

The Worshipful Company of Needlemakers



The Master - Henry C. Milward FCMA, ACIS
Senior Warden - Dr Simon O. Fradd BSc, MB, BS, FRCS, MRCP
Junior Warden - Mr Michael G. Cook The Learned Clerk
Immediate Past Master - Mr Deputy Michael J. Snyder DSc, FCA

Needle News October 2006

The Master's Column

I was honoured to be elected as your Master at the Installation Court on 4th October and I shall use my best endeavours to uphold the long traditions of the Company. I feel especially proud to hold this position following my grandfather who was Master in 1910 and my father who was Senior Warden in 1981.

I am delighted to have Simon Fradd as Senior Warden and Michael Cook as Junior Warden. I congratulate them both on their appointments. Clearly the appointment of Michael to the position of Junior Warden means that we will need a new Learned Clerk.

I follow my predecessor Michael Snyder who found time amidst his hectic life as both Senior Partner of Kingston Smith and Chairman of Policy and Resources in the City of London travelling the world with the Lord Mayor, to have an inspirational year for this Worshipful Company.

During our 350th Anniversary year we had the most spectacular Banquet in the Guildhall which many of you attended.

The Company published the Book of the Needlemakers.

Our Newsletter came into being and was well received.

We visited the Lord Mayors Home at the Mansion House and saw their silver collection, before having a guided tour of the Guildhall and dinner next the Roman Coliseum.

We had a weekend in West Midlands and were able to present a film of modern needle making to the Redditch Needle Museum.



Robing the new Master



Immediate past Master & new Master

We were invited by the Lord Tope to dine at the House of Lords.

And as a final parting to a successful year Michael presented the Company with a beautiful 350th Anniversary Loving Cup.

During the Last Year we have admitted the following to the Livery and welcome them whole heartedly:-

Andrew Peter Roast
Patricia Ann Alston
Ciprian Dorn Illie
Jason Philip Cope
Victor Flintham
Allan Anthony Chambers
David Charles Brooks Wilson

I wish to congratulate Claire Cross and Simon Born on their appointments as Assistants to the Court. Simon will be representing the Fellowship of Needlemakers, during his term as Chairman.

Regrettably I have to report the death of Liveryman Donald Molyneux Berry. I extend our deep sympathy to his family.

I have already seen the enthusiasm of the Livery with the overwhelming response to the trips that have been planned.

I am looking forward to representing the Company in the coming year.

Henry Milward

Programme of Events for 2006/07

2006

Wednesday 8th November

A viewing of the Company's Silver with a talk by the Archivist - Liveryman David Henshaw. This will be followed by a reception and buffet supper at Butchers Hall.

Wednesday 22nd November

Saint Cecelia's Day Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, followed by Luncheon.

Tuesday 12th December

Annual Carol Service at St. Giles Cripplegate followed by a fish and chip supper.

2007

Tuesday 9th January

Court Luncheon at Butchers Hall.

Thursday 11th - 23rd January

Trip to Needle Industries and Southern India

Thursday 22nd February

Annual Banquet at the Mansion House

Wednesday 21st March

The Guildhall School of Music Woodwind Competition, followed by Supper.

Friday 23rd March

The United Guild Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, followed by Luncheon.

Tuesday 3rd April

Court Luncheon at Butchers Hall

Thursday 17th May

Visit to the Royal School of Needlework and Hampton Court with buffet lunch

Saturday June 2nd - 9th

River Douro Trip to Portugal

Wednesday 4th July

Formal Court Dinner at Butchers Hall

Wednesday 3rd October

Annual Church Service at St. James Garlickhythe. Followed by Installation Dinner at Painter Stainers Hall

The Worshipful Company of Poulters

Poulters Shrove Tuesday Pancake Race

Guildhall Yard 20th February 2007

Calling All Liverymen. The Poulters have invited all Liveries to enter a team into their annual pancake race on Shrove Tuesday 20th February 2007 in Guildhall Yard. Should you be interested in joining a team please contact the Master on 01952-727705.

Golf Day

The Livery is looking to hold a golf day in the summer. In order to establish its viability please could you contact Liveryman Michael Foulkes to register your interest. He is on 01245-227572 (or Gillian.foulkes@virgin.net).

Past Events

Dinner at the House of Lords

A full house of the Livery and their guests were entertained by The Lord Tope at the Cholmondeley Room. The reception was held on the balcony overlooking the Thames on a beautiful evening.



The Lord Tope - Liveryman Graham Tope gave a few thoughts about the House.

