

THE CORDWAINER



The making of a modern Cordwainer

**Marching for the Marsden
Air and Grace at Footwear
Friends Awards**

**Arise Sir Michael –
Past Master Mike Uren's knighthood**

THE NEWS



Youngest Fusilier steps up to thank Cordwainers

The annual Fusiliers' Dinner was held in October, when the Master presented prizes to members of C Company, the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and he in his turn, received the prized beret and Fusilier hackle.

The Company was delighted to welcome three veteran Fusilier Chelsea Pensioners, Gerald Farmer (who was also a former Cordwainers-sponsored leather cutter), Albert Mayle and John Westlake.

It was the youngest guest, however, 16-year-old-Fusilier cadet Ruby-Rose Mansoor, who made a lasting impression, with her eloquent speech of thanks. Cadet Mansoor, from 212 Hornsey Fusiliers, provided an update on how Cordwainer funds are being used to support the Fusilier cadets. She told the Company about weekly training, the annual camp and their recent trip to the Somme in the centenary year of the battle, a visit that none of them will ever forget. Ruby read a poem commemorating the battle and



The Master with Cadet Ruby-Rose Mansoor.

acknowledged with gratitude that, 'Such things would not be possible without the continued support and contribution from the Cordwainers who dedicate time, money and moral support to us. I speak on behalf of all cadets like myself when I say I cannot express in words how thankful we are for this.'

Music to our ears: RLSB choir flourishes after Musical Extravaganza

The Musical Extravaganza of April produced more than just tuneful memories that lingered long with those who were there. The funds raised during this extraordinary evening, which Cordwainers shared with visually impaired guests, will support the establishment of a new choir composed of visually impaired singers. The Royal London Society for Blind People (RLSB) Choir brings together blind young singers and musicians from across London.



Members of the RLSB Choir.

Directed by choir master and accomplished soprano, Victoria Oruwari, the choir made their debut performance at RLSB's annual Christmas Concert on Thursday 1 December.

Victoria performed at the recent Livery Dinner and told us how much she enjoys working with such a lively and enthusiastic group

of young people. Her feelings are clearly reciprocated: choir member Cheyenne, 17, said 'When I first heard about the project I was really excited. I love everything to do with music so I was determined to do it. I'm glad I'm here, and I'm glad I joined this community.'

Kirsty Kemnitz, RLSB Community Support Worker who is leading the project says: 'A great benefit of the project is seeing the young people's joy and enthusiasm when they take part. It's wonderful to see them realise their potential, and it's all due to the Cordwainers, so a big thank you to them!'

Tackling cancer – and goats

Guest of honour at the Livery Dinner, Professor Mitch Dowsett of the Royal Marsden Hospital and a world expert on breast cancer, is also something of a closet Cordwainer. The owner of several pygmy goats, he explained that while treatment of breast cancer had made huge progress over the 40 years of his career, goat husbandry remains rooted in tradition. More than once, he has wondered whether his recalcitrant goats would be better employed in the leather trade.



Professor Mitch Dowsett.

MASTER'S COLUMN

I am amazed that five months have already flown by, and the beginning of my year has been busier than most, as we ran our first fundraising event on the 3rd September, competing in the Great River Race. Thanks to all the fantastic support, we raised far more than anyone envisaged, thus starting my year off with a bang (or possibly a mighty splash on the squally River Thames)!



Master of all he surveys: Jeremy at home on his tractor.

I have already attended many dinners, cathedral services, award evenings, seminars, and even lunch at the Old Bailey! However, the most interesting and moving event by far, was a lecture given by a team from the Royal Marsden Hospital at the Royal College of Surgeons, relating to three different types of cancer. When the Q&A session started, I realised most of the audience were former cancer survivors, and it was fascinating to hear how cancer treatment has advanced in the last 20 years. The three of us - the Clerk, my wife and I, left realising how lucky we really are.

Frankly, cancer research cannot have enough money, and our fundraising for the Royal Marsden Hospital will continue with the Marsden March, next spring. We hope that as many members of the Company, together with their families and friends, will take part in this sponsored 14-mile walk between the Marsden hospital in Chelsea and their site in Sutton. More details are on page 6.

