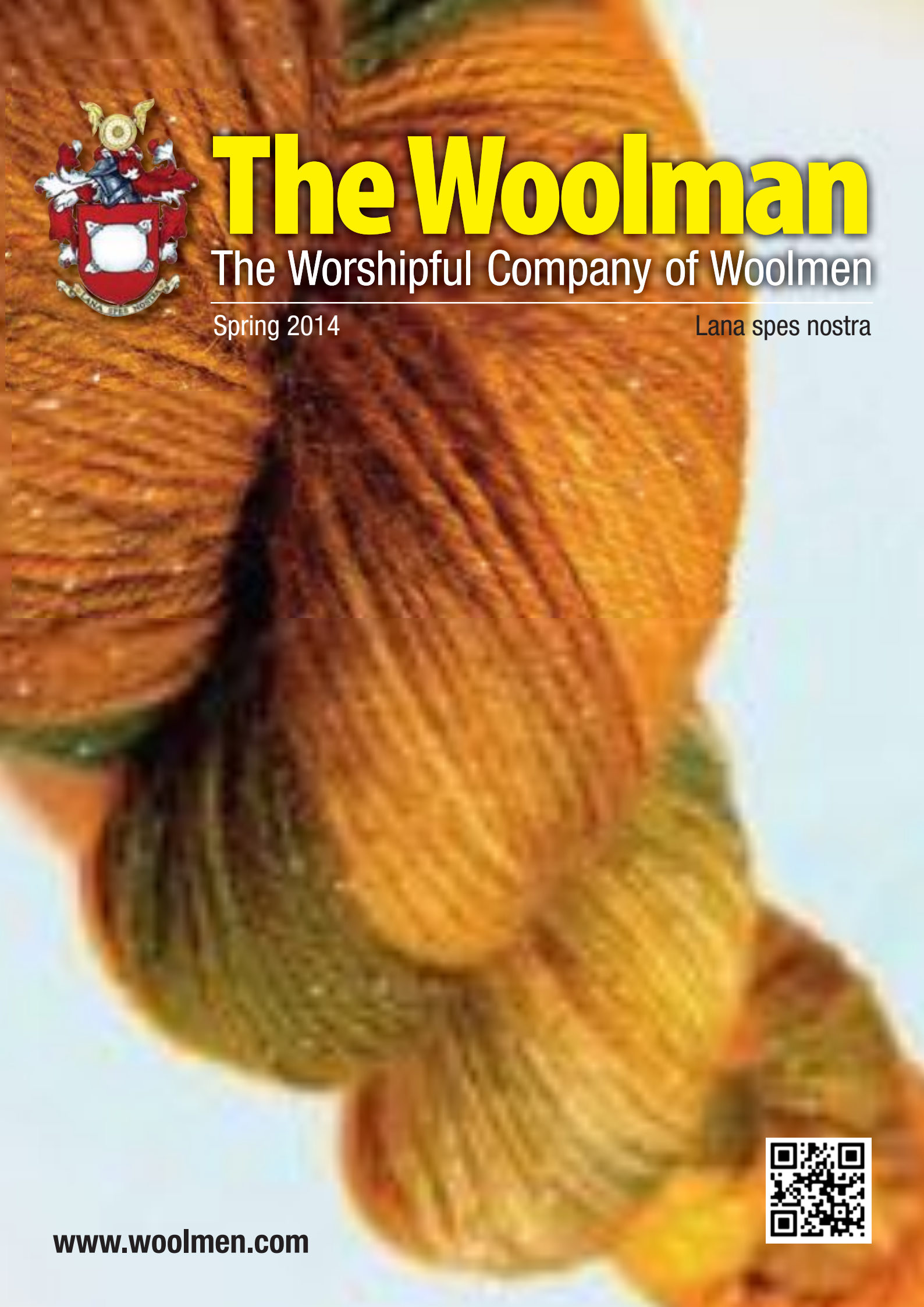

The Woolman

The Worshipful Company of Woolmen

Spring 2014

Lana spes nostra

www.woolmen.com

Programme of Events 2014

United Guilds Service
St Paul's Cathedral and Stationers Hall
4th April

Past Masters' Lunch
Army and Navy Club
3rd June

Great Yorkshire Show
Tue 8th – Thur 10th July

Royal Welsh Show
Mon 21st - Thur 24th July

Installation Dinner
Carpenters Hall
23rd April

North South Golf Match
16/17th June

Master's weekend
Somerset 19th/21st September

Civic Dinner
Painters' Hall
Thursday 23rd October

Ulster Show
Wed 14th – Fri 16th May

Royal Highland Show
Thur 19th –
Sun 22nd June

Election of Lord Mayor
Guildhall and Painters Hall
29th September

Bath and West Show
Wed 28th – Sat 31st May

Summer Banquet
HQS Wellington
1st July

Alms Court Dinner
Saddlers Hall
15th January 2015

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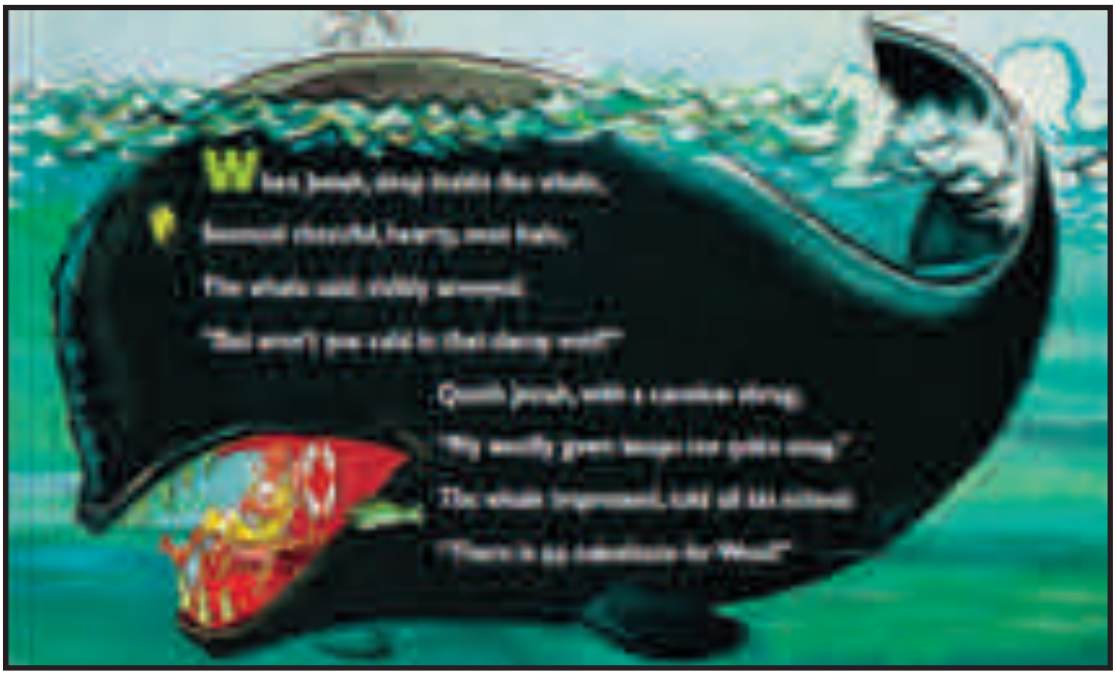

There is no substitute for wool…

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

My very best wishes to friends and fellow liverymen for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2014.

Howard Venters

This year looks to be a particularly busy one and we continue to devote ourselves to driving this wonderful Company forward. Since being appointed as the new Chair of the Livery Committee my intention is to engage as many members as possible in the interesting events we have planned over the next few months. Equally I want to further our affiliations with the Military which is important. We have engaged on a number of initiatives with the Queen's Own Yeomanry, developed our relations with 131 Commando RE and the Master and I have recently met with the CO of RAF Brize Norton and another important new affiliation will soon be in place.

Bill and Jean Skidmore have done a super job in compiling content for this edition and Bill makes some important comments below.

Howard Venters, Publisher

I would like to wish our own Liverymen and of course others who read our magazine all good wishes for 2014 and hope they will enjoy the articles which we have in store for them.

