



Update

News from the Livery Company to the Trade

Issue 2 - December 2024



Letter from the Master

I am delighted to endorse this new publication, this the second edition of 'Update'.

It is designed to keep AMUSF students, tutors, alumni and the wider trade up to date with recent and future activities that the Upholders Livery Company is engaged in.

It will also highlight the numerous Awards and Bursaries that the Livery Company grant and how you can apply for the ones relevant to you..

My role is Master which is an office held for a year. The role comes after serving in the roles of Junior Warden and Senior Warden, if elected at a Livery wide meeting known as Common Hall. In my case I was installed just prior to a wonderful Livery Dinner at the fabulous Apothecaries' Hall in April.

During the year the Master represents the Livery at around 150 functions which mainly take place within the City of London. I also stand on every committee of the Livery which include Trade & Education, Membership, Finance and Charity. In addition I chair the Court meetings of the Livery which happen three times a year. You might liken it to being CEO to a board of Directors.

We put a huge value on developing our links with the Upholstery trade and the launch of 'Update' is designed to start a closer dialogue. We want you to learn more about us and find out the ways we can support and encourage you best.

Rob Ward

Master of the Worshipful Company of Upholders 2024/2025.

P.S. What is the Worshipful bit?

It reflects that when we were established in 1360 all apprentices and Livery members had to attend a weekly church service within the City of London. Nearly every Livery Company has this title.

London Met Upholstery Award Winners

Each year the Worshipful Company of Upholders awards a set of prizes to the upholstery students at London Metropolitan University. The twice yearly visits from the Past Master, Malcolm Hopkins and the Warden to the Trade, Roger Wates, are keenly anticipated by our upholstery students.

It is very motivating for them to think that their hard work on their traditionally upholstered chairs could be chosen to receive one of these prestigious awards.

The teaching team at London Met, also really appreciate the time which is taken during the two visits to thoroughly assess the students progress on their traditional work.



Margaret Johnson Award
Traditional Sprung, Stuffed and Stitched Dining Chair
1 David Stevens
2 Sabela Fernandez- Gonzalez
3 Debby Strode



Advanced Traditional Armchair
1 Lucy Reinhold
2 Laura McIntosh
3 David Clemetson

This year the prizegiving took place in the Wash Houses at the University campus in Aldgate East. This wonderful venue also houses part of the Parker Furniture Collection, so is a fitting location. As usual it was an well attended evening with many guests from the Livery and the wider upholstery industry joining the celebration. The evening also included a speech from the Master, Rob Ward. All of the winning chairs where on display.

The Upholstery Department are also very grateful to Liveryman, David Johnson for continuing to offer the Margaret Johnson Award for Stage 1 students and for attending personally to present it.

London Met Upholstery Award Winners

Two of the first prize winners David and Harry were delighted to also be sponsored to attend the Livery dinner at Merchant Tailors Hall in October. This offering gave each of them a unique experience of the Livery Company and both enjoyed the evening immensely.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming Malcolm and Roger for their first judging day in March. The 2024 awards will be the 35th year of these prizes being offered to the upholstery students. I hope many of you can join the celebration!

Rachael South
Trade and Education Committee
Worshipful Company of Upholders



Intermediate Traditional Nursing Chair
1 Harry Scott
2 Clara Zaina
3 joint Clare Williams and Kathryn Parrott

Newsletter Content

The Trade and Education Committee are always looking for interesting content to include in our Update and newsletters. If you have a story to share please contact clerk@upholders.co.uk

Roy Theobald FAMU

The Upholstery trade lose a deeply valued lifelong Upholsterer.

Beloved member of the Livery Company Roy Theobald FAMU sadly died aged 74 on 19th October 2024.

Roy was many things to many people; our exceptional and fearless Beadle, Toastmaster and Celebrant, past Chairman and Fellow of the AMUSF, Master Upholsterer – willing to help and mentor, and friend to all.

He demonstrated the upholstery craft widely, representing the Livery at Guildhall events and at the Wool Fair every year.



Wearing his trademark bowler hat he engaged everyone with ease, including celebrities and the Lord Mayor, and ensured that they all tapped a dome headed brass nail into his famous Upholders leather covered board. He even convinced some participants that the nails were solid gold and had a knack of encouraging donations to charity at the same time. With his quick wit and affable nature he captivated and engaged all those around him.

Roy was especially well known by the AMUSF Kent branch where for 25 years he helped organise their Christmas dance. Within the AMUSF he served on the board, was Past President and became a Fellow.

Roy was passionate about Motorbikes, Camping, and Scouting in his leisure time. In addition to his Upholstery business he was a Celebrant and a Toast Master. He served as past president of the London Toastmasters Association and officiated at many City Livery functions.

He was a man of multiple talents, had a generous, warm, amusing personality and is deeply missed by his widow Sunee, the upholstery community and those who had the privilege to know him.

The Usher Travel Bursary

The Worshipful Company of Upholders is delighted to confirm that The Usher Travel Bursary is open to all trades that the Upholders represent whether it be Funeral Directors, Upholsterers or those engaged with soft furnishings.

The purpose of the grant is to assist in the personal or educational development of the applicant through travel, which is something that Past Master Ray Usher, after whom the Award is named, strongly believed in.

The projects that have been supported have been wide ranging and may include training, service improvement, history, visiting museums or conferences but the common thread and the guiding principle is that you should be inspired by a project that adds value to you and the profession that you represent.

Previous recipients of the award have benefited enormously from their experiences.

