

The Musicians Livery Club

THE INAUGURATION and objectives of the Livery Club are most instructively dealt with in "The History of the Worshipful Company of Musicians" a copy of which is given to all new Liverymen.

The Club was started in 1902 under the Presidency of the then Master for the purpose of promoting the interests of the Company and its usefulness to the Art of Music and to provide members more opportunities of meeting than the Company's formal events offered thereby facilitating interchange of views and concerted action.

Apparently the Club at once infused new life into the Company. This is perhaps not surprising because whilst the formal events of any Livery provide certain attractions and satisfactions for an essentially all male membership there is little opportunity for socialising, especially with the presence of members' ladies and thus getting to know in some depth one's fellow members.

At its inception the Musicians' Livery Club was unique with the exception of another Livery in having such a social centre; it was not until twelve years later in 1914 that the City Livery Club was founded with membership open to all Liverymen. Only interrupted by the first World War the Musicians Club has continued to provide a social focal point except for the uneasy period following the revival of the Club after the War when the Club again lapsed for some years.

Entertainment

It is thought provoking that the second revival was sparked off by a desire to provide entertainment for members' ladies other than through the costly Company's formal events – a state of affairs which has frighteningly worsened!

The Club is run by a Committee with an Honorary Secretary & Treasurer and a President elected annually roughly according to membership seniority. Liaison with the Court of the Livery is maintained through a Pastmaster serving on the Committee.

The Club membership subscription is nominal the events being designed to be self supporting. These events have as a core, connections with the Livery's musical associations. Thus the Club year begins with support for the Livery participation in the St. Pauls St. Cecilia's Evening, a beautiful service followed by a Tea Party given by the Club in the Chapter House. Always the events, whilst providing musical interest, have in mind fraternisation through a dinner or supper. Thus the support of the Club for a Maisie Lewis Recital for young performers organised by the Livery and given in the Festival Hall is happily combined with a supper in the nearby National Theatre Restaurant. The

association the Livery with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama has given rise to support of the Club for one of the schools' very high standard operatic evenings when the friendship with the School enables supper to be provided for the Club by the School caterers. This core of events is completed by the Spring Ladies' Night with musical entertainment following a more formal dinner in an interesting rendez-vous other than a costly restaurant or Livery Hall. Other events depend upon the originality of the Committee's thinking and especially that of the President. Thus Michael Howard a retired bell-founder, suggested a coach trip in 1989, to the Loughborough Bell Foundry & Museum with a performance upon the town's unique War Memorial Carrillon.

The Club has played in recent years, as in the past, useful roles in providing esprit de corps within the Livery. Thus a Livery Club Tie talked about for many years was brought into being last year by the encouragement of the Master, Sir Vivian Dunn and the zeal of Committee member Laurie Goodwin. It is hoped that Livery & Club Members who have not yet identified themselves with this insignia will obtain one from him. Another innovation brought about recently by the Club was the preparation on a Members Directory. The annual Livery List gives but little

indication of the unusual range of talent, interests and authority of the Members both within and without the Musical World which the Directory seeks to rectify and thus provide a valuable reference.

With the rapport now well established between the Clerk's Office and the Secretary, it is unlikely that any new Liverymen will escape receiving information about the Club but older Liverymen who are not yet Club Members are urged to contact the Secretary. The first event in the current year will be an illustrated lecture by our charismatic Pastmaster John Heddle-Nash on October 23rd about his famous tenor father and amusingly entitled "The Best Messiah in the Business".

It would seem that the virtues of the Musicians Club has spread in the Livery World. Two such other clubs were established in the seventies by the Bakers and the Coopers. The Club Secretary became surprisingly aware of this by an approach from the Bakers Society Secretary with a proposal to hold a joint meeting in the Bakers Hall, Supper to be organised by them and the musical entertainment by the Musicians Club. A highly successful and enjoyable evening was had in a lovely Hall and it is hoped that other developments will follow from this initial venture.

A.S.D.B.

The Walter Willson Cobbett Medal



WE ARE HAPPY to print this informal study of Lt.Col. Sir Vivian Dunn and Miss Sidonie Goosens to whom he had previously presented the medal. It is an interesting thought that she has been performing for as long as the Medal has been endowed (1924) and continues an active association with the world of music.