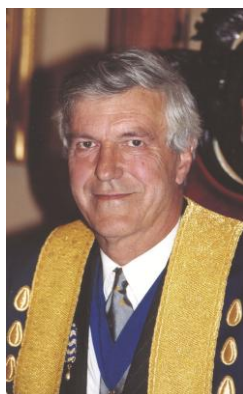


Masters' Annual Reports



Nick Paul 2000 2001

The last year has been a busy period for members of the Company. The wettest year since records began over 200 years ago resulted in the worst flooding for decades and the scourge of foot-and-mouth has been with us for the last 5 months. The press concentrates on the political and social elements of these events, with no recognition being given to all the hard work put in by engineers and scientists to help resolve these crises.

The disposal of over 6 million carcasses has been a major public health issue that has taxed large sections of the industry. In addition, we should not forget that the restriction of movement over much of the countryside imposed huge problems for our utilities which for some weeks were not able to get access to their installations. The disposal of sludge to land was also severely restricted and contractors had problems getting access to sites, particularly for the construction of pipelines (if the sites were not already flooded!!).

It has also been a busy year for the Company. Our first full year of Livery status has seen an increased level of activity, both in the City and in our relationship with other Livery Companies. It has been a delight to see the very positive welcome that we have received from other Livery Companies. The events and activities that I have attended as your representative are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Company continues to flourish. Membership has risen to 213, of whom 156 are Liverymen. With 7 Honorary Freeman/Liverymen, there are still 50 Freeman of whom some 40 have expressed a wish to be clothed. I would ask these latter members to contact the Clerk so that they can arrange to attend a suitable Court Meeting for the clothing ceremony.

The Court and Committees have been kept busy, particularly in respect of resolving the future role of the Company now that we have achieved Livery status. Reports have been received on membership and on our role in water conservation. The report on our relationship with the City has been delayed due to the Deputy Master's accident last year but has now been received and will be discussed at the Committee and Court meetings. A number of interesting recommendations in the first 2 reports have been agreed and these will be implemented progressively during the coming months. In addition, we are considering an exciting educational initiative, led by Court Assistant Jeff Rasbash.

The Archive Committee (Past Masters Truesdale, Hewett and Bland) did a wonderful job in writing the history of the Company "so far" and the result was a fitting testament to all their hard work. Our grateful thanks are also due to Wing Commander Gary Barber OBE and his team at AIDU for their

help in the printing. Copies were not only sent to Company members but also to all the other Livery Companies and I have received a huge number of letters complimenting us on the quality of the document.

Social events have been well attended, as have the new Business Lunches which will hopefully now become a regular feature in the Company's calendar. The introduction of refreshments after Company Lunches has also been well received since they have provided a welcome opportunity for increased networking and discussions with old friends.

Sadly, a number of members or their partners have suffered serious illnesses during the year. This has shown that our systems for finding out about such problems and giving practical and moral support are not as good as they might be. It was therefore decided to appoint a Company Almoner who can be the focal point for contact in the event of death or serious illness and who can arrange for other members to give appropriate support. I am delighted that our Chaplain, Adrian Hopwood, has agreed to undertake this role and he will be circulating a note to members in the near future.

I am delighted with the appointments of the Master and Wardens for the 2001/02 year. The Company is in good hands and I wish them well for their year in office. I am also pleased that, for the first time, we had 3 nominations from the membership for new Court Assistants. In the past, nominations have come from the Court so the nominations this year are a healthy sign.

It has been a great privilege to have been your Master this year. It has been a year of immense personal enjoyment, as well as filling over half my time since my retirement at the end of May 2000. Inevitably, I have not achieved as much as I had hoped to do at the start of the year but that is the "nature of the beast" and hopefully a number of the new initiatives that have been started this year will come to fruition in the coming year.

A close involvement with any organisation such as ours demonstrates that little would happen without the personal commitment and time that members are prepared to put into it. We all owe a debt of gratitude particularly to the members of the Court and, on your behalf, I would like to thank them for all the time and help that they have given to the Company during the past 12 months.

I also thank my wife, Judy, for the support that she has given me during the last year. Without her understanding and involvement it would have been impossible to give the Company the level of commitment that the role requires. In the process however, she has also had some good times and has met a number of interesting and delightful people.

P.N.Paul

Deputy Master