Feedback has included:

'This experience has opened up a whole new world of conservation',

'It really broadened my horizons', 'I learned so much',

'The visits have all been fruitful ... and have generated lots of ideas',

'It was an amazing life experience for me and I hope that all I experienced and learned will benefit all of my students'.

Applicants should be over 18 years of age and it should be noted that the grant is not intended to cover the cost of travel from an individual's home to their main educational establishment.

Forms are available from

www.upholders.co.uk/upholding-our-charities/usher-travel-bursary

City of London Sheep Drive & Wool Fair 2024



Left to Right: Liveryman Kirsty Lockwood, Master Rob Ward, Liveryman Marian Sinclair, Liveryman Greg Cuppitt Jones, Liveryman and Clerk Rosemary Selfe, Warden to the Trade Roger Wates

The Upholders had a lovely day at the London Sheep Drive and Livery Wool Fair. The Master Rob Ward and Liveryman Lizette May drove their sheep across Southwark bridge and looked to be having a fine time.

SOUTHWARK BRIDGE Sunday 29th September 2024

A long-established charity event, celebrating a Freeman's ancient "right" to drive sheep to market over the Thames, toll free; all in aid of raising funds for The Woolmen Charity and The Lord Mayor's Appeal.

<https://sheepdrive.london/>



We attend as a Livery Company each year to represent our trade to the general public and the other liveries.

As our Livery includes the trade of Funeral Directors we represented them with a superb model of a motorcycle hearse on display, leading to fabulous engagement from the public who were intrigued by the links between the two professions. Our thanks go to Liveryman Marian Sinclair for driving hours from the Midlands to bring the motorcycle to us and represent us for the day.

Traditional upholstery demonstrations were provided by Liveryman Greg Cupitt-Jones (who holds the prestigious Upholders Master Certificate Award), we are very grateful to him for battling London traffic to join us.

Current livery Masters were invited to tap a dome-headed nail into our special leather covered board, created by Liveryman Roy Theobald, completing the word "Upholders" which encouraged engagement with the Lord Mayor and other liveries.

Sustainable Upholstery



Delyth Fetherston-Dilke

The Upholders are members of the Inter livery Textile Sustainability Group. Last year the Upholsterer Delyth Featherstone Dilke was involved in a discussion panel at their annual conference.

Here is an article she has written for us to encourage Upholsterers to promote sustainable solutions whenever possible. Thank you Delyth.

SUSTAINABILITY, THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND THE UPHOLSTERY TRADE

Every year in the UK a conservative estimate is that 7 million+ sofas are discarded as waste. The discarded sofas are destined for incineration at the same temperature as hazardous hospital waste. This is required by DEFRA to try to break down the toxicity and long life of the flame retardant chemicals present in the foam and often fabric.

As upholsterers we need to be aware of these chemical flame retardants. About 20% of a sheet of UK foam is not foam but chemical flame retardants. Backcoated fabrics are treated with chemical flame retardants, as are the Trevira treated polyester yarns. These flame retardant chemicals can be toxic, they can cause birth defects, reproduction issues and cancer. If we are stripping down an old piece of foam filled furniture face masks, a hepa filter on the hoover, wet mopping a floor and lots of hand washing and open windows are all good ideas. No eating lunch in the workshop.

Sustainable Upholstery

In rebuilding a piece of furniture we have the knowhow to offer the client an alternative to foam. For those clients aware of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) - nasties that release into the indoor air, permeate their skin and collect in dust in their homes, their number one item to avoid should be chemical flame retardants. You can take a look at the Government's Environmental Audit, Toxic Chemicals in Everyday Life to read more on the toxicity of these flame retardants.

Evidently we have a duty to rebuild furniture in compliance with the 1988 Furniture and Furnishings Fire Safety Regulations. If the sofa is pre 1950, we can choose what internal fillings we deem most suitable, the regulations do not apply. For a post 1950 domestic sofa we are bound to respect the regulations. We can experiment with coir, hair, natural latex, wool and send samples of our "build up" to an authorised re testing lab. Or we can use hair springs and wool with a natural top fabric and a woolmix barrier cloth - each individual layers that pass re safety tests.

The AMUSF is working on posting guidance to its members on steps upholsterers can take to protect themselves from chemical exposure, and what natural materials can be considered as alternatives, so watch this space!

Delyth Fetherston-Dilke
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www.delythupholstery.com

The Upholders National Upholstery Awards

At the January Furniture Show NEC 19th -23rd January 2025

The Upholders are delighted to hold our National Upholstery Awards for the second year for Students awarded a Double Distinction for Stage 3 of the AMUSF course.

Do come and visit our Stand during the four day show in Hall 4 to see the finalists who will show both their modern and traditional chairs. You are sure to be inspired. The award ceremony will take place on Sunday 20th at 12.30pm at the Social Studio Stage in Hall 2.

We will show these very special chairs alongside 5 chairs from the fabulous Frederick Parker Collection. The collection is owned by the Furniture Makers Livery Company and represent a small part of their 190 chairs and archive originally created by Frederick Parker of Parker Knoll fame. Having both exhibits together creates a powerful educational tool for visitors to the show and champions the best of past and present upholstery design and practice.

The Upholders Livery Company attend this show as the we want to showcase the amazing standard of work that can be reached on the AMUSF courses and celebrate these traditional and modern skills nationally. Upholstery is the core trade of the Upholder with our ancient Livery Company being founded in 1360.



Lucy Fisher wins first prize for her Traditional Club chair in cork fabric and her Egg chair January 2024