The main aim of my year is to increase participation, not just by getting more Cordwainers to attend dinners, but to encourage them to fulfil their role within the Company by adhering to the voluntary code of giving established as part of the 2020 Vision. Donations to the Company and its charities are entirely voluntary and the Court has drawn up a three-tier structure of suggested contributions according to one's position within the Company. As a reminder, we ask Junior Livery to contribute £20 per month; Senior Livery £30 and the Court £40.

The Cordwainers have always fought against the idea of compulsory quarterage levied by many livery companies, but to avoid it, all Cordwainers must play the same game. The monthly payments expected from each member only equate to



The Master, Jeremy Blanford

a round of drinks at a family gathering. Having said that, the Cordwainers pride themselves on being a supportive family company that also welcomes non-financial contributions from members who might wish to donate their time and expertise to support the Company's work.

I reported to the Court on the state of the Company's funds over the last year. Our investments have done well even in these uncertain times, and our properties are all fully occupied or about to be.

I am very grateful to the office team, who have been unstinting in their support, ensuring that I was in the right place at the right time with the correct combination of badge, tie and gown. Finally, I would like to thank my team of Wardens for all their support so far, which makes my role as Master such a pleasure.

My very best wishes to you all for a happy Christmas and peaceful new year.



The Master with his family, daughters liverymen Sarah and Catherine, and his wife Jane, the Mistress Cordwainer.

The making of a modern Cordwainer

Fashion journalist Freeman Elisa Anniss has visited the team at LCF to discover exactly how footwear design students acquire the skills to become the world-class shoe designers and creators the industry needs.



Acting Course Leader Freeman Sarah Day with a student.

When students embark on a BA Honours Footwear: Product Design and Innovation degree at London College of Fashion, UAL (University of The Arts London) the medieval origins and history behind the word 'Cordwainer' are often as unfamiliar as the world they are about to enter.

And for those for whom English isn't their first language, it's likely to be even more baffling.

'From day one and our earliest lecture we outline our history and what being a Cordwainer actually means,' explains acting course leader Sarah Day and lecturer in footwear Ian Goff, both Freeman of the company. They add that as a course team they also share with students how proud they are of the inextricable links to the livery company that helps to set Cordwainers apart from other shoe educational establishments.

'At first students are given a series of lessons and inductions on the core skills of shoemaking, which helps to illustrate just how much work is involved in producing a shoe. We positively encourage a high level of creativity. And while practical limitations may prevent them from making an outlandish and extravagant shoe at this stage, we certainly do not stop them from having dreams and aspirations.'

Typically, undergraduates arrive with a wide range of skills and past experiences. Many are shouldering the financial burden of living in London, tuition fee increases and the challenges of leaving home for the first time. For some, there is the additional challenge of moving to another country.

Students may come from industry or have a footwear family connection, or, have no footwear experience at all. The excellent links with countrywide colleges of further education that offer UAL approved courses and Artscom short courses serve as a good introduction, although students from any FE or higher education colleges are also eligible to apply.

'We have a resource at UAL that covers the International student recruitment and this is very successful in finding suitable candidates for the courses.' Thanks to media exposure, reputation and its glittering alumni, which includes Jimmy Choo, Charlotte Olympia, Rupert Sanderson and Georgina Goodman, overseas students are attracted by the college's reputation for being the world's foremost shoe educational establishment. According to Day and Goff, this diversity adds to the overall experience. 'Foreign students contribute to the cultural mix that is so important for the education of all our students.'



Over the next three, or four years (if they choose to take up a work placement) students gain an in-depth understanding of the fashion footwear industry. Cordwainers boasts excellent links with industry and alumni, which often translates into placements and eventually jobs for graduates. Indeed, most recently the graduating class of 2016 took up employment with Hunter, Sophia Webster, Tommy Hilfiger, Dune and the supermarket chain Tesco.



“From the outset, we share our own industry knowledge with students, preparing them for the workplace whether it’s small design focused business or working in a large design team for a large international company; the pair continue. ‘We do this by encouraging students to engage with presentation, feedback and critique, creative practice including much 3-D experimentation and drawing. They use industry-standard CAD (computer-aided design) software and have access to a wide range of advanced creative machinery, such as laser cutters and 3-D printing.’



