

# THE FLAME

DEAR FIREBIRDS,

Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of The Flame, and with true Firebirds spirit, we rose from the ashes of 2017 (and numerous carol services), have held our first event, our AGM, on March 6<sup>th</sup> and are planning another exciting series of events for the remainder of the year.

This edition is tinged with a little sadness as Erika Gloyn has retired from the committee for family reasons and has passed the baton to a nervous guest editor who will struggle to match the editorial brilliance (and proof reading accuracy) of the first three editions. Many thanks to Erika for all her work in creating a universally acclaimed newsletter.

In this edition, we are delighted to feature an article on life as Lady Mayoress from our vice-president Samantha Bowman; an update on the biennial dinner and AGM; a feature on "*Life after mistressing*" (or consorting) from Vicky Nugee; a report from Jane Orr - our intrepid 'round Cape Horn' sailor, plus the usual news of forthcoming events, member updates and City Trivia.

Happy reading.

Peter Green (Framework Knitters)  
Guest Editor



## FORTHCOMING FIREBIRDS EVENTS

### VISIT TO THE PHYSIC GARDEN

**THURSDAY 14TH JUNE 2018**

The tour starts at 11.00 am and will be followed by lunch.

More details to follow.

### DRAGON BOAT RACING

**SUNDAY 29TH JULY 2018**

**11:00 A.M. TO 4 P.M.**

A fun day out in the superb setting of Chillington Hall and in aid of the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

For more details, see Page 7.

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

# LIFE AS THE LADY MAYORESS

## THE LADY MAYORESS - SAMANTHA BOWMAN

It's been nearly 4 months since Charles was installed as the 690<sup>th</sup> Lord Mayor of the City of London and I am so pleased to be able to write a short up-date for my fellow Firebirds.

It's been a busy time to say the least and I've done all sorts of things from firing a cannon in Guildhall Yard to helping the scouts blow up nearly 1000 balloons for the Children's Party. Indeed, the Lord Mayor's Show can sometimes seem like a million years ago!

We had quite a run up to Christmas. Firstly, I rapidly became immensely proficient at switching on lights – I think I switched on 3 if not 4 sets of Christmas tree lights which means that I can now count backwards from 5 with some confidence. (Sometimes even from 10 should the situation demand it) Of course, I am, at all times, ably supported by shrieval consorts Fiona and Emma but at these events, I always make sure that I've made friends with the chap in the high vis jacket clutching a pair of pliers - he's the one who will get the lights on if you short-circuit the system.

Also in December, I was lucky enough to be invited to travel to Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Dubai with the Lord Mayor's delegation. In addition to various receptions and business events, I visited a university, a museum, a number of women's centres, a falcon hospital, a saluki dog breeding kennel, a rescue dog home, a camel reproduction unit and rode an endurance horse in the desert. Quite a lot to pack in to a 4-day trip.



Back in the UK The Lord Mayor's Appeal has been busy with organising events designed to raise money for three inspirational charities for three years to deliver ground breaking programmes and find solutions to some of London's most pressing societal issues. These charities are Place2Be, OnSide Youth Zones and Samaritans

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 I am taking part in the annual City Dip – a fund-raising sponsored swim for the Appeal and plan to swim for 5 hours in the Golden Lane swimming pool in the City. If you would like to get involved, visit [www.thelordmayorsappeal.org/events](http://www.thelordmayorsappeal.org/events). We would love to see you there.

Then on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018 we have the prospect of the best event of the year – 'The Lord Mayor's Dragon Boat Race Day'. I just want to say how excited Charles and I are at the thought of powering across the water on the beautiful lake at Chillington Hall. (Why does my computer's spell check keep replacing 'on the lake' with 'in the lake'!)

We are so grateful to Crescent and John Giffard for their immensely generous offer of hosting this event at the beautiful Chillington Hall in Staffordshire – home to the Giffard family for nearly 840 years. With all sorts of entertainment from music to craft stalls, hog roasts and tours of the Hall this is going to be such fun. I'm just hoping my swimming training in the lead up will not be required on the day!

