



The Basketmaker



The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers

Annual Review

2024

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The Prime Warden's Year

My year among friends: Lady Lauriston

It is a great honour to have served as Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers. My theme for the year was *Among Friends*, reflecting my own happy experience of the Company, and I offer my heartfelt thanks for your friendship and support. I am delighted to introduce this review by sharing my memories of my year in office.



The Prime Warden

Celebrating the wonderful world of basketry

I set out to showcase the wonderful world of basketry, and it has



The Prime Warden with her bird feeder

been a pleasure to meet so many of our Yeoman Members and basketmaking communities from around the country. Special thanks go to those in the Scottish Basketmakers Circle who helped me create my willow bed in the walled garden at Lauriston Castle to mark my Prime Wardenship. We planted 100 willows on St Valentine's Eve, in celebration of our Basketmakers' motto: *Let us love one another*. A year later, the harvest produced more than enough for me to make a garden bird feeder to present to our Honorary Liveryman HRH The Duchess of Gloucester. Our Basketmaking Days were a delight: with expert help, Basketmakers and Livery Consorts made everything from berry baskets to miniature Christmas trees. The results were amazing!

Our City stars in the spotlight

Our craft was in the spotlight in the Lord Mayor's Show, where once again we were honoured to be the first Livery Company in the procession, accompanied by the Guild of Young Freemen and Gog and Magog, the giant basketry guardians of the City. We owe a lasting debt of gratitude to the late Olivia Elton Barratt, our first female Prime Warden, for her foresight in leading the making of the giants, and we are grateful to the Young Freemen for shepherding them so skilfully through the streets. Later in November, at the Guildhall Christmas Market, our Stars at Christmas kits were a bestseller: twinkling willow stars decorated with an upcycled trimming of a costume from a West End show – a brilliant idea by theatrical costumier Sasha Keir, who chairs our Trade Committee. We raised almost £1000 for the British Red Cross. I returned to Guildhall for the Rifles Dinner, attending a reception in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and TRH the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, and dining with our affiliates from 8 Rifles.

Festive Carols and the man who saved Christmas

Our well-attended Carol Service was joyous, with the glorious music of the choir soaring to the rafters in St Margaret Pattens, where only a few weeks earlier I had been humbled to watch my name being gilded, letter by letter, on to our roll of Prime Wardens on the panelled walls of this wonderful Wren church. After carols we enjoyed supper at Watermen's Hall - always delightfully



The Prime Warden's Year continued

Christmassy, and especially so with the addition of a giant ball of mistletoe gifted to us by the Master Painter-Stainer, who was installed on the same day as me. In return I gave him a charming apple basket for his orchard in Kent. We were watched over by the portrait of the man who saved Christmas, City waterman John Taylor, whose persuasive writing helped to keep festive traditions alive during the bleak Cromwell years.

Our tartan: my gift to the Basketmakers

In January I was honoured by a great gathering at our Scottish-themed Livery Dinner at Butchers' Hall. There were nods to Robert Burns, including a rousing *Address to a Haggis* by Past Prime Warden Neil Redcliffe, and splendid piping by my piper, Gordon Casely KSJ. To mark my year in office, and as a mark of the affection that William and I hold for the Basketmakers, I announced that members of the Company were now entitled to wear Newlands of Lauriston tartan, which my husband William had commissioned as a birthday present in 1986. It was a wonderful gift to me and I was delighted to share it with the Basketmakers. All the Livery Masters at the dinner received baskets by Scottish Yeomen. I presented Master Mason Alastair King - who was elected Lord Mayor later in the year - and his fiancée Florence with a round basket by Virgil Bauzys. They used it to hold rose-petal confetti at their wedding at St Lawrence Jewry in March.



Scottish Livery Dinner (with William, Alastair King and our Beadle)

Basketry Showcase: focus on fine art and craftsmanship

I was so proud of our Basketry Showcase, the March extravaganza that showcased the very best of basketry. It was heartwarmingly well attended, and I am grateful to everyone who gave their support – it meant so much to us and our Trade. The Dutch Church was filled to capacity with some of the finest craftspeople in the country, demonstrating their skills in everything from the finest willow work and chair caning to critically endangered crafts such as oak swill basket making. We welcomed The Duchess of Gloucester, who met all our makers and toured our heritage exhibit. During my year in office, I had the honour of meeting The Duchess of Gloucester



Meeting HRH The Duchess of Gloucester at Buckingham Palace



The Prime Warden with Yeoman Christiane Gunzi at the Basketry Showcase

on four occasions, including being presented at a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace hosted by Their Majesties the King and Queen. On behalf of our Company, I would like to record our gratitude to the Duchess, whose knowledge and enthusiasm for our craft is much appreciated.

The Prime Warden's Year continued

Welcoming Spring with the Letzi Guild in Zurich

In April, our friends in the Letzi Guild were most hospitable to Past Prime Warden Norman Woolley and me on our visit to Zurich for the annual Sechseläuten Festival, which celebrates the beginning



The Prime Warden at
Sechseläuten with Zünfftmeister
Stefan Forster

of Spring. I was honoured to be invited to address the assembled Letzi – one of Zurich's community guilds – in their beautiful mediaeval Guild House, and I paid tribute to Norman and Ehrenzünfftmeister Raymond Porchet for their vision in initiating the relationship between our two organisations a quarter of a century before. I presented Zünfftmeister Stefan Forster with a pewter quaich – the Scottish cup of friendship – before taking part in the traditional parade of the guilds through the streets of Zurich. We returned the hospitality to the Letzi in September, when we were delighted to welcome a group attending our Annual Banquet, resplendent in their traditional costumes.

