

# The Flame



## FORTHCOMING FIREBIRDS EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER 2020

City Farm Visit

### 2020 PRE-CHRISTMAS

Champagne Tea

### SPRING 2021

Weekend in Brighton with  
dinner at the Royal Pavillion

## PHOENIX EVENTS

### Friday/Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020

Visit to Portsmouth. Dinner  
aboard HMS Warrior and visit  
to the National Museum of the  
Royal Navy. Firebirds partners  
are included.

### Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Visit to Michael & Hilary  
Goodridge's Garden.  
Tickets: £10.00 per person  
All proceeds to go to the  
National Garden Scheme.  
Firebirds Partners are included.

## OTHER EVENTS

### Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

City Consorts Coffee Morning  
for all Livery Consorts at the  
'City Centre', Basinghall Street.



## DEAR FIREBIRDS,

Preparing this edition of the Flame was almost therapeutic. It took my mind off the headlines in the news.

We have a great number of interesting contributions from Firebirds and Phoenix Masters alike. There are reports on events attended and enjoyed by both and many more articles and photos for you to read and enjoy.

However, I would like to draw your attention to Nigel Whitehead's article on Page 15. He is planning to do a tandem skydive from 12,000ft on 21<sup>st</sup> April, to raise money for Crisis, the national charity for homeless people. The Covid-19 situation is particularly difficult for the homeless and I feel that Nigel and Crisis deserve our support, even if there is the chance that, because of the coronavirus restrictions, Nigel might not be able to do the skydive.

David Pearson's article 'The Phoenix Masters and the Samaritans' (page 10) is telling us, amongst other things, about the Samaritans' initiative called 'Wellbeing in the Workplace'. This brings Samaritans' tried and tested resilience, listening and wellbeing skills into the workplace. The Samaritans listeners will be very busy at this difficult time and one can only say thank you to everyone volunteering and helping.

Although we don't know what the next weeks and months hold, I hope you have a good Easter.

God bless.

Erika Gloyn (Masons)

[firebirds.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:firebirds.newsletter@gmail.com)

Visit our website on [www.firebirds.london](http://www.firebirds.london)

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.



## LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Firebirds,

The AGM was a lovely event; we polished off the business in record time and then had a smashing lunch in the lovely contemporary Farmers' and Fletchers' Hall.

Here is a brief resumé of the important points:

**Paris:** Alas! We have decided to abandon our projected trip to Paris next spring: it's going to be just too complicated and over-ambitious. Apologies to anyone who was getting excited about it.

Instead, three committee members tempted us with various alternatives and it was put to the vote. Sheila Higgs' suggestion of a 3-day trip to Brighton won hands down, so we'll be busy planning that for next spring. The other suggestions of Stratford-Upon-Avon and Bordeaux will be shelved for the time being, but may reappear at a later date.

**HMS Warrior:** May 22nd. Effectually a Phoenix visit. I trust that you have encouraged your Phoenix partner to sign up for what promises to be a very special trip.

**Garden Visit:** 8th June. Hilary and Michael Goodridge will very kindly open up their fantastic garden to us, near Guildford, and give us tea.

**City Farm:** September, date tba. There will be a trip to the City Farm including travelling on the river via Surrey Quays.

**Champagne Tea:** Pre-Christmas, date tba. Since our visit to Fenwick's in 2018 was such a success, it seems a good idea to do it again!

There will be more information about these events circulated nearer the time. News and info will also be published in later editions of The Flame, and available on our website: [www.firebirds.london](http://www.firebirds.london)

The accounts are in a healthy position and the meeting was happy to accept them.

The Membership is still looking good. Anne Somers reported that we have had one person return having let their membership lapse; if you come across any ex-Firebirds who would like to rejoin, they will always be welcome back!

Anne Somers has been working away at a new Picture Book which includes both Masters and Consorts, side by side, using the original photos. It is a tremendous production which is a joint venture between the Firebirds and Phoenixes. We thank Anne for her hard work.

By the time you read this, the Picture Book will have been presented to all who attended the Phoenix Spring Dinner on the 11th March. After that date it will be sent to all members in a downloadable format. A hard copy will be available if you send an A5 sized SAE to Anne Somers at 45B Lurline Gardens, London SW11 4DD. Soft copies will be posted on the website shortly.

I look forward to seeing you at an event.

Cheerio,

Vicky Nugée  
Firebirds Chairman



## 22 FIREBIRDS AT THE 2020 AGM

By Peter Green (Framework Knitters)

Our AGM is a salutary reminder of how quickly one year passes by, as twenty-two Firebirds (with 29 apologies) convened in the Farmers' and Fletchers' Hall to review the activities of the past year and outline future plans.

Firebirds have had another fun and informative year, with visits to the Queen's House at Greenwich, a tour and supper at the Old Bailey, a Phoenix trip to Porto and a hugely successful biennial lunch aboard HQS Wellington with a speaker on the UK Parliament.

As the initial plan for a trip to Paris was deemed a logistical challenge too far, three alternatives were researched and presented to the meeting: Sheila Higgs outlined the delights of Brighton (Fish and Chips on the Beach, a trip down the Brighton Sewers on Saturday, followed by a dinner in The Royal Pavilion); Patsi Wheatly-Hubbard described a fascinating weekend of culture in Stratford-on-Avon with a tour of the Theatre and Shakespeare's birth place, combined with a tour of a Tudor Farm and Hidcote Gardens; and El had prepared a tempting resumé of a trip to Bordeaux, staying in a central hotel, visiting a Chateaux with wine tasting and the medieval village of St Emilion, with a group dinner on the first night and a Gala dinner on the third. All three options would, of course, include Phoenix members.

