



**COVID YEAR
RECOLLECTIONS
OF 2020**

'Only Connect' – E. M. Forster

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Foreword

Thank you so much to those members of the Lady Masters Association who have contributed to the project that was discussed by a few of us during a cheese and wine tasting – to draw together memories of 2020, our Covid pandemic year. I had been so struck by the wonderful work that so many of you had been doing, and the courage, resilience and ingenuity of our members. I am delighted to be able to share your stories from 2020.

This is such an interesting record for history where we captured our memories and reactions before everyday life took over again. We all had our own ideas on what effects the pandemic had had and will have on us and our Livery companies and the fact that we are Lady Masters has given a different slant than if a group of Masters in general were asked.

You were asked to include what you wanted, but we made some suggestions to help you get started:

- 1. What stands out in your memories of 2020?*
- 2. What has your Livery company done during the year to help its members and society generally?*
- 3. How do you think your Livery Company will use any of the experiences of this year in their future activities and programmes?*
- 4. Do you have particular personal achievements that you would like to record from this period?*
- 5. What will be your own resolutions for change following this unusual period?*

The document covers all these areas and includes many other inspiring stories which often follow E. M. Forster's advice to 'only connect'.

With very best wishes.

*Ann Buxton, Chairman, Lady Masters Association
May 2021*

Alderman Alison Gowman

Master Plaisterer, July 2019-20

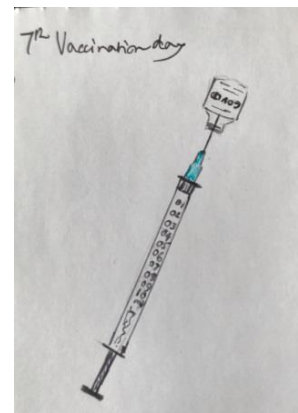
Past Master Glover



My year as Master Plaisterer was interrupted by the lockdown and abrupt transition to working from home. What seemed an impossible situation slowly unravelled as I



encouraged Zoom meetings (needing a special resolution of the Court) and Zoom socials. I threw myself into the challenge and, whilst everyone else was sympathetic to the truncation of my events, I did not really feel upset



until I finally handed over to my successor and realised how many of my plans had been junked. Regardless, we found a new way of connecting and made a communal effort to keep in touch. I feel sure we will continue this way of working and engaging with those further afield.



Personally I took up long walks around and out of the City averaging 5 miles a day (the sunny weather helped at the start). Like

many others I enjoyed nature with more vibrancy than ever before and started recording a daily sketch of what had struck me that day. The picture alongside is of one day when I ended up hugging the oldest tree in the City. I have not gained any artistic skills but keep a reminder of a moment or event.



Ann Buxton

Chairman, Lady Masters Association

Past Master Pewterer



After a year of intermittent lockdowns, I think I may be developing Stockholm Syndrome. Other than missing my family and seeing friends, I have been remarkably content living a quieter life with my husband in our beautiful little village in Wiltshire where the community spirit, cooperation and kindness have been a huge support. I did not make sourdough, bake cakes, or learn Serbo-Croat, but I did update 15 years of our family photograph albums. It was really satisfying to bring these records up to date. Our garden has never been so cherished, and I have walked miles every day with our spaniel – an average of 12,400 steps per day in 2021.

The Lady Masters Association has been an enormous pleasure. As in so many other organisations, our Association has used Zoom extensively: for Committee meetings, a lecture on Kenwood House, a lecture on jewellery, and a popular Italian Cheese and Wine tasting. I hope these have helped our members – I certainly enjoyed organising them with our lovely committee and am including a photograph of one of these events.



As a Pewterer, I have been proud of our response to the many needs revealed by the Pandemic. We almost doubled the level of our charitable giving. As an illustration, when the pandemic broke out it was clear that one vital way that children could be supported through this period of disruption and absence from school, was by making sure that they had the technology to access lessons on line. Within the whole of the UK, an estimated 9% of children do not have a lap top or equivalent at home. So the Pewterers have provided many needy pupils with just that – laptops and internet access.

Looking ahead after this difficult year, I hope we will learn that the kindness of small communities is to be cherished, and that the heart of the Livery movement is charity and friendship.

