



# The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths

Newsletter  
40<sup>th</sup> Issue  
July 2012

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Published by: The Publicity and Public Relations Committee,  
Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths, 9 Little Trinity Lane, London EC4V 2AD  
www.blacksmithscompany.org.uk



Alice Brooks and her  
rain-sodden passengers  
pass the Globe during  
the Thames Diamond  
Jubilee Pageant

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## Events attended by The Prime Warden

The Worshipful Company of Turners – Masters' and Clerks' Lunch  
The Worshipful Company of Mercers – Concert in aid of the Royal Ballet School  
The Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers – Dinner at the invitation of the Master Patten Maker  
Dinner for Livery Companies at Mansion House  
Breakfast at Carpenter's Hall prior to the Election of the Lord Mayor  
Lunch at Stationer's Hall after Election of the Lord Mayor  
The Worshipful Company of Painter Stainers – Watercolour Exhibition at The Mall Galleries  
The Worshipful Company of Painter Stainers – Painting Workshop at The Mall Galleries  
The Derek Melluish Memorial Lecture and Reception at the Dutch Church  
The Worshipful Company of Actuaries – Lunch at Staple Inn  
Dinner at Vintners Hall in aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution  
Parish Clerks' Service at St James', Garlickhythe  
The Worshipful Company of Engineers – Installation Dinner at Vintners Hall  
The Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators – Reception and Lecture at The Royal Aeronautical Society  
The Worshipful Company of Distillers – Reception and Lecture on China at JP Morgan  
The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths – 'Trial of the Pyx' and lunch  
Garden Party at Morden College, Blackheath  
St Bartholemew the Great – Procession and viewing of the hospital and its facilities  
Festival of the Sons of the Clergy at St Paul's Cathedral  
The Worshipful Company of Tin Plate Workers – Annual Dinner at Glaziers Hall  
The Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights – Annual Dinner at Mansion House  
The Cutlers of Hallamshire, Sheffield – Annual Feast  
The Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers – City Tour and Dinner at Haberdashers' Hall  
The Worshipful Company of Loriners – Annual Dinner at Mansion House  
Installation of the new Dean at St Paul's Cathedral  
Garden Party at Buckingham Palace  
Unveiling of the St Paul's Tercentenary Gates in Richmond Park  
Whitehall – Trooping the Colour – Major General's Review  
Masters', Prime Wardens' and Upper Bailiff Weekend at Ironbridge, Shropshire  
Reception and Exhibition 'Pewter Live 2012' at Pewterers' Hall  
The Worshipful Company of Firefighters – Lecture and Supper at Winchester House  
The Worshipful Company of Actuaries – Annual Dinner at Leeds Castle, Kent  
Masters and Clerks Dinner at Painters Hall  
Exhibition – 'Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker' at Guildhall  
Reception at Saddlers Hall – part of the Cheapside Fayre  
Exhibition at Plaisterers Hall – part of Cheapside Fayre  
Breakfast at Goldsmith's Hall – prior to the Election of Sherriffs given by Searces  
The Election of Sheriffs at Guildhall  
Dinner at Merchant Taylors Hall – as a guest of the Master Merchant Taylor  
The Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers – visits to City Institutions, and Reception  
Dyers Hall – 'Not a Master in sight' Lunch just for Prime Wardens and the Upper Bailiff hence the title  
Butchers Hall – Lunch as a guest of the Patten Makers

## Events attended by Mrs Barbara Barker

Luncheon aboard HQS Wellington as a guest of the Master Mariner's Lady, raising funds for the Red Cross  
Luncheon at the invitation of the Lady Mayoress at Mansion House  
Merchant Taylors of York  
– Ladies Dinner at Bedern Hall, York  
The Worshipful Company of Lightmongers  
– Luncheon at Tallow Chandlers- hat obligatory  
Luncheon at Cutlers Hall – Guest of Mistress Cutler

The Prime Warden makes the first cut into the Epiphany Cake to be served after the luncheon following the Epiphany Court Meeting





# The Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant

Barbara Barker

Taking part in the Diamond Jubilee Thames Pageant was a once in a lifetime opportunity so when Past Prime Warden Tim Herring invited us to join him on his historic launch we didn't have to be asked twice. The boat is a twenty five foot, half deck, gentleman's launch dating from the 1920s and was probably designed as a tender to a large yacht on the Solent. It boasts a new 5cyl Volkswagen marine diesel engine capable of giving twenty five knots. The launch is named Alice Brooks after Tim's grandmother and is lovingly maintained in wonderful, polished brass and varnished teak condition by Tim and his son Stephen.

There were six of us on board, the Prime Warden Don Barker, myself, Tim, Cathy and Stephen Herring, and the Captain, James. We flew the Blacksmiths' Flag and Tim and Don wore their Court robes with a tri-corn hat for Don and Company bonnet for Tim.

The River Pageant was an amazing feat of organisation which was years in the making and involved police checks of all participants, long and detailed scrutineering of every boat, numerous briefings, passage plans, and a prodigious quantity of information and downloadable pdf files on the official web site.

James and Stephen brought the boat down from Burnham on Crouch well in advance and had to spend several nights sleeping on board in the open in the rain at West India Dock. The night before the Pageant they cruised up stream to moor on buoys at Barn Elms. Next morning, the rest of us were delivered to Barn Elms by rib (dinghy) from Putney Pier and had to embark by climbing through another boat which had apparently belonged in a previous life to Diana Dors.

As we waited patiently for several hours, bolstered by the bacon

butties Cathy had thoughtfully prepared, we watched shiny, bunting-laden narrowboats going upstream to muster behind us, and jolly, sporty looking rowing boats going downstream to head the flotilla.

Great excitement and anticipation filled the air and eventually we were given the order to cast off and away we went, making sure we were in our allotted position at the prescribed four knots. Once underway, the only other boats we could see were the other historic ones ahead of us and the "Jubilant Choir" following at a distance behind. There

were people on the banks waving, others on bridges and piers or leaning from windows until there were more and more and more and more. Eventually there were literally thousands of people waving flags and arms and small children; they spilled over the edges of balconies, stood on roofs and cheered and waved their union flags until their arms must have been falling off. How special it all was and how privileged we felt to be part of it.