In true democratic style, we voted on the options, with the Brighton visit emerging as the forerunner.

Finishing business in 24 minutes, we had time for a photo-call and the above is a wonderful reminder of a delicious lunch and convivial conversations with friends.

Many people contribute to the success of the Firebirds which, for me, is a defining attribute of any strong association. So the thanks are sincere, but too wide spread to mention individually. However, special mention for Patsi Wheatley-Hubbard for organizing the venue and catering.



# INVESTITURE

by Lady Samantha Bowman (Firebirds Vice President)

October 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 was memorable as the day we were meant to leave the EU and then didn't. For me and our two daughters, Grace and Charlotte, it was special because we all went to Buckingham Palace to watch Charles receive a knighthood.

Despite the best efforts of a faulty Bakerloo line and then a taxi driver who was very reluctant to drive us into Buckingham Palace (even though we were slightly overdressed to be up to no good), we did get there on time. Our first pleasant surprise being Angela Turnbull latterly of the City's Remembrancers' Office, who greeted us at the (very big) door and also informed us that we were invited to a champagne reception directly after the event.

The whole event ran like absolute clockwork with never any doubt as to where we should be and what we should be doing. Charles included apparently – he was whisked away at the start to meet the other honours recipients and run through the process. We were told that there were 68 recipients and the whole event would therefore be over in an hour and 10 minutes.

The Princess Royal was representing the Queen and she gave each recipient at least a minute of conversation after they had been presented with their honour. Someone must have been there to help with a briefing if required but, for the life of me, I couldn't see who that was and when they did it!

Well-known amongst the 68 were Olivia Colman, who was receiving her CBE under her given name of Sarah Sinclair and also Feargal Sharkey of The Undertones who was receiving an OBE. I did wonder if the band of the Countess of Wessex might be tempted to give us a burst of 'Teenage Kicks' but they stuck (beautifully) to more traditional music throughout the ceremony. Also present were a number of British divers receiving bravery awards for the part they played in the rescue of the Thai boys trapped underground last year.

After the ceremony was over, we attended the champagne reception with Angela followed by a very efficient photography session in the inner courtyard. We finally left the palace to have a lovely lunch with Charles' mother, sister and brother in St James.

Our most sincere thanks to all the kind best wishes we have received from the Phoenix Masters and the Firebirds. Your support throughout the shrieval and mayoral years and then beyond has been extraordinary and so much appreciated.



**SIR CHARLES AND LADY SAMANTHA BOWMAN  
AND DAUGHTERS GRACE AND CHARLOTTE**

# PHOENIX MASTERS AND FIREBIRDS RIDE TO THE WILD WEST



By David Pearson (Past Master Marketor)  
Photos by Isobel Pollock-Hulf (Past Master Engineer)

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019, 25 Phoenix Masters and Firebirds gathered in the ancient Tuckers' Hall in Exeter for a black tie dinner. Tuckers' Hall belongs to the Incorporation of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen which is the historic guild of Exeter's ancient cloth trade. The Guilds and Incorporation have existed in Exeter for nearly 600 years and have occupied Tuckers' Hall since 1471. Both the Incorporation and the Hall have a remarkable story with a glorious and continuous history. The Guild received its Royal Charter from King James I in 1620 and importantly this gave them more control over their own business. The wealth of Exeter in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was created as a direct result of the woollen cloth trade in the city. On the back of this prosperity, many became Merchant Venturers and later Bankers including the founders of Barings.

By 1700 Exeter was responsible for a quarter of England's woollen cloth trade. But with mechanisation and loss of overseas trade, Exeter's affluence waned along with the Incorporation's membership; declining significantly from a peak of over 400 craftsmen to losing its last qualified member by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fortunately they had the foresight to open membership to outsiders in 1858. From the 1960s it has enjoyed a revival drawing its membership from prominent local businessmen, actively supporting the civic life of the city, education and many other charities.

The current membership numbers 66 with a waiting list for membership and balloting taking place annually.



TUCKERS' HALL

The Hall is charming with dining capacity restricted to just 28. It is oak lined with curved beams. It has survived many crises in its history not least when it was confiscated by Queen Elizabeth I in 1574. She gave it to a nobleman but after four years the Guild managed to wrestle back the freehold for the not inconsiderable sum of £20 in 1578. It has also survived fire in a neighbouring building, a nearly collapsing front wall and the Baedeker Blitz, part of the Luftwaffe's retribution on England's medieval towns for Lübeck. The nearby cathedral was not so fortunate.

Past Master Joiner & Ceiler Mark Snelling, who has strong local family links, took the chair and gave a short and witty speech. We were delighted that our Vice President Sir Charles Bowman and Firebird Lady Samantha Bowman were with us but it must be the first time in years that Sir Charles was allowed to relax and did not have to make a speech.



On the Saturday morning most of the party skulked in their rooms watching the Rugby Union World Cup Final but enough words have been published about that. Afterwards some of us saw the sights in our own way while Past Master Tallow Chandler Nicholas Bull took a select party to see the University where he serves on the governing body.

The University of Exeter was named the Sunday Times University of the Year in 2013 and was the Times Higher Education University of the Year in 2007. It has maintained a top ten position in the National Student Survey since the survey was launched in 2005. It was founded and received its royal charter in 1955, although its predecessor institutions, St Luke's College, Exeter School of Science, Exeter School of Art, and the Camborne School of Mines were established in 1838, 1855, 1863, and 1888 respectively.