Bill Skidmore

Secondly, I am indebted to our Companion, Mrs Freda Jefferson for bringing to my attention, that we made a mistake in not giving the correct term of office to Past Master, Raymond Cousins as 1993 to '94. I hope Raymond will accept our apologies.

On March the 18th in the Apothecaries' Hall in Black Friars Lane the Worshipful Company of Woolmen along with other Companies are involved with a project set up by the Livery Schools Link to showcase the crafts and skills which Livery Companies are known for. This is an exhibition for secondary school pupils and teachers, to create interest, hopefully inspire them to think of possible further study, apprenticeships and learning in areas they may not have much experience or knowledge about. It is a well known fact, that people see commodities in stores and do not know how they are manufactured, what the content materials are or the supply chain. Hopefully, this hands on showcase event will go somewhat to correcting this for some London school pupils.

Speaking of education, I wish retailers would spend more time giving a few facts and training to sales staff. This incorrect information and false descriptions is downright scandalous. From Savile Row tailors to High Street stores there is a lack of knowledge in textile products. Some well known companies have had major advertising campaigns which cannot differentiate correctly between knitted and woven structures. One major well known retailing group did not know the difference between woollens and worsteds. This mistake was even made on a question and answer on University Challenge! When one goes to order or purchase a suit these days, you will see on cloth a 'Super number' anything from 100s to 120s and 150s etc. Try asking the person serving you what it means?

I hope through our Company and magazine we can help, rectify and educate, so people are more aware of products, materials and ultimately what they are buying.

Finally, if you have some information you think may be of interest to other Liverymen, about wool in a very loose sense, historical or otherwise or if there are any topics you would like us to cover please contact the editor; it would be much appreciated.

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Master's Report

Since the last edition of *The Woolman*, the Livery Companies of the City of London have elected a new Lord Mayor at Common Hall – Alderman Fiona Woolf, who is only the second woman in the history of the City of London to be elected Lord Mayor (the first was Mary Donaldson who was Lord Mayor 1983-84). She addressed the Masters and Clerks of the Livery Companies in Mansion House in November and informed us all about her charities for this year's Lord Mayor's Appeal.

It has been a very busy time in the City, and I have attended as many events as possible. I have dined with the Feltmakers in Habersdashers' Hall, the Farmers in the Farmers' Club, the Agricultural Journalists in Stationers' Hall, the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales in Cardiff, the Merchants of Edinburgh, the Joiners and Ceilers on a boat on the Thames, to watch the fireworks after the Lord Mayor's Show; also with the Actuaries in Staple Hall Inn, the Basket-makers in Skinners' Hall, the IT Company in the IT Hall, the Weavers in Vintners' Hall and our own Civic Dinner at Drapers' Hall. I attended the Inaugural General Meeting and lunch of the Great 13 (the Past Masters dining club for the year 2013) in Painters-Stainers' Hall, and the Woolmen's panto-mime outing to see Aladdin in Wimbledon. Unfortunately due to a diary clash I was unable to get to Bradford for the present-ation of the Jubilee Hanging to the corporation, but Past Master Elizabeth Peacock represented me at Bradford City Hall on that occasion. Even more annoy-ingly, I was unable to attend the book launch for Elizabeth's new book, 'A Yorkshire Lass at the Court of Thatcher'. This is a very good read and should be compulsory reading for any aspiring politician – and probably quite a handy reference work for future Masters!

I attended the Arts Scholars Annual Mithras Lecture at the Dutch church in Austin Friars, the Gresham College lectures about the Plantation of Londonderry, Phil-anthropy in the City at the Charterhouse, the Marketors' Annual City Lecture in St Mary at Hill church, the Actuaries Lecture in Staple Inn Hall and the Royal British Legion service of Remembrance in St Paul's church-yard; also the Red Cross Christmas Market preview in Guildhall with the Pikemen and Musketeers of the HAC in the Guildhall yard, Fiona Adler's non-Aldermanic shrieval campaign launch in Armourers' and Brasiers' Hall, and a reception at Milton Court (the new wing to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama). Janet and I watched the Lord Mayor's Show from the stands opposite St Paul's cathedral – when we took pictures of Companion Freda Jefferson's kneelers being used by the Lord Mayor and her consort, and the Cenotaph Parade in Whitehall the following day.

I have made a point of having coffee or lunch with several potential liverymen, and I am sure some of them will come forward for membership in due course. I also attended Company Freemen ceremonies which Gill held for new Freemen at Guild-hall, and several religious services – evensong at St Paul's Cathedral for the Musicians' Company with Janet; the Harvest Festivals in St Bride's Fleet Street, St Martin's in the Fields and in our home village of St Thomas a Becket, Shirenewton.

I was surprised to discover that it is not generally well known that we are looking for new members of the Livery. I referred to our membership numbers in my speech at my Installation Dinner, but perhaps I did not make the point sufficiently well. Although we do not want to get so large as a Company that we no longer get to know one another well, we would like to be large enough to make good use of some of the more spacious, interesting and more splendid venues. To do this, we need to have at least 140 sitting down to a dinner, which we

"I was surprised to discover that it is not generally well known that we are looking for new members of the Livery. I referred to our membership numbers in my speech at my Installation Dinner, but perhaps I did not make the point sufficiently well

achieve at about one in three dinners at the moment, but we would need to hit this figure every time. We are below our cap of 150 members, so please encourage your friends to think about becoming a Liveryman.

I was delighted to be told that people read The Woolman quite avidly. Many Masters of other Companies have come up to me and congratulated me on a splendid and interesting magazine, which is very flattering, and credit must go to Bill and Jean Skidmore and Howard Venters. I have been in conversation at dinners with other companies, and mentioned some of the things the Company has done, and my dinner companion has told me that they know all about it, because they read the article in our magazine! On another occasion I was describing the Master's weekend, and someone said they had read about the dinner on SS Great Britain and thought they might take their company there. I also read the magazines of other Livery Companies, especially since the sheep drive, to see how many Masters appear in pictures with their sheep.

It is clear that people are using the website more and more, because the Clerk is receiving many queries about the Company and what we do, and how to join the Woolmen. Students are also contacting us asking for support from the charitable trust. The most dramatic proof of the use of the website was when it crashed a few days before the sheep drive – but we have taken steps to make sure that will not happen again. So, although it is clear that people outside the Company are using the website, what is not clear is whether the site is used as much by our own members, because at this stage we are not subscribing to that sort of monitoring service.

At the Court Dinner in the Guildhall in early December, the Upper Warden, Richard Excell, composed and delivered a most suitable seasonal and woolly Grace; I made a short speech thanking the Court for their support and rewarded them with a very bad joke about some parrots which I had heard at a lunch a few days earlier; and then the Under Warden, John Brewer, said some very kind words about my year to date as Master. However I stressed that I still had some five months left as Master, and I still have a few things I wish to achieve, and if I started the year at a canter, I intended to finish the year at a gallop.

I am sure we would all like to extend our congratulations to Liveryman Barry Fletcher-Whitaker for his award of the OBE in the New Year Honours for services to the Textile Industry and to the Community in Bradford, West Yorkshire and also to Lady Ann Riches for her award of the MBE for Voluntary Services to Health Care in London

Janet and I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and are looking forward to 2014 as much as we are. ■

Christmas goodies to Afghanistan

As many will know the Woolmen have significantly increased our interaction with our military affiliations in recent months. Liz Venters (sister and unpaid volunteer!) worked hard to organise, pack and post Christmas 'goodie' parcels to 8 soldiers of the Queen's Own Yeomanry who were serving in Afghanistan over the festive period, having liaised with the CO. Our enclosure read "Thinking of all of you in the Queen's Own Yeomanry over the Christmas and New Year period and wishing you safe and happy days in 2014. Sent with warmest wishes from your affiliated livery company – the Worshipful Company of Woolmen – your friends in the City of London"; and we received back the picture here together with a delightful note from Col. Hugh Campbell-Smith. ■

Book Review

A Yorkshire Lass at the Court of Thatcher

by Elizabeth Peacock. (Pen & Sword Books
ISBN 978 1 78303 292 1 300pp hardback £25)

As MP for Batley and Spen, 1983-97, Elizabeth had an office next to Edward Heath's and she tells us he never passed the time of day but then, after many years had passed, suddenly invited her to a cocktail party at his home and showed her numerous photographs of himself displaying his yachtsmanship. By gum, you had a narrow escape there, Elizabeth! Although I am told that Sailor Ted's natural instincts and affections followed a different scent altogether. Elizabeth represented the Tory party but she admits to having been "a rebel" and, when "common sense" dictated it, she was not shy of voting against her party. For example, after John Major had succeeded to the premiership, she opposed the ruthless way in which pit closures in Yorkshire were being implemented and, as a result, made many unexpected friends among the miners while ruffling the feathers of her Conservative colleagues.