Scottish castles: among friends in Aberdeenshire

One of the many highlights of the year was to host a party of 44 Basketmakers for my Prime Warden's Weekend in April, among friends in a gloriously warm Aberdeenshire. William and I loved welcoming everyone to Lauriston Castle. First mentioned in 1243, Lauriston was home to my family for four centuries until 1695. It is now home once again, after a major restoration project, and it was a delight to share Lauriston's storied history. Our party was also welcomed to Benholm Castle and Arbuthnott House with great kindness and hospitality. We dined at William Adam's House of Dun, in the magnificent saloon, and enjoyed a fireside chat with Pip Hills, founder of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society, in a hotel that boasts 900 whiskies behind its bar. The sun shone throughout, and some were even heard to remark that the weather in Scotland was too hot!



The group at Lauriston, on the Prime Warden's weekend

The Prime Warden's Year continued

Enjoying our magnificent Livery Halls



The Prime Warden in the ancient Court Room at Apothecaries' Hall

I fulfilled a long-held wish to host dinners in two of my favourite ancient Livery Halls. Usually only members of the Court attend our Court Dinner in April, but this year I extended the invitation to the whole Company, so that we could all enjoy the magnificent Armourers' Hall, including a superb musical interlude by soprano Zoë Jackson and pianist Weng Soon Tee from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In July, London's oldest Livery hall, Apothecaries' Hall, was the sublime setting for our Trade Dinner. I was very pleased that almost half of our Yeomen members were able to attend, and our pop-up basketry shop did a brisk trade as everyone enjoyed pre-dinner drinks in the summery courtyard. I presented the Outstanding Contribution to Basketmaking Award 2024 to straw plaiter Veronica Main MBE. Once part of a thriving hat

making industry that employed hundreds of thousands of people, straw plaiting is now a critically endangered craft – Veronica is the only full-time plaiter in the country.

Behind the scenes – backstage and boardroom

We enjoyed fabulous summer visits at the invitation of two of our members. In June we toured backstage at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, to learn at first hand about the inner workings of this wonderful theatre. Sasha Keir gave a fascinating insight into some of the many costumes her studio has made for Covent Garden productions. Afterwards we enjoyed a seasonal lunch in The Private Room at The Ivy West Street. In August we were invited to Fortnum & Mason by Fortnum's Chair Kate Hobhouse, a Freeman of the Company. A party of 24 enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea in the boardroom, before Kate led us on a fascinating personal tour of the store featuring everything from Fortnum's in-house gin distillery to the hamper department, where we admired the exquisite willow creations of our Yeoman member Eddie Glew.



Our Banquet with the Lord Mayor at Mansion House

We held a splendid Annual Banquet at Mansion House, where I welcomed almost 200 Basketmakers and guests. The full Civic Party included the Lord Mayor, Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli, with Sheriffs Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley and Alderman Bronek Masajada, who were enjoying their last event together after a fabulous year as a civic team. On behalf of our Charitable Trust, I presented donations of £2000 to the Lord Mayor's Appeal and £5000 to the Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund. Award winners included Air Corporal Bethan Wride from our RAF affiliate ISTAR Airwing, who received a new Aviator of the Year trophy kindly

The Prime Warden's Year continued

commissioned by Court Assistant Philip Miles, and Honorary Liveryman Mary Butcher, who was awarded The Roy McLeod Special Award for Outstanding Basketry Achievement, named in memory of our late Liveryman who bequeathed a very significant legacy to our Charitable Trust. Our Army Cadets affiliates, 2 Company City of London and North East London, formed a very smart carpet guard, and we were delighted to be joined by representatives from HMS Richmond and 8 Rifles. The Royal Marines Association Brass Ensemble provided an excellent musical programme which culminated in a rousing Post Horn Galop. The tables were beautifully adorned with more than 100 baskets of flowers generously commissioned by PPW Anne Holden. Each arrangement was threaded with tartan ribbon, and all the ladies received their own basket of flowers to take home. We are grateful to Anne for her kind and stylish gesture.



The Prime Warden with Sheriffs and Lord Mayor

With our Livery friends in the City

I led a party of Basketmakers at the Annual Sheep Drive, exercising the ancient right of Freemen of the City of London to drive sheep over the Thames. We were the first group to cross Southwark Bridge into the City after the event was opened by Hollywood actor Damian Lewis. Many thanks to The Woolmen for organising such a memorable day. The many other Livery and City events I attended included the aptly named Not a Master in Sight lunch, for the Masters and Clerks of Companies which do not have a Master: seven of us have Prime Wardens and the Weavers have an Upper Bailiff.



Damian Lewis with the Lord Mayor, our Prime Warden and the Master of the Woolmen



Grateful thanks and my toast to the future

I offer my thanks to everyone for their support to me and to our wonderful Company and Charitable Trust. In particular I thank my husband and Consort, William, and our Basketmakers' Clerk, Richard Turner – both have been hugely supportive, as have the Upper and Under Wardens and members of the Court. I wish my successor, Julian Adams, much happiness and success in his year in office. My toast to the Basketmakers and to all our friends: "Long may we continue - may we flourish root and branch, forever!"

