# The Woolman

## The Worshipful Company of Woolmen

Autumn 2013

Lana spes nostra

## Sheep Drive over London Bridge

www.woolmen.com

# Programme of Events 2013/14

**Pantomime**
7th December

**Court Dinner**
4th December

**Alms Court Dinner**
15th January 2014

**United Guild Service**
4th April 2014

**Installation Dinner**
23rd April 2014

**Past Masters' Lunch**
3rd June 2014

**Election of Sheriff**
24th June 2014

**Summer Banquet**
1st July 2014

**Master's Weekend**
19th/21st September 2014

**Election of Lord Mayor**
29th September 2014

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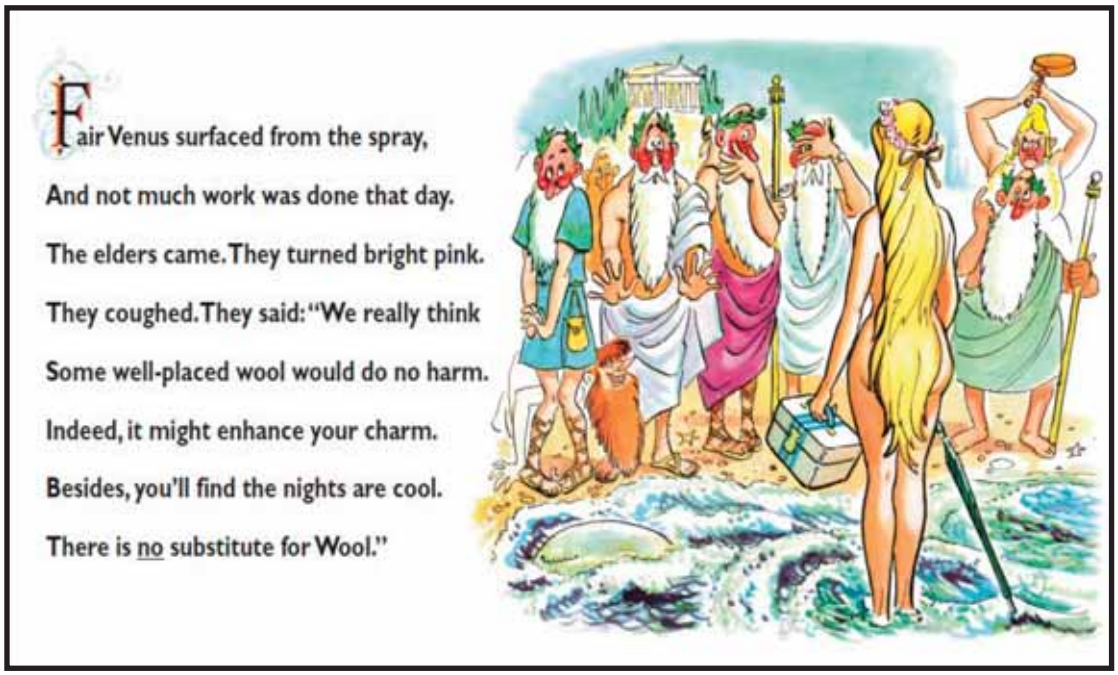


# There is no substitute for wool…

We are delighted to implement the idea of Past Master Richard Proctor to serialise the cartoons and poems from the book he produced *There Is No Substitute For Wool*, with acknowledgement and thanks to The Woolmark Company who retain the copyright ownership of the poems. If you can't wait for the next instalment of these amusing advertisements, you can contact the Clerk to purchase your own copy of the collection.

With acknowledgement and thanks to The Woolmark Company who retain the copyright ownership of the poem

*Howard Venters*

Well, what a busy year this has been reflecting on the last few months as we get close to the end of the calendar year. As Bill intimates below, the summer was full of activity and the Master's year has been yet another example of the tremendous commitment of time and energy that a Master Woolman commits to his year of office. In recent months we have actively promoted the Woolmans Company to potential new applicants, we have certainly made the headlines with the Sheep Drive and we have worked hard to build on our military affiliations which is developing very nicely indeed.

Subject to the Court's approval, I will take the Chair of the Livery committee at the end of the year and I wish to personally thank Vincent Keaveny for his kind help and support in doing so, equally so the Master, Upper Warden and other members of the committee.

Next year promises to be equally busy and in due course we will take soundings from all within the company as to what events you may or may not like to see organised in the eighteen months ahead.

***Bill Skidmore***

June and July are always hectic months due to student degree shows. If anyone wants to see the young talent being produced in fashion and textiles, Graduate Fashion Week and New Designers are the places to be in London, giving an overview of the best from across the country. For the benefit of our readers I can report, graduates are using wool fibre in many different, imaginative ways from fine worsted to heavy knitwear. I also visited the London Cloth Company with students. This, as you will see later in the magazine, is a new progressive company working with British Wool. Unfortunately, the BBC programme, 'Fabric of Britain,' was, in my opinion, disappointing; certainly on the history of knitting, they forgot to mention the first 1000 years, and more especially the development of the knitting frame in Nottingham in 1559.

For Wool Week, (Britain), October 14th – 20th, The Campaign for Wool is supporting The Royal Academy of Arts, 'Australia' exhibition. On Saturday 19th October, a flock of Aussie/ English Bowmont Merino sheep will make a special appearance in the courtyard of the RA, as part of the RA's family learning programme, where people will be encouraged to meet the sheep and learn about wool fibre. There are also many other events arranged around the country.

Finally, the last of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration events, (as far as I know), was the unveiling of a wall hanging, commissioned by the City of Bradford. After an initial introduction, the work was revealed by DL and Woolman, Roger Bowers and the Lord Mayor, Councillor Khadim Hussain. The Woolmen Company made a substantial donation to this and the event was attended by a number of local liverymen. I hope to provide a full report in the next edition.

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# The Master's Year So Far…

*The Master and Janet at Buckingham Place*

I have discovered that a lot of the Master's year is to do with planning and preparation – planning transport and accommodation, and preparing to be in the right order of dress at more or less the right time in near enough the right place. I think I have largely achieved this, but it may be that people are just too polite to tell me when I have got it wrong. It is delightful that people are so polite and very friendly and I have made a lot of new friends from amongst the masters and clerks of the other livery companies. I am not sure a full list of the functions and events I have attended would make interesting reading, but a few highlights might serve to give an indication of the involvement of the Master in the City of London.

> I am not sure a full list of the functions and events I have attended would make interesting reading, but a few highlights might serve to give an indication of the involvement of the Master in the City of London.

My very first event was the evening following my installation when I dined with the Merchant Taylors of York in their splendid hall in Aldwalk. I was fortunate to meet several other masters of London livery companies there, as well as masters of companies in York, Richmond, Shrewsbury and Hallamshire. So by the time Janet and I went to the Ironbridge weekend in early June I already knew quite a few masters, and to my surprise there were already several masters there who were even newer than me! Breakfast at Haberdashers' Hall before the election of Sheriffs was an excellent way to start the day, lunch at Painters-Stainers Hall after the elections continued the day in a similar vein and I forget what I did that evening, but I suspect food and alcohol may have been involved. Following that I have attended receptions at Drapers' Hall, Mansion House, Guildhall and Mercers' Hall; I have had lunch with Her Majesty's Judges at the Old Bailey, and dinner with the Chief Commoner to mark his new appointment and the end of the tenure of his predecessor, Court Assistant Ken Ayers; I have had lunch with many friends and acquaintances, our Past Masters, the Drapers' and the Knights Bachelor; dinner with the Parish Clerks and the Actuaries, and in between I gave a talk to the local Women's Institute about City Livery Companies, discussed the finer points of arranging major events with the Director of the London Festival, and compared and contrasted the differing merits of white tie and black tie at dinnes with masters of the Great Twelve.