Gifts from the Gulf States made it possible to build a new university library in 1983 which holds more than 1.2 million physical library resources, including historical journals and special collections. More recently donations have allowed for the creation of a new Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies. A further major donation enabled the completion of the Xfi Centre for Finance and Investment. Since 2009, significant further investment has been made into new student accommodation, new buildings in The Exeter Business School, and the Forum: a new development for the centre of Streatham Campus.

On arrival, we were met by a current student and together, she and Nicholas guided us around the Streatham campus starting with the Forum, past Queens, to the main Reed House, past the Arabic & Islamic studies to Holland Halls famed for their spectacular views, past Physics back to the theatre. We were all amazed at the mix of facilities enjoyed by the students ranging from a theatre and performing arts spaces, sports facilities, eateries, shops, study spaces and lecture theatres all set in a large campus of green spaces and mature trees. During the tour, Nicholas highlighted the Alumni lecture theatre in the Forum, so named to remind all present students of what might be expected of them in the future!!!

Afterwards, we enjoyed a satisfying tasty lunch at The Beer Engine washed down with very local zero mileage beers from its own micro-brewery.

The other principal sight in this delightful city is the outstanding cathedral with its myriad of special features. The cathedral was founded in 1050, has a copy of the Exon Doomsday Book and Shakespeare's Second Folio. We learnt that its West Front Image Screen was initially painted in vivid colours which have faded to a grey. Then there is the Astronomical Clock, St James's Chapel featuring a portion of the bomb that fell through its roof, the lady with the two left feet, and many other treasures. For the author a special feature is the Chapel where lies Hugh Oldham, Bishop of Exeter from 1504 until his death in 1519. Bishop Oldham was a member of the Oldham family after whom Oldham, Lancashire is called. In 1515 he founded Manchester Grammar School, the author's Alma Mater. He also co-founded Corpus Christi College.

The menu at our dinner was inscribed "First West Country Dinner" so perhaps there are plans for more Wild West adventures. But it was also suggested that we might want to explore the other Guild and Livery Halls around the country in Glasgow and Edinburgh, Sheffield and York and beyond. Perhaps a Phoenix might like to organise a Special Interest Group to that end.



EXETER CATHEDRAL  
ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK

# The City Of London: Who, What, Why?

Book by Alderman Alison J Gowman (Master of the Plaisterers' Company),  
with introduction by Vicky Nugée (Weavers)

The City is a fascinating place, stuffed with tradition and ceremony as well as being wonderfully modern and even cutting-edge.

This book seeks to explain some of the uniqueness that is the City. Alderman Gowman explains the roles of the major players, the part the Livery plays in the modern City, the ways that the City interacts with the outside world and promotes its trade and services and the huge amount of charitable work that is done. On a more mundane level she also looks at congestion, roadworks and the wholesale markets.

These subjects are interesting enough, but Alderman Gowman doesn't stop there – she also has much to say about the City's traditions, such as the Woolmen's annual sheep drive and the Carmen's cart-marking; its quirks: the enigmatic London Stone, the City's secret gardens and hidden churches; and its history: the great fire, the celebration after the battle of Waterloo, the attempt to promote settlement in the Ulster Plantations.

The book is constructed as a series of articles, and its short chapters are ideal for dipping into: take one at bedtime.

Alderman Gowman has kindly given permission for us to reproduce (substantially) her opening article.

## THE LORD MAYOR

### History

The first recorded Lord Mayor was Henry Fitz-Ailwyn in 1189. The current Lord Mayor is the 691<sup>st</sup> – thus some have clearly held office for more than the one year that is now the norm. The title 'Lord Mayor' has come about by custom and is not conferred by any charter. In 13<sup>th</sup> century documents the term 'dominus maior' is found, and then in English 'Lord Mair' is used in 1414. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century the prefix 'Right Honourable' was in use. Thus the full title is now 'The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor'.

Some Lord Mayors are household names, such as Dick Whittington and William Hardel, who witnessed the Magna Carta. Others have a mixed reputation – such as the Lord Mayor during the Great Fire of 1666 who was unable to appreciate the extent of the damage that his inaction was causing to the City. The Magna Carta is of special importance to the City because it is in this document that the right of the City to elect its own Mayor is enshrined and this is the only extant part of the Charter still operative and not revised and subsequently re-enacted.

This is not an exclusively male office as there have been two female Lord Mayors to date: Dame Mary Donaldson in 1983 and Dame Fiona Woolf in 2013.



**691<sup>ST</sup> LORD MAYOR OF LONDON  
(2018/19) - SIR PETER ESTLIN**

The Lord Mayor now holds office for one year only, from the Silent Ceremony in November. The following year is then packed with events such that the Lord Mayor is fully occupied, and ultimately exhausted, by the timetable.

### **Function: Looking Down**

Primarily, the Lord Mayor is head of the City of London Corporation. His or her remit is the Square Mile of the City of London. He or she works closely with the Mayor of London, who is the political leader of Greater London; but the two have quite different roles. The City Corporation is a uniquely diverse organisation that is more than a local authority. It seeks to support and promote London as a place to live, work, study and be entertained. The Lord Mayor works with other leading members of the City Corporation to make sure that the City's interests are reflected in local and national policy. For example when, in February 2018, the Lord Mayor appeared before the Foreign Affairs Select Committee to discuss what 'Global Britain' meant to the City and the UK professional and financial services sector.

