



THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

Newsletter

Issue 7 - January 2007

From the Master

It is hard to believe that it is three months since I last wrote this column. Much has happened since then and I have represented the Company at a whole host of events ranging from the Garden of Remembrance Ceremony at St Paul's, through innumerable lunches and dinners, to participating in the judging of the annual ICE Teambuild Competition (about which I seem to recall my immediate predecessor wrote in some detail last year) and presenting the Company's prize for the best contract strategy. I was pleased to note that, this year, almost all the teams included at least one architect.

Like many of the competitors and several of the other judges, I arrived a little late for the initial Friday briefing, having driven through torrential rain from York where my wife and I had the previous evening been guests at a dinner given by the York Guild of Building in the splendid medieval Merchant Adventurers' Hall.

The first Company event of the year was my Master's Reception at the church of St Martin in the Fields where we were given a fascinating and instructive insight into the £36m rebuilding project that is currently underway. Robert Kennett and Tim Lynch of Eric Parry Architects were on hand to talk us and walk us (in the rain!) through the project, and joined us afterwards for a most enjoyable buffet supper in the crypt. The evening was nicely rounded off, for those who were able to stay on, with a Trafalgar Day concert in the church.

We again participated in the Modern Companies' float in the Lord Mayor's Show which this year boasted the largest number of participants and the longest procession ever. I am particularly pleased that the Company has been able to support the new Lord Mayor in this way over the past few years and was delighted this year to be invited (along with several hundred others, I have to confess) to join him for lunch at the Mansion House after the Show.

In last October's Newsletter, I made mention of the

Company's ambitions for widening its franchise to enable freemen and liverymen to be recruited from members of the profession who are not members of the RIBA and registered with ARB. I am pleased to be able to report that our proposal has now been formally approved by the Court of Aldermen and was adopted by the Court at its meeting in January. I look forward during the coming year to installing new freemen and liverymen from the wider architectural profession and, indeed, from outside the profession but having close professional associations with it.

I also reported last time that former Lord Mayor, Alderman Sir Robert Finch, had accepted an invitation to join the Company as an Honorary Liveryman and I was delighted to perform the installation ceremony at the January Court. It was a condition of Sir Robert's acceptance of our invitation that he be given a useful role within the Company and, in view of his vast experience of property and property development within the City, has agreed to chair our Awards Committee.

His first task in this role is to participate in the judging of the New City Architecture Award. This is an annual award given by the company for the new building which makes the best contribution to the streetscape of the City. However, this year we are making a one-off change to the brief and will present the award for a public open space, created since 2000, which makes the best contribution to the streetscape. I have long held the view that townscape and streetscape are as much about the spaces around buildings as they are about buildings themselves and I believe that it is only fitting that the contribution such spaces make to our living and working environment are properly recognised. The winner will be announced at the Livery Banquet on 21 March which brings me neatly onto the Company's forthcoming events, details of which can be found elsewhere in this publication. I would, however, draw particular attention to the Banquet which will, as always be a glittering event, to be held this year in Haberdashers' Hall. In view of our planned architectural study tour to Brazil in July / August, our principal guest at the Banquet will be Brazil's Deputy Ambassador in London, Minister Laudemar Aguiar Neto, who will, I am sure, entertain us with an intriguing insight



News from the Court

The Court meeting held at the end of January was just a bit special. Special for three reasons. Firstly it was held in the splendid and historic surroundings of the Court Room at Merchant Taylors' Hall and was followed by a reception in the Library and a delightful lunch in the Parlour. This was a privilege arranged for us by Past Master John Penton - also a Past Master Merchant Taylor. We were grateful to be able to look out on the central garden court and to wonder about the acoustics in the Court Room. John tells me that there is a seat for new members of the Merchant Taylors' Court which ensures that any minor verbal indiscretion that may make (sotto voce) in asides to their neighbours is amplified many times while they appear to be unable to hear anything that is said by others in the room. By such experiences are great men moulded!

