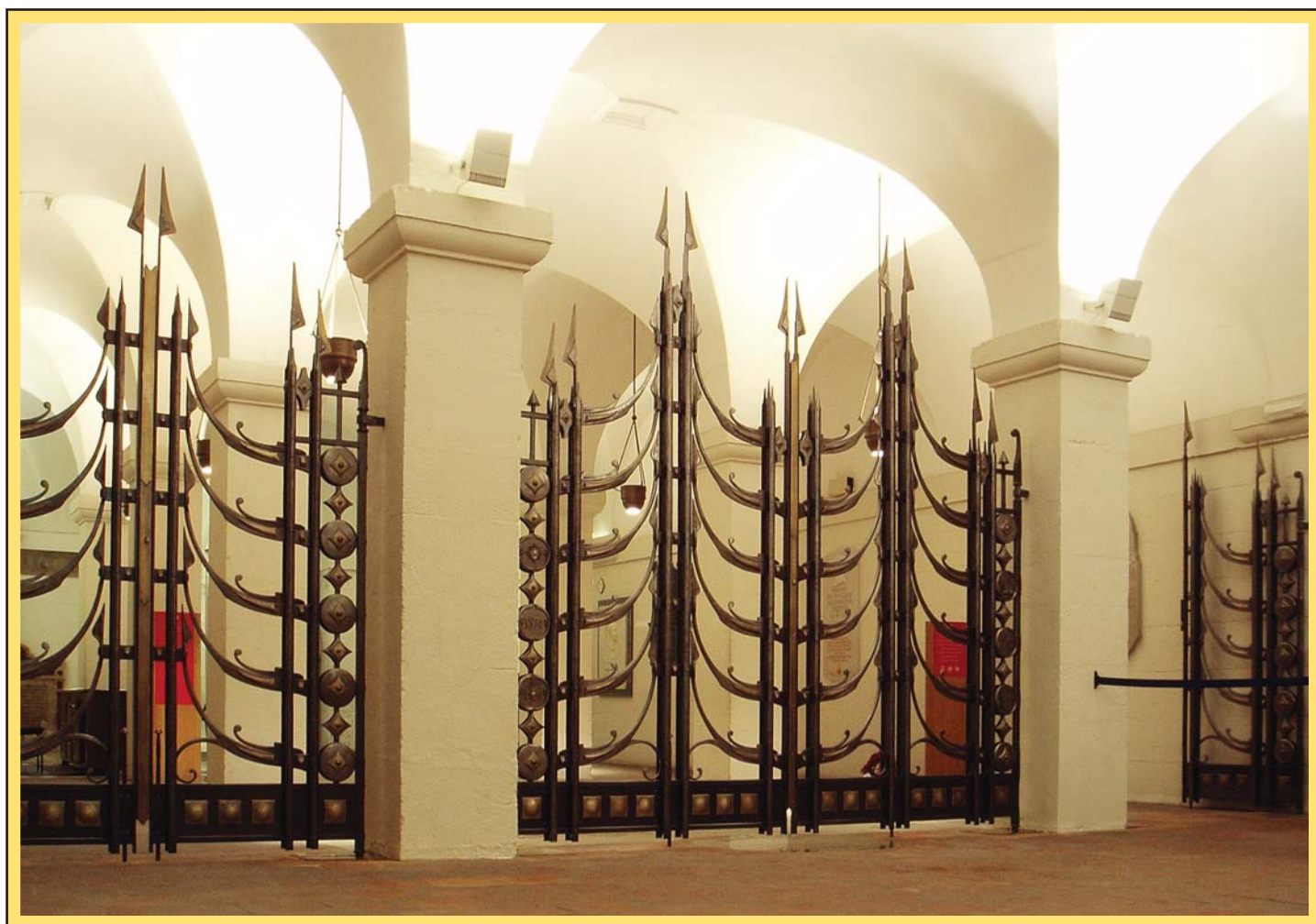
The Battle Hymn of the Republic was also sung, echoing both Sir Winston's American forebears and his own funeral service.

His daughter, Mary Soames, was present and we were reminded of her words in a letter to her father:

In addition to all the feelings a daughter has for a loving, generous father, I owe you what every Englishman, woman and child does – Liberty itself.

A detailed appreciation of the Screen will appear in a future edition of the Newsletter.

Photography by Gabrielle Ridler & Artist Blacksmith Magazine



Bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar

21st October 2005

RNLI Reception

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution arguably enjoys a higher reputation than any other charity. Its City of London Region (Chairman, Alderman David Brewer) benefits from wide support in the City and the Region is currently seeking to raise the sum of £1,000,000 to provide a new Lifeboat – called *City of London III* – to be based at Sennen Cove.

This year will mark the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar probably one of the most important sea battles and the one that introduced Admiral Lord Nelson to the pantheon of British military heroes. The unique skill of the Faberge family is the final thread between the City, the RNLI, the Livery Companies, and Trafalgar.

