



The Pattenmaker

WEEKLY NEWS FROM AROUND THE LIVERY

Issue 20

Friday 14th August 2020

From the Master Dr David Best



The Covid Crisis has had a wide range of effects, and I think that there is no one in the country untouched in some way or another. As we know many have died and more have had their lives seriously affected. One unforeseen and beneficial effect, however, has been

the impact on our fellowship, very much for the better. To name but a few of these impacts; this newsletter, packed with information, experiences and the life events of many of our members; an overhaul of our e mail list and database, long needed and often delayed; virtual meetings and events, and some attended by members of the Livery who have not been able to attend events in person for a long time, or at all; more phone contact with members of all ages and geographies; the first virtual Court meeting; and many other smaller but notable impacts.

For myself, I had the opportunity, as a result of Covid, to undertake a journey which I had been intending to do for some years but had never got round to. Repeating a walk that I did as a teenager along the Ridgeway in Wiltshire and Oxfordshire, passing Stonehenge, Avebury, Wayland's Smithy and many other Neolithic features along the route. I wanted to redo this journey from South -West to North East, rather than in the other direction, as I did when I first undertook it. I walked about 65 miles in the five

day trip, and there is a link to the blog for any interested readers: [David in Wiltshire Blog](#)

It was a real pleasure to wander along tracks free from traffic and to see and hear the country all around, be able to stand and stare when I wanted, and to have the luxury of solitude.

It would be great to hear from you of one or two significant beneficial effects that Covid-19 has had on you. Perhaps hearing these experiences would help all of us offset, to a certain extent, the negative effects of the virus.

In this edition we have a postcard from Lithuania from Freeman Ingrida Kerusauskaite where she describes some of the features of her home country, a feature on the work of the Charitable Fund in supporting St Paul's Choral Trust from the Master Elect, and a note from the Hon Treasurer of the support that Mrs Hon Treas. has singlehandedly provided in response to the Appeal from the Past Master Framework Knitter. Assistant Jane Wilson Chair of the Charity Committee has provided an account of Lockdown in Somerset.

Read about the work of Stuart Paver and shoes for the sufferers of Leprosy in India, as well as his interview on the BBC regarding the current trading situation, an interesting biographical note on the work of Liveryman Richard Muir in the FM industry in our Company. Liveryman and author Steve Huxham has provided a note on one of our very distinguished Past Masters and there is much more including a new recipe.

Thanks to the good work of the Clerk, Pattenmaker Face Masks are now available featuring the Company's Arms on a yellow background, and these are attractive, fashionable and a talking point! An order form is attached. I hope that shortly these and our other promotional goods- umbrellas, ties, scarves, and more, will be available through the website in our soon to be launched on-line shop. Watch this space for further announcements on the timing of this.

In the events section, we are planning a further Wine Tasting, following the first of these which was reported in last week's newsletter, and perhaps adding a cheese tasting as well. We are very grateful to Liveryman Graham Perry for organising these.

Thanks to you all and the great work of the Master-Elect and the team, the Newsletter goes from strength to strength- please keep your contributions coming and contact me, the Master Elect, or our indomitable Editor with suggestions for changes or improvements.

City of London Corporation

Whilst the Barbican Centre may be the focal point of the Arts in the City, it is far from being the only cultural institution in the Square Mile. And, because the City is so small, each of the other museums, theatres, landmarks and galleries are easily within walking distance of each other. Once you're in the City of London, you can dart around from one to the other without having to jump on buses or trains – safety first folks! Plus, the teams at each of these locations have worked like crazy over the past few months to create stacks of regular online content for those who can't make it in person.

As we reported in an earlier edition, the new Museum of London Project on the site of the Smithfield Market, and the plans for a new international standard concert hall and complex to be the home of the London Symphony Orchestra, under its Director of Music Sir Simon Rattle, will ensure that the City remains a world class cultural centre for the 21st Century.

Our Charitable Fund

St Paul's Cathedral Trust

Jennifer Bryant-Pearson, Master Elect

For some years now, the Pattenmakers have been one of a number of City Livery Companies supporting the Chorister Trust at St Paul's Cathedral.

The Trust provides financial assistance to support parents and carers whose children with great musical talent have been selected as a chorister but cannot afford to pay the school's costs and in particular, their musical education including vocal and instrumental tuition. In these times of uncertainty, the grants provided are even more important as parents' circumstances change and further support may be required.

So many well-known singers, musicians and performers started life as a chorister in one of our great cathedrals but it is very special for the Company to be involved with choristers at St Paul's which is at the heart of the City of London and all its traditions.

The support we provide to the Trust goes into a central fund and is allocated according to needs and so all choristers' financial support is treated in absolute confidence.

The Livery Companies are allocated a chorister who wears their medal and each year we have a special Liveries Evensong when those Companies meet with their chorister after the event although we have regular reports and letters from the Headmaster, the Director of Music – Andrew Carwood and the choristers themselves throughout the year.

Our first chorister went on to become Head Chorister and then won a full musical scholarship to Eton. He joined us for an Ascension Day service at St Margaret Pattens and sang superbly in the presence of our Royal Patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester.



He is pictured here in his final term at St Paul's when Past Master Richard Kottler and I took him out for afternoon tea at the Goring, when he was accompanied by Deputy Headmaster Jaco Brand.

I keep in touch with our associated chorister on behalf of the Company and remain in contact with Kasper, whom I very much hope will join the Pattenmakers in the future. Kasper was immensely proud to wear the Pattenmakers' medal (as is our current chorister) and they have both taken a great deal of interest in the Company itself.