Ann Kenrick

Master and CEO

The Charterhouse



As we start 2021, battered but resilient and wiser, I look back on the sadness of losing three of our residents, and the terrible decisions about furlough, and staff reductions that we had to make, because we had no visitor or venue hire income. I am equally buoyed by the

extraordinary efforts made by all of the team to protect our Brothers, and all the ways we found of working in new ways.

With the Brothers in lockdown or very restricted for much of the year, we adapted routines, spaced out communal eating, and helped with shopping – everything we could to keep life as normal as possible. The gardens, always very important, came into their own as a place to meet and a source of solace and cheer.

Our commercial teams developed new ways of engaging our audiences online, which has meant learning new skills such as filming, editing and live streaming – which will continue to be very valuable in the future. The last year has taught us we can work in different ways, and so we know we can adapt our working styles in the future as things change.



For me personally – the bottom line has been keeping the Brothers as happy and safe as possible, as well as maintaining good morale amongst the staff. I felt much rewarded when a Brother recently texted: *You've been an inspirational example of determination, cheerfulness, discipline and decision!*

Christina Parry OBE

Immediate Past Master

Chartered Secretaries and Administrators



‘Where can we get funding?’ - the plea from a friend needing to finance an amateur effort to sew PPE (personal protective equipment) for Lewisham Hospital.

Desperately needed in March 2020 as severe Covid cases started to swamp the hospital. Cue for an urgent grant request to the WCCSA Charitable Trust (the Chartered Secretaries and Administrators), which was given immediate approval. This started a roller-coaster personal project, leading 50 local volunteers sewing PPE scrubs, hats, bags and headbands for local hospitals, working against the clock to make and deliver the goods.



So passed most of the first national lockdown. Followed by a glorious Summer at home for once, with Autumn looming, and uncertain times ahead. Cue for a second major project, this time enrolling for a part-time MA, anticipating that Livery and



other activities would be on hold for quite a while. So to Autumn 2020, and onset of more restrictions, whiling away the time on remote learning, philosophy and ethics essays, interspersed with zoom meetings for all manner of organisations. Sadly social life seems a thing of the past. Screens have replaced handshakes and hugs, and we are impoverished by the change.

Denise Fellows

Master Management Consultant

October 2019-2020



My year started in late October 2019 with a calendar of Company events planned for the year and opportunities to attend fabulous functions rolling in. The last week of March had seven major events: three lunches, three dinners (including the white tie Mansion House Banquet) and the United Guilds Service at St Paul's. Over a period of two weeks, they were all cancelled as it became clearer that it may not be wise and then would not be legal to meet.

The first covid-era Zoom meeting on the 20 March became a weekly Friday evening call with seven female Masters, sharing ideas and supporting each other with wise words and comfort. Every Master should have such a network. Our Court of Wardens moved to Zoom for weekly planning meetings and we developed a new calendar of Zoom events, mainly management consultancy focused but also drawing on our special interest groups. By early July we felt confident enough to hold a virtual admissions ceremony. Plans for a small celebration in person after the Annual Service in September were thwarted as the 'rule of six' was imposed. The service went ahead with a small congregation and many more joining online.



Our motto "Change through Wisdom" has never been more appropriate. It is not about what we can't but what we can do. We started some new initiatives: Sixteen Members volunteered to call up all Members in the Company under the guidance of the Almoners. A small team also initiated 'Securing Future Prosperity', which is providing guidance to millennials who run small businesses in the City of London and have been severely impacted by Covid-19.

I had time to ensure that my election promises were achieved: the Court accepted a Governance Calendar to enable better oversight; we increased the recognition of some legacy projects such as our marvellous wine cellar, we strengthened the Clerk's office and we gained parity between male and female Wardens.

We have learnt that we can meet virtually and we will continue with Zoom for many of our internal meetings as well as external events in the future. The technology has enabled us to meet more easily as well as engage with Members who live outside London and the UK.

Dids Macdonald OBE

Immediate Past Master

Furniture Makers



Little did I know when I started my year as Master that my focus on welfare would prove so apposite with the then emerging pandemic . I started a [“One Step at a Time”](#) campaign to ensure that all those in our wonderful furniture sector would know about the welfare available to them in times of need and where they could go for help, and set a target of 100 major companies to spread the word. Yes, we achieved this and to date have given out £263,550 in [Personal Support Grants](#) to 384 people with an average of £813 per person. Here is a link to a very [short video](#) where help made a difference. Our current Master, David Woodward, is taking this idea forward with [“Step2it”](#) and aims to raise £250,000.