*The Master with the Master of the Parish Clerks and the Master Leatherseller*

Janet hosted tea at St Pauls', has lunched with the Lady Mayoress, the Tallow Chandlers and the Lightmongers; and Janet and I attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace – the Duke of Edinburgh saw my badge and came over and had a chat. I have had many meetings with the City Corporation and volunteers about the sheep drive over London Bridge. This has involved organising barriers and cones, security stewards, lane closures, bus stop suspensions, moving signs, street cleaning, applying for licences (including a scaffolding and hoarding licence – don't ask me why) . We have also had the Master's weekend in Monmouthshire, which is covered elsewhere in this magazine. Janet and I are having so much fun we hardly wanted to take a week off in Crete in August, but it was a pleasant break before getting back to it all again. So much seems to be happening in the City that it is clear that two editions of The Woolman a year will not be sufficient to keep everyone informed, so it has been agreed that this year we will run with three editions. The next one will be published in January 2014 and then there will be one in May 2014 to cover the transition between Masters. ■

# Manor of Sal

When James I decided in the 17th century that he wanted to settle Ulster, he ordered the Lord Mayor to plan how the settlement would be implemented, and so the Lord Mayor spoke to the Masters of the Great Twelve. They were not interested, and made their feelings clear, so the King locked them in the Tower. After a short time to consider their position, the Masters of the Great Twelve agreed that there was a lot of merit in the King's idea. Thus in 1613 the province of Ulster was split initially into twelve areas, with one of the Great Twelve responsible for each portion, and then to spread the risk they encouraged other livery companies to take a part of their share. The Woolmen joined the Salters group, along with the Dyers, the Cutlers, the Saddlers, and the Joiners and Ceilers. This was known as the Manor of Sal, and was originally based in Salterstown near Magherafelt. The agents appointed by the City Corporation to develop the land, gather rents and settle disputes, were The Honourable The Irish Society, which still exists today and continues collecting rents at very much the same level as 400 years ago.

This was not a very successful investment by the livery companies, and many bailed out sooner rather than later. In the 1640s there were rebellions by the indigenous Catholic population against the Protestant incomers, and many of their bawns, (houses and farms protected by walls and towers). were burnt out, including the one owned by the Manor of Sal on the edge of Lough Neagh. Effectively the plantation of Ulster came to an end as the livery companies largely sold out their shares or retreated back to London, but they left behind an infrastructure legacy of houses, roads, towns, and civic buildings. Some of the Great Twelve continue to foster their links with the Province, but the Manor Of Sal is the only group that still meets regularly, (usually over lunch), to commemorate these events.

2013 is the 400th Anniversary of the Plantation of Ulster, as it became known, and to commemorate this part of Irish and English history The Honourable The Irish Society, along with the Salters Company, arranged for the Manor of Sal to return to Salterstown, Magherafelt and Londonderry in May, and I was privileged to represent the Woolmen. The main purpose of the visit was to present six silver cups to the six secondary schools in the mid-Ulster area round Magherafelt – two Roman Catholic, two Protestant, one integrated and one special needs – to be presented annually to the pupil that did the most for their local community. This was much appreciated by the schools, and we were welcomed by the local Mayor. As part of the trip we were escorted round the Londonderry City walls, (the livery companies donated cannon during the rebellion to help defend the City), visited the City museum, had a guided tour of the refurbished Guildhall, and walked across the Peace Bridge to the site of the old Ebrington Barracks. It was fascinating to see the changes in a City that has emerged into the 21st century with confidence in its new image of Derry-Londonderry, the city of culture. ■

*Masters of the Companies that make up the Manor of Sal with the Mayor of Londonderry in the Guildhall*

*The Masters with the cup winners from the six secondary schools in Magherafelt*

# Summer Banquet

The Summer Banquet this year started a little earlier than usual. The Master, Lt Col (Retd) Bill Clark, had arranged for the Band and Drums of the Corps of Royal Engineers to Beat Retreat outside Trinity House by kind permission of the Chief Royal Engineer.

Fortunately, it was a fine evening as Liverymen and their Guests gathered, glasses in hand, in front of the building's imposing neo-classical façade, designed by Samuel Wyatt in 1794. The band marched back and forth across Trinity Square, which had been blocked off for the occasion, playing a number of marches. London visitors, taking a break from sightseeing, in Trinity Square Gardens, were also drawn to the event. The Master took the salute, and eventually the band marched away. This was an unusual, but, very enjoyable start to the evening.

On entering the building, the entrance hall, lined with maritime artefacts, leads to the magnificent twin-curved staircase. At the top of this, the imposing Quarterdeck runs virtually the length of the House and houses a fine collection of 18th century paintings, as well as the Bell from The Royal Yacht Britannia, given to the Queen by Trinity House on Trafalgar Day 1953 and given back to The House when the ship was decommissioned.

Dinner was served in the Library, an elegant room housing a fascinating collection of silverware and overlooked by a minstrel's gallery from which we were entertained by soloist Clare Presland accompanied by Ivan Kiwuwa on the piano. Beyond the beautiful 16th and 17th century stained glass windows there are lovely views to the Tower and River Thames. After the usual toasts to the Queen, The Royal Family, and the Lord Mayor and City of London Corporation there was a presentation to 131 Independent Commando Squadron RE, the new affiliation announced at the Installation Dinner.

The Toast to the Guests was by Liveryman Lt Col ( Retd) Alan Skidmore and this was responded to by Malcolm Corbett, Chairman of The British Wool Marketing Board. ■

Presentation to LCpl Edwards

The Band on Parade

Preparing to take the Salute

Photos: Jean Skidmore

# Past Master's Lunch

1984-1985

1990-1991

1991-1992

1992-1993

1997-1998

2000-2001

The City has always found it difficult to coin a collective noun for a group of clerks; but what could possibly be the collective noun for a group of Past Masters of the Woolmen's Company? Fortunately no one challenged the Master to devise any woolly neologisms at the inaugural event on 4th June at the Army and Navy Club in St James's Square. Twelve Past Masters from 1984 to 2012 sat down to lunch with the Master and the Upper Warden to celebrate this new event in the Woolmen's annual calendar. The oldest, in terms of when they held their office, was Past Master Sir Robin Auld (1984), who coincidentally had seconded the current Masters application to become a Woolman, although sadly the Master's proposer, Past Master Ben Hodges (1978) was unable to attend because he and Peggy were on a much-anticipated cruise; several other past masters had tendered their apologies for similar reasons; and others through age or infirmity.

After meeting in the bar of the club, where some past masters met others for the first time in several years, the group moved through to a private dining room, where the conversations continued. There was a very pleasant and congenial atmosphere as everyone caught up with everyone else's news, their families and mutual friends. There were many anecdotes which should have been captured in writing there and then, in case they are lost to posterity, which led to the suggestion that there should be an updated edition of the history of the Woolmen. Apart from the Master saying Grace at the start and a few words of welcome and news at the end, it was an informal event which everyone enjoyed and it was generally agreed that the event could withstand a repeat performance next year – a suggestion which the Upper Warden duly noted! ■

*Master and Stewards*

2001-2002

2002-2003

2005-2006

2006-2007

2009-2010

2011-2012

# 2013 Inter-Livery Charity Clay Shoot

Photo: John Lee

SPORTS

It was with some concern that the Woolmen's team, comprising Immediate Past Master Simon Boardman-Weston, Upper Warden Richard Excell, Under Warden John Brewer and Liveryman Jonathan Lee approached the Holland & Holland Shooting Grounds in Northwood, Middlesex, on Wednesday 22nd May. They were to compete in the annual Inter-Livery clay shooting competition. In truth, there was no anxiety whatsoever from your team about the outcome of the competition, which is much more about enjoyment of taking part than winning, but rather about the ominous black clouds and spots of rain on our car windscreens.

Fortunately, the rain held off and after a good, warming, breakfast we had a fantastic and varied mornings shooting at what must be one of the largest and best run shooting grounds in the country. The competition is battled out over a ten stand, 80 bird Sporting layout, interrupted only by the four man, 80 bird flush from the high tower, where we downed 53 birds. Moments of brilliance from your team were interspersed by moments of abject failure, as we wended our way from one stand to the next. Our final position? - We were not the last!

Over a sumptuous buffet lunch with wide-ranging choices of hot salt beef, hot and cold roast beef, hog roast, pork sausages and much, much more, we shared a table and very amiable conversation with the Loriners' team. The Loriners, a fascinating Company whose first Ordinances were granted in 1261, were originally makers and sellers of bits, bridles, spurs, stirrups, saddle trees and the minor metal items of a horse's harness. Though there are only a couple of active firms left in the UK, they are able to boast a membership of 450.

Next year, the Woolmen and guests will fill their own lunch table, or tables, by entering several teams. Our observation was that skill levels varied enormously, from the excellent Gunmakers teams, one of which had all four members firing hammer guns with Damascus barrels, to decidedly average. Why not put together your own team, or register your interest as an individual gun with me, Jonathan Lee, to create a composite team? It is a superb opportunity better to get to know your fellow Woolmen over a fun day, out in the presence of over 400 Liverymen from over 50 other Companies, while raising a significant amount of money for a variety of charities. ■

**Jonathan Lee**

# Livery Yacht Club Membership

**By Richard Hollis**

**Have you thought about joining the City Livery Yacht Club?**

The City Livery Yacht Club offers sailing, boating and socialising opportunities to its members, even those who are just interested in 'messing about in boats' or who just like to meet and chat about their boating experiences. In fact not all members cruise or sail, nor do all members have boats. So whether you are an absolute novice or an experienced racer, cruiser, sailor or motor yachtsman, why not join now?