Many former students stay in touch. Graduates return to give student talks and many of them support the end of year shows and events. According to Day and Goff, there are plans afoot to strengthen the alumni network.

Liveryman Georgina Goodman is one of them. She has come full-circle from Cordwainers graduate to a teacher on the MA course. Over the years she has also welcomed many students into her own Georgina Goodman shoe business. ‘I’ve had some amazing students,’ she says adding that she typically takes them into her business on a placement after their second year.

Some students skip placements for all manner of reasons including financial ones (these are the cases, says Goodman, where bursaries prove to be invaluable); others split placements for a more enriching experience.

‘Students are encouraged to get ready for internships as though it were employment, they are treated like an employee, including the hours worked. It’s serious stuff. Before the studio, when I had my company, I would get them to work in the shop, in finance, in shipping and design, really to get an overview of everything. Often students who have done placements in a company are employed by the people that they’ve worked with.’



‘All students have the opportunity to graduate with the skills to make a pair of shoes. But this is not necessarily the focus for everyone,’ conclude Day and Goff. ‘Whilst many students wish to become shoemakers there are probably a higher percentage that want to go on to become designers, buyers, creative directors and work in other areas of the industry. The focus is to give all students a wide range of employability skills that enable them to go on and gain employment in whichever field they wish to upon graduation.’



OUR CHARITIES



24 stalwart Cordwainer rowers at the start of the Great River Race.

Making a splash on the Thames

Master Jeremy Blanford planned the fundraising activities for his year of office well in advance, announcing that the Royal Marsden Cancer Charity would be the focus and fixing on the Great River Race as a really engaging means to do good while having fun.

Having breezily assured us all that a 21-mile row up the Thames would be a doddle, the Master's optimism was hugely encouraging, but it's possible that even he underestimated how hard the Cordwainers' waterborne adventure would be.

Four Cordwainer boats, which were generously sponsored by the Shaws, Williams, Skinners and Chamberlains, set off on 3 September from Limehouse to row the 21 miles upstream to Richmond as part of the Great River Race. The date was important, as a favourable tide was expected to speed the rowers on their way. And indeed it did.

Unfortunately, a brisk breeze and steady rain worked in opposition to the tide and by the time the last boat arrived at Ham House, the crews were cheerful but very wet – and really quite tired. Fortunately, the non-rowing Cordwainers had turned out in large numbers and were on hand with warming drinks and copious snacks (special mention must go to Past Master John Rubinstein's impressive picnic) to revive the teams.



Past Warden David Walker raises the flag.

Even more inspiring than the physical achievement of the rowing teams was the amount raised for the Master's charity – a magnificent £20,000.

To celebrate their achievement, all 24 rowers were invited to the Livery Dinner in November, where Professor Mitch Dowsett of the Royal Marsden Hospital explained how the money raised is used in developing new techniques to fight cancer.

Marching for the Royal Marsden

For those who prefer to stick to dry land, Cordwainer teams will be joining the Marsden March on 19 March 2017, a 14-mile sponsored walk between the Royal Marsden's hospitals in Chelsea and Sutton.

The Marsden March is a great event for the whole family (including the dog!) to take part in. There is a choice of either a 14-mile or a family-friendly 5-mile walk. We are planning to time our walks so that our 14-milers meet our 5-milers at the beginning of their walk and we can try to cross the finish line together.

At the end of the walk there will be a Cordwainers' area where we can celebrate another day of doing good while having fun with food, drink and live music to dance the night away to – or perhaps we'll just compare aches and pains and have a quiet sit down . . . It is worth mentioning that there is a very comprehensive training programme on the Royal Marsden's website, www.royalmarsden.org/march/preparation

We hope that as many members of the Company as possible will be able to join us – this really is a lovely opportunity for Cordwainers and their family and friends to participate together in a fun day out. We also hope that we can add to our already impressive fundraising total to support the life-changing work of the Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. **Liveryman Nick Ferrier, Chair, Events Committee**



Footwear Friends 2016



Claire Burrows of Air and Grace, with the Master.

The Cordwainers are proud to sponsor the Cordwainers Award for Innovation at the annual Footwear Friends ceremony. It is a significant prize which provides a boost to entrepreneurial shoemakers, giving them a cash award of £5,000 as well as 12 months mentoring from industry experts. Among the judges this year was Freeman Dominic Casey.

