



The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths

Newsletter
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Editor:
Merv Allen

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Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths, 9 Little Trinity Lane, London EC4V 2AD
www.blacksmithscompany.org • Tel: 020 7248 1861

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First Words from your Editor Merv Allen FWCB

'BY HAMMER AND HAND ALL ARTS DO STAND'

The Company motto poetically endorsed in 17th Century verse

*'The anvil and the hammer you behold
Above the which is plac't a crown of gold,
The badges of their honour let's us see
All other traids to their's are pedantrie'*

Quoted in 'The Blacksmiths' History';
Tuckett, A. Lawrence and Wishart Ltd. 1974

Welcome to the latest edition of your Newsletter and many thanks to all those who have contributed.

During the summer, the craft shows are in full swing with many of the country's finest blacksmiths competing for the titles of National Live and National Champion. The backing of the WCB is vital to the continued success of these events, so I would encourage all to visit at least one show during the season to provide your support and to see the outstanding quality of work being produced. A list of the remaining

shows appears on the back page and further details of the competitions can be found at the National Blacksmithing Competition website www.blacksmithscompetition.co.uk.

I would also draw your attention to the article concerning the Poppy Cenotaph Project to be held during 2016 in the Belgian town of Ypres. This important event promises to be the greatest gathering of smiths ever assembled for a single project and will provide a lasting memorial to all those who were involved and influenced by the First World War Western Front conflict.

Please note that from now on, the newsletter will be published in August and January. This will permit the August edition to be in phase with the start of the new Prime Warden's year.

As always please send me stories, photos or other items of interest. If you need any assistance I will be pleased to help out.

Enjoy your summer and I hope to meet you at a WCB event during the year.

metalwizard@btinternet.com

Medieval Poem

This ancient rhyme was given to Mr. Jarvis Browning by the late Dr. Basil Cottle, Professor of English at Bristol University and is reproduced by kind permission of Gill Harris, Editor of Forge Magazine.

Swarthy, sooty smiths smutted with smike are driving me to death with the din of their dents.

No one has ever heard such a noise at night.

What shouting of knaves and clattering of bangs!

The snubnosed changelings shriek out for 'coal, coal!' and blow their bellows till all their brains burst,

'Huff, puff!' Says one; 'Haff, paff!' says the other.

They spit and lounge around and tell lots of yarns, chew and gnash their teeth, groan in unison, and keep themselves hot with herd hammers. Their aprons are made of bull-hide, their legs are garnered against sparks.

They have heavy hammers that are toughly wielded; they strike rough blows on a steel anvil.

'Luss, buss! Lass, dass!' they roar in turn.

May the devil make off with such grim noise!

The boss lengthens a little piece, belabours a smaller one, twists them together, and strikes a treble note.

'Tick, tack! Hick, hack! Ticket, Tacket! Tick, tack! Luss, buss! Lass, das!' – that's the life they lead!

May Christ give sorrow to all horse-clothers!

No man can get his rest at night because of water-sizzles!

Mick Maxen

Our front page shows a selection of outstanding work by WCB Silver Medal Award Holder Mick Maxen FWCB.

Inscription Damascus: The photo shows a small section of 50mm x 20mm bar that is 350mm long and 8mm thick. The bar has 'Maxen' running through it in a similar way to the writing in a stick of rock.

Pattern Welded Trinket Boxes: Sizes range from 75mm to 50mm in diameter.

Pipe Tomahawk: The overall length is 560mm. The hawk head is 200 mm long with a 75mm blade and has been filed to shape from a bar of 400+layers of pattern welded steel. The piece is fully functioning as the Curly Maple handle has been drilled out for the smoke

hole and the octagonal shape is the pipe bowl. The oval plate with the Buffalo Horn smoke hole stopper has been made from Mick's Inscription Damascus which again has his name running through it.

Swallow Tail Arrow Head: The arrow length is 110mm and 45mm across the tails. The pattern welded edge has been forged welded to a 10mm mild steel socket.

My Year as Prime Warden – Mike Shepherd Reflects on his Year in Office

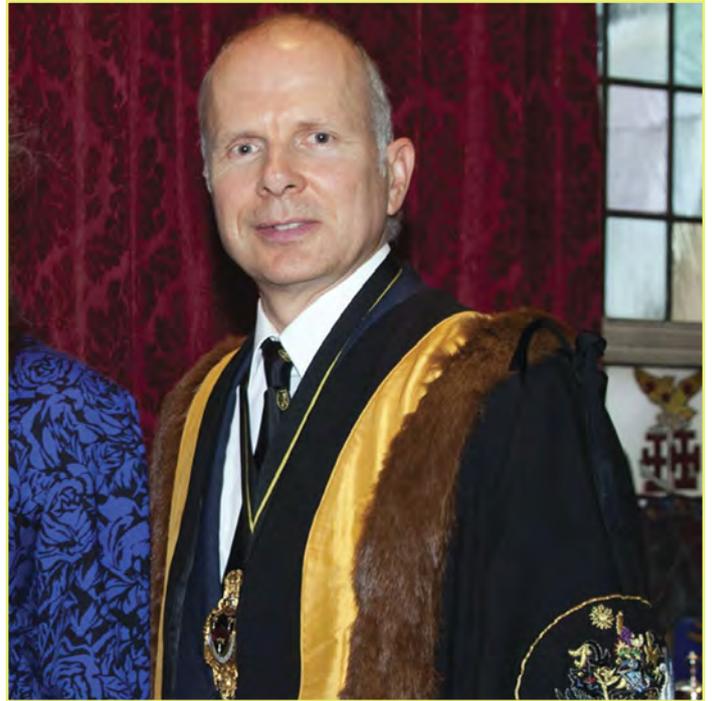
It doesn't seem possible that 12 months have passed since starting my tenure in office. It has been an amazing year with a rollercoaster of emotions, which I hadn't expected. I exceeded 140 events this year. When you consider that an 'event' could be an hour meeting or a two and a half day trip it makes it difficult to quantify, but to say the least, I have been busy. My busiest day saw five events: 08:30 a champagne breakfast, 11:30 processing in the Sheriffs Election at the Guildhall, 12:45 another champagne reception followed by lunch, 15:15 back to Guildhall Yard for the Armed Forces day raising of the flag followed by a full cream tea, 18:45 another champagne reception followed by a sumptuous dinner at the Merchant Taylors. All great fun, if a little tiring. Other days I have had four committee meetings in one day so it is not all partying.

We have been led this year by a vivacious Mayoral team. The Mayor and Sheriffs have been respectful of their office in the City, but also recognising the need to be fun. This has filtered down to all the Masters, Prime Wardens and Upper Bailiff and has meant that the functions have all been light hearted and highly enjoyable. There has certainly been a fun feel to the City.

Early on in the year I went to the Treloar's School fund raising annual Mansion House banquet. It was a splendid event and always a pleasure to be at Mansion House. After the champagne reception we were seated in the Egyptian hall for dinner, it was packed. There were a couple of speeches and then 4 of the students, with severe disabilities and in wheelchairs, sang various songs to us. The last song was a duet by two girls, "We are beautiful, no matter what they say"; there wasn't a dry eye in the house. What a way to start a fund raising event. Everyone just got their cheque books out and handed them over!