Secondly (in the context of this article written for the Livery) is the role with regard to the Livery, of which the Lord Mayor is the effective head. On the first evening after the Lord Mayor's Banquet, the Lord Mayor and Civic Team (the Sheriffs and Officers) are always dined by the Mercers, and the next evening by the Grocers [the first and second Livery Companies in precedence]. The Lord Mayor seeks to honour many Livery Companies with visits, and will present many prizes during the year.

The City Ceremonial is closely linked to the Livery – the installation of the Lord Mayor, the Lord Mayor's Show as well as the church services and other public occasions, which range from the Armed Forces Flag Raising to the switching on of the Christmas lights at Leadenhall Market. Additionally the Lord Mayor will host several important dinners each year: for the Mayor of London, the Masters of all the Livery Companies, the Ambassadors and Heads of Mission, the Bankers and Merchants, the Judges, and for Financial Services and International Trade professionals.

### **Looking Up**

The Lord Mayor has a special link with the Government and the Royal Family. Historically, and in constitutional terms, the Lord Mayor is treated rather as the 'premier citizen' (my terminology). In the City of London the Lord Mayor takes precedence over everyone save the Queen. The Lord Mayor is first to be informed of the calling of a general election (after the Monarch) and also of the birth of a child of the Sovereign as well as the death of the Monarch. The Lord Mayor is then obliged to announce these matters to the other citizens by way of a public announcement on the steps of the Royal Exchange. The Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs attend the Queen at the time of any State visit to meet the visiting Head of State, and the City will usually entertain the Head of State at a Banquet at the Guildhall, at which the Lord Mayor presides.

### **Looking out**

The Lord Mayor is the international ambassador for the UK's financial and professional services sector. Indeed he or she travels with the seniority of a Cabinet Minister and is thus accorded a welcome from the local Ambassador. The remit is to promote this sector, in which the UK is the leading exporter of financial services across the world, with a trade surplus of £72bn. London houses more foreign banks, and accounts for more international bank lending than any other centre. The UK also offers exceptional maritime services, Islamic finance, legal services, insurance, education, and infrastructure financing and delivery. There are plenty of good stories to tell, and it is the Lord Mayor's job to tell them. Throughout the year the Lord Mayor is expected to make over 700 speeches and greet tens of thousands of visitors at the Mansion House. At the same time he or she is expected to spend about 100 days abroad and visit some 30 countries in support of the City and the UK.



## Charity

It has become traditional for the Lord Mayor to promote a charity appeal through the Lord Mayor's Appeal. This is in addition to many other charitable endeavours that the Lord Mayor supports. The Lord Mayor promotes the idea of charitable giving with the annual City Giving Day and promotes responsible business through the Dragon Awards that have been awarded for over 30 years to businesses and individuals all working to improve the lives and prospects of Londoners.

The Lord Mayor resides at the Mansion House, supported by many hard-working staff, who together work as a team to ensure that the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress are able to perform to the best of their ability during an exciting year of office.

*With grateful thanks to Alderman Alison Gowman, and apologies for my deviations from the original, and my sub-headings. (Vicky Nugée)*

*Books can be ordered at a price of £10 and can be delivered by post at an additional cost of £3.50. Please send enquiries to Alison Gowman at [themaster@plastererslivery.co.uk](mailto:themaster@plastererslivery.co.uk). The sale price will be given entirely to the Museum of London, the charity nominated as the Master Plaisterers' charity of the year.*

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## REMINDER

from Hilary Goodridge (Arbitrators)

A visit to our garden has been arranged by the Phoenix Masters on June 8th at 2pm for tea and cake. It's £10 per head and there will also be plants for sale.

I hope all the Firebirds will urge their other halves and friends to come. So please put the date in your diaries. Our garden is just south of Guildford, Surrey. Further instructions to come.

All proceeds in aid of the National Garden Scheme.



MICHAEL AND HILARY GOODRIDGE'S GARDEN

# THE PHOENIX MASTERS AND THE SAMARITANS

By David Pearson  
(Past Master Marketer and  
Chairman, Phoenix Masters Outreach and Purpose Committee)

When we formed the Phoenix Masters Association at Ironbridge in 2016, I am sure that most of us thought that this would be just like all the other Past Masters Associations and just be a social club. There is nothing wrong with that. We have all become friends, enjoy each other's company and looked forward to continuing to enjoy events together. And so we have been and are doing.

But some of us wondered whether there might be some other purpose we could achieve. Collectively we have a range of skills and experience, of contacts and networks. Couldn't we put that to some alternative use? The Chairman Mark Chambers asked me to lead this exercise and we formed a committee consisting of Mark, Liz Green, Tim Haywood, Nicholas Bull, John Nugée, Bill Mahony and myself as Chairman. We kicked around a number of ideas, but then decided to concentrate first on supporting our Vice President Charles Bowman with his charities as he came up to being Lord Mayor.

However, we made it clear to Charles that we would not raise money as our Livery Companies already did that. It would be like robbing Peter to pay Paul, or in some cases robbing Peter to pay Peter as the Livery Companies all make donations to the Lord Mayor's Appeal. What we were offering was our time, an in-kind contribution.

Charles fully understood this. He asked us to help with two projects: firstly, to help the Samaritans with the launch of a new initiative, Wellbeing in the City, and secondly, to help increase participation in City Giving Day. This article will focus on our efforts with the Samaritans.

The Samaritans are well known for their help with people who have reached a desperate situation. Just last year in the UK and Ireland they took 5.4 million calls or contacts. But they also want to see if they can help people at an earlier stage of mental illness, to try to prevent them reaching the stage of desperation. The initiative Wellbeing in the City was thus breaking new ground for them.