Company Events

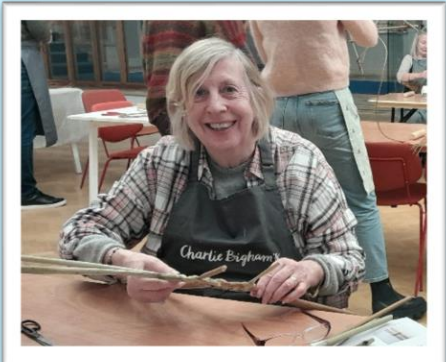
Installation Day



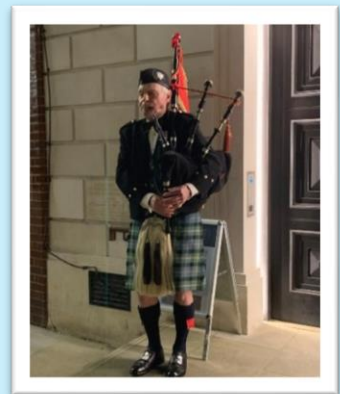
The Lord Mayor's Show



Company Basketmaking Day



Livery Dinner at Butchers' Hall



United Guilds' Service Lunch At Barber Surgeons' Hall



Company Events continued

Prime Warden's Weekend Away in Aberdeenshire



East of England Lunch



Election of the Sheriffs Lunch at Stationers' Hall



Visit to Royal Opera House



Trade Dinner at Apothecaries' Hall

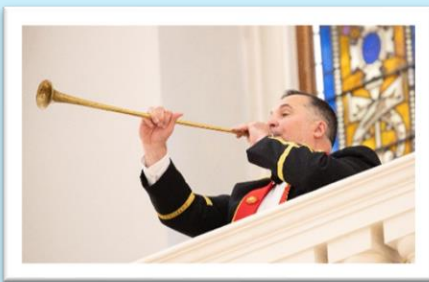


Company Events continued

Visit to Fortnum & Mason



Banquet at Mansion House



Election of the Lord Mayor
Lunch at Painters' Hall



The Court 2023-2024



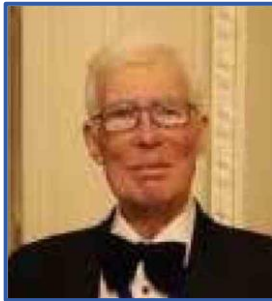
Lady Lauriston
Prime Warden



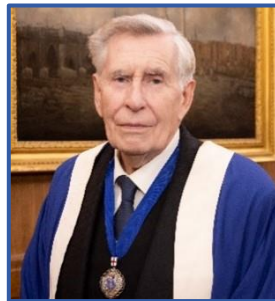
Julian Adams
Upper Warden



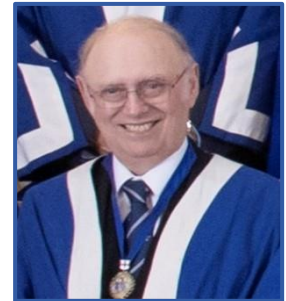
Mark Cooper
Under Warden



Graham Redcliffe
PPW 1988



John Robinson
PPW 1992



Graham Lewinstein
PPW 2008



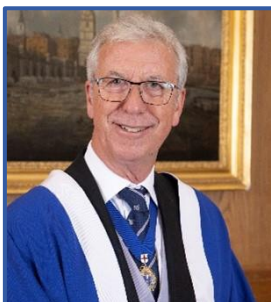
Michael Stemp
PPW 2009



Neil Redcliffe
PPW 2012



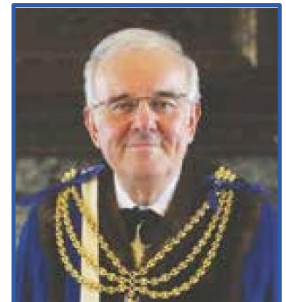
Graham Aslet
PPW 2013



Edward Donaldson
PPW 2014

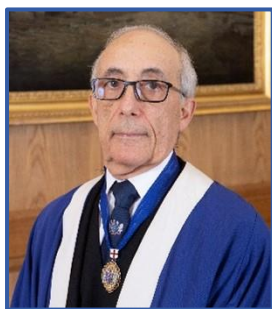


Richard Boucher-Giles
PPW 2015

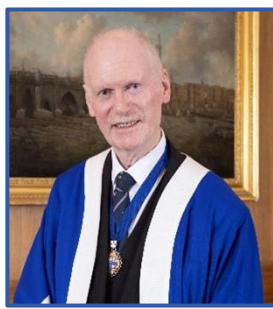


Peter Allen
PPW 2016

The Court 2023-2024 continued



Stephen Gee
PPW 2017



Christopher Hipkins
PPW 2018



Anne Holden
PPW 2019



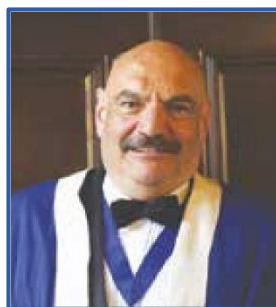
Lewis Bloch
PPW 2020



Roger Harper
PPW 2021



Judy Tayler-Smith
IPPW



John Pyzer
Assistant



Anthony Charlwood
Assistant



Simon Langton
Assistant



Philip Miles
Assistant



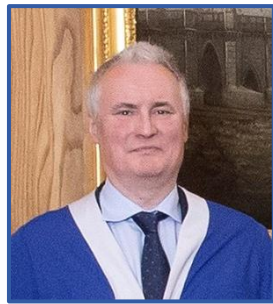
Hugh Thomas
Assistant



Peter Donaldson
Assistant



Mike Horton
Assistant



Hedley French
Assistant



Stephen Bowsher
Assistant



Sasha Keir
Assistant



Vicky Nugée
Assistant



Louise Smyth
Assistant



Richard Turner
Clerk

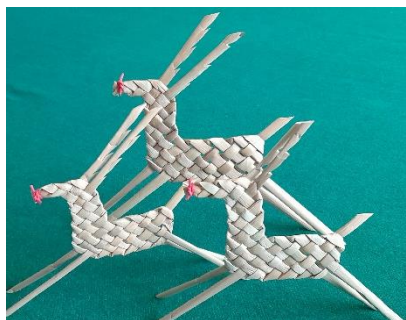


John Oakley
Beadle

Basketry Report

The Company has granted thousands of pounds for events, projects, bursaries and sponsorship, had dozens of baskets made at workshops, met with hundreds of children, enabled Yeomen to sell huge numbers of baskets, made hundreds of pounds for charity and sadly said goodbye to one long standing Yeoman.

With the ever popular Consorts basketmaking days held twice a year run as a double header between our Trade Advisor and Yeoman John Page nearly 40 complete beginners proudly took home the baskets they'd made in just a day. It's fantastic to hear how in demand these workshops are and knowing that everyone has a new appreciation of the work involved in making a basket.



Then at the Company Christmas workshop another 20 willow and rush festive wonders were made - stars, trees and reindeer decorations

- with the help of some glue, glitter and ribbons.