One of my other favourites for the year was the Sheriffs' Breakfast. The Sheriffs have the formal ceremony of hand over from the ceding Sheriffs and then go on to a lunch to celebrate. The lunch was a morning suit affair at the Merchant Taylors Hall. The food and wine was, of course, wonderful, but the company and conversation was outstanding. Rarely do you get so many people with so many letters after their name in one place at the same time. When I saw the number of speeches my heart sank, but all of them were expertly written and some very humorous. Quite an exceptional event.

Whilst all of the events in the City are enjoyable, our own Awards Lunch stands out for me. It is a baptism of fire for the new Prime Warden as it is the first event over which he presides. The hall was packed and this year we were fortunate enough to have the Lord Mayor with us. We are a Livery that still has an active trade and we are right to be proud of that fact. Many Livery companies are envious of us for our connection with our trade. The handing out of awards to the top Blacksmiths gave me the greatest pleasure. This was repeated at the County shows that I attended where I gave out the prizes for those competing at the shows. It is imperative that we continue to grow this



relationship and I hope that I have done my part in showing the Livery's accessibility to the trade.

At several events the Livery companies combined to show their support. These included the United Guilds Service at St. Pauls, the opening of the Garden of Remembrance, also at St. Pauls and the elections of the Sheriffs and Lord Mayor to name but a few. On each of these occasions I felt great pity for the organisers as herding cats would appear to be much easier. Still, it is a huge honour to process and to represent our Livery Company.

My year couldn't have happened without the support of my family. As many of you know, my wife, Lara, became ill with Fibromyalgia a matter of months before I took office. This meant that it was difficult for her to attend many of the functions. My daughter, Elizabeth, who has Chronic Fatigue/ME, stepped in as did both of my sisters. There are a number of Consort only events as well as events to which we are both invited and it was essential that we didn't let the side down. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to all four consorts. Thank you for all of your help.

I have had a wonderful team within the Blacksmiths Livery as well. Our new Learned Clerk had the unenviable task of learning on the job, with very little training. Martin has simply been outstanding and whilst there may well have been some "gliding swan" on occasions, he never let the pressure show and has been a tower of strength, thank you. My team of Wardens and the Father of the Company have also been stalwart supporters and a Prime Warden couldn't have asked for a better team. Thank you gentlemen. I also thank all who have attended the many events and made my year such a pleasure. Hopefully I hand the Livery over in good stead for the incoming Prime Warden. Nigel, I wish you every success in your year.

The Court Meetings Adrian Oliver

To give a change of scenery the Prime Warden decided that our **Epiphany Court** would be held at the Tallow Chandlers in their beautiful 'new hall' close by Cannon Street station. 'New' because it was built



in 1668 to replace their 'old' hall that burnt down in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The Prime Warden cut the traditional Epiphany cake, which was entirely consumed with the coffee at the end of our excellent lunch.



The **Lady Day Court** was held at the Pewterer's Hall, to the writer's mind one of the 'shiniest' of the Livery halls. Anyone who thinks of pewter as a dull grey metal should see their gleaming displays showing how pewter should be kept. The writer so enjoyed the company and lunch that he forgot to take a photograph.



www.pewterers.org.uk

For the **Mid-Summer Court** it was back to the Painter Stainers Hall for the Court meeting followed by dinner. The idea of holding this Court meeting in the afternoon followed by a dinner is to give an opportunity of attending to those unable to take a long lunch.

At the Court meeting we admitted Alastair King as an Assistant to the Court. He is the first of our tranche of new Assistants who will bring fresh blood to the Court, more about this in our next Newsletter.



This year we went back to our religious roots, and possibly started a new tradition, by holding a Church service between the Court Meeting and the dinner. The service was composed by the Father of the Company, Brian Land. The Court processed through the streets in full robes from the Painter Stainers to St James Garlickhythe, to the amazement of tourists and the studied indifference of Londoners. There we were joined by a number of guests and our Honorary Chaplin Rev Anthony Berry joined with the Father and the Priest-in-charge Guy Treweek in leading a concise and personal service for the Company. We were graced by Alderman, Sheriff and Liveryman Dr Andrew Parmley upon the organ, and thank him for fitting us into his hectic diary. We then processed back to the Painter Stainers for an excellent dinner.



The **Election Court** was held at the Innholder's Hall. The Prime Warden, Michael Shepherd spoke of how much he had enjoyed his year in office and thanked his Wardens for their support. He announced his intention to fund an annual training event for Blacksmiths for the next three years on the subject of marketing.

Nigel Whitehead was then elected Prime Warden for the year ahead and installed by Michael Shepherd. Richard Regan was elected Renter Warden and installed by the new Prime Warden. Jash Joshi was elected and installed as Craft Warden. Michael Shepherd was elected and installed as Third Warden.

'The River Flows'

2014 WCB Tonypandy Cup Winner Andy Hopper reports on his Award Winning Project

When I began this project in 2009 I had no idea of the difficult times that it would see me through in 2010/2011.

I was initially approached by a contractor to design a contemporary staircase handrail. An architect's firm had offered up an artistically but physically frail drawing. This was a licence to assert a Blacksmith's view on things!

This piece is located in a large Georgian property near Winchester the property having had a complete refit around six years ago. The exterior kept its Georgian Architectural style whilst the interior is completely modern, maintaining Georgian proportions but with clean white spaces. This presents an excellent opportunity for a contemporary design and as the property boasts the River Test running right through the estate adjacent to the house this seemed the perfect inspiration for the design; a very substantial linear building style beautifully contrasted with effortless flowing lines right in the heart of the home. Polished forged stainless steel and bronze were the perfect material choice for the application.

Through a very lengthy process involving various concept drawings and two sample panels, a final design was agreed upon. I prefer to deal directly with clients but was denied that privilege in this instance. Client meetings are crucial to me. They allow an opportunity to gauge the client's tastes fully and get a real feel for what is necessary to design the work correctly. However, once the work was completed I had the pleasure of becoming better acquainted with the client.

To me, good design is about positive and negative space; without one you don't have the other. Positive lines through negative space relate to each other and allow room for a mutual existence; they must have purpose and intent. I design purely with pencil and paper and work at a large scale of A0. The flow of my body and my arm to my hand creates flowing lines that have emotion embedded within them. They have a story to tell; the work should be alive.

The whole piece of work is 8.3m long. There is 49m of forged section; 13m of 'Coldur A' silicon bronze and 36m of 316L stainless steel. Every single millimetre of section was forged under a 2cwt power hammer to the required profiles. The bronze had to be laboriously forged from

round to flat bar and then to the profiles which when finished, tapered in both planes. I set the curves in the flat plane under a 50ton hydraulic press then made them 3D over a correct radius former with an oxy-acetylene torch. After this stage, by using a series of grit sanding pads, the stainless steel was taken to a 'satine' finish and the bronze all the way to a mirror finish.

Finally, swinging from art to maths and back, I had everything in place to connect the sections together. It was only through putting my trust in the full size drawing, the true line measurements and the carefully measured and checked profiles, that I could be sure that everything would fit together. This really is the reason to spend time and put in the hard work at the design stage. One can trust ones drawing as it is the true datum and this job had to fit; there could be no adjustments.

