



The Woolman

The Worshipful Company of Woolmen

Spring 2011

Lana spes nostra





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The New Master's Report

It is a particular pleasure to write my first Masters Notes to coincide with the launching of our *Woolman*. It has been developed by Under Warden Bill Clark working with new Liveryman Howard Venters, publisher of *Sheep Farmer* amongst other titles. I hope you like our new look. We are very indebted to Liveryman David Keating for all the hard work he put into its predecessor *Woolmen's News* but we now have the chance to move on and embrace a wider circulation including; our members, the educational institutions we work with, increase our profile within the City, further afield in the UK, and beyond.

But why you may ask? Immediate Past Master, Simon Bailey, initiated and saw through to its completion a comprehensive strategic review of The Company – our challenge now is its implementation.

The maintenance and furtherance of the aims and objectives of the Company I see as being my main role as Master. In particular the development of education in the wool and allied sectors. We award medals for the best junior shearing at the national shows, support the textile colleges with bursaries and encourage all stages in the wool supply chain. I am involved in the Campaign for Wool, with Prince Charles as it's patron, where the over-riding target is to promote wool usage the world over.

Our Company is recovering from difficulties of a few years ago and we must continue that upward growth which I see as my overall priority along with the Finance & General Purposes committee and our Clerk together with the Livery Committee.

So how do we start? and what is already in place?



Gerald Sharp Photography

The first and probably the most rewarding result will be the continuous expansion of the Livery through new membership and I ask each member to consider if they have contacts or know of others who would like to join us. These can be from the City, the industry or of other backgrounds provided they will share our passion for the Woolmens Company. This leads on to interaction amongst the Livery members at our high quality formal and informal events and with outside contributors to "add value". There is already a good interface between members from the "trade" and those from the city - one of our great strengths. This leads on to each of us enhancing our charitable giving and supporting the detailed work which PM Charles Brook undertakes to ensure our funds are used in the best way possible to maximise the benefits to students, their institutions and future employers. It follows that access to reports made by our bursars should be freely available in all relevant websites and journals for the benefit of future generations.

With my own background in farming and wool merchanting, a long time ago I admit, I will try to ensure that we use that part of our remit to work with as effectively as possible with those of a more urban culture. Our Summer Banquet will be addressed by Sir Stuart Rose; I met the Lord Mayor who hopes to attend our Civic Dinner; supporting education will be the theme of our Alms Court Dinner winding up with an overview at the House of Lords Lunch in March.

With your support I believe we have a great opportunity to help the Woolmens Company fulfill it's strategic objectives. ■

Court News

The Installation Court meeting is always a mixture of anticipation, excitement, regret and nostalgia: the anticipation of the new officers waiting to take up office, barely concealing their excitement; the regret of the out-going Master that his year has ended all too soon; and the nostalgia of the Past Masters for their year in office. Wednesday 20th April was no exception as the Court heard Court assistant Peter Ackroyd make his declaration as a new member of the Court, and the Court went through its usual business of the budget for the year ensuing, the strategy for the Livery, the Membership Committee's last report before its duties are taken over by the Livery Committee, and the Charity Committee report.

The Master, Simon Bailey, announced that the Immediate Past Master's award for the Liveryman who had contributed most to the Livery during the year (introduced last year by Past Master Elizabeth Peacock) would be awarded to Court Assistant Chris Thierry for his sterling work over the years first as a member of the Livery Committee and then as Chairman of The Livery Committee for the last three years. Past Master Elizabeth Peacock was presented with her Past Master's badge of office, and surrendered her Immediate Past Master's badge; and the Master (Elect) Eric Wilson CBE presented all the Court Assistants with new silver badges of office as his Master's gift to the Livery. The Court also approved three admissions to the Freedom and Livery – Jamie Macleod, Dr George Crowther and Steven Batty. This was followed by the Admission and robbing of six Liverymen, which is reported on elsewhere.

As is customary after the Installation Court, the Court led the procession of the Livery across to St Michael's, Cornhill for the Annual Service. The Church rapidly filled up for the best attended Annual Service in recent memory. The Choir and Officers processed up the aisle to the singing of 'We Plough The Fields and Scatter', and after the welcome and bidding prayers Eric Wilson CBE was installed as the new Master by the outgoing Master, Simon

Boardman-Weston was installed as Upper Warden, and Bill Clark was installed as Under warden. All three made their declarations, and the choir sang 'Oh For The Wings of a Dove', quite exquisitely. The Master read the first lesson, and the congregation sang 'The Lord's My Shepherd'. The Upper Warden read the second lesson, and then the Chaplain, The Reverend Dr Peter Mullen, led the prayers, and then preached a very personal sermon about his life and his route to taking Holy Orders, including the occasional period when he strayed from the flock, but was returned again. A stirring rendition of 'I Cannot Tell Why' to the tune of the Londonderry Air demonstrated the power of the congregation when it gave full voice *con belto*, before they were dismissed by prayers, The Blessing and the hymn 'And Did Those Feet'. The choir and new officers of the Company processed out of the Church to the Organ Voluntary, and led the procession back to Merchant Taylor's Hall for the reception and a splendid dinner.