To mark the bi-centenary Theo Faberge, the only living grandson of the Russian Imperial Jeweller Carl Faberge, has created a limited number of Trafalgar Eggs. They are to be offered for sale at a minimum price of £10,000 with £5,000 being donated to the *City of London III* Appeal. The Eggs are a fine example of the traditional Faberge skill as the photograph clearly illustrates.

To support the City of London Region of the RNLI the Company sponsored a Reception and Charity Auction of Trafalgar Egg number five on Thursday 27th January 2005 at Apothecaries' Hall (by kind permission of the Master). In addition to the egg there were two other auction lots namely, **Lot 1** Champagne/Port/Rugby **Lot 2** One week's holiday for ten people in a Cottage in Cornwall.

Before the auction Mr Terry George (Coxswain, Sennen Cove Lifeboat) gave a talk about the Lifeboat Station and showed his own video that graphically illustrated the sea around that part of the Cornish coast and the skill and fearlessness of the Lifeboat-men. Afterwards Rear Admiral John Lang outlined the attributes that Lord Nelson brought to the management of his officers and crew and why they were so devoted to him. Suddenly, Admiral Lord Nelson himself joined him, wearing his full uniform, to speak about some of his naval engagements.

Trafalgar Egg



Nelson wearing the hat and coat he wore at the Battle of Trafalgar

After a short talk by Philip Berkenstein, an expert on Faberge and the family, he then conducted a lively auction for all three lots with the Egg Number Five finally being sold for £12,000 (that meant £7,000 for the Appeal). The purchaser not only gained the Egg but an invitation for two people to dine on HMS Victory to celebrate the bi-centenary.

The three auction lots raised a total of £10,600. One further Egg was sold that evening and, in addition, the Prime Warden requested that the proceeds of the collection at the Company's Carol Service should be donated to the Appeal. This means that the total raised by The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths amounted to £15,863.

It was a most enjoyable and convivial evening that was not only enjoyed by all present but, more importantly, raised funds for the *City of London III* Appeal.

Should anybody wish to purchase an Egg, without the excitement of an auction, I know that the Clerk will be pleased to supply details.

LANDLUBBER

It was reported that a group of French people were being shown around HMS Victory and, while on the gun deck, one of the visitors pointed to a pile of cannon balls and asked if

they had been used at the Battle of Trafalgar. Immediately the sailor who was acting as a guide responded "Oh no! You have still got all those".

FRIDAY

FRIDAY - LINKS WITH ANCIENT GUILD REVIVED

The Guild of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen of Exeter has its earliest Ordinances dated 1483 but there is evidence of the existence of an important woollen industry at the start of the thirteenth century. Exeter was one of the most important ports for the export of woollen cloth, and it was estimated that in Tudor times it was the fourth biggest port in England.

Like our own Company the Master and Wardens were given responsibility for the quality of output and control of Members of the Guild. In the Elizabethan and early Stuart times it was estimated that the Guild numbered about one hundred skilled craftsmen comprising, with their workforce, one in ten of the adult male population of the City. However, for the marketing of their cloth abroad they relied on the merchants with whose wealth and local status they could not compete.

To free the members of the constraints of the City of Exeter the Guild secured its first Charter in 1620 from James I (another common feature with this Company) and a great deal of freedom to manage its affairs and hold property was secured.

The Company's heyday coincided with that of cloth manufacture in Exeter and by 1700 some 300,000 cloths a year were exported from Exeter representing one-quarter of

the total English cloth trade.

Companion of the Worshipful Company John Parkin is a Past Master of the Guild and it was his idea that this Company should visit Exeter in October 2004 to learn more about the Guild and meet its Court. By happy co-incidence his son, Henry, was Master.

On Friday 8th October the Wardens, the Clerk and their escorts were the Guests of the Incorporation at their historic Tuckers Hall. This site was originally the chapel of the Fraternity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary alias the Gild (*sic*) of Weavers, Fullers (or Tuckers) and Shearmen. The Hall continues to house many artefacts of the Guild and is a very evocative building and we were privileged to be able to be there.

A splendid evening was enjoyed with a meal consisting of courses made from local products. The speeches were short and witty while great friendship was rapidly established at table. The Prime Warden presented a plaque of the Company's Coat of Arms and a copy of our Charter of 1604 as mementos of the evening.

A first class occasion but that was only the start of our involvement with the Members of the Incorporation.

Saturday would see us in competition at Westpoint!

The Guild of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen of Wessex is an association of blacksmiths with the aim of enhancing their craft, exchanging ideas and helping train and develop other smiths. Many Liverymen blacksmiths are members and the most important annual award is the Frank Day Trophy presented in memory of that outstanding smith. The Worshipful Company is the proud possessor of examples of his skill.