"The Needlemakers had received their Charter during the republican times of the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell. At the time of our Incorporation, therefore, the House of Lords had been abolished.

Cromwell had described it as "dangerous and useless" and the Commons had described it as a "great inconvenience". Both views might find some resonance in Government today!

But shortly after our Charter in 1656, Cromwell had decided (of a second Chamber) that "unless we have some such thing as a balance, we cannot be safe". He had in mind a second Chamber wholly appointed by him - again a thought that may have resurfaced recently.

A Comparison could be made between the Corporation of London and the Lords. Both are difficult to defend in a modern democracy - and even harder to explain! (for instance, the only elected Members of the Lords are those there by right of birth - the remaining hereditary Peers in the Lords are elected, quite literally, by their Peers!)

In neither case would we start from here but the best defence of both is that they have grown organically and historically and, above all, they work!

The Quality of the debates are considered of the highest quality with at least 7 ex Foreign Secretaries and 2 Nobel Prize winners available to speak. The Lords sits for longer hours than any other European legislature (including the Commons) and costs less than one third of the cost of the Commons per UK tax payer. In 2004/5 the cost of the Lords is £3.15 per UK taxpayer against £11.15 for the Commons, judge which is the better value". .

A very enjoyable dinner and evening for those attending.

"The Art and Craft"

The Master Michael Snyder, as part of the 350th Anniversary Celebrations, invited the Livery to visit the Needle Museum in Redditch. This visit was to serve as a most appropriate recognition and timely reminder of our wonderful industrial heritage. It was the highlight of a splendid weekend visit to the West Midlands starting on Friday 30th June and ending on the afternoon on Sunday 2nd July 2006.



Inside Forge Mill Needle Museum

Our party was 38 strong and we were based at the very comfortable Hyatt Regency Hotel situated in the new commercial part of Birmingham.





Forge Mill Needle Museum



The Livery inside the museum



Baddesley Clinton

Those who managed to arrive in the early afternoon of Friday enjoyed a super visit to Entaco Limited, formerly Needle Industries, and had the opportunity to see needle equipment and manufacturing processes in a needlemaking factory producing hand sewing needles.

On arrival at the factory, there was a bit of extra excitement in that our Senior Warden along with a few distinguished others were locked out and despite every effort could not gain entry to Entaco! Fortunately "Mobile Phones" came to the rescue and all was well.

On the Friday evening the Master hosted a "Sparkling Reception" followed by a sumptuous Dinner in the Hotel. After Dinner it was reported that some ventured forth to enjoy the delight of Birmingham's "equivalent" of the London Eye! Others decided to discuss the "The Art and Craft of Needlemaking" over a nightcap in the Hotel. Some did both !

Following a hearty breakfast we left by coach to visit The Black Country Museum. The weather was glorious, sunshine and blue skies provided a perfect start to the day.

The Black Country was at the very heart of industrial Britain and the open-air museum provided a fascinating insight into the industrial age of the mid 19th Century.

So much to see from that era, from working trams, horse drawn transport, a coal mine, iron works with rolling mills and forge, a school, cottages, and an amazing canal trip in a barge! The shops were intriguing from the hardware shop, to the pawn shop and the incredible Emile Doo's chemist shop and so much more including a vintage car museum. To finish off, there was a welcome visit to the "Local Pub" and Fish and Chip shop!

There was something of interest for everyone and the museum well reflected the excitement, industry, challenges and hardships of a bye-gone age!



Inside Forge Mill Needle Museum

Saturday evening was a unique and thoroughly enjoyable experience with a visit to Baddesley Clinton, a magnificent

moated medieval manor house in Warwickshire, home of the Ferrers Family for 500 years.

We had a highly informative tour of the Manor and viewed the stunning Great Hall with its truly beautiful heraldic stained glass. The House is steeped in history with stories of "The Gun Powder Plot", providing Refuge for Priests and, of course, "The Ghost Story"! The Manor and those who lived there in the past were brought to life through the late 19th Century paintings by Rebecca Ferrers.

On completion of the tour, we had a most enjoyable Reception and Dinner.

After a good nights rest and breakfast on Sunday morning we were off to the Forge Mill Needle Museum at Redditch.

The Master had highlighted the importance of our industrial heritage and the visit to the Needle Museum provided the perfect opportunity to go back to the very roots of the "Art and Craft of Needlemaking."

The superb guided tour soon demonstrated the fascinating processes and severe hardship of needlemaking in Victorian times.