I do hope that all the marvellous Firebirds will spread their golden wings and rise to the challenge of swimming and rowing – we are going to have a blast!

---

## OUR INAUGURAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018, 23 Firebirds met at the wonderful surroundings of Painters' Hall for our inaugural AGM. The minutes and 2017 report containing more details will be circulated separately, but suffice to say that the event reflected the conviviality that Firebirds seek to maintain, with a warm introduction from our Secretary, Rue Hoddinott, an excellent (and very efficient!) presentation of the informative annual report by our Madam Chairman, Lady Lenzie, an update on our healthy finance from our Treasurer, Sheila Higgs, and warm words of closing by our President, Juliet Mountevans. After which we retired to the serious business of enjoying excellent cuisine organised by our indefatigable Events Secretary, El Moss.

---

## LIFE AFTER MISTRESSING (AND CONSORTING)

### VICKY NUGEE - WEAVERS

Well, we enjoyed our year as Mistress/Consort, didn't we? We were fêted and honoured and made to feel special and important. And we increased our wardrobes and tried not to do the same to our waistlines. And we got to be quite dab-hands at the problems of changing shoes and changing trains and found our way to all manner of places in the City that we'd never been to before and felt quite proud of ourselves for (mostly) arriving on time. We represented our Company and thought that, in the end, we didn't do such a bad job of our *annus mirabilis*.

And then it all came to a stop. We were dropped like a ton of bricks and went back to being “(and guest)” on the two or three occasions a year that we are invited to Livery events. In some ways it wasn't all bad; it was good to take control of our diary again, and for some Mistresses/Consorts it was a relief to be able to concentrate again on an already busy life. But some of us were not ready to abandon it all. The splendour of being the representative of our Livery perhaps cannot be recalled, but the camaraderie, the tradition, the pomp and the bling and the feeling of being a part of the amazing history of the City of London can be continued if, as some Firebirds have found, we join the Livery movement ourselves.

Some Firebirds have been fortunate in that their Livery Company automatically makes provision for Pastmistresses, as, for example, Georgina Hall says is the case for the Water Conservators, “*in recognition of the work Mistresses and Consorts do for the Company*”; and Sarah Mosse says that the Broderers has just been persuaded to invite the Pastmistress to become an Honorary Freeman. This is an excellent thing: that there is recognition of the growing importance of the role of the Mistress/Consort in the Livery Movement.

For some Firebirds joining their Master's Company was not an option, and they have been looking further afield. Then the question arises: How to choose which company to join? Joining a Livery connected with their profession seems an obvious choice. Thus, Anne Somers (Turners) says: “*I felt that ... once my year as Mistress Turner was over I would like a Livery in my own right, and one that was more reflective of my professional life. Having spent my career in Publishing and Media ... I felt Stationers and Newspaper Makers would be a natural home. I am delighted to say that I have been*

*somewhat fast-tracked through the system and welcomed wholeheartedly by the Stationers Company. I now look forward to inviting my husband as my guest to their events!"*

Marion Whitehead (Blacksmiths) is a professional musician, and, on the strength of that, was pressed to join the Musicians by their Master. She gladly complied and now says: *"I have found members of the Musicians to be very friendly and I am looking forward very much to a long association with them."*

Peter Green (Framework Knitters) has become an International Banker. He says: *"During my year of 'mistressship', the value of the broader livery movement became clear and in order to play my part, it was appropriate for me to join a livery company that represented my profession. As an added benefit, this has afforded me the luxury of being, occasionally, one step ahead of my Master rather than two paces behind".*

Von Spofforth (Chartered Accountants) has followed her profession and her heart and become a Baker. Both she and Peter mention the education aspect of their chosen company; Von says: *"being able to give something back in supporting the education of others is incredibly satisfying."*