By the time we passed beneath Tower Bridge towards the Queen, the rain was thrashing relentlessly and we could all attest to the fact that a label in clothing stating waterproof is more a statement of ambition than an absolute promise. However, as Cathy said, "We are British and we will survive", and we did.

Thanks must go to Tim and Cathy Herring for their kindness and generosity and to their son Stephen and Captain James, without whom the venture would not have been possible, and who suffered without complaint to provide us with a day we will remember with great pride and affection for the rest of our lives.



Alice Brooks about to pass beneath Southwark Bridge



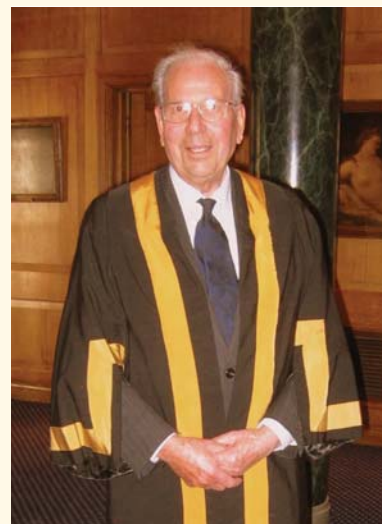
The Prime Warden wore a tricorn hat for the occasion



The Company Pennant keeps flying despite the rain

## Liveryman Robert A Fryars OBE

Robert Fryars was admitted to the Livery in 1942 after completing his apprenticeship. To commemorate his seventy years as a Liveryman he was presented with an illuminated address by the Prime Warden at the Ladyday Court. Helping make the day a particularly special occasion for Robert was the presence of his two sons the elder having come from Amsterdam and the younger from Ottawa just for the occasion. We wish Robert well for the future.



Robert Fryars OBE

# The Annual Banquet An Interested Observer

Arriving at Mansion House for the Annual Livery Dinner is an exciting moment and this year was no exception. There is an air of expectation as Liverymen gather to greet relatives and friends before ascending the grand staircase for the Reception, given in the Salon beneath the splendid row of crystal chandeliers, to be formally announced to the Wardens led by Prime Warden Don Barker and his wife, Barbara.



The Father of the Company with the Wardens

Soon, the level of conversation would even drown the sound of a blacksmith working at his anvil, as Liverymen and their guests use the time before being called to the magnificent Egyptian Hall for dinner to renew acquaintances, make introductions and admire the wonderful display of paintings (part of the Samuel Collection) adorning the walls of the adjoining Drawing Rooms.

A fanfare announced the arrival of the Civic Party which this year comprised The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor Alderman Mr D Wootton and the Lady Mayoress, Sheriff Mr Alderman A Yarrow and his wife and Sheriff Mrs W Mead. Other principal guests were the Masters of the Worshipful Companies of Ironmongers, Farriers, Gunmakers and Plumbers.

Following Grace, music was played throughout the dinner to the clear delight of those present. After the Loyal Toasts Liverymen sang with gusto The Blacksmiths' Song before the Prime Warden arose to deliver his address.

In his speech the Prime Warden explained how, when he had begun his career as a blacksmith, the feeling of isolation experienced by most

working smiths had already been identified by the late Liveryman and Gold Medal holder, Tommy Tucker. Tommy had been the inspiration behind the formation of the British Artists Blacksmith Association (BABA), which was to give individual smiths the opportunity to meet and share experiences. The Prime Warden had joined BABA, which is now an internationally respected organisation, in the late seventies when he attended his first forge-in with other members. Most of the forging done on that occasion had been the forging of new friendships which have endured throughout the last thirty-five years.



The Prime Warden with his family

By recognising and rewarding excellence in the Craft through its prestigious medals, the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths has played its part in the renaissance seen in blacksmithing. The Company also provides financial support to young smiths in training and the Colleges they attend as well as promoting the craft to other City Livery Companies, Guilds and trade organisations throughout Great Britain.

In bringing his address to a close and proposing a toast to the Lord Mayor, the City of London Corporation and the Sheriffs, the Prime Warden addressed the Lord Mayor as



The Prime Warden welcomes The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress

a fellow Yorkshireman, saying "I know you are a Yorkshireman and so it is with extra pride I am here with you in Mansion House this evening and as a souvenir of your evening with the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths I would like you, Lord Mayor, to accept this letter opener forged by me from pure iron in the form of a fletched arrow, and for you, Lady Mayoress, a miniature version of the Blacksmith's most iconic tool, the anvil, cast from a pattern I carved in wood".

The Craft Warden proposed the toast to the Guests to which the Lord Mayor replied, thanking the Company for a wonderful evening and making a special presentation of a specially commissioned china mug to the Clerk, Mr Christopher Jeal.

And so a delightful evening came to a close and some two hundred and forty diners including sixty three Liverymen of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths, departed from Mansion House to begin their homeward journeys.



Liveryman Blacksmith Hector Cole and his wife, Maris



# Clifford Champion Commemoration Dinner

**Nigel Whitehead**

On Thursday the eighth of March Liverymen of the Company gathered at Fishmongers' Hall for the first Clifford Champion Commemoration Dinner to dine in the magnificent splendour of the Banqueting Hall. Part of Clifford's bequest (he died on 15th January 2011) was to fund an annual dinner on the anniversary of his birthday for 100 liverymen of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths. The bequest stipulated the dinner should be "first class" and so it was, much to the delight of all those attending! The occasion gives liverymen of the Company an opportunity to meet each other and exchange views in a relaxed environment. A toast to the memory of Clifford was proposed by Past Prime Warden John McCuin.

Clifford's generous bequest will also provide donations to the Company's Charitable Trust thus enabling the Company to expand its educational bursaries for the furtherance of the Blacksmiths' craft.



# St Paul's Cathedral Tercentenary Gates, Richmond

**Don Barker FWCB**

A new pair of gates, designed and made by blacksmith Joshua de Lisle and previewed by Her Majesty the Queen during Richmond Park's "Wild London" Diamond Jubilee event, has been unveiled before a specially invited group including Prime Warden Don Barker, Barbara Barker and Past Prime Warden Sir David Brewer and his wife, Tessa.

Joshua was just nineteen when his design was selected by the Goldsmith family, which helped fund the gates in tribute to the renowned environmentalist the late Edward Goldsmith. The family was supported in the selection process by a team of blacksmiths, a structural engineer, Royal Parks staff and Richmond Park supporters.