On completion of the forge work, I had a single finished piece which I very reluctantly had to cut into two in order to facilitate transit and fitting. For reconnection, I created five very neat half laps with grub screws.

What a lot of work I made for myself. This was an extremely complex structure, but I love a challenge and am pleased to report that after all the hard work and careful preparation the work fitted like a hand in a glove.

I extend my thanks to Master Farrier and Blacksmith Bernie Tidmarsh, Master Blacksmith Iain Whitefield and Master Blacksmith Brian Russell for being truly inspirational. Also, a special thank you to Supreme Master Blacksmith Mike Roberts who has been incredibly supportive to me when it really mattered. And thank you to the WCB for the Award; I am honoured.

I designed and made this piece of work whilst going through extremely difficult personal circumstances. It helped me work through those times and kept my feet on the ground. I dedicate the work to my late partner Lisa in loving memory.



Concerning the Tonypandy Cup

Past Prime Warden Lt. Colonel Delwyn Dennis, presented this Cup to the Company in 1998. It was given in memory of Lord Tonypandy (George Thomas, Speaker of the House of Commons) who was an Honorary Member of the

Court of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths.

The Cup may be awarded annually for a piece which is considered to be an outstanding example of the skill of a blacksmith or blacksmiths. The Company welcomes suggestions

from any source for work which meets the criteria 'outstanding'. A special panel of judges has been set up to assess the nominated pieces.

Nominations, incorporating as much information as possible should be sent to the Clerk of the Company.

Reflections and Reminiscences Christopher Jeal

First of all I must thank everybody who so generously contributed to my 'farewell' gift. I was quite overwhelmed by the total value of John Lewis vouchers presented to me at the Midsummer Court Dinner last year. There have been numerous successful and enjoyable visits to John Lewis in the Bluewater shopping centre.

I thought that mementos were finished until Hugh Adams presented to me a book containing tributes and thanks from many of the working blacksmiths; that was very special.

I thought I should let some time elapse before trying to set out some thoughts and reminiscences about my time as Clerk so here they are in no particular order.

Sixteen years and sixteen Prime Wardens each of whom brought his own style to the office. The one common strand was a determination to advance the Worshipful Company and to enjoy the year. I have often been asked who was the easiest and who the most demanding. However, it would be quite inappropriate to say except that they were all interesting!

There were so many City occasions, luncheons and dinners that to pick one or more is difficult. To represent the Company was a wonderful part of the job and the many and varied people I sat with always ensured an interesting occasion. The speeches were sometimes informative, sometimes humorous and – it has to be said – some were frankly boring.

The annual United Guilds Service at St Paul's Cathedral was always a splendid event. As the Masters, Prime Wardens, Wardens from all Livery Companies plus Liverymen and Clerks milled around with just a few minutes before the Service was due to start it seemed unlikely that order could ever ensue. Invariably it did and silence fell as the dignitaries arrived. I would strongly recommend any liveryman who had not attended to try and go to the Service at least once to see the City at its best.

The various Prime Warden's weekends were always challenging and interesting. Just mentioning the name of the Worshipful Company seemed to open many doors and enabled us to visit interesting places that were often not usually accessible. While there were many special moments I suppose the most incongruous was when we visited Fowey. The formal Saturday evening dinner was in a historic house but it was realised that our large coach would not be able to gain access close to the venue. The solution was found by using the Asda Store shopping bus. The sight of Members of the Company in their dinner suits with the ladies in their finery setting off in this unusual mode of transport will stay long in the memory.

Our participation in the 2005 Lord Mayor's Show to celebrate David Brewer's installation was a major event in the Company's history (although it has been achieved again under Adrian Oliver). In 2005 the main feature was the live forging that took place on the Float itself requiring fires to be taken though the streets of the City. An emotive requirement as the memories of 1666 still seems to exist.

It was my responsibility to write the risk assessment and steps to be taken in an emergency, which had to be approved by the Pageantmaster's agent. Fortunately my words were



Chris receiving his 'Book of Tributes'. Left to right are Past Prime Warden Don Barker FWCB, Prime Warden Nigel Whitehead, Christopher Jeal, Past Prime Warden Hugh Adams CWCB

accepted and our splendid Float took to the streets and was greatly appreciated by the crowds.

While the activities of the Livery Companies are many and varied few have an underlying craft. It is the existence of the art and mystery of the blacksmiths that is the envy of many Companies. It was always a pleasure to try and point out the varied nature of the craft and its creations. I found getting to know the blacksmiths and gaining an appreciation of their knowledge and skills most rewarding.

That the Company continues to support and encourage student blacksmiths is very important.

No thoughts on the blacksmiths would be complete without a reference to the various Awards Luncheons and the achievements of so many 'smiths. The one that stands out to me is the very first for which I was responsible. James Latham, the Prime Warden, was to present Gold Medals to Ron Carter and 'Tommy' Tucker. The noise of applause, foot stamping, table banging and cheering for those two stalwarts as they came to receive their Medals was something that I had never experienced before. It certainly enforced on a 'green' Clerk just what the attainments and skills in the craft meant to its practitioners.

As well as supporting the craft the other main element of the Company's raison d'être is to support the Lord Mayor and the City. We might be 40th in order of precedence and far from being a large Company but the respect enjoyed by the Blacksmiths within the City is enormous. Every Prime Warden has ensured this is enhanced and the frequent presence of the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs and the full Civic Party at our Annual Banquet is an endorsement of our reputation.

An element of the Company is its family links. There are many examples and it would be dangerous to try and mention some for fear of offending those not included. This strength allied to the breadth of professions and interests within the Livery makes for a diverse membership and ensures interesting discussion at luncheons and dinners. It has been a pleasure to get to know so many Liverymen as they have progressed through the various stages of introduction.

While welcoming so many it is inevitable that we have lost distinguished Members of the Court and Liverymen over the years. Their contributions may have been significant or through quiet support but all have added to the strength of the Company.

Looking back the overriding sensation is that it has been a pleasure to have been able to be Clerk of the Company. It has given me a wonderful opportunity to meet and work with so many delightful people both in the Company itself, fellow Clerks and representatives of the City. I look forward to many years supporting the Company as a Liveryman and to enjoy being part of the unique organisation that is The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths.

Our New Prime Warden – Nigel Whitehead

Having left school at the age of sixteen, Nigel has enjoyed an unremarkable but lived an enjoyable life. Before leaving full time education he was offered a place at RAF Halton to be trained as an aircraft engineer but, under pressure from friends doing their National Service at that time, he was persuaded not to sign up. Despite the high qualifications then stipulated, none of which he had, he was employed by Coutts & Co. the bankers. He recalls being interviewed by two very impressive gentlemen resplendent in frockcoats whilst he, though tidily dressed, was sporting a quarter inch crewcut (it was the era of the teddy boy). He was however offered a job starting three weeks later as the youngest clerk ever employed by the Bank and was politely told that “the Bank does like its staff to wear partings in their hair”! In his first year he was given time off to attend the World Scout Jamboree as one of two Queen’s Scouts selected to represent

Royal Eltham in S E London. Shortly after starting his work in the City of London Nigel joined the Honourable Artillery Company in which he spent many enjoyable moments.