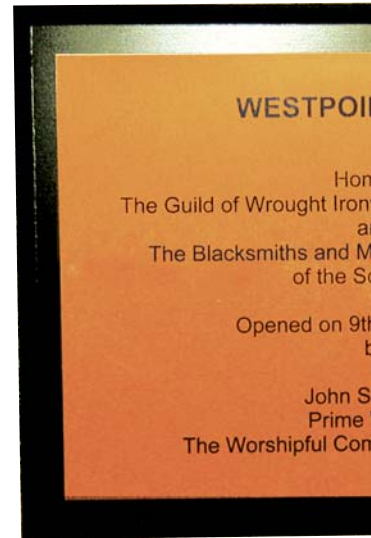
For many years the Guild has been seeking an independent base from which it could offer its courses and to act as a focal point for meetings and the exchange of information. Over many years negotiations have been in progress with the Committee of the Devon and Exeter Agricultural Association with a view to having a permanent site on the Westpoint Showground. This would aid the presentation of the blacksmiths at the Annual County Show as well as

providing a first-class facility for use by the Guild throughout the year.

It was appropriate that a successful arrangement could be concluded in the year that John Parkin was Chairman of the Show Committee. His family have run blacksmithing companies in Exeter for, at least, four generations.

The building had been erected, secured, and thanks to great efforts by members the facilities were in place, fires and anvils installed by late on Friday 8th October for the formal opening ceremony the next day. Obviously such a momentous event had to be marked by a titanic (or should that be volcanic) blacksmithing competition. So it was that representatives of The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths found themselves in competition with members of the Guild of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen of Exeter. It seemed that the outcome might depend on who had the least hangover

Wardens Vi



Photography by

Photography by City of Exeter



The Lord Mayor, Prime Warden and Henry Parkin

SATURDAY

SATURDAY - NEW HOM

from the dinner the previous evening.

Not daunted all the contestants looked on as Richard Jones showed what it was we were to make and how to set about it. After the first phase and with goggles, gloves and an experienced blacksmith as mentor and guide we took our places at an anvil. There were cries of 'foul' immediately as the Worshipful Company all appeared in identical polo shirts with the Company's crest. However, sartorial elegance and colour co-ordination would not sway the Judge, Silver Medallist Bill Morris.

Fortified by cups of tea or coffee, amply supplied by the ladies of the Guild, we heated iron, beat metal, split and generally tried to look competent. The working smiths were most generous and refrained from laughing aloud. Half time was called and we all went to the Diggers Arms for a light lunch.

Immediately upon our return to Westpoint the formal business of the

Visit to Exeter

SUNDAY

SUNDAY – THE LORD MAYOR OF EXETER

The Church of St Peter in Exeter is better known as Exeter Cathedral. That was the Church where we were due to meet the Members of the Incorporation but there was a unique element.

By permission of the Acting Dean of the Cathedral the representatives of the Company and the Incorporation had been invited by the Lord Mayor of Exeter, Councillor Mrs Hilda Sterry, to join the Civic procession from the ancient Exeter Guildhall to the Cathedral for Matins. Led by the City Sword, the Mace and the Tudor Hat (presented to the City by King Henry viii) we processed, all gowned, side-by-side with the Members of the Court of the Incorporation. We also had a police escort and as we moved down the busy High Street one bystander was heard to remark to another "No, I don't know what its all about but this is England."

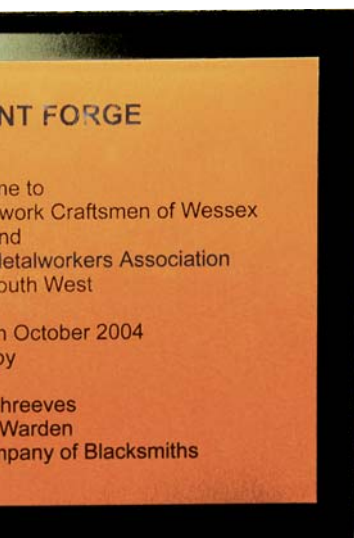
We were greeted at the West Door by the Acting Dean, Cannon Neil Collings, and Chapter of the Cathedral and were conducted to our seats in the stalls by the High Altar. A Service, specially dedicated to the Company and the Incorporation, of hymns beautifully sung by the Cathedral Choristers and readings followed. We were treated to an uplifting sermon by Cannon Collings in which he outlined the history of blacksmiths in Exeter and how great ecclesiastical buildings, with their craftsmanship, were an endeavour by man to reach God.

After the service the procession reformed (with our escorts) and we returned to the Guildhall for coffee. That did not complete the Civic element as the Lord Mayor, and her consort, had agreed to join the members of the Company and the Incorporation for a buffet luncheon at the hotel.

Another very social occasion ended when, as promised, the Prime Warden and Clerk accompanied Mrs Sterry to her car precisely at 1.45 p.m. to ensure that she was not late for her next appointment. Then it was time for farewells at the end of a packed but highly enjoyable weekend.

There are so many people to thank from the Guild, the Civic party and the Incorporation but special congratulations must go to John Parkin. The weekend was his idea and he made all the arrangements.

John's contribution to his family business and blacksmiths, his work for the Worshipful Company as an enthusiastic member of the Craft Committee, his involvement with the Guild of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen, his commitment to the Incorporation, his participation in Devon life through the Devon and Exeter Agricultural Association and his devotion to Exeter (where until recently he was a Magistrate) all came together to provide a weekend that will long live in the annals of this ancient Company.



