



Master's Blog #12

The Final One



Casting the Coronation Planters at the Plumbers Museum Workshop Trust, Amberley

So here we are, after 12 fun filled and busy months it is time to draw stumps and let the next innings begin. Sue and I have been honoured to represent you over the last year, and there has been no let up in pace right to the end. In fact, the day after I hand over I will be helping cover for the new Master, who is double booked on his first day! Nothing changes!

Sue travelled down to London for her final Consorts' event organised by the Chartered Accountants, a very informative and interesting visit to the Royal Society for Blind Children and lunch at their Hall. We were both then down again a couple of days later, despite the best attempts of the rail strike to stop us getting to London, for the Musicians' Evensong and reception in St Paul's Cathedral. Adrian, our Clerk, accompanied and hosted us in his capacity as a Court Assistant of the Musicians' Company. Another great Livery spectacle with the majority of Masters, Upper Wardens and Upper Bailiff attending and processing.



Me, Master Plumber and Musician Court Assistant Adrian Mumford, aka Our Clerk!

The following evening we held a Plumbers' Golf Society committee meeting to review the past year and set up the programme for next year. Full details will be out later this year. Like so much that we do in the Plumbers, we have a lot of fun, on and off the courses, and you don't have to be a good player! Look out for the programme if you are interested.

The next day the rail strike failed again to stop me travelling to London for the Lightmongers Company's Masters' and Clerks' lunch in Tallow Chandlers' Hall. Twenty-one Masters and Clerks no less attended a very convivial function, with entertainment from a flautist and pianist from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. And it was the last time I had to give an 'official' speech in office, replying on behalf of all the guests.



Lightmongers' Masters & Clerks' Lunch at Tallow Chandlers' Hall

The following day, Saturday, was a gloriously sunny day spent in the Guildhall Yard for the annual Lord Mayor's Cadet Music Competition, initiated and hosted by Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley, late Lord Mayor and accomplished musician. Four cadet bands /corps of drums competed and it was particularly pleasing for me to see (and hear) the RAF Air Cadets Band from No 56 (Woolwich) Sqn win. It was particularly pleasing for Master Lightmonger, Jamie Berry, too as it is the sqn with which his company is affiliated.



56 (Woolwich) RAF Air Cadets Band



Mill Hill School CCF Corps of Drums



London Area Sea Cadets Band



London District Army Combined Corps of Drums

The end really was nigh the following Wednesday as I drove down to London for the rehearsal for Master Elect David Adams installation at St Magnus. It really brought it home to me that my year was nearly over! We followed that with a brief 'Execs' meeting over lunch, before I drove on down to Amberley for one of the highlights of my year. Work is proceeding apace to cast Their Majesties' Coronation Planters and the Master Gardener, Nicholas Woolf, and I were invited to the Plumbers' Museum Workshop Trust to cast our own Company Crests to be placed on the planters. And I was given the honour of casting Queen Camilla's main Royal Cypher panel too. What an honour! Something to tell the children, grandchildren.....a true legacy of my year.

The work of our volunteers at the Plumbers' Museum Workshop Trust to undertake this major historic project is truly outstanding and I cannot thank Liverymen Peter Cheesman and Eddie McCourt for all they are doing. They looked after us superbly on the day and everyone had a fabulous time. I must also give a huge thank you to Museum Director & Past Master Steve Hodgkinson for the champagne and the best pork pie we have all ever eaten! You'll be able to see much more on this historic project, a video is being made, but for now some photos from the day:



The Plumber's Shield mould ready for casting



Pouring molten lead into the mould



The finished cast Shield



Preparing Queen Camilla's Royal Cypher Panel



Casting the Panel



Cleaning the hot panel



Queen Camilla's cast Royal Cypher



Master Gardener Nicholas Woolf and me with our respective cast Company Shields

As I've said many times, Sue and I could not have done all we have without the outstanding support we have had from the office team and the Stewards. We were delighted to invite Clerk Adrian, Clerk's Asst Sharon, Bookkeeper Debbie, Beadle Peter, Snr Steward Malvern and Webmaster Philippa to the RAF Club for a special lunch to say thank you.



L to R: Adrian, Sue, Peter, Debbie, Malvern, Sharon, me, Philippa

Our year finished that same evening with a marvellous white-tie banquet for Sue and me in the Guildhall courtesy of the Gold & Silver Wire Drawers' Company as it celebrated the 400th anniversary of its Royal Charter with 350 guests, including the Lord and Lady Mayoress and the new Sheriffs. They have laid on a spectacular display in the Guildhall Art Gallery, do go and visit it before it closes.



The City Churches Vestment from Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee

Queen Mary's Coronation Gown from 1911

A fabulous end, made even more special by the fact that the Gold & Silver Wire Drawers had a very strong affiliation with RAF Uxbridge, which has sadly closed, and now RAF Northolt, in West London. We met up with a number of our old friends and colleagues in 'light blue' and indeed many of our new ones from my year as Master. What a fabulous finale to the year and a cracking way to finish!



The Gold & Silver Wire Drawers' 400th Anniversary Banquet in the Guildhall

The Royal Logistic Corps of Drums laid on a spectacular drum voluntary with all the lights turned off and the guest speaker was barrister and TV personality Robert Rinder.



Me with Mistress Lightmonger



Master Lightmonger, Sue, Master Tobacco Pipe Makers

That's it folks! I will chair the Installation Court on Tuesday 17th October, and install 6 new Liverymen, before leading the Court on its procession to St Magnus to hand over. Sue and I count ourselves very lucky indeed to have shared such a fulfilling life with two great organisations, the RAF and the Livery. And with, hopefully, many more years to share too!

All it remains for me to say now is to wish Master Elect David Adams and Kathy a fabulous year too. Next year's programme is on the website, so I hope to see as many of you as possible during the year, starting with Installation Day on 17th October and then at my Ladle Dinner in Painter Stainers' Hall on 14th November.

In fellowship,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Paul". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Paul Nash
Master

14th October 2023