The Coutts’ training was an excellent introduction to the world of commerce and eventually Nigel chose the path of surveying for a full time career and worked with one of the then major national firms for sixteen years before joining a friend who had set up a practice with its principal office based in the City.

Nigel is happily married to Marion, a professional musician, and this year they celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary. He shares her interest in music and, in years past, has been the “roadie”, transporting her and her harpsichord to concert venues.

Nigel serves on the Grants Committee of the Friends of the Kent Churches, is a trustee of the Kent & Medway Young Musicians Trust and is a member of his local Conservation Area Advisory Committee which



enables him to indulge his appreciation of architecture and the church in the English landscape.

A passion shared with his wife is a love of Italy where, for twenty five years, they have kept a home and have established a lasting friendship with an Italian family, the maternal grandfather of which was an artist blacksmith.

New Year Honour for Sir David Brewer

We are delighted to report that Sir David Brewer has been appointed Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (CVO) in the 2015 New Year Honours for his services as Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London.

In 2005/6 Sir David served his term of office as Lord Mayor of London and has been Her Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant since 2008. In addition, he is a Past Prime Warden of our Company, Past Master of the Worshipful

Company of Merchant Taylors and a Liveryman of the Insurers Company.

We extend our congratulations to Sir David and grateful thanks for his continued commitment to our Company and Craft.

Editors Note: The Royal Victorian Order is a personal gift of the monarch and was established in 1896 by Queen Victoria. The honour is a dynastic order of knighthood which recognises distinguished personal service to the Order’s Sovereign.

Hector Cole FWCB MBE

I collected my MBE from Her Majesty at Windsor Castle which suited me fine as I was able to see the superb collection of arms and armour there. The day was well organised and everything ran like clockwork.

My family and I arrived at the castle after being subjected to a full security search of our car and its contents. Once inside, I was whisked off to another room along with all the other recipients to be briefed on the procedure for the ceremony. We were then filed out in batches to await our turn to receive our appropriate

award. Having received my award and handshake, I left the Waterloo Chamber and was taken out for a press photograph and interview. We were then allowed to visit all the State rooms and see the many works of art on display before having the official photographs taken. All in all, a memorable day that my family and I will never forget.

I am sure that all in the Company and beyond, will join me in congratulating Hector on being recognised in the New Year’s Honours list. Hector, a master arrow and bladesmith received his MBE for Services to Heritage Crafts – (Ed.)



The Prime Warden's Weekend Susan Miller

Our Prime Warden, Mike Shepherd made an excellent choice of venue for the weekend in Danesfield House; a beautiful and romantic house, now a luxury hotel – quintessentially British, overlooking the River Thames. Set high, within 65 acres of gardens and commanding views across the Thames to the Chiltern Hills the House has a unique history and has gained its present name from adventurous, nomadic Danes who settled on the site to hunt the ample game and to use flint from the chalk cliffs. A remnant of the ramparts of a prehistoric fortification also remains.

Guests were able to wander around the grounds and formal gardens, enjoy relaxing on the Wisteria edged terrace and visit the lovely spa and spacious pool. We all met up for pre-dinner drinks in the Great Hall where our Prime Warden, accompanied by his lovely wife Lara, and son and daughter Ben and Elizabeth, cordially greeted us. As always, this weekend is an excellent opportunity to socialise with other

The Saturday activities began with an excellent leisurely full English breakfast and our party was joined by additional weekend guests before we all boarded the coach to Henley on Thames for our trip on the New Orleans Paddle Steamer. Once aboard, we enjoyed a wonderful cruise travelling the Royal Regatta course in style. Preparations for the Regatta were underway, with racing lanes marked out to remind us of the serious competition to come. We passed through a lock and lowered the funnels to traverse under low bridges. On the top deck in the sunshine, we viewed water meadows and opulent waterside residences. Many and various local craft were also on the water, some being beautifully festooned with floral displays as part of Henley's fringe version of Chelsea Flower Show! Our Blue badge guide pointed out: landmarks, an abundance of Red Kites, wildfowl, plus the homes of extrovert yet reclusive celebrities.

After a light lunch, we were back ashore. The majority of us headed off

admirably named Trojan crew whose task was even more impressive with missing limbs; four servicemen with only five legs between them! Also displayed were a finely polished old wooden Thames Skiff, Canadian canoe and the first Steam Launch to be built for the Umpires on the Thames in 1876.

All of this would have made us long to get out onto the river – if we hadn't already! Another highlight at the museum was the Wind in the Willows 3D model exhibition. Scenes from Kenneth Grahame's much loved tale were magically depicted. Adrian and Jane Oliver were very impressive with their knowledge of the book!

The Gala Dinner was preceded by a reception held on the terrace in the evening sunlight and further members having travelled from afar to join us. Apparently George Clooney and his wife chose the setting to celebrate their wedding – and now the venue was hosting the Worshipful Company confirming its appeal! We moved into the Chiltern Suite for more gastronomic delights, stimulating conversation and plentiful good wine. Mike Shepherd's additional provision of lovely floral, candlelit table decorations added to the ambience. Mike Roberts, a Gold Medal blacksmith, informally presented the Prime Warden with a bronze letter opener he had made; a superb example of the Craft. Following a wonderful time once again incentive was strangely lacking to head for the bar! However, a few of us ladies, on passing by the magnificent Versailles Ballroom, did have a brief dance with decorum of course!

Sunday morning saw us in the Chiltern Suite once more for a hearty breakfast. It seemed, yet again, that there had been no takers for the Prime Warden and the Clerks' kind offer of a 5.30am run, followed by PT....maybe next year. Afterwards, farewells were said to a few long distance travellers, and the remainder of us were given a talk by the General Manager on the varied history of Danesfield House. There had been two previous houses on the site rebuilt before it was requisitioned by the Royal Air Force as the base to develop their intelligence section for



Befriending a local

members of the Livery; to get to know brief acquaintances better and to catch up with old friends alike.

A very pleasurable informal dinner followed in the Henley Room. A 'Small Luxury Hotel of the World' with a Michelin Star did us proud with a delicious menu and attentive service. We wine and dined so well that I believe the tradition of putting the world to right at the bar had to be skipped!

to the Riverside Rowing Museum; the only such dedicated to the history of rowing in the country. Consisting of three galleries, it displayed an abundance of information including: details of an ancient Greek Trireme, Sir Mathew Pinsent's very large shoes in the 2000 Olympic boat, the story of Olympic rowing, film footage from early 20th century Boat Races, the boat used to row the Channel in 1911 and a recent Atlantic crossing by an

Reconnaissance and Photography. The base was known as RAF Medmenham and the notorious Hell Fire Club was formed. It offered probably the most luxurious Officers' Mess in the country and was responsible for photo interpretation during WW11. An archive of 4,000 of these photographs of allied assaults on D-Day plus bombing raids over Germany, are now available to view online. They can be found at www.aerial.rcahms.gov.uk.

Our history talk also included tales of the resident ghost, the Grey Lady. It was a little late in the weekend to warn us but please report any sightings to the Prime Warden. Events were rounded up with a tour of the gardens. These had been completely restored and renovated since 1989, maintaining original Topiary, Box, Lavender of English and French origin and stunning, scented Wisteria. There was also Clematis, Choisya, Chimonanthus, Arbutus 'Strawberry'



A high standard of dress was maintained

Tree and a 'Tulip' tree.

