

November is the Old Collyerians dinner, and I was pleased to represent the Guild. The change from a grammar school to sixth form college made a fundamental change to the character of the school, and to the level of interest of the former pupils in both the Association and the Guild. It is a challenge to us to reach the current Collyerians as well as those at the new technology colleges at Telford and Walsall.

In an attempt to keep the Christmas spirit alive, in January we visited the Young's Brewery at Wandsworth. A visit had been planned some while ago but cancelled due to "foot and mouth". We were shown the whole process by a charming guide and had the opportunity to visit the stables and see the night watchmen, a gaggle of geese. Time precluded us from trying the entire extensive range of brews, but we did test some over sandwiches in the Brewery Tap.

Bells have been made in Whitechapel since the sixteenth century, and a visit by some 20 Guildmen and guests confirmed that not much has changed in the intervening five hundred years. The owner of the foundry, Mr Hughes, gave us an interesting tour, covering all aspects of the history and process of bell founding. After the tour we were entertained by Mrs Hughes and other family members to a splendid spread in the sixteenth century house attached to the premises.

In early May I was pleased to represent the Guild at the Centenary Luncheon of the Old Mercers' Club held at Mercers Hall. Although I had to sing for my 'supper' it was an enjoyable and happy occasion. Any old pupils' association would be pleased to fill Mercers' Hall and it is a tribute to the Club that their the lunch was over subscribed.

At every Court meeting in the year new apprentices have been presented. I think that about a dozen have been "bound" to masters in the year, and there is still a shortage of those able to act as master to an apprentice. At the close of the year the Guild membership stood at 219 of which 67 are apprentices.

Congratulation to Colin Hart, Old Dauntseian and Guildman, on his election as Alderman for the Ward of Cheap. This is the first year of the new electoral regime so new ground. We will let him get his feet under the table before asking him to address the apprentices!

One highlight of any Guild Master's year is the Mercers' Company Dinner to the Associated Companies, and I was not disappointed. It is a wonderful occasion to meet old friends from the cluster schools and representatives from all the areas of life that the Mercers support. The food and wines were, of course, excellent and we were entertained by the Drums and Pipes of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. It was a real treat to round off the year.

## Angus Macpherson

## Guild Master 2003/2004

### The Installation Dinner

The Installation Dinner was held on 1st June following the Mid Summer Court meeting at which Michael St John Parker was installed as Master for 2004/05 with his wardens, Richard Lawman and Robert Smith.



The Master flanked by the Renter Warden (left) and the Junior Warden (right) prior to dinner

The Court & Dinner were held at Painters' Hall and was attended by over 100 Guildmen, Apprentices and guests. We were particularly pleased to welcome the Chief Commoner, Mr Tom Jackson. This was the first function since being elected Chief that he had attended which was not directly involved with City affairs and he told us a little of what was expected of him in the coming year in his reply to the toast of 'the guests'. We were also pleased to welcome the Master Mercer, Sir John Blofeld, DL who was kind enough to propose, very wittily, the toast to the Guild and the Master, to which the Master replied in suitable fashion. The Master also commented at how delighted he was to see so many apprentices, some of whom had invited their parents. It was also a pleasure that Charles Parker, Clerk to the Mercers' Company, was able to accompany the Master Mercer. We were entertained by Katie van Kooten and Andrew Macmillan (not the Apprentice Warden!) from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.



The Installation Dinner in Painters' Hall

The alms dish was passed, as usual, and £511 was generously donated to the charity of the Master's choice; the Family Nurturing Network. This charity was founded in 1994 and works largely in the Oxford region, principally to improve parenting skills and confidence, and to reduce children's anti-social behaviour and improve their mental health.



The Master with the Master Mercer, Sir John Blofeld



The Master with the Chief Commoner