**The membership benefits include:**

- A plethora of sailing, boating and socialising opportunities, including an annual rally at Cowes each May and one on the East Coast each June/July, as well as a Commodore's special event in September.
- Monthly members-only meets, hosted at the bar and restaurant of the Royal

# Woolmen's Golf Team take part in the "Ryder Cup"

Photo courtesy of golfeventphotography.co.uk. / Hugh Furber

*From left to right: John Payne, Hugh Furber and Richard Excell and*

On the 2 July 2013, a team of four Woolmen took part in this inter-livery golf competition which was impeccably organised by the Worshipful Company of Marketors, and held at the Verulam Club at St Albans. The competition takes its name from the famous Ryder Cup which was donated in 1927 for a biennial competition, originally between Great Britain and the United States of America, but now between Europe and the USA. The donor, Sam Ryder, was a wealthy and successful seed merchant and a member of the Verulam Club where he had a golf handicap of 6. Apart from being a Mayor of St Albans, philanthropist and lay preacher, he employed a professional golfer, Abe Mitchell, whom he hoped (in vain) would win the Open Championship. A statuette of Abe surmounts the trophy. The Woolmen's team thoroughly enjoyed their round over this beautifully presented but challenging course. Their score did not put them among the prize winners, but they had a great day of Livery fellowship. This ended with an excellent dinner at which they shared a most convivial table with Liverymen of the Worshipful Company of Engineers. All four Woolmen expressed a wish to play in the completion again next year, when it is hoped to raise two teams

This competition was the first in a series of golf outings now being organised for the Company. The first event next year will be a North v. South match to be held over two days on the 16/17 June at the splendid Hawkstone Park Golf Resort in Shropshire. The prime purpose of Woolmen's Golf is fellowship and enjoyment. Although we have a number of accomplished golfers, occasional players and guests without formal Club handicaps should not be deterred from entering, they will be made very welcome. If Woolmen, Freemen or Liverymen, are interested in playing golf, at whatever level, and have not yet indicated this wish, they should contact Hugh Furber (hughfurber@btinternet.com or see the Livery Directory).

The final golf event this year was held at St. Pierre on Friday 13 September as the start of the Master's Weekend. It was a Stableford competition for the Master's Quaich. The testing Mathern Course proved a challenge for the competitors particularly as there was some rain over the last nine holes. Nevertheless, an enjoyable time was had by all and the afternoon concluded with a tea provided by the Master. At the informal supper that evening, the Master presented the trophy to the winner who was Liveryman Chris Dancaster. Mrs. Bridget Meredith won the Ladies' Prize. ■

**Hugh Furber**

*Mrs. Ursula Hollis, Richard Pickance, Richard Hollis and Johnny Orr-Ewing with their trophies won at the City Livery Club Weekend in Cowes in May on the Hollis' Yacht 'Crackerjax', sailing under the Woolmen banner*

Thames Yacht Club and traditional yacht club dinners at prestigious London venues.

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To learn more about the City Livery Yacht Club or to download a membership form, please **visit us online at** www.clyc.co.uk or contact our Club Secretary, Margaret Campbell, Club Secretary, City Livery Yacht Club, 79 Palace Garden Terrace, London W8 4EE. Email: clubsec@clyc.co.uk Tel 020 7993 2849. ■

# The Livery

*Greg Craig Waller*

**Gregory Mark Craig Waller**

I am a chartered accountant in practice having spent most of my career in the City of London. I live in Beckenham and am married to Rose, from Dublin, with two sons aged 26 and 29.

I was educated at Repton School, and I began my accountancy career in 1971 articled with the firm of Chalmers, Impey & Co, becoming a partner 10 years later. After several practice mergers, I am presently with Baker Tilly based in Farringdon Street, EC4. My work has largely been in the corporate sector and now focuses on our services within the pensions industry.

Outside work, I have been a school governor of two schools for many years and from which I stepped down a few years ago. I spent several years on the Management Committee of a project providing accommodation for the homeless. Presently, I remain involved with our local rugby club and I am inching my way to full MCC membership. In the non-sporting arena, I am a member of the Wine Society and the Wine Society Dining Club. I am member of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, an international charity providing educational facilities and other support to the Christian community in the Holy Land. ■

# Harvest Service

In recent days I have been very pleased to wear my Woolmans' tie at two wonderful Harvest services.

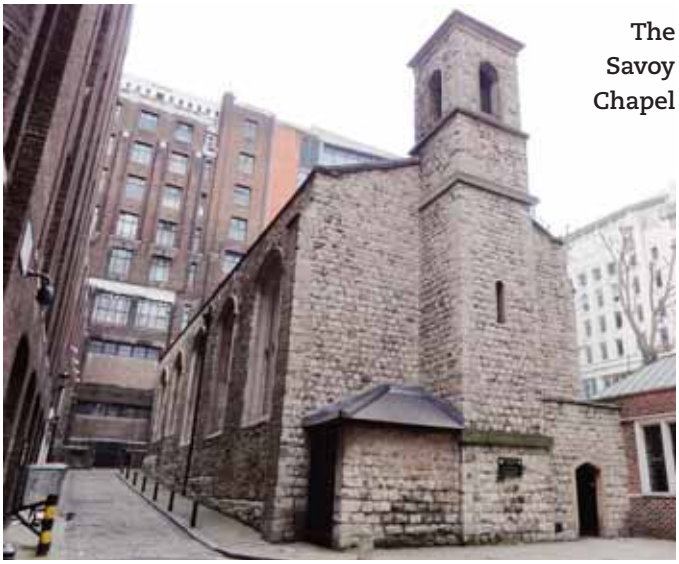
On Sunday 13th October I attended the beautiful Queen's Chapel of the Savoy for the occasion of the Harvest Service in support of the Addington Fund.

The Addington fund was initiated in February 2001 at the request of the then Archbishop of Canterbury in order for the Church to respond to the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). Canon Richard Addington, supported by Reverend Canon Sally Fogden, Mr James Aldous, Mr David Barker and Mr Edmund Vestey, set up the original Addington Fund in 2000 to support the pig farming community in East Anglia dealing with the consequences of the outbreak of Classical Swine Fever. Richard's ethos was that any financial support should be accompanied by pastoral support. Richard sent over the remaining balance of his fund to them in 2001 when they gladly adopted both his ethos and his name.

Today, the main focus of the Fund is housing. It was clear from the 22,000 applications for support received during FMD that a precarious financial situation meant some businesses, particularly in the tenanted sector, would not survive. To lose the business also means the loss of the family home. Over the last eleven years they have also come into contact with families where a suicide, a fatal accident or illness has rendered a farm unviable.

The Addington Fund housing portfolio extends across England and Wales. Since 2001 they have distributed £11m in hardship grants (£10.3m during FMD 2001/2003) and they have built up an asset base, mainly in property, of £10m.

The other splendid occasion which the Master and Clerk also attended was the beautiful service held at St Bride's, Fleet Street, famous for its spire, for the occasion of the British Guild of Agricultural Journalists Harvest Service. The choir was quite extraordinary with the most beautiful choice of music and a packed church was followed by lunch for some 200 BGAJ members and guests at Stationers' Hall. The guest speaker was Lt Col Hugh Campbell-Smith, MBE, who is the Commanding Officer of the Queen's Own Yeomanry to whom the Woolmen are affiliated. A brief video presentation also highlighted the forthcoming IFAJ World Congress to be held in London, Aberdeen and Wales next September.



**The Savoy Chapel**

Anybody interested in donating to such a worthy cause as the Addington Fund should email enquiries@addingtonfund.org.uk or call 01926 620135. Details of IFAJ2014.com are posted on the web and details of BGAJ can be found at www.gaj.org.uk. ■

**Howard Venters**

# Obituaries

## Arthur Hollis

**Past Master Arthur Hollis died on the 20th of April at the age of 90.**

He grew up in Carshalton, Surrey and attended Dulwich College where he excelled at Rugby, Swimming and was Dulwich Middleweight Boxing Champion. He was academically bright, however with war approaching, he left at 16 and was articled into Chartered Accountancy. He volunteered for the RAF at 19, learnt to fly in the USA and joined 50 Squadron as a pilot flying Lancasters in 1943. Determined to achieve his tour of 30 operations he survived a mid-air collision over the Dutch Coast returning with his stricken aircraft and on another occasion managed to bring back his crew and Lancaster, having been badly damaged by anti aircraft fire over Essen and further damaged by a night fighter during the return to England. For the latter, he was awarded the DFC. He then trained Pilots in England, married Elizabeth only to be sent to the Far East, ending in Hong Kong. He returned home in 1946 left the RAF and continued training to be a Chartered Accountant. He qualified in 1948 and joined Limebeer and Co becoming a partner in 1953. He began to specialise in European clients, particularly from Italy, also clients from the musical and theatrical world. He helped Yehudi Mehnuin found the Yehudi Mehnuin School. He ended his career as a Senior Partner of Fraser Russell, now Baker Tilly.