The Lord Vestey KCVO DL, the principal guest, gave a very amusing speech, and the Master replied in kind and reminded the Company that in his other guise as Master of The Horse to Her Majesty The Queen the principal guest was approaching a very busy and important time as he assisted in the preparations for the Royal Wedding. The beautiful ambience of Merchant Taylors' Hall was enhanced by an organ recital to entertain the guests, who were well fed, well watered (although I am assured there was more than water to drink), and thoroughly enjoyed each other's company, in the best traditions of The Worshipful Company of Woolmen. ■



The Master and Wardens

Gerald Sharp Photography

Programme of Events 2011/2012

Royal Ulster Show
11th-13th May

Royal Bath and West Show
1st-4th June

Master hosts Liverymen and their partners in the Shetland Islands
6th-10th June

Royal Highland Show
22nd-26th June

Election of Sheriffs
24th June

Summer Banquet
6th July

Great Yorkshire Show
12th-14th July

Royal Welsh Show
18th-21st July
(Woolmen's hospitality on 19th July)

Election of Lord Mayor
3rd October

Civic Dinner
1st November

Lord Mayor's Show
12th November

Court Dinner
30th November
(Court members and partners only)

Pantomime
3rd or 10th
December (tbc)



Our New Publishers

By Howard Venters

I wish to express to the Master, officers and members of this particular livery how pleased I am that Shepherd Publishing Ltd have been appointed publishers to the Worshipful Company of Woolmen for the purpose of producing its official newsletter. This follows a number of meetings to explore ways of building the publication, increasing its frequency and adapting it to appeal to a wider audience. Equally, I am extremely grateful to all who have been involved with the publication previously, not least the immediate past editor, David Keating, and I hope that we can build on the hard work that has gone before.

Our immediate priority has been to modernise (sometimes a dangerous word but in

this context used conservatively...) the style, make better use of colour, design and photographs and increase pagination. Also to create a more lateral publication that not only serves our own livery but gives us opportunity to promote ourselves to our livery counterparts, potentially to aid recruiting, but certainly to profile the Company further afield and to educate a much wider audience about the function of the City, guilds and liveries, their history and their continued importance in the 21st Century.

Shepherd Publishing is well known and highly respected within the UK livestock sector. Our publications specialise across sheep, beef and dairy sectors, including

The 2011 Lord Mayor's Show

By Bill Clark

The Lord Mayor's Show takes place on the second Saturday of November every year. It is one of the world's oldest civic processions and it winds through nearly 800 years of London's history, marching unscathed through everything from the Black Death to the Blitz.

This year the Woolmen are going to enter the show again – we last entered in 2005. As in previous years, the Woolmen's entry will comprise two horse-drawn floats, dogs and dog-handlers and a number of walkers dressed as shepherds and bo-peeps. The dogs and dog handlers will lead, followed by the first float which will contain live sheep and a shearer who will pretend to shear them. The second float will be a departure from previous years (when it has carried dignitaries and children). This year we plan for the second float to show a wool spectacular.

So please put the date in your diary – **Saturday, 12th November 2011** – and you can register your interest by contacting the Under Warden, Bill Clark, who is the Chairman of our Planning Committee, now on 01291 641783 or williamjhclark@msn.com. Please note that all participants are required to be dressed as shepherds, shepherdesses, bo-peeps, or other period agricultural costume. Please start



planning yours now! Entry for Liverymen and their families is free, and children are most welcome. All participants must be capable of walking about a mile and a half each way, as this year there will not be a 'people carrier' for those who get tired.

Participants will need to be at Painters' Hall by 9.30am to change and be briefed on the day, and we will then all join our float together. Packed lunches will be provided for the lunch break, and at the end of the return leg we will all go back to Painters' Hall to change and there will be a hot meal laid on for participants. At 5 p.m. there is a fireworks display for those who wish to watch it. ■

The Newbury Coat

publications such as *Cattle Breeder*, *Beef Farmer*, *Sheep Farmer* and *Wool Producer*, so we are well placed to bring, in addition to domestic editorial, varied and interesting content to the publication which as you will have probably noticed, we now refer to as 'The Woolman'. Under Warden Bill Clark has been extremely helpful in the compilation of this first issue under our control for which I am grateful, as have the new Master, Eric Wilson, Liveryman Chris Thierry, Clerk Gill Wilson, and many others to whom I would like to express my grateful appreciation.

In our ongoing endeavours to produce interesting and relevant editorial content, I extend a warm and informal invitation to all members of the Company to give thought to ideas, suggestions and editorial contribution, all of which should initially be addressed to Bill Clark in his capacity as 'Content Supervisor'. Alternatively I am always available via my office info@shepherdpublishing.co.uk, telephone 01684 565533.

With best wishes to all.

Howard Venters

*Publisher
Shepherd Publishing Ltd
Liveryman Worshipful
Company of Woolmen
Liveryman Worshipful
Company of Farmers*

Newbury and Greenham Berkshire were a large textile centre during the 19th Century. In 1811, John Coxeter, who owned Greenham Mill – a large concern, boasted at the time of his mechanisation that he could take wool directly from sheep and turn it into a finished coat in the course of a day.

Baronet, Sir John Throckmorton heard of Coxeter's boasting and after some calculation laid down the wager of £1000 guineas.