ST STEPHEN'S WALBROOK

There are a number of happy links in this story and they are not coincidences. Chad Varah founded the Samaritans in the City of London. He was the vicar of St Stephen's Walbrook which is next to Mansion House and is the Lord Mayor's church. It is also the Grocers' church and the Grocers paid for Chad Varah's expenses in installing the telephone that he used. You can still see the original telephone in St Stephen's. Charles Bowman is a Grocer. He is also a partner of PwC and sadly they had a tragic case of suicide a few years ago. So they have been working with the Samaritans to develop and test Wellbeing in the City.

It is a programme using online and paper materials to assist both employers and employees to help identify workplace colleagues in distress. Some of our committee members have been through the programme and what we have learnt is that if you try to help a colleague by asking if there's anything they might like to share with you, then even if they decline you can't make things worse. So don't hold back.



SAMARITANS' PHONE AT  
ST STEPHEN'S WALBROOK

In April 2018, the programme was launched by the Samaritans' leadership team in St Stephen's and we were there in support. We then published details to our members and invited them to bring it to the attention of business contacts in the City of London. Initially it was aimed at the City for a number of reasons, but it has since been expanded. The programme has been rebranded Wellbeing in the Workplace and its focus has been widened. Special attention is now on the retail sector because of the turbulence there with mass closures of stores up and down the country. There is also a plan to focus on the construction industry because it has a high incidence of accidents and of insecure employment.

I have not tried to measure our own level of achievement as we always recommend our contacts to get in touch with the Samaritans directly. We do not want to become a bureaucratic hurdle and so cannot say for sure how much we have achieved directly. But the Samaritans are delighted with the help we have offered and we are in frequent contact with them about progress.

The programme is now up to 14,000 registered users across all partner firms. Just two firms, Aon and Schroders have led the way with 4,000 users between the two businesses. Wellbeing in Retail also continues to gather pace, with 15,000 registered users across the retail partners.

I started by saying that we would not raise money. But we then heard about the City Hub. Over 500,000 people work in the City of London, but only a few thousand live there. This presents an enormous challenge to the Samaritans. By their own rules the volunteers must work from physical premises, not remotely from their own homes. There must always be a second person present in case the first needs help. And they must offer a 24/7 service.

The proposed solution is the City Hub, a physical location which will be manned and operated by volunteers recruited as much as possible from City based firms. This, of course, comes at a cost. The first year cost is budgeted at £216,000. There are start-up costs included in this so future years will be a bit less. The Samaritans asked for our help.

We decided that while we had said we would not ask our members to put their hands in their own pockets there was no reason why we could not ask the Livery Companies themselves, or rather their charity committees. And so we did. It is not appropriate here to mention names but several Livery Companies have responded very positively and some are still looking into it. We have pointed out that this is a City based initiative which we should support if we can. There is the historical connection. But as well as money there is the opportunity for your members to introduce an interesting way to give back to the community. So far the Samaritans have received 256 enquiries from potential volunteers. They regard this as extraordinary.

Of the £216,000 over a third has been raised by the Phoenix Masters' initiative. This is what the Samaritans management said in a letter we received: "The Year 1 cost for City Hub is now fully funded. To be frank, we would not have been able to do this without you."

We have been invited to be represented on the supervisory committee for the City Hub. And here is another happy link. And this one is a coincidence. Our representative is Past Master Plaisterer Bill Mahony. He served as a Samaritan volunteer for 14 years.

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If you would like to know more about the Wellbeing in the Workplace programme click on:  
[https://media.samaritans.org/documents/Samaritans\\_Wellbeing\\_in\\_the\\_Workplace\\_brochure.pdf](https://media.samaritans.org/documents/Samaritans_Wellbeing_in_the_Workplace_brochure.pdf)



I must start this article by saying that I am writing it on 8th March 2020, so it may well be that many things will have changed by the time that you read this – pandemics evolve rapidly!

My expertise is on the “Spanish ‘Flu” pandemic of 1918-19. That occurred in three waves, but like all good Hollywood blockbusters, it had a prequel. The prequel started in 1916, only appeared to attack fit, healthy people, and had a 25% mortality. It appeared simultaneously on the Western Front, in Vienna and in Copenhagen. No-one could work out what it was, or where it came from, but later those who recovered from it proved to be immune to Spanish flu. It killed by triggering a massive immune response called a cytokine storm which often proved fatal. That is why fit young people were more likely to die as they had the strongest immune responses. Luckily, it was not very infectious and did not spread easily, so “only” 150 British soldiers and about 2,000 young Viennese died.

The official first wave of the Spanish flu started in a recruit camp in Kansas, USA in March 1918 and was quite the opposite. It was extremely infectious, but for the vast majority it just made them feel awful for about 3 days and then they made a perfect recovery. The mortality was about 2% and was mostly in infants and the elderly. It made planning the tactics during the First World War difficult as whole units at a time were incapable of fighting, but as far as civilians were concerned it was just a nuisance. It was also unusual in being a problem during the summer when one expects influenza to have died out.

In August 1918 disaster struck. Someone, we do not know who but probably a sick soldier in Étaples, picked up both the prequel and the first wave viruses at the same time and these mutated into a new virus that was nearly as infectious as the first wave (American) flu, but nearly as deadly at 20% as the prequel (European) flu. This mutation is known as the second wave of the Spanish flu and it swept around the world killing about 4% of the total population. Somewhere between 50 and 100 million died, averaging 6% of the people in non-industrial countries, and 0.8% of the industrial ones. In UK over four million caught one of the two variants and overall 6% of those died. About 250,000 people perished, mostly between October and December 1918, which was 0.6% of the population. It appeared to die out in early January 1919, only to reappear a month later as the third wave which accounted for about a quarter of the deaths. Interestingly, Italy did particularly badly amongst the European nations, losing 1.3% of its population.