The gates replace an earlier set at the entrance to Sidmouth Woods and frame the Park's famous vista across the capital from King Henry's Mound to St Paul's Cathedral. Their installation marks the Cathedral's ter-

centenary. The gates depict oak branches forming a concave top suggesting a reflection of the Cathedral's dome, finished in colour which produces a spectacular effect of algae and lichen growth on the bark texture softening the metalwork and blending with the natural environment.

An epigraph *The Way*, incorporated into the gates, is evocative

of the protected vista connecting the Park to St Paul's and defined by the cleared woodland which is a wildlife sanctuary. The Way is also an epigraph to Edward Goldsmith author of the book by the same name.

With the help of bursaries awarded by The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths Joshua attended the National School of Blacksmithing at Holme Lacy College of Rural Crafts. During his first year he won an outstanding achievement award, the Harry Skinner Best Smith trophy and the live forging competition at the Three Counties Show. He completed his course in 2009 and in 2010 became National Reserve Blacksmithing Champion. The St Paul's Tercentenary Gates are his first public works commission the award of which he says has dramatically changed his life after two challenging years.



St Paul's Cathedral Tercentenary Gates

# New Appointment for John Barber DL

The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths congratulates Past Prime Warden John Barber on his appointment as Representative Deputy Lieutenant for the London Borough of Newham with effect from 10th September. John was appointed as a Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London in 2008 by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir David Brewer CMG JP.

Deputy Lieutenants must live within Greater London or within seven miles of the boundary. They tend to be distinguished residents who have either served the local community or have a history of service in other fields. Because of the size and constitutional

structure of London, the office of Representative Deputy Lieutenant was created in 1951 by Viscount Alanbrooke. Their main functions are to represent the Lieutenancy, and occasionally the Lieutenant, at civic and other official functions and to promote voluntary, charitable and youth activities.

Representative Deputy Lieutenants wear a uniform based on the dress uniform of Army officers though those with former military service, in the rank of colonel or above (and its RN and RAF equivalents), may opt to wear the uniform of their service. All Representative Deputy Lieutenants carrying out civic duties in civilian dress may choose to wear the Deputy Lieutenants badge shown here.



Deputy Lieutenants badge



John Barber DL resplendent in his official uniform

Photography by M. O'Sullivan

## My Year by Barbara Barker

Having been told by wives of Past Prime Wardens that they had not attended many functions during their husband's year I had expected to spend many an evening in front of the TV with the dog and a Tesco's meal for-one. However, I have been pleasantly surprised to note the changes slowly emerging in "The City". There is certainly a move in many of the Livery Companies and other City organizations to include the consorts of Masters in their invitations. This initiative seems to be gathering momentum and has done so noticeably even within the last twelve months.

I attended forty-five functions with Don including black tie dinners, receptions, lectures, exhibition launches, four white tie dinners, three of which were held at Mansion House, and a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. On my own I attended six functions, the first being

a delightful lunch hosted by the Mistress Tallow Chandler in October, the second, in March, was an intimate luncheon for eighteen at Mansion House hosted by the Lady Mayoress, Liz Wootton, who treated us to a guided tour and the third, in April, was a lunch on board HQS Wellington which raised money for the Red Cross. Later in April Don attended a dinner hosted by the Merchant Taylors of York in their Hall whilst I joined the consorts (including two men whose wives are Masters) at Bedern Hall for a dinner hosted by the Master's Lady.

Next came a lunch at Lightmongers' Hall in May which raised money to help fund three music students who kept us entertained by demonstrating their outstanding talent, and lastly there was a luncheon at the Cutlers' Hall in June preceded by a guided tour.

This makes a grand total of fifty-one functions attended on

behalf of the WCB. I was also delighted to become a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers (Grandfather's footsteps) in March, proposed by John Timpson and Sheriff Wendy Mead and a Freeman of the City in June attended by Don, Mari Kavanagh and Wendy Mead, resplendent in her full regalia. I have not of course included above the many Pattenmakers' functions I have attended during the year and so it has been a very full and fulfilling year; a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity which has allowed me take part in the pomp and ceremony of the City and learn about the incredible and important work carried out by, and funded by, the Livery Companies every day. I have made many new friends, visited incredible places and collected experiences that will remain with me for the rest of my life. Thank you WCB for making this possible!



# Cheapside Fayre 2012 – A Magnificent Effort by Blacksmiths

## Nigel Whitehead

In what must have been one of the greatest displays of blacksmithing seen in the City of London for many years, over twenty smiths gathered for the Cheapside Fayre to demonstrate their skills and display their wares. A huge vote of thanks is due to all those Smiths who attended, many of whom had started out at the crack of dawn to travel from as far afield as the Midlands and the West Country.

The team of Smiths included nine Liveryman blacksmiths, all senior Award holders, one non-member senior Award holder and six Certificate of Merit holders.

Few items if any will be actually forged in the Square Mile these days so the flower shown here, forged on the day of the Cheapside Fayre is rather special. The square on which the flower sits represents the Square

Warden Hugh Adams CWCB, the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths' stand stood in the shadow of Bow Bells Church at which, during the afternoon, a Quarter Peal was rung



The flower in the form of a Pen Holder forged outside Bow Bells



Richard Jones and Michelle Parker

full advantage. Both adults and children were fascinated to see shapeless pieces of iron being fashioned into useful objects and beautiful decorations. During the course of the day many Liverymen and their families turned up to support the Company's presentation and to enjoy *all the fun of the Fayre*.



Activity all around the Blacksmiths' stand

drowning the sounds of hot iron being beaten on anvils. Later, to the delight of onlookers, the assembled blacksmiths and Liverymen joined in singing with gusto The Blacksmiths Song, ably accompanied on guitar by Kate, wife of blacksmith Ben Wood.

The Company stand occupied the largest area of any stand on Cheapside and quickly became a centre of attraction for tourists and day-trippers. With its array of working forges the stand provided the blacksmiths with a wonderful showcase, of which they took



Kevin Boys

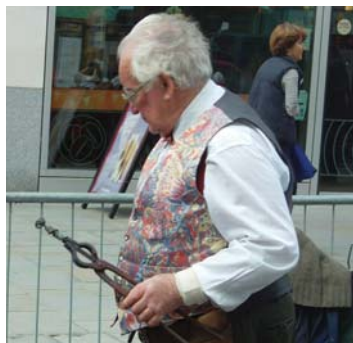
Mile and is stamped with the Company mark as well as the date, and made into a pen holder.