She declares, as fiercely as Luther when he nailed his agenda to the cathedral door, "I decided there and then, so be it: if the party takes policy routes which are not in the best interests of the people I represent, then I will vote against that policy regardless of the consequences."

"I came from a poor background which would not normally embrace Tory politics." So begins this evocative and revealing memoir. Elizabeth attracts us immediately by her sympathy for her colleagues and political opponents while maintaining scrupulous honesty and an unflinching self-criticism. She tells us, reassuringly, I think, that, away from the hothouse of the chamber of the House of Commons, there is true camaraderie and friendship among members of all parties. After the expenses scandal, I will try to resist the temptation to describe this equanimity as honour among thieves.

She is grateful for what she genuinely accepts as the "privilege" of being an MP and recounts, with equal measures of amazement, pride and modesty, her meetings with such international luminaries as Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev and the Pope. On the great political and social issues of the day, she is by turns conservative – retaining the death penalty, being pro-life – and radical – opposing the Poll Tax and being generally in favour of the socially-liberal causes.

Elizabeth acknowledges Mrs Thatcher's uncompromising toughness but pays tribute to a usually unrecognised personal tenderness in the makeup of the Iron Lady. For example, one evening Elizabeth collapsed in the House from sheer fatigue brought on by overwork. By 8am the next day, she had received a get-well letter in the Prime Minister's own hand. "She always looked after her troops."

She does not go for soft targets but excoriates those in high places – the ministers and mandarins in the Foreign Office, for example, at the time of the Falklands War: "What has never been explained is the role of the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service who failed to report the Argentine threat." All very serious stuff, but Elizabeth is no puritan or killjoy: "I have always believed that, while politics and electioneering is a serious business, it has also to be fun and we should always have a lunch break at the pub and we should finish the evening back at the pub." She was ever in the thick of it – present in the Brighton hotel the evening before the IRA bomb went off in 1984.

She does not remember "Robin Cook or Gordon Brown ever speaking." Other MPs

Elizabeth Peacock

Elizabeth Peacock with Mr David Evennett MP. Lord Commissioner of HM Treasury

The London Cloth Company

Photos: LCC

Warping mill

You would never expect to find a woollen mill not far from the centre of London. However, you would be wrong. In actual fact there is a micro mill in Clapton, that was only founded a couple of years ago. It consists of very traditional winding, warping and weaving machinery rescued from a variety of sites around the country. This was the brainchild of a young, eager and entrepreneurial young man who, when this venture was perceived, knew very little about the textile industry – Daniel Harris.

In the beginning

Originally, Daniel only planned to do a little bit of weaving for fun. It was something he had always thought might be interesting and amusing, with a surname like Harris. He started teaching himself to weave; naively thinking that all you needed was a loom and a small hand bobbin winder. It was a steep learning curve.

He had researched looms and knew he did not want a wooden one – far too slow! Therefore, he was looking for a 50 to 100 year old industrial loom. Why an old one? Because that is what he knew he could afford and understand.

He spent weeks on the phone, before tracking down a loom. It had been removed from a Cambrian mill in the early eighties, put in a barn halfway up a mountain and left. Essentially, all the main bits were there; not that he knew any better having never seen one before.

It was moved pretty much whole, as he was terrified of dismantling it and not being able to put it back together. It weighed under a ton, so in retrospect it was not too bad. With the help of the farmer and friends, it was manoeuvred out of the barn, through a pigsty and into the back of a transit van. Unfortunately, he ended up having to dismantle most of it on the pavement outside the workshop in order to get it in. A stringent regime of restoration followed to remove 25 years of rust and filth that involved a lot grinding, scouring, turps, petrol, matt black enamel spray, wire wool, toothbrushes and rags.

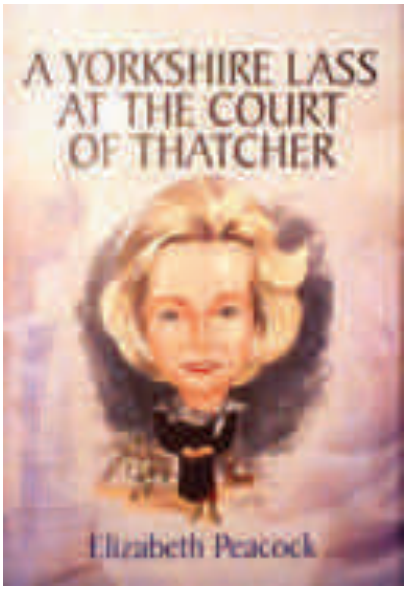
Working from photographs, he had made a rudimentary warping mill from bits of timber. He wound the bobbins on a small Swedish hand winder and made the first piece of cloth in the midst of a party organised to celebrate. They had fun, no one lost a finger and they produced a piece of cloth 6" wide and 12ft long. Needless to say, it was rubbish. (Daniel's words not mine).

were more forthcoming. "The notorious Nicholas Fairbairn" once demanded of her, "What are you doing in my constituency?" And he went on to say that no woman could speak on his patch unless he had "bedded her" first. Elizabeth was not backwards at coming forward with her reply. ""Well, Nicky, I am speaking in ten minutes. We'd better do the bed bit now as there are plenty of beds around, but can you perform in your state of intoxication?"

Elizabeth Peacock's personality shines all through her memoir: her courtesy, fair-mindedness, wit and kindness.

Thanks for a lovely book, Elizabeth. I would say to all-comers, buy it – you're in for a terrific read. ■

Rev Peter Mullen,
Chaplain to the Woolmen



Weaving a reverse twill

After that, it became quite apparent that this might need a bit more thought.

Second Phase

Since then Daniel has scoured the country for parts and consulted the very best weaving oracles. He has been all over the place, Devon, Somerset, Yorkshire, Cumbria, Lancashire and the Highlands. As he says, 'It has been fantastic; I have met the most remarkable people and seen some wonderful things. I have repeatedly been overwhelmed by people's interest, enthusiasm and willingness to help.'

By the end of year 1, he decided to go ahead with opening a fully functioning cloth mill in London.

He was beginning to get cloth that was worth sending to the finishing agent and was taking orders.

One and a half years on he now has 5 industrial power looms, 3 pirn (bobbin) winders and a warping mill, in a 1400sq ft mill with a capacity of about 75m of fabric per day.

The Company today

The London Cloth Company is almost certainly the first cloth mill to open in London for over a hundred years. They weave predominantly wool tweed and cotton cloth on their collection of restored, traditional machinery. They offer entirely bespoke fabrics, meaning that designers, tailors, companies and individuals can create their very own distinctive designs. At present, they run all the looms with foot pedals, meaning the cloth is hand-woven, and the weaving process, from start to finish, is all carried out on the premises.

The majority of the work is weaving fabrics to order. Over the last year they have developed cloth for many top designers and brands all over the world including, Ralph Lauren, Paul Smith, John Lancaster, S E H Kelly, Fallow, Bastyan, Gresham Blake, Child of the Jago and some people in Japan. Daniel intends to continue to build the mill, with the additional aim to open a part time museum on the side, explaining to adults and children some of the basics of weaving. In addition, where their clothes come from; that cotton does not come from sheep; Linen is also a plant; the evils of the High Street fashion industry and that Primark is not sustainable.

Pirn winder

British Wool

In Britain: Currently, 97% of the wool comes from Australia, even wool marked as British wool may only be 50% actual British wool.

