



# THE TURNER

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS OF LONDON

June 2014

On 29<sup>th</sup> May 2014, Ascension Day, I became the 344<sup>th</sup> Master of the Worshipful Company of Turners. Only 344 Masters in the 410 years since our Royal Charter in 1604 because for most of our first 160 years it was usual for Masters to serve for two-year terms. For many years before 1604 we believe that two Wardens governed the Guild of Turners and in the earliest times we know that in 1179 “the gild of strangers of which Warner le Turner is elderman” owed 40 shillings for not being properly licensed by the King. What an honour and a privilege to continue in a succession spanning at least 835 years.

I am hugely indebted to the long line of distinguished Masters who have preceded me leaving the Company in such good health, and to our capable Clerk, Wardens, Master’s Steward, Committee Chairmen and Members, Beadle, Almoner, Archivist and Chaplain with whom to share the responsibilities of office. And I owe special thanks to Rhidian Jones who has proved to be yet another outstanding Master of the Company and whose wise counsel will be available to me as Deputy Master.

My first experience of turning came in the 1960s when, as a young engineer in a modern aluminium rolling mill, I learned about lathe production of the micron finishes and cambers of mill rolls that are needed to produce sheet to the necessary gauge, flatness, surface finish and temper.

One of my very first assignments involved production of high-strength, heat-treated aircraft sheet for the supersonic Concorde. Later, as a REME TA officer, I became aware of the Company’s support for military craft skills when my Field Workshop won the Southern Craftsman competition. Later again, while Director General of Fair Trading, I learned about King Edward III’s decree that “wooden measures, as well for wine as for ale” should only be made by “turnours” – with marks of their own. We are indeed the Company that brought you the pint and to this day we have a wonderfully living art or mystere of turning to celebrate.

Craft and City – and the unique City of London. Here the Turners’ Company continues to develop its enviable reputation following our quadrennial Wizardry in Wood Exhibitions and this year, in October, we shall be mounting our biennial Turning Competitions at Carpenters’ Hall. Once again we shall be able to showcase the ingenuity and skill of craft turners, old and young. I do hope you will all come along and bring your friends too.

Craft, City and Charity are our watchwords. Our charity is in good health, financially sound and able to achieve great things through its generous donations to colleges, schools and aspiring turners. We have lathes in many parts of the country giving you all the opportunity to see how much our contributions are appreciated. Do please try to make a visit in the course of the year.

The Turners’ Company is famed for its living craft and its friendliness, for its hospitality, its vitality and its sense of fun. You, the members of the Company, make it so and I thank you for doing it effortlessly and with such style. We have a full programme of formal and informal events to which we can look forward and I do hope that many of you will be able to introduce new members to the Company in the year ahead. We have so much of which we are proud and so much to share.

I am looking forward to sharing many more happy moments with you all.

Master Col. John Bridgeman CBE TD DL



Photo: Jon Murell

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- First World War: Remembering members of the Turners’ Company who did not return
- The extraordinary Victorian story of PM Ashmead Burdett-Coutts and the Baroness
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- Successes for our Golf and Shooting teams
- Woodturning skills in the early Bronze Age investigated by Freeman Stuart King in BBC film