Another Furniture Makers’ initiative I spearheaded during Covid-19 was to produce [four webinars](#) “Innovation in Times of Crisis”. Sharing survival and emergency strategies with designers, retail giants, manufacturers and industry leaders and a further webinar about how to engage with parliament on industry concerns.

On a lighter note, if we can all remember actually meeting people - in the words of Rudyard Kipling “Chance Favours a Prepared Mind!”, our Royal Charter Dinner at Apothecaries’ Hall holds a special memory for me. Quite by chance at a Mansion House reception, I met the vice principal of Drapers’ Academy and told her that I had been let down by a choir I had intended to entertain us. She immediately said, ‘We’ve got a choir, why don’t they entertain you?’. Fast forward to a glittering celebration when 20 nervous school children sang like angels and received a standing ovation, led by our generous charity president, The Lord Kirkham CVO. Now having visited their school, we’re hoping some of their students will participate in our next



Young Furniture Makers exhibition. It’s amazing what a tiny snippet of conversation can lead to.

Fun was a key element in my year and we even went supersonic with a memorable “trip” on Concorde and a not to be missed tour of Brooklands (I was proud to be Concorde cabin crew in years of yore!)

Elizabeth Nodder

Master Salter from June 2020



Being elected remotely as the first Lady Master in the 626 year history of the Salters' Company from the comfort of my Cornish cottage was a doubly surreal experience. My first function in June 2020 was virtual tea with the Lord Mayor and some other Masters. At that stage I was a Zoom novice but I quickly adapted, realizing that it was the way not only to manage meetings but to keep the Company together. A kind Information Technologist taught me how to manage breakout rooms and we were off!

Regular Meet and Greet sessions for members, monthly talks on the history of the Salters' Company, and our own Advent Carol Service, with readers from Canada and New Zealand, followed by breakout rooms, enabled everyone to catch up before Christmas.

This year we have enjoyed cooking with our Masterchef Beadle, Barmy Bingo and a wine tasting, using wines from our own cellars dispatched to Salters' homes. We will continue some of these virtual evenings into the future to allow far-flung members to take part. We have increased our charitable giving to COVID related charities and I even managed to complete paperwork, as a retired GP, to take part in the vaccinations in Cornwall.

Felicity Harding OBE

Past Master Spectacle Maker



Personally we have rediscovered the joys of walking in unfamiliar places not far from home, including a protected area for skylarks, butterflies and cowslips and, if we are lucky, pirouetting red kites and buzzards above us. A special birthday App on my phone instantly makes me an expert by identifying wild plants and flowers!

The Spectacle Makers' Clerk and Liverymen have adapted quickly to the pandemic with excellent communication between members with events and meetings online on the all-embracing Zoom. Virtual events have included the installation of the incoming Master at St Bride's Church; a black tie livery dinner presided over by the Master and attended by Liveryman Alderman Keaveny with a delicious meal ordered and delivered to our home in advance. What other participants did not see was, under the glamour, the comfort of shoeless feet.

Our Society has not been idle either with tea parties, picture quizzes and virtual visits. We continued to enjoy our Eye to Eye series of lectures by distinguished ophthalmologists, our museum curator and other experts watched by Liverymen worldwide! Perhaps to be retained occasionally in the future? We have had similar fun events with the Lady Masters.

A highlight was the Lord Mayor's Advent Carol service from the Church of St. Vedast alias Foster conducted by a friend, Rev. Paul Kennedy, seven lessons and carols sung by the sublime Voces 8 singers, a world-class group. Privately, I have maintained links with my late father's church, Stephen Walbrook, next door to Mansion House, where my father was the incumbent Rector for 50 years. I dial up weekly for their Wednesday Morning Prayer conducted by the Rev. Stephen Baxter.



I have fully utilised the new technologies retaining my contacts with friends and colleagues outside the UK and across The City's Livery Companies and Wards, the Spitfires and the Lady Masters. A real joy in seeing "virtual" faces. I do hope to take a train again soon and experience the warmth of face to face encounters.

The novelist, EM Forster's dictum 'Only Connect' has been refashioned in these discomfiting times with a new purpose. He would be amazed and delighted!