Organised by that stalwart of Shows and Events, Past Prime

The Editor acknowledges with gratitude the kindness of his former regiment, The Honourable Artillery, in allowing the blacksmiths to park their vehicles at Armoury House.



David Harman and Paul Allen



Chez Chescoe



Mum Zena Sanders helps one of her identical twin daughters



Jim Head



## Masters Weekend – Ironbridge The Prime Warden

Returning home to Lincolnshire from our boat moored in Limehouse Basin, which has served as our base for the past twelve months, Barbara and I left Hester, our dog, in kennels before setting off for Ironbridge for The Masters Weekend. We arrived in good weather (surprisingly) at the Holiday Inn, Telford.

Our weekend began with a black-tie dinner in the Covered Bays at the Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron. The occasion provided an opportunity to meet other Masters, Prime Wardens and the Upper Bailiff and saw the weekend off to a good start. Ninety four of the hundred and eight Masters were in attendance, an indication of just how popular this event has become.

On Saturday morning we walked across the Iron Bridge and, returning to the Museum of Iron, spent the remainder of the morning viewing the exhibits including Abraham Darby's original blast furnace and examples of cast iron products made there over the years. Successive generations of the Darby family expanded the output of the Coalbrookdale ironworks to include iron wheels, rails, steam engine cylinders and, of course, bridges, the most famous being the Iron Bridge itself, erected over the River Severn in 1779. There is a small sculpture park attached to the Museum exhibiting work mainly produced by the British

Artist Blacksmiths Association during the conferences they have held there.

After lunch we visited the Ironbridge Gorge Museum with its



The Prime Warden at Ironbridge

street of period premises including shops, a bank, a school and a pub. Here stands an entire iron works, transported brick by brick from the North of England. Originally owned



Mrs Barbara Barker tries on a hat at the Ironbridge Fashion Museum

by Walmsleys Iron Works, the equipment is no longer in use due to a combination of cost and health and safety. Nonetheless, it is still interesting and the shingling hammer is incredible. Barbara's ancestors were shinglers and operated further down the valley at Eardington in the 1850's. (*Ed. – Shingling is a process in the making of wrought iron.*)

That evening the Ironbridge Ball was held in the engine shed next to *Engenuity*, an exhibition designed to encourage children's interest in engineering; as it was very tactile we all had to have a play before dinner.

The next day we met to establish our Masters' organisation for 2012 and Master Farmer took over the post of Chairman. Later we made our way to the Jackfield Tile and the Coalport China Museums where beautiful tiles and pots are still being made. On seeing the tiles Barbara and I decided to design a pattern for the hall of our home with the result we left with considerably lighter pockets.

All ten museums at Ironbridge are worth a visit. On this occasion the visit was only intended as a taster but, having now visited Ironbridge on several previous occasions with BABA, Barbara and I still enjoy the experience and will certainly be going again. I recommend a visit to anyone who has not been there before. There is something of interest for everyone.

## The Lord Mayor's Easter Banquet John Barber DL

By tradition the Lord Mayor and the Civic team host an Easter Banquet at Mansion House for the Diplomatic Corps in London, at which this year more than a hundred ambassadors were present. I have been fortunate having now been invited on two occasions. On the first I was placed between the Ambassadors of Columbia and Brazil, and this time between the Ambassadors of Turkey and Greece, all the best of friends.

Despite the formality of the occasion with trumpet fanfares preceding speeches and toasts the general atmosphere is cordial. This year Foreign Secretary

William Hague delivered a key-note speech stressing the United Kingdom's determination to strengthen relations with South America and re-affirming the UK's commitment to the Falkland Islands and their right to self-determination. Traditionally the response is made by the longest serving and most senior diplomat present who this year was His Excellency the Ambassador of Brunei. His was a delightful and amusing speech giving rise to much hilarity.

The Lord Mayor was on good form and very much enjoyed the atmosphere before and after the banquet. The City is at its best on these occasions.



# Prime Warden's Weekend – York, May 2012

## Liveryman Dr David Woodings

After journeys of various lengths and complexity some fifty itinerant Blacksmiths arrived at Burn Hall in the middle of nowhere (or more correctly in the middle of God's Own County!) about 11 miles north of York. Some members had detoured to Pontefract where they were entertained by John and Liz Thring who showed their Classic and Vintage Car Collection and provided tea. The weekend party included ten Past Prime Wardens, two Wardens and two Court Assistants and all were warmly welcomed by the Prime Warden and his wife, Don and Barbara Barker, whose gift to everyone was a beautifully crafted golden anvil designed by Don: an apt memento of the weekend.

A champagne reception was followed by a very enjoyable informal dinner involving plenty of lively conversation. After dinner we repaired to the bar to put the world to rights and found ourselves mingling with a Wedding Party. On spying an advert for stag and hen nights, clay pigeon shooting and quad bike riding we wondered whether our sleep would be disturbed but a quiet night, fortunately, ensued.

On Saturday morning after an ample breakfast and led by our intrepid Prime Warden and his wife we had a short picturesque drive to a splendid stately home. Castle Howard is one of England's finest historic houses and is situated in the beautiful Howardian Hills which is an area of outstanding natural beauty. This magnificent 18th century house was designed for the 3rd Earl of Carlisle by Sir John Vanbrugh. Today, the Hon. Simon (whom we saw going round the house winding the clocks) and Mrs Howard with their children Merlin and Octavia call Castle Howard home.

There was ample time to explore the house and the extensive grounds. The house is filled with world-renowned collections of frescoes, furniture and paintings. However, it may be better known for being the location for the filming of Evelyn Waugh's famous novel *Brideshead Revisited*. This was first produced for television in 1981 and then as a film in 2008.

The gardens consisted of sweeping lawns, woodland walks and magnificent fountains. The main flowers on view were rhododendrons. There were magnificent bridges, temples and statues including one of the 3rd Earl himself. Unfortunately, we were too early for the roses in the famous Rose Gardens. There was also an 18th century walled garden which was home to an Ornamental Vegetable Garden with alliums and lavender.