The London Cloth Company works with Ecologist Heather Webb, and Michael Churchhouse, the 'Rhino' of Sheep shearing to source Fleece from interesting British flocks. They then have this processed in Yorkshire to create their own yarn. It is 100% natural undyed British wool, currently there are only three mills doing this in the whole of the UK. They never dye it or blend shades, so they design cloth by breed of sheep rather than colours. ■

Bill Skidmore

Two of the looms

> The London Cloth Company is almost certainly the first cloth mill to open in London for over a hundred years.

Exhibitions at the Fashion Textile Museum, Bermondsey

Image courtesy Fashion and Textile Museum / © Target Gallery

Artist Textiles

Picasso to Warhol 31 January – 17 May 2014

This survey of textiles as an art form in 20th century Europe and America explores the unrivalled collaboration between artists and textile manufacturers in modern art history. Featuring work by Braque, Calder, Chagall, Dalí, Dufy, Hepworth, Léger, Matisse, Miró, Picasso, Nicholson and Warhol, Artist Textiles presents over 200 rare examples, many of which have not been on public display before.

Claire McCardell dress, 1955 in Picasso 'Fish' print

Pablo Picasso, 'Toros y Toreros' fabric for Bloomcraft, 1963

Image courtesy Fashion and Textile Museum

Mexican Textiles

Frida Kahlo & the Art of the Rebozo 6 June – 30 August 2014

Mexican Textiles highlights the art of the rebozo – the classic shawl woven in Mexico – from the 17th century to the present day. With the current resurgence of craft skills, the work of leading artists and contemporary fashion designers is shown alongside examples of historic rebozos, with major loans from the Franz Mayer Museum, Mexico City.

20th Century Knitwear: Chanel to Westwood

19 September 2014 – 18 January 2015

Inspirational fashion knitwear from the 20th century. Highlights include 1920s Chanel jersey, 1930s woollen swimwear, 1970s Bill Gibb and conceptual garments from 1980s and 90s designers Comme des Garçons, Vivienne Westwood and Julien MacDonald. An exciting combination of famous names and visually exciting pieces, the exhibition charts the influence of art movements Pop, Punk and Deconstruction alongside new knitwear technologies and design innovation.

The Threads that Bind Us

An inter-generational wall-hanging commissioned to mark the Diamond Jubilee of her Majesty the Queen

> As the Queen's reign has covered several generations it was thought only fitting that a project to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee should involve a variety of different age groups.

Past Master Elizabeth Peacock DL, Roger Bowers DL and other Yorkshire Woolmen

Bill Skidmore

This project, to create a long-lasting legacy of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations reflecting Bradford's culture, history and industry, its past and future, was the brainchild of former Bradford Lord Mayor Cllr. Dale Smith during his year in office. However, it would not have been able to go ahead without the significant support of sponsors, who have donated money and materials for the piece of art. Sponsors include Curtis Wools Direct Ltd, one of the world's largest wool merchant and processing companies who provided materials for the installation along with the British Wool Marketing Board, the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, the Freemasons, James Hare Silks and the Woolmark Company. Bradford's Midland Hotel and the Sprinkle Sunshine Appeal, set up by the Lord Mayor have also contributed to the project.

As the Queen's reign has covered several generations it was thought only fitting that a project to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee should involve a variety of different age groups. Children from 16 Bradford primary schools worked with older people's groups, (ages ranging from 6 to 76), to share ideas of beloved places in the area which have strong meaning culturally, socially and emotionally; also well known local figures that hold a place in local people's hearts also appear in the final piece.

The contributing groups produced story scrolls that were used as a resource to select the final images. The groups then experimented with collage techniques, working with fabric and sewing, using layers of felt, fragments of vintage fabrics and other items. The older people interacted with the children, passing on their memories and skills. The children gained valuable insight into Bradford's history and its strong connections to the textile industry. As one teacher said "It was brilliant that they learned so much about history, not coming from a teacher but from people who have actually experienced it," One of the women from a sheltered housing complex who worked alongside the children, says she enjoyed showing them how to sew and talking to them about her experience in the textile industry. "They had the most amazing time and were fascinated with what we did in the olden days."

It was under the careful instruction and intricate craftsmanship of local artist Morwenna Catt and her partner Lucas Stephens that the wall hanging came together. They diligently interpreted the children's story scrolls along with textile pieces created in workshops. The final hanging uses many fragments of vintage fabrics from Bradford Industrial Museum and some vintage fabrics left over from community projects in the city, locally produced felt, woolen cloth, velvet, silks and woollen threads.

The hanging consists of 3 panels, framed in deep blue velvet, which cascade down the wall in a waterfall effect. Each panel contains an amalgam of bold shapes and small intricate details. The main scenes include historic buildings;- Listers Mill, the Bingley Five Rise Locks and Cartwright Hall as well as more modern structures, the National Media Museum, the Alhambra, and the City Hall. The award winning City Park and magnificent water feature are given a stylised treatment. There are also references to other local parks and surrounding moors as well as Ilkley's Cow and Calf rocks. There is the head and shoulders of

Bradford-born artist David Hockney; in another panel, the Brontes are depicted and Bingley astrologer Fred Hoyle puts in an appearance encapsulated by the night sky. The Bradford Boar, a feature of Bradford's crest and a reminder of a legend from medieval times, the Yorkshire Rose, the imperious stone lion from the imposing entrance of Saltaire's Victoria Hall and an impressive ram's head, emphasising Bradford's status as the one time wool capital of the world, complete the main scenes. However, something new is discovered every time it is viewed; little details like a hot air balloon floating over the mill chimneys and Bradford's heraldic motto 'Progress, Industry and Humanity' embroidered into the smoke.

The wall hanging was officially unveiled by Roger Bowers, Deputy Lieutenant of West Yorkshire and also a Woolman, in the City Hall's beautiful wood-panelled banqueting hall. He: said "This is a fitting and long-lasting tribute to mark this historic occasion. The children have contributed their own ideas to the hanging which will reflect the rich textile heritage of the district". The unveiling was attended by Elizabeth Peacock, JP, DL, Past Master of the Woolmen representing the Present Master, and a number of other Yorkshire Woolmen.

Historically, the wool trade earned the city global recognition, creating full employment and financing the building of many of the city's fine buildings which serve as a legacy to the golden era of textiles. So it is quite fitting that a community project to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee should incorporate wool, a fabric which is now back in vogue. ■

Jean Skidmore

Bradford Diamond Jubilee Wall hanging

Obituary

Eric WIlson

Eric Wilson CBE 1933 - 2013

Eric was born in Scotland on 20th November 1933 and lived in Leamington Spa in Warwickshire. He was educated at Glasgow Academy and at the West of Scotland Agricultural College, which laid the foundations for his subsequent career. He was President of the European Marketing Board and Co-Operatives Organisation, and also Deputy Chief Executive of the UK's largest farming co-operative. He was CEO of the Trade Association for Agricultural Marketing Boards and Cooperatives and a trustee of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth. Other executive positions included Director of the Development Board at The Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, University of Edinburgh and Chairman of Agri-Food Charities Partnership. He was involved with HRH The Prince of Wales' Charity, and Director and Company Secretary of The Campaign for Wool Ltd.

Eric was the Master of the Woolmen in the year from April 2011 to April 2012. For many years he had taken on the Company's main liaison role with the major agricultural shows where the Master traditionally presents medals and prizes for shearing. He also arranged for the Woolmen to have a corporate table at the Royal Welsh Show so Liverymen could support the Master at the finals of the Woolmen's Shearing Competition. He arranged for the medals to be made, and his gift to the company during his year as Master was a set of medals for Court Assistants. He also took on the Livery Schools Link portfolio and was making progress with encouraging Woolmen to become involved in the governance of London schools.

Eric was also a Liveryman of The Worshipful Company of Farmers and was Past Chairman of The Farmers Club in Whitehall. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Member of the Geographical Club, Past Chairman of Rotary in Leamington Spa and Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. He was a member of the First-XI Past Masters' Association and The Diamonds Past Masters' Association. He was appointed Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. His other interests included golf, music, and hill walking as well as being a very competent Silversmith. A widower for some years, Eric was a proud Father to his four children Elizabeth, Susan, Charles and John and very proud of his grandchildren.

