



COMPANY COMMENT

The Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America

www.freemenlondon.org

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From the Master

It is a pleasure and an honour to have been invested as your Master at the AGM and Dinner on 9th May 2003. Since that time, the new Court of the Honourable Company has met twice and I have to say that I have full confidence that we will continue to achieve the success and growth of the Honourable Company that you have seen during the last several of years. There are now several new and enthusiastic Court Members who we expect to generate new ideas, and an events committee has already been formed. These youthful people help to reduce the average age of members of the Court – something that has been a concern to me over the period of time that I have been with the Company.

Despite the recent increase in membership, the Honourable Company of Freemen will not continue to flourish unless younger members are prepared to become Freemen and in turn to serve on the Court and to replace those of us who every year become Past Masters – an expression, incidentally, whose significance I now begin to understand!

In mapping out the way forward, there are three people that I have to mention by name who are making notable contributions to our Company.

The first of these is John Smith, the Deputy Master, who has agreed to also continue on in the unfilled Office of Honorary Treasurer and who, no doubt, will also continue to be at the forefront of several social and charity events.

The second is Martin Walmsley, the Honorary Clerk. His is a thankless job but one that holds the very fabric of the Honourable Company together. I am sure that his efforts will be rewarded in Heaven.

The Last of these three, but not least, is Peter Leach, Past Master, Editor of this publication and a devoted member of the Honourable Company whose long and continued contribution was recognized by a special award at this year's AGM dinner.

I can also not let the opportunity pass to thank Hugh Oddie, your Immediate Past Master, for his leadership, vision, enthusiasm and hospitality. Under his Mastership, the growth of Membership has accelerated, the event attendance increased and we had the largest number in attendance at the Annual Meeting and Dinner for many years. Congratulations on a job well done, Hugh.

Finally, may I say that we rely on our membership for support of our functions and events. I hope to see many of you at our Dinners, Theatre and Concert Nights, Charity Receptions and other social events during the rest of the year. There are many wonderful people in this organization from many different walks of life. Meeting and mixing with each other, in my view, is at least as important as the event itself.

Geoffrey Mayo Master

A Brief History of a City Livery Company – The Worshipful Company of Gardeners

History

It was in 1345 that the Gardeners were first recognized as a Guild and were permitted to sell produce “where they have been wont of old in front of the Church of Austin at the side of the gate in St. Paul’s Churchyard”. Before this time, the foci of activities were purely those of a Fraternity. It wasn’t until 1605 that the Company was incorporated through a Royal Charter granted by James I “to protect those in the trade of gardening from those not qualified to do so”. The Gardeners are number 66 in the order of precedence.

In the reign of Charles I, a proclamation was issued to reform the rules and controls of the Company to eliminate the many abuses “against the Corporation of Gardeners”. This gave a heightened value of those in the business of gardening by establishing quality standards for what they produced and, more especially, establishing apprenticeship programs and training in their craft.

By 1649, the Company ran a large market garden outside the walls of the City employing 1500 men, women and children as well as 400 apprentices.

Current Activities

The Company no longer operates gardening operations or controls the qualifications and training of Gardeners, but it maintains a program of scholarships for students to learn the honourable skills and following the traditions of “raising food and flowers out of the very earth at our feet”.

It maintains three objectives:

- To promote the art and practice of good gardening throughout the Country and especially in the London area
- To support charitable activities connected with horticulture or the City of London

To beautify the City of London by encouraging the display of flowers and foliage, for which awards are made annually. In England, as in most countries, women play a large part in the business of gardening in both the commercial and domestic sectors. It is especially relevant that the Gardeners Company was one of the first City Companies to permit women to take the Livery.

In foreseeing the value of enjoying good relations with Europe after the First World War, the Company started making regular visits to Belgium, Holland, France and other countries to visit state gardens and to forge ties with leaders and horticulturists in those countries. In 1942 Queen Juliana accepted the Honorary Freedom and in 1971 the then President of Portugal was similarly honoured.

Inspired by these festive and highly organized visits, the Gardeners Company started a program to encourage the planting of gardens and flower boxes in the City. This civic program was later extended to horticultural societies within a six-mile radius of St Paul’s and this practice continues today. The Company now has amongst its Liverymen and Freemen many people, both professional and amateur, who

are closely involved in the horticultural, floristry and flower arrangement industries. UK and European Royalty are also well represented amongst their ranks.

Not always digging in the earth, the average Gardener cleans up pretty well to grace the tables at their memorable banquets. The Company convenes these functions in borrowed quarters such as Goldsmiths’ Hall, all being magnificent venues for these delightful formal occasions. The menus, of course, always include “Gardeners’ Pride” a selection of the freshest and most flavourful vegetables.