R. K. C. Bole

Photography by City of Exeter



The Lord Mayor and the Prime Warden

RDAY

ME FOR BLACKSMITHS

day took place. The Master of the Guild, John Bellamy, praised all those who had worked hard to bring the dream of a permanent site into reality. He then invited the Prime Warden to unveil the Plaque commemorating the event combined with the Worshipful Company's Coat of Arms.

For his part, John Shreeves echoed the sentiments of the Master and said how proud Liverymen of the Worshipful Company were to be associated with a Company that had such a vibrant and important craft. He was just beginning to appreciate the true skill levels and how, as with all consummate professionals, the working blacksmiths made it all look so simple.

The Master's reference to Frank Day reminded the Prime Warden that at a Dinner only the previous Thursday he was sitting next to Sir Edward Du Cann who immediately started talking in the warmest possible terms about Frank.

Then it was back to Richard and the next stages in the manufacture. Oh yes, a toasting fork was the piece being made.

At the end of the afternoon the ten finished items were laid out, anonymously, for Bill Morris to judge. He took a long time considering each piece most carefully and commending everybody. Then came his wise judgement: toasting fork number five was declared the winner. Among further cries of 'foul' it was revealed that the winning piece was the product of the efforts of the Learned Clerk.

The Reserve was made by the Fourth Warden John Barber although the influence of his assistant, Denise Axelsen the 2004 National Championship Blacksmith, was called into question. The piece produced by Henry Parkin was declared the best of the Incorporation.

It was a wonderful day of fun, hard work, education and, with the opening, formality. We were all most grateful to the Members of The Guild

of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen of Wessex, and their partners, for making us so welcome and being so forgiving of our lack of skill.

So we left Westpoint but still there was more *bonhomie* with the Members of the Incorporation and their partners.

This time there was no competition as the Prime Warden and Jean hosted an informal dinner at the Southgate Hotel in Exeter where the Company's party was staying. Another friendly evening was enjoyed with representatives of the Incorporation and we bade them goodnight saying that we would see them in Church on Sunday.

The gentlemen from the Company repaired to the hotel bar to discuss important Company matters. Application for details of their heroism when the hotel fire alarms went off should be made to the ladies in the party!

Christopher Jeal

The Tonypandy Cup

Triumph of traditional skills

Viscount Tonypandy, better known as George Thomas when the Speaker of the House of Commons, was an Honorary Member of the Court of Assistants of The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths. After he died, and to mark his association with this Company, a Cup was donated by Past Prime Warden Lt. Col Delwyn Dennis which may be presented annually for an outstanding example of the blacksmith's craft.

It is one of the Company's most prestigious awards. The Panel will call upon specialists to help in the evaluation of work suggested to them. The members of the Panel are always pleased to receive suggestions of outstanding pieces of work for consideration.

Upon his election as Lord Mayor The Worshipful Company of Ironmongers, his Mother Company, decided to present Sir Michael Oliver with a replica of the Sword of State of the City of London that is borne before the Lord Mayor on ceremonial occasions. This also reflected Sir Michael's interest in swords which he collects.

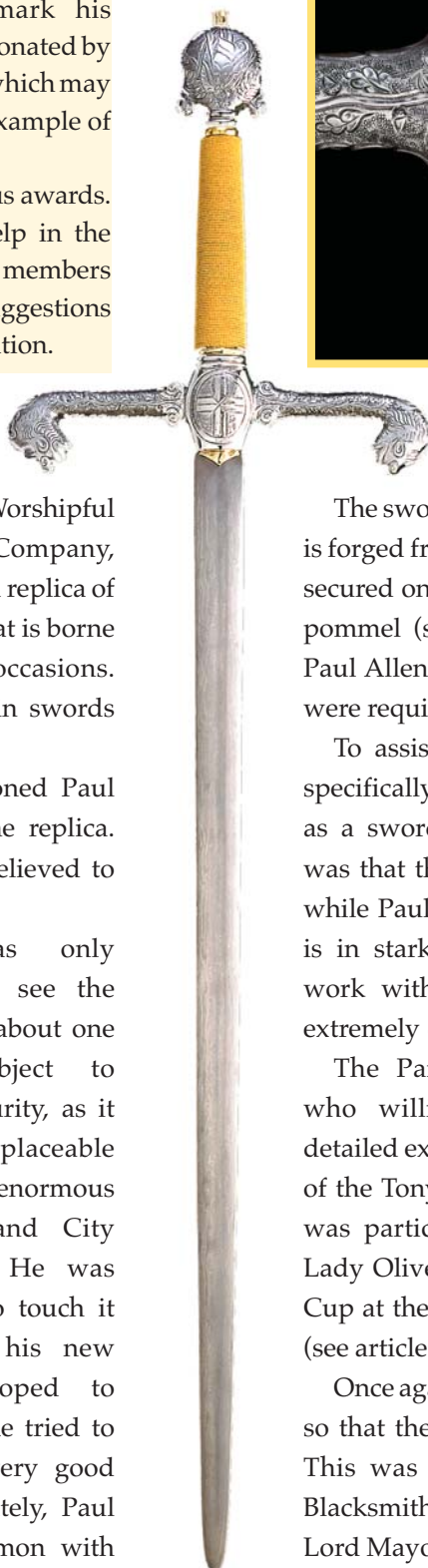
The Ironmongers Company commissioned Paul Allen to produce the replica.