Nearly 100 stars were sold at The Red Cross Christmas fair at Guildhall a few days later. Thanks to the indefatigable enthusiasm of the Trade Committee Chair, Sasha Kier, who organised the Company stall, and Rae Gillott beavering away making stars that sold as soon as they were finished, nearly £1000 was made for the charity.



Sasha Keir & Rae Gillott at the Red Cross Christmas Fair



John Galloway at the Guildhall in 2023

Very Sadly the death of Yeoman John Galloway was announced in December. A passionate teacher, his ambitious workshops for the company were always popular and he loved coming to the schools link day at the Guildhall to work with the children. This year Yeomen Anita Vozik, Linda Lemieux and Karen Lawrence attended the two day event and met

with hundreds of school children. The kids made so many bracelets we ran out of rush, they also helped to weave two lovely willow baskets.

Basketry Report continued

The Basketry Showcase in March featured the work of 15 basketmakers, plus The Basketry Association, and the Scottish Basketry Group. Our patron, The Duchess of Gloucester, was presented with a garden basket made by Yeomen Helen Jackson (pictured right).



Two new bursaries were awarded as part of the Cockpit Arts sponsorship in April. The two basketmakers will be supported to develop their business skills whilst being given studio space to work in.



The Trade Advisor inside the Marquee that the company sponsored at the Tear Up festival

Further grants were awarded to Eddie Glew for the Tear Up festival held in August. The £10,000 award enabled one of the biggest basketry festivals held in this country for many years to be truly international, with some of Europe's leading basketmakers teaching learners from all over the world. Yeomen Anita Vozik and Rachel South have also been awarded funds to enable them to visit Japan to research bamboo basketry techniques. Further grants were given to The Lewes Basketry Festival and The BA for their Endangered Basketry Project. The Walmsley Bursary was awarded to Lorna Singleton to research split oak basketry in Ireland and Elizabeth Crawford to develop her skeining techniques. Mary Butcher received an additional grant to enable her to write up and digitise her notebooks in order that they can be of use to other basketmakers.

Two Yeomen ran The Company stall at the annual Sheep Drive in September, always a popular event with the livery and a great way to showcase the work of our Yeomen.

The Company has enabled a great many people to benefit from basketry - whether learning new skills, building on existing ones, buying and enjoying baskets - or just finding a new appreciation of the work that goes in to making them.



The Company stall at the Sheep Drive

Eleanor Morgan

Trade Advisor to the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers

Basketry Showcase

We were delighted to welcome our Honorary Liveryman HRH the Duchess of Gloucester to our Basketry Showcase at the Dutch Church, where some of the finest craftspeople in the country were showing their work and demonstrating their skills. Prime Warden Lady Lauriston made two presentations to the Duchess: a willow apple basket made in Royal Deeside by newly-elected Yeoman Maker Helen Jackson, and a bird feeder the Prime Warden had made from willow grown in her garden at Lauriston Castle. The Duchess met all the makers and toured our heritage exhibit, which included exquisite miniature baskets collected by Queen Mary and presented to the Company in 1954.

Yeoman Nadine Anderson



Dido Grattan & Annie Attlee



The Duchess of Gloucester &



Prime Warden Lady Lauriston



Yeomen Report

The category of Yeomen Members, dating from 1994, recognises the importance of our Trade to the life of the Company and is awarded, by consent of the Court, to exemplary practitioners of basketry or chair caning. They assist as tutors on our basketmaking days, at the Livery Schools



Yeoman Helen Jackson with the Prime Warden. Helen made the basket which was given to the Duchess of Gloucester at the Basketry Showcase

Link and demonstrate their craft at the annual Sheep Drive and at our Bi-annual Basketry Showcases. During the year, they are involved in many basketry exhibitions, fairs and programmes such as Countryfile and The Repair Shop.

At present there are 45 Yeomen members. We have lost two in the past year, John Galloway and Paul Weir. Both are sadly missed and were active in the life of the Company. We have gained four new Yeomen; Helen Jackson, Rachel Frost, Mollie Macmillan and Geoff Travers and the Trade Committee will be considering

fresh nominations at its January meeting. The close relationship between the Yeomen and the Company is reflected in the inclusion of a Yeomen representative on the Trade Committee. The current



Liveryman Rae Gillott, who is also President of the Basketmakers' Association

holder is John Page who is very involved in the City Lit's basketry teaching. We also have the Trade Liaison Officer, Liveryman Ann Clark, sitting on the BA Board plus Liveryman Karen Wright (Deputy TLO) attending meetings as observer as I do myself. Louise Brown as chair of the BA also sits as a voting member of the Trade Committee and Liveryman Rae Gillot, President of the BA, represents the BA there as well. So the Company is working well with the trade.

Access to grants and funding by the Charitable Trust has been sought by many of the Yeomen this year and the Trust's generosity has helped Eddie Glew stage his excellent Tear up festival, assist chair caners Rachael South and Anita Vozik travel to Japan to study specialist chair caning and Lorna Singleton, who was this year's winner of the Walmsley Bursary, lead an innovative project in traditional baskets made from oak, ash and hazel that finished with "86 Baskets – Wood, Water, Weave". The Trade is flourishing, and these are only a few examples of the many grants and donations made by the Trust in 2023/4. There is also a strong sense of the value of becoming a Yeoman and of the relevance of the Company to the Trade.

*Sasha Keir,
Chair of the Trade Committee*



Yeoman Anita Vozik, chair caner, with the Duchess of Gloucester at the Basketry Showcase. Anita often teaches at basketmaking days.



Some of the 86 Baskets from the Wood, Water, Weave project

The Charitable Trust

The Objectives and Aims of our Charity are to support:

Charitable objectives related to the trade of Basketmaking including education and welfare.

Charitable objectives relating to the City of London including the Lord Mayor's Appeal and the Sheriffs' & Recorder's Fund.

The Guild Church, St. Margaret Pattens.

