



Upholder News

The Marketing and Communications Committee
Newsletter Issue 1, May 2020

'News' by definition announces the 'new' and in this first issue of what is planned to be a bi-monthly newsletter, there is plenty - starting with this new digitised logo designed by Liveryman Caroline Lofts. If you are a member of our Trades, you should soon receive authorisation to use it on your websites and business stationery.

Several pages are devoted to marking the incredible efforts of our Liverymen to support the NHS at this extraordinary time of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Congratulations to Upholders Liveryman David Woodward who became the 59th Master Furniture Maker in a virtual ceremony on 11th May, and will be the first in their history to serve for 2 years. He is pictured here with our Master Elect at the Southern Region Furniture Makers' Indian Summer Party held in September 2019.



Find out about visor production on page 3

Through the generosity of an individual Liveryman, the Upholders were able to respond swiftly with a sizeable donation to the NHS Livery Kitchens Initiative appeal in the Lord Mayor's letter of 1 May. This is helping 500 high quality meals to be delivered every day to NHS workers in three Barts Health NHS Trust hospitals.

Also in this issue:

- ◇ City Freedom awarded in virtual ceremonies
- ◇ Nominations open for Master Certificates
- ◇ Upholding the 75th Anniversary of VE Day
- ◇ Liveryman's daughter wins scholarship

It has been a pleasure to guest-edit this first issue on behalf of the Marketing & Communications Committee. Sincere thanks to all contributors who have written articles whilst they continue to produce PPE and support their communities.

S Nevard

A message from the Master

I hope that all Upholders are keeping well and have adapted to this new way of living.

VE Day marked the start of easing of our UK lockdown. The combination of confinement and worry has made for a difficult two months for many of us. Our Company has adapted to the new world by moving Court and committee meetings onto Zoom, a video conferencing platform most of us had not heard of two months ago but that has now become part of daily life for me and many others.



Following the successful virtual Freedom of the City ceremony for Colonel Tom Moore, two of our own candidates for Livery, Lieutenant Dennis Tate RN and Stefan Koschek were recipients of the virtual City Freedom the following day.

I would also like to extend my welcome to Michael Tang who has taken over as Honorary Treasurer from Leonard Specterman, stepping down to look after his wife Miriam and who leaves with our sincerest thanks and gratitude.

We are through the worst and we can look forward to brighter times that are appearing in the distance.

We are most fortunate to have our Clerk who has kept our Upholders lights burning brightly and who has guided to the new way of doing Livery with skill and grace and I am most grateful for that.

It will be some while before life in general and livery life in particular reverts to anything approaching pre lock down normality so in the meanwhile enjoy the improving weather and keep well. **Anthony Demby**

Message from the Marketing and Communications Committee Chairman Tim Solway

In January this year the Senior Warden Elect and Junior Warden Elect asked me to rejuvenate the Communications Committee. I was delighted to accept as starting with a blank sheet of paper I was able to invite a number of livery suspects from my year as Master. Little did I know that COVID was around the corner and this committee was going from a condition of inactivity to the most active committee of the Upholders in a matter of a few weeks.

To this point I thought that a Zoom was an ice cream that I enjoyed as a child in the shape of a rocket. Now I know that a Zoom is a virtual meeting... Some fifteen meetings later I can tell you that we are learning fast.

We do not know when we will meet up again and give you a warm handshake. Social distancing will not allow ... so please stay in touch by e-mail, phone or Whatsapp. We are committed to keeping our dear Upholders livery alive during these testing times. Setting our fears aside to support each other and looking forward to better times ahead.

With my best wishes IPM - Tim

PPE production and community support ~

A focus on the work of our Liverymen

Several Upholders will recognise the workshops of Liveryman Roger Wates as E&A Wates Ltd in Streatham was the destination for a recent History Society visit. Read how life there has changed since then...



Cutting foam for the visors

In its 120th year, during the Lockdown, SW London interior specialist E & A Wates responded to a social media shout out for an upholsterer to supply the foam components. These were desperately needed for visor production for PPE within the NHS and Care home sectors.

When foam stocks were depleted Martins of Maidstone twice specially opened their warehouse to supply 18 sheets of foam.