The Coat of Arms

The Company’s Coat of Arms carries an heraldic shield at its centre depicting Adam in the Garden of Eden. Following the theme of the role of women in gardening, the shield has on each side a female supporter each carrying a cornucopia of gardening produce. Above the shield is a Knight’s helmet surmounted by a basket of flowers and foliage with fruit, and beneath is the motto... “In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eate thy bread”.

Links to the Honourable Company

The Gardeners is the Livery Company of our long time member Anthony Kemp, he being the third Master of the Honourable Company. Tony was apprenticed to the Worshipful Company of Gardeners in 1954 while still a student at Ridley College. He was admitted to the livery in 1968 at the time when his father, Leslie Kemp, was the Master of that Company. That was a memorable year for Kemp Sr. and the year following he had the privilege of maintaining this company’s tradition of presenting to HM Queen Elizabeth, at Buckingham Palace, a replica of the bouquet she carried in her coronation procession in 1952. This follows a similar tradition that had been started in 1920 when the late Queen Mother, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyons was married in Westminster Abbey.

In 1985, following the practice of beautifying the City of London, Tony Kemp’s architectural office in Toronto sponsored his then nine-year-old daughter and some of her friends to plant flowers in empty concrete planters at the Yonge Street / St. Clair intersection in Toronto. This modest civic gesture was very well received but persuading the merchants to water their new blooms was another challenge. Today, it is encouraging to see several merchants reviving this idea by coming together to put some natural colour into the urban streetscape.

This article was created from information assembled by Anthony Kemp with some additions from the website of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners: (www.gardenerscompany.org.uk).

Events Report**Annual Meeting and Dinner**

What a superb Annual Meeting and Dinner. With the largest group of members and their guests, in the last 15 years, 91 people joined together at the Albany Club to celebrate the 24th Annual Dinner of the Honourable Company. It was so very nice for all to meet so many new members to the Honourable Company as well as to renew friendships with Members who had been absent last year.

Following his “dramatic” debut last year, John Smith was again the Master of Ceremonies and he took us through the serious and not so serious celebrations. The new Company Grace was used for the first time and said by its primary author, Immediate Past Master, Neil Purcell. Agnes Christopoulos, Court Warden, proposed the Toast to the Queen, a motion that was enthusiastically supported, as was the toast to the Office of the President of the United States, proposed by Stanley Elkind.

With the number of Guests, their introduction took longer than usually, but it was superb to appreciate how many people support the Honourable Company and the number who are considering joining.

After Dinner with a smoked salmon appetizer, baked whole Guinea Fowl followed by Rhubarb Crumble, we enjoyed the Toast to the Honourable Company and the traditional Ceremony of the Loving Cup. Calling the Meeting to Order, the Master of Ceremonies handed over to the Master for the formal business. The Master announced the results of the vote on the new Constitution, which had been passed overwhelmingly, and followed this with some observations on his year in office and the progress made by the Company under his leadership. He expressed gratitude to the people that work unstintingly, often unrecognized, to ensure the continuing success of the Honourable Company.

The final agenda item of the Meeting was the Investiture of the New Master and the New Court (*see opposite*)

With the closing of the Annual Meeting, the Immediate Past Master introduced the Guest Speaker, Mr. Bob Coghill, President of the Sherlock Holmes Society of Toronto. Bob talked extensively about the Bootmakers of Toronto, and the many fascinating linkages between the legendary Sherlock Holmes and Canada, the enthusiasm that the world still has for these great stories and the very possible linkages between the Bootmakers and the various London Livery Companies involved in the Boot and Shoe trades.

The Bootmakers are named after an allusion in the Hound of the Baskervilles and the society is the parent society for Canadian Sherlockians.

Bob Coghill was thanked by Sylvia Davis

Outing to the Country Home of the Master

This event was held on Saturday July 5th at the Master’s summer residence near Port Severn and was thoroughly enjoyed by a group of 18 members and guests. After the Group had convened, the Master conducted a tour of the gardens and waterfront. Lunch was served on the terrace in perfect weather conditions, despite an adverse forecast by the experts at Environment Canada.

Afternoon entertainment was provided by two boat trips on the Severn River and into Georgian Bay, with the Master as Captain. This was followed by afternoon tea with biscuits and then a swim in their warm pool.

This was a great opportunity for some really good entertaining conversation in delightful surroundings with superb food and with most gracious and obliging hosts.

Article written from information provided by the Master.

