

# The Flame



## FORTHCOMING FIREBIRDS EVENTS

### Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 Firebirds AGM

To be held at  
Furniture Makers' Hall  
Starts promptly 12 noon and  
followed by lunch (£69.00)  
We would like you all to come.  
Places are unlimited.

### APRIL/MAY 2019

Trip down the Thames to visit  
the Greenwich Museum.

### SUMMER 2019

Liz and Peter Green have  
kindly offered to arrange a  
joint Phoenix and Firebirds  
evening tour of the Old Bailey.  
Date to be confirmed.

### NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

The Firebirds are organizing a  
lunch on HQS Wellington.  
Phoenix Partners are included.

### PHOENIX EVENT

#### 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019

The Phoenix are organizing a  
trip to Oporto. Firebirds  
partners are included.



## DEAR FIREBIRDS,

Following Liz Green's election as our non-Aldermanic Sheriff, Peter, as her consort, is now busier than ever. It would have been a struggle for him to edit the Flame. Therefore, when Vicky Nugée, the Firebirds' new Chairman, asked if I would come back onto the Committee and edit the newsletter, I was happy to agree.

It is very good news that Vicky has agreed to take over the Chairmanship and you will find her introduction on page 2.

Page 3 continues with the June visit to the Chelsea Physic Garden and the report on the Dragon Boat Race in July (pages 4 and 5). This is followed by Samantha Bowman's article (pages 6-8), giving us an insight into the past year of her life.

Despite his duties, Peter has written the Trivia article (page 9). I am sure that you will come across one or two facts that you didn't know before. Anne Somers' write up of the Champagne Tea at Fenwick's is on page 10 and Rue Hoddinot's invitation to the AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 on page 11.

Please help me to keep The Flame topical and interesting. Let me have your news, experiences, stories, comments and feedback. The next newsletter should come out in March 2019. Please let me have your contributions by the end of February.

I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> February. In the meantime, have a happy Christmas and a very good New Year.

Erika Gloyn (Masons)  
Editor

The views and opinions expressed by the authors and those providing comments are theirs alone and do not reflect the views and opinions of the Editor or the Firebirds Committee.

# FROM OUR NEW CHAIRMAN

Dear Firebirds,

You will have heard by now that our previous chairman, Lady Lenzie, has stepped down and that the committee lost no time in throwing the mantle round my astonished shoulders. I will do my best! I do, at least, have the advantage of being known to all of you having been membership secretary.

I believe that the role of the committee is to serve the Firebirds, and to produce the kind of events that you'd like to attend. With that in mind, I'd like to expand the committee, so that we have more input to our discussions, and more ideas and expertise. No-one needs to have any particular skill to offer, but we would really benefit from a larger group to bounce ideas around. Here's what the existing committee

members say about it: "It helps me to maintain friendships and camaraderie;" "I had such a great year as Mistress, I didn't want it to be over;" "I joined because I thought it would be fun and to get to know the Firebirds better;" and "I'm involved because I wanted to get to know people and be part of what's going on". We'll be asking for nominations ahead of the AGM 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019; information will appear before Christmas.

We'd also welcome ideas that you might have about possible future events. What sort of things did you most enjoy about your year as Mistress/Consort?

The Dragon Boat event in the summer was a tremendous occasion (see report in this Flame) and also incurred an immense amount of hard work. We're very grateful to those involved, and delighted to have made such a fine donation to The Lord Mayor's Appeal. The Dragon Boat race may be repeated, but, if so, it will be someone else's headache, and not a Firebirds event. For us, it was a special one-off as we wanted to support 'our' Lord Mayor.

We're extremely pleased to welcome past Flame editor Erika Gloyn back into the fold to produce this newsletter for us in her own inimitable style. Erika ([erika.gloyn@gmail.com](mailto:erika.gloyn@gmail.com)) will always be very willing to receive articles or ideas for the Flame; please don't hesitate to get in touch.

The Committee and I look forward to much conviviality and friendship and to seeing you all at future events.

Vicky Nugée  
Firebirds Chairman



**VICKI NUGÉE**





Twenty-four Firebirds gathered together on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018 for a guided tour around the Chelsea Physic Garden, followed by lunch. This garden oasis is tucked away beside the River Thames and is the oldest botanic garden in London, housing around 5,000 medicinal, herbal, edible and useful plants.

The Garden was a fascinating glimpse into the past. Many of the 400 medicinal plants, the most common of which is digitalis, have been grown in the garden since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Pharmaceutical plants form the basis of around a quarter of all modern Western medicines.

We were divided into two groups, each with a guide. The day of our visit was also that chosen to remember the victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster. At 12 noon, we held a minute of silence in remembrance. Afterwards, we continued with our tour.

