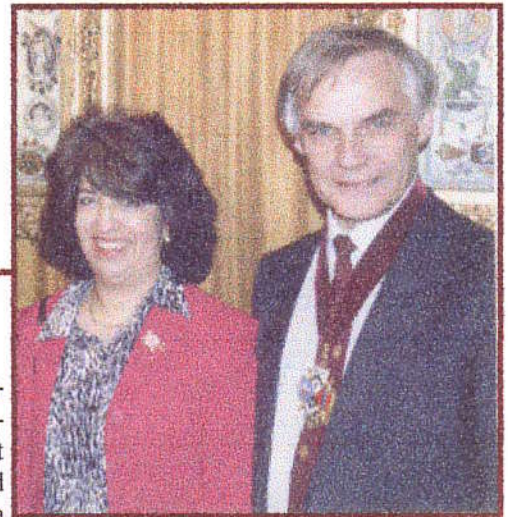




CIVIC GUILD OF OLD MERCERS'

NEWSLETTER FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2002

Guild Master:	Dr H G J Worth
Renter Warden:	Mr M J Houghton
Junior Warden:	Mr A S Macpherson, JP
Apprentice Warden:	Mr R A Lawman
Honorary Clerk:	Mr N J Watson
Hon. Asst. Clerk:	Mr R J Davey



Guild Master Howard Worth with his wife Cristina

The Master's Message

One of the first duties of my term of office as Master of the Guild was to recognise the hundredth birthday of PGM Arthur Hall. Arthur was a stalwart member of the Guild, not only serving as Master, but also as Honorary Assistant Clerk and Honorary Clerk. He was also a Liveryman of the Gardeners' and Clockmakers' Companies. The occasion was marked by a presentation by the Guild of a birdbath to the residential home in which Arthur was living. A number of members of the Court were able to attend and we were entertained to tea by Arthur and his daughter, Mrs Jennifer Bath, making a very pleasant afternoon. Sadly later in my year of office at the Lady Day Court the members of the Court were informed of Arthur's death.

With regard to the social programme, it has become tradition to have an 'out of town' visit during the year. My programme thus commenced with a visit to the Bluebell Line and Sheffield Park Gardens in July. The weather was not entirely kind to us as we set off from Sheffield Park Station under very damp conditions. Happily it was somewhat improved when we returned and visited the gardens after lunch. Later in the summer we had the pleasure of a further 'out of town' visit with a day's sailing on the Jolie Brise, the pilot clipper owned by Dauntseys School. This was a trip that PGM David Griffiths had been trying to arrange for some time and I was in the fortunate position that it happened during my year of office. The weather was beautiful, but windless, leaving us becalmed. However we had an extremely pleasant day under engine rather than sail, moored at Cowes for lunch and sunbathed on deck on the return journey.

November saw one of PGM Dixie Dean's City walks in Clerkenwell. As always he unearthed several treasures that the casual passer by never notices. On this occasion the weather surpassed itself with one of those rare autumnal days when there is not a cloud in sight. The Christmas visit to the Barbican consisted of a matinee performance of Twelfth Night by the Royal Shakespeare Company followed by supper at Baracca, our usual 'watering hole' in the City. Other functions during the year included visits to the British Library, HMS 'fast and the Public Record Office. My other engagements included invitations to the annual dinners of the Old Collyerians' Association, the Old Mercers' Club, the Old Dauntseians' Association and the Mercers' Company Livery Dinner to the Associated Companies. I was pleased to be able to attend all these functions and was accompanied by my wife to the Old Collyerians' Dinner and by the Honorary Clerk to the Mercers' Company Dinner.

I think it is fair to say that the state of the Guild has never been healthier, certainly in terms of membership. The Honorary Clerk was able to announce at the Mid Summer Day Court that membership has exceeded 200 for the first time. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly the considerable and increased support from the schools in the Mercers' cluster, which is of course where the future of the Guild lies. And secondly in the success of the apprentice scheme. This has now evolved in to having apprentices 'bound' to a 'master' for the duration of their apprenticeship in a ceremony in the Chamberlain's Court in Guildhall. During my year as Master I was delighted to witness my own daughter admitted to the Guild as indentured apprentice - the future of the Guild is dependent on attracting young members in this way. The other matter I wish to report on is the Benevolent Fund. The Court, with the permission of the Charity Commissioners, has extended the role of the Fund to support small educational and charitable projects submitted by apprentices and Guildmen. To assist this Guildmen were asked to support the fund through committing to an annual donation by means of a Gift Aid Certificate. This guarantees an annual income, and relief from income tax, which can be used to support educational projects without decreasing the capital of the fund. This has been successful in the first year in that the fund has supported five projects with contributions ranging from £100 to £250.

For the Master it is a challenging and enjoyable year in office, but the real work is done year on year by the permanent officers of the Guild and I would like to thank the Honorary Clerk and the Honorary Assistant Clerk for their considerable work on behalf of the Guild. I should like to thank the Court and Guildmen for their support in what, I hope, was a successful year. Not only has it been enjoyable, it has been a privilege to serve the Guild as its Master.

Howard Worth