The award immediately casts a strong spotlight on the winning business, providing invaluable brand recognition within the shoe trade. Richard Swift of Swift Shoes, and winner in 2015 said: 'The award helped us a lot, not just from the monetary side, but from a marketing perspective, in that we were thought of so highly in our start-up year. It's not easy driving a brand forward in a very competitive climate, but we are much strengthened, and with renewed vigour and the wind in our sails I am certain we will succeed.'

Matt Horan of Rollasole won the award in 2014 for his innovative roll-up after-party shoes. He said, 'It was a fantastic recognition of all the hard work over the years, and it put our brand on the map within the industry. We were able to commit full time to a PR agency that has boosted our profile significantly over the last 12 months. We have established ourselves with Debenhams and have recently secured a trial contract

with Accessorize who we launch a range with next month. Our international growth has been fantastic, with big inroads made into the US and Middle East.'

This year's winner, Claire Burrows, owner of Air and Grace has patented a particularly comfortable insole, which makes her distinctive shoes unique.

'The award put our brand on the map within the industry.'

'Air & Grace shoes have our patented Tender Loving Air footbed hidden inside to give your shoes a sneaker feel. But never at the expense of style. People tell us it's like walking on little fluffy clouds.'

Claire made the mighty leap from the corporate fashion world to owner of her own business Air and Grace just two years ago and is working to develop a shoe entirely made in the UK. With global ambitions for her company, Claire is using her previous experience as a designer for big-name brands to conquer the world in what she calls her 'beautiful shoes for busy feet'.

Sports Column

The Cordwainers enjoy participating in several inter-livery sporting fixtures, most successfully, golf and bridge. We have recently entered teams into the inter-livery shooting day and joined the tennis tournament at Queen's Club. The Company funds some or all of the entrance fees and if you would like to play a part in any of these teams, please get in touch with the team captains noted below.

Golf – Past Warden David Walker
(david@walker596.orangehome.co.uk)

The annual 'friendly' match against the Curriers will be on 7 June 2017 at Piltown Golf Club in Sussex. It's a good opportunity for golfers of all abilities to play an informal competition event against another Livery company and enjoy a good lunch afterwards.

The more serious Prince Arthur Cup is at Walton Heath on 18 May 2017. It is a large event with 54 Livery Companies taking part. The Cordwainers field a team of our four best golfers. Over the years, we have had some success and come second twice in a row.

Lastly, in April the five 'Leathery Liveries' compete in the Leathery Livery Golf Match, an informal and friendly fight to the death.

Bridge – Master Jeremy Blanford
(blanfords@btinternet.com)

The Cordwainer bridge team is a tight-knit and highly skilled group of players – and would love to welcome some new members. They normally field a team of six players.

There is an annual match against the Carpenters, which will be played on 9 January 2017 at Carpenters' Hall.

They also participate in the annual Inter-Livery Bridge tournament, hosted (appropriately) by the Worshipful Company of Playing Card Makers. This is a very convivial evening of about 60 pairs who play duplicate bridge. It will be held on Monday 6 March 2017 at Drapers' Hall.

Shooting – Past Warden Arthur Chamberlain
(chamberlain@bartonadvisory.com)

The Cordwainer guns have been enthusiastic participants in the Inter-Livery Clay Shoot and are keen to recruit new guns. The competition is provisionally scheduled for 17 May 2017 at the Holland & Holland Shooting Grounds in Northwood, Middlesex. Additionally, the Inter-Livery Rifle day will be on 2 June, at Bisleigh.

Tennis – Past Warden Cameron Brown
(ckdb@hotmail.co.uk)

The Feltmakers organise the annual Inter-Livery tennis Tournament at Queen's Club and the Cordwainers are only recent participants. This year, our mixed double partners, Cameron Brown and Trish Peal acquitted themselves brilliantly, reaching the semi-finals. It would be great to enter a few more pairs, so if you would like to participate, or even spectate, please contact Cameron.



A Cordwainer Knight

Many congratulations to Past Master Sir Michael Uren, who was knighted in the 2016 New Year Honours, for his philanthropic service.