His outside activities involved a number of senior posts with Ashford, Kent and South East Conservatives. He was awarded an OBE in 1985. He loved country life in Kent, shooting well into his 80s.

He joined the Company in 1963 and became Master in 1982/3. Sadly, his successor, Walter Hoadley became ill early into his term of office and Arthur stepped in as Master again. He was particularly delighted when I became Master in 2008/9. He had a great sense of humour and remained a gentleman to the end. ■

**Richard Hollis. Past Master**

## Revd Neville Barker Cryer

**Past Master Revd Neville Barker Cryer has died at the age of 89.**

I had the pleasure of admitting Neville Barker Cryer to the Freedom of the Company in January 1976 and he was invested with the Livery later that year.

At the time, Neville was the Secretary General of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He was fluent in seven languages and had a working knowledge of several others. He travelled widely for the Society and he was very successful in his role no doubt aided by his linguistic abilities. Soon after Neville became a Liveryman, he was appointed as Honorary Chaplain of the Company in succession to Revd Canon Norman Motley, who was retiring as the Rector of St Michael Cornhill,

Neville had a lovely personality with a loud booming voice and he gave very imaginative Graces before most of the Company's dinners. A different Grace for every dinner and he definitely did not need a microphone to be heard. Neville was very good at making all the guests at the Woolmen's dinners feel very welcome. He contributed very considerably to the family feeling of the Company, remembering everybody by name, and you could often hear his booming laugh across the room. Neville remained Chaplain to the Company and Almoner until 1999 when he moved to York.

Neville was warm-hearted and very generous to many people. I remember him helping me on many occasions. When I was managing an interregnum at my Parish Church, he often came to take the Sunday morning Eucharistic services. His only charge was that Ruth and I should give him breakfast between the Services!

By an amazing coincidence, my firm became involved in helping him when his house in Epsom was suffering settlement. I was pleased that one of my partners was able to restore the house to its former integrity.

Typical of many of his Graces is this one composed for the Ladies' Banquet in 1978:-

*May God, who first gave Eve to man,*
*Who made him dig while wool she span,*
*Grant us to weave at Woolmen's table,*
*Such webs of friendship as we're able,*
*And digging into food and wine,*
*Let us bless his name divine.*

We remember and give thanks for Neville's life and remember his many kindnesses and contribution to the Woolmen's Company. ■

**Raymond Cousins**

# The Master's Weekend

The Master's Weekend started with a rather damp, (but enjoyable), golf tournament on Friday afternoon. By 4pm the rain had really set in and everyone gathered in the public rooms of the St Pierre Hotel, Chepstow for a warming drink and Welsh Cakes before repairing to their rooms to get ready for the evening. Dinner was served in the Chepstow Room where we were entertained in true Welsh fashion by the Chepstow Male Voice Choir, accompanied by Rosemary Lewis on the piano and directed by Elaine Matthews.

After a rousing rendition of 'Men of Harlech', followed by 'Unchained Melody', and a Welsh Hymn before a Trilogy of American Folk Songs the programme ended with ', 'Myfanwy', 'Bring him Home' from Les Miserables and finally 'When I'm 64', though I suspect a few present were thinking 'if only'! The Golf prizes were awarded, with Chris Dancaster winning the Master's Quaich and Mrs. Bridget Meredith taking the Ladies' prize.

Saturday morning dawned bright with some sunshine and after an excellent breakfast, the group boarded 2 coaches to explore the local area and learn more of its history. Firstly the Roman settlement at Caerwent, founded by the Romans in AD 75 as *Venta Silurum*, a market town for the defeated Silures tribe. In typical Roman fashion the town was built on a grid pattern with 4 gates through the surrounding walls, large sections of which are still in place, rising up to 5 metres high in places, easily the most impressive town defences to survive from Roman Britain. In spite of modern houses built on top of half the site, the ruins of several Roman buildings are still visible, including the foundations of a Romano-British temple, the forum-basilica and a number of houses and shops. Most of the houses were small though a couple of larger courtyard houses have been uncovered, one with the remains of a hypocaust floor. The village church houses some of the larger artifacts documenting events in the lives of the inhabitants from the local governor to an altar dedicated by an optio, (centurions 2nd in command) in thanksgiving for a favour from the gods

Moving on in history, we then visited the castle at Chepstow founded by the Normans. The massive structure towered over the car park but it was not until one entered the gates and followed the path through the four baileys, (courtyards), to the oldest part of the castle, that one realised exactly how impressive it is. The oldest part occupies the highest point on the cliff overlooking the River Wye. Successive occupants extended

*Chepstow male voice choir*

Photo: Ines Murray

*Chepstow Castle overlooking the Wye*

down the hill adding towers and halls using stone quarried from older buildings... many of these stones probably came from Caerwent and there were clearly Roman tiles incorporated into the structure. I think it would have taken several hours to explore thoroughly but lunch beckoned.

A short coach journey took us to Tintern where, after an excellent lunch, most people walked to the Abbey where our guide for the day, Gordon Hill, gave us another of his knowledgeable and amusing talks before giving us time to wander round and marvel at the ruins of this magnificent Cistercian monastery started in 1131. During the 13th century the Abbey was mostly rebuilt; first the cloisters and the domestic ranges, then finally the great church between 1269 and 1301. The present-day remains of Tintern are a mixture of building works covering a 400-year period between 1136 and 1536. Then, with the Dissolution of the Monasteries, lead from the roof was sold and the decay of the buildings began. As we wandered round the ruins, like many before us, gazing at the towering arches, highlighted by the sun against the dark woodland of the valley sides, an idyllic setting for this memorable ruin, we marveled at how such a structure could be built without all the paraphernalia of a modern construction site.

Photo: Chris Thierry

***Lunch at the Master's***

Alas, we had to leave to return to St Pierre to prepare for the evening. We were all looking forward to a cup of tea or coffee on our arrival but **everyone** was surprised to discover a table laden with sandwiches, cream and scones, chocolate éclairs and other cakes. In spite of a good lunch, this spread was difficult to resist.

At 6.30pm we were on the road again, this time in all our finery. Transported back in time we boarded the SS Great Britain at Bristol Docks. The Lydbrook Brass Band greeted our arrival and as we progressed to the promenade deck, we were handed glasses of Champagne and entertained by the band as we explored and learned more about this remarkable ship.

Photo: Bill Skidmore

***Gordon Hill describes the finer points of Caerwent Roman Village***

The SS Great Britain was the longest passenger ship in the world from 1845 to 1854 and combined an iron structure with a screw propeller, the first large ocean-going ship with these features. Isambard Kingdom Brunel designed her for the Great Western Steamship Company's transatlantic service. She was the first iron steamer to cross the Atlantic, which she did several times in 1845. In her second year of service, however, her captain made a series of navigational errors that resulted in her being run hard aground on the northeast coast of Ireland.

She was sold for salvage and repaired, then carried thousands of immigrants to Australia over a 30 year period, interrupted only by two relatively brief periods as a troopship during the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. Gradually, she earned a reputation as the most reliable of the emigrant ships. In 1882, she was retired to the Falkland Islands where she was used as a warehouse, quarantine ship and coal hulk until scuttled in 1937. As a bunker, she coaled the South Atlantic fleet in the WW1. In WW2, some of her iron was scavenged to repair HMS *Exeter*, one of the Royal Navy ships that fought the *Graf Spee* and was badly damaged during the Battle of the River Plate. This should have been the end of the vessel however, in 1970, a salvage operation was organised, made possible by several large donations, including from Sir Jack Hayward and the late Sir Paul Getty. The hulk was loaded onto a submersible pontoon, towed across the Atlantic, then up the River Avon to Bristol. Perhaps the most memorable moment for the crowds that lined the final

> Everyone agreed it had been superb and would be difficult to beat... but that is not the point... every weekend is different and I think we are all looking forward to the next one.