Fiona Adler

Master Tobacco Pipe Maker 2011-12

Sheriff 2014-15



Bizarrely 2020 seems a lifetime ago for time has both sped up and stood still! Days and weeks have felt longer than they are but also very precious and enabled me to recalibrate and work out what I treasure most. Like many others though, with hindsight, I wish I had bought shares in Zoom and had a haircut before lockdown began (x2)!

This ghastly pandemic has taken so much from us and continues to cause great hardship for so many, but it has also brought people together and shown communities at their best. Pembroke House, just south of the river is a wonderful example. This remarkable charity that I am a Trustee of and my Livery Company supports has transformed into a food distribution hub, providing regular parcels to those most affected by the crisis. In difficult times, this has been a real lifeline for thousands of vulnerable people.



Since March, we've delivered 200 tonnes of food in 25,000 food parcels. At the peak of the first lockdown we supported 550 households a week. While circumstances improved for many beneficiaries as lockdown eased, we are still feeding over a thousand people each week. Nearly 40 partner organisations refer recipients to the Hub – from charities, schools, GPs and Southwark Council to churches, community groups and residents' associations. Volunteers pack parcels at the Hub and deliver them by bike to households across Walworth. Since March, 350 residents have volunteered 15,000 hours, cycling more than 70,000km in the process. I have been part of the team acquiring food donations from

the incredibly generous traders at Smithfield and Billingsgate Markets, there are many funny and uplifting tales I could tell but I have run over my 200 words!

Fiona Morrison

Master Actuary

17.7.2019 – 10.12.2020



2020: From Rubies to Zoom (without so much as a hiccup)

It turned out I was the 150th woman to be a Master and my year was also our Ruby Anniversary. Eleven Liverymen, in Ruby coloured dresses, enjoyed the LMA dinner in February 2020 – who knew where we were heading? Luckily, in January 2020 I had launched the Actuaries' Company's WhatsApp group, so more participants than ever came to Livery Dinners.

Particular joys:

- Starting on the very first Thursday of the very first lockdown, our weekly Zoom socials – quizzes, book clubs, COVID updates, "Letters from America", love of islands, bingo, charities, a treasure hunt (aged 9 to 90): these will continue, post lockdown. Meanwhile visits such as our Company social at the V&A Mary Quant exhibition became distant memories!
- Our ("white tie and slippers") "virtual Mansion House Banquet" was very emotional, reminding me of our fantastic community (probably taken for granted pre-COVID).
- We hosted the Lord Mayor at his very first Zoom seminar – losing him in the waiting room as he was joining under an alias!
- We ran Professional CPD events: Zoom is a perfect "hosting location", and these will continue post lockdown.
- Our "Charity Matching Challenge" raised £72,000 for our charities most affected by COVID and Black Lives Matter, plus our "Maths in Prisons" project (progress slowed by the pandemic).
- Making friends for life with a small group of amazing, fun and energising

female Masters who have shared and supported each other.



- I was awarded, jointly with my Clerk, Lyndon Jones, our Company's "Award of Honour" for enabling the Company to "not just survive, but thrive" in lockdown. It was, of course, a team effort.

- I have served the longest "year" as Master Actuary – 512 days (equals 2⁹).

- Finally here I am socially distancing at the V&A, **before** the idea was invented!

Jo Connell

Master Information Technologist
2008-09



2020 was a year I'll never forget. For me the hardest thing was the lack of social interaction and in particular not being able to see my family. The Prime Minister's change of plan for Christmas was devastating.

My Livery Company has been amazing and managed to maintain a significant calendar of activities online. Not quite the same as face-to-face but considerably better than nothing. There must have been something every week - formal black tie dinners, quizzes, talks, award ceremonies to name but a few. In addition I received a weekly newsletter via email and regular emails from the Beadle. One of the best events online was the Christmas Party, where we dressed up in our Christmas jumpers and played silly games. Most of the events generated money for our charity.

I am very proud that Information Technologists played a significant role in helping to organise a virtual carol service "Carols in the City" which raised money for charities, including the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

I am looking forward to a return to formal dinners and other events in person. However the success of online activities to reach large numbers of our membership who might not be able to attend in person will, I am sure, become a regular fixture of our Livery year.



Judy Tayler-Smith

*Past President, City Livery Club
and Past Master Upholder*



While some people have been complaining about having too much time on their hands, my 2020 was by far one of the busiest and most stressful years of my life. I had originally been caring for my mother three days a week, but when the virus struck I moved in with her in March full time. She had too many nurses, carers and a cleaner coming in who were not wearing PPE. I cancelled them all and took over her care to keep her safe.