So can we predict from this what is going to happen with covid-19? In many ways it is behaving like the first wave “American” flu, though appears to be a milder disease in the previously healthy. On the other hand, the mortality appears to be similar, when one would have expected that 100 years of progress would have improved things. I am unaware of any other variant of the coronavirus circulating that causes a cytokine storm, so we must all pray that none emerges to prove to be a prequel and cause a mutation that would have a similar mortality to the devastating second wave.

To keep things in perspective, “normal” influenza kills between 600 -700,000 people worldwide each year, which is a mortality of 0.1%. Covid-19 is obviously killing a higher proportion of those it infects, so we must also hope that it will do what viruses normally do and cease to be a problem when the days become longer and warmer.

In the meantime do remember that it is not only washing hands frequently that is needed to protect yourself, but wearing gloves is another vital precaution. I am not just saying because I am Past Mistress Glover, but because it has been shown that the virus can live on hard surfaces such as handrails and door handles for up to 9 days, and people wearing gloves are much less likely to put their contaminated hands near their nose and mouth.

You have been warned!

## At your Convenience



Have you noticed this City of London Community Toilet Scheme sign on any coffee shops, wine bars or restaurants? No, me neither. But one eagle-eyed committee member commented on the sign during our November meeting and, as with many of our 'non-agenda' items, the whole conversation spiralled out of control, culminating in a *'what a splendid topic for our City Trivia section'* 'Excellent', I said. 'Why me?', I thought.

Fortunately, spellcheck (and probably the Editor as well) has blocked most of my attempts at humour, and I promise no puns about just going through the motions of crafting this contribution. So sit down and be prepared for a feast of facts on faeces.

To start, a little history on 'the smallest room'. First records of indoor toilets are from around 3100 BC in Ancient Egypt. If you were rich, you sat on a limestone seat, if poor, you made do with a wooden stool with a hole in it. But the destination was the same - a pit filled with sand. In around 2000 BC, the Minoans developed toilets that flushed with water, and around 800 BC, the Romans, in a moment of inspired contemplation, invented sewers. The original public loos date back to the 26th century BC in Mohenjo-daro, Pakistan, where rooms lined with benches of toilets were often a place for conducting business. One way of keeping meetings short.



**THERE WAS NO TOILET PAPER IN ROMAN TIMES – THEY USED A SPONGE ON A STICK INSTEAD**

Where does our wonderful city sit on this topic? In the early years, people simply used a bucket or pot and then threw the contents out of their window on to the street or into the Thames. Most houses had overhanging first floors. A courteous gentleman walked on the outside of his lady in the street as the lady was thus protected by the overhang and the gallant gentleman would be in the line of fire.

Out in the streets people relieved themselves wherever they liked, but some were of a more delicate disposition. Ever resourceful Londoners found a solution – the human lavatory ... men and women who wore voluminous black capes and carried a bucket. When the need arises, look for the nearest man or woman with a cape and bucket, give them a farthing and sit on the bucket. The cape surrounded you thus preserving your modesty. History only records the name of one human loo – in 1190 a certain Thomas Butcher of Cheapside was fined 'and admonished' for overcharging his clients. Presumably he asked them to spend a penny, not a farthing.

By the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, 'houses of office' started to appear and were usually built on bridges. The original London Bridge was equipped with one of these conveniences, a simple arrangement of

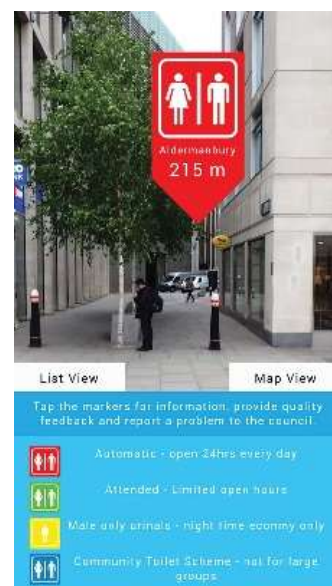
wooden planks with holes carved out of them. Quite a disincentive for any potential enemy naval assault up the Thames.

More elaborate public conveniences were also constructed, some with four or more holes, culminating in the four-time Lord Mayor of London, Richard Whittington, building a 'house of easement' over the Thames at the end of Black Friars Lane. Two rows of sixty-four seats, one row for men and the other for women. Its flushing system was simple – the river. However, given the Thames is tidal, the journey from the riverbank to open water could take up to eleven weeks. Use of these conveniences was free, but no paper was provided. Boys roamed up and down the ranks of seats selling torn-up pamphlets, or 'bum fodder' (giving us the modern word 'bumf').

The Victorians turned public lavatories into architectural gems, but pressure on the public purses made this unsustainable. In the decade up to 2016, some 1,782 public conveniences were closed across the UK. Hence the need for schemes such as the City of London Community Toilet Scheme ([Click here for a map](#)) and the related augmented reality app for your phone (City Toilet Finder), or the Gen Z answer to the problem – an online database of the access codes for all the loos in London ([Click here for London Loo Codes](#)).

So remember to carry a copy of The Flame with you at all times – you'll never be caught short again. It is, after all, the epitome of bumf!