Photo: Bill Skidmore

Photo: Chris Thierry

*The Aumbrey presented to Shirenewton Church*

few miles was her passage under the Clifton Suspension Bridge, (another Brunel design), to her birthplace, the dry dock in the Great Western Dockyard

The ship's many cabins have been painstakingly restored. The Dining saloon, where we had dinner, was the ship's most impressive. Columns of white and gold, with ornamental capitals are arranged down its length. The archways of the doors are carved and gilded, while mirrors add an illusion of spaciousness. We partook of an excellent dinner after which one of the guests Keith Arnold, Past Master of the Welsh Livery Guild informed us that the guild had just been designated the Worshipful *Livery Company of Wales, Cwmni Anrhydeddus Lifrai Cymru* before entertaining us with several jokes.

Before leaving, we had time to explore the rest of the ship, from the First Class cabins to the claustrophobic conditions of the steerage accommodation. In the cramped kitchen, the cook shouts at the cat to chase away the mice, while in the engine room stokers work to keep the engine going. Life on the worlds' first great luxury lined has been wonderfully recreated.

Although some people had to rush home on Sunday, the majority continued to enjoy the weekend with a visit to The Masters' home village of Shirenewton. First, to the Church of St Thomas a Becket for dedication of an Aumbry. The aumbry was made by Siân Evans from Sussex. The centre panel is a reminder of the death of St Thomas a Becket – a sword piercing a mitre; there is a broad copper collar round the outside of the aumbry, soldered, polished and lacquered. Top centre of the collar is the coat of arms of The Woolmen in brass and copper. On either side is a

*Tintern Abbey nestling in the Wye Valley*

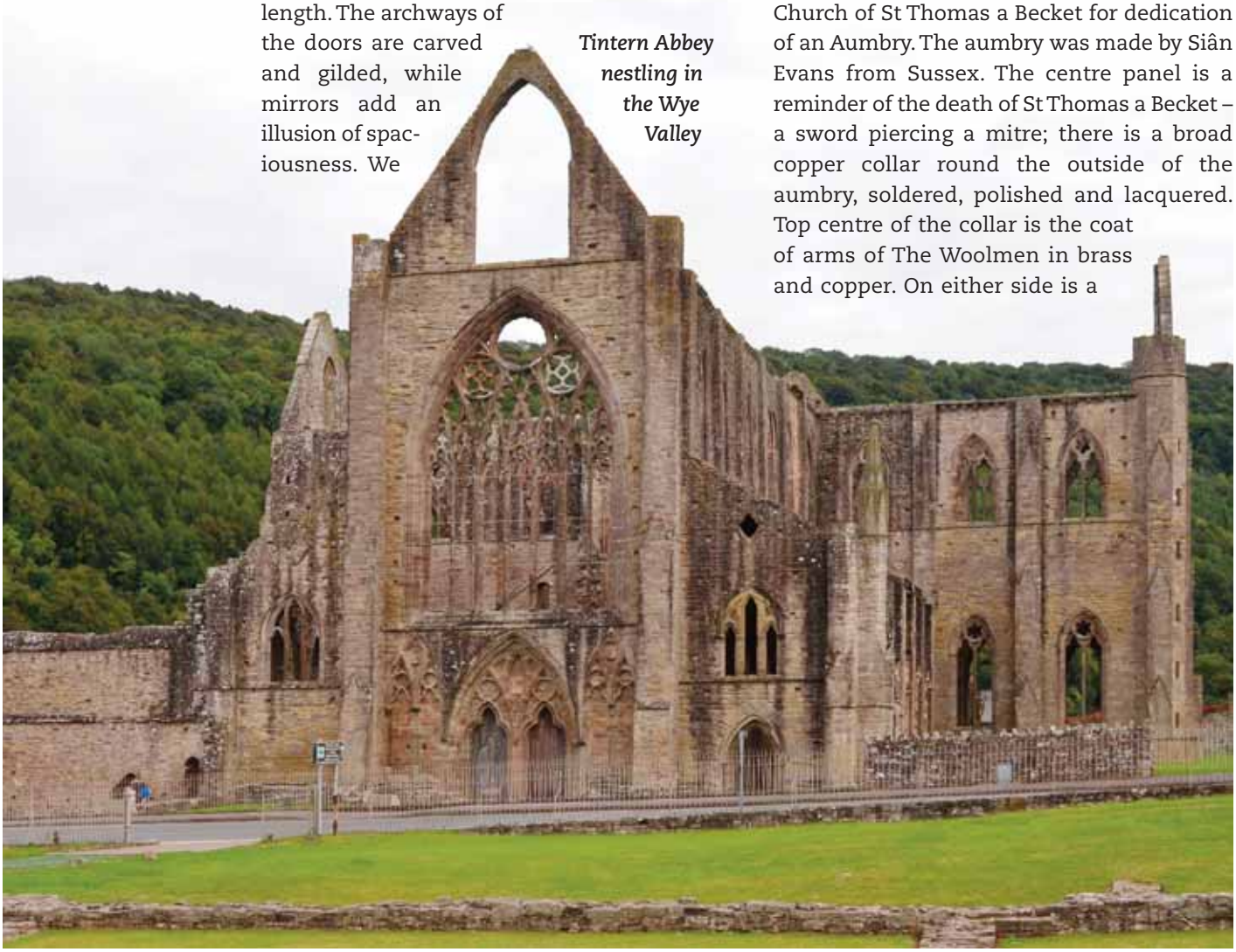


Photo: Chris Thierry

Welsh archbishop's crook, also in brass. At the bottom there are two brass sheep looking outwards, and between them a brass woolsack with the inscription: Presented to the Church of St Thomas a Becket, Shirenewton by Lt Col Bill Clark during his year as Master of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen 2013-2014.

After the service, we walked down the hill to the Masters home where, (fortunately), he had organised a marquee to accommodate us for lunch. The weather forecast for Sunday had been horrific but we had been lucky in the morning as the rain had held off; this was not to last. However, the rain did not dampen spirits and we enjoyed an excellent lunch. Richard Excell thanked the Master and Janet, for an excellent weekend, starting with thanks in Welsh, which he had been practicing with the help of one of the waiters at the hotel over breakfast. Everyone agreed it had been superb and would be difficult to beat... but that is not the point... every weekend is different and I think we are all looking forward to the next one. ■

Photo: Chris Thierry

***Keith Arnold entertains the dinner guests***

# Tea at St Paul's

Photo: Janet Clark

It was a bright, June afternoon when spouses and supporters of The Worshipful Company of Woolmen gathered in the crypt of St Paul's for tea, hosted by Janet Clark, the Master's wife. It was nice to see so many supporters from different parts of the country, and although there were a few gentlemen in the ranks of the monstrous regiment, they did not feel any more intimidated than usual. The friendly staff brought choices of tea, followed by an array of teacake stands, stacked with sandwiches (cucumber, salmon, egg, ham – not all in one sandwich, of course); scones with jam and cream; and a most amazing variety of cakes, individual summer puddings and lemon meringue pies, brownies and other bits and pieces. Whilst the tea was poured and the food passed around, the conversation ranged far and wide, some had come from work, others from home, others on their way between appointments, but all keen to exchange views about everything under the sun. It was clear that the tea, although an added attraction, was merely a vehicle for a very sociable and informal get together. ■

**Janet Clark**

# Shetland Knitwear in Extreme Environments

*Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary in Shetland jumper following the ascent of Mount Everest, 1953.*

Photo courtesy of Anne Sinclair, George Waterston Memorial Centre.