Sadly, all too soon, it was time to say our goodbyes and wish everyone a safe journey home. Thank you Mike for arranging a wonderful weekend, also to Lara for your warm welcome.

The organisation for 'The Weekend' in 2016 is well under way, thanks to our next Prime Warden, Nigel Whitehead, when we look forward to joining him and his wife Marion in Coventry.

Albert McKenzie VC – Progress Report

Nigel Whitehead

On a bright, sunny Saturday in mid-April Kevin Boys FWCB was host to the many guests attending his Forge at the Surrey Docks Farm located beside the Thames. The occasion had been organised so that members of the public could see for themselves the progress being made in the construction of the public memorial to Albert McKenzie RN, a local Bermondsey boy, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallant action in a raid on Zeebrugge on St. George's Day 1918. Many of those present were given an opportunity to participate in the making of a webbing strap, in steel, that will become part of the finished statue.

Attention to detail in the creation of the statue has been an important element in the process and the Imperial War Museum, consulted on a detail of the Lewis gun carried by Albert, explained that the model depicted was not correct being of a Belgian type not the British one that Albert would have had. As a result parts of the gun had to be remade.

Despite the sunshine there was a cold wind but a plentiful supply of food and hot drinks kept everyone in good humour. Among the many guests attending were members of the Oxford & Bermondsey Club. The Club was formed in the nineteenth century by John Stansfield for boys living in Bermondsey to teach them independence and to take care of their health. It had many off-shoots and one such was the Decimus Club of which Albert McKenzie VC had been a member.



Magazine and barrel of the Lewis gun

The conception of the Albert McKenzie VC Memorial came from members of the Oxford & Bermondsey Club who have given tremendous support to the venture, both practically and financially. Because several members are ex-military, particularly Naval, approaches were made to Her Majesty's Royal Navy for any backing they could provide. They did and how! Lord West, Admiral of the Fleet, took up the cudgel, as did Simon Hughes who was the local Member of Parliament for Bermondsey at the onset of this adventure, and both have given all-round, magnificent support.

All of us outsiders who have taken an interest in the project in any form, are now looking forward to the ceremonial presentation in the not too distant future.

Visit to Theakston's Brewery Hugh Adams CWCB

At the Great Yorkshire Show of 2014, I became quite pally with one Jonathan Manby who is the resident full time cooper at the Theakston Brewery based at Masham, North Yorkshire. During the course of conversation, I made the observation that some of the tools being used in the live cooping demonstration looked pretty well worn. Jonathan said that he did not know how he would be able to replace them once their life was over. The name Simon Grant-Jones immediately sprang to mind. Simon is a member of the Blacksmiths Company and holder of the FWCB and has an interest in reproducing authentic tools of various trades used in bygone years. I made some not very good drawings and photographs of a 'Knocker Upper' and a 'Block Hook' in the hope that Simon could replicate them. He did, producing two splendid and practical pieces of work. Simon suggested that I might be able to use them for promoting the Blacksmiths Company so I phoned Jonathan with an update of the news and he very kindly invited me and our editor, Merv Allen FWCB to

attend a small presentation ceremony at Theakston Brewery. It should be noted that we did not really want to go, but we thought we had better see it through, who wants to spend all day being entertained in a brewery?

We were made very welcome by the reception staff and by Jonathan himself. Shortly afterwards we were joined by Mr. Simon Theakston, Executive Director of the Brewery, Chair of the Yorkshire Agricultural

Society and Liveryman of the Brewers Company.

Our thanks go to all the personnel and staff of Theakstons for such a warm welcome and a most interesting day. Thanks also go to Simon Grant-Jones for producing 'the goods'. Personally, I am all for building up plenty of 'entente cordial' with the Theakston Brewery. I can almost feel a summer holiday coming on in Masham!



In the Theakston's Bar with the Knocker Upper are left to right: Simon Theakston, Hugh Adams CWCB, Jonathon Mansby and Merv Allen FWCB

The Magic Circle Visit Liveryman David Watts

The Blacksmiths' foray into the world of magic on the 10th February was a great success. The occasion was sold out and many of you missed a very special evening of magic, mystery and illusion.

The evening began with a light meal and wine in a pleasant old pub only a short walk from the Magic Circle theatre and museum. The theatre itself, quite understated from the outside, was surprisingly different inside. Upon entry we were confronted with a strange winding staircase adorned with hundreds of saucer-like objects leading up to four separate floors, each of which held a few surprises. The walls, staircase and ceilings were all adorned with pictures and details of most of the world's greatest magicians and illusionists past and present, including of course the great Houdini.

The museum, situated on the first floor housed many more fascinating and some quite baffling pieces of magical paraphernalia, including the late great Tommy Cooper's ball and cups trick. There was also a mystery clock, that kept perfect time with no visible signs of a working mechanism, springs, or any mechanical assistance. Even the magic circle staff couldn't explain how it worked.

After looking around the museum, we were treated to a dazzling introductory impromptu show by various magicians with a face to face performance of sleight of hand and mind reading tricks from approximately six feet away. Quite remarkable for them to have achieved that level of skill in such close proximity to their audience.

The climax of the evening was of course the main show, held in a

small and intimate theatre set further up the staircase on the third floor.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the very varied and at times extremely humorous production. The highlight for me was the rather large and rotund compere dressed in black with what looked like a very round and polished head. He asked the audience to concentrate upon a moving circular card that he was holding and then to look straight at him, at which point his head appeared to grow by fifty percent. A trick of the eyes? Who knows, but it was certainly a treat for us to enjoy something different in a unique and intimate world not usually available to the public. Many thanks to Mike Shepherd for arranging this very enjoyable evening.



Nevis Gates Past Prime Warden Don Barker

Some years ago while manning the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths' stand at the Great Yorkshire Show, we were approached by a gentleman who said he owned the only hotel on the island of Nevis and needed some gates to keep the wild donkeys out of the hotel grounds. We were happy to oblige and duly made the gates although he did decline our offer to go and fit them at his expense! They arrived on the island by way of a banana boat making its outward journey and were fitted by a local handyman.

It wasn't until some time later that we were surprised to see the gates on the news on TV. It was a report announcing that Prince Charles and Lady Diana were experiencing difficulties with their marriage and Diana had taken herself off to Nevis with the two young princes. The usual gaggle of paparazzi was there but being held at bay by our gates. So it is gratifying to know that our gates work for wild donkeys and feral reporters alike.

Liveryman Marie Kavanagh does not of course fall into either category

and was lucky enough to enjoy a wonderful holiday on this paradise island kindly supplying us with this lovely picture. Thanks Marie!

Marie Kavanagh by the gates in Nevis



WCB Stand Returns to the South of England Show

After a gap year in 2014, the South of England Blacksmiths were once again participating at the South of England Show held at Ardingly, West Sussex.

Although the stand was somewhat 'tucked away' it was close to the Young Craftsmans' and Farrier displays which meant that the Blacksmiths were easy to find. A steady stream of visitors throughout the event enjoyed the fine display of forge work with numerous visitors congratulating the organisers on an excellent show. The live competitions provided the ideal opportunity for the public to get an understanding of the skills involved and a lot of interest was shown by people wanting to 'have-a-go'. Fortunately, many experienced smiths were on hand providing advice and guiding them in the right direction.