Eric was taken seriously ill after a trip to the Shetlands and was admitted to Warwick Hospital where despite his own heroic performance and the best efforts of the medical team he suffered a dramatic decline. He remained in very good spirits until the end and died peacefully with his children around him.

Bill Clark

It was a dull grey wet day, the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 2013 when the emotional echoing notes of the "Last Post" were played on the organ of St Mary Magdalene Church, Leamington Spa. Peacefully resting before the altar lay the cream coloured woollen coffin of Eric Wilson, piled high with beautiful white roses. Despite the dullness of the day, a subdued light shone through the fine stained glass windows of this pleasing stone Victorian Church. It was full to capacity as the funeral service now began.

Eric was a well known and much respected figure in the City of London; he was even better known in Warwickshire. Presented to the Queen, he had received the CBE some years previously for services to the farming community. His City connections were strong, not only from his membership of the Farmers Club near Whitehall but also through his Livery Company, the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, of which he was Master in 2011-12.

His family gave readings whilst his son and daughter gave loving tributes with a closing address from Reverend Charlotte Gale. Rarely have I heard a church so full of tumultuous sound as the final hymn was movingly sung to the tune of The Londonderry Air. Following Eric's coffin, we left the church where coaches transported us to a quite splendid lunch at the Mallory Court Hotel.

Here had been a man of a kind and generous disposition and one who "could get things done". A true gentle man, as so often are those who work close to Mother Nature and the land - thus perhaps being closer to God than many of us. His hobby was working with silver; he will surely be remembered always from his presentation to our Company

of a solid silver sheep, now proudly adorning the top table at all of our Banquets.

He had a huge interest in the social fabric of the City of London, which led him to ask me how he could get more involved. I suggested he join the Guild of Freemen of the City of London. A Past Master myself, it was a great pleasure to see him inducted last year. With over 2000 members, he would have had a wide choice of contacts. Sadly, the Guild has lost someone who could have been of much benefit.

So it was thus that Eric departed, in a wonderful way with soft sadness and palpable love and affection.

Rex Johnson

New Year's Honours

Paul Barry Fletcher-Whitaker OBE

Mr. Paul Barry Fletcher-Whitaker, (always known affectionately as just Barry Whitaker) was awarded The Order of the British Empire, OBE, in the Queen's New Year's Honours for Services to the Textile Industry and the Community. I am sure all Woolmen will join me in congratulating Barry on this prestigious achievement.

Born in Bradford, where his family were topmakers, Barry grew up in a city and culture steeped in wool. "I never thought that wool was about textiles – it was just a commodity to be traded and in those days fortunes were made in the wool trade." Barry has stated.

After an exceptional secondary schooling he was awarded a B.Sc in Textile Industries at Leeds University. Barry has always promoted and has been connected to education in the field of textiles.

After graduating he was employed by the famous Salts (Saltaire) Ltd, however, a few years later he found his true vocation in importing and selling textile machinery. This later led to him setting up his own company, Allertex, in Bradford in 1977 and also a subsidiary in North America a few years later.

Throughout his career Barry has held many executive roles in the business arena, from Managing Directorships, Chairman's Roles and member of Governing Bodies.

On attaining Textile Institute qualifications, progressing to a Fellowship, Barry has been synonymous with the TI. These roles involved many appointments from Council Member to Hon. Secretary, Public Relations and Marketing Committee to the Textile Machinery Group,Vice President of the International Textile Institute and Hon. Secretary. He was awarded the TI Institute Service Medal and the ultimate award of Companion of the International Textile Institute, the highest award and restricted to only 50 people worldwide.

In and around the City of Bradford Barry has played a major role within the community, serving on many Boards and Committees, education always being at the forefront. He has been School Governor, member of Court for Bradford University and was installed into the Bradford College Hall of Fame. He was also made a visiting professor at Leeds University.

Charity work has also been a major activity, sitting on different committees and being a Trustee of several Charitable Trusts. The Bradford Textile Society has also benefited from Barry's expertise as a Past President, Council Member and Hon. Secretary.

This prominent Yorkshire figure is well known for his political involvement and relentless work in and around Bradford.

Barry Whitaker, (one of the first things I remember him telling me was - definitely only one 't'), is known internationally for his work within the world of textiles, but 'up North' he is a Textile Legend. ■

Bill Skidmore

New Year's Honours Continued

Lady Susan Elizabeth Ann Riches MBE

Lady Ann Riches was awarded the MBE, in the Queen's New Year's Honours for Voluntary Services to Improving Healthcare in London – a very well-deserved, (and some may say overdue), award, for 57 years of service mainly in the East End of London. I am sure all Woolmen will join me in congratulating Lady Riches on this wonderful achievement.

Lady Riches studied for her SRGN at the Middlesex Hospital and became the youngest member of a Hospital Management Committee when appointed to the HMC of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children in 1955.

In 1968, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital combined with Great Ormond Street Hospital, (the former treating more common childhood illnesses, the latter playing a more specialist role), to encompass all aspects of children's health. Lady Riches was a member of GOSH's Board of Governors until 1994 and has since continued to Chair their Advisory Appointments Committees.

In 1973 she became a member of the Shadow Area Health Authority for the City and East London, (including the Royal London and St Bartholomew's) and for 20 years she was a member of the City Hackney Practitioner Committee chairing the GP Vacancies Committee and a number of other committees. During this time she was also Chairman of the Board of Governors of the St Philip's Group of Hospitals and a member of the Nurses and Midwives Whitley Council management side.

Further NHS re-organisation in 1982 introduced District Health Authorities and Lady Riches became a member of The Hackney City DHA. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital closed in 1998 and its provisions moved to the Royal London, where a children's ward was named after Lady Riches.

The Ann Riches Healing Space, a new, Alice in Wonderland themed play area, launched in February 2013, has been named after Lady Riches, in recognition of her long association with children's services in East London. It has transformed the paediatric services at The new Royal London Hospital which was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen accompanied by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh. During their visit the Royal party toured the Children's Hospital including the Ann Riches Healing Space.

As a non-executive lay director of the Bart's and the Royal London NHS Trust, Lady Riches continues to do Advisory Appointment Committees, regularly attending the Tower Hamlets' PCVT meetings. She was also, from its inception, the Chairman of The Island Health Trust, set up in 1992 to promote the provision of primary health care on the Isle of Dogs until she retired in 2004. In total she has worked for the NHS in Tower Hamlets and Hackney for over 55 years.

She is additionally a founding member of the Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens since 1991, and assists at the Information Centre at Hyde Park Corner when time allows, as well as a Governor of Christ's Hospital, Horsham, a charitable boarding school for children aged 11-18, from all backgrounds.

Lady Riches joined the Worshipful Company of Woolmen in 1989. ■

Bill Skidmore

> I am sure all Woolmen will join me in congratulating Lady Riches on this wonderful achievement.

The development of the Woolmen's new website at www.woolmen.com is now complete, and the website was launched at the Court meeting on 6th November. The new site has been the initiative of the Master, Bill Clark, who has not only masterminded its very professional new design and features, but has also very kindly funded its development as his gift to the Company. I am sure you will agree that this is not only a significant step forward for the Woolmen, but also a very generous and far-sighted idea from Bill Clark. You will be able to access the Members section of the website with a personal log in name and password. This should have been sent to you by email. If you have not received these details it is probably because we don't have your email address. If this is the case, please let the Clerk know.

The Livery Committee Events

The Master and Janet, along with Peter and Joyce Hammond and many members of his family, gathered at the Italian restaurant, Al Forno, Wimbledon, for lunch prior to heading to see the matinee performance of the Pantomime Aladdin. The restaurant had good food, a great atmosphere and the most cheerful waiters. Then the great surprise; along came the largest pizzas any of us had ever seen. They were quite amazing, about a foot wide and 3 feet long; one pizza looked like it could feed all of us. 4 were ordered and these were the medium ones, heaven knows what large looked like!

Taking a break... City Churches Tour organised by Vincent Keaveny

Christmas pantomime at its best can tickle the parts no other show can reach – as was joyously the case with this year's production of Aladdin at Wimbledon.