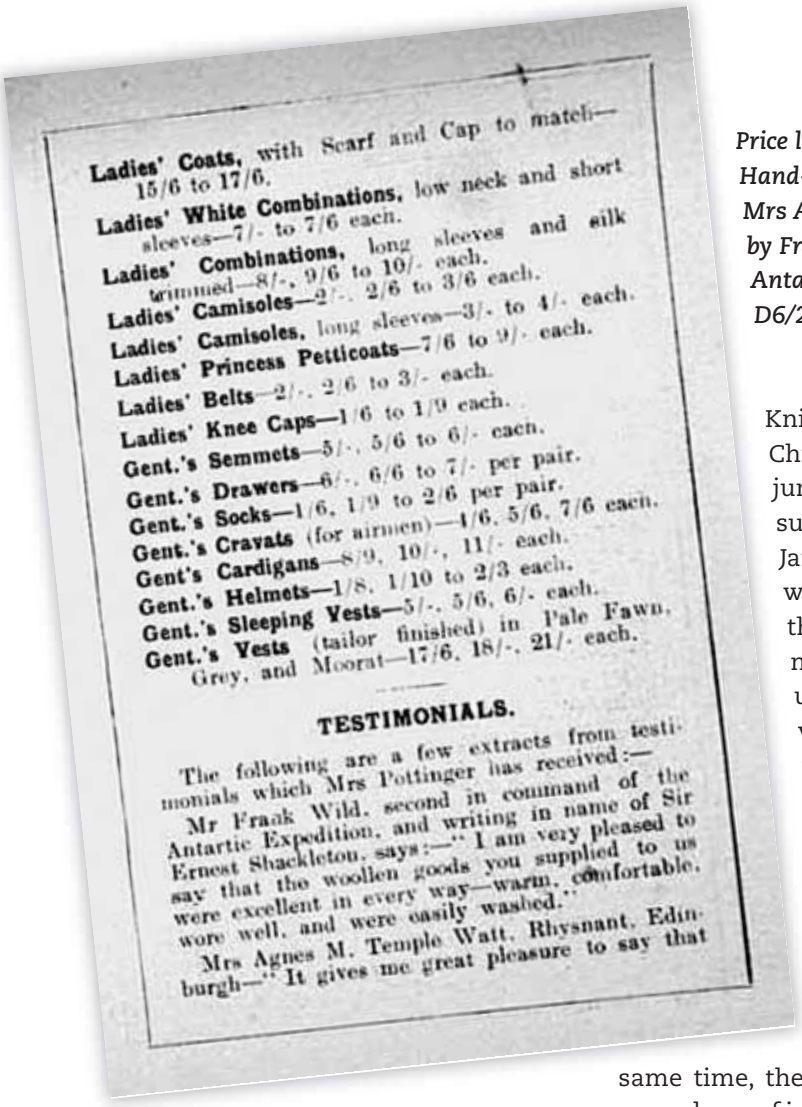
Shetland is world-renowned for its woollen knitwear. It produced literally millions of stockings, long-johns, spencers, scarves, mittens, shawls, stoles, and pullovers, all sold away from Shetland. But part of the remarkable history of Shetland knitwear is how garments found their way to the most extreme environments on earth. Shetland's woollen textiles contributed to the comfort, well-being, and indeed life preservation of Britain's sailors, explorers, and mountaineers.

It is because of the inherent qualities in Shetland wool – softness, lightness, but excellent insulating properties, that it was the material of choice for outdoor clothing before modern man-made fibres were developed. Shetland's spinners and knitters made the most of these qualities by processing each fleece to extract the right fibre qualities for the intended garment. In the first instance, the garments were made for local fishermen and crofters, and sold or traded to passing whalers, traders, and foreign fishermen. With the Heroic Age of Exploration in the late 19th century, Shetland knitwear caught the attention of expedition leaders.

**Knitted tobacco pouch made in Fair Isle for the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition,**

One of the earliest records of Shetland knitwear worn by explorers concerned the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition to the South Pole in 1902. Scottish naturalist W. S. Bruce, expedition leader, was financially assisted by brothers Andrew and James Coats Jr. from the Paisley thread firm. Their support included kitting out expedition members with all manner of Fair Isle knitwear – from pullovers to tobacco pouches. The knitwear was bought directly in Shetland during summer yachting trips by the brothers. So much knitwear was bought that between 1899 and 1902 four notices were published in Shetland newspapers remarking on the Coats' purchases. Crew members photographed in their patterned garments against the white polar landscape may have served to enforce the Scottish identity of the expedition, since Bruce struggled to obtain support from English institutions and individuals who, at the time, were behind Scott's campaign.

During the Heroic Age of Exploration in the Antarctic, Shetland-made woollens made a considerable contribution to the comfort of explorers. Sir Ernest Shackleton's failed attempt to cross the southern continent in 1911, leading to months of survival on ice floes and in small boats, was supplied with woollens from a small, woman-owned business in central Shetland. Anne Pottinger was the wife of a local schoolmaster and mother of 10 children. She ran a knitwear business from her home at the schoolhouse. Her price list shows she supplied mainly underclothing and outerwear accessories. The garments purchased by the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition were hand-knitted, most likely from hand-spun wool.



Ladies' Coats, with Scarf and Cap to match—15/6 to 17/6.
Ladies' White Combinations, low neck and short sleeves—7/- to 7/6 each.
Ladies' Combinations, long sleeves and silk trimmed—8/-, 9/6 to 10/- each.
Ladies' Camisoles—2/-, 2/6 to 3/6 each.
Ladies' Camisoles, long sleeves—3/- to 4/- each.
Ladies' Princess Petticoats—7/6 to 9/- each.
Ladies' Belts—2/-, 2/6 to 3/- each.
Ladies' Knee Caps—1/6 to 1/9 each.
Gent.'s Semmets—5/-, 5/6 to 6/- each.
Gent.'s Drawers—6/-, 6/6 to 7/- per pair.
Gent.'s Socks—1/6, 1/9 to 2/6 per pair.
Gent.'s Cravats (for airmen)—4/6, 5/6, 7/6 each.
Gent's Cardigans—8/9, 10/-, 11/- each.
Gent.'s Helmets—1/8, 1/10 to 2/3 each.
Gent.'s Sleeping Vests—5/-, 5/6, 6/- each.
Gent.'s Vests (tailor finished) in Pale Fawn, Grey, and Moorat—17/6, 18/-, 21/- each.

TESTIMONIALS.

The following are a few extracts from testimonials which Mrs Pottinger has received:—
Mr Frank Wild, second in command of the Antartic Expedition, and writing in name of Sir Ernest Shackleton, says:—"I am very pleased to say that the woollen goods you supplied to us were excellent in every way—warm, comfortable, wore well, and were easily washed."
Mrs Agnes M. Temple Watt, Rhysnant, Edinburgh—"It gives me great pleasure to say that

*Price list for Real Shetland Hand-Knit Goods, supplied by Mrs AH Pottinger, with testimonial by Frank Wild, Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, c1916; D6/294/1/p69.*

Each of these garment types had different qualities built in – the semmet, or vest, was soft and light; the helmet (balaclava), made of coarser wool, harder spun and tightly knitted. This type of clothing was de rigour for Shetland's fishermen, whalers, and crofters working in harsh weather, so it is no wonder that Shetland could supply appropriate knitwear to polar explorers.

The most notable example of Shetland knitwear in extreme environments occurred in the successful 1953 ascent of Mount Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. Shetland firm T.M. Adie & Sons received orders to supply 24 jumpers of various sizes for each member of the team. Knitters worked over the 1952 Christmas period to make the jumpers before expedition supplies left Britain in January. Unfortunately, there was not time to hand-spin the yarns, so a lightweight machine-spun yarn was used. The style, quality, and weight closely resemble the traditional fishermen's sark, or woollen undershirt, examples of which are preserved in the Shetland Museum's textile collection. Both the Sark and Everest jumpers each weigh only 200 grams (7 ounces). At the same time, they provide a soft and very warm layer of insulation that absorbs body moisture but retains airflow between under and outer garments. The jumper quality was later marketed in the ready-to-wear clothing trade as the Everest jumper, a tradition that continues today. ■

**Dr Carol Christiansen**

*This research was aided by a generous grant from the Worshipful Company of Woolmen.*
*Dr Carol Christiansen, Shetland Museum and Archives.*

> During the Heroic Age of Exploration in the Antarctic, Shetland-made woollens made a considerable contribution to the comfort of explorers.

## Publications available from The Clerk

**A Short History of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen** by Gordon Huelin PhD FSA

**The Woolmen's Tale** by David Buirski

**"There Is No Substitute For…"** by Past Master Richard Proctor

**A Layman's Commentary on The Register of Freedom Admissions of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen** by Lt Col (retd) WJH Clark

## Woolmen's Umbrellas, Scarves and Ties

The Clerk has a stock of Woolman's umbrellas, scarves and ties for sale.
Woolmen's Scarves – £30; Woolmen's Umbrellas – £25; Woolmen's Ties – £30
Ladies silk scarves - £20
Silk bow ties - £15

*Please make cheques payable to the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, and arrange collection with the Clerk from Painters' Hall; this is best achieved at the Civic Dinner.*

# Gabby Logan installed as Leeds Trinity University Chancellor

I am sure most people will know of the television presenter Gabby Logan. Some may also be aware of her connections with Leeds, her father Terry Yorath played football for Leeds United so Gabby was brought up in Leeds. However, what may not be known is Gabby is the first Chancellor of Leeds' brand new third university. On Thursday 6th June, in Leeds Trinity University's Chapel, Gabby was officially installed as the University's Chancellor, whilst celebrating Gabby's strong connections with Leeds and Yorkshire.