6200 sections of foam were supplied to a group of prop makers in Twickenham who in the end supplied over 10,000 visors to 21 hospitals and additional Care Homes.

E & A Wates also supplied freestanding adhesive label dispensers. The labels were designed to help NHS hospital workers identify each other whilst in scrubs at St Georges Hospital in Tooting. The wooden stands were delivered with Critical NHS, a local community based non-profit organisation responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

In addition, two car loads of fabrics were supplied to South London Scrubbers who made the fabric into gowns, caps and laundry bags for washing scrubs in.



NHS staff using the label dispensers

Liveryman Richard Newbold's haulage business and handling company at the Port of Tilbury was last month kept busy handling and then delivering plywood partitioning down to the Excel Centre to help build the Nightingale temporary hospital.

PPE production and community support ~

A focus on the work of our Liverymen

Liveryman Penny Bruce is owner of Denton Drapes, providing training in soft furnishing, curtain making and sewing skills and design consultancy in Milton Keynes, Bedfordshire.



Patterns are adapted to any size required

Penny writes:

“I belong to a small ladies community sewing group that meets up twice a month in Bedford for breakfast and some sewing.

The lady that organises this group took on the task of setting up another group of sewers in and around Bedford to sew sets of scrubs for Bedford Hospital with the fabric and notions provided by a donation from Bedford Hospital Charity.

The aim was to produce 500 sets of scrubs using in excess of 1500mts of poly/cotton fabric.

I offered my skills and was asked to cut and sew 20 sets of size XXL scrubs. This consisted of 20 tops and 20 pairs of trousers. It took me three days to cut everything out. I got through 90mts of fabric which was three complete rolls. We set up a cutting table in our kitchen to do this.

Each sets took an average of 5 hours to make and I completed the last set today.

I know that a large proportion of the scrubs have already been delivered to Bedford Hospital and are already in use.”

Contact Penny on
info@dentondrapes.co.uk

www.madetomeasurecurtains.info

01908 282915



PPE production and community support ~

A focus on the work of our Liverymen

What did you do in the Coronavirus crisis Granny?

Many years from now, when my grandchildren ask me "what did you do in the Coronavirus crisis Granny?" I will be able to look them in the eye and say - I was a scrubber!

Picture the scene... I was juggling three separate home schooling timetables for teenagers, attempting to run my curtain and soft furnishing business from the kitchen table, and trying to convince the spoilt Spaniel Otis that a fourth walk was really not necessary before lunch. Only three weeks into the lockdown and I was going stir crazy. How to save my sanity?



News reports each day carried the same message; hospitals were in desperate need of masks and medical gowns. It is easy to feel helpless in a crisis but at least I could put my sewing skills to good use and do my bit to help the NHS. I downloaded a simple pattern, set up my trusty Singer machine and soon my kitchen resembled a busy cutting-room and production line.

Originally known as surgical greens, medical scrubs have been standard issue in operating theatres since the 1950s when they were usually made from stiff white cotton to emphasise cleanliness. I had to make do with some off-cut curtain material in an elegant navy hue that had been destined to hang in a Victorian bay window in Battersea. In such times of national emergency it was clear that I would have to improvise.

Although the design was relatively basic, it took me many hours of cutting, trimming and sewing to produce a few sets of gowns in a range of sizes that hopefully would suit everyone from consultants to matrons and nurses. Although they would not win any fashion points for these unisex sacks, at least they would have a clean change of uniform.

I hope that my homemade scrubs will put to good use on the wards and when all of this is over those bay windows will finally get the dressing they deserve.

Liveryman Elly Allen runs Elly Allen Interiors Ltd, making curtains and blinds, pelmets, blinds, headboards, cushions and accessories. See her profile in Issue 23 of Upbraid.



Upholders receive City Freedom in first week of virtual ceremonies

Congratulations on behalf of the Upholders Company to Lt Dennis Tate RN (pictured left), who we believe was the first recipient on the day after the first ever online ceremony for Capt Tom Moore. The very next day Stefan Koschek (pictured right) received his own Freedom. Murray Craig, Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court, was as informative and topical as ever in his entertaining welcome to the two candidates.