However in May my mother lost her appetite and after a month of telephone consultations with her GP, they agreed to a home visit. A blood test confirmed there was something seriously wrong. I was not allowed to accompany my mother to the hospital and she was diagnosed with cancer and given no more than 12 weeks to live. It was a shock. After three days, I got special dispensation to visit her, because her condition was terminal. But visiting her in hospital for 10 days, queuing an hour every day to get a security pass to go up to her 'covid-safe' room added to the stress. They gave two choices: either she could go to a hospice, where we might pick up the virus or she could be returned back home under palliative care. Obviously, I chose the latter. I then had more frantic weeks making this possible. I had to empty her bedroom, get special care workers back, palliative care equipment, furniture and medication delivered to her home and deal with at least five medical teams and administer all her medication myself (except injections). It was crazy. Although she only lasted a further five weeks at home, it was worth it. My husband, sister and I were there when she died, in her own bedroom, albeit in one of those hospital style beds.

However, that was not the end of my Covid-story nightmare. If all that chaos from March to August were not enough, when she died (as the executor), I had all the paperwork to deal with. Dying during the pandemic is not to be recommended, because all the 'official bodies' are not operating properly. From registering the death, the funeral, the burying of the ashes, to closing down my parents' estate: banks, utilities, pensions, etc. to clearing my parents' three-bedroom home during the remainder of 2020 was a nightmare. Illness, death and being an executor is stressful in normal times, but it's ten times more difficult during a pandemic.

Despite all this, I am feeling very positive and happy about 2021. I have another Livery Mastership on the horizon and when it is safe to travel I will be dividing my time between the City of London and Scotland. Rather than being sad about the current lockdown right now, I'm really looking forward to having a bit of 'enforced' boredom thrust upon me. Maybe in 2021 I may even find time to read a book?

Karen Richardson

Past Master Solicitor



So, how to encapsulate “my life in lockdown” in a way which sounds sufficiently impressive amongst a hundred accounts from other Lady Masters who have admirably used the time to clear clutter, grow gardens and learn languages? An impossible challenge....

There has been immense frustration and incredulity at some of the decisions made and rules imposed; there has been intense sympathy for the people who have suffered personally, emotionally and financially, losing life savings, livelihoods and lives; and there has been desperate fear and worry for close family and friends.



But, amongst all the negatives, there is a chink of positivity. Life can be lived more calmly. Planning has been largely futile and may therefore sometimes be unnecessary. Concentrating on the immediate can bring a luxurious focus on the here and now, not enjoyed since – probably – childhood.

Women are famously good at dealing with difficulties and adapting to circumstances, and we have had to exercise those skills constantly. Being forced to look beyond ourselves more than usually possible has been insightful as well as challenging.

So, perhaps we can move into the future with some sense, however embryonic, of renewed purpose, hope and energy.

Lis Goodwin

*Chairman, Livery Schools Link
Master Educator, 2018-19*



Livery Schools Link have met regularly since March 2020. We helped towards the London Careers Festival (LCF) which ran virtually in June 2020. We are running the Livery Education Conference in March 2021 virtually and we were lucky that the conference last year took place just before lockdown. We are joining the virtual LCF with a Showcase this June giving pupils a chance to interact with various Livery



Companies. The careers app HELP has been delivered and is being promoted at present. The volunteering platform has been enlarged with merger with two other organisations. The Livery in Education booklet is being published on March 1 2021. Our biggest achievement is the Digital Divide campaign which to date has raised over £100,000 to help disadvantaged school students through devices and connectivity to access on-line learning. We have helped in schools known to LSL to supplement the government schemes.

The Educators' Company since March 2020 has had a full programme of events: business, social and education related. It has been particularly good to welcome on Zoom those who find travel to London more difficult because of incapacity of various sorts or because of travel time. It will be good to run hybrid meetings in future with some people at a venue and others at home on Zoom to keep a wider proportion of the Company more engaged. Small short meetings could also be run virtually to save people's time in travel to London.

Personally, like many people in lockdown I have tackled long outstanding tasks. I have read books, listened to opera streams, knitted, house tidied and acquired more digital skills. It has been good to talk to more people in our village on daily walks. Variety can be created in lockdown and going forward I plan to spread my time more evenly over different activities.