Small charities based mainly in London.

Benevolence for Company members and their dependents.



The Prime Warden presents our donation to the Sheriffs & Recorders' Fund at the Mansion House Banquet



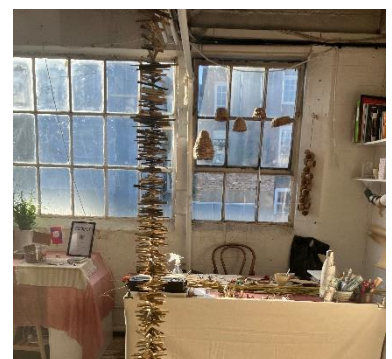
Do you want to support the basketmaking trade?

There is no better way than by donating to the Charitable Trust. We have closer links with the trade now than we have ever had and so have been able to respond positively to requests for financial assistance. Those links are stronger than ever before because of the hard work of our Past Prime Warden Lady Lauriston, our Trade Committee Chairman Sasha Kier, Trade Advisor Eleanor Morgan and Trade Liaison Ann Clark who have worked so hard in the last 12 months on our contacts with the trade and the Basketmakers Association.

We have distributed over **£96,000** since Installation Day 2023. Over 50% of all the Trust's giving is to the basketmaking trade.

What do the trade want from us?

Our Yeoman Basketmakers are very talented in what they make but often need basic accounting to help them make a living from their trade skills and create a sound basis for their business. We sponsor courses so that they can obtain those skills. Talented basketmakers can find workspace difficult to obtain and that it can be expensive. So, we sponsor two basketmakers at Cockpit Studios in London. The studios are located in Deptford, SE8 and Bloomsbury, WC2. You can visit them at work there.



The Charitable Trust continued

Our own Basketry Showcase Day is held every other year, our next in 2026. Held in The Dutch Church, the Charitable Trust makes it possible for our invited guests from our fellow Livery Companies to view basketmakers at work demonstrating their talent. Finished items are on show and available for sale. Our Showcase Day in March 2024 was attended by our royal patron HRH the Duchess of Gloucester. The Charitable Trust provide practical support to our basketmakers, paying for their travel expenses to London on those days they exhibit.

What's next for the Charity?

We are affiliated to the Army, Air Force and HMS Richmond, currently at Plymouth. In early 2025, we plan for some of our Yeomen basketmakers to give tutorials to Naval personnel who are keen to make a basket. The Charity will make that possible by making expenses available to our Yeomen so that they can travel there, donate the materials needed and take them to the ship.

2025 sees the Basketry of the Year Competition, fully funded by the Charitable Trust. This competition is open to basketmakers from the UK and EU.



Some past Basketry of the Year competition winners

1st Prize for Traditional Basketry £2000

1st Prize for Contemporary Basketry £2000

2nd Prize £1250

3rd Prize £750

This is a prestigious competition with substantial prizes and there are usually many entries; the objective is to encourage excellence and

innovation in the craft. The winners are invited to our Banquet in September, where the Lord Mayor presents the prizes.

We could do none of these things without your financial support. The Trust continues to rely on the members of the Company to fund its activities and we are most grateful for all donations received.

For a further breakdown of the Trust's giving, please go to:

<https://www.basketmakersco.org/charitable-trust>

Anne Holden

Chairman of the Charitable Trust



Yeoman member John Page with the Duchess of Gloucester at the Basketry Showcase



The Prime Warden presenting a cheque for the Lord Mayor's Charity



L to R: Linda Lemieux, Anita Vozik, Trade Advisor Ellie Morgan, Karen Lawrence

The Livery Schools Link (LSL) works with Livery Companies to help connect and assist them to work with schools and other educational organisations. Set up over 20 years ago, the Basketmakers were one of the earliest affiliated Livery Companies of which there are currently 62.

Over the course of the year the LSL organises an annual conference held at Merchant Taylors Hall; the London Careers Festival held at Guildhall in February; runs the Opportunity Fund (a legacy following the success of the Digital Divide campaign during the pandemic) and organises the speakers for schools through its volunteering platform.

The Company was once again represented at the London Careers Festival held at Guildhall on 27th and 28th February. This is the biggest event in the LSL annual calendar. The Basketmakers' stall was manned on both days by our trade advisor, Eleanor Morgan and the three yeomen members pictured above. The stall was inundated throughout the days and was thoroughly enjoyed by the students who were able to experience hands on basketmaking.



The baskets made by the schoolchildren

The LSL also produces the biannual 'Livery in Education' report which documents the work each livery company undertakes within the education field. As a company this is we predominantly do this through the support provided by the Charitable Trust, both through grants made to small, London based charities and institutions and through the Trade. In terms of the Basketmaking trade, this includes the support provided to allow people to attend the basketmaking course at City Lit, the support provided for two basketmakers to attend Cockpit Arts (previously this was only one) for a year to develop their businesses as well as support for numerous other basketmakers to undertake more advanced study including the prestigious Walmsely Bursary. In relation to education in general, support the Charitable Trust provides includes to The Crown and Manor Club and Magic Breakfast, both of which work with schools or young people.

*Steve Bowsher,
Court Assistant*



Our relationship with the Letzi Guild of Zürich continues to be warm and friendly, with two reciprocal visits each year.

Approximately 200 Zürich Guild members and their partners processed in the Lord Mayor's Show



last year. This included some members of the Letzi Guild, pictured here with PPW Roger Harper. They were very colourful, waving their banners and wearing their medieval costumes. Our Letzi friends loved taking part and so did our Basketmaker's group, very ably led by our Prime Warden. In the evening there was a Visiting Cities' Gala Dinner at Plaisterers' Hall. This was attended by the Prime Warden, PPW Norman Woolley, PPW Roger Harper, Court

Assistant Philip Miles and his wife Christine; the new Lord Mayor Professor Michael Mainelli was able to join halfway through the evening. A really super evening enjoyed by the Basketmakers and our lovely Letzi friends.