Competition results judged by Peter Parkinson FWCB

GROUP A: NATIONAL CHAMPION COMPETITIONS

Class 1 Static Traditional and Contemporary Show

Champion: Kevin Boys FWCB (Archer)

Reserve Show Champion: Remuna Picard (Fire Screen)

Class 2 National Live Champion Competition –

Candelabra

Show Champion: Richard Jones FWCB

Reserve Show Champion: David Mortimer

GROUP B: SOUTH OF ENGLAND BLACKSMITHS COMPETITIONS

WCB Metalwork Award for the Young Craftsman of the Year

First: Sam Chumbley of Plumpton College (Fire Basket)

Peter Begent Award Live Forging – Knife, Fork and Spoon

First: David Mortimer

Camelia Botnar Foundation Cup - Fire Side Tools

First: Jack Curtis

Second: Frazer Homewood

Third: Ryan Francois

Fourth: Dan Drummond



Kevin Boys receiving his trophy from Mike Shepherd

New Liverymen

EPIPHANY COURT

Mr Leslie Morgan OBE, DL, B.Pharm (Hons.), F.R.Pharm – A Pharmacist. Introduced by Past Prime Warden Hugh Adams CWCB and Seconded by Sir David Brewer CVO.

Mrs Cathy Herring – A London-based restaurateur. Wife of Past Prime Warden Tim Herring.

Mr Alastair Bowles – A gun maker with Purdeys. Son of Citizen and Blacksmith Colonel William Bowles OBE

LADYDAY COURT

Mr William Normandale – Working Blacksmith, son and apprentice to Mr Charles Normandale FWCB.

Mr Guy Simon – Works in the financial industry in the City of London. Nephew and apprentice to the current Prime Warden.

We welcome our new Liverymen and look forward to seeing them at Company events.

Handover of International Blacksmithing Festival Panels

The official handover of 8 competition panels and the Irish Traditional Gate to Westpoint Arena/Devon County Agricultural Association was held on Tuesday 30th June. John Bellamy of the IBF spoke of the successes of this memorable event and thanked Westpoint and DCAA for their help and support. The contribution made by the many volunteers and supporters was gratefully acknowledged and the hope expressed that a major blacksmithing event would again be held at the same venue sometime in the future. Richard Maunder of DCAA/Westpoint responded with praise for the efforts of all those involved and paid tribute to the craftsmanship on display.

The panels and gate are installed outside of the Westpoint Main Arena and provide a lasting memory of the IBF 2014 and the chance for the public to see what can be created by 'Hammer and Hand'.

Readers will recall that the panels, incorporating various agricultural themes, were made by teams of blacksmiths over an 8 hour period.

Team A 'Country Living' – Y dyfodol, Wales (Third)

Team B 'Flora and Fauna' – Army, REME Blacksmiths

Team C 'Cattle' – Edenbridge & Oxted Show Team, South Of England (First)

Team D 'Forestry' – Ambachtelijke Smedersgilde, Belgium

Team E 'Sheep' – North of England Blacksmiths (Second)

Team F 'Poultry' – Irish Artist Blacksmith Association

Team G 'Agricultural Implements' – The Iron Knights, Blacksmiths of Galilee

Team H 'Horses' – Design and Forging Skills Team, Hereford College

The Irish Traditional Gate was also made over an 8 hour period by Peter Cassidy and Jeremy Stanley of the Irish Artist Blacksmiths Association, the design being based on detailed subject research by Peter Cassidy and kindly donated to Westpoint/DCAA.

Attendees shown in the photograph from left to right:

Nigel Whitehead – Renter Warden of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths

Merv Allen FWCB – IBF/Guild of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen of Wessex

Tim Trimlett-Glover – Lance Corporal REME 6th Battalion

Emily Egan – Westpoint Business Manager

David Hemsley – IBF/Guild of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen of Wessex

John Bellamy – IBF/Guild of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen of Wessex

Andrew Hall FWCB – IBF/Guild of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen of Wessex

Martin Lindsay – Staff Corporal

Household Cavalry

Ollie Allen – DCAA Show Secretary

Richard Maunder – DCAA Secretary

& Westpoint Chief Executive

Ray Bater – Westpoint Works

Manager

Not shown is photographer Bryn Posey – Guild of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen of Wessex.



Assessors' Seminar Held at Hereford College – Holme Lacy Campus

14th March 2015

This important seminar which was organised by Hector Cole, Richard Jones and Adrian Legge was held in order to explain and review the present WCB Awards system, which has been the subject of much discussion and helpful criticism over recent times. It was hoped that after an open and enlightening debate, suggestions could be forwarded to the Awards Sub-Group of the WCB Craft Committee for their review.

A total of 21 were present and after lectures by Hector and Adrian, which included questions from the floor, the attendees were divided into three groups to more fully discuss and comment on the previous proceedings.

A degree of lively debate ensued but, with Hector and Adrian's encouragement and facilitation, a final list of suggestions was made and voted on. These will now be passed to the Awards Sub-Group for discussion and action.

All present extend their thanks to Hector, Richard and Adrian for their hospitality and efforts in organising such an interesting day and the lunch provided by the WCB was splendid!

Obituary

It is with sadness that we report the passing of the following Liverymen. Our thoughts and condolences go out to their families and friends.

Mr Brian Horace Lister – Born 12 July 1926, died 16 December 2014. A Liveryman since 1983

Mr John William Cullin CWCB – Born 12 September 1938, died 25 May 2015 Elected a Companion of the Company in 2000 and joined the Livery in 2014

(An obituary of Mr Cullin will be printed in the next edition of this Newsletter – Ed.)

Poppy Factory Visit Liveryman Terence Clark FWCB

On Wednesday 15th July a small group of Worshipful Company members visited the Poppy Factory at Richmond, Surrey. The Poppy Factory has an inspirational story. From its early days employing disabled soldiers to make poppies and wreaths in its factory in Richmond, today's modern organisation has grown to become the nation's leading employability service for disabled veterans.

The Poppy Factory has been providing employment for disabled veterans and members of the wider Armed Forces family in its factory in Richmond for over 90 years. Originally established in 1922, its founder Major George Howson MC believed that in the aftermath of the First World War, every disabled veteran who wanted to work should have the opportunity to do so.

In its heyday the charity employed

over 350 men, hand making the poppies and wreaths for the British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal. Howson was an innovator, and the factory was designed around the needs of his disabled employees.



Fast-forward most of a century and The Poppy Factory has evolved around the changing requirements of ex-Service personnel both male and female. They want careers that utilise the wide variety of skills and experience gained in HM Armed Forces, and they want to find work in

a location that suits them; nearer their friends and families.

A dedicated team of regional consultants work with each veteran to create a personal career plan, give free CV and interview training, and source local job opportunities with supportive employers. A network of volunteer mentors and ongoing in-work support ensures that Poppy Factory 'clients' thrive in their new workplace.

Any veteran with a physical or mental health condition can register, as long as they are no longer being supported through the MOD as part of their resettlement.

We had a really interesting tour around and learnt a lot about the history and background to the factory, as well as being able to make a poppy.

Thank you very much to Prime Warden Mike Shepherd for organising the visit.