The importance of friendship groups for companionship and ideas on how to help others is the thing that stands out for me the most in 2020.

Liz Green

Master Framework Knitter 2016-17

Sheriff 2018-19



Last April Past Masters Liz Green and Sheila Turner organised 'Knit for Community' which supported five charities from Halifax to London. As well as helping individuals in need of support the initiative has provided a positive focus for many during the Covid lockdown and self-isolation restrictions. Members of the Framework Knitters have been collecting and delivering knitted squares and wool, and visiting our charities to deliver blankets, socks and knitted hats and gloves which have been donated. In addition, one of our Past Masters, who runs a sock manufacturing business in Derbyshire, has donated 1,400 pairs of socks to a number of charities in London, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.



By April 2021 568 individuals, as well as members of some groups, have volunteered to help and well over 25,000 knitted squares have been received, including squares from members or friends of 35 Livery companies and a number of charities. In November 2020 we held an auction of 30 blankets which raised over £6500 for our charities. Having thought we would

produce 20 - 30 blankets the phenomenal response has enabled the Framework Knitters to produce over 280 blankets and 240 lap blankets, and we anticipate the project continuing throughout 2021.

As a Livery company Zoom has been used for a number of social events including walking tours, wine tasting and magic shows, and this has enabled those who would not normally travel to London to attend and enjoy chatting to fellow Liverymen. I hope this will continue even after restrictions have been lifted.

After completing a fairly extensive online training programme Peter and Liz have been volunteering at their local vaccination centre. Some days are busier than others and it's far more fun when the sessions are full. Peter is normally on the car park and Liz is the 'bingo caller' allocating individuals to a vaccinator.

Liz Turnbull

*Master, The Guild of Nurses, 10.05.19 – 12.05.20
and The Company of Nurses, 12.05.20 – 5.10.20*



As a nurse, my memories of 2020 are of great pride, but also much sadness.

Designated the WHO International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, it was to be a time of celebration and fellowship for all nurses everywhere and our diaries were full! Four years since the formation of The Guild of Nurses, we had hopes of completing the petition to attain Company status...

But right from the beginning of the pandemic, Wardens and Freeman were under pressure - redeployed, retrained, returning to work, involved in setting up the Nightingale hospitals, closing businesses so as to work on the front line and becoming unwell - others were frustrated and in lockdown. We quickly set up a system of phone "buddies" for those at work, isolating or vulnerable. Stories (and pictures) of their experiences were written for the website and archive. The Charitable Trust provided much needed benevolence for many nurses in need and a donation was made to the Livery Kitchen Initiative.

On May 12th 2020, the bicentennial of the birth of Florence Nightingale, the petition was approved and The Company of Nurses was formed - a proud and historic day for the nursing profession. The messages of congratulation from the Lord Mayor and Livery Companies were circulated amongst our Freeman and provided great encouragement and a much needed morale boost.

The Company continues to conduct business and hold social events virtually and while this may continue in the near future, we are all feeling the need to come together again soon. We have a lot to talk about.

I extended my time as Master to provide some continuity during such an extraordinary time and, in October, was very proud to receive the Freedom of the City at the end of my time in office.



In March, I began a large quilt project with over 3500 pieces – still not finished, as you can see!

Morag Loader

Past Master Tax Adviser



WFH (working from home) began in March 2020, and became the three-letter acronym of the year. It was a big cultural change, but a very pleasant one, as I saved three hours a day in commuting time. Zoom meetings meant there was plenty of social interaction, so I never felt cut off or isolated. Work was more productive without the typical background noise and interruptions of the office. I am sure that for many people work in the future will retain an "at home" element.

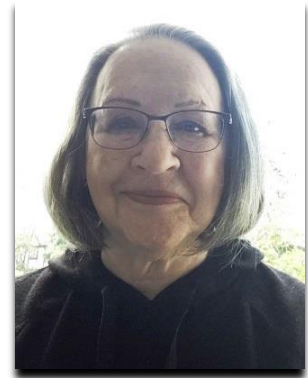
In common with most Livery Companies, the Tax Advisers moved their Court meetings, committees and social events on to Zoom. The social programme included a wine tasting, a magic show, a virtual City Walk and an increased History of Tax lecture programme which I run. Our pre-lockdown lecture venue had a limit of 80 people, but we were averaging around 500 participants with the Zoom format. Post Covid-19 I am sure we will want to keep the virtual option for those who cannot attend in person but who can spare an hour from their own home.