There was plenty to see but the weather did not entice us to long walks in the gardens and we enjoyed the beauties of the house explained by very helpful and knowledgeable guides. One of the highlights was the Chapel with Burne-Jones Stained Glass Windows. We were also



The Prime Warden, his wife, The Master Merchant Taylor Graeme Miller and his wife Margaret

admirably fed and watered with morning coffee and lunch taken in the Grecian Hall. Many of us took the opportunity to purchase souvenirs from the Gift Shop but perhaps not fruit and vegetables from the Farm Shop.

We returned to the hotel by a different route, again viewing the very green and breathtaking views of the rolling countryside. After a short break, we were off again and this time the coach took us to York. After a short walk entering through the city walls at Monk Bar, we soon found ourselves at the magnificent hall of the Merchant Taylors, whose archives go back to 1387. This Hall dates from the early fifteenth century and it is interesting to compare it with the oldest London Livery Hall, the Apothecaries, which only dates from 1668! Champagne was served in the adjoining Little Hall which dated from 1446.



Dining in the historic Merchant Taylors Hall

There was a roaring log fire in the splendid fireplace added in 1575 but the grate was of more recent origin and had been made by our own Prime Warden. More Liverymen joined us for dinner including Don and Barbara's two sons. Whilst sitting at our tables, we realised how close we were to the city walls as we could see through the windows the legs of those walking on them! After a sumptuous repast, including of course Yorkshire Puddings, together with delightful wines, Peter Rayner, Father of

the Company, regaled us with a witty and entertaining speech. Then we slowly returned again through the walls to find our coach back to our hotel.

On the Sunday morning most of the party went to view Beningbrough Hall, a lovely National Trust House with Gardens, en route home. An excellent weekend had been had by all and we wish to extend our thanks to Don and Barbara for arranging and hosting it quite admirably. We also wish to thank our Clerk, Christopher Jeal, who, although not present, was much involved in the preparation and organisation. We all eagerly anticipate next year's Prime Warden's weekend.

# Festival of Living Crafts – Hatfield House

## Liveryman Merv Allen FWCB

Having successfully negotiated the hazards and complexities of the M25, your reporter and family arrived in moderately good humour at the delightful Jacobean stately home that is Hatfield House in the historic county of Hertfordshire. Built by Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, the house celebrated its 400th anniversary in 2011. As an aside, it was interesting to discover that the name Hertford is derived from the Anglo-Saxon heort ford meaning deer crossing (of a watercourse).

Thankfully there were few watercourses to navigate and the incessant wet weather of recent weeks had relented enough to partially dry out the field in which we parked our car. Even so there was evidence of cars having to be manhandled on the still slippery surface but fortunately this did not affect our trusty Ford motor.

The Festival of Living Crafts provides a showcase not only for established craftsmen but also for aspiring younger ones to display their skills and exhibit a wide range of unique wares from large sculpture to fashion jewellery.

Blacksmithing was most ably represented by The Blacksmiths Guild from the West Country. The Guild, which provides training and actively promotes traditional skills, was established several years ago by the amalgamation of The Guild of Wrought Ironwork Craftsmen of Wessex and the Blacksmiths and Metalworkers Association of the South West. Past Master of the Wessex Guild, Roland Hall, his wife Betty and two of their sons, both of whom are professional smiths, were busy manning the marquee and demonstrating their skills on the outside forge which attracted a steady stream of interested members of the public. The pieces displayed were of the highest quality as one would expect from such a prestigious and experienced organisation.

The public were invited to vote on a wide range of fireside furniture made during the show with the winner to be declared on the last day. As Hatfield House has eighty eight



Part of the Blacksmiths display at Hatfield House

chimneys the opportunity for sales of such objects to the current owner, Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 7th Marquess of Salisbury, would appear to be immense!

Also in attendance on the day of your reporter's visit was Past Prime Warden Hugh Adams who welcomed visitors to the stand with his usual charm and enthusiasm. Just before your reporter's arrival a TV crew had been filming at the stand so possible stardom beckons for those interviewed although I'm not sure whether that includes Hugh!

My family all agreed that spending a day in beautiful surroundings had been a great way of enjoying themselves despite the vicissitudes of the London orbital motorway. It is to be hoped that next year's event will be blessed with better weather and a higher attendance.

The Blacksmiths Guild is based at the Westpoint Showground, home to the Devon County Show. Further information may be found at their website: [www.blacksmithsguild.com](http://www.blacksmithsguild.com).

## The Warwick Square Lunches

John Barber DL

For many years the Sheriffs' wives have hosted a Consorts' lunch for the ladies who have accompanied their partners when attending State and Livery functions in the City of London. Now with the election of lady Sheriffs Fiona Wolfe in 2010 and Wendy Mead in 2011, the hosts of the lunches are the Sheriffs' Consorts.

The Warwick Square lunches as

they are called were named after the entrance into the Old Bailey used by the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs. I was invited by Robert Tipping (consort to Sheriff Wendy Mead) and Jilly Yarrow (wife of Sheriff Alan Yarrow) to one of the first of these lunches under the new system. Around fifteen guests from various walks of life gathered in the Sheriff's flat at the Old Bailey for

pre-lunch drinks before entering the long room normally used for receptions when the judges are entertained. During lunch I sat beside a charming lady who had "popped in on her way from work". Jilly Yarrow then told me that this lady lived with her husband, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams at Lambeth Palace – an interesting lunch.



# My Father Hector Cole Melissa Cole FWCB

I can write about blacksmithing and my father Hector with ease as he has been a great inspiration to me and many others who have followed his passion for traditional forging.

My father started aged four making a pig ring in the local smithy in Osbournby, Lincolnshire, under the guidance of local smith Frank Greatham. Although he needed to stand on a box to reach the bellows and tend the fire, his enthusiasm for traditional forging grew, nurtured by Frank until the village smithy closed in the 1950s.

Hector then went on to obtain a Teacher Training Certificate in Handicrafts at Dudley, giving him crucial access to a forge. As promised by the Vice Principal on his enrolment, he also found a wife there; my mother, Maris.