The date was set for the 25th of June. As dawn broke, Francis Drewitt sheared two sheep and the challenge was on. At 8pm Throckmorton sat down to dinner in the finished, albeit damp, coat.

The coat now resides on display at Coughton Court in Warwickshire, near Alcester where the Throckmorton Family eventually moved to.

In 1991 the Kennet Valley Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers rose to the challenge of reproducing the coat, but entirely by hand! This challenge was met and beat the original that was done by machine by one hour.

This year, 2011, is the 200th anniversary of the original challenge and the Guild is rising to meet the event once more. The challenge is to break the record yet again!

The Managing Director of Ackroyd and Dawson Limited, a member of the Bradford Textile Society as well as a member of several guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, Patricia Ackroyd will be on the team of spinners on that Day.

The coat will be replicated as exactly as possible, the wool used will be Dorset Down. There will be teams of Carders, Spinners, Dyers, Weavers and Tailors all focused on attaining the goal.

The invitation from the Guild is to all those in the Textile Society and Textile and Wool Guilds and Associations to rise to the occasion and support and endorse this fine and noble event.

This will again take place on 25th June, at Newbury Park. This project is done in cooperation with The Campaign for Wool. The original event was commemorated by a historical etching that has been reproduced in smaller sized prints. Those from the traditional textile societies and organisations who support and endorse this endeavour will be included in the 2011 historical photographic record from that day of the event. ■

The finished Newbury Coat will be displayed at the Newbury Show later this year in September. Please Contact Patricia Ackroyd for further details. Tel: 01458 830 971

Company Officers for 2011/2012

Master

Eric Wilson CBE

Upper Warden

Simon

Boardman-Weston

Under Warden

Lt Col (retd) Bill Clark;

Immediate Past

Master

Simon Bailey

Beadle

Ernest Brocklehurst

Honorary Chaplain –

The Reverend Doctor

Peter Mullen

Clerk

Gillian E. Wilson

The Old Post Office

56 Lower Way

Great Brickhill

Bucks MK17 9AG

Tel: 01525 261541

clerk@woolmen.com

Shearing Competitions



The sheep shearing competition season is now just around the corner, and keen young shearers all over the UK will be eagerly polishing their best combs ready for action. Quite often, keenest of all are the young junior grade shearers, who are just starting out in their careers.

For them, one of the greatest aspirations that they could hold is to win the Worshipful Company

of Woolmen Junior Circuit. This circuit takes the top two shearers from Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales (as placed in the Royal Ulster, Royal Bath and West, Royal Highland and Royal Welsh shows respectively), plus the two highest placed UK shearers at the Great Yorkshire Show. The ten qualifying shearers then compete at the Royal Welsh to decide the winner.

Most junior shearers are aware of the generous prizes this circuit offers – medals for the winner and runner-up, fantastic prize money for all semi-finalists and vouchers for British Wool Marketing Board (Wool Board) shearer training courses. They know that this circuit is kindly sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Woolmen because of the name. Few, if any, however are fully aware of just what this organisation is, or of its incredible history, or of the true depth and breadth of support that it gives to the wool industry.

The Worshipful Company of Woolmen was one of the first Livery companies established in Medieval London. These companies were basically trade bodies, set up to regulate and look after their respective trades.

The Woolmen's earliest records begin in 1180, and for hundreds of years it was one of London's wealthiest and most important Livery companies, at a time when wool was England's number one commodity. Wool, back then, was like oil today, and wool taxes paid for the building of the London Bridge and churches all over England.

Although the wool industry has suffered a massive decline since those days, the Worshipful Company of Woolmen is still going strong.

Today, Livery companies exist in more of a charitable role to support their respective industries, and particularly to help get young people started in them. The Worshipful Company of Woolmen provides support to three groups of young people: agricultural students, young shearers, and students in the textile industry.

Charles Brook, a former Master of the Woolmen, explained how they are conscientious about making sure the money they give goes to the people who matter, and that it is not wasted.

"I have made sure now that all the monies we give away go direct to people in terms of the winners of these junior competitions, the students at the colleges," he said. "We give to the people."

The prize money on offer to the young shearers is very generous. "Put it this way," says Colin MacGregor, the Wool Board's Shearing Manager, "you're better being winner of that than you are being winner of the open in many competitions."

Also, it is distributed generously across all the finalists and even the losing semi-finalists, which means support and encouragement is provided to as many young people as possible. The winner gets the prestigious Worshipful Company of Woolmen gold medal.

"Medals are very important we think," says Charles, "because they're something tangible. Money's lovely to have, but 'Winner of gold medal' actually means something. They can put it on their CV."

The first qualifying show will be for junior shearers in Northern Ireland at the Royal Ulster on the 12th May.