The end of the District line, in SW19, has always been a pantomime mecca. Top of the bill this year, was Jo Brand making her panto debut, playing a grumpy Genie of the Ring. Brand's a wonderfully iconic comic, but she's not a natural panto star.

Matthew Kelly, was in wonderful form as Widow Twankey, at one point taking to the stage dressed up as a box of Surf washing powder and sporting bosoms that hoot. He had exactly the right mixture of warmth and humour and proved a delightfully nifty mover.

The wicked Abanazer, David Bedella was eminently hissable. David was a superb Abanazar, urbane and relishing his own posh-voiced wickedness, as bursts of flame issue from his fingers. His big number was one of the Rolling Stones' greatest songs, 'Sympathy for the Devil', which he delivered with a Jagger-like strut and sang magnificently – as you would expect from this star of musical theatre.

Flawless, the dance troupe first seen on Britain's got Talent, were dressed as the Old Peking police force. On stage there was enough energy to suggest that Wimbledon has just been subject to a small, localised nuclear explosion! There was even a rather neat, modern, LED take on the old panto tradition of UV lights, that was delivered with real swagger to the almost uncontainable pleasure of the crowd. The forces of law and order have seldom been so cool and popular.

The Master, Janet, Shirley, my grandson Daniel and myself have not missed any of these pantos since they were introduced some years ago; we all left once again elated and in the most festive of spirits. ■

Chris Thierry

Christmas pantomime at its best can tickle the parts no other show can reach – as was joyously the case with this year's production of Aladdin at Wimbledon.

Civic Dinner

> The Drapers, like the Woolmen have a long history as merchants; the Woolmen dealing with raw wool, the drapers trading in woollen cloth.

The Civic Dinner of 2013 was held at Drapers' Hall, Throgmorton Street.

The Drapers, like the Woolmen, have a long history as merchants; the Woolmen dealing with raw wool, the drapers trading in woollen cloth.

The Drapers' Company has owned the site since 1543, when it purchased the London mansion of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex and Chief Minister to Henry VIII, but had been forfeited to the King on Cromwell's execution in July 1540. The original building was destroyed in the Great Fire of London, as was the Woolmens' Hall. Here our histories differ as the Drapers were able to rebuild, to designs by Edward Jarman. After another fire in 1772, it was rebuilt again. Further extensive alterations were made in the 19th century. The hall was one of the few to survive the Blitz during the Second World War.

The bronze doors of the Throgmorton Street entrance lead into an oak-panelled corridor relieved by a stained glass window containing the coats of arms of Sir Francis Drake, Lord Nelson, Earl St. Vincent and Sir Walter Raleigh. Drake, Nelson and St. Vincent were Freemen; Raleigh was included because the Drapers subscribed to his venture to Virginia.

An impressive marble and alabaster staircase with 15th century Italian details leads to the Court Room, where, hang two magnificent Gobelin silk tapestries, (*I suspect like many similar ones, the warp will be wool,* Ed.), depicting two episodes from the Legend of the Golden Fleece. Two others from the same set hang in the Court Dining Room. The ram with the Golden Fleece, seen in many guises, from the architectural ornaments at Drapers' Hall to the motif on members' ties, is the constant reminder of the origins of the Company's wealth. It also forms the crest of the Company's coat of arms.

Dinner was served in the magnificent Livery Hall surrounded by the Company's collection of royal portraits including King William III by Sir Godfrey Kneller, George III by Sir Nathanial Dance and George IV by Sir Thomas Lawrence. The hall was used as the intimidatingly grand 'Accession Council' at 'St James's Palace', where the new King is intimidated by the portraits of former monarchs in the film 'The King's Speech'

After dinner awards were made to students from:

Harper Adams where two students are supported for research work.

Heriot Watt where five students are supported for work in Fashion Technology and Textile and Fashion Design Management courses.

Huddersfield where five students are supported with scholarships and medals for Technical Innovation and Design, Manufacture of Wool Products, Fashion Design using wool based fabrics and Manufacturing or Fashion Design, Marketing & Promotion.

Scottish Agricultural College where five students are supported for research work associated

Gerald Sharp

The Master with Prizewinners

with sheep or wool and to BSc students on two different sheep related courses.

A further award, the Lord Barnby, is awarded to the most promising young person already employed full time in the West Yorkshire textile industry. Lord Barnby, Francis Vernon Willey, became a partner in the family firm Francis Willey & Co and travelled the world as a wool-tops[1] salesman before the First World War. He served in the army in Egypt and at Gallipoli before being recalled by the war office. Appointed Controller of Wool supplies he was responsible for the purchase and distribution of the British and Colonial wool clips from 1916-1920. He was awarded many Honours and served as an MP for Bradford for several years. His industrial and commercial interests were many and varied but he never ceased to be a Bradford woolman at heart. Lord Barnby was a Past Master of The Worshipful Company of Woolmen and a President of the Textile Institute.

Joshua Barker-Lockwood was awarded his medal at the Huddersfield Textile Centre of Excellence at the annual awards ceremony in front of the Key Note Speaker, Barry Shearman, local MP, Industry Hierarchy, award winners and families. This annual event is a show case for the Yorkshire textile industry. The many prizes and certificates go to recipients for their excellence in gaining awards in training and learning. ■

Jean Skidmore

[1] *Tops are sliver that forms the starting material for worsted cloth obtained by carding and combing the raw wool prior to spinning.*

Joshua Barker-Lockwood being presented with his medal by Mr Bill Skidmore, Woolman Editor and immediate Past President of Huddersfield Textile Society.

Photo: John at Photoeye

Joshua Barker-Lockwood

My name is Joshua Barker-Lockwood, aged 22, born and raised in Huddersfield. After dropping out of Huddersfield New College, after realising that the full time education path was not for me as I wanted to work in an industry as well as study. Ian Ashmore, the managing director of Stanley Mills Weavers Ltd. and the father of a close friend offered me an opportunity to join his firm as an apprentice technician/tuner/overlooker. I took the job with an open mind, not knowing much about textiles, apart from what I had heard - that it was a dead end industry, that this should only be an in-between job, and that I should look for something that has a more secure future. Taking all of this aboard I decided to take the job and decide for myself.

After only being a part of the industry for three and a half years, I have revised my opinions of the industry. Yes, the industry is old and has a lot of history; yes it has flaws. There are not enough young people coming into the industry, especially on the manufacturing side of things and this is necessary to guarantee its future.

There is a lot of work in the industry at the moment; clearly buyers realise that Britain, especially West Yorkshire is the place to be. Buyers in the higher end of the fashion industry appreciate that it is well worth the extra money spent ensuring the finest quality of cloth is purchased.

One thing I have discovered is that the management side of things can be outdated and over the years some companies have failed, due to lack of foresight and the need to adapt to changing conditions. I also feel that management needs to have a knowledge of all areas of textiles and not just the management side of things. I am very passionate about the industry and wish to progress into the managerial field so I can ensure the future of fine cloth in West Yorkshire, especially wool/worsted. I realise that getting that opportunity may be difficult, due to being judged as 'too young', but I am a quick learner and hope to own my own company one day. I look forward to, hopefully, a very long and successful future in wool.