While he was teaching full-time, I remember the evenings, weekends and school holidays when he was busy in his forge working on commissions, the first being a fire basket. As a founder member of Local Crafts of Wessex he made and sold traditional forged iron work at regional shows leading to larger commissions, notably gates at The Perfumery in Bourton on the Water. Hector was constantly pushing his traditional technical ability, especially considering he didn't own an electric welding set. We all knew when he was fire welding because the dog would bark and shoot out of the forge door!

In 1980 Hector joined BABA. His first contact with the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths came when he won a prestigious commission for gates at Highgrove House for His Royal Highness Prince Charles and Lady Diana. Two designs were submitted, one more traditional than the other, and Prince Charles chose the latter, a design which Maris helped with and which beautifully complimented the curved space.

After building his new workshop following early retirement and redundancy from 30 years teaching,



Hector Cole FWCB

Hector was awarded a Bronze Medal by the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths in 1993. I joined him then, taking on the spare forge and receiving expert tuition and fire welding sparks to the backs of my legs!

He was awarded the Company's Silver Medal in 1996 following completion of some prestigious commissions including the gates and overthrow to Charlton Park, the Madresfield gates and the restoration of the buttery bracket at Waddesdon Manor.

With my father's well known passion for archaeology, archery and fencing, it was a natural progression for him to research and develop ancient tools and techniques to forge

arrow heads and swords. Hector's connection with archaeologists plays an important part in his accurate technical re-creation of forged findings from burial mounds; he is an acknowledged world authority on the forging of historic arrowheads used by archery cultures worldwide.

Traditional forging without a power hammer, paring materials down to the minimum acceptable for each job, has given Hector's forge work an ethereal quality, defined by lines and spaces and with carefully judged aesthetic weight.

Hector became a Liveryman of the Company in 2002 and regards his role, as a Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths' assessor and serving on the Crafts and Awards Committees, as an opportunity to assist the Company in directly influencing the quality of traditional blacksmithing and the skills crucial to the continuation of the craft.

His teaching of the skills required for blacksmithing is a thread throughout my father's career, continuing today through the work experience offered to students of all ages and the private courses he runs. I was lucky enough to have seven years of guidance and still relish the moments when we can forge together.

## The Royal Bath & West Show Adrian Oliver

The Bath and West Show enjoyed better weather than most other Shows have so far this year. Simon Grant-Jones won the static prize for his circular garden screen, while Richard Bent won the Live Forging Competition ahead of Richard Jones. The picture is of Richard Jones making a pair of blacksmith's tongs against the clock within thirty minutes.



Simon Grant-Jones Garden Screen – First Prize



Richard Jones in the Live Forging Competition

# Young Craftsman of the Year Competition

Hugh Adams CWCB

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Young Craftsman of the Year Competition held each year at the South of England Show, Ardingly. Entrants aged between fourteen and twenty one from schools and colleges across the region display their outstanding pieces in



Mrs Sarah Peay, Chairman of the Young Craftsman of the Year Competition with Eric Lamprell FWCB

categories including metal, wood, ceramics and textiles. The Competition Chairman is Mrs Sarah Peay, who took over the organisation of the competition in 2003, following in the footsteps of her late father, Jim Green.

A prize for the highest placed entry in the metalwork section by a student blacksmith is awarded annually by the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths and for the last two years the Company is proud to have been asked to provide a Judge for this prestigious event. This year Eric Lamprell FWCB was appointed.

Entrants from the Camelia Botnar Foundation, to which the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths awards an annual trophy, always do well in the Young Craftsman of the Year Competition, coming away with plenty of the "honours".

Judging normally takes place a few days before the opening of the Show thereby enabling Mrs Peay and her team of ladies to devote their time to attending visitors to the exhibition.

Nearly everything imaginable is on display. Alongside the metalwork will be found woodwork, ceramics, dressmaking and dress design, jewellery and design, and amazing inventions having useful and practical applications.

# Careers Day at Uplands Community College

As part of the Careers Day presentation put on for the benefit of students at Uplands Community College, Wadhurst, East Sussex, David Harman FWCB gave a practical demonstration of blacksmithing. Alongside his presentation, within the college building itself, information on a whole range of career opportunities was available for students to consider. Blacksmithing was the only craft being demonstrated.



Students being given a demonstration

# Ruskin Mill College Adrian Oliver

On a brisk January day Prime Warden Don Barker, Third Warden Rodney Bole and Craft Warden Adrian Oliver visited Ruskin Mill College in rural Gloucestershire. The College, one of three established and run by the Ruskin Mill Trust, offers young people with learning difficulties including autism, an opportunity to learn useful traditional crafts and practical skills at their own speed, within a peaceful and natural environment.

The College ethos was inspired by the principles of Rudolf Steiner, John Ruskin and William Morris. Much of the teaching takes place outdoors, and food grown by the students forms an essential part of their wholesome diet. With one teacher or an assistant for every two students there are major cost implications, thus conventional education needs to have failed the student before finance can be allocated for a placement at the College.

Subjects are not taught separately but in an holistic manner so, in the forge, a building constructed by the students themselves, students start on an Iron Age charcoal forge operating primitive bellows, as an apprentice would have done three thousand years ago. In the photograph Hayden makes it look easy as he teaches his new assistant! As they do this they also learn how an iron worker would have lived in those times, what implements would have to

be made and where the materials would be gathered. They then progress to working at a medieval forge with more advanced bellows worked by the blacksmith, himself. They also learn about the materials, the daily life and needs of the medieval blacksmith before being taught what a blacksmith produces today.

So much education today is theoretical and deskbound that many young people are unable to appreciate the need to learn mathematics. However, presented with a practical situation, the student can then understand its usefulness, for example in enabling him to divide a length so that his coat hooks can be equally spaced on a backing board.

From the fish ponds in the valley to the farm at the top of the hill, we saw the dedication and patience of the teachers engendering enthusiasm in the students as they discovered they were capable of doing things for themselves. It was a moving experience for all of us.



Hayden showing the Prime Warden how to work "Iron Age" bellows



# South of England Show – Ardingly

## Liveryman Merv Allen FWCB



Vase of flowers by Peat Oberon – yes, the flowers are iron, too!

Despite the vagaries of the weather 2012 was yet another successful year for The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths' stand at this prestigious event. This year the Blacksmiths' stand was in its new position on the showground close to the Young Craftsman of the Year marquee. Staunch supporter Past Prime Warden Hugh Adams was present for the three days of the Show assisting Mick Demianow, Merv Allen and Ben Wood with the organisation of the stand.