There is now an abundance of promising young junior shearers all over the UK thanks to the quality of Wool Board training schemes, and competition for the title of 'Worshipful Company of Woolmen Junior Champion' will be tougher than ever. Trying to predict who might win is impossible. One thing is for certain though: the ten lucky young shearers who make it to the finals at the Royal Welsh in July will never forget the experience, or the encouragement it will give them. ■

Clerk Elected President of the Fellowship of Clerks

The Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, Gill Wilson, was elected President of the Fellowship of Clerks in March this year for a one year term. This honour to Gill, which reflects very well on the Woolmen's Company, is a tribute to her involvement in the Fellowship of Clerks, her experience as a Clerk and not least the respect in which other Clerks hold her. Her experience as a Clerk dates back to her time as Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists, the 100th Livery Company which was awarded its Livery in 1992; so from one of the more modern companies she came to the Worshipful Company of Woolmen with its roots in the 12th Century. Similarly, to be a member of the IT Company you are required to be a practitioner in IT, whereas the Wool-

men have a more open approach to membership. It is this rich pattern of differences between Livery Companies that makes the Livery movement so interesting, but also so challenging for the Clerks of the various Companies. The Clerks of the Companies that are not part of The Great Twelve and do not have a hall to manage meet as the Fellowship of Clerks to discuss matters of common interest, and to act as a lobby group when necessary. Gill has never been backward in coming forward at these meetings, and her opinions and advice are not only regularly sought, but also valued and as often as not acted upon.

We all congratulate Gill on her appointment as President of the Fellowship of Clerks and wish her all the very best for her year in office. ■



Gerald Sharp Photography

United Guild Service Friday 1st April 2011

On Friday 1st April the massed ranks of the Livery Companies descended on St Paul's Cathedral for the 69th Service of the United Guilds of the City of London. This annual occasion starts with a procession of Church dignitaries, a couple of Beadles, 24 Masters of ancient and modern Livery Companies, more Church and City dignitaries including the City Marshal, the Chief Commoner, The Sheriffs, the Court of Aldermen, the Select Preacher, the Ceremoniarus, the Bishop of London (Citizen and Woolman), the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Sword Bearer, the Lord Mayor and the Dean. This year Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal (Citizen and Woolman, and Master of the Worshipful Company of Butchers) and Vice-Admiral Timothy Laurence (Master of the Company of Coachmakers and Harness Makers) brought up the end of the procession.

The service was the usual mixture of rousing hymns, pertinent prayers and excellent music from the choir and organists. The hymns included Let Us With A Gladsome Mind, Tell Out My Soul, and My Song Is Love Unknown. The bidding prayers were given by The Dean

of St Paul's, The Right Reverend Graeme Knowles. The lessons were read by the Lord Mayor and The Reverend Canon Giles Fraser (Canon in Residence) and the prayers were led by The Reverend Sarah Eynstone (Minor Canon and Chaplain). The Dean of Westminster, The Very Reverend John Hall, preached the sermon, remarking on the rivalry between St Pauls Cathedral and Westminster Cathedral – at the level of the annual inter-choir football competition – and speaking about John Donne and the 380th anniversary of his death in 1631. This very English priest, metaphysical poet, lawyer and satirist was appointed Dean of St Pauls in 1621. He was also a Member of Parliament.

The Bishop of London gave the Blessing, and then we all sang the National Anthem before the procession formed up again and retired to the sound of an excellent organ voluntary. After the service we adjourned to Stationers' Hall for a jolly good lunch, deep and meaningful conversations with old friends and new acquaintances, and the occasional glass of wine. ■



John Donne
(1572 -1631)

Babel on the Wool Exchange

A recollection of the London Wool Exchange 1895

Down
Memory
Lane...

Any one who wishes to have a fair idea of what the confusion of tongues was like may be recommended to pass half an hour in the Wool Exchange, in the City, during one of the periodical sales held there. It surpasses anything in that direction within ordinary experience. There is probably no other place in the world where so many excited representatives of foreign nations are congregated; certainly no place equal to it for the extraordinary babel which prevails day after day for the three or four weeks that each of the series of sales last. A 'wool sale' does not sound very inviting to those on the look-out for novelty and amusement, but any one turning into the Coleman Street establishment will find his preconceived ideas on the subject of sales by auction rudely assailed. A wool sale has nothing in common with the sale by auction of any other commodity.

There is still nothing to indicate the Wool Exchange; but pass through the swinging doors and your ears are assailed with cacophonous sounds that startle you. At one moment you think they are howls of execration. Some unfortunate fellow must be being mobbed. Then the sounds change. It is like the baying of a pack of hounds in full cry. They die away suddenly, only to break out with renewed vigour a moment later. You pass through glazed doors into a narrow gallery, with something of the look of the whispering gallery at St Paul's. This is perhaps suggested by the huge glazed dome which forms the

roof. In serried rank are five or six hundred men of all nations, acting apparently in the most unaccountable manner. Their seats are arranged in a semi-circle, and they are packed close together like herrings in a cask. On a rostrum at the side is the auctioneer; the

only calm and dignified man in the place, if you except his assistant and his clerk, who are absorbed in their ledgers. The foreigners are all immersed in large papers, like the agenda papers of the Common Council. Busy with their pencils, they never look up except to bid; they never look to one another; never exchange a word. The all-absorbing nature of the business in hand is the first characteristic one notices. All the rest seems chaotic to the