And, as a non-trivial closing to this trivia article, let us not forget World Toilet Day, recognised by the UN, that takes place on November 19 each year. It acknowledges that 2.5bn people across the globe are yet to have proper access to acceptable sanitation and the diseases which can spread as a result.



## Coffee Morning for Common Hall Shrieval Election

**10.30am - 1pm, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, for all Livery Consorts,  
at 'The City Centre', 80 Basinghall St, London EC2V 5AR**

You are invited to this wonderful social morning with coffee, tea and biscuits freely flowing. Meet old friends and make new ones in our super new venue. **PLUS**, a talk and demonstration with the on-site lecturer around the 1:500 scale model of the City.

To book a place please email [claire.cityconsorts@btinternet.com](mailto:claire.cityconsorts@btinternet.com). Tickets £16.00



## BECKET 2020



Celebrations for Becket 2020 have now begun in earnest and include a current exhibition of pilgrim badges at the Museum of London. There is also a fantastic new online resource, part sponsored by the Mercers' Company, which contains lots of fascinating detail on Becket and London <https://www.thebecketstory.org.uk/>

Other London events to look forward to include a British Museum exhibition from October through into 2021 and, of course, The Becket Pageant for London and Livery Crafts Display, now planned for end of June 2021 in Guildhall Yard. (Details to follow subject to final confirmation.)

Contact is Emmeline Winterbotham at [becketpageant@gmail.com](mailto:becketpageant@gmail.com)

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## HOW WOULD YOU MARK YOUR 80<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY?

One of the joys of being a member of the Phoenix Masters is the pleasure we all take in the social life of the group. We meet friends and acquaintances and other interesting people, visit fascinating places and dine in style. Afterwards we return to the comfort and security of our own homes. We are fortunate. There are many who don't have homes to go to, so to mark my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, I will be trying to raise money to help them. I have committed to a tandem skydive from 12,000ft on April 21st, my fifty-fifth wedding anniversary, never before having jumped from anything higher than a diving board. So why am I doing this?



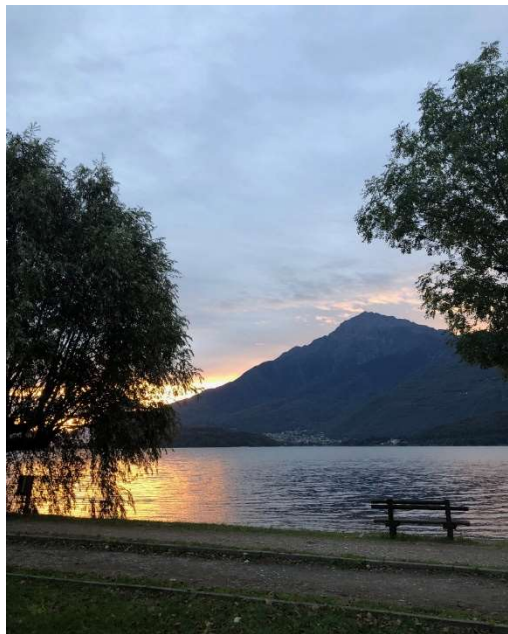
Money raised will go to Crisis, a charity close to my heart which works with the homeless. To me it is unforgivable that, in this world of plenty and particularly in a rich country like ours, there are people living on the streets for any number of reasons. I have set myself a target of raising £10,000 which if achieved could be significantly increased with the benefit of Gift Aid. I have a Just Giving web-page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/NigelWhitehead80th>,

Please do visit the website and help me to support this worthwhile charity if you can.

Thank you.

Nigel Whitehead (Past Master Blacksmiths)



**SUNSET LAKE COMO**

## ITALIAN LAKES

by Sheila Higgs (Launderers)

In September 2019 my husband Paul and I joined 22 other car mad people and took our Porsche Boxster to Italy.

Day 1 - Our trip starts at the Folkestone Rail Terminal, after our 20 minute train journey we head for our first stop in France. We stay overnight at the Najeti Hotel Chateau in Tilques, Built in 1891, the current castle is located in Tilques, near Saint-Omer. It occupies the site of an old 17th century manor and offers the authentic charm of the French countryside. The building is a superb example of neo-Flemish architecture.

Day 2 - We begin our epic journey the next morning with a drive of 390 miles to Belfort, still in France.

Day 3 - After a morning's drive we stop in Bern for lunch and the opportunity to see the Bern Bears and chat to Albert

Einstein, a resident in 1905 when he developed the formula  $E=mc^2$ . Continuing our journey, we drive the Grimsel Pass and on to the summit of the Simplon Pass in Switzerland before heading to Italy and our stay in Stresa on Lake Maggiore. A distance of 256 miles for today. We stay in the very grand Hotel Regina Palace.

Day 4 - The cars and drivers have a rest day. Now it's sightseeing, a cruise on the lake to the Borromeo Islands, lunch and dinner and a few bottles of wine sees everyone unwind.

Day 5 - After our restful day we take to the road again and head for Lake Como. On the journey we stop at the Alfa Romeo museum near Milan. In the UK the Alfa Romeo cars were renowned for their short life spans as they were eaten by rust before your eyes! But after a trip to the museum we all appreciated the beauty of the car design.



**PORSCHEs AT THE ALFA ROMEO MUSEUM**

Day 6 - We stay in a hotel located on the Como lakeside and spend another relaxing day sightseeing, eating and drinking, without disturbing the resting cars.

Day 7 - We are off again at high speed into Switzerland, driving to the summit of the Julier, Albula and Bielerhöhe Passes. We have the perfect car for the road conditions, but I do spend a lot of time with my hands over my eyes ... good job I am not the driver!!