We were delighted to welcome the many familiar faces including Liverymen, who visited the stand over the three days and also Peter Cassidy from the Irish Artist Blacksmiths Association. Peter said how much he appreciated the friendliness and hospitality he received and how he hoped other members of IABA would be able to make the trip next year.

Many encouraging comments were made by members of the public visiting the stand on which were displayed some amazing exhibits and saleable items. Sales and commission enquiries also appeared to be holding up well in spite of the harsh economic climate and it was particularly heartening when visitors wanted to 'try their hand' at hitting hot metal.



Mike Roberts FWCB explains a point to Blacksmith Ben Wood

That popular, local, traditional music band (some would say ne'er-do-wells!) 'The Outwood Forgers' performed blacksmithing related songs including a somewhat risqué version of 'The Lusty Smith' and a rousing rendition of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths' own song, for which song sheets were provided.



Heraldic Lion by Kevin Boys



Simon Grant-Jones receiving the Show Champion Blacksmith Award

Without their support we would be unable to continue.

The competitions, which for the first time included a round of the National Blacksmithing Championship, were judged by Mike Roberts FWCB, holder of The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths' Gold Medal. Our thanks go to him for his enthusiasm and dedication to the task whilst providing friendly advice throughout the three days of the Show.

Donations received were for the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) [www.c-r-y.org.uk](http://www.c-r-y.org.uk).

A huge amount of effort goes into making the Show a success and this endeavour was again well rewarded. Our sincere thanks go to all our sponsors and helpers and every smith who displayed work, demonstrated his skills and entered the competitions.

Hugh Adams and Mike Roberts looking pleased – something must be right!



Our congratulations to the Prize-winners who were:

### NBCC COMPETITIONS:

**Class 1 Traditional:** 1st Simon Grant-Jones  
2nd Pete Oberon

**Class 1 Contemporary:** 1st Malcolm White  
2nd Malcolm Shepherd  
3rd Richard Jones

**LIVE FORGING:** 1st James Price  
2nd John Bellamy  
3rd Michael Hart

### SHOW CHAMPION BLACKSMITH:

Simon Grant-Jones

### RESERVE CHAMPION BLACKSMITH:

Malcolm White

### SOUTH OF ENGLAND BLACKSMITHS COMPETITIONS:

**PETER BAGENT AWARD:** 1st David Mortimer  
2nd Malcolm White  
3rd Tom Carter

### CAMELIA BOTNAR FOUNDATION CUP:

1st Charlie Whittingham  
2nd Tom Brixey  
3rd Anthony Lee

# Faircrouch Forge, Wadhurst Nigel Whitehead

Wadhurst in East Sussex was probably the oldest of all the Wealden iron smelting centres and once supported at least nine separate forges. Little evidence of these activities remained since the closure of Bassets Forge, now developed for housing, until the recent opening of Faircrouch Forge by David Mortimer, or Mort as he prefers to be known.

Mort's enthusiasm for the craft arose through his interest in archaeology. While working on archaeological sites he was inspired by the discovery of what he describes as fantastic old metalwork. He has a BA(Hons) in Archaeology and an MSc in



David Mortimer outside his Forge

Osteology, Paleopathology and Funerary Archaeology. After spending five years in doctoral research at Sheffield University he turned his attention to traditional blacksmithing. His academic background has assisted him in understanding the construction and uses of traditional metalwork and he is often asked to copy items in museum collections and to undertake commissions for the re-enactment market.

Having found suitable premises, Mort needed to obtain planning permission to operate a forge and was assisted in this quest by a supportive letter from The Clerk of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths.

## A Tale of a Village Sign

In the 38th issue of the Newsletter there was a well presented and interesting article about Village signs by Shirley M. Addy. The article reminded me of the one and only time I had anything at all to do with a village sign.

There is a beautiful, typical English village just south of the M25. When I say typical, I mean typical. It has a range of buildings from past eras reflected in different architectural styles, together with a Church, arranged around a large village green complete with pond. Cricket and other village sports are still played regularly on the green where once one of England's greatest ever cricketers played. The village still manages to support two Pubs.

The village is also home to a Blacksmith; a famous man in his own environment; a man possessing great skill and knowledge but little patience! He hides behind a mask of abruptness combined with a dry sense of humour. Personally, I would describe him as crusty, very crusty.

One Thursday afternoon I received a phone call, short but to the point. "I've renovated the Village Sign, come down tomorrow afternoon and help me load it up, then we can go to the pub, and I'll get us a Chinese for later. On Saturday morning we'll have the full English, do the sign and should be under starter's orders by twelve o'clock."

I duly arrived at the appointed hour, and things happened pretty much according to the specified schedule until the final positioning of the sign. I was trying to ease the sign upright before concreting it into position but each time I used the vertical plumb of the spirit level on any one of the four sides of the post I was getting a different reading. The Blacksmith meanwhile was holding an audience with a group of admiring villagers - how he loves to play to an audience!

## Anon

"Come along, hurry up, it's a quarter to twelve" he quipped. Alarm bells began ringing in my head. As I eyed the level I saw it had a discernible cock-screw shape. If held one way the sign had a list to starboard, turned over, a list to port. "Is there something wrong with your level?" I asked politely while quietly fuming inside. "It was alright when I used it on Tuesday, but I did manage to reverse the van over it". Case solved; time to use the rule of aesthetics! "Does it look right to you now?" "Does it look alright to me - yes, it does - concrete it in".

We were tasting the first pint at 12.05 just as the cricket team turned up to start rolling the pitch. By 2.30 pm the sign seemed even more aesthetically pleasing, so everyone was happy.

Thank you for your patience. I hope you have derived some amusement from this tale.

However, I would like you to consider these three questions:

1. What is the name of this village with its aesthetically pleasing sign?
2. What is the name of the greatest cricketer to have played on the green?
3. Last but not least, what is the name of this crusty, oh ever so crusty, Blacksmith?