PPE production and community support ~

A focus on the work of our Liverymen

View from Liveryman Jeremy Field (C P J Field Funeral Directors)

Who could have imagined the world in which we find ourselves just 3 or 4 months ago? I had a conversation with a colleague about the situation in Wuhan. “We’ve been here before” I said; “Swine Flu, Bird Flu, SARS and so on. It won’t spread to different climates - it can’t travel far quickly. They’ll find a vaccine, this sort of thing happens every flu season”, were amongst the reassurances I offered having been involved in Pandemic Flu planning for some years. If someone had told me that by late March the nation would be asked to stay in their homes to stop the spread in the UK I simply wouldn’t have believed them.

The extent to which we’ve seen the world change around us so quickly was simply inconceivable, yet already many of the chose changes now feel somehow normal. 2 metre spacings in supermarket queues, meetings being held by video call, half empty streets and offices, all of these have overnight seemingly become everyday life.

Funeral service has continued throughout lockdown and will continue to provide support to families experiencing bereavement both as part of the pattern of life, as well as those who have a family member fall victim of this ghastly virus.

Somehow the emotional toll of providing our service to our communities seems to have been greater in the last couple of months than ever before. That is not to say as funeral directors we are not moved by every funeral we’re involved in, as to be successful there is a base level of compassion and understanding of the impact grief has required. Yet in the present circumstances we’re acutely aware that every scenario seems to have a level of tragedy which leaves a deeper mark than usual.

It’s frustrating when the restrictions imposed are so incompatible with your own human instincts. A reassuring hand on the shoulder, a hug from a friend or close family member. These are all the small gestures of comfort that we offer to one another without a thought. Right now, unless you are from the same household, all of these are off the agenda. Even a reassuring and affable shake of the hands before leaving is not allowed. We English can be socially awkward at the best of times and bereft of the devices we use in the place of words or to break an uncomfortable silence, makes these interactions feel more stilted and emotionally challenging than ever. Your choice of words never more important.

But there are a few positives which we must embrace and hold onto as the human spirit shines a light that reassures that maybe everything will be ok. Families and communities are finding new and ingenious ways to support each other. Virtual funeral receptions are being hosted on Zoom in lieu of physical gathering, communities are lining the street (at a socially appropriate distance) to clap the passing hearse or simply standing and bowing their heads in respect in their front garden. Small acts of personalisation and meaningful gestures that reassure grieving families they’re not alone, that the person who died is loved and will be missed are having a profoundly positive impact. That their community, friends and family will be there for them in the days, weeks and months to come, goes some way towards healing the void. These random acts of kindness towards bereaved people and also towards us as funeral professionals quite simply mean the world. Gifts of food or posies of flowers left on the doorstep of the Funeral home or hand delivered with a note simply saying “thank you”.

Scenes from the Master elect's workshop

Much has had to be postponed, however we still have a few things in the diary: the September Court dinner, which may turn out to be my Installation dinner, and the Mansion House banquet, unless the Lord Mayor needs to take back that date. So, I am not holding my breath and will let you know final details as soon as we are able to.

Providing it goes ahead, we are still planning to participate in the annual Sheep Drive and Wool Fair on Sunday 27th September. This year both fair and sheep drive will be held on Southwark Bridge, as London Bridge is closed for repairs.

David Woodward, Master Furniture Maker, and I are still planning our Charity Auction in November. I have lots of beautiful, interesting and creative pieces of upholstery and soft furnishings currently being made by some of my past and present students, that I hope is going to raise lots of money for our new Upholders' Charity and, in particular, to boost the funds for our new upholstery Bursary Scheme, which is now due to roll out in 2021.



The Master elect knitting for past Sheriff Liz Green's 'Knit for Community' project, making colourful blankets for the homeless

Steve Blake's project for the Charity Auction



In the meantime, I have had a bit more time to keep making. During this lock-down period, I have been making medieval style banners and organising items in readiness for the Lord Mayor's Show. I have also been making cushions and doorstops for sale at both the charity auction and the wool fair, and I have been supplying fabrics for, and making, face masks. So, while this Covid-19 lockdown persists, I am keeping busy and out of mischief.