The meeting saw the formal adoption of a revision of the Ordinances of the Company which allows the election to the Freedom and Livery of a small number of non-architects. It is not intended that the Company be flooded with such applicants but that we use the opportunity to encourage membership from those in allied professions or with a real interest in architecture as commissioners or users. We have also taken the opportunity to correct a couple of anomalies which, among other things, now allows us to recognize the Royal Institutes in Scotland, Wales, Ulster and Ireland.

The Court was pleased to have the opportunity of admitting the Company's fourth Honorary Liveryman - Alderman Sir Robert Finch. His predecessors in this role have been Sir Hugh Wontner, Lord Rodgers of Quarry Bank and Sir Stuart Lipton.

Sir Robert has had a long association with the property and construction world as the senior property partner of Solicitors Linklaters and currently as Chairman of Liberty International Plc.- the third largest listed property company in the UK with a 1.2 billion pound development programme. He was elected as an Alderman in 1992 and served as Sheriff in 1999-2000. His most successful year as Lord Mayor -2003-04 - culminated we like to think, is his success in seeing Temple Bar returned to the City after a protracted absence. His singular achievement in keeping the Contractors on programme (to ensure that the monument could be opened in his Mayoral year) might

be an object lesson to us all. Perhaps he will, one day divulge the secret - if, that is, there is more to it than the power of mayoral patronage.

The range of Sir Robert's involvement in the City has been extensive. Suffice it to say that, while his mother Company are the Innholders, he is also a Liveryman of the Solicitors and Chartered Surveyors Companies. We will be delighted to be able to call on his experience and expertise in the coming years. He is most welcome in the Company.

In addition to the installation of Sir Robert, the Master was also pleased to badge David Barclay as a Senior Steward and to accept, on behalf of the Company copies of books recently published by two members of the Court. Geoffrey Purves followed up the publication of his '*Healthy Living Centres - a Guide to Primary Health Care Design*' last year with that of his more recreational work '*Churches of Newcastle and Northumberland - a Sense of Place*'. This is a delightful publication which, apart from giving much useful historical background sets out a number of trails and has a comprehensive illustrated gazateer section.

Dr Mervyn Miller has also published the long awaited update of his '*Hampstead Garden Suburb - Arts and Crafts Utopia?*'. Mervyn is Honorary Life President of the Hampstead Garden Trust which celebrates its centenary this year. This extremely readable and beautifully illustrated book containing, as it does, much new material is recommended to anyone with an interest in the Suburb or in garden suburbs generally.

Recent Events

A fascinating insight into the work of **Allford Hall Monaghan Morris** was given by Simon Allford when a number of members of the Company, including most of the Student members, joined a visit to their offices on 15 November. This was one of a number of such events which have proved popular over the years. There was a wide spectrum of work to look at as we were shown round the office and a very clear picture was given of the working philosophy of the office.

The **Annual Carol Service** held jointly with the Furniture Makers' Company has become a victim of its own success. St Mary-le-Bow Church was comfortably full but attendance at the supper had Furniture Makers' Hall bursting at the seams to such an extent the Clerks

of the two companies have decided that numbers will have to be restricted next time round. The date for the 2007 Service has already been set for Wednesday 12 December and early booking will be advised when the calling notice goes out later in the year.

The **Court Lunch** which followed the recent meeting at Merchant Taylor's Hall was attended by the vast majority of the Past Masters who are no longer on the Court together with a number of the Company's Stewards. The Master was pleased to welcome the Masters of the Plumbers' and Fuellers' Companies, the newly installed Honorary Liveryman and the newly elected Freeman of the Company Paul Weston. In his reply to the welcome Sir Robert Finch thanked the Court for electing him and expressed his willingness to assist the Company in whatever way he could. The Master had earlier expressed the hope that Sir Robert would not come to regret that offer when inviting him to take part in the forthcoming assessment of the New City Architecture Award for 2006.

Coming Events

Firstly and most urgently, your attention is drawn to the **Extreme Architecture Event on The Halley VI Antarctic Research Station** to be held in the Painted Hall of the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich on **22 February**. Details of this most interesting event, with which the Company is pleased to be associated, have been circulated but a further copy is attached.

