

## **Masters' Annual Reports**



### **Prof. Gerald Noone MBE 2002 to 2003**

Having now passed the Mastership of your Company for 2003/04 into Kevin Bond's safe hands, ably supported by his Wardens; this short note reports back on achievements made and initiated during my year.

#### **Our twin themes for the year were:**

- increasing City and other relevant influencers' awareness of what we do and its vital importance to everyone's economic as well as personal "health and well being"
- improved business processes for our company, notably our overall governance and its clarity

Considering each:

#### **Raising awareness of the vital importance of our Company's contributions to the City, Nation and Internationally**

This role is, and must remain, at the heart of our activities, at least for the next decade as the local and global consequences of climate change and other environmental consequences of modern living bite yet deeper. This focus continues the historic Livery role of ensuring the wider awareness of the benefits any particular "Guild or Livery" brings to its community. Those benefits are reinforced by charitable giving and activities such as relevant sponsorship. Last, but certainly not least, the ensuring of a sound platform of common understanding amongst ourselves

is essential. Supported by memorable, interesting 'FACTS', encapsulating the value of what we do helps the effectiveness of our awareness raising. A final copy of the AWARENESS RAISING FACTS document modified in the light of other's inputs is being mailed to every member of the Company.

Our range of company events, designed as they are for mutual pleasure and benefit, facilitate such awareness raising; indeed they embody our wider company role of "**pleasure with a purpose**". Using interesting, pithy information about our activities we get the great satisfaction of seeing the surprised and positive reactions of often prominent people when they realise how impoverished everyone's lives would be without what we collectively provide.

This year has also seen us take part in international awareness raising via our presentation at the "Water 2002 and Beyond" Conference for 300 delegates at the Royal Geographical Society. The Conference outputs formed part of the UK Government's inputs to the Kyoto Summit earlier this year.

### **Governance and clarity**

Whilst Livery Companies are, of course, very small in financial metrics such as turnover, they are much more significant in terms of their impact and reach of members. This underlines the need, as Gavan Arthur, this year's Lord Mayor, reinforced in his address to Masters of all the Livery Companies, that modern governance of Livery Companies was crucial. He correctly saw this as fundamental to the Livery remaining vibrant and relevant, rather than their becoming merely interesting historical anachronisms, such as is now generally the case in the remainder of near Europe.

A clear programme of business process improvement has been determined, committed to, and is being progressed to improve governance. More clearly defining our processes, associated procedural requirements and accountabilities is at the heart of these improvements.

### **Diary Highlights**

Turning to highlights from my diary for the year, details appended, I'd like to context these particular listed activities with a few more general comments.

The Dinner or Luncheon invitations from other Masters, which form the majority of formal events attended, offer great opportunities to raise awareness of our Company and activities. For instance, the responses to raising awareness of London's future flooding threats, as the impacts of climate seriously reduce the Barrier's defensive capabilities by 2030, has ranged from disbelief through to even humour and near anger that no one had warned them it was predicted. The second of our City lectures, on the topic of flood risk in 2004, within Kevin's environmental theme, should thus 'hit the spot' as the consequential future risk and insurance issues are communicated.

City processes such as elections, support for T S Scott at Maidstone and our continuing successful river racing events, together with Court and Committee Meetings, account for most of the remaining activities.

The 'Water Forget Me Not', our Thames Cutter, was also recently successful on the Tyne in beating the Cutter from the Company of Watermen, as part of the University Regatta, see picture. A very full and entertaining weekend at Ironbridge, as guests of the Museum Trust (70 Masters attending), and an earlier visit to the Black Country Living Museum (over 20 Masters attending), each provided further opportunities for pleasure as well as the opportunity to raise awareness especially the water and environmental issues emanating from those cradles of the Industrial Revolution.

I am hugely grateful to a large number of colleagues who supported me and our activities throughout the year, a period which also reinforced for me the opportunity we have as a modern company to really make an impression on the wider Livery – the challenges to our services from 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century living, along with their being truly 'Vital for Life' give us a wonderful opportunity to reinforce our worth.

**Gerald P Noone MBE**

**Deputy Master**