We were told that because the garden has a warm micro-climate, it is able to grow trees which would normally only be found in Mediterranean climates. These include the UK's largest outdoor fruiting olive tree, the most Northerly outdoor grapefruit tree and pomegranates. It was a fascinating tour and an eye-opener to how much modern medicine depends on plants used several centuries ago.

We then hot-footed it to the Tangerine Dream café, which is in the garden, where we had an enjoyable two-course meal.

It was great fun to catch up with both Firebirds we knew and also to meet Firebirds we had not met before. It made a most delightful day out.

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For more photos please use the following DropBox link –

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ru166lpn5qlacju/AADilBcZeEh93ff9t\\_up3nYCa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ru166lpn5qlacju/AADilBcZeEh93ff9t_up3nYCa?dl=0)



# THE DRAGON BOAT RACE

Report by Vicky Nugée (Weavers) and photos (mostly) courtesy of Peter Mosse, Past Master Broderer



It's a wonderful thing that the Firebirds (and the Phoenixes – their contribution was invaluable) are such great sports. On a cool, grey and especially wet Sunday in July Firebirds threatened to become Thunderbirds as we gathered to compete in the Lord Mayor's Dragon Boat Race.

After months of concerted fundraising (including struggling with our Just Giving pages) and anxiety over 'What shall we wear?', changes of plan, venue and weather, weeks of emailing and a frenzied flurry during the days just before the race – even zapping WhatsApps back and forth – the whole Firebirds Dragon Boat Team assembled at Fairlop Waters in Essex on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> July. I thought that was an achievement in itself.

We were welcomed by the Lord Mayor with a glass of champagne to cheer our spirits; we waved our floppy beach hats – the only 'uniform' item that we had agreed upon – and set about the first race, the Lady Mayoress changing hastily into suitable wear and a fine hat.



We donned our waterproofs and removed our hats (or tied them on) and headed out into the wind and rain. We scrambled more or less elegantly into our damp seats and began paddling with a lusty 'One, Two, One, Two' towards the start line. Juliet Mountevans, our President and our drummer, beat the rhythm manfully, even with some frills and trills, whilst seated on the most precarious, wobbly perch imaginable: her position was no sinecure! We cast steely glances at the boat alongside us; someone shouted Go! and we were off! To my astonishment, we trounced the first team they sent against us! So much for the gentle

swanning along at the back of the field (or lake in this case) which was the original plan; when Firebirds get the bit between their teeth they are a force to be reckoned with!

By our second race things had changed a bit. Some of the other teams were short of rowers, and the Lord Mayor, clearly never one to say 'no' to a challenge, whipped off his city smartness and reappeared in shorts and sports shirt, fit and ready to help out, and the Bowman's two daughters, Grace and Charlotte, set to with a very fine paddle. From that moment on we felt that the odds were stacked against us, and even roping in Phoenix Edward Middleton in the final race (owing to an early departure) was insufficient to propel us beyond third place. Third place! We won a trophy for fastest losers, and were presented with bronze medals apiece! We say nothing about there being only three boats left in the race by the end. We also won the trophy for Most Stylish Team, which must be thanks to the Hats! But Charles Bowman, nobly assisted by daughter Charlotte, helped to paddle his boat into first place, thus securing gold medals apiece; could lead to a strained atmosphere in the Bowman household!



A great deal of fun was had by all, and it was wonderful to see the Firebirds' team spirit grow.

It was a great event; my thanks to the team for being such tremendous sports; the team was:

Juliet Mountevans,  
Samantha Bowman, Sandy Rowsell, John Rowsell, Peter Green, Liz Green, Diana Reese, Marion Whitehead, Sarah Mosse, Sheila Higgs, Rue Hoddinott, Patsi Wheatley-Hubbard, Rosemary Middleton, Edward Middleton, Annie Attlee, Alison Knocker, John Nugée.



Lady Lenzie and Angie Kay between them put an unimaginable amount of effort into organising a wonderful day, and especially in such trying circumstances as the late change of venue. We are very grateful to Crescent and John Giffard for their original offer of Chillington Hall as the venue, and feel particularly sad for them that the unprecedented weather made it impossible.

Best of all, many, many thank yous to all those who contributed to the fundraising. The final total raised by our team through Just Giving was £6,040 which is a really fantastic figure and will mean such a lot to all the recipients of the Lord Mayor's Appeal.







Light Cavalry - Smith's Lawn

## WHAT A YEAR

by Samantha Bowman (Firebirds Vice President)

As I am sure most Firebirds will attest, during the year of their spouse or partner's office, time becomes elastic. This last year for me has passed by at pretty much warp factor 10 throughout and so it is extraordinary to look in my appointments diary and read that, this day a year ago, on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017, I was buying abayas for the trip to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, going to the opening of the Red Cross Fair at Guildhall and meeting the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

That small window is a pretty good illustration of the breadth of activity that goes on in Mansion House and the Corporation every day. And that was just my small bit – the number of meetings and events Charles would have in a day was rarely less than in double digits. It has been a truly extraordinary year and trying to describe it is a rather daunting task.