Gabby wore an historic gown that was commissioned by the University to celebrate Leeds' long-standing textile and manufacturing heritage, as well as the University's commitment to employability and nurturing emerging talent. Young Leeds-based graduate designer, Kate Duckworth, was selected to design the gown and began production at the landmark site of Leeds manufacturing, Armley Mills. The gown was made from fine 100 per cent wool worsted Barathea fabric from Hainsworths Mill, a specialist textile company that has manufactured fine textiles in Leeds since 1783. Kate Duckworth, who did her placement year from university at A W Hainsworth, designed the gown. It was lined with imperial silk provided by James Hare, a Leeds silk specialist established in 1865.

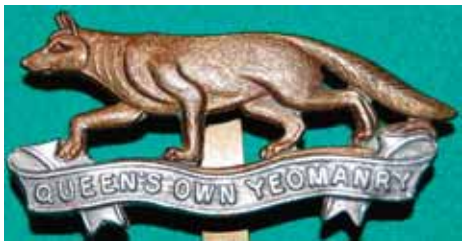
James Hare were originally merchants of woollens and worsteds, started from a cottage in Leeds. By 1913, the company started manufacturing cloth with seven looms. In 1935 two million metres of cloth was despatched from their warehouse. However, in the 1980's they switched to supplying silk especially for the bridal market. In the new millennium, there was a further move into interiors. They introduced silk wall coverings in the first decade. Now they have showrooms across the globe from New York to Beijing, Europe and the Middle East. Tim Hare, a direct descendant of the founder and MD of the company, is one of our own Liverymen.

The final cut and finish took place at Samuel Brothers; a bespoke military tailors in Leeds that was established in 1830 with a long history of supplying garments made from Yorkshire's finest textiles. The garment featured elements symbolic of Leeds University's history, including a cameo of archive cloth from the Sunnybank Textiles Archive at Farsley. The gown was adapted to be more feminine and elegant for Gabby Logan, but keeping the true scarlet colour, (which is already part of the university's own crest), giving it a modern feel and soft draping details. ■

**Bill Skidmore**

# Visit to the Bovington Tank Ranges
# The Woolmen's Military Liaison

**Howard Venters reports on his visit with Upper Warden, Richard Excell to catch up with the Queen's Own Yeomanry**




Howard Venters is the Woolmen's Military Liaison and Chair Elect of the Livery Committee.

Since the affiliation between the Woolmen and the Queens Own Yeomanry was instigated by Colonel John Nickell-Lean TD, past Master, in 2003, the Woolmen's company has traditionally awarded a trophy to the Squadron whose (reserve) soldiers showed most commitment and deployment in that particular year and the award is presented to the winning Squadron at the annual installation dinner.

The Regiment's Commanding Officer, Lt Col Hugh Campbell-Smith MBE, attended the Master's installation dinner in April and in conversation with Howard Venters, it was agreed that we would endeavour to organise more frequent events and explore wider opportunities to mutual benefit.

The initial result was an invitation for Upper Warden, Richard Excell, and Howard to visit the QOY in training at the Armoured Corps home in Bovington, Dorset.

The day started with an introduction to current military protocol and a briefing about the restructuring of the Yeomanry. At the present time the Queen's Own Yeomanry consists of five Squadrons based in Belfast (current winner of our trophy), Ayr, Fife, Newcastle and York. Each Squadron consists of approximately 90 reservist soldiers of mixed ranks plus their regular counterparts who act as permanent staff, Regimental Officers and NCOs. In recent times – over some 10 years – the QOY have had soldiers deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq, Cyprus and have also served with distinction during the Olympics as part of the Army's homeland activities.

Structure of the QOY will change under latest Army proposals to create a new Regiment – the Scottish and Northern Ireland Yeomanry – which basically splits the territory with four Squadrons of SNIY in Belfast, Ayr, Cupar and Edinburgh and four Squadrons of QOY located in York, Newcastle, Chester and Wigan. The end result will be four Yeomanry Regiments in total – the Queen's Own Yeomanry, the new Scottish and Northern Ireland Yeomanry, the Royal Yeomanry and the Royal Wessex Yeomanry.

QOY's vehicles have previously been tracked scimitars (combat reconnaissance) but are newly equipped with RWMIKS (pronounced R Wimmicks) – wheeled fortified Land Rovers with machine guns front and rear. The Armoured Corps basically consists of three types of vehicle – light (wheeled), medium (tracked) and heavy which refers to the Challenger 2 tank.

*Howard and Richard ready for the enemy!*

During the visit the three main priorities of the modern British Army were discussed, "contingent capability for defence and deterrents" – effectively confrontational in a war like situation, "overseas engagement and capacity building" – designed to prevent the former and "UK engagement and homeland resilience" which encompasses events such as the Olympics and basically homeland security.

The Regiment runs two main camps each year and recruitment continues to be one of the main priorities. Government policy is to reduce the regular army from 100,000 to 82,000 and increase reserve forces from its current level at some 18,000 to 30,000 – all to be achieved by 2018.

The visit was inspiring but the message was clear. Recruitment remains an issue and absurdly so – any city or rural employer has limitless opportunity to have the Army train its staff or workforce in the skills of leadership, mechanics, driving, fitness, discipline, teamwork, plus the honour and integrity that goes with belonging to our armed forces – all skills that will undoubtedly contribute to both the business and social fabric of every day life. A total "no brainer" some might say… ■

*I wish to record thanks from both of us to the CO, officers and men of the QOYs who made every effort to accommodate us and show us their training activities. Special people and we were quite frankly humbled in their presence. We are immensely grateful to them all.*

# A round up of the agricultural shows

As usual in May, June and July, the Master visited the major agricultural shows to present the prizes and medals for shearing.

**Royal Ulster Agricultural Show**

The Royal Ulster Agricultural Show was held at the new show ground at Balmoral Park 15th/17th May – the first year the show has been on the new ground, which was the site of the Maze prison some years ago. HRH Prince Edward visited the show and opened the Maurice Megahy shearing stand, commemorating the contribution to shearing in Northern Ireland by Liveryman Maurice Megahy who died last year. He met Maurice's son and daughter, Brian Megahy and Sandra McCullough and clearly this was a very special moment for them. Sandra emailed the Master a picture of Maurice with Princess Anne at a livery dinner. It had been very wet the day before the shearing, and all attempts to dry the sheep off before the competitions started worked very well, so a couple of very good days shearing took place. The fastest shearers managed to shear 18 sheep in 14 and a half minutes. The perpetual cup went to William Jones. He said he had planned to quit after last year, but he wanted to try out the new facility; and now he wasn't sure if he would quit or not.

**Royal Bath and West Show**

The Royal Bath and West Show 30th May/1st June had slightly better weather, and the Master and Janet were put in a very pleasant frame of mind by their invitation to lunch with the Fruiterers Company before the competitions. The cider flowed freely and the talk was of more than fruit and sheep, but the shearing was of a very high standard, and they were delighted to see another very good day's shearing. After the competition they attended the Cider-makers reception where there were an amazingly wide range of ciders on had to try. Wisely they did not attempt to taste them all! This was the nearest show to their Monmouthshire home and they were able to get there and back in a day.

**Royal Highland Show**

The Royal Highland Show 20th/3rd June meant a flight to Edinburgh from Cardiff airport. The traffic on the M4 was alarmingly slow, but the Master and Janet made it to the terminal with half an hour in hand. However, there was an awkward passenger holding up the queue at the bag drop, and the flight closed just as Janet put her bag on the scales. They allowed her through, and held back the Master! Diplomatic skills were brought to bear, and the Master was allowed through to join Janet in security. The Master's badge, combined with the medals he was carrying in his hand baggage to present to the winners, triggered all sorts of alarms, but diplomatic skills were again deployed and they managed to board the aircraft harassed and breathless, but in time. The Royal

Highland Show is always very well attended, and the visit of HRH The Princess Royal no doubt brought in extra crowds. As old Edinburgh hands the Master and Janet knew a few good places to eat in the City and very much enjoyed their stay there. The weather was starting to warm up nicely and the shearers had no problems with damp sheep.