Prime Warden Lady Lauriston and PPW Norman Woolley travelled to Zurich for the annual Sechseläuten Festival, which marks the beginning of spring, and were grateful to the Guild for their splendid hospitality. Lady Lauriston was honoured to address the assembled Letzi in its beautiful



Sechseläuten

Affiliations – The Letzi Guild continued

mediaeval Guild House. She spoke warmly of the friendship between the Basketmakers and the Letzi, and paid tribute to PPW Norman Woolley and Ehrenzunftmeister Raymond Porchet for their vision in initiating the relationship a quarter of a century ago.

To mark the visit on 15th April, she presented Zunftmeister Stefan Forster with a pewter quaich – the Scottish cup of friendship – before taking part in the traditional parade of the guilds through the streets of Zurich. Usually, the parade culminates in a spectacular bonfire topped by a giant snowman. This year the fire was not lit because of dangerously high winds, which meant that the snowman's basketry hat survived to see another day!



Master of the Letzi Guild Stefan Forster with the Prime Warden at Mansion House

In September members of the Letzi Guild visited London to attend the Mansion House Banquet. There was also an interesting programme laid on for them; PPW Stephen Gee accompanied them on one visit. He writes: On 4th September five Company members and eight Letzi members visited Leighton House in Kensington, the



Urs Weilenmann

studio house designed and built in 1866 by George Aitchison for Lord Frederick Leighton. We all enjoyed a guided tour of the house, and in his studio, which

has been preserved just as it was on the day he died, there is a grand piano which Letzi Guild Member Urs Weilenmann played for us brilliantly. His impromptu performance received enthusiastic applause from both our group and the public - a wonderful and unexpected treat. We finished the day by enjoying refreshments in the Garden.

We were delighted to welcome Jürg Vogel as a Liveryman of the Basketmakers in the spring. He had forged strong ties with the Company during his years as Master of the Letzi Guild; he continues to hold the position of Letzi/Basketmakers liaison person, and his becoming a Liveryman gives us another bridgehead in Zürich and strengthens our mutual relationship in the framework of the annual visits.



*Roger Harper,
Past Prime Warden*

HMS RICHMOND



Crown copyright/Royal Navy

The New Year saw RICHMOND rapidly deployed in response to tensions in the Red Sea where she spent nearly six weeks in the line of fire around the Bab-al-Mandeb Strait and Gulf of Aden, where merchant shipping has come under repeated attack from Houthi rebels. RICHMOND was called upon just once to fire her weapons in anger to thwart such attacks, firing Sea Ceptor missiles to down incoming drones in the largest swarm attack to date: rebels launched 57 missiles and drones from various sites in Yemen in the small hours of Saturday 9th March.

Her crew were also first on the scene after the merchant vessel Sky II was struck by a Houthi missile, provided the ship's master with an assessment of damage. Additionally, the combined Royal Marines/Royal Navy boarding team, watched over by the frigate's Wildcat helicopter, searched seven vessels to ensure the craft were not carrying illegal cargoes.

Since sailing from Devonport in the first week January, Richmond has sailed over 22000 nautical miles – 9,000 of them in February alone, the most in any month since she commissioned, as well as being far enough to sail the circumference of the earth– while her Wildcat helicopter flown 115 hours of sorties making it the busiest in the Navy. Chefs have worked around the crew to serve four meals a day to their 200 shipmates (more than 100,000 in all), getting through 30,000 eggs, 40,000 sausages, six tonnes of potatoes and 25,000 litres of milk. The ship's company have enjoyed brief periods of rest – swimming in the Indian Ocean and flight deck barbecue, plus stops in Malta and Gibraltar on the way home.

Lt Cdr Tony Lofts (Weapon Engineer Officer) attended the Mansion House banquet as the ship was at sea that week; he is pictured here with Prime Warden Lady Lauriston.



*Mark Cooper,
Under Warden*



RAF ISTAR AIR WING

Starting in 1996 the Company formed an association with V (Army Cooperation) Squadron RAF, which was established in 1913 and was one of only seven squadrons in what was then the Royal Flying Corps to be formed before the First World War. As often happens with RAF Squadrons and not for the first time in its history, V (AC) Squadron was temporarily disbanded on 31st March 2021 and is awaiting a new role. The Basketmakers have therefore formed a new affiliation with ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) Air Wing, based at RAF Waddington.

During the year, operations conducted on NATO's Eastern Flank by the Rivet Joints of 51 Squadron and Intelligence specialists of 1 ISR Wing have continued apace, with 51 Squadron deploying to the Eastern Mediterranean to continue their work with UK and NATO forces in the area.

The 14 Squadron Shadows continued to support operations in the Middle East and assisted in locating the remaining hostages in the Gaza region. XIII Squadron's Reapers continued to fly operations 24/7 delivering excellent imagery and intelligence in support of Operation SHADER.

Personnel of 31 Squadron trained with 54 Squadron, the ISTAR Training Squadron, to prepare their aircrew for flying Protector from RAF Waddington. The engineers of 31 Squadron were very busy as the Protector airframes were delivered, and needed to be built, tested, and then prepared for flight. The Protector Remotely Piloted Air System can now be seen in the skies of Lincolnshire more regularly.



There was significant ISTAR participation in the Freedom of Lincoln Parade, marching with the King's Colours through the city centre to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings; a moment of pride and a poignant time of reflection to remember those who served during D-Day.

North at RAF Lossiemouth, the P-8A Poseidon fleet of CXX, 201 and 42 squadrons again flew in support of Maritime Search and Rescue missions in the seas around the UK and Ireland. Tireless

Affiliations – RAF ISTAR Air Wing continued

work ensures that the defence of UK sovereign airspace and waters are maintained 365 days a year. The Poseidon fleet operated in multiple locations, flying from Hawaii in support of Exercise RIMPAC, while also supporting its sovereign and NATO commitments from the UK.