Since I last wrote for the Flame back in February/March I have been lucky enough to go on a further trip with the Lord Mayor's delegation, this time to Chile. It was only for a few days but, as usual, the program managers managed to pack in a lot of events. First we visited the massive Expomin Trade Show in Santiago which is a world show-case for all things mining. It was fascinating, with the British section demonstrating incredible innovation and development. I was particularly impressed by 2 young men from Cardiff who have developed a material which can be rolled out like a mat, in lengths (that can be manipulated by a mere 5 people) to line a water course. When it is then soaked with water the mat becomes rigid and waterproof and provides a perfect waterway lining that is invaluable to the water-hungry mining industry which, inevitably in Chile, is located up in the desert north. It was basically a roll of plaster of Paris and I cannot believe that I have spent my veterinary career being continuously impressed by the constantly evolving bone-setting techniques of metal plates and frames and had completely missed the potential wider (and very lucrative) use for the 'old fashioned', pretty much abandoned, messy, p of P!

As you might imagine, the hospitality extended by the Chileans was immensely generous and I became a rapid convert to Pisco Sours though with some restraint – as the saying goes, 'three or more and you're on the floor'. I lunched at the Instituto Chileno Británico de Cultura, visited La Moneda Palace Museum and the Precolombino Art Museum and attended the annual Queen's

Birthday Party at the British Residence. The latter becoming even more of a celebration when the Duchess of Cambridge obligingly produced another prince on the actual day.

Chile was my last trip abroad as, though I was invited to the USA, the dates clashed with the City Dip and by that stage I had committed myself to a 5 hour swimathon and couldn't very well duck out of it. I would have been jolly fed up to do so after all the training, too. A huge thanks to all those kind enough to sponsor me (we managed to raise over £10,000 for my bit alone) and especially to those who managed to come down to the pool and cheer me on. Swimming isn't much of a spectator sport so I really appreciate your kindness - it meant a huge amount to have so many supporters there.



In fact, a number of water-based activities took place over the summer, not least the Dragon Boat racing which the whole Bowman family thoroughly enjoyed. (Charlotte has just reminded me – not for the first time - that she and her father won in their boat!) The fact that the races took place at all was nothing short of a miracle and an extraordinary testament to the determination and organisational skills of Andrea, Angie and the team. As I'm sure you will be aware, due to the exceptional weather conditions, the original lake we were meant to be racing on (so kindly offered up by John and Crescent Giffard) was detected to have dangerously high levels of blue green algae and had to be abandoned as a venue. The whole event, in less than a week, was moved from Staffordshire to Essex. The resourcefulness and determination of the organisers in pulling this off was quite simply staggering. Thanks to the amazing Firebirds (and a number of Phoenix Masters), well over £10,000 was raised for the Lord Mayor's Appeal charities, Samaritans, Place2Be and Onside Youth Zones and they could not be more grateful to you all for your support.

The first event Charles and I attended back in London after the summer break, was also back on the water. This time the Thames. The Jubilee Sailing Trust's tall ship Lord Nelson, was arriving back in London after a 40 day round Britain sail, crewed by Army cadets and ex-servicemen. A few days before the event we received the usual email from the programme officer on duty for the day with all the appropriate timings and instructions.

The email included the immortal line, 'At Greenwich we will be making an exciting ship-to-ship transfer'. Now an individual's response to this sort of statement can perfectly illustrate the different characters that make up a marriage. Charles' reaction was 'Whoppee! They haven't cast the new James Bond yet – I'm in with a chance'. My reaction however was – and you may well recognise this particular refrain – 'Oh my goodness – what on Earth do I wear'!

The last 2 months of this mayoral year have been spent on terra firma with elections, admissions, sheep driving, Flowers in the City, cadet evenings, guard inspections, police horse naming ceremonies, a sponsored ride around the City and a state visit to list but a few of the events. As I write this, I am sitting by the sea in Mauritius – it's been pouring with rain for days but the sun has been promised for tomorrow. I look forward to seeing you sometime soon in 2019 and thank you.



### **Police Horse Samantha**

The mounted police officers do enjoy it if you speak to them when they are out on patrol and especially if you know the horses' name, so please look out for Samantha. She has an interesting extension of her black coat – a triangle down through the white of her front right hoof's sock, so instantly recognizable.



This is to demonstrate Police Horse Samantha's distinct markings for identification when she is on patrol!



City Ride



Mauritius

Finally, a well-deserved rest. Although, Samantha, heroically, did write her article whilst on holiday!



# CITY TRIVIA

by Peter Green (Non Aldermanic Sheriff's Consort)

Relocating from rural Chilterns to Old Bailey changes life in many ways, not least the decrease in green surroundings. So I have been exploring the City to find nature.