Presentation of Honorary Membership

At the Annual General Meeting, the Master announced the first recipient of an Honorary Membership under the revised Constitution and By-Law of the Honourable Company. This was presented to your editor, Peter Leach, Haberdasher and Freeman. The commendation reads:

“In recognition of his outstanding contribution to advancing the objectives of the Honourable Company, Peter Leach has been admitted as its first Honorary Member by the presiding Court of Wardens in the year 2002/03. Peter’s efforts are warmly and sincerely appreciated by all of the Company’s Members”.

Peter joined the Honourable Company in 1981. He was elected to the Court of Wardens in 1993, serving as Honorary Treasurer for 3 year. He was elected Deputy Master in 1996 and Master in 1997 and 1998. In 1999, when Gerry Wooll retired as editor of Company Comment, Peter assumed that task. While Master, Peter instituted the Dinners for the East and West Coast Chapters, negotiated the Membership rights exchange agreement with the Guild of Freeman and assisted Amber Armitagein preparing for the 20th Anniversary Celebration visit to London in 1999.

Peter is a Haberdasher, entering that Worshipful Company by servitude. He was admitted to the Freedom of the City of London in 1970 and clothed in the Livery in 1971. He joined the Guild of Freeman in 1998. His professional contributions were recognized in 1999 when he was made a Fellow of the Engineering Institute of Canada, for “excellence in Engineering and the services to the profession and to the society”.

He has been happily married to his Wife, Kay, for 34 years and they have two Children who are both also happily married. Kay is Joint Master of the Ottawa Valley Hunt

The Court Induction

During the Annual Meeting, the following were inducted to Office and to the Court of Wardens and Assistants.

Master	Geoffrey Mayo, Engineer
Deputy Master	John Smith, Guild of Freemen
Honorary Clerk	Martin Walmsley, Freeman
Honorary Treasurer	John Smith, Guild of Freeman
Hon Clerk, East Coast	Kenneth Wood, Shipwright
Immediate Past Master	Hugh Oddie, Feltmaker
Wardens and Assistants	Agnes Christopoulos Sylvia Davis James McDermott David Moorcroft Neil Purcell, Past Master Geoffrey Wright

Upcoming Events

Tutored Wine Tasting

Location	Innocenti's Restaurant 587 King Street West (at Portland), Toronto
Date and Time	9 th September 2003, 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm
Dress	Informal
Cost	\$50.00

Annual Dinner 2004

Location	The Albany Club 51 King Street East, Toronto
Date and Time	7th May 2004, 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm
Dress	Dinner Jacket or Dark Business Suit
Cost	TBD

Recent New Member Bios

In the previous issue, some of the new Members' brief biographies were not included. The Court is pleased to bring them to you now:

Geoffrey Keith Johnson

Geoffrey started his career in the hospitality industry as a Apprentice Chef with Eugene Koeffler at the Dorchester Hotel in London. In 1977, he saw greater opportunities in Canada and the US, joining the Four Seasons Group as an Executive Chef. This took him all across the US and Canada. Later he joined Sutton Place as Executive Sous-Chef. In 1982, seeing great opportunity on his own, he opened "en Ville Event Design and Catering", a business that has gone from strength to strength. With this talent joining the Honourable Company, the Court will be looking to events where we can take advantage of Geoffrey's skills and talents.

Geoffrey is happily married to Linda

Paul Wilson

Paul was born in Surrey, England and came to Canada in 1960 to study Chemical Engineering at McGill University.

Clearly a student who enjoyed life more than studying; bridge and amateur sports car racing caused him to leave McGill. Later, he entered Concordia University and graduate in English. This change in educational direction did not seem to slow his professional career, which took him all across Canada, to New York and London with a number of global companies. Included in these are Proctor and Gamble, Cominco, Bankers Trust and, most recently, the Royal Bank Financial Group, where is currently Deputy Head of Corporate Communications.

For mental relief, he races a 33-foot sloop, called the Flying Circus, on Lake Ontario. We will need to find out if he is a Monty Python fan!!

Paul is happily married to Sharyn, and we look forward to seeing a lot of both of them in the future.

Robert Thomas

Robert started his career with Messrs Coutts and Co in London and has gone from being a Royal banker (Coutts is the bank of the Royal Family) to being a banker at the Royal. He came to Canada 23 years ago to join the Royal Bank group and is now an Executive Officer of the RBC Financial Group.

His life has taken him from Sheffield, Northampton, Southend-on-Sea and London, to Toronto and Montreal as well as a number of the Caribbean Islands. He had his home in Jamaica for several years.

