

Master's Year 1992-93

Workers alias Wire Workers in the Butchers' Hall; the Innholders' and the Plaisterers' Companies in their own Halls. And, of course there was the visit to Buckingham Palace for tea.

The Parish Clerks' and Fan Makers' were generous in providing hospitality on more than one occasion. There are strong links with both Companies. Of the Parish Clerks, Frank Fowler is a Member of our Court and Liverymen John Gaze, Alan Pearmain and Noel Mander are Pastmasters. John Hammond, who was Master of the Fan Makers is also joining us having been proposed by our Junior Warden Robert Gold – one of their Pastmasters.

There were visits to numerous Cathedrals and Churches, both within and without the City, comprising services – some at which I read a Lesson or, fully robed, processed – as well as concerts, recitals and meetings. It does seem tragic that some of the City's Churches – such remarkable heritage and beauty – should be under threat of closure.

The association with the Royal Marines provided two special highlights. My wife and I were invited to the Royal Albert Hall for the Mountbatten Festival of Music. The Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines were under the direction of Lt. Col. John Ware, a Freeman of the Company. Liveryman David Cole was one of the conductors. A piece composed by Pastmaster Sir Vivian Dunn was included in the programme. This was followed by an invitation to take the salute at the Annual Open Day at the RM School of Music, Deal. The welcome was very warm including that of a former Principal Director of Music, Liveryman Graham Hoskins. I took the opportunity to lay a wreath in the Garden of Remembrance in memory of the Young Musicians who were killed there by an IRA bomb.

There were numerous visits to the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, Trinity College of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. At the latter, I was present at the opening by the Lord Mayor of the new Extension to the Westrup Library, with its close Company association, and subsequently the 15th Anniversary Celebrations of the European Piano Teachers Association and the founding of the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe.

With the family connections, it was a particular pleasure to attend the great Brass Band Contests in Manchester and London. Margaret Mortimer asked me to present the Prizes at the British Open

in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, (now that Belle Vue is no more) where Liveryman Bram Gay was among the adjudicators, Liveryman Frank Renton was among the conductors (Grimethorpe Colliery Band) and Liveryman Peter Wilson was representing the 'British Bandsman'. I was also invited by Freeman Ann-Marie Sizer of Boosey & Hawkes to present Elgar Howarth with the Certificate for the Iles Medal on stage at the National Brass Band Contest, originally founded by my grandfather, at the Royal Albert Hall. In two short speeches, these events alone provided the opportunity of saying something about the Musicians' Company to some six thousand people.

In October, the Court supported the granting of an award for a suitable test piece for the British Open Brass Band Championship in Manchester for this year – 80 years after a piece was specifically commissioned for a band contest for the first time by my grandfather in 1913 at Belle Vue.

Livery Company Day at Ironbridge Museum, and the Manchester Mid-day Concert following which we were entertained at the RNCM by Liveryman Christopher Underwood, gave my wife and I the excuse to leave London for a few days of 'business' away. The former was not only a fascinating journey to the heart of the Industrial Revolution but an opportunity to meet and make friends with many other Masters. For the latter, the late

Pastmaster Derek Lockett invited us to stay with him. His hospitality and kindness are something Renate and I shall remember for a long time.

An evening which had interesting developments was that of the Commissioner for Hong Kong's Musical soirée, brought about as a result of Assistant John Hosier's association with their Arts' Academy and written up in a previous issue. It was a delightful occasion. As a result, we received an invitation to the Reception at the Chinese Embassy to honour the visit of the Beijing Opera Company.

And so the year drew to a close with the City Music Society at Goldsmiths' Hall. I am grateful to Liveryman Alan Paul for his kindness. The occasion was held to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of its founding by Ivan Sutton. It was a most pleasurable finale.

Sadly, it is impossible to report everything – so much happened during the twelve months. However, having held office as Master, I hope that I have helped not only to set the Company upon a new course, but also accumulated sufficient knowledge to be of service in the years ahead.

I believe that the Company is currently blessed with an enthusiastic energetic and receptive Court. I am profoundly grateful to those who supported and advised me in a complex and busy year. Their presence and experience augurs well for the future.

John Iles.



At the RM School of Music with the first women musicians, one of whom is a Company Silver Medalist. Photo: Kent Messenger Group.