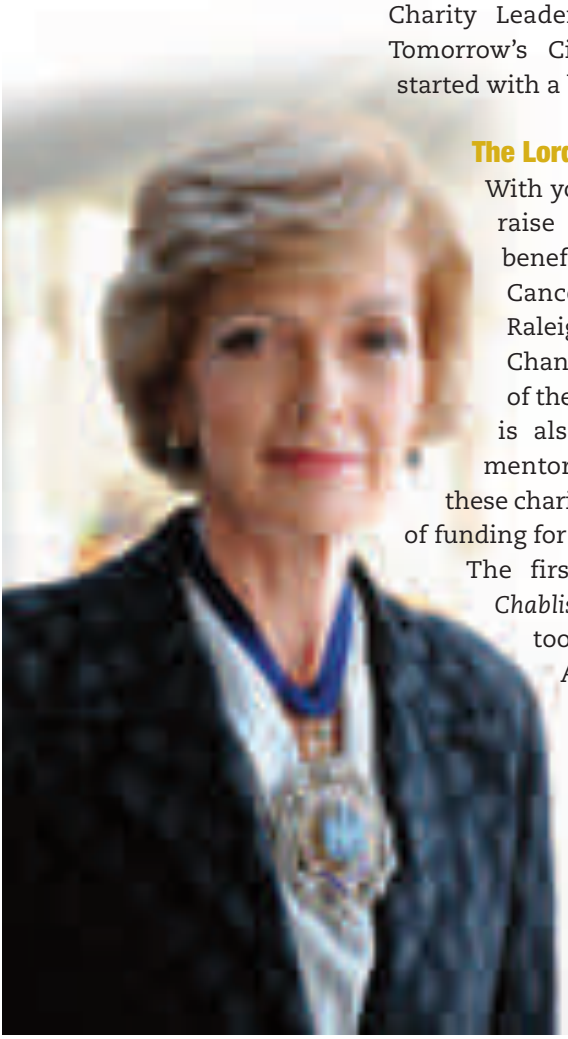
Due to unfortunate circumstances I was unable to attend the Civic Dinner and receive my award with the other prize winners. However, I was pleased to receive it officially at an event in Huddersfield. I am looking forward to attending the dinner at Painters' Hall in January.

Joshua Barker-Lockwood

The Lord Mayor's Message to the Livery Companies:

The 686 plan has gone off like a rocket!

Going into 2014, I am feeling energised from my experiences as Lord Mayor so far. It was a pleasure to host the Masters and Clerks at my Address to the Livery in November and to introduce everyone to my '686 Plan', named after me being the 686th Lord Mayor. The four programmes which make up the 686 Plan – The Lord Mayor's Appeal, the Power of Diversity breakfasts and conferences, the Charity Leadership Programme, and the Tomorrow's City programme – have all started with a bang!



The Lord Mayor's Appeal

With your help, the Appeal hopes to raise £2 million for my four benefiting charities: Beating Bowel Cancer, Princess Alice Hospice, Raleigh International and Working Chance. Fundraising is at the heart of the Appeal programme but there is also a strong commitment to mentor, help raise the profiles of these charities and open up new sources of funding for the future.

The first Appeal event, *Une Soirée Chablisienne*, was held on the day I took office. Supporters of the Appeal spent the evening tasting the wines of Chablis and later cheered me on as I was installed as an honorary *Pillier Chablisienne* – a ceremonial process which involved me drinking a chalice full of Chablis while the Piliers sang! The Lord Mayor's Christmas Party was also a great evening of festive fun and Dickensian feasting!

The Appeal programme has a lot more in store. The *Académie du Vin de Bordeaux* will be co-hosting a wine tasting and dinner with me at The Mansion House on 12th February. On 14th April, Shakespeare's Birthday Party will be taking place in the atmospheric Middle Temple, where Twelfth Night was first performed! We will also be launching a Lord Mayor's Appeal Day in the summer, when the Square Mile will be transformed by events and activities fundraising for the Appeal, including a Human Table Football tournament in Guildhall Yard. This day will recognise and celebrate the good that the City can do and *does* do for society in an effort to reach a wider audience.

For the full list of fundraising events and for more information about The Lord Mayor's Appeal and Power of Diversity programmes please visit the Lord Mayor's Appeal website: **www.thelordmayorsappeal.org**
You can find out more about the Charity Leadership Programme and Tomorrow's City Programme at **www.cass.city.ac.uk/lmclp** and **www.tomorrowscompany.com/city** respectively.

The Power of Diversity

The Power of Diversity programme has been designed to capture the benefits of diversity for the innovation that City businesses need to seize the opportunities of the "new normal". The first breakfast, Attaining Power, was a huge success as 100 of the programme's sponsors and an array of corporate managers engaged in a discussion about the skills needed to achieve power. The inspirational panel, chaired by Lady Barbara Jude CBE, revealed their key messages on how to progress your career and what you must do to strengthen the team around you at every level in an organisation. There are four more Power of Diversity breakfasts to come, as well as two major conferences taking place this summer.

I am also thrilled to announce that three Transport for London buses have been wrapped – thanks to our corporate sponsors and Sir Peter Hendy, the Transport Commissioner – to promote the Power of Diversity programme and the Appeal. Look out for the buses which will be operating from Westbourne Park, Bow and Shepherd's Bush across London!

The Charity Leadership Programme

The Charity Leadership Programme features two City's Giving Lectures, which together

If I have a single objective, it would be inclusiveness and Liverymen have so much to bring to the party. It has been a joy to see so many of your friendly faces over the last two months, and I hope to greet many more of you over the coming year.

will highlight some of the challenges and opportunities which impact the effectiveness of charities. William Shawcross, Chair of the Charity Commission and keynote speaker at the first lecture in November, said to the 300 attendees that the regulator intends to send clearer messages to those abusing charitable status and take more decisive action against wrongdoing. The second lecture will be given on 23rd January by Sir Ronald Cohen, who will provoke new thinking by focusing on philanthropic investing to achieve better social outcomes.

During 2014 there will also be three receptions providing the opportunity for charity Chairs, Chief Executives, funders and leaders to network and share experiences and knowledge. Each of the receptions will have a social focus; the first of which, taking place on 3rd March at Mazars, will focus on Social Welfare.

Tomorrow's City

In keeping with my role as Lord Mayor to promote the business and financial service sectors, the Tomorrow's City programme is setting out how the City can best ensure its future success through long-term value creation. The opening events have focused on forward looking financial services regulation, integrated reporting and new models of long-term finance for infrastructure.

I hope you will join me for some of the evening events at The Mansion House and breakfasts at my home law firm, CMS, which will be continuing the dialogue of this programme.

Your Support

If I have a single objective, it would be inclusiveness and Liverymen have so much to bring to the party. It has been a joy to see so many of your friendly faces over the last two months, and I hope to greet many more of you over the coming year.

Thank you for all you have done to support me as Lord Mayor and The Lord Mayor's Appeal. There is certainly more to come! ■

Alderman Fiona Woolf CBE
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor of London

Wool Week 2013

The Campaign for Wool's Wool Week has again taken over the UK with a variety of events to highlight the advantages of wool as both a fashion and a furnishing fibre.

Photos: Jean Skidmore

Love Wool Floor Cushions

Love Wool. Wool ticks all the boxes. It is a completely NATURAL product, is RENEWABLE, it can be recycled but at the end of its life it is also BIODEGRADABLE, breaking down in a relatively short time releasing valuable nutrients back into the soil. However, these environmental credentials are not the end of the story. It is a NATURAL INSULATOR and its unique structure allows it to absorb and release moisture so it can help to control moisture levels and it is also BREATHABLE. It also reacts to changing body temperatures and helps to maintain the wearers comfort in both hot and cold weather. It is RESILIENT and ELASTIC enabling garments to stretch comfortably but also return to their original shape maintaining their appearance. It is EASY CARE as wool is antistatic so it picks up less dust and the protective waxy coating on the fibres make wool products resistant to staining. It is also more efficient at absorbing and releasing sweat to the air before bacteria can develop making it ODOUR RESISTANT. Finally, thanks to its high water and nitrogen content, wool is NATURALLY FLAME RETARDANT and has a far higher ignition threshold than many other fibres, will not melt and stick to the skin causing burns, and produces less noxious fumes that cause death in fire situations.

> When it comes to wool, the Campaign tends to take the view of 'bigger is better', and Wool Week 2013 was no exception

When it comes to wool, the Campaign tends to take the view of 'bigger is better', and Wool Week 2013 was no exception. From sheep in the courtyard of the Royal Academy of Arts, to live knitting in the Oxford Street window of John Lewis, let alone the hundreds of other British retailers with woolly window displays. Events took place throughout the country.

Royal Academy of Arts. As Australia is the world's largest producer of Merino wool, The Woolmark Company and The Campaign for Wool were proud supporters of the RA's Australia exhibition, the largest collection of Australian Art ever seen outside Australia. The Woolmark Company focused on celebrating the role that wool has played in forming both the landscape and culture of the nation. To close Wool Week a flock of Aussie/English Bowmont Merino sheep made a special appearance in the courtyard of the Royal Academy on Saturday 19th October as part of the RA's family learning programme where kids of all ages were encouraged to meet the sheep and learn about the wool fibre.