The original is believed to date from 1680.

Paul was only allowed to see the Sword for about one hour, subject to heavy security, as it is an irreplaceable artefact of enormous historical and City importance. He was not allowed to touch it

but thanks to his new digital camera hoped to

have excellent images. However, when he tried to reproduce the pictures only four, not very good quality, shots had been secured. Fortunately, Paul had made extensive notes and, in common with many good craftsmen, enjoys an excellent memory.



The sword was extremely complicated to make as it is forged from Damascus steel, with 9 carat gold braid secured on the grip and detailed filigree work on the pommel (see accompanying photographs taken by Paul Allen). It meant that very advanced techniques were required to make a perfect replica.

To assist the Panel Liveryman Hector Cole was specifically invited to be a member for his expertise as a swordsmith. What impressed the Panel most was that the original handle was gold, a soft metal, while Paul had to forge it in mild steel. Its hardness is in stark contrast to gold thus meaning that to work with it and copy the original pattern was extremely demanding.

The Panel was most grateful to Sir Michael who willingly made the sword available for detailed examination. The Court endorsed the award of the Tonypandy Cup for 2004 to Paul Allen and it was particularly gratifying that Sir Michael, with Lady Oliver, agreed to make the presentation of the Cup at the Michaelmas Court and Awards luncheon (see article on page 11).

Once again Sir Michael brought the sword with him so that the Livery and their guests could inspect it. This was the second time that it had been at a Blacksmiths' Company event because, when he was Lord Mayor, Sir Michael allowed it to be displayed at our Annual Banquet, which he attended.

Awards Luncheon

The Company salutes the achievements of blacksmiths

The capacity of Painter Stainers' Hall was tested on Thursday 30th September when over 170 people attended the Awards luncheon. After an excellent luncheon the Prime Warden rose to give details of the 14 recipients of awards.

Ian Baxter collected his Diploma of Merit while we were pleased to learn that the Blacksmiths Army Cup had again generated a great deal of interest and that a close competition had been won by Sergeant Andrew Price of REME

The Paul Allen Award is a coveted prize for NETS (New Entrants Training Scheme) students at the National School of Blacksmithing. As Paul Allen, the donor, also runs the courses the winner has to be able to show a high level of dedication and attainment. It was David Stephenson who showed those characteristics as the 2004 winner. The National School was represented by Gareth Thomas as winner of the Stanley Allcard Cup while students at Warwickshire College receive their acknowledgement through the John Webb Cup. Robert Comerford was successful in 2004.

Four Bronze Medals had been awarded. Liverymen Clive Mockford and Godfrey South with Avril Wilson and Roland Hall all received their medals from Third Warden John Smith who, until recently, was Chairman of the Craft Committee.

Photography by M. O'Sullivan



Sir Michael Oliver and Paul Allen

The static and live competitions at the County shows offer blacksmiths the opportunity to display their skills both immediately at the show and through the more 'relaxed' conditions at their own forges. Denise Axelsen won the National Championship Blacksmith competition which involves forging live and

to a strict timetable: while Roland Hall was the Reserve.

It was not possible to separate two smiths for the static work that they exhibited and so Richard Jones and Richard Hillam shared the award as Champion Blacksmith.

The Tonypandy Cup (see article on page 8) is the Company's most prestigious award and the standard required to secure the accolade from the judges is extremely high. It is a testament to the strength of the craft and the ingenuity of its practitioners that new pieces can be found each year without reducing the integrity of the assessment process. Paul Allen won the award for 2004 and it was a great honour to the Company that the former Lord Mayor Sir Michael Oliver, for whom the replica City Sword was commissioned, made the presentation. His speech showed just how enthusiastic he is about his collection of swords and how important the replica of the City Sword is to him. It was a most happy occasion and it was a pleasure for Liverymen and their guests to salute the varied work and skills of blacksmiths.

High-Flying Member of Court

Assistant Emeritus Leslie McGowan takes to the skies

Most of us would contemplate celebrating our 92nd birthday with a quiet cup of tea, a slice of cake and the greetings of friends; but not for Assistant Emeritus Leslie McGowan! On 29th September 2004 he went on a balloon flight just five days after his birthday.

The flight took place from Manor Farm near Bearsted in Kent. Despite the need to enter the basket while it was laying on its side, Leslie was soon aboard for the flight and could admire the patchwork of fields, major buildings and the coastline as the balloon gained height. After about an hour the balloon returned to earth with a

small bump and the passengers could disembark and enjoy champagne and a snack.

Not content with 'mass' travel Leslie subsequently engaged on a flight in a glider. The plane gained up to 2500 feet during the flight and Leslie took control for over thirty minutes. The instructor complimented his skill in handling the glider. Having tasted the thrill of powerless flight he is keen to fly again.