This is me enjoying a short birthday break at a local hotel between lockdowns!



Pamela Goldberg

Past Master Needlemaker



The first part of the lockdown I baked for friends and neighbours. My mother in law was a fabulous baker and I have her recipe book. Having never baked until I stopped full time work I am still learning. One of my favourites are “koeksusters” (literally “cake sisters”) a South African doughnut type of specialty but dipped in

brandy flavoured syrup. I do not believe I was responsible for the flour shortage.

Prompted by Liz Green I dug out the needles (I am a Needlemaker after all!) and responded to the call for squares for the Framework Knitters to turn into blankets. They had a massive response.



I then moved to knitting baby blankets for a neighbour who was collecting for refugees. Equipped family with hats, small neck shawls to keep the women warm at their computers, a blanket for our Swiss family which has been appropriated by the dog. Nothing too complicated.....just therapeutic. We also had an intruder around the time of the USA election. I didn't knit the gloves.

Pamela Taylor

Master Educator

June 2019 - 2020



By 2020, I was 6 months into my year; the division between the first 3 months of 2020 and my last 3 was dramatic. January to mid-March included a superb Annual Lecture from Professor Becky Francis, great educational seminars on 'education and skills for life', with one from Andria Zafirakou, Global Teacher of the Year, who received a standing ovation, and a Company weekend in Stratford-upon-Avon, where we saw 'King John' just before lockdown and the almost-overnight move to Zoom.

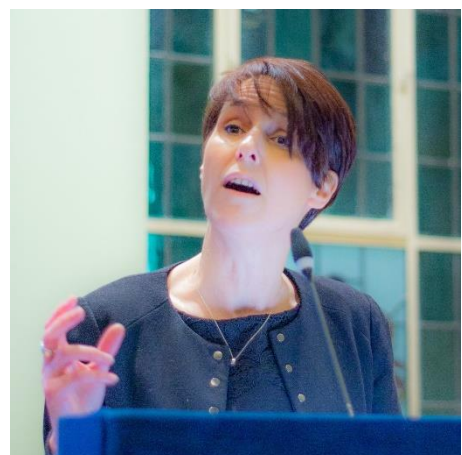


Communication with the Company became paramount. My weekly message aimed to keep morale high, underlining how much we were offering. Many educators have been

used to online working; hence it was relatively straightforward to make professional and social programmes virtual.

The disadvantages of losing face-to-face contact are counteracted by increased numbers participating onscreen, involving more members outside London or abroad and savings in time and travel. Our Special Interest Groups have proliferated, covering most Members' specialisms.

Losing the 'Master's Weekend' in France was disappointing, and the 'virtual' Court meeting at the end of my year, without the chance to say my farewells in person, was not quite the same. However, I left office with the Company in excellent spirits. Our members made extraordinary efforts to keep education going, finding ingenious, innovative solutions to overcome the lockdown's challenges. My 'skills for life' programme proved highly appropriate: resilience, adaptability and thinking outside the box, all of which we shall continue to use in face-to-face fellowship and virtual events.



Penrose Halson

Past Master Turner



The Turners' Company signed the London Funders statement committing to continuing to support our charities. The Company set up:

- A Resources Hub (practical help, funding, exhibitions etc)
- A 'buddy system' of phone calls to every Company member
- 'Turning For Good': the Company purchased turned pieces from members of the Register of Professional Turners then sold them, the £3,000 profit going into the Charity Fund
- A Zoom account enabling the Register of Professional Turners to meet regularly
- Online events: several receptions, including video clips and live interviews with practising turners, and a Christmas-time magician. Common Hall online included a quiz and a limerick competition.



The Company will continue to use Zoom for those who can't get into the City. We are exploring a mixture of online streaming alongside a live event, and an online woodturning shop to help members of the Register of Professional Turners sell online. I am very proud to be a Turner.

My most vivid personal memories of life under Covid are of the kindness of both friends and strangers, particularly when Bill was rushed to hospital for an emergency operation. Paramedics, nurses and doctors, all under great strain, were cheerful, reassuring, practical and positive. Friends were invaluable.