uninitiated. The auctioneer calls out a number. Immediately a dozen or twenty people get up and bay or howl at him. You recognise the sounds which appalled you on the staircase, but you distinguish nothing. The auctioneer is a mild, inoffensive man, and you wonder what they are execrating him for. He takes no notice, but goes on writing in a book with a huge quill pen that looks big enough to have come from the wing of an ostrich. The cacophony continues. Every man is excited, and howls at the top of his voice. What they are shouting you have not the faintest idea. Two or three are getting red in the face and look apoplectic. All have their right hands extended, and wave their catalogues in the face of the auctioneer. Whatever they are howling, it is directed at him. He looks up presently, and points his quill at one man. Several of the others drop in their seats; but immediately there is a fresh shout from those that remain standing. It is a new note, but it is as yet undistinguishable. Then the auctioneer looks up, something is said you cannot hear, and they all drop into their seats. You imagine that they are utterly exhausted. In another minute they are on their feet again; the babel is continuous. At one moment there are a Hungarian, an Austrian, a German, a Frenchman, a Russian, and an Italian joining in the cry. They are all animated by the same excitement; and even the phlegmatic Englishman shouts and bawls with the rest.

After a little watching, and a stray question put to a neighbour—the gallery is full of people who are probably spectators, as they take no part in the proceedings—one begins to understand the process. The first point learned is that the number the auctioneer calls is the number on the catalogue, and refers to so many bales of wool, samples of which have been on view elsewhere. There is no laudation of the wool, no appeal for bids, no opportunity for the auctioneer to be smart or jocosely. The number is no sooner called than someone shouts ten or twelve, or any number up to eighteen. Then the babel begins. The first shout you find to be one. Everybody is pointing at the auctioneer, and furiously shouting 'one.' The sound which is so much like the baying of a pack of hounds is distinguished to be 'half'; and the next is found to be 'three.' A neighbour explains that the wool is sold by



A sale of colonial wool at the wool exchange, from an engraving from the late 1880s.



the pound, and fetches from 8d. to eighteenpence per pound. If the figure '8' is shouted, the 'one' means eightpence-farthing, the 'half' means eightpence halfpenny and 'three' means eightpence three-farthings. The lot is supposed to be knocked down to the one who first bids the highest amount; but how the auctioneer distinguishes him in such a babel of sound, it is difficult to see. If eightpence is bid, and some one gives 'half' more, then all the bidders go on shouting 'half, half,' without stopping, until someone bids again, or until the auctioneer points to the one to whom it is knocked down. Even then the bidder may not get the 'lot,' for if the previous buyer got his lot at the same price he can calmly say 'last buyer,' though he has not bid at all, he having the option of taking the next lot if the price is the same. This often occurs, but the bidder thus baulked of his purchase takes his defeat philosophically. And this again points to a characteristic of the place. Seeing the excitement with which the bidding goes on, one would suppose there would be much wrangling about who really bid first, or who should have the various lots. But the authority of the auctioneer appears never to be questioned.

These sales have usually been held five times a year, but in 1894 there were six. They last two or three weeks; and usually the amount of wool sold at each series of sales is of the value of from five to six millions sterling. The largest amount comes from Australia. Last year, of 1,410,000 bales, 1,170,000 bales came to England; this was a decrease on the previous year owing to the drought in Queensland and other causes. From the Cape 274,616 bales were imported, only a very small quantity going to the Continent and America

direct. The remainder come from the River Plate, to the extent of half a million bales; East India, 104,000 bales; Persia, Spain, and Portugal, Russia, the Mediterranean, Peru, and China; the last-mentioned being comparatively small quantities. Last year there were many causes of depression. In the first place, the American crisis caused an almost complete cessation of demand both for wool and woollen goods. Then the tariff war between Germany and England, which also broke out in the summer, worked in the same direction. It considerably hampered the German industry by closing to it an important outlet, and reduced the volume of its competition for the raw material. While the export demand thus became contracted, and increasing quantities of goods were thrown on the home markets, the consuming power here was impaired by labour disputes-notably the coal strike-and by enormous losses in investments. This year the prospect is much more promising. It is a distinct advantage to this country that practically all the wool of the world should be sold here, for the profits in various directions must be very great. The import of wool has grown enormously. In 1860 the amount of colonial wool imported into Europe and America, through this country, was 226,000 bales, and the total value was £6,850,000. Last year the total value had risen to just under 26 millions sterling and this though the average value per bale has decreased from £25/15s. in 1860 to £12/10s. last year. All this means work for shippers, railway companies, warehousemen, and other distributing agencies, and employment for auctioneers and others, forming a considerable item in the commerce of the country. ■

A 'wool sale' does not sound very inviting to those on the look-out for novelty and amusement, but any one turning into the Coleman Street establishment will find his preconceived ideas on the subject of sales by auction rudely assailed.

Publications available from The Clerk

A Short History of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen
by Gordon Huelin
PhD FSA

The Woolmen's Tale
by David Buirski
"There Is No Substitute For..."
by Past Master Richard Proctor

A Layman's Commentary on The Register of Freedom Admissions of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen
by Lt Col (retd) WJH Clark

Woolmen's Umbrellas, Scarves and Ties

The Clerk has a stock of Woolman's umbrellas, scarves and ties for sale.
Woolmen's Scarves - £30;
Woolmen's Umbrellas - £25;
Woolmen's Ties - £30

Please make cheques payable to the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, and arrange collection with the Clerk from Painters' Hall; this is best achieved at the Civic Dinner.