RAF Lossiemouth conducted a series of exercises in late May to demonstrate the ISTAR Force, and wider Station's, ability to operate in dispersed locations. These types of exercises help the whole force to develop the ability to fly and fight in the most adverse conditions, ensuring they are prepared for whatever the future may hold.

Latest news October 2024

ISTAR Air Wing's focus is the provision of intelligence to the UK's Armed Forces our international allies and partners. It has been kept busy due to the current conflict in the Middle East as well as its normal role of ensuring security for the Euro-Atlantic region.

The UK has become the first country to conduct a full transit of NATO's eastern border, from the southernmost point of Greece to the most northerly point of Finland.

The flight was completed by ISTAR Air Wing's electronic surveillance RC-135W Rivet Joint aircraft, which flew with the support of NATO and international partners. The UK's achievement is a landmark moment for air power and further shows the Armed Forces' commitment to the alliance.



The Rivet Joint aircraft can be employed for surveillance in all theatres on strategic and tactical

missions. Its sensors can detect electronic emissions from communications, radar and other systems from enemy forces. Powered by four 21,600lbft (96kN) CFM International F108-CF-201 turbofan engines, the aircraft can travel at 540mph and has a range of 4,000 miles.

*Philip Miles,
Court Assistant*

ISTAR Commander Air Wing Aviator of the Year Award for Junior Ranks

At our Mansion House banquet, the Lord Mayor presented the inaugural Aviator of the Year award to Acting Corporal Bethan Wride of ISTAR Air Wing, who is a digital technology expert. The award recognises exceptional achievements or contributions in support of operations, the ISTAR Air Wing mission, RAF life or community engagement. ISTAR Air Wing chose a modern and eco-friendly design for the trophy which is given along with a financial award and a donation to an appropriate RAF charity each year. Bethan was presented with the striking new trophy kindly commissioned by Court Assistant Philip Miles, who is responsible for our RAF liaison.





8th BATTALION THE RIFLES

The Battalion remains most grateful to the Basketmakers for our ongoing and deepening relationship. I as Commanding Officer, and Captain Frankie D'Souza, your 'link man' to our Battalion, were delighted to attend your Annual Banquet at Mansion House.!

Your Battalion continues to compete successfully and seamlessly against far longer established Battalions – packing a real pound for pound punch. We remain 19 Light Brigade's go to Battalion in terms of extrovert thinking to drive modernisation and change in the Army Reserve. Our Headquarters Infantry Reserve sponsored 'Skirmish Group' Pilot is forging a path in the modularisation of Army Reserve support weapons growth whilst also delivering to the Chief of the General Staff's (CGS) intent of doubling lethality.



Skirmish Group's Team 62

Operational Activity We continue to provide support to the vital delivery of Operation INTERFLEX (the training of UKRAINIANS on UK soil) and are providing augmentees to Army tasks in KENYA and OMAN, and back office support to the Army's special operations brigade and special forces tasks in the UK and overseas. Training for operations remain the Army Reserve's Centre of Gravity, and so we have been busy with various support weapons cadres – including anti-tank, mortars and machine guns. 2024's highlight has been delivering SAVA STAR, a NATO interoperability exercise with the Croatian Armed Forces.

Workforce We sit on the cusp of seventy percent headcount with a strong pipeline and a healthy promotion ratio that betters itself year on year. Unsurprisingly the two sub units already formed at the Battalion's establishment six years ago continue to do well. And pleasingly that the two we started from scratch are now steadily climbing thanks to increasing our footprint into Hartlepool paired with rebranding and capability initiatives. Turnover is expected as aspirations are fulfilled, but our relentless focus on culture and 'too good to miss' training opportunities are positively affecting attendance and so retention.

Affiliations - 8th Battalion the Rifles continued

Adventurous Training (AT) and Sport We have again run AT this year – bucking the wider Army Reserve trend – including sailing and downhill skiing. Army representatives include LCpl Myles (climbing), Pte Cage-White (sailing), Rfn O'Shaughnessy (British ju-jitsu) and CSjt Forrester (rugby league). LCpl Chatwin again represented the Army and the RIFLES in cycling disciplines, whilst Sjt McGinlay and Rfn Chamberlain represented the Infantry at angling and climbing respectively. We also had multiple runners simultaneously in the Nairobi Half Marathon and the Great North Run – including 2nd Place in the Men's Elite category thanks to an Olympian enrolled in a Royal Army Physical Training Corps 'Lateral Entry' Pilot.



Cambrian Patrol Team Bronze Medallists
(third year in a row)

Community Engagement Another event heavy period (94) across our Regimental Pillars maintaining the RIFLES brand in our communities. Army Benevolent Fund events and deepening relationships with Birmingham City and Sunderland Football Clubs are offering strong 'multi-pillar' engagement; and Bugle Breakfasts remain a practical, stylish way of getting the Bugle in the eye of stakeholders whilst showing off our history, our present and our future.

Competitions Our Cambrian Patrol team recorded a 'third in a row' bronze and we again competed at Divisional Operational Shooting Competitions. Pleasingly we are Army North, Minor Unit, Cross Country Champions. This makes up for our inability to defend our crown at the 1st Division's Bismarck Challenge team relay event – due to our Unit deployment to Croatia. We also led 19 Light Brigade's Defence Cyber Marvel team and contributed to cyber concentrations. Competition of any kind is key to personal development, team culture and brand management – and our ethos is to 'compete to win' in everything we do.



Cross country champions

Conclusion We continue to develop a lethal, credible and coherent Army Reserve Battalion, that competes hard, contributes meaningfully to the development of 19 Light Brigade and the Army Reserve, and places our 'Rifleman culture' front and centre (and on the flanks).

P H Bull

Lieutenant Colonel

Commanding Officer

8 Rifles



The relationship between the Company and the 2 Company City of London and North East Sector Cadet Force continues to deepen. They are a valuable addition to some of our finest moments, providing a stair guard at Mansion House and supporting our Basketry Showcase.