The Company's **Annual Livery Banquet** is being held in the Michael Hopkins designed **Haberdashers' Hall** on **Wednesday 21 March**. This is our main formal social function of the year and we will be entertaining the Sheriffs. It is an excellent opportunity to invite guests to enjoy our company in modern surroundings which show how the architects have reworked the traditional livery hall in contemporary materials. The Masters' principal guest will be Minister Laudemar Aguiar Neto - the Head of the Ambassador's Office at the Brazilian Embassy in London.

The **United Guilds Service** at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday 23 March is, happily, sold out - all the places we are allocated in the Cathedral have been snapped up. Book early for next year!

It may still be possible to squeeze in a few extra takers for the **weekend visit to Dublin** from **Thursday 17**

to Sunday 20 May. Those attending are booking their own flights to Dublin on the Thursday (and there are bargains to be had) so that they can travel from convenient airports, sail or perhaps row or swim! A good programme of guided walks has been arranged and there is spare time to look at galleries. We will be arranging a couple of group meals which might involve the consumption of the odd glass of the national brew.

If you would like to join the trip please contact the Clerk as soon as possible so that accommodation can be sorted out. The current cost based on two sharing and exclusive of air fares is £350.00 with a £170.00 single supplement. The figure includes bed and breakfast hotel accommodation. Sums have been included to cover the services of specialist guides for the walking tours, a river cruise, admissions to buildings where appropriate and to cover the basic costs of the two 'group' meals. There is a small contingency to cover unexpected costs.

Please put in your diaries an event on **Saturday 2 June**. Mervyn Miller will be leading a **visit to Hampstead Garden Suburb**. While further details and costs will follow, it is the intention to meet up in Central Square mid-morning to have a briefing session on the significance of the Suburb and then for a walk taking in the Central Square and Churches and Heathgate to the Heath Extension, returning to Central Square for lunch. In the afternoon there would be the opportunity to visit the Artisans' Cottages and the Suburb Gallery.

Common Hall for the Election of Sheriffs takes place on **Monday 25 June** and will be followed by lunch in a friendly Livery Hall - details to follow.

The **Annual Service at St Lawrence Jewry** and **Election Court Dinner at Armourers' Hall** will be on **Monday 2 July**. Again, details to follow.

The Master is looking for more members of the Company to join him on the **Architectural Study Trip to Brazil** from Friday 27 July to Wednesday 8 August. He has done a lot of work to ensure an excellent itinerary with a blend of great architecture and leisure time. A further copy of the calling notice accompanies this issue.

For those interested in advance planning the following events are also in the planning stages:

Open House Weekend - Saturday / Sunday 15/16



September - Stephen Wagstaffe and Patricia Stefanowicz will welcome an early response from volunteers interested in stewarding the City Churches over the weekend.

The **Installation Court Lunch** will be held at Trinity House on **Monday 17 September**.

Common Hall for the election of the Lord Mayor and a lunch to follow it will be on **Monday 1 October**.

The **Carol Service & Supper** will be on **Wednesday 12 December**.

Charitable Giving

In the absence of the Master, the Upper Warden was pleased to present a cheque for £500.00 from the funds made available from the Company's Charitable Trust to Liveryman Max Hutchinson in his role as founder and Chairman of **Architects for Aid**.



The presentation took place in the presence of RIBA President Jack Pringle and, indeed, in his office and the Clerk.

To quote from their website -www.architectsforaid.org *'Architects for Aid trains and provides architects to work in conjunction with aid organisations, charities and NGOs on post disaster or conflict reconstruction and development projects. We aim to promote capacity building, livelihood creation and skill sharing.'*

They are currently involved in projects in a number of countries - full details can be found on the website. Max and his colleagues would particularly welcome donations from individuals or practices.

The funds available for disbursement for Charitable causes are related to the amount held by the Trust. The Trustees are keen to see the fund grow and would like all members to consider making or increasing the contributions they make.

In all, nearly £8000 has been made available in the current year. Following the recommendations of the Charity and Education Committee this has been distributed in support of a diverse range of activities including The Team Build Competition (which encourages collaborative working between young construction professionals), the Stuart Murphy Travel Award, the Drawing Prize at the RA Summer Exhibition, Prizes for Art at the four City Schools, the Lord Mayor's Appeal, the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund, ABS, and a charity selected by the Master. Through the good work of the Master of Students and the Almoner, modest but valuable pastoral care is also covered.