*Answers on a Post Card please to the Editor.*

**Erratum** – The caption to the photograph at the top of page 10 of the last issue of the Newsletter incorrectly attributed the pieces either side of Michelle's winning piece to Wendy and Melissa. These were the winning pieces of other entrants. *Ed.*



# Obituaries

**Assistant Emeritus Leslie Vernon McGowan** So nearly a centenarian! Born on 24th September 1912, Leslie died on 24th January 2012. He had celebrated his 90th birthday in style (a balloon ride and gliding) and it would have been no surprise if he had achieved the magic 100. It was not to be and the attendees at his Funeral Service in the Holy Cross Church at Bearsted (his home for many years) heard that, while he had no immediate family, through his nieces, grand-nephews and grand-nieces he has fostered love and affection.

**Liveryman Geoffrey Berry** Geoffrey was admitted to the Livery in 1983 but it was just one of the many organisations (such as Epsom Rotary) to which he brought his knowledge and enthusiasm. The majority of his professional life was spent as a member of the Customs and Excise service: thus a Civil Servant. It was the aptness of those two words that

his son, Liveryman and Honorary Chaplain the Reverend Anthony Berry, concentrated on at Geoffrey's funeral. His father was one of 'the old school' where manners and respect for others mattered so much.

Born on 7th August 1921 he died on 27th May 2012 but by then he had witnessed his daughter, Jacqueline Minchinton our Honorary Archivist,

Tributes were given from his 'family' in New Zealand as well as those in Kent. It was a fitting occasion for a man of great generosity and friendship. He was admitted to the Livery in 1958 and although he was elected to the Court in 1986 personal circumstances dictated that he could not move to the highest offices in the Company. Nevertheless he remained a most enthusiastic supporter of the Company and was a regular attendee at Company functions, quite often accompanied by his niece (Margaret MacIntyre) or her daughters.

admitted to the Livery and the completion of the apprenticeship to their grandfather of Edward and Simon Minchinton followed by their admission to the Livery. Finally, his son-in-law Peter Minchinton became a Liveryman at the 2012 Ladyday Court.

Geoffrey's benign influence will be with the Company indirectly for many years to come.

**Liveryman George Henry Reginald Ward** While his business commitments meant that he could not devote as much time as he might have wished to the Company, we are sorry to record the death of George Henry Reginald Ward. He became a Liveryman in 1987 and died on 23rd April 2012 aged 79. Committed to free enterprise and the

expansion of business, his career will be best remembered for the Grunwick Film Laboratories dispute at the plant in Willesden, North London. The two year strike (1976-1978) created many headlines and dramatic photographs and ultimately led to changes in the law surrounding industrial disputes following the Scarman Inquiry.

## New Liverymen

At the Epiphany Court the ranks of working blacksmith Liverymen were increased with the admission of **Nigel Charles BARNETT**. He holds a Company Bronze Medal and is committed to the highest traditional standards of the craft from Fransham Forge in Dereham, Norfolk. He was nominated by another distinguished Norfolk Blacksmith, 'Bill' Cordaroy.

The blacksmithing link was continued at Epiphany when Clive Mockford AWCB presented his nominee **Derek Alan HARRINGTON** to be admitted to the Livery. Derek is a retired Local Government Officer. For him 'retirement' means involvement with many organisations where his professional management skills, developed over many years, can be put to effective use.

**Donald Andrew ROWE** is a holder of the Company's Silver Medal and is widely respected as a teacher where his experience extends from assignments in Africa to

West Dean College, Chichester. Andrew (as he prefers to be known) is based in Camarthen where he specialises in architectural and sculptural forged metal work. Proposed by Gold Medal holder, Mike Roberts, Andrew was admitted to the Livery at the Ladyday Court.

The Ladyday Court also saw the admission of **Peter Edward MINCHINTON** to the Livery. A specialist in taxation, Peter completes the family involvement through his father-in-law the late Geoffrey Berry. (See the accompanying Obituary).

It is encouraging to the Court to see the growing number of working 'smiths becoming Liverymen and providing links to our historical craft base. This is complemented by a wide range of other professions to help give the Livery its broad and interesting membership. All our new Liverymen are most welcome to the Company and we look forward to their support of Company events.

## Geoffrey Fairfax MBE – The Beadle

It was with great concern we learnt that Geoffrey, our Beadle, had been admitted to hospital following a stroke. We understand that his recovery is progressing well and that he should be allowed home soon to join his wife Christine. We wish them both well and Geoffrey a strong recovery.

## Diary of Events 2012

Election Court	Thursday 26th July
Warden's Court	Thursday 13th September
Trafalgar Night Dinner	Thursday 18th October
<b>Michaelmas Court and Awards Luncheon</b>	Thursday 25th October
Warden's Court	Thursday 6th December
Carol Service	Friday 14th December

## Show Dates 2012

Royal Welsh Show	July 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th
New Forest Show	July 24th, 25th, 26th
Edenbridge and Oxted Show	August 26th, 27th
Dorset County Show	September 1st, 2nd
<i>SHOWS IN ITALICS ARE SUPPORTED BY THE WBC BUT ARE NOT ON THE NBCC CIRCUIT</i>	

## Office/Meeting Room – EC4



The photograph shows the furnished office/meeting room attached to the Clerk's office on the second floor of 9 Little Trinity Lane, London EC4. It is available for use by Liverymen of the Company by arrangement with the Clerk.

## A Reminder

*(E-mail communication with the Livery)*

In early March Liverymen should have received notification from the Clerk of the intention to use Members' e-mail addresses for correspondence where possible with the intention of reducing the Company's significant postage costs. Inevitably there will be occasions when traditional mailing will be unavoidable but e-mail is now the preferred method of communication. If you have not already notified the Company of your e-mail address please consider doing this by sending a brief message to Helen at the Company's office:

[hammerandhand@btconnect.com](mailto:hammerandhand@btconnect.com).

Please be clear whether it is your home or business address.

## Copies of photographs

Copies of the excellent photographs taken by Michael O'Sullivan, of the Awards Luncheon and other formal events and reproduced in the Newsletter can be obtained directly from:

[www.michaelosullivanphotography.co.uk](http://www.michaelosullivanphotography.co.uk)

or

[michaelphotography@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:michaelphotography@tiscali.co.uk)

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## Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths' Shop



*Prices:*

- Livery Tie £10 (*Liverymen only*)
- 'Social Tie' £22
- Umbrella £15
- Cuff Links £66.50
- Brooches £45



All items available from the Clerk, Christopher Jeal.  
A limited supply might be available at Court luncheons.