At the Basketry Showcase, receiving the Duchess of Gloucester

When not in Basketmakers' service, they have a wonderful time engaging in a whole variety of activities, from fieldcraft and drill to motocross and windsurfing. The resilience, leadership, planning and communication skills that these instil set up cadets for life while also creating memories that will last a lifetime.

The aim of the corps is to inspire young people to achieve success in life with a spirit of service to the King, their country and their local community, and to help them become good citizens. Research this year has shown the impact on social mobility, as well as a huge boost in wellbeing and career prospects, for young people who belong to the cadet forces. It is particularly advantageous to those from poorer and disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, our affiliation with the cadets is very much helpful to both parties, and so a particularly valuable association.

Under Warden Mark Cooper attended their Day Camp this year. He writes: What an inspiring bunch of young people this year's cadets are. We were treated to archery and range firing demonstrations along with a competition to build a sturdy box with limited time and tools. After an excellent curry lunch in the mess, we were privileged to watch the 'passing out' parade and



presentation of berets to the new recruits after an intense week of training. The ACF do wonderful work building skills and confidence and we are proud to support them. Congratulations to the section of 2024!



Guild Church of St Margaret Pattens with St Gabriel Fenchurch

The Company is fortunate to be able to use the pretty Wren church for Installation and Carol services, as well as having use of a meeting room for some of our committee meetings.

Physical attendance in church at the Thursday communion service is averaging about fifteen. However, additionally there are still regular attendees now on YouTube since our Peoples' churchwarden, Felix Corbett, got the camera system, bought several years ago, working and we will continue to offer this mode of worship for as long as there is a demand.

The carol services were held on Thursday 14th December 2023, a wet and miserable day. The church's own carol service was held at lunchtime and about 50 people were in the congregation. The Joint Livery Carol service, Basketmakers and Pattenmakers, was held in the evening and attended by 110 in the congregation, which is approaching pre-pandemic levels and is very heartening.

At the April 2024 AGM Richard Turner was proposed as Churchwarden by Rev. Andrew Keep, and was voted unanimously. Richard takes over the role of Basketmakers' Churchwarden from Tony Charlwood, who has served honourably for 20 years, and remains as Parish Clerk. Richard's appointment is temporary until someone steps forward to take on the position permanently.

As part of the efforts of the church to be more energy efficient, it has been suggested that glass porticos be erected at both entrances and that solar panels be fitted on the roof of the Church. A proposal and estimate have been put together by Treadlighter. The Church is asking for additional support to finance this.

Basketmakers are permanently invited, should they find themselves in the vicinity of Rood Lane on a Thursday at 1pm, to attend Holy Communion.

Tony Charlwood

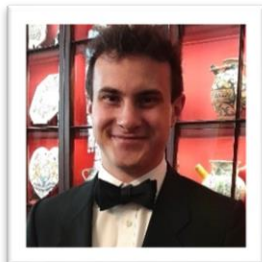
Honorary Court Assistant; Parish Clerk

Company News

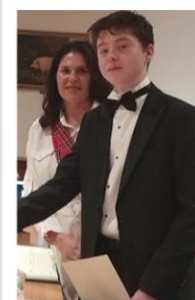
We welcome:

New Freeman; L to R: John Nugée, Andrew Jackson, Lesley Bull, Michael Bull, Colin Risso.

New Apprentice Elliot Wright and his Master, Karen Wright.



New Freeman Toby Kerby



New Freeman Adam Goldman with Lord Mayor Nicholas Lyons

New Liverymen;
L to R: John Nugée,
Jenny Nugée-Jacob,
Jürg Vogel.



New Yeoman Bob Johnston



New Liverymen; L to R: Andrew Jackson, William Daniels, the Prime Warden, Christine Daniels and Yeoman Geoff Travers



Also, not pictured,
new Yeoman Virgil Bauzys



New Yeomen; L to R: Rachel Frost, Mollie McMillen and Helen Jackson with Trade Advisor Eleanor Morgan (with badge)

Sadly, this year we have also lost an old friend:

Yeoman John Galloway
He will be much missed.

Livery Climate Action Group

The Livery Climate Action Group, LCAG, which our Company joined in June 2023, now comprises 104 other Livery companies and is committed to reduce our impact on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation. In this we support the ongoing efforts of the Lord Mayor and the City of London.

As a company without a livery hall or owned transport, our carbon emissions are not easy to benchmark so our strategy must be on the basis of best practice and continual improvement. Part of our Climate Action Plan (CAP) will be to encourage our Court, Clerk, members and suppliers to support our targets in reducing our impacts. Our CAP will be applied across all Company activities and will form part of the 'Company Manual' and governance. It covers such areas as reducing paper use, maintaining a green investment portfolio, encouraging caterers at events to source and produce our food in an environmentally friendly manner. Our Trade is extremely green; in promoting it and supporting education of the next generation of basketmakers we help to slow climate change.

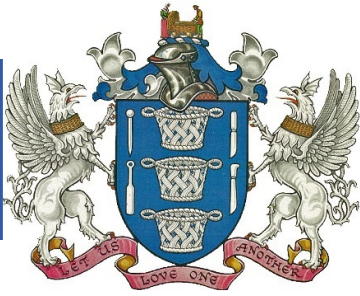
The LCAG quarterly newsletters (available online) are full of articles relevant to climate adaptation and climate resilience and have up to date advice for Companies with or without halls. The Climate Action Plans already posted (ours included) are being used as a resource and a template for those Companies now preparing their own. Thirteen plans have now been posted.



A group of representatives from several companies visited 41, Lothbury, the old Natwest Headquarters, on the 29th July in the company of LCAG founder Alderman Alison Gowman to see the comprehensive renovation of the Edwardian structure, retaining many of its original features and with the most up to date procedures for re-cycling and waste disposal.

The group also supports other groups such as Pollinating London Together which work, with the blessing of the Corporation of London, to educate people and produce a greener and more sustainable city.

*Sasha Keir,
Court Assistant*



The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers



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