Not everyone has the sort of profession which will direct them in their choice of Livery Company. Angie Kay (Environmental Cleaners) has put her finger on the problem of deciding what to do: *"This is the real issue I think. If you ARE inspired by your year to become a liveryman yourself, which DO you join if you have a range of skills and interests? Some can be quite intimidating in their expectations of you as a prospective liveryman, while others will welcome you with open arms."*

Some Companies, such as the Weavers, are difficult to join, as they have a waiting list. Others, however, are keen to increase their numbers, and actively invite new members. The Basketmakers is one such; at their Mistresses' Basketmaking Day the Prime Warden issued an invitation to join them, and Crescent Giffard (Drapers), Anne Lofts (Upholders) and I (Weavers) have already become Liverymen, and Annie Attlee (Innholders), who is also incidentally a keen amateur maker of baskets herself, will also have taken the plunge by the time this is published. Similarly, Sue Wichtowski (Cutlers) has joined the Framework Knitters *"Because they asked me"*. So, hurrah for the Companies who recognise the value of a thoroughly seasoned Pastmistress in their Livery!

I'll finish with something I wrote to a fellow Firebird – and a puff for my own Company! The great thing about joining a separate company is that now my husband can be 'and guest'! It also means that between us we have twice as many events to attend and gives another perspective on the livery world. The Basketmakers are a friendly company – their motto is 'Let us love one another' – which I think is rather fine. If you are thinking about joining a company, I can certainly recommend them!



---

## CITY TRIVIA

For this edition, we return to an earlier trivia topic – that of City street names. And as with all Flame trivia, we are open to correction from the collective wisdom and knowledge of the Firebirds.

Before the Great Fire of London in 1666, the City of London had around 100 churches in an area of only one square mile. Of the 86 destroyed by the Fire, 51 were rebuilt, along with St Paul's Cathedral. The current number of churches is 46, or one for every 209 residents. It is unsurprising, therefore, that many street names have religious connections.

Paternoster Row (first recorded in 1334 as Pasternosterowe) has two plausible derivations – the first based on the numerous prayer books and other ecclesiastical supplies produced and sold in this area by so-called paternosterers. Such bookshops continued to flourish in the areas until 29th December 1940 when an incendiary air raid destroyed much of the area and an estimated six million books. However, my preferred explanation (for no valid reason other than it invokes more evocative images) derives from the belief that, prior to the reformation, the clergy would process through the streets around St Paul's. This procession involved reciting the Lord's Prayer in Paternoster Row (Pater Noster being Latin for 'Our Father'), the Hail Mary in Ave Maria Lane, the Credo in Creed Lane, and the Amen in Amen Corner.



Crutched Friars takes its name from the Crossed Friars, an Augustinian order that began in Bologna in 1169 and was established in London by Ralph Hosiar and William Sabernes in 1298. The name derived from the friars' habits, which were blue with, usually, a red cross on the back



Not all names have a direct religious connection. Pope's Head Alley, where Lloyd's of London was first established, takes its name from a 15th-century tavern that was destroyed in the Great Fire and then rebuilt. One of the earliest mentions of the tavern occurs in the reign of Edward IV. A wager reputedly took place as to whether a goldsmith from Alicant was as talented as one from England. No contest I'm sure, if you ask the Worshipful Company that is fifth in the order of precedence. At the Reformation it is believed that the owner was forced to change the name; he chose the Bishop's Head but shortly after, on the assumption that the King had forgotten his minor fracas with Rome, changed it back.



Worship Street clearly has a religious heritage. Wrong. It takes its name from an Elizabethan merchant tailor, John Worsop, who owned over six acres of land in the area.

And those of a sensitive disposition should cease reading at this stage. The holy-sounding Cardinal Cap Alley, in fact takes its name from a brothel, possibly named for Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester. It seems that the church of the day was commercially minded - the brothels of Bankside, which flourished for centuries, were leased from the Bishops of Winchester. I suspect the Church Commissioners may be a little more circumspect with their investments today.



