

## CRIPPLEGATE WARD CLUB: MASTER'S REPORT 2016-2017

It has been my privilege and a great honour to have served as the 139th Master of Cripplegate Ward Club having been elected at the AGM on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Immediately afterwards I hosted our **Civic Luncheon** in the magnificent Old Library at Guildhall. Built in 1870 this room of great charm and character is an ideal place to enjoy a splendid celebratory luncheon with friends. Our guest of honour was Sheriff Dr Christine Rigden, accompanied by her husband Stephen. During my speech I presented her with donations from Members in aid of the Lord Mayor's Appeal and the Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund.

My programme of events for the year was deliberately varied. The first in April made Club history with the first visit to Goldsmiths' Hall by a group of Cripplegate Members. Here we learnt about the work of the **Assay Office** through a presentation and a tour of the laboratory. During the tour we were able to watch craftsmen at work hallmarking both by traditional methods and the newer laser technique, hold gold bars worth thousands of pounds, and learn about the Trial of the Pyx which was underway during our visit. After a fascinating morning *The Slug and Lettuce* was the venue for a relaxing lunch.

In May, accompanied by our President, we were privileged to visit the headquarters of **The City of London Police** who are responsible for the safety of the thousands of people who live, work and visit the City. In addition to presentations on topics including Community Policing and anti terrorism we watched as two lovely Police dogs were put through their paces, viewed equipment used when handling anti social behaviour and civil unrest before seeing and learning about Police response vehicles and motor cycles. A charitable donation from the ticket price was made to DARE – a programme increasing awareness of the dangers of drug abuse in City of London Schools. Rather later than planned we made our way to *Pizza Express* for an Italian style lunch.

The oldest manufacturing company in the UK, the **Whitechapel Bell Foundry** was the venue for our June event. Here we enjoyed a tour of the foundry, guided by one of the Directors. A delicious buffet supper hosted by the family owners followed in the adjoining Foundry House. The announcement, made since our visit, that the foundry is to close, made the opportunity to see the work undertaken by the craftsmen there so much more special.

Our tour of the iconic London Theatre – **the Coliseum** – in July was enjoyed immensely. Our knowledgeable, enthusiastic and entertaining guide took us on a full circuit of the building including the foyer, auditorium and backstage areas sharing so much about the theatre with us, the history, architecture, people and events punctuated with some great anecdotes. A convivial lunch in a private room at nearby *Côte Brasserie* followed.

Early in August we gathered in the Mall prior to our private tour of **Clarence House**. We wandered through the downstairs rooms learning about the works of art and the history not only of the building but also the events that have taken place there. After viewing the Prince of Wales's own watercolours and a visit to the gift shop, we enjoyed a relaxing glass of champagne while looking out over the garden. Then we took a short walk through St James's Park to the lakeside restaurant, where aperitifs were followed by an excellent supper, finishing with further drinks by the lakeside - bringing a memorable evening to a close.

Later in August I was thrilled to announce "The Masters Surprise Event" - I had successfully secured two tours of **Number 10 Downing Street**. On a hot, sunny morning together with our President we gathered in Whitehall, were directed along Downing Street, walked through the most famous front door in the world, up the stairs lined with the photographs of past Prime Ministers and through the reception rooms where Heads of State are often entertained. Our tour concluded in the tranquil garden. Then it was off to The *National Liberal Club* for a reception on the terrace overlooking the Thames, before a delicious lunch and then back onto the terrace afterwards to finish off a fabulous day.

I was delighted to learn from the many kind comments I received that Members and their guests truly enjoyed themselves in October at our **Annual Banquet**, held this year in the elegant surroundings of

**Saddlers' Hall.** Excellent food and wine were followed by a magical musical interlude, provided by students from *The Guildhall School of Music and Drama* based in the heart of our very own Ward of Cripplegate, took us "around the world" in song. Our Guest of Honour and Speaker, Past Master Musician, Paul Campion continued the musical theme. All this together with the friendly company for which our Ward Club is known combined to make a memorable occasion.

The heavy rain that fell on the morning of **The Lord Mayor's Show** in November eased by mid morning as we gathered in Guildhall Yard to support the traditions of the City as the new Lord Mayor surrounded by the Aldermen boarded his coach and left for Mansion House. After watching the colourful and lively parade we made our way up to *The Guildhall Club* for a very welcome pre-lunch drink and a tasty four course lunch.

In November I also organised a small tour of **The Government Art Collection**. In addition to seeing some works of art not currently gracing the walls government buildings and embassies throughout the world we learnt about the history and role of The Government Art Collection as well as how paintings are prepared for display and shipped. Afterwards we enjoyed a relaxed and informal supper of steak or lobster followed by some amazing '*knickerbocker glories*'.

In December we were privileged to be invited by *The Worshipful Company of Musicians*, also residents of the Ward of Cripplegate, to join their **Carol Service**. The beautiful setting of St. Michael's Cornhill, a wonderful choir and music from the recently restored organ made a magical start to Christmas. After the service we gathered in *The Counting House* close by, for an enjoyable supper during which The Masters' Raffle of items useful during the Christmas Season was drawn and to finish our very own Cripplegate Father Christmases' distributed a small gift to everyone attending. A donation from the sale of tickets was made to The Musicians' Company Yeoman programme.

**The Supreme Court**, very much in the news over the historic "Brexit" challenge by the Government, was the venue for our January event. In addition to a very informative talk Members were able to visit each of the three Courts as well as the Judges' Library. *Cellarium*, a restaurant housed within the 14<sup>th</sup> Century fabric of Westminster Abbey, where the monks themselves once stored their own food and wine, provided an atmospheric venue for lunch.

Finally, in February I welcomed Members and their guests to the prestigious Carlton Club in St. James's. Here in the aptly named *Churchill Room* a personal friend of mine, Gillian Halcrow, gave a fascinating, entertaining and moving talk on the World War 2 **Special Operations Executive** or Churchill's Secret Army. A donation from the sale of tickets was made to the Lt Dougie Dalzell MC Memorial Trust. This being the last event of my year the evening closed with a celebratory canapés and wine reception.

I would like to thank the Members of Cripplegate Ward Club for the tremendous support they have given my events and for making them such friendly and happy occasions. Every one of my thirteen, all inclusive events have been full and I am happy to have offered over seven hundred event spaces during the year - this has raised a good surplus to boost Club funds! My sincere thanks go to the Club's Social Secretary, David Herbert, for all his help, support and hard work in organising and publicising my programme.

I would also wish to thank our President Alderman David Graves for his involvement in the Club during my year, our Honorary Secretary, Barbara Allan for her assistance and wise counsel, our Honorary Treasurer, Sidney Morton for keeping the Club's finances in order and the Committee for their support.

Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank my very dear husband and Consort, Douglas for all his love, support and encouragement. Douglas and I both thank you all for giving us the opportunity to serve as Master and Consort. It has been a wonderful experience. We cherish many happy memories of the past twelve months and hope you do as well. We look forward to seeing you all again in the future.

**Mrs Christine Nevard MBE, Master 2016/17**