Day 8 - We start our homeward journey, the weather isn't the best, but we stop at Meersberg for coffee before heading to Rottweil, where, of course, a toy Rottweiler Puppy is purchased. Our hotel for the night is the Hotel Rebstock Neuweier in the Black Forest in Baden-Baden, a very impressive modern hotel, built in the traditional Alpine style.



Day 9 - We head back to France and visit some WW1 memorials notably Vauquois Hill where the French and German fought each other in close proximity, destroying Vauquois completely. The battle site is left as it was, making a very poignant memorial. Some of our party were beginning to show signs of fatigue but the weather improved so several hardy car drivers and their navigators took to the deserted French roads, and had a blast. We stopped at Les Fantômes, a sculpture on the Butte Chalmont in the Aisne. We are all stunned at the beauty, especially when the sun chooses this moment to shine and bathes the sculpture in spectacular sunlight.

Day 10 - The tour comes to an end; we take the coast route back to Calais for our return train home. It was an awesome trip, at high speed, through some wonderful parts of Europe.

We will continue our adventures in 2020 with a visit to the Classic Grand Prix in Monaco; watch future Flames for details.

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## THE PHOENIX MASTERS 2020 SPRING DINNER

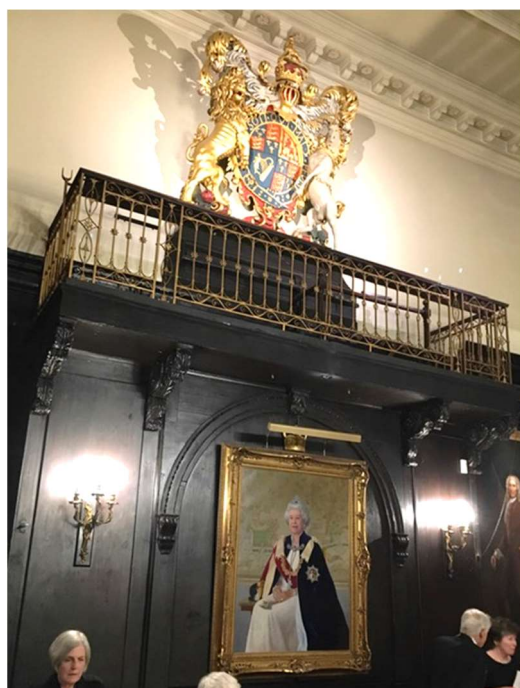
The dinner took place at the splendid Apothecaries' Hall, which is the oldest existent livery hall in the City of London, with significant 13th century elements and the first-floor structure and arrangement of the Great Hall, Court Room and Parlour remaining as rebuilt between 1668 and 1670.

To start off the evening, Firebird Anne Somers was presented with a magnum of Champagne for her sterling work in combining the Phoenix and Firebirds Picture Books. Copies of this new edition were distributed with the menus and the seating plan.

The occasion was well supported, with the President and the Vice-Presidents in attendance. The Phoenix Masters' Chairman, Mark Chambers, presented Sir Charles Bowman with a cheque for the Samaritans, one of the charities championed by the Lord Mayors Appeal during his year as Lord Mayor.



FROM THE LEFT: LORD MOUNTEVANS, PAUL HIGGS, SHEILA HIGGS. SIR CHARLES BOWMAN, ELEANOR MOSS



HER MAJESTY, AMONGST OTHER WORTHY PORTRAITS, WATCHING THE PROCEEDINGS



# EL'S RECOMMENDATION

## Easter Simnel Cake – a Mary Berry recipe

The name Simnel comes from the Latin word 'simla' which means 'fine white flour' and the cake has been known in England since the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Simnel cake was traditionally given by servant girls to their mothers when they returned home on Mothering Sunday. But it's now become a classic Easter cake.

### INGREDIENTS

- 100g/4oz glacé cherries
- 225g/8oz butter, softened
- 225g/8oz light muscovite sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 225g/8oz self-raising flour
- 225g/8oz sultanas
- 100g/4oz currants
- 50g/2oz chopped candied peel
- 2 lemons, grated zest only
- 2 tsp ground mixed spice



### FILLING AND TOPPING

- 450g/1lb marzipan
- 1-2 tbsp apricot jam, warmed

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 150C/280F/Gas 2 (non fan). Grease and line a 20cm/8in cake tin.
2. Cut cherries into quarters, put in a sieve and rinse under running water. Drain well then dry thoroughly on kitchen paper.
3. Place the cherries in a bowl with butter, sugar, eggs, self-raising flour, sultanas, currants, candied peel, lemon zest and mixed spice. Combine well until thoroughly mixed. Pour half of the mixture into the prepared tin.
4. Take one-third of the marzipan and roll it out in a circle the size of the tin and then place on top of the cake mixture. Spoon the remaining cake mixture on top and level the surface.
5. Bake in the pre-heated oven for about 2½ hours, or until well risen, evenly brown and firm to the touch. Cover with aluminium foil after one hour if the top is browning too quickly. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes then turn out, peel off the parchment and finish cooling on a wire rack.
6. When the cake is cool, brush the top with a little warmed apricot jam and roll out half the remaining marzipan to fit the top. Press firmly on the top and crimp the edges to decorate. Mark a criss-cross pattern on the marzipan with a sharp knife. Form the remaining marzipan into 11 balls.
7. Brush the marzipan with beaten egg and arrange the marzipan balls around the edge of the cake. Brush the tops of the balls with beaten egg and then carefully place the cake under a hot grill until the top is lightly toasted.