# BIENNIAL LUNCH AT MERCHANT TAYLORS

ERIKA GLOYN - MASONS

It was like 'coming in from the cold' arriving at Merchant Taylor's Hall for our Biennial Lunch on 28<sup>th</sup> November. Merchant Taylor's gave us a warm welcome with its magical Christmas decorations. Everything was decked out beautifully; Christmas tree in the Hall, fresh pine garlands up the staircase, wreaths in the dining room and more.



The Lunch started with welcome drinks in the conservatory, giving everybody the opportunity to catch up with friends. The food and wine were, as anticipated, excellent. Being one of those irritating people with numerous dietary requirements, I measure quality of the food by availability of alternatives. I was not disappointed.

We were delighted and honoured to welcome The RT Hon the Lord Mayor Alderman Charles Bowman and the Lady Mayoress Samantha Bowman to this, our first Biennial Lunch.

Lady Lenzie, the Firebirds Chairman, gave the toast to the guests

The Lord Mayor said in his speech that he felt he was amongst friends and family being with us and how much he appreciated the support of the Firebirds and the Phoenix Masters. He thanked John and Crescent Giffard for hosting the planned Lord Mayor's Appeal Dragon Boat Race Day on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at their home, Chillington Hall, in Staffordshire. In his speech he set out the aims for his year to create a City ready for Brexit and to rebuild trust, making the City a better place for everybody.

The Lord Mayor presented the Firebirds Chairman with a pepper mill, which is reflective of the symbolism of pepper as evidence of trust – hence peppercorns are still cited as payment in some real estate transactions, i.e. peppercorn rent. (Shame they don't accept peppercorns at John Lewis.)

We also had with us Felicity Harding, the daughter of Chad Varah, founder of The Samaritans. The Samaritans are one of the charities supported by the Lord Mayor's Appeal

Work on the Dragon Boat Race Day has already begun and we were very pleased to be able to welcome sponsors and partners for this event.

Our first Biennial Lunch caused some flutters, but it was all worth it. When I put up my hand to be part of the Firebirds Committee, I was thinking of one or two lunch or tea parties a year. However, our Chairman has different ideas. She has certainly raised up the stakes and deserves to be congratulated on the success of the first Firebirds Biennial Lunch. Thanks go in particular to El Moss for her tireless organisation and everyone else who made it happen.



---

## THE LORD MAYORS DRAGON BOAT RACE DAY

Get your diaries out, book the date and practice your paddling. The Firebirds Charity Event at Chillington Hall in support of The Lord Mayor's Appeal will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018 from 11am – 4pm.



Day tickets give access to the festival village, tours of Chillington Hall, access to bankside to watch the racing dragons. Additionally, you will see dragon dancing, entertainers, music, a Kids zone, arts and craft, charity and food stalls. The day concludes with a podium ceremony and the winning team being presented with the Lord Mayors' Cup by our very own Phoenix and Firebird Charles and Samantha Bowman, The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress.

Tickets are £15 for a single ticket, £25 for double tickets and family tickets at £40 (up to x 4, must include x 1 child under 16),

Our President, Lady Mountevans is spearheading a Firebirds' Boat and asking for Firebirds to join the crew. It is anticipated that, as gallant hosts, our boat will not seek to be overly competitive. In fact, most of the training proposed to date has focussed on blind testing the champagne that will be consumed during the gentle paddle across the lake. And unlike most boats whose crew is based on 16 rowers and 1 drummer, the Firebirds are currently looking to recruit 16 drinkers and 1 outboard motor. So, if you want to volunteer for such arduous duty, make your intentions known to a member of the committee or Fund-Raising committee. Each 'rower' will be charged an entry fee of around £65 and is expected to seek sponsorship of around £250. This gives you access for the day, plus access to the team tents, a "gourmet" lunch box, an exclusive event T-shirts plus free parking.

Further details of the event will be circulated to all Livery Companies.