We congratulate Leslie not only on these achievements but also his zest for life and enthusiasm for The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths which he supports so avidly.

Visitors Centre at Thiepval

A moving day of recollection

The monument by Sir Edward Lutyens to the 73,757 soldiers who fought on the Somme and whose bodies have never been found sits alone in the silent and brooding atmosphere of the French fields and regrown woods. It was realised recently that after 80 years people visiting were asking not so much “why?” as “what?” So a decision was taken by both the French and the British that a Visitors’ Centre should be built at Thiepval to explain to visitors the purpose of the Monument.

Funds were raised and the Company made a contribution to the appeal. In due course everything was complete and the Centre was formally opened by HRH the Duke of Kent on Monday 27th September 2004.

Official guests were limited to 350 British and 150 French. Two tickets were allocated to the Company but the Prime Warden very generously waived his right to represent the Company in favour of Past Prime Warden Clifford Champion and myself.

The event was not a military one but was organised along military lines. We started from Waterloo on a special Eurostar train named for the occasion “Entente Cordiale”. Breakfast was served as soon as we moved off. Every carriage had a Guards NCO to look after us and assist in moving us from train to coach and back again. Very efficient and very necessary as a Eurostar train had never stopped at Haute Picardy before and so it had to go on to Paris to ‘park’. During the latter part of the journey we passed through some of the Somme battle sites and received a commentary on the various actions. In one place the train tracks actually ran over the site of the front line trenches.

Military cemeteries could be seen in many places and the atmosphere became even more subdued. The coaches, with police motorcycle escort of twelve, arrived on time and we transferred to the marquee where refreshments were served whilst waiting for the Royal party to arrive: they travelled on the train with us. By now the peculiar Northern French mist/drizzle had started and everything began to get damp.

Soon everyone was assembled and we received three speeches in French, from the President du Conseil

General de la Somme, the Mayor of Thiepval and the Prefet de la Region Picardie and the Duke of Kent’s in English. There were also representatives from Australia and Canada. To demonstrate reconciliation the Duke of Gottenburg was also an official guest. As space around the Centre was very limited we all watched on closed circuit television whilst only the Ceremonial party moved to the Centre. His Royal Highness was assisted by two young children, an English boy and a French girl both of whom had Great Uncles die on the Somme.

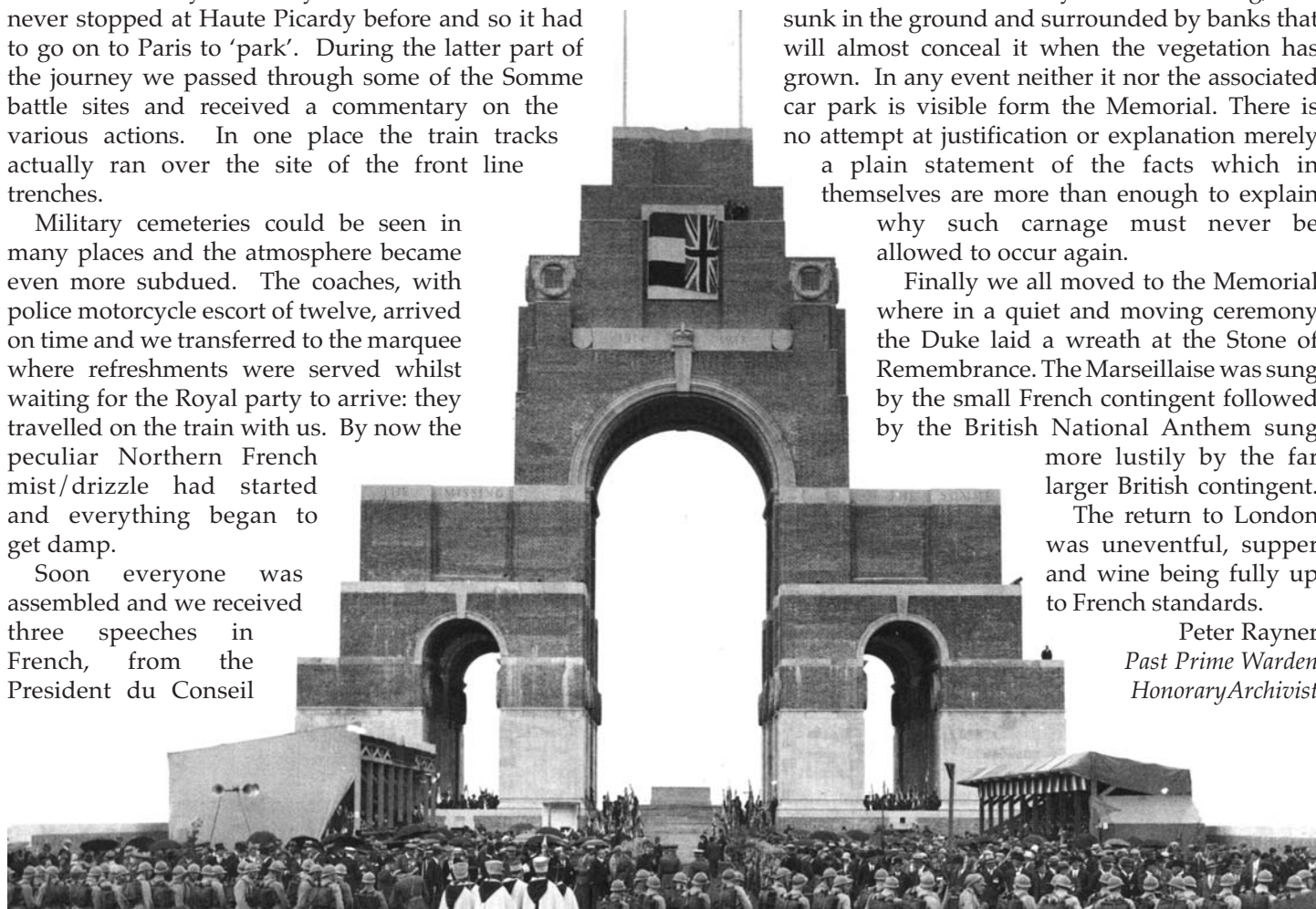
During luncheon there was an appropriate programme of music from the Band of the Grenadier Guards, Thetford Grammar School band and Thiepval Town Band. We were then allowed to visit the Centre in our own time. During this period the Duke of Kent was taken round the marquee to meet various people. I was honoured to be selected, largely because of my Past Prime Warden’s badge that I had been instructed to wear. Although security was extremely tight it was very discreet and HRH was accompanied by only one Aide. Whilst with me the Aide was called away and I was left responsible for the Duke for several minutes. I don’t know who was more worried! He told me that already visitors, including parties of schoolchildren, were arriving; more British than French at the moment.