Ironbridge Weekend Mike Shepherd

The Ironbridge weekend is one of the great highlights of the Prime Warden's year. It is when we form our year group of all the Prime Wardens, Masters and Upper Bailiff as well as the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs in office at the time. This group then forms a social circle of friends that holds events of all sorts each year to maintain the bonds of friendship formed during our year in office. The consorts form a similar group and have their own activities. We called our group the Magna Masters and the Consorts called themselves the Carta Consorts, most appropriate in the 600th anniversary year of the Magna Carta.

The idea to go to Ironbridge started over thirty years ago by a past Lord Mayor as a one day event. This quickly grew in popularity and duration to the event that we experienced this year; two and a half days of events and over 250 attendees representing nearly all the Livery Companies and the City Corporation.

We had to be at the hotel by Friday afternoon at 18:30 to be taken by coach to the black tie dinner in one of the many museums. Friday afternoon on the motorways was going to be heavy going, but no one thought that it was going to take five and a half hours to

do a 2 hour journey. Most of us just about scraped in with fifteen minutes to book in to our rooms and change in to black tie / gowns. It is amazing how quickly the ladies managed to do a change that normally takes them at least two hours. Ladies, the secret is out, we now know you can be quicker! The dinner was in the Covered Bays at Coalbrookdale. A lovely example of Victorian architecture.

On Saturday we were taken to four of the many sites run by the museum; rather rushed, but the idea was to give us a flavour of what they did rather than act as a thorough insight. We went to a tile factory where they made the tiles for many of the important buildings in London, including St. Pauls' and the Houses of Parliament. Then we went to a pottery factory, where some of the best examples of bone china had been made. We stopped for lunch, then on to Ironbridge itself, the original smelting furnace and the famous Victorian village.

In the evening was another black tie dinner but this time at the Engine Shop at Coalbrookdale. The champagne reception was in the "Enginuity" building where they have interactive exhibits to show how things work. It was very funny to see so many men



wanting to play but trying to resist the urge. A couple of us just went straight in and played and then they all did. It was hard work for the caterers to get us to stop and go to dinner.

Sunday morning was for us to meet and form our year group and then off for a behind the scenes tour of another part of the museum. After lunch we were free to do our own thing. Elizabeth and I decided to go back to the Victorian Village for a proper look and as we had the regalia for our office we decided to have a Victorian style photograph taken.

All in all a wonderful time was had. The Magna Masters and the Carta Consorts are up and running and the weekend was a great success.

Ypres 2016 Liverymen Terrence Clark FWCB and Sally Clark CWCB

If you live in the world, here is an important date for your diary. Artist blacksmiths are taking part in a major International public forging event in the centre of Ypres, Belgium from the 1st to the 6th of September 2016 to create a Cenotaph to commemorate those on all sides – both military and civilian – who fell during, or were touched by the First World War.

During the War, Blacksmiths and Farriers were essential to maintain the military machine and to shoe countless thousands of horses. One hundred years later the plan is to bring together blacksmiths from the many countries whose soldiers fought in the War, to celebrate their skills in a spirit of peace and co-operation and to remember the fallen.

As a strategic military focus throughout the first World War, Ypres provides testimony to the heroism, tragedy, futility and aftermath of war because, in contrast to many other European cities, reminders of the War are still there. This was “the war to end all wars” which gave rise to so many poignant images; the grim reality of trench warfare, and yet in those black and white photographs, the soldiers smile; the Christmas Truce of 1914; trees shattered by heavy shelling; artillery and horses bogged down in mud; and straggling lines of men blinded by gas.

During more than four years of fighting, the battle front shifted little more than eight kilometres back and forth to the east of Ypres, at the cost of some 800,000 military and civilian casualties. The city itself was almost completely reduced to rubble, yet it stands today, proudly re-built, including the huge and iconic medieval Cloth Hall which dominates the cobbled city square of the Grote Markt.

This First World War centennial project was initiated in 2009 by Luc Vandecasteele of ASG, the Belgian Guild of Blacksmiths, and designed by Terrence Clark, then the Chairman of BABA, the British Artist Blacksmiths Association. His Poppy Cenotaph design is a seven metre tall steel slab incorporating the negative and positive image of a Flanders poppy to symbolise the two sides of war; the negative, representing those who lost their lives and the loss experienced by their families; the positive representing the future that springs from their sacrifice and those who survived and their families.

The Cenotaph will stand in a field of 2016 forged steel poppies surrounded by a zig-zag arrangement of individually designed railing panels echoing the characteristic plan form of the trenches. This will both define and provide public access to the site when the Cenotaph is installed permanently in Langemark-Poelkapelle, a few kilometres from Ypres alongside the beautiful German Cemetery. The ceremony to unveil and inaugurate the Cenotaph will take place there on 11.11.2016.

The poppies and railing panels will all be made at the event. Thirteen railing panels will be designed by invited masters, each to be made by teams of six volunteer blacksmiths under the guidance of the master. This is an opportunity to experience working alongside some of the world’s most respected blacksmiths including: Will Maguire from Australia, Achim Kuhn from Germany, Claudio Bottero from Italy, Peter De Beus from Belgium, Sandra Dunn from Canada, Takayoshi Komine from Japan, Vladimir Sokhonovich from Russia, Francisco Gazitua from Chile and Shona Johnson from the UK. The names of further masters will be listed in due course.

Twelve railing panels will be designed in an international design competition open to all. Each winner will similarly be assisted to create his design by six volunteer blacksmiths. The design brief and application form is available on the project website at www.ypres2016 where one can register ones intention to submit a design. This is an opportunity to design a panel to represent your feelings about a very serious subject as part of a significant and lasting memorial.

The work will be undertaken in extensive blacksmithing facilities set up in the Grote Markt. The 7m x 2m x 100mm Cenotaph slab will be erected on a temporary base, clad with plywood, enabling the 2016 forged steel poppies to be set in place as they are made.

Some of the poppies will be forged by children who will be assisted by specialist blacksmith instructors in dedicated forging areas within cordoned safety zones. Strict safety regulations will be observed under the control of an appointed Safety Officer together with a Forgemaster and team of

deputies who will control the activities on the site.

To accompany activities in the Grote Markt, BABA is currently working on a proposal to mount a public exhibition of blacksmithing work in Ypres. A suitable indoor Exhibition space has been identified and our Exhibition Officer is working on the details. Further information about the Exhibition space and the kind of work which may be submitted will be published on the Ypres 2016 website in due course.

As one of the largest public events with which BABA and ASG have been involved this is an opportunity to demonstrate the skills and application of contemporary blacksmithing, to meet and work with smiths from other countries and to contribute to the creation of a unique and significant piece of work.

For more details visit: www.ypres2016.com

Facebook: [Ypres2016](https://www.facebook.com/Ypres2016)

twitter.com/ypres2016



The Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

12th May 2015 Lara Shepherd reports on a unforgettable day

This special occasion is bestowed upon the Prime Warden and his immediate family. Elizabeth and I were over the moon to be invited to the Palace with Mike, although we were disappointed that our son Ben was under 18 and therefore not allowed in. Fortunately, due to my disability, we were accompanied by Mike's sister, Helen, as my assistant.

The weather was perfect. The men in morning suits were so handsome and the ladies' outfits and hats were beautiful. Of course there was the occasional person with an unusual take on the dress code.