The Master's Weekend at Goodwood



Other than the discrete plaque at the entrance gates there was little to advertise the presence of Rolls Royce; the plant blended so well into the landscape that it did not disturb the serenity of the Sussex Countryside. Its 'green' credentials were emphasised by the 'living' sedum roof. One could tell we were in for an exceptional visit of precision and exactitude as we were asked to park extremely precisely, all bonnets facing in to the centre of the forecourt.

On entering the foyer and showroom area one could smell the 'new car leather'.

After refreshments we were given a full presentation on the history, and present and future developments, with insight into the company ethos and its willingness to provide whatever the customer desires.

Emphasis is put on the fact that this is not a factory but a 'plant', basically an assembly line assembling all the parts brought in from Germany. The body shells come in partly dip painted but the main surface finishing, of several coats of water-based paint and lacquer, are applied before hand finishing for 5 hours. The leather work, using up to 11 hides, and the wood veneers are all hand made on the premises. For the Phantom, the veneers are 'book matched'. This can produce some unusual imagery; the face of the devil was obviously rejected.

Along the assembly lines there was an aura of calm. Everyone knew exactly what to do, but there seemed no urgency... the emphasis being on precision and perfection. Each week the company holds a lottery for the staff... the prize one of the test vehicles for a weekend.



Once completed each vehicle undergoes extensive testing for noise and vibration. Rigs simulate every possible type of road surface and then the vehicle is blasted with 5,000 litres of water, under high pressure and from all angles, to ensure there are no leaks before the vehicle is road tested. Rolls Royce cars must be perfect. They do not break down... but just in case there is a team of mechanics ready to fly out at short notice.

A fascinating visit, we did not realise that we had been there for 3 hours. We also came away with a memento of our visit ... no, not a Phantom unfortunately, but a mouse-mat cut from the off-cuts of the upholstery hide. ■

Bill Skidmore



‘Glorious Goodwood’, one of the great brands in the world of sport, evokes images of warm summer days, the heat of the sun tempered by a gentle sea breeze, the beauty of the Sussex Downs and elegant ladies and gentlemen being entertained in great comfort and style. However much the Master might have hoped in organising his weekend in Goodwood that the magic of the brand might add lustre to the event, he could not have expected us to enjoy a weekend that matched the glories of high summer in Sussex, but match it we did.

The weekend started for those arriving on the afternoon of Friday, 8 April, with a visit to the Rolls Royce motor car factory on the Goodwood Estate. The factory is a wonderful example of architecture and the environment being aligned so as to produce a distinctive building that compliments a site of great beauty. It seems altogether fitting that cars of the quality of today’s Rolls Royce models should be produced in such surroundings. Within the factory the craftsmen go about their work in remarkably clean, calm and noise free conditions. With both the Phantom and Ghost now in production, several hundred cars are assembled annually. We were shown some of the customisation that is possible – for the Rolls Royce customer, virtually anything can be provided, from a solid gold Spirit of Ecstasy to bespoke wooden cabinets for storing champagne in ideal conditions.

We returned to the Goodwood Hotel briefly before an excellent dinner in a local pub, The Royal Oak in Lavant. It was hard to believe as we enjoyed pre-dinner drinks (including good Sussex bitter) outside the pub that it was only early-April. The author and the Clerk took it upon themselves to organise a sweepstake on the Grand National, being run the following day, a suggestion that met with great enthusiasm, at the time. Had I known that I would draw the winning horse, Ballabriggs, I may not have been quite as keen to organise the sweepstake and to endure the inevitable accusations of a “fix”!

Saturday morning took us to nearby Chichester, where we enjoyed guided tours of two of the town’s great features: its Cathedral and the Pallant House Gallery. The two are closely linked through Dean Hussey, who commissioned a number of striking pieces of sculpture and glass for the Cathedral. He bequeathed his own collection of art to Chichester, a collection that now forms part of what is on display in Pallant House. A glass of wine and a sandwich lunch at the gallery was followed by a little time for shopping and an afternoon

in which we were free to relax or to enjoy one of the several optional activities that the Master had arranged for us.

On Saturday evening we were joined by a number of Liverymen who had been unable to be present earlier so that a party of about 60 awaited our transport to dinner at Goodwood House. We embarked in some style on board a gleaming, vintage double decker bus, with the usual rush for the seats at the front on top! On arrival at Goodwood House we had a champagne-fuelled tour of the house with a particularly engaging and knowledgeable guide, seeing some of the highlights of the Duke of Richmond’s extensive collection of Royal and family portraits, Canalettos, sporting art and extraordinary furniture and tapestries. Our dinner, the highlight of which was Goodwood Estate beef, was held in the Egyptian Dining Room, only recently restored to its full glory - King Edward VII’s dislike of the room’s Egyptian-themed decoration had resulted in it disappearing beneath plaster for almost a century. After dinner we retired from the movie set atmospherics of the Egyptian Dining Room to the 18th century elegance of the Ballroom for some well selected and varied musical entertainment provided by a harpist and flautist and short speeches by the Master and the Under Warden. Seldom can the Woolmen have dined in such splendid but very hospitable circumstances outside London. Our double decker returned us late that night to the Goodwood Hotel, from where on a sunny Sunday morning many of us on our way home took the opportunity to see a little more of Sussex.