The Centre is a suitably modest building, half sunk in the ground and surrounded by banks that will almost conceal it when the vegetation has grown. In any event neither it nor the associated car park is visible from the Memorial. There is no attempt at justification or explanation merely a plain statement of the facts which in themselves are more than enough to explain why such carnage must never be allowed to occur again.

Finally we all moved to the Memorial where in a quiet and moving ceremony the Duke laid a wreath at the Stone of Remembrance. The Marseillaise was sung by the small French contingent followed by the British National Anthem sung more lustily by the far larger British contingent.

The return to London was uneventful, supper and wine being fully up to French standards.

Peter Rayner
Past Prime Warden
Honorary Archivist



Unveiling of the Thiepval Memorial, 31st July 1932

New Liverymen

Nicola Cebak was admitted as a Liveryman at the Epiphany Court. She has been a Freeman since 2002 when she was admitted by Patrimony when her father, Peter Allcard, was Prime Warden. Nicola is a Project Manager with Datapost and becomes the fourth generation of the Allcard family to be a Liveryman.

On the same occasion **Simon John Curtis** was admitted to the Livery. Based at Newmarket Simon is a Farrier and a distinguished lecturer on the craft. He was Master of the Farriers' Company in 2002 when he was a joint host at the Jubilee Dinner organised by our two Companies. He was sponsored by Past Prime Warden Peter Allcard and Simon adds to the existing links between the Blacksmiths and Farriers with Assistant 'Mac' Head and Liveryman Les Armstrong.

Other family ties were also extended at the Epiphany Court with the admission of **Edward James Stearns**. He is the Great Nephew of the Father of the Company, Dr John Beale, and the 24th Edition of the Newsletter set out his other family connections. Edward works as a Journalist with the Daily Mail and we are pleased to welcome him to the Company.

At the Ladyday Court the admission of **Hugo William Monrad Sanders** completed what could be described as the 'historical' means of attaining the Livery. He was apprenticed in August 2000 to his father, Liveryman Lt. Col. John Sanders and, having completed his term, was admitted as a Freeman at the Epiphany Court. Having received the Freedom of the City Hugo was able to present himself on Ladyday and was clothed as a Liveryman.

As he pointed out to the Court he is the fourth generation of his family to be Liverymen.

Family links were also evident in the admission of **Daniell Timothy Morrissey**. He was nominated by his father Liveryman Patrick Morrissey a retired working blacksmith. Daniell works as a recruitment manager with the BBC.

Ladyday Court also saw **Richard Stewart Gough** admitted to the Livery, sponsored by John Knox. Becoming a Liveryman returned Richard to his City links, as he had been a commodities trader. Now he is the director of a boat-building company.

We are pleased to welcome all our new Liverymen and look forward to seeing them at many Company events.

New Members of the Court

Robert Guy SHILLINGFORD MBE MBA was admitted to the Livery in 1963. He had been elected to the Court of Common Council, for the ward of Vintry, in 1961 and when he retired in 1978 he had completed seventeen years continuous service. He found time, despite this commitment, to manage the family paper merchanting business.

He is also the senior Past Deputy Master of the Honourable The Irish Society, which is the senior of all the Corporation Committees (an article in the last Newsletter gave more information about the Society). A Past Lord Mayor has to be the Governor.