## Great Yorkshire Show

The shearing at the Great Yorkshire Show took place on 9th/11th July, so the Master travelled up the day after the Summer Banquet at Trinity House. You will remember how hot London was if you attended the banquet: and Harrogate was just as hot, possibly hotter, as the Summer temperatures really began to rise. The cancellation of the 2012 show after the first day due to flooding was a distant memory, and the very idea of wet sheep was laughable, as the temperatures rose on one of the hottest days of the year. The lack of shelter for spectators at the shearing shed meant that the crowd was shifting (or in some cases reddening) all the time, as they sat on the benches or open grass in front of the stand, but this did not deter the great crowd that assembled to watch the excellent shearing competitions. It certainly did not deter the shearers who put on a grand display.

## Royal Welsh Show

If the Bath and West show is the nearest to the Master and Janet, geographically, the Royal Welsh Show is their local show emotionally. They have been attending the Royal Welsh Show regularly since the Woolmen first organised a sponsors' lunch for the Livery at the show. The main shearing competitions were on the second show day (23rd July), but the Master went back for the third show day a well to award the medal for the best pen. On the 24th July he had two surprises: he found himself having lunch with the secretary of his local Chepstow Agricultural Society (the Master is the Health and Safety representative on the organising

committee); and Their Royal Highnesses Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall visited the show and stayed talking to people for a couple of hours. The day came to a close with the test competition between the Welsh team and the New Zealand team. The New Zealand team performed the Haka, and then two of them sang it; and the Welsh team (and everyone in the shearing shed) sang the Welsh National Anthem – accompanied by the sound of rivets popping out of the tin roof. The Welsh team won.

The Master was very impressed throughout by the closeness, friendship and camaraderie of the shearing community. Young shearers and the older shearers, and some ancient shearers, judges and stewards, all knew each other and their capabilities, and any of them were at several of the shows. They are all looking forward to the 2014 World Championships in Galway next year. ■

**By The Master**

Photos: Victor Herbert and Bill Clark

# The Woolmen's Sheep Drive across London Bridge

*Above: Alderman and Sheriff Sir Paul Judge, the Clerk, the Master, Sheriff, Adrian Waddingham, Alderman and Woolman Peter Hewitt, Upper Warden Richard Excell*

Well, we did it. It may not have been perfect; it may have been a bit messy at one or two points; but we got 600 people and their sheep across London Bridge, and they all had a fun day out and enjoyed themselves. Sunday 29th September 2013 was also a great family day out, because in the spirit of the original sheep drives, where farmers needed their friends and family to assist in their efforts to get their sheep to market in the City of London, we encouraged Freemen to bring their family and friends to drive sheep, too.

The weather was kind to us, which made all the difference. Wet wool does not smell very nice at the best of times – and that would have just been the Freemen's clothing, never mind the sheep! But all the volunteers turned up, and the TA and cadets were on parade, and the Woolmen were there, and there were sheep – twenty of them, waiting to be driven.

And the Freemen and Liverymen turned out – in their hundreds – to enjoy the day and support the charities. There were babes in arms, toddlers in buggies, parents in consternation, grandparents and grandchildren, Sheriffs and Aldermen, and the great British public, as well as a myriad of bewildered tourists and a few double-takes from the top deck of some of the London buses.

*Bill Clark (Master), Howard Venters (Organising committee and publisher), Adrian Bell (event publicity officer) and David Seaward (provider of sheep).*

This was our major fundraising effort for this year. We have raised about £40,000, which means that after the costs have been met, the Woolmen's charitable Trust and the Lord Mayor's Appeal will each receive about £15,000. I am delighted that it was so well supported, not just by our own Livery, but also by Actuaries, Arts Scholars, Barbers, Builders Merchants, Chartered Accountants, Charted Secretaries, Chartered Surveyors, Coachmakers, Clothworkers, Coopers, Cordwainers, Educators, Engineers, Environmental Cleaners, Fanmakers, Farmers, Framework Knitters, Glovers, The Guild of Agricultural Journalists, The Guild of Freemen, Horners, Information Technologists, Joiners and Ceilers, Marketors, Master Mariners, Pattenmakers, Plumbers, Poulters, Security Professionals, Spectaclemakers, Tallow Chandlers, Tax Advisors, Tinplate Workers, Tobacco Pipe Maker, Tylers and Brickmakers, Water

*Crossing the bridge*

Photos: Gerald Sharp Phottraphy and Whisper PR

*Liveryman Howard Venters keeps the sheep in check*

*The formal welcome at the south end by the Guildable Manor of Southwark*

*Our Clerk Gill Wilson with husband Steve*

*A thoughtful Bo-Peep considers her sheep*

Conservators and World Traders – not forgetting the Guildable Manor of Southwark, who greeted us formally when we arrived on the Southwark side.

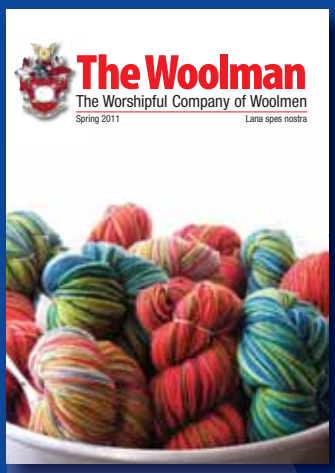
ITN came and thrust their camera at the Master, Terry Wogan gave us three mentions on Radio 2, and the photographers were everywhere. We had about 20 of them for the first crossing of the bridge – at least twice as many as the sheep we were driving – and believe me the sheep were easier to handle. Fortunately none of the sheep made a determined break for it – there was the occasional anxious moment when one or two leaped on the backs of their friends and were perilously close to the edge of the bridge, but the expert sheep handlers kept them under control. By the end of the day, the story had been picked up by various online publications, and had been syndicated to a plethora of local papers. By Monday morning, the story was in the Times, The Financial times and the Independent, and by that evening it had been picked up by the South China Morning Post, as well as newspapers in Canada and Malta. You could say that this fundraising event may have put sheep on London Bridge, but it also put the Woolmen on the map!

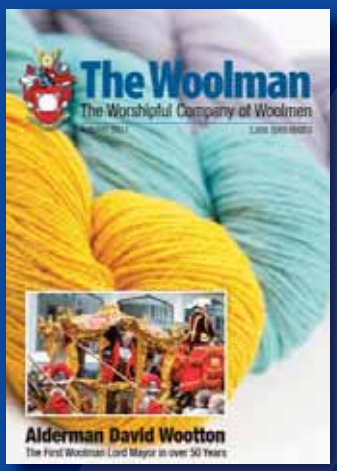
None of this would have been possible without the sterling support of those who turned up on the day and gave up their Sunday to make it all work. The Master was there with Janet, ably assisted by The Upper Warden and Carolyn Excell, Court Assistant Vincent Keaveny and Amanda, Court Assistant Chris Thierry, Court Assistant Peter Hammond and Joyce, Howard Venters, Peter Holmes-Johnson, Greg Craig Waller, Malcolm Campbell, David and Barbara Seamark who provided the sheep, David Jones from the Woodland Trust who organised the sheep handlers, Whisper PR who managed to get some fantastic coverage in the press, Mark Murphy and the cadets from 4th Battalion the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment, WO2 Stuart Jordan and his colleagues from 131 Independent Commando Squadron RE (V), the security staff at Fishmongers Hall, and the hall management at Fishmongers, who made us all so welcome. Cook and Butler bravely cooked lamb burgers, and Gerald Sharp Photography took masses of photos (I recommend looking through the full set on their website at www.sharpphoto.co.uk). ■

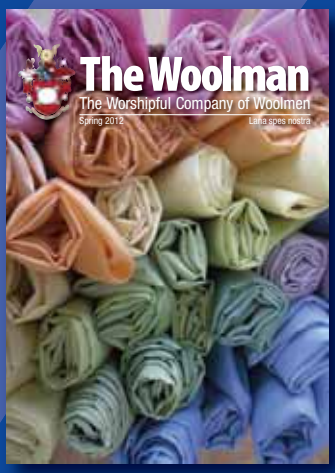
*The Master with the biblical shepherds from his home village of Shirenewton*

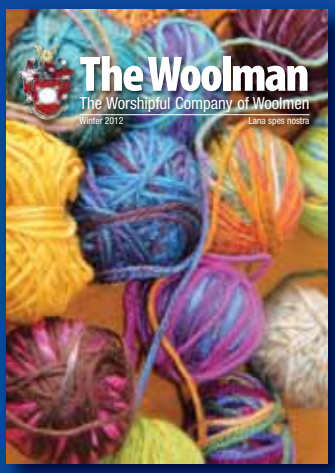
*Our Beadle Ernie Brocklehurst and wife Val with grandchildren*

"We have raised about £40,000, which means that … the Woolmen's charitable Trust and the Lord Mayor's Appeal will each receive about £15,000.

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