Robert is married to Suzanne, who is also with RBC and they have two children, both of whom have successful careers. Jason is a musician working with EMI Records in London, and Claire is an intensive care nurse with the University Health network in Toronto.

In what is clearly limited spare time, Robert dabbles in golf, is a member of the Artist's Club in Liverpool England, and Chairs the Finance committee of Palace Place where he is also a member of the Board.

New Members

Christina Fung, Robin Norman Hart and Scott Paul Stennett

Profiles will be provided in the next issue.

Edward (Ed) Charles Mayled

Ed grew up in the area around Bristol and received his early training in the design of packaging systems. He was enlisted with the Royal Marines and served with distinction in many tours of duty. On leaving the services, he rejoined the packaging industry as a consultant. Assignments brought him to Canada where he later established his headquarters. His business is global and he is a regular visitor to China, Japan, the UK and Europe.

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When not working, Ed enjoys singing and is a member of a number of Choirs. He maintains his linkages with the Royal Marines and often joins them for various parades.

Ed has come to a number of the Honourable Company's events as the guest of Ray Gibson. He has enjoyed the experience and is intent on seeking the Freedom of the City of London in the immediate future.

James (Jim) and Linda Mitchell

Jim has spent most of his life flying aircraft. When in High School, Jim and a couple of friends bought a small training aircraft from the Government. In this, he learned to fly and this provided a great base for a lifetime of flying. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force as a pilot and later went on to become a commercial pilot with Air Canada. Quickly rising to the level of Captain, he traveled the World and has lots of stories of many humorous incidents that he encountered.

Recently, Jim has retired and is heavily involved in various charities, giving unstintingly of his knowledge and time to their activities and committees.

Linda has spent most of her life in the teaching profession and retired recently to take a far more active involvement in her community and charitable interests. Like many who retire, she now wonders how she ever found the time to work. Amongst her interests, she chairs the twinned training committee of the city of Mississauga and its Japanese counterpart. This role requires her to visit Japan frequently, which she clearly enjoys.

Jim and Linda are great supporters of things British and its Heritage in particular. What can be more appropriate, therefore, than their joining the Honourable Company and a commitment to becoming Freeman! They are welcome and will bring their flare and enthusiasm to the Company.

City Ceremonies – Warrant of Membership to the Guild of Freeman

Many of the Members of the Honourable Company take their commitment to the City of London enthusiastically and energetically. As membership in the Livery Companies can only be pursued through servitude or by invitation (unless you happen to have a parent who is Liveried), many decide to join the Guild of Freeman. The Guild is open to all Freeman, but it is necessary to apply, a process that requires the identification of a proposer and seconder who are prepared to support the applicant and are, themselves, Members of the Guild. (For Members wanting to join the Guild, Honourable Company Members, who are active in the Guild, will usually do this for you – contact the Clerk if you want to find out who these people are).

Once an applicant is accepted, the Guild provides an invitation to attend the joining ceremony. Like most things of a ceremonial nature in the City, this is done with appropriate pomp and circumstance.

April - June 2003

The inductees are asked to assemble at a specific location where the Court of the Guild is meeting. For several years this has been at the Hall of the Tallow Chandlers on Dowgate Hill. After assembling in the Entrance Hall, an occasion for meeting other new Members, the Beadle invites the group up to the Parlor and briefs everyone on the process. When the Court is ready for the induction, their last item, the Beadle lines the inductees up in alphabetical order, leads everyone into the Banquet Hall with guests following to sit in seats at the end of the Hall, and introduces each inductee by name. Walking up into the space between meeting tables that are in the form of a 'U', each inductee bows or curtsies to the Master, and sits in the next available seat, half of the group sitting to the right facing inwards and the other half to the left.

The Master welcomes the new Members and the Master and inductees partake in the ceremony of the loving cup, each inductee being aided by one of the two Renter Wardens. After being greeted with a "hearty welcome" in this fashion, each inductee is invited by the Master to come forward to receive his or her Warrant. On reaching the Master, each bows to the other, shakes hands and receives the Warrant. The Member then turns walks to the foot of the table, turns and bows again and then leaves the Banquet Hall to sign the register.

The new Members and their Guests reenter the Parlor, where drinks and canapés are served. After all the new Members have been inducted, the Master terminates the Court Meeting, and he and the Wardens and Assistants, join everyone in the Parlor to meet and chat for up to half an hour.

The Warrant itself is mounted on a presentation board embossed with the seal of the Guild of Freeman of the City of London. The citation reads "This is to certify that ___ was duly admitted to membership of the Guild of Freeman of the City of London on the __ day of ____, after he (or she) had undertaken to conform to all Rules and Regulations made by the Court of the said Guild and to promote the interests of his (or her) fellow Freeman, and protect the rights and Privileges of the City of London by all lawful means within his (or her) power".