The City of London is responsible for over 30 City Gardens (according to their map at <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/city-gardens/Documents/city-gardens-map.pdf>). But don't get too excited – given that Hyde Park is over half the size of the entire City of London, we are not talking about vast tracts of green and pleasant land. The City would fit easily within Central Park in New York (area, if not shape)! But there are some quiet corners.



Perhaps the best known is **Postman's Park**, named due to its popularity as a lunchtime garden with workers from the nearby old General Post Office. Postman's Park, which opened in 1880, is the home of the memorial wall conceived by the Victorian painter and philanthropist G F Watts (1817 – 1904). In 1887, Watts, a radical socialist, wrote to the Times proposing a park commemorating 'heroic men and women' who had given their lives attempting to save others. The

memorial was erected in 1900 and consists of glazed Doulton tablets commemorating acts of bravery, each one detailing the nature of the heroic act, often involving children and/or concern fire, drowning or train accidents.



The City of London map identifies one of my favourite church names in the City. First mentioned around 1170, **St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe** was almost certainly founded considerably earlier. In 1361, Edward III moved his Royal Wardrobe (a storehouse for Royal accoutrements), from the Tower of London to just north of the church, hence the unusual name.

The Wardrobe and the church were both lost in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Of the 51 churches designed by Sir Christopher Wren after the Great Fire, St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe is among the simplest. The church was again destroyed during the London Blitz with only the tower and walls surviving. It was rebuilt and rededicated in 1961.



A hidden gem is **St Dunstan in-the-East**, not to be confused with St Dunstan in-the-West. St Dunstan became patron saint of English goldsmiths and silversmiths because he worked as a silversmith making church plate. The church was originally built around 1100, a new south aisle added in 1391, repaired in 1631, then severely damaged in the Great Fire of London and superficially patched up. A steeple and tower were added in 1695-1701 by Sir Christopher Wren.

The Church was again severely damaged in the Blitz of 1941. Wren's tower and steeple survived the bombing and in 1967 the City of London decided to turn the site into a public garden, which opened in 1970. New plantings in spring 2015 revitalised this popular space.

These are some of my favourites – do let me know of hidden gems in the City you know about. *(Thanks to the City of London web-site for many of the facts and stories in this article.)*



## 'Twas the First Day of Christmas!

by Anne Somers (Turners)

On the afternoon of Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December, 21 Firebirds met for afternoon tea at Fenwick's in New Bond Street, and what a treat it was!

Warmly greeted with a glass of champagne, we then indulged in delicate finger sandwiches, followed by cream desserts, all superbly crafted and designed to kick off the Christmas celebrations. With the traditional scones and jam also on the menu, it was a glorious and indulgent spread!

Roland Billson made sure we all got into the party mood, wearing not only a 'Santa in the chimney' hat, he dressed in a bright red jacket and tie too, offering kisses under the mistletoe to anyone who asked!

Despite his busy diary as Sheriff's Consort, Peter Green was able to join us, and let us all know that he and Liz were having an "amazing time" in their current roles. We all wished them both all the best for the rest of their year.

Catching up with each other is an easy and enjoyable experience, and a very jolly afternoon was had by all. The food was plentiful, and Fenwick's kindly supplied "doggy boxes" and bags for the surplus, so many of the group took the creations home...allegedly for grandchildren, but maybe a little something for later for themselves too!

A big thank you to El Moss for organising the event.

Photos by Vicky Nugée and Peter Green





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## FIREBIRDS AGM 2019

Next year's Firebirds AGM will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019, at 11.30 for 12 noon, at the Furniture Makers' Hall, 12 Austin Friars, London EC2N 2HE. The AGM will be followed by Lunch, the cost of which is £69.00.

I do urge you to come to this important Firebirds meeting. Further information including booking information will be sent out in the New Year.

The committee will be looking for some new committee members, particularly a Membership Secretary, as Vicky Nugee, our previous Membership Secretary has now become Chairman. If you are interested in joining the committee, you might like to contact Vicky at [vicky@nugee.org.uk](mailto:vicky@nugee.org.uk) to discuss what is involved.

The format is to find someone to nominate you and then send an e-mail to that effect to Rue Hoddinott (Secretary) at [ruehoddinott@aol.com](mailto:ruehoddinott@aol.com). The nomination should arrive before the 16<sup>th</sup> January. You can still nominate someone and be voted for in your absence.

Please try and attend.

The Committee wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Rue Hoddinott (Secretary)



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## FLY ON THE WALL

Our grandson number one is 3 years and 8 months old. He goes to nursery and before the last summer break he started to get a bit boisterous. On one occasion he let himself fall onto another child, which caused a bit of an upset. When asked what had happened, he had a quick answer: 'It was gravity'. Erika Gloyn (Masons)