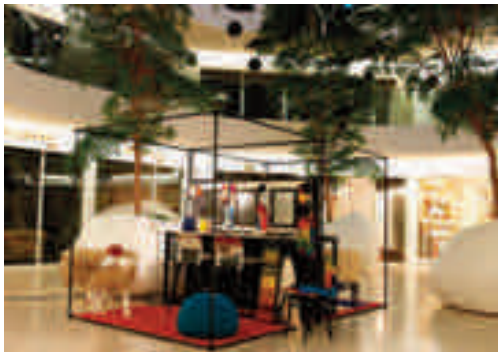
Sheep in the Courtyard of the Royal Academy

Knit Nation. This year Wool Week celebrated haberdashery and encouraged the nation to pick up knitting needles. An exciting partnership with John Lewis saw a week-long agenda of fashion forward knitting and wool craft classes hosted by some of the UK's finest knitwear specialists at both the Edinburgh and London stores. John Lewis' Oxford Street window came to life as live knitters knitted their way around a plain white room setting, emerging as a flurry of colourful knit patterns

Knitters in John Lewis' window

Wool School. For a second year running provided fashion, textile and design students with an opportunity to design a wool sweater, on this year's theme 'knitwear traditions of the British Isles', to be sold nationwide in some of the UK's top retailers. This year's brilliant retailers included Albam, Brora, Barbour, Christopher Raeburn for Harvey Nichols, Folk, Hobbs, Jigsaw, Lyle & Scott, Margaret Howell, Marks and Spencer, Pringle of Scotland, Topman and Topshop. The Campaign received over 1000 entries from the 12 collaborating universities with head designers and creatives at each retail outlet joining forces to select their winner. One student per retailer was selected and 15 jumper designs were developed, manufactured and were available in stores to coincide with the start of Wool week. Five per cent of Wool School jumper sales will go back into fashion education programmmes across the UK.

Picknit. Craft, knitting and crochet ruled supreme with the launch of Picknit; the knitting party that friends, strangers and customers could participate in by hosting their own PicKnit at home, school, in a shop, café, on a beach or anywhere at all. Knitters could download stunning patterns for a brightly coloured blanket and two matching cushions.



One Wool

Victoria Quarter, Leeds, Wool Exhibition. Leeds College of Art collaborated with SIL Holdings to create outstanding wool installations housed in the Victoria Quarter buildings. The installations were free to view and made up part of a competition, with winning students awarded work placements with SIL Holdings Limited fabrics. Harvey Nichols showcased one of the winning designs in a window for the duration of Wool Week and sheep appeared in Brigate, Leeds main shopping area.

Chelsea Harbour Design Centre supported Wool Week to demonstrate the beauty, quality and diversity of wool in interior

Photos: Jean Skidmore

Sheep Thrills it's Wool Week

design. An eye-catching pop-up was especially commissioned to showcase directional wool fabrics and carpets from some of the most important names in the industry. Fun, witty and ingenious, visitors delighted in a playful take on a 'baa baa' shop and a 'chic sheep' design studio. A Wool Week design trail was devised to show visitors where to find wool products in participating showrooms.

Finally following the success of Wool House, the Campaign launched a wool room design competition in association with Homes & Gardens endorsed by leading industry associations including KLC School of Design. The three winning entries were photographed for a Home & Garden feature in April 2014 and will be displayed at a future design event. ■

Harvey Nichols window

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 Installation Dinner. Telephone the Clerk for details: 01525 261541

Alms Court and Alms Court Dinner

Photos: Gerald Sharp

At the Court meeting prior to the Alms Court Dinner, officers were elected for the forthcoming year;

Richard Excell was elected as Master, John Brewer the Upper Warden, and the next Under Warden will be Court Assistant and Deputy Ken Ayers. All are due to take up office after the Installation service on 23rd April 2014. Congratulations to all. Four new liverymen were also clothed: The Rt Revd Peter Fearnley Hullah, John Payne, Kim Gillespie-Franklin and The Hon. Lord Woolman. We will include a short Biography of each in the next edition. The Court Meeting also approved the initiatives of the Upper Warden to expand the Woolmen's influence in the wool industry, and to put them at the heart of the wool business.

Pre-dinner drinks were served in the Court Room of Painter-Stainers' Hall where the displays chronicle the fascinating history of the Livery Company including Royal Charters granted to the Company by Elizabeth I, James II, George VI and Elizabeth II, together with a wide collection of historical portraits and other items relating to notable events in times past. The assembled company then ascended to the splendidly proportioned Livery Hall, illuminated by beautiful crystal chandeliers and hung with a fine collection of Royal Portraits including William III by Kneller, King Charles II by Baptist Gaspar and Elizabeth II by Leonard Bowden.

Yu Su, from the Guildhall School of Music played as we entered the hall and later accompanied Emma Kerr and Sam Smith as they sang pieces by Donizetti, Saint-Saens and Gershwin for our entertainment.

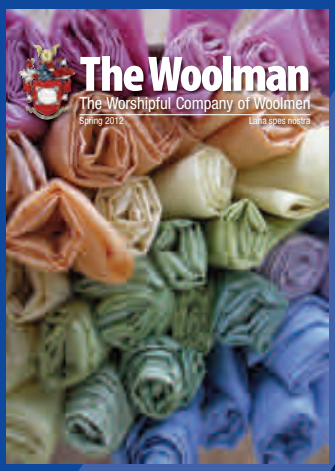
Liveryman Judith Donovan CBE proposed the toast to the guests including 15 Masters and the chief guest Admiral the Lord Boyce KG, GCB, OBE, DL. Lord Boyce joined the Royal Navy in 1961, qualified as a submariner and in the course of his time in that specialisation commanded several submarines including a nuclear attack submarine. He also became an Anti-Submarine Warfare specialist. He was promoted to the Flag List in 1991. In the next few years was knighted and also held a variety of senior NATO Commands. He became First Sea Lord in 1998, Chief of Defence Staff at the beginning of 2001 and retired in May 2003. He was elevated to the peerage in June 2003 and was appointed Lord Warden and Admiral of the Cinque Ports and Constable of Dover Castle in July 2004, King of Arms of the Order of the Bath in 2009 and was made a Knight Companion of the Order of the Garter in April 2011. He is also Master Draper.

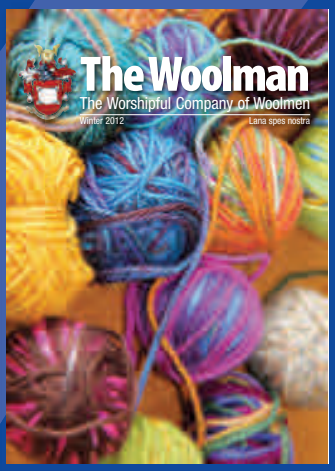
In his response on behalf of the guests, Lord Boyce referred to the importance of wool over the centuries, with wool being at the heart of the economy, and to the woolsack as a symbol of the wealth of England. As Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports he told us a little of the history of Romney wool and the involvement of the area in the 17th Century in smuggling, as wool exports were forbidden and the death penalty introduced. Later, this was rescinded, but then high taxes were imposed – as much as £3 a bag in 1775. However, eventually, Romney sheep were exported to New Zealand where they form the basis of both the wool and meat industries. He also mentioned that a Woolman was involved in a project to bring an apparel cloth made of Romney wool to market. He concluded by mentioning the support given to the armed forces by the population in general, and the Livery in particular and that this is going to be even more important as they stand down from active service.

Our Master, Bill Clark, thanked Lord Boyce for his speech and mentioned that 2014 is a big year for the Drapers Company, marking their 650th Anniversary. He told the assembled company that we are taking two stalls at the Livery Schools Link Showcase Event at Apothecaries' Hall on Tuesday 18th March and that there will be another Woolmen's Sheep Drive in 2014!

More about these elsewhere in the magazine. ■

Bill Skidmore





No woolly ideas here

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