Because of his commitment to the City of London and constant promotion of The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths and its best interests the Court approved his appointment as an Honorary Member of the

Court. He was admitted at the Ladyday Court meeting.

A widower Bob now lives at Morden College, Blackheath an institution that also has extensive involvement with the City of London because, as decided by Sir John Morden, the Trustees have to be appointed from the Court of Aldermen.

There were two Court vacancies for Assistants to be filled at the Epiphany Court meeting.

Adrian Peter OLIVER BSc FRICS is a Chartered Surveyor and was admitted to the Livery in 1978. He is self-employed and lives in Caterham. Married with two children he has many City involvements.

Christopher John CHILDS CEng BSc MIMechE is a former Submarine Engineer officer who specialised in nuclear propulsion, a skill he carried into his post service career with Babcock International.

Obituaries

Arthur Sage

Arthur Sage, who died on 29th December aged 82, was admitted to the Livery in 1975. Throughout his membership of the Company he made a contribution to our affairs and, until only recently, in two important areas.

He was Secretary of the Craft Committee and managed the Company Awards process while also acting as Secretary of the National Blacksmiths Competition Committee. In both responsibilities

he helped strengthen the ties between working blacksmiths and the Worshipful Company. He was a well-known figure on the Company's stand at county shows.

However, his most important and enduring contribution was his development of full colour for the Newsletter and the attainment of a 'house style'. I believe that it makes our Newsletter fully comparable and as professional as the others that we see.

The Company has lost the services of a remarkable man and we extend our sympathies to his family. We are pleased that his son, Richard, is a Liveryman and is contributing to the Company's affairs by his membership of the Finance Committee and as Webmaster where he shows the same attention to detail and design flair as his father.

James Latham
Past Prime Warden

Ian Pennington

We also have to record the death of Ian Pennington in early December. Like his father he was a distinguished engineer and was admitted to the Livery in 1980, the nominee of his father, Alfred, who was Prime Warden in 1984.

Leslie John Pym

Leslie John Pym CBE, who died in January, was admitted to the Livery in 1988. His working life concluded as senior manager with Barclays Bank. However it was his community involvement, as Mayor of Barnet, that led to wider recognition of his commitment and achievements.

We extend our sympathies to all the families with thanks for the contribution that has been made to this Company by their loved ones.

Company Diary

Prime Warden's Weekend	13th – 15th May	2005
Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy Service	17th May	2005
Wardens Court	26th May	2005
Election of Sheriffs	24th June	2005
Midsummer Court and Luncheon	30th June	2005
Election Court	28th July	2005
Wardens Court	1st September	2005
Election of the Lord Mayor	29th September	2005
Michaelmas Court and Awards Luncheon	6th October	2005
Lord Mayor's Show	12th November	2005
Wardens Court	24th November	2005
Carol Service	16th December	2005



Barge banner

Photography by M. O'Sullivan

The Lord Mayor's Show Company to enter a Float

The Company will enter a float in the Lord Mayor's Show this year. The Prime Warden is leading a small working party to see that this venture is a success. While plans have yet to be finalised we are working on a float that will have blacksmiths working with real fire as they forge metal, musicians, the Prime Warden and Wardens plus a display of ironwork.

One feature that we hope to incorporate is the Company's Barge Banner, shown in the accompanying

photograph. Believed to be an 18th century artefact it is over 18ft long and was probably used the last time the Company took part. That was when Company barges would sail on the Thames to accompany the new Lord Mayor on his journey to Westminster to swear the Oath.

The ties to secure it to the barge are clearly visible and this would have ensured that it did not trail in the water. We can find no note that we ever owned a barge and must presume that we hired one.

Obviously the original Banner, which is stored in the Museum of London, cannot be used but reproductions will be incorporated into the Float.

A full description of our participation is planned for the Autumn Newsletter. In good time before the Show the Clerk will be writing to seek volunteers from Liverymen, and working smiths, to walk with the Float. The overall distance is 3.5 miles.

Christopher Jeal

Climbing the Equator Challenge met and funds raised

In the last edition we outlined the plans of Liveryman Neville Shulman CBE to climb four mountains in South America. These were:

Pinchincha	15,729 feet	(4795m)
Iliniza Norte	16,815 feet	(5217m)
Cotopaxi	19,348 feet	(5910m)
Chimborazo	20,696 feet	(6310m)

He was successful, although reading just the summary of his efforts makes one appreciate what a tremendous technical feat, as well as one of endurance, this expedition proved to be. Neville overcame the difficulties and raised over £100,000 for the NCH George Thomas Society in

support of NCH special work at Penhurst School in Chipping Norton for children with severe disabilities.

In the New Years Honours list he was advanced to Commander of the British Empire (from OBE) in recognition for his work as Chairman of the George Thomas Educational Trust and his fund raising achievements. This is certainly an instance where the honours system can give wider recognition to the achievements of an individual.

Our congratulations to Neville on his private attainments, as well as the public acclaim, and wonder if he is about to exchange climbing boots for carpet slippers.

www.blacksmithscompany.org.uk