

Musicians' Benevolent Fund

Assistant Philip Jones has succeeded the late Allen Percival as Deputy Chairman of the Executive and as Chairman of the Awards and Trusts Committee.

Court Changes

Nigel Tulley, bandleader and computer specialist is to join the Court. He is the first to be elected under the recently adopted procedures. He is also a member of the Jazz Medal Committee.

Hot off the Pizza

Livery and friends including Pastmaster Sir Andrew Carnwath ensured a virtual sell out at the final contest for the 1994 Jazz Award held earlier this month at the Pizza on the Park. The enthusiastic audience welcomed Liveryman John Dankworth who compered the show in which five young musicians, supported by Alec and Jacqui Dankworth, competed with sparkling individual performances. The evening was also further enhanced by the presence of Cleo Laine and George Shearing. The winner was the highly talented Andy Panayi on saxophone.

Exultation

Recently, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra gave a concert in the Birkenhead Tunnel under the Mersey to celebrate its 60th anniversary. Scheduled to last an hour, it had to be cut short as officials feared a crush! Further musical entertainment was provided by the Bootle Concertina Band and the Wirral Boys Brigade Band.

It has been considered a shortcoming that the Channel Tunnel could not have received more musical approbation. We therefore invite the Livery to submit suggestions for a commemorative programme or appropriate comic verse which might be sung to the refrain of Rule Britannia or other Community anthem in order to commemorate its opening on a regular full time basis.

A small prize will be awarded for the most entertaining contribution.

THE COMPANY'S OFFICE

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Congratulations



Photo: Church End Studios

Liveryman Brian Kemble has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to the piano industry. He is joint Managing Director of the family firm, Kemble and Company, a Director of the Music Industries Association and a past President of the Piano Manufacturers and Distributors Association.

Master and Wardens' Committee

The Court is considering the reorganisation of various committees, primarily, the Master and Wardens' which has served the Company so well for the past twenty five years. In principle, it has accepted that the time has come when it might be appropriate for this committee to be strengthened on a trial basis. This October, two further Pastmasters will be elected to serve for a maximum of two years and then not be eligible for re-election until at least a further year had passed. The outgoing Immediate Pastmaster would not be eligible for election for at least one year after leaving it, having previously probably put in at least four years of continuous service. Two junior members of the Court should also be elected at the same time for one year only and would not be eligible for re-appointment until their election as Junior Warden.

CORRESPONDENCE

From the Master...

I was most interested to read your letter in the March, 1994 issue of Preserve Harmony, I am sympathetic to your complaint at the length of the speeches at some of the Company's functions. Steps are being undertaken in the first instance to reduce the number of speeches, and, at any rate at the Midsummer Banquet, there was only one guest speaker; nevertheless, the point about the length of the speeches is still well taken.

However, I have to disagree that the length of the speeches in discourteous to the musicians who are due to perform. It has been our custom lately to invite the musicians, if they so wish, to dine with the Livery as the Company's guests - and I believe this to be only right and proper. It has been my experience that rather than resenting being kept waiting, the musicians are often, on the contrary, rather glad of a possible break in order to leave the tables before the speeches to prepare themselves and their instruments for their performances.

I do not understand your comments about the naming of the guests in the speech proposing their health. If a toast is to be made to the guests, surely it is correct to refer to at least some of them by name, especially if they are Company, as opposed to personal, guests and say something complimentary? Have I missed something or are you suggesting the the toast to the guests be abandoned?

From Liveryman John Borron...

Thank you for your letter of 20th April. It is good of you to take the trouble to write. In my original letter I stressed that one can do nothing about boring speeches, one is lucky or unlucky, but one can limit length. The length of speeches at the last two Autumn Livery Dinners has been intolerable. I think the Master had better copy my grandfather's example of taking out his pocket watch and gently swinging it!

You may be right about some musicians wanting time for preparation. I must confess that I have always been only too anxious to be finished with speaking, etc. It is not fair that the musicians should have had to perform as they did on the last two occasions against a background of Liverymen and guests anxious to catch last trains.

When I first attended a Livery Dinner it was the custom for the Master to single out a few of the Company guests, i.e. fellow Masters, but only a few. Now it has become the custom to deal with every Company guest in detail. The contrast I was making was between the exhaustive account of Company guests and personal guests who remain unsung (mercifully!) but are still guests. Of course I think the toast to the guests should take place - it would be discourteous to omit it. Perhaps, however, we could return to past traditions.