Rosemary Beaver

Master Insurer

October 2019-20



It was a huge challenge and a tremendous privilege to be the first Lady Master Insurer during the pandemic. My year started in 2019 with celebrations for our 40th anniversary - with our "Globe Balloon" in the Lord Mayor's Show - ***"London Insures the World"***. By March we were cancelling our Mansion House Banquet and re-setting priorities to focus our philanthropy on those more vulnerable and in need as a result of Covid-19. I am incredibly proud that, through the generosity of our members, we made extra donations to existing charity partners and also new grants supporting nurses, the homeless, and delivering hot meals to the isolated. We provided extra grants to school mentoring partners and, despite the challenges of lockdown, launched "Into Insurance" a programme for young people seeking careers in our sector. Finally we are leading our industry on an initiative to provide 10,000 laptops for school children.



We supported our members and our profession in new ways, with topical information on industry challenges. We relaunched our web-site and transferred on-line our professional seminars. We are all missing the warm fellowship of Livery occasions - but we have been delighted to welcome new and younger members into the Livery with diverse backgrounds and skills, and to host more inclusive on-line events attended by even more members than usual. Despite the legal uncertainty from unforeseen pandemic impacts, I am proud to be on the board of a Lloyd's insurer providing liability cover for over 500 clinical trials of Covid vaccines/therapeutics, and a member of an industry sharing risk management expertise on the future impact of climate change.



I feel privileged to have passed on the torch of Master - the precious legacy of my predecessors - and kept it alight in extraordinary times through the commitment, generosity and fellowship of our members - proving that the Livery can achieve a great deal when it combines the traditions of the past with a passion to be relevant for the future.

Wendy Shorter-Blake MBE

Master Upholder 2020-22



The most outstanding memory of the Covid-19 pandemic for me, will be the effect the restrictions have caused in our ability to meet and entertain in person. The various lockdown restrictions meant that my Installation as Master was first postponed by six months, and then when I was installed in September, it was a much smaller event. We still managed a small “in-person” ceremony and, for the first time, it was also streamed live, meaning that more of the Livery were able to witness the event than would be normal.



We continue to hold “virtual” meetings, talks, lectures and various tastings that have been both enjoyable and well attended, particularly by those living further afield and who sometimes find it difficult to attend our normal City events.

As a practising upholsterer and soft furnisher, I have been busy making cushions, doorstops and furniture that will be auctioned or sold to raise funds for our Charities. Other members of the Livery have provided materials and made PPE Masks and Scrubs for the NHS. We also knitted enough squares for two blankets for Past Sheriff, Liz Green’s “Knit for the Community” project.

I look forward to the time when we can start meeting again in person, but we will also continue to offer both “in-person” and “virtual” events in order to engage with as many in our Livery as possible.



Acknowledgements

With thanks to the following for their contributions:

Alderman Alison Gowman

Ann Buxton

Ann Kenrick

Christina Parry OBE

Elizabeth Nodder

Denise Fellows

Dids Macdonald OBE

Felicity Harding OBE

Fiona Adler

Fiona Morrison

Hilary Lindsay

Judy Tayler-Smith

Karen Richardson

Lis Goodwin

Liz Green

Liz Turnbull

Jo Connell

Morag Loader

Pamela Goldberg

Pamela Taylor

Penrose Halson

Rosemary Beaver

Wendy Shorter-Blake MBE

Compiled by Hilary Lindsay

Some final reflections

A few quotes that sum up the sentiments expressed across the contributions:

- *Women are famously good at dealing with difficulties and adapting to circumstances, and we have had to exercise those skills constantly. Being forced to look beyond ourselves more than usually possible has been insightful as well as challenging.* (Karen Richardson)
- *We will continue some virtual evenings into the future to allow far-flung members to take part.* (Elizabeth Nodder)
- *We know we can adapt our working styles as things change.* (Ann Kenrick)
- *My 'skills for life' programme proved highly appropriate: resilience, adaptability and thinking outside the box.* (Pamela Taylor)
- *EM Forster's dictum 'Only Connect' has been refashioned in these discomfiting times with a new purpose.* (Felicity Harding)
- *The heart of the Livery movement is charity and friendship.* (Ann Buxton)



Patron: HRH The Princess Royal KG KT GCVO GCStJ QSO GCL

Chairman: Ann Buxton (chairman@ladymasters.org.uk)

The Lady Masters Association exists to maintain and promote fellowship and the support of charity among women who hold or have held the office of Master, or other high office, in the City of London, and to inspire and support the next generation of Livery leaders. (<https://www.ladymasters.org.uk/>)

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