

Master's Annual Report



Peter Matthews 2012 to 2013

Wow – where did that year go!? In a hectic twelve months, Lis and I have been very privileged and proud to represent the Company at many events and time has just flown by. We coped with many challenges because we had the support and friendship of the team of Wardens – thank you. An abridged version of this report is included in the Conservator for the Summer of 2013

Just as in any walk of life there have been highs and lows in the year for many reasons, but the wonderful contributions made by the Members of the Company have made our highlight experiences unforgettable. I was determined that, at least some of my time, would be spent on an inward focus in the Company and many of the things we set out to do - we have achieved – and I use the word ‘we’ deliberately because it has been teamwork. Members have come forward with ideas and offered to champion projects and have carried them through. We extended the concept of our Finance, Management and General Purposes Committee to include a network of Members who wanted to do something, but did not have the time to commit to Committee membership. So we have a revamped website, a continuous history on the website made up of the published history up to 2000 and consolidated Deputy Master reports thereafter, a book, Reflections on Water, and the first edition of a consolidated Company Manual.

An objective was to reach out and involve as many Members as possible and these projects, together with several social events were instrumental in doing just that. By a very rough inspection of attendance lists, I can say that there were not many of our Members who did not participate in something during the year. We had a great weekend at Cromer last July, where the weather was clement at a time of almost continuous rain and the compere at the End of Pier show called us the Water Conservatives!! We had two regional visits one to a Vineyard and one to a Cider farm, visits to Windsor Castle, to the Shard and to the Globe theatre.

I wanted to strengthen our links to the Water Sector, and although we did not do everything we planned – and work continues into next year – we did make good progress in rekindling contacts with Water UK, organizing a dinner debate at the Reform Club on the future of the

Water Industry, and by being very active participants in the WET 10, which organized an excellent evening on the subject of changing climate and weather, led by the chief executives of the Met Office and Environment Agency. We led the WET10 contribution to the City of London Energy and Sustainability Sub Committee. Our first Corporate Member is Huber Technology UK which supplies equipment to the water industry and I appreciate its support at the Banquet and its MD for giving one of our Court Luncheon guest speeches.

Our connection to the waterways flourished and our ladies team continues to row supreme in our cutter on the River Thames The Company has managed several visits to the Maidstone Sea Cadets during the year to present awards and donations for their best cadet to experience life on a tall masted sailing ship. The year also included raising over £2500 for a new boat for the unit which I had the pleasure of launching.

We also made very good progress in the Water Conservation Trust and all the credit must go to Members of the Trust and I have asked them to contribute to this report. They report a busy year. The Universities' Bursary Programme, starting in 2007 and supporting postgraduate studies in the water and environment subjects, has matured and now extends to 11 universities. A total of 44 bursaries have been awarded by 2012. This programme has been boosted through major donations from WAMITAA and the ESAET and is expected to peak in 2013-14. Nine Best Dissertation Awards have been made, with prize-winners regularly attending Company Lunches to receive their awards. The Schools Programme has been upgraded with a new cooperation with Thames Water. In addition to continuing support to Ysgol y Gogarth (tools) and Ruislip School (an aquarium), the Trust has donated the cost of safety equipment to Hillside Primary School, Orpington, to preserve access and the educational value of its pond. The Trust supports City charities with a regular donation to the Lord Mayor's Charity. The activities of the Trust involve Company Members and rely heavily on Member's regular giving.

But in addition I would like to record my thanks for the great generosity in the collections at our Court lunches and we have made donations to other charitable activities such as support to the CIWEM Tomorrow's Water Prize to school pupils, the winners of which represent the UK in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize, and to the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers Magic Taxi trip to Paris for sick children. Congratulations to the winners of our prizes to members of the Armed Services.

Turning now to our life in the City of London and the Livery. I thought that it would be useful to start a blog so that our Members could see what we did and that was successful. It is 400 years ago that the New River in London was opened by Sir Hugh Myddelton and it was our honour to have the Lord Mayor as our guest at the Myddelton Lunch in January at Trinity House – Sir Hugh came from Ruthin in North Wales, the home of the new Master Ivor Richards – so the wheel of fate is truly mysterious. In addition to our presentation to the City of London Energy and Sustainability Sub-Committee, the Company participated in the judging and the presentation for the award of prizes in the PLHA Thames Fishing Competition and the Living Cities Awards.

I will not list all the events that Lis and I went to, except to say that we enjoyed them all, and where-ever we went there was camaraderie. When the Companies gather together at Livery events, there is often a procession in which the Masters are organized by Livery Number and hence there is an inevitability that one gets to know the newer Modern Companies best – and we have much that we can share with them. Thank you for making us so welcome.

So finally thanks once more for your confidence in electing and installing me – I hope that Lis and I have repaid you well. I have not mentioned anyone by name as there are so many of our Members which have helped – so for fear of leaving some-one out – I have not made any specific mention – and every contribution, no matter how big or small, was welcome. May I wish Ivor and his Wardens the very best for the coming years. I have handed on Mastership of a Company in very good heart and with a good reputation.

But I have saved the saddest part to last. At the very end of the year Court Assistant Nick Reeves suffered a severe stroke and he passed away on July 7th. Nick was a very good friend, a steadfast Liveryman, and he played a very significant role in the successful delivery of projects during the year. Nick, we thank you and honour your contribution. We will remember you.

Peter Matthews
Deputy Master July 2013