---

## ROUND CAPE HORN AND ON TO THE FALKLANDS

### JANE ORR - GLOVERS

I have recently returned from a fantastic voyage with the Jubilee Sailing Trust. The Trust owns two tall ships that are specially adapted so that mixed ability crews can sail them. For the last two years TS Tenacious has been in Australia, giving people with physical disabilities there a chance to sail. Now it was time to bring Tenacious back to the UK. I

volunteered for the second leg - from Auckland in New Zealand to Stanley in the Falkland Islands. This involved five weeks of sailing over 5000 miles across the Pacific, finishing

with rounding Cape Horn and sailing another 500 miles up to the Falklands. There are no passengers on JST ships, everyone is crew, including paraplegics in wheelchairs, amputees, blind, deaf and those suffering from Parkinson's disease. The average age of the crew was 61.



During our time in Auckland we were assessed as to our ability to climb the rigging and move along the yards (see photo). I passed, which was a mixed blessing as when sails tore later in the voyage I was one of those who had to climb up and replace the sails in gale force conditions.

We were divided into four watches and while at sea were therefore on duty twice daily, usually for four hours at a time, but occasionally doing the two hour dog watches. While on watch we steered the ship, provided the lookout, completed the hourly log and the four hourly Met Office reports as well as being the first ones called to help with bracing the yards, or handing or setting the sails. When not on watch we could also be called for sail setting and at 10.30 each day we had "happy hour". This involved making the ship happy, half of us cleaning inside and the other half scrubbing the decks and cleaning the windows on the bridge. You certainly never had a chance to be bored!

After the first 48 hours at sea we did not see land, or even another ship, for 32 days. We saw an awful lot of sea, at times with 7 meter waves, and at night the most wonderful starry skies as the only light pollution was from the moon. We had the treat of a lunar eclipse, and then two weeks later a partial solar eclipse. As the latter could only be seen in mid-Pacific and a small area of Antarctica, we were probably the only people who saw it. We had albatrosses flying around the ship daily, and also saw dolphins on several occasions, though sadly no whales. The weather varied from being so calm that we had to turn the engines on, to Force 11 hurricanes when we were going at 13 knots despite having only one sail set. We had to get used to living on a tilt - at times up to 40 degrees from the vertical - and reckoned we used more calories trying to sit at the table and keep our food on the plates than we were going to acquire from eating the meal! The food gave us some idea of the problems that have beset sailors for centuries. During the voyage we ran out of fresh vegetables and fruit, eggs and milk. The cook baked bread until he ran out of yeast, then it was soda bread. We ate a huge quantity of baked beans in the last week or so! At least we had meat daily as we had large freezers in the hold.



The highlight was passing Cape Horn, luckily on a calm and sunny day. Official photos were taken of each watch. Alongside me is Kate our watch leader (in a wheelchair) and Sally who was PA to Past Master Distiller Michael Broadbent.

I loved every minute of this voyage. It is wonderful to work as a close-knit team where everyone does what they are capable of. It is wonderful to see the way a blind person can learn their way around a ship, and recognise people from the way they breathe. It is brilliant that someone like Kate can steer the ship, and pull on ropes and be an equal member of the team. The Jubilee Sailing Trust needs money to be able to provide

bursaries for people with disabilities, and after my voyage also now needs to replace three sails! If you have not already sponsored me the link is <https://give.everydayhero.com/uk/help-jane-raise-money-for-the-jubilee-sailing-trust>. The money will be much appreciated.



---

# MADCAP SCHEMES AND MARATHONS

## PETER GREEN – FRAMEWORK KNITTERS

Anyone looking for proof that craziness is hereditary need only have witnessed a conversation between my daughter (Steph) and me during which we sort of agreed to run the London marathon if the other one would. My excuse? In denial about a significant birthday. Her excuse? She is my daughter. Basically, it is all my fault. And yes, she is a lawyer so wins most arguments.

As a result, on Sunday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, we will be setting out on the 26-mile journey (plus the painful final 385 yards) from Blackheath to The Mall along with 39,998 fellow runners. For me, over 400 miles of training – the good news – has been tempered by three injuries. But to make the pain worthwhile, we are supporting two amazing charities. I am running for Samaritans, the charity of The Lord Mayor, Charles Bowman, and am seeking to raise £3,000. Steph is supporting British Heart Foundation.