To see the original water-powered machinery, the Forge Mill, the manufacturing equipment and the many processes in needlemaking including the Pointer's grinding tram and to hear that a Pointer's life expectancy was only about 30 years yet the job was sought after as it was well paid!

The visit brought to life the very essence of Needlemaking and its History!

It was, I am sure, a very memorable visit for all but particularly for Senior Warden Henry Milward given the unique place in needlemaking held by " Milward's Needles."

We returned to the Hyatt Hotel invigorated by the visit and ready to enjoy a relaxed lunch before departure.

The Master thanked all for their participation in a truly happy and highly informative weekend.

A special thank you to Liveryman Bryan Knight for his tireless endeavours before and throughout the very successful and enjoyable visit.

Assistant George Borthwick

Results of Questionnaire

by Assistant Pamela Goldberg

We had an excellent response with 106 replies. Several people commented that they were pleased that the Court was consulting the members. Overall the older and longer standing members were happiest and I added in another category to cover those who reprimanded me for not including a "happy" category as they had met people and made friends (18 members)! However, some of them made comments about the challenge of attracting younger members which were very similar to what the younger members themselves said.

The main issue for older members in not attending events, or as many as they would like, was failing health and the effort of travel if they lived out of London which many do. While some said that the cost of an event was not a deterrent, the ancillary costs of travel and possibly accommodation was.

Younger members were more likely to quote family commitments. Members' partners were less likely to attend because of the timing of events rather than the cost.

Type of Event: this was almost evenly split between lunch and dinner with a cocktail party a popular third choice. About half said that cost was not a factor with about a fifth saying that it was. However, some of those who said that cost was not a factor for them personally said that it was for others and also limited bringing guests and also mentioned the add-on costs of transport, accommodation etc. One younger member said "cost is less of a factor than the offering/choice which determines support; needs to be relevant to business life in the City in the 21st century; this is not reflected in the events." Similarly time and distance were also factors in non-attendance of events.

A number of suggestions were made about mitigating costs which included reducing the number of courses at lunches, limiting the amount of alcohol "Did we need cognac and port?" said one member. There was some support for less expensive events such as a buffet, "bangers and mash", visits to places of interest were mentioned by quite a few people and family outings were also mentioned. I will pass all the suggestions on to the Functions Committee.

Meeting liverymen - particularly on an informal basis came up in various ways: a number of members, particularly the younger and/or newer ones said that they would have liked a "mentoring" scheme whereby longer-standing members introduced them around, sat next to them at events, etc. Perhaps this needs to extend beyond their sponsor whom they presumably already know well. New members did not feel engaged - several asked about committees and how they could become involved.

Several members commented that husbands and wives should not be seated next to each other so that one met more people and there were one or two comments that the seating always seemed to be the same. Suggestion that place cards have the names - including first name - on both sides so the person opposite could see as well.

Communication with members was also mentioned: the wearing of name badges; a newsletter was suggested, reports on events, visits, etc more information about forthcoming events, eg details of the speaker. Of the total, 31 said that they had not met many people and would like to.

The Master (then Senior Warden) presented a Scholarship to Zara Carroll at the Abbey High School, Redditch, to study Textile Technology.



Reasons for joining: people could choose more than one and about half nominated "friends" and "work of the City" and about a third "family" and "meeting people". However the category "haven't got to know many people but would like to" received the largest nomination of 31 with "not important" and the extra category for those who were happy each receiving 18.

The following are recommendations for action:

1. Engaging the Livery more:
 - a. Review committee membership to see if more members can be engaged as well as members of the Court (apart from the Membership Committee).
 - b. Membership development: a committee of younger liverymen should be set up to look at ways of engaging existing younger liverymen and attracting new ones. The Chair of this committee should have visiting privileges at the Court and should serve for a fixed term. Initial expressions of interest should be canvassed through the newsletter.
2. Communication:
 - a. A newsletter has been established and will now be produced in Spring and Autumn.
 - b. Events should be properly marketed and some attention given to different types of events. This could tie in with the younger livery committee.
 - c. Website should be upgraded and kept up to date. Fuller details about the company should be available so that potential new members can access the information.
 - d. Review the Company's literature. Possibly include a leaflet with details of the current members of the Court which is available to guests at events.

Consideration should be given to the following:

- Guest lists/table plans to include full names
- Place cards to have names on both sides
- Name badges for members of the Livery (other than the Master and Wardens) with full name and title (eg Assistant, Past Master etc) for lunches and other day time events. Permanent badges can be created for members, if it is felt that Liverymen will remember to bring them
- A cocktail reception.

The Learned Clerk

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