To the Master, Simon, and Margaret, we owe a sincere debt of gratitude for organising such a special and enjoyable weekend away for the Company: a Glorious success in every respect. ■

Vincent Keaveny



For the Phantom, the veneers are ‘book matched’. This can produce some unusual imagery; the face of the devil was obviously rejected.



New Liverymen



Michael Stone



John Foddy



Judith Donovan



Bill Skidmore

Since the last article on this subject there have been a number of new joiners to the livery, particularly at the recent April 2011 dinner. They are an eclectic group and we have warmly welcomed all of them.

In November 2010, we had 6 new liverymen.

Judith Donovan CBE is a Yorkshire entrepreneur, who founded her own marketing agency in 1982 and grew it significantly before selling it in 2000. Since then she has pursued a career in the public sector and as a non executive director.

Her current roles include some wool related posts such as being Director of the British Wool Marketing Board and member of the DEFRA Farming Regulation Task Force.

Bill Skidmore is a Yorkshireman who has been working with fashion textiles for over 50 years including educational roles as well as marketing director for a ladies fashion chain. He continues to promote all aspects of the textile industry and to have close links with the University of Huddersfield.

Hugh Furber is a retired Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and more recently has spent his time achieving a BA in English and cultural Studies and a MA in English Literature, both at Warwick University. He is also a regular golfer and is involved with various charitable and arts organisations.

Michael Stone is a Yorkshireman who has spent the majority of his career in the construction industry. He is commercial director of a raised access flooring company, which has involved working at prestigious developments in the City including developments such as One New Change and Heron Tower.

Colin Fell is a Chartered Surveyor and partner in King Sturge LLP. He has extensive experience in the commercial property sector, including advising banks on property lending and he has a particular interest in appropriate structures

for property investment, including launching 3 syndicated SIPP funds of significant value.

In January 2011, **Kevin Barwick** joined the livery. He is head of audit at the Basingstoke office of Baker Tilly. He has a particular interest and professional expertise in charities, including having provided auditing services to the Woolmen.

John Foddy joined King Sturge in January 2001 as a Partner in the Planning & Development Consultancy Group. From 2005 he was promoted to Equity Partner and with responsibility for the firm's mixed use development and residential divisions providing clients with all aspects of advice including, planning, strategic master-planning, affordable housing and development/mixed use consultancy. John is also a lead Partner on the Partnership's UK Consultancy Board which aims to manage, coordinate and target national consultancy services.

Alderman **David Wootton**, Sheriff of the City of London 2009/ 2010 was educated at Bradford Grammar School and at Jesus College, Cambridge. He became a partner at Allen & Overy in 1979, specialising in corporate transactions and best-practice compliance with law and regulation in corporate governance. This involved dealing with mergers and acquisitions, IPOs and joint ventures across various international markets. He is currently a committee member of the City of London Law Society.



Hugh Furber

Alderman Wootton is a governor of several institutions, including the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, King Edward's School in Witley, and the City of London Academy Southwark. He is also a Trustee and Chairman of the Audit Committee of the King's Fund, Chairman of the Trustees of the Charles Dickens Museum and music patron of St Paul's Cathedral. A councillor since 2002, Alderman Wootton was elected to the ward of Langbourn in 2005.

He was Master of the Worshipful Company of Fletchers in 2005/6, and is a Liveryman of the Solicitors, Clockmakers, Glaziers, Information Technologists and Bowyers. Alderman Wootton currently serves on the Council of the City Livery Club and is President of the Society of Young Freemen.

He is married to Mrs Elizabeth Wootton and they have four children.

Alan Johnson was born in Coventry in 1947 and educated at Bablake School in that city. He studied at Leicester School of Architecture qualifying as a Chartered Architect and becoming a member of the RIBA in 1973.

Following a number of years working in private practice and as Group Architect for Gallifords, he formed his own practice, Alan Johnson Associates, in 1979 where he remained as sole principal, and later senior partner, until retirement in 2004. During the 25 years of Alan Johnson Associates, the practice was fortunate to act on substantial commercial, industrial, distribution and retail schemes throughout the UK for major pension funds, plc developer clients and government departments.

He now lives in the Warwickshire village of Leek Wootton with his present wife, Hilary, and between them they have four grown-up children and five grandchildren.



Appointed to the Coventry Magistrates' Bench in 1997, Alan finds great satisfaction in his work as a JP and is a Bench Chairman in Coventry and a Magistrates' Appraiser for the West Midlands. Other principal interests include golf, motor boating, rugby as a Vice President of Kenilworth RFC, Freemasonry, travel in the UK and elsewhere, spending time at their house in southern Spain and fine dining in interesting company.

Howard Venters has farming interests in both Sussex and Herefordshire with a small beef suckler herd and breeding flock of Hampshire Down X sheep. He has previously kept, promoted and bred rare breeds, primarily Gloucester and Irish Moiled cattle.

Howard is director of Shepherd Publishing Ltd who take over as our new publishers as from this revised issue of *The Woolman*. Shepherd is based in Malvern, and specialises in the production of livestock publications across dairy, beef and sheep sectors, including *Cattle Breeder*, *Beef Farmer*, *Sheep Farmer* and *Wool Producer* – a new publication in co-operation with the British Wool Marketing Board, created to inform producers about the complexities of the wool and textile industries and to promote the Campaign for Wool, recently instigated by HRH the Prince of Wales.