A keen supporter of the Company, Mike, as we all know him, was Master of the Cordwainers in 1990. One of his first actions was to take charge of the design and construction of the new Halls of Residence in Mare Street, Hackney, to provide accommodation for the students of the College, which he put into a new charity called the Cordwainers Educational Trust, so that Cordwainer Court would for ever remain safe in Cordwainer hands.



Sir Mike Uren, with his Partner Janis (2nd from right) with General The Lord Dannatt and Lady Dannatt, who so kindly invited them to lunch at the Tower of London on the occasion of his investiture.

Mike also formed and led a new property development team, with Donald Birts, Chris King, and Tim Weber-Brown, who under his chairmanship over the next ten years, played the key role in the redevelopment of the Company's Fleet Street properties, all of which were completed at the turn of the 21st century, from which time onwards they became a highly successful source of income to the company, and they have ensured a steady income stream for the Cordwainers ever since.

Mike is a Chartered Engineer from Imperial College, who served in the Royal Navy in WW2. On being discharged from the Navy in 1946 he spent the next ten years in professional practice, following which he began to set up his own companies, which he formed into a group called Civil and Marine (Holdings) Ltd. This included a deep sea dredging company involving five ships, which together were supplying up to 4½ million tonnes of sea-dredged aggregates per annum to the ready-mix concrete

industries of West Germany, Holland, Belgium, France and the East Coast of England, all dredged from the bed of the North Sea under licence from The Crown Estate Commissioners.

Mike then went on to lead the development of a cement made from a by-product of the iron and steel industry, instead of from the limestone or chalk deposits used in the production of Portland Cement, for which he designed and built five cement factories spread across the UK, one in the Czech Republic, and the first one of all in the USA. These new cements were an immediate success story, on which he proceeded to take 17% of the UK Cement Market of many millions of tonnes per annum.

Today Mike is regarded as one of the UK's most generous philanthropists, in which the Foundation which he formed has so far distributed over £70 million, some 35% of which has gone to our ex-Service charities,

the next 30% to some very advanced medical research, and the remainder to the protection and preservation of endangered species of wildlife, and the habitat in which they live, namely in the rain forest. His greatest single achievement is probably the endowment of £40 million to Imperial College, London, his old alma mater, from which the university is now building a Bio-Medical Engineering Research Centre, to be named in his honour.

Mike, who is now 93, and as passionate and enthusiastic as ever, commented on his donation to Imperial College as follows, 'My vision is that in building this huge research centre within a few miles of the City of London, which itself has become the financial centre of the world, it is clear that all that investment will be watching for, and waiting for the research and inventions which will trigger tomorrow's great companies, thereby creating a new Silicon Valley London. We shall see!'

Forthcoming Events 2017

Junior Members' Event

Thursday 9 February

Informal supper at the Guildhall for Freemen and junior Liverymen. **Dress:** Lounge suits.

Past Wardens' Dinner Friday 10 March

Members of the livery entertain guests and City representatives, often the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs.

Venue: Clothworkers' Hall **Dress:** White tie.

Marsden March Sunday 19 March

Sponsored walk to raise funds for the Master's chosen charity.

Dress: Sports gear and comfortable shoes!

Apprentices' Supper Tuesday 4 April

The Court and Freemen entertain company apprentices, 14-21 year old free-born children of liverymen. The supper is preceded by the annual Came's Minge's and Shawe's Anniversary Sermon at St Olave's Church.

Venue: Clothworkers' Hall.

Dress: Lounge suits.

Ladies' Dinner Friday 19 May

Formal dinner for all members of the livery, their partners and guests.

Venue: Clothworkers' Hall.

Dress: White tie.

Cordwainers National Footwear Student of the Year Awards Thursday 8 June

All members of the Company are invited to the prestigious award ceremony, which celebrates the best in student footwear design from our three university partners.

Venue: Clothworkers' Hall. **Dress:** Lounge suits.

Oath Day Friday 7 July

All members of the Company are invited to celebrate the beginning of a new Master's year. Supper in Clothworkers' Hall is preceded by Fisher's Minge's and Wild's Anniversary Service at St Katharine Cree Church.

Venue: Clothworkers' Hall. **Dress:** Lounge suits.

The Clerk is delighted to hear from all Cordwainers. Please remember to tell the office about changes of address and your family news.



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