It is certainly a memorable occasion for those fortunate enough to be invited to join the Guild.

Goodbye

After five years as the British High Commissioner, we are sad to see Sir Andrew Burns and his wife, Lady Sarah, leave Canada to return to the UK. It has always been regrettable that his diplomatic obligations have never allowed them to attend any events of the Honourable Company. However, Sir Andrew has always been willing to offer his support, especially through the involvement of Consul General in Toronto.

We know they have enjoyed their stay in Canada but have had a lot of work to do in maintaining relationships during

the Foot and Mouth problems and in the disagreement between the UK and Canada over the war in Iraq.

We understand that Sir Andrew is retiring from the diplomatic corps, and they will be returning to their home on Exmoor. However it seems unlikely that, after many years of great service, they will be able to escape that easily from public life.

We know that they have established a lot of enduring and strong friendships here, so, while they will be missed, we hope that they will be able to join us at one of our events during visits, whenever they come back to Canada.

Obituaries

Belle Lechem

It is with great sadness that we report to you the death of Belle Lechem on 26th June 2003. Belle was the wife of Brian Lechem, Freeman, Basketmaker and Past Master of the Honourable Company. The Members will have many very happy memories of Belle's humor, friendliness and gentle disposition whenever she joined in our events. A number of Belle and Brian's friends in the Honourable Company attended the funeral to pay their last respects to her

Over the last 7 years, Belle had fought lymphoma quietly and stoically, never letting even close friends know of her illness. Over that time she fought hard and with dignity against the progress of the disease.

Belle Rosswick was born in London, England in 1937 where 18 year later she met Brian Lechem at a synagogue youth group, and he obviously made an impression, for two years later, in 1957, they married! They had just celebrated 46 years together shortly before Belle passed away.

The arrival of children Ruth, Alan and Paul kept her busy at home, but Belle was always involved in numerous community groups, in Sheffield and in London. Managing her professional work, running the home, ensuring all three kids participated in a wide variety of activities, working on a range of committees through the local schools and synagogue, she created a whirl of activity. It was an environment in which Belle thrived. The busier, the better!

In 1976, Belle and Brian made the decision to take up a business offer in Canada. Once in Toronto, Belle got involved in Toronto book clubs, the National Council of Jewish Women, the synagogue and other community groups! In addition, it was a natural extension of Belle's organizational talents to join Brian in running their association management company (Base Services) founded in the mid 1980's, and in expanding the business through the 1990's until her retirement some five years ago.

They traveled extensively together on business, and shared many common interests, including the Honourable Company of the Freeman of the City of London of North America.

Belle's passion and talent for art was evident in her garden, her home, her dried flower arranging, her paintings, and in her impeccable sense of style and dress, which many Members will remember vividly.

Together with Brian and Base Services, she helped look after the Company's mailing list for more than 10 years. She was an enthusiastic supporter of Brian during his time on the Court and especially in 1990/91 when he served as Master.

Many Members will have very fond memories of Belle and it is hoped that Brian and his son Alan will help rekindle her memory during their regular attendance at the events of the Honourable Company.

Article written with the assistance of Ruth Abrahamson, Daughter of Brian and the late Belle Lechem

James McDermott

James had only been a member of the Honourable Company for a few years, and was brought on to the Court in 2002. During that year he was diagnosed with brain cancer and, while surgery provided some respite, he succumbed to this insidious disease. While it is always really upsetting to lose a friend and colleague after they have had a full and satisfying life, it is always so much harder to lose a friend and colleague in the prime of life with so much to contribute both professionally and socially.

James was born in Donegal, Ireland, and being the son of a high school principal, he was encouraged to further his post-secondary education in London, England. Following his career in the City, he became an officer in the Police Force in Hong Kong. There he met and married Judy, a vivacious Canadian, but, when the hand over to China occurred, James decided to take early retirement and move with his family to Ontario.

James was one of those people that you always wanted to call on because he would always help, always volunteer and always do his utmost. One of his responsibilities on the Court had been to manage the information in and the structure of the Website of the Honourable Company. It is very upsetting that he has not been able to fulfill his vision of expanding this vehicle to add ever more value to all Freeman across North America.

Jim will be sorely missed by the colleagues on the Court and the Members of the Company that had got to know his generosity and great spirit. We know that our loss pales in comparison to that of his family and life-long friends, and our hearts go out to them in this difficult time.

Article written with information provided by Captain Ray Gibson, Founding Master.