Howard's mother livery is the Worshipful Company of Farmers and last year he joined us in the Woolmen. In younger years, he served in Reserve Forces with the Royal Engineers. He is a longstanding member of the Farmers Club, a director of the British Cattle Breeders Club and council member of the Guild of Agricultural Journalists.

Other new members are **Christopher Dancaster** and **Paul Brame** ■



Alan Johnson



Howard Venters



Kevin Barwick



David Wootton

Guildhall Visit

12 Liverymen wives and friends all duly arrived for a 11.00am start for a private guided tour of the Guildhall's Great Hall, the Guildhall Art Gallery and Roman London's Amphitheatre, on March 14th.

The first part of the tour was the Great Hall, many of you will have sat in the Guildhall over the years for the voting in of the City Sheriffs and Lord Mayor, which does not provide any opportunity to explore this magnificent building which has been the City powerhouse since the twelfth century.



The Great Hall was built between 1411 and 1440 and its splendour is still awe-inspiring. It was built in an age when the Lord Mayor of London rivalled the monarch for influence and prestige. This was where the Lord Mayor and the ruling merchant class held court fine-tuned the laws and trading regulations that helped create London's wealth. The Great Hall measures 152 feet long, 49.5 feet broad and 89 feet high. The 15th century walls are 5 feet thick and divided by clustered columns and mouldings, at each end of the hall are Gothic windows. The stone arched roof is its fifth over the past 800 years was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1953.

Each of the Romanesque windows in the side walls contain the names of previous Lord Mayors of London, starting with the first

Henry Fitz Ailwyn in 1189 during the reign of King Richard I. It also houses monuments to national heroes, including Admiral Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Mayor Beckford, William Pitt, and Sir Winston Churchill. Our guide also pointed out the Great Hall is home to the colossal figures of the famous legendary giants Gog and Magog who were said to have founded London.

Next we headed to the Guildhall Art Gallery and Roman London's Amphitheatre. The art was brought to life by our guide Karen

Chester whose knowledge of the Guildhall collection was amazing. By coincidence that day several of the paintings were being either moved or replaced as a major rehang, this made the tour even more interesting as we could see pictures being removed from their frames, rolled ready to be stored.

The gallery displays about 250 works of art at a time, with a programme of temporary exhibitions exploring different themes to allow other pictures from the collection to be displayed. If my memory serves me right Karen said the City of London held 4000 works of art. This remarkable

collection includes, portraits from the 16th Century to the present with magnificent views of London life from the 17th Century to the present along with a host of Victorian paintings and sculpture including Pre-Raphaelite works and the studio collection of Sir Matthew Smith.

Last we were taken below the Guildhall Courtyard to explore the Roman London's Amphitheatre which was discovered in 1988 during construction work and therefore for nearly 2000 years had not been seen.

Finally we all then set off for an excellent lunch just around the corner at Davy's wine bar at the Woolgate Exchange building. I had to leave early though I understand the party was still going past 4.30 pm. ■

Legacies

The principal features of the City Livery Companies are the fellowship they offer and the educational and charitable work they undertake in support of their particular trades and crafts. Such work is fundamental to their very foundation and continued existence.

Our own Company is no exception and much work has been undertaken in developing our financial support for the education of graduates and post-graduates working in wool. In addition we continue to support other charities associated with our own Company and those of the City of London. The Worshipful Company of Woolmen's Charitable Trust supports academic and practical achievement in wool and textiles with awards and medals.

Academic Achievement

The Worshipful Company of Woolmen's Charitable Trust (including the Peter Valpy Memorial Bursary, Roger Flemington Bursary, Jeremy Marshall Bursary and Lord Barnby Bursary) supports twenty students in wool and textiles at Heriot Watt University, Huddersfield University, Manchester University, the Scottish Agricultural College and Harper Adams University College.

Practical Achievement

The Worshipful Company of Woolmen's Charitable Trust (including the Robert Camac legacy) supports junior and adult sheep shearing

with a total of thirteen medals (one gold medal, one silver medal and eleven bronze medals) at The Royal Ulster Show (Balmoral), The Royal Bath and West Show, The Royal Highland Show, The Great Yorkshire Show and The Royal Welsh Show. There are also cash prizes associated with some of these awards.

Legacies

In these difficult economic times there is increased competition for a reduced level of charitable giving. Our own charity is not immune from these commercial pressures and yet the importance of supporting our younger generation through our educational awards has never been greater.

Most Woolmen have in place a regular scheme to make donations to the Charitable Fund, and we would encourage those who do not to do so. Any amount, however small, is always welcome and is an important part of the ethos of being a Liveryman.

We also encourage Liveryman to think about leaving a bequest to the Charitable Fund in their will. This is a very apt way of thanking the Company for years of pleasure and companionship, and ensuring that the charitable fund continues to grow and prosper for the benefit of all those seeking education in the industry in the future. If you would like any more information about leaving a legacy to the Woolmen, please contact the Clerk in the first instance. ■



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