Opinion page ~ the page for free expression where Liverymen can air their views

COURT ASSISTANT AND MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN STEVE GARDNER shares his
Coronavirus lockdown thoughts this month... **WHAT ARE WORDS WORTH?**

When I was growing up, back when Permian gave way to Mesozoic, the 'C' word was the one Uncle Roger used when he got drunk, and I don't think my mother ever forgave him. Today a different 'C' word seems to pervade all our conversations and messages from every organisation with whom we come into contact. And I thought it worth taking the opportunity, in the time between cataloguing my cornflake collection and throwing rubber bricks at the television, to reflect on some other words and expressions which have changed their meaning over the years.

One word which will of course be familiar to all Upholders is "mystery," which the Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines as: **Mystery** (Late Middle English): a handicraft, a craft, an art, one's trade or profession or calling. Rather sadly, this word has itself become somewhat of a mystery over the years and has devolved into a novel, such as those penned by Agatha Christie, recommended by someone for whom English is not their first language.

Another word whose meaning has changed fairly recently, and which directly or indirectly affects us all, especially when things are counted, is "billion." Just before the beads fell off my abacus, a billion was a million million and now, for reasons probably best known to treasury officials and statisticians seeking to make their musings and prognostications bigger, this has become a thousand million – we all know that that is really a milliard. And heaven knows what a trillion comprises; all I know is that people like Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates appear to be on the edge of having several of these things each. Mind you, my wife Mauricia grew up in Yugoslavia where at one time you needed several million dinars for a cup of coffee!

My observation is that when a word is incorrectly used over time, or a new meaning applied, the new meaning sticks but often in the process its original meaning becomes downgraded, sometimes to the stage where most meaning is actually lost; examples that spring to mind are "iconic" (a particular hate of mine), "epic" and "literally."

And just before I go off to rant at BB 'C' Radio 4 News, if anyone thinks of asking me to "reach out" to someone for any reason, please don't. I'm happy to phone, email, speak face to face or engage in any of a number of communication activities, but I do not "reach out."

If you have any particular words or phrases that make you smile, choke or reach for the Hayman's gin, please do send these to the editor (Tim Solway) and he can publish a selection in the next newsletter.

Happy incarceration!



Upholding Livery and City ~

A round-up of the latest news

Nominations now open for Apprentice, Journeyman & Master Certificates

For the last 5 years, Master Upholder certificates have been presented to individuals showing excellence in their craft. Candidates are invited to a special ceremony at a prestigious Livery Hall in the City and given their award by the Lord Mayor.

The Master Certificate scheme was set up to encourage career progression in skills closely associated with City of London Livery companies and we are now seeking nominations for 2021 in all three categories: Apprentice, Journeyman and Master.

If you know of anyone whom you feel deserves recognition for the work they have done or does within our trades of upholstery, soft furnishings and undertaking, then please contact the Clerk, Susan Nevard, for an application form. The closing date for applications is 31st August 2020.



75th Anniversary of VE Day

Liveryman and Beadle Roy Theobald

describes celebrations in lockdown with neighbours:

“The two sons are in the Army and home on leave. We had a bit of Max Bygraves, singalong war songs in the background. After observing the two minutes silence, I played Reveille on my bugle. At midday in the front garden we enjoyed a wonderful chicken green curry that Sunee had cooked.

Sunee and I both wore Scout neckerchiefs and me a proper scout hat. I'd had a great time in the Scouts when I was a boy and a lot of people don't know, but the Boy Scouts in Both World Wars did a lot of work to help the War effort and many died. When we finally finished our meal and the festivities, one of the soldier boys presented me with his Regimental Flag of The Royal Corps of signals. I can say was moved! The house was decorated with hand made bunting and flags. Brilliant!

In a rather topical final news item, Liveryman Steve Franklin's talented daughter Emilia has just been awarded a Cambridge scholarship to study Hereford's Black Death victims.

Emilia's PhD research into the Hereford Cathedral Plague Pit of 300-400 bodies believed to date from around 1349 will investigate the possible underlying health conditions of victims of the Black Death. Emilia has already gained a Distinction in her MSc in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology from the University of Sheffield. We wish her well.