News of Members

Simon Alexander was never going to let retirement be unproductive. After a career with the Seifert organization, Simon set up his own consultancy in 1995 to work as an expert witness in building construction litigation and other property matters. He also founded an Award 'to honour his late mother who had been an impoverished student of the piano at the School of Music at the University of Capetown in the 1930's. The money awarded helps three or four poor but worthy music students each year at the SA College of Music with their living costs. Several of these black South African students have gone on to achieve international acclaim'. Additionally, he is much involved with Enfield College having, among other things, guided them in their redevelopment programme.

Edward King picked up yet another award in the latter part of last year - this time away from his Sussex base. The Leamington Society made an award in recognition of his contribution to the quality of Royal Leamington Spa with the Regent Hotel where the ballroom, foyer and entrance were restored and developed.

Bernard Gooding writes of 'an unusual and unique project being handled by his practice'

'Currently one of my clients is trying to give the Borough Council £45 million to save the world's longest pier, an enormously important part of our country's cherished heritage and a Grade 2 listed building. The pier

is possibly in terminal decline and needs repairing, restoring and making safe; it has suffered several fires, the battering of the sea and old age.

A magnificent example of Victorian engineering, a pier that Sir John Betjeman long admired, a pier that played so prominent a role for literally millions of Londoners and is known worldwide is in danger of being declared unsafe and being closed to public use. Southend Borough Council cannot afford to invest the millions desperately needed to restore the rusting ironwork and rotting timbers, to replace the rail track and trains that are now well beyond their working life.

Will this wonderful example of our Victorian engineering brilliance, this piece of social history known to generations of Londoners, really be allowed to come to a final end? No, my client cares. He has spent £1 million putting together a project that will restore the pier. Engineers, Architects and Consultants have worked long hours to develop the scheme.

The secret of the success of the project is a roller coaster which will be unique as it will be the only one of its type built over the sea. It involves new track and trains, two new stations, a new pavilion similar in a modern way to the original. It will contain a pier museum which will hopefully become a National Pier Museum. There will be restaurants and other users and, at the pier head a variety of leisure attractions including a 4D theatre, climbing wall, rip ride etc.

My client is prepared to modify the proposals if required by the local council but, to date, all such attempts have been rebuffed.

This could be a catalyst for the area and bring prosperity to all local residents. Sir John Betjeman is noted as saying 'the pier is Southend, Southend is the pier'.

The illustration below gives something of a flavour of the proposals - more detail can be found on www.atlantiscity.co.uk



of general interest

Your attention is drawn to a new occasional lunching opportunity for those seeking to dine or entertain their friends or clients in slightly different surroundings. Following the example set by a few other Livery Halls (most notably the Butchers' Hall weekly carvery lunches) the new caterers at **Watermans' Hall** in St Mary-at-Hill have established the **River Thames Lunch Club**. Your restaurant correspondent - one of the onerous tasks the Clerk assumes on your behalf - can vouch for the fact that a very good lunch was available at a modest cost in fairly unique surroundings - the only Georgian Hall still operational in the City. The cost is £24.00 per head (inclusive of VAT) and a cash bar and wine list is in operation from 12 noon. Reservations are available at 12.15, 12.30 or 12.45.

The club, which is open to all is open the first Tuesday of each month and bookings may be made by phone (020 283 2373) or email: events@watermanshall.org.

The Clerk, wearing his Tylers' & Bricklayers' Company Craft Committee Chairman's hat, draws your attention to a seminar he has organized on Ceramic Tiling. This will take place on **Thursday 24 May** in the Garry Weston Library at **Southwark Cathedral** from 2.15 to 5.00. Those wishing to do so are invited to attend the Sung Evensong following the event. The cost is a modest £20.00 per head. If anyone is interested and, it is hoped that some of you will be, can contact the Clerk for a copy of the Calling notice which gives further details of the event. CPD points will be available!