I realise that many of you are committed to several charities through your livery connections, but any support and words of encourage would be much appreciated and will be a tremendous boost during the final stages of training and the actual event. My Just Giving page has more details if you wish to find out more [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/petergreen60](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/petergreen60).



---

# INDUSTRY RECOGNITION FOR PAUL HIGGS

We are in 'awards season'. But the real prize was not a Grammy, the BAFTAs, or even a golden statue at the Oscars. No ... all eyes (well, perhaps a fairly specialised group of eyes) were on the Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Awards – the LADAs. And the winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award was ... (pause) ...Phoenix Past Master Paul Higgs, ably supported by Firebirds Treasurer, Sheila. If you want to witness the cheers of support when the award was announced, fast forward to 5 minutes and 20 seconds into the YouTube video of the event at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adNoFA5AJlo>.



Here are some of the words for Paul's citation. A hearty 'well done' from all of us (and good to see that his livery role received a special mention).

*“Paul Higgs is a real lifetime achiever, having spent 53 years in the Drycleaning industry. Born in Balham where he spent his early childhood, the youngest of 4 children. The family moved to Leatherhead in the 60's when his Father was appointed Caretaker at the Blind School.*

*Paul joined Neil & Spencer, the renowned UK manufacturer of Drycleaning Equipment, at the Leatherhead factory, in 1964 at the age of 15. His first job was a clerk in the service department, but when given the opportunity to train as a service engineer jumped at the chance. He spent the next few years travelling the UK in his Morris Traveller Van!*

*In the 80's Paul set up Dane Engineers, initially rebuilding Neil and Spencer Machines. Paul first met Realstar Italy in the mid 80's when he was looking at including new machines into his range. The Realstar machine was launched in the UK at the 1988 Birmingham exhibition. Paul is still an active member of the industry, he is involved with SLEAT and was a founder member of the SLEAT Code of Conduct striving to make drycleaning environmentally safe.*

*For many years a member of the Worshipful Company of Launderers, Paul was elected as Master in the summer of 2015. A high accolade for someone who joined the industry from school all those years ago.*

*Paul, a modest unassuming man who loves everything Drycleaning! A family joke is that if he cuts himself, he bleeds perc!! \*\* He has tirelessly driven his company forward and embraced the new innovations within the industry. Having survived several recessions in the UK, his company is still 'up there' with the best.*

*This is a well-earned award for Paul, and the judges were unanimous in their decision."*

**\*\* Editor's note:** Tetrachloroethylene (perchloroethylene), which the industry calls "perc", is the most widely used solvent in dry cleaning (which as a liquid, implies the cleaning is far from dry. But I am easily confused, and clearly would never be in the running for a LADA)

---

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

You should all have recently received an email requesting your annual subscription renewal. We've had over a year of Firebirds and we hope that you've enjoyed it. Even if you haven't managed to get to any of our events you may have seen reports and pictures in The Flame (the envy of so many other Associations!) with interesting news and views.

The time has come to renew membership. Your subscription fee remains the same as last year, £30.

At the AGM Vice President Stephen Rigden made the great suggestion of a Life Membership whereby, for the one-off payment of £300 (equivalent to 10 years' membership fees) a Firebird could be a member for life and never again have to be bothered by demands for your subscription fees. The idea was unanimously voted in. The choice is yours: renew your membership at £30 per year or a once off £300 Life Membership.

Life Membership will continue to be offered next year and so forth, but it will never be as good a deal as it is this year!

Payment by 31<sup>st</sup> March please.

if you have any queries, please contact Vicky Nugée at [membership@firebirds.city](mailto:membership@firebirds.city)

---

The Firebirds MCA 70 Wimpole Street Mayfair London W1G 8AG  
[news@firebirds.city](mailto:news@firebirds.city)