I had to use my wheelchair which had some very important benefits; some we knew about in advance and others a surprise on the day. We were permitted to park behind Canada gates, across the road from the Palace. These gates are spectacular and well worth a visit. We joined a relatively short queue and were quickly ushered to a side access to the Palace gardens. This meant we missed entering through the front of the Palace which was a shame. However, we were some of the first into the garden and had plenty of time to wander the garden paths looking at the plants and lake. There was a huge marquee set for tea and a VIP tea enclosure next to the lake. As you can imagine the gardens were very well looked after and nothing was out of place.

We congregated on the lawns along with approximately 4,000 other guests. Then the National Anthem was played announcing the Royal Family had arrived. The Palace staff had moved through the crowds parting the people to form avenues the Royal Party could pass through to greet guests. Each avenue was for a different member of the Royal Family. I could just make out a tiny person in primrose yellow making her way down another avenue. In our own avenue came Prince Philip. We got a good view but couldn't hear his conversation with the principal guests.

We were then free to make our way to the tea marquee with tables and chairs on the lawn. It was very impressive and beautifully presented. I am still astounded that the sandwiches and petits fours were so fresh and delicate; after all it's not easy to feed 4,000 people in a garden. It was

around this time we were told that the Royal Family would be returning to the Palace through a side door and wheelchair users and their families would have a good chance of seeing the Royal Family if we lined up along the wall around 5.30pm.

At the appropriate time we made our way to the side of the Palace. Well, what a treat was in store; not only did we see them, but each of them noticed the Prime Warden's badge of office. The Queen expressed that she hoped everyone had a lovely day as she passed us all, but then stopped to ask about the badge of office. Then followed Prince Philip, Prince Charles, Camilla Duchess of Cornwall, Prince Edward and Sophie Countess of Wessex, each taking a moment to greet us and ask about the Prime Warden's golden medallion. It was wonderful that we spoke to all of them.

Once the Royal Family had gone, I noticed a handful of young soldiers in lovely red tunics and we were told that we could have one of them to assist us. I got rather excited at the idea of my own personal soldier but Mike quickly pointed out that he wouldn't be mine to keep, so my hopes were dashed!

We decided to leave the Palace via the terrace so that we had the opportunity to see the grand reception rooms, walk down the red carpeted stairs and out of the front door. The Palace staff were very helpful and did all they could to assist me. It was a very special day that will live long in our memories.



Recipe for Mussels in Cider

As cooked by John Burton-Race on a Forge at the International Blacksmithing Festival – Westpoint 2014

INGREDIENTS:

3kg Mussels
50g Unsalted Butter
1 Onion
2 Garlic Cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1 Stick of Celery, finely diced
1 Apple, peeled, cored and chopped
1 Sprig of Thyme
1 Bay Leaf
2 Tablespoons Parsley, finely chopped
1/2 Lemon
300ml of Dry Traditional Cider
150ml Double Cream
Salt
Black Pepper

METHOD:

Wash and scrape the mussels and remove the beards. Melt the butter in a large lidded saucepan and add all the chopped ingredients. Cook for around 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, then add the thyme and the bay leaf.

Turn the heat up to high, pour in the cider and bring to the boil. Next tip in the mussels, stirring them into the liquid with a wooden spoon, working from the bottom of the pan to the top. Cover with the lid and cook for about 3 minutes until the mussels open.

Shake the pan, remove the lid, add the cream and stir into the mixture. Season with a little salt, lemon and lots of black pepper then sprinkle in the chopped parsley.

Using a ladle, divide the mussels between 8 bowls. Pour some of the broth over them and serve immediately with crusty garlic bread.

Diary of Events 2015

Invitations will be sent to all Liverymen but please put these in your diary now

- 12th September – Visit to Petworth House and Downland Museum
- 14th September – Guided Tour of Mansion House
- 29th September – Election of Lord Mayor
- 22nd October – Michaelmas Court and Awards Luncheon – Painters' Hall
- October/November (TBA) – Visit to The Household Cavalry Stables in Knightsbridge Barracks

2016

- 6th May – Mansion House Banquet
- 3rd to 5th June – Prime Warden's Weekend
 - 1st to 6th September – Poppy Cenotaph Forging Event – Ypres, Belgium
- 11th November 2016 Ceremony to Unveil and Inaugurate the Poppy Cenotaph – German Cemetery, Langemark-Poelkapelle, Belgium

Show Dates 2015

- Edenbridge & Oxted Show August 30th, 31st
- Dorset County Show September 5th, 6th

Other Blacksmithing Event

- St. Clems Day, Finch Foundry, Sticklepath, Okehampton, Devon November 21st

Copies of photographs

Copies of the excellent photographs taken by Michael O'Sullivan of the Awards Luncheon and other formal events and reproduced in the Newsletter can be obtained directly from:

www.michaelosullivanphotography.co.uk
or michaelphotography@tiscali.co.uk
Telephone: 020 8363 8350

Editor: Merv Allen
e-mail: metalwizard@btinternet.com
Telephone: 01342 841742

Blacksmith Gods Myths, Magicians & Folklore

Author: Pete Jennings

Reviewed by Merv Allen FWCB

Of all the trades and crafts none have the mystique, history and folklore of blacksmithing. The almost magical process of turning pieces of cold, unforgiving metal into objects of function and beauty has often astounded those not privy to the 'ways of the smith'. Endowed with such magic, smiths have served their communities with hammer and hand often extending their repertoire to that of doctors and shaman. Having these skills, coupled with an often charismatic presence, it is no wonder that blacksmithing folklore and mythology abounds in these islands and abroad.

Pete Jennings is a respected writer on Anglo Saxon and Viking topics and his latest work provides the reader with an overview of the legendary and esoteric world of blacksmithing ranging from Classical Greece and Rome to Africa, Asia, Scandinavia and Europe. The text not only provides summaries of many ancient beliefs, but also includes archaeological and historical information together with folk songs and tales of legendary blacksmiths.

Pete writes with an enthusiasm which should entice those new to the subject to research further whilst those with some knowledge will find much of interest. He draws on a wealth of literary sources including the Bible and the Persian Book of Kings (Sah Nemeah) and his writing is interspersed with fascinating anecdotes, many of which have been neglected or forgotten through the years. For example, in North East Scotland the custom exists of bathing a child in the water trough of the smithy as a cure for rickets. After bathing, the child is laid on an anvil and tools passed over his body whilst suitable words are spoken. It is believed that the iron rich water and ritual endow the child with strength to fight the disease.

The cover of the book depicts a horseshoe in the flames of a forge which some may find misleading. However, Pete points out the recent differences between farriers and blacksmiths and of course it is not so long ago that there was no clearly defined separation of the professions.

This is a good value read and valuable resource that I recommend be on your bookshelf.

Blacksmith Gods – Myths, Magicians & Folklore
Moon Books an imprint of John Hunt Publishing Ltd. Hampshire, SO24 9JH

Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths' Shop



Prices:

- Livery Tie £10 (Liverymen only)
- 'Social Tie' £22
- Umbrella £15
- Cuff Links £66.50
- Brooches £72.50



All items available from the Clerk, Martin Heath.
A limited supply might be available at Court luncheons.