Past Master Peter Luscombe mentioned at the recent Court Lunch that he was a governor of The Bishopsgate Foundation and Institute. No one within earshot had heard of it so it was suggested that he do a piece for the Newsletter.

The Institute was founded on funds from the consolidated charities of St Botolph's Bishopsgate and was the brainchild of the then Rector the Rev. William Rogers. For us as Architects it is interesting to discover that the design of the buildings was by competition and the winner was Charles Harrison Townsend. His design was the Lloyds building of its day, unique and controversial. He went on to design the Whitechapel Art Gallery and the Horniman Museum.

The premises comprised a Great Hall, a Lending Library and a Reference Library with separate reading rooms for



men and women. It was opened by the then prime minister, Lord Roseberry. Its intention was educational and recreational, an alternative to the gin palaces.

Needless to say over the years the Institute has had to adapt to changing circumstances. The lending library - in its day the only such in the City has gone. The reference library has acquired numerous collections especially on the subjects of London, the free thought movement and the cooperative movement. The most recent acquisition is the papers of the socialist thinker Raphael Samuel. Probably its most unusual possession is the minute book for the years 1866 to 1869 of the First International Working Men's Association many of whose meetings Karl Marx attended. The Association later became the Communist International.

Today the Institute continues to provide adult education. It currently runs 125 courses including courses in six languages along with others in various physical and leisure activities and the performing arts.

We are often posed the question 'if the Institute did not exist would anyone invent you today?' to which we reply 'probably not, but it would be the City's loss'.

If you want to know more visit our web site on www.bishopsgate.org.uk

City Traditions

Among the more colourful, exotic even, and potentially more interesting posts which are filled at Common Hall on Midsummer's day each year are those of the Ale Conners for the City of London. There are four of them. Traditionally they were officers appointed yearly at the court-leet of ancient English communities to ensure the goodness and wholesomeness of ale and beer. They were also trusted to ensure that the beer was sold at a fair price. They were sworn to 'examine and assay the beer and ale, and to take care that they were good and wholesome, and sold at proper prices according to the assize; and also to resent all defaults of brewers to the next court-leet.'

In London the post holders duty is to examine beer and liquor sellers to guard against fraud but, since ale and beer have become excisable commodities, the custom has, in most places, fallen into disuse. The title is now a sinecure.

When the Corporation was set up the post was retained as a city tradition. Today, the four ale conners, led by the City Remembrancer Grant Simmonds (who has been in post for over 20 years), each test ales in the City two or three times a year - usually when a

new pub opens or a new beer is launched. The opening or launch would be notified on a pub sign and the conners would be called to check it was being served in the right measures and was of adequate specific gravity.

First, the ale would be tasted then a pint poured on a wooden bench. The conner would then, having taken the precaution of dusting off his leather breeches for the occasion, sit on the bench for a minute. If there was inadequate suction when he rose, the ale was not the right consistency. Assuming the test was passed the conner would announce 'I proclaim this ale to be of good quality. God save the Queen' At this stage, everyone proceeded to get merry. Few pubs fail the test, though in the old days the post holders could carry out spot checks to ensure that the beer was not being watered down to make it go further.

Its hard work but someone's got to do it. Pay is not good - the annual stipend is £10 a year paid in two installment. I suppose there was a time when this might actually have bought a few rounds! In addition to the leather breeches, the conners wear a seventeenth century black cloak which most hire from a theatrical costumier. Next time you see someone dressed like Dracula or Jack the Ripper in your City (or indeed, Southwark) local don't be too perturbed. If he starts pouring his beer on the chair listen to what he says and stick to what he's drinking.

Stop Press

An event has been planned to take place on **Friday 1 June** on the Ardwina moored in St Katherine's Dock. It will take the form of a **lunch time talk by Katrine Sporle - the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate** on the subject of planning appeals. Details will follow later but please note the date..

I am indebted to the Independent for bringing the news that most children wish to be celebrities when they grow up. Most parents thought their 2-5 years old children would chose between a famous performer (31%) while the Fire Brigade took second place ahead of being a builder or an architect. Astronauts came in fourth. Maybe there is hope for the profession.

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