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lunch at Merchant Taylors' Hall and, that evening, to attend the Royal Concert at the Royal Albert Hall. In December I was present at the Beethoven Competition and it was a pity that none of the candidates was of sufficient merit to be awarded the first John and Renate Iles Medal. I was very pleased to meet again my old friend Alberto Portugheis who entertained us so memorably at the Court Dinner in April. I was glad too Lucy Jeal, who benefits from the loan of a violin under the Cremona Trust, played for us at the Midsummer Banquet. Prizegiving at Kneller Hall is always a special occasion and I appreciate that the new Commandant has expressed an interest in joining the Company, thereby reviving an old-established tradition.

Another pleasure this year was to participate in the judging for some of the Company prizes, particularly the Carnwath Scholarship and the Gemini Fellowship. I was sorry that absence abroad prevented my attending the reception at which the prize was awarded to Julian Butcher, a most worthy winner. I was also unable to be present at a reception given by the Lady Mayoress at the Mansion House in honour of the 60th birthday of the Lord Mayor. However, on the day before I handed over the Mastership, I was received by them and, on behalf of the Company, presented the Lord Mayor with a specially bound copy of Benjamin Britten's War Requiem – a gift that the Court considered appropriate as the composer was one of our distinguished Honorary Freeman.

The Master has traditionally been honoured to be invited to a Royal Garden Party; for the first time Her Majesty the Queen agreed that, in addition to the Master's Lady and up to two unmarried daughters aged between 18 and 25 being permitted to attend, sons might also be included. We were thus able to take full advantage and we were present as a complete family. The occasion was most memorable, even if it was the hottest day of a very hot summer!

This year the Shrieval and Mayoral elections generated more interest than usual. In June there was a contested election for the lay Sheriff, which was resolved only by the 'unofficial' candidate standing down and declaring his support for the two 'official' ones. More drama followed at the Mayoral election in September, when there was a very real possibility of a poll being demanded. This would have delayed the election for two weeks – a circumstance that has not arisen this century. At the very last moment a formal poll was avoided, but the arguments had already lasted an extra three quarters of an hour and everyone's lunch was cold! As far as I understood it, there was no opposition to the election of the incoming Lord

Mayor, Alderman Christopher Walford, but the problem was who would be Lord Mayor in 1995/6. Such are the ways of the City.

There was one event at which my duties as Master and my professional obligation coincided – the presentation of the Iles Medal to Peter Parkes at the National Brass Band Festival at the Royal Albert Hall in June. As the occasion was being sponsored by Boosey & Hawkes, I had to be careful in what I said, but I was able to point out that, as far as I knew, this is the only medal that is presented to the winner three times, by three different people, and even then is taken away to be engraved!

There were some functions that business or other commitments prevented my attending. I was particularly sorry not to be present at the Annual Banquet of Scientific Instrument Makers. Liverymen Stephen Barrett (one of their Pastmasters and founders) has kindly made arrangements for the Masters of the Musicians' and Gardeners' Companies and their Ladies to attend in perpetuity. It so happened that in the first year their Banquet coincided with our own Midsummer Banquet, so that Pastmaster John Iles and his wife were enabled to enjoy Stephen Barrett's generosity and the Scientific Instrument Makers' hospitality.

We have been the beneficiaries this year of a gift from Assistant Norman Tribble and a substantial legacy from the late Myra Verney, for both of which we are most grateful. The latter is to be used for the endowment of a prize to be

competed for among the Conservatories of Music for the performance of the music of J.S. Bach, and for the encouragement of singing. In all, the finances of the Company under the new Treasurer are in good shape and the Court is taking steps to streamline the administration of our funds and to consider the best ways in which they may be used in the future. Final decisions have still to be taken and, doubtless, future masters will report in greater detail in due course.

I cannot let this report of my year pass without referring to the grievous losses the Company has suffered in the deaths of Pastmaster John Heddle Nash and of Robert Gold, the Junior Warden. Their passing cast a pall of gloom over the last weeks of my year in office. I am sure I write on behalf of all Liverymen in expressing deepest sympathy to their families.

On a happier note, I felt honoured to be present at the Service and luncheon party in Charterhouse to celebrate Donald Baker's fifty years in the ministry. Congratulations, Donald, and best wishes for your year of office as President of the Livery Club.

I close this report by indicating that I feel it a great honour and privilege to have been allowed to serve as Master, and I thank all Liverymen for the support that they have given me. I have made many friends and, I hope, learnt much that may be of use to the Company in the future.

Tony Pool.



Presenting the Iles Medal to Peter Parkes. Photo: Boosey & Hawkes.