Our present chorister who joined the School last year, is already proving to be quite a star in the making!

Covid 19

The Livery Face Masks

These are now available and an order form is attached: [PM Face Mask Order Form](#)



Framework Knitters' Knitting Appeal

Readers will recall that Past Master Tim Watts, following a conversation with his neighbour, Past Sheriff and Past Master Framework Knitter Liz Green, brought to our attention the Framework

Knitters' knitting appeal, and the flyer was added to the Newsletter.

Honorary Treasurer Liveryman Stephen Etheridge now reports further – regarding the Livery of Framework Knitters asking for help for their Charity project. Maggie thought it would be a good thing to help and therefore “took up her needles!”

First batch of wool was delivered to Maggie Etheridge knitted and delivered to the Framework Knitters. A second batch of wool was ordered and has accompanied us to Norfolk so hopefully by the end of our holiday Pattenmakers will have been well represented when their project ends.

The following email arrived today.

Dear Maggie,

Your blanket has just been delivered back to me and I hope you like the design that our volunteer has chosen. I think it looks fantastic - it will certainly brighten someone's day and make them smile! Many thanks on behalf of us all - we are extremely grateful! The response has been brilliant and we now have sixty blankets either completed or being made up, which is so exciting to see. Most days an envelope with varying numbers of squares arrives here and people are currently happy to keep knitting.

If you would like to share the photo with any of the Pattenmakers' that's obviously fine with me - we have members of over 30 Livery companies helping and we hope to be able to help a couple more charities as we have more blankets than we had originally anticipated.

*Best wishes
Liz*



Chair to the Charities Committee - Lockdown in Somerset Court Assistant Jane Wilson

The long hot summer continues here in Somerset, with just enough rain falling to keep everything green. The area is slowly coming back to life after lockdown with a recent influx of “staycationers” filling local campsites and enjoying Famous-Five-style days out on bicycles through lanes narrowed by untrimmed hedges.



Lockdown itself was an almost unique experience combining perfect weather with the near-silence brought on by empty roads and empty skies. Despite living in this house for fifteen years, it was only in this enforced stillness that I discovered that a tawny owl uses the tall Scots pine adjacent to the house as its hunting perch...vigilant at dusk before gliding silently into the neighbouring field to hunt.



*Deserted Market Square in
Wells*



*The return of the
Bishops Palace swans*

As elsewhere, deserted streets were the norm as the usually busy market square in Wells attests (for film buffs...the location of the Hot Fuzz shoot-out). But nature carries on; the widowed swan on the Bishops Palace moat, absent for a year, has returned with her new partner and a ‘herd’ of cygnets (I Googled it!)



From a distance everything looks normal

It’s been like “Waiting for God” but without the same sense of urgency!

But the footwear sector never rests and the working hours of lockdown were a furious succession of HR crises and order cancellations...only to be followed a few weeks later by panicked reinstatements of those same orders! Elsewhere locally, the difficulties being experienced by Clarks as the largest local employer are having repercussions in all directions. These are worrying times for many families in the area.

Away from the turmoil of trying to keep going over Zoom and Teams, the lockdown has provided many unexpected benefits. Hitherto untried skills have been developed such as sorbet-making...a delight when trying to dispose of an abundance of summer fruit. The garden has never looked better, with things actually planted in the right spot at the right time of year. Coupled with plentiful sunshine, everything has bloomed early and generously with the roses onto their third cycle of flowering.

Lockdown has also worked wonders for personal fitness, although a little less can be said about the

diet! The dogs have never had so many walks and, without a commute, it's finally been possible to fit in a decent amount of exercise.



"Another Perfect Day in God's Country" (Hot Fuzz)

As life slowly returns we can hopefully look forward to the Pattenmakers meeting up again and enjoying the fellowship for which the company is well known. Hopefully we will have the opportunity to meet up again the Autumn. In the meantime, David and I will have to put up with yet "another perfect day in God's country!"

Our History

A brief biography of Past Master Lieutenant-General Sir John Brown (Master 1942, 1943, 1950.) - Court Assistant Steve Huxham

As we all enjoyed reading Past Master Kottler's report in Newsletter 18 about the approach from the grandson of Lieutenant-General Sir John Brown KGB CBE DSO TD JP DL FRIBA FSI with the offer of a signed History Book, Members may be interested to learn a little more about Past Master Brown.

As was stated in the original article, Sir John served the Company as Master no fewer than three times – in 1942, 1943 and 1950. Born in Northampton in 1880, he was later described as "an architect by profession, (but) he was surely by

vocation a soldier" and also as "the most famous Territorial Army officer of his generation.



Lt Gen Sir John Brown from the Spinks' Medal Auction

Educated at Magdalen College School, Brackley, he joined the 1st Volunteer (later the Territorial) Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1901 and was made Instructor of Musketry in May 1902. After War broke out and by November 1914 the 1/4th Battalion of the Northants was at Thetford and the now Captain Brown was appointed as Adjutant. He sailed with the Battalion from Devonport in the *HMT Royal George* on July 30th, 1915 for Suvla Bay, Gallipoli.



The group photo shows Captain Brown (on the left) with fellow officers, just before leaving for the Dardanelles.

The amphibious landings at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli peninsula were the final British attempt to break the deadlock of the Battle of Gallipoli but were mismanaged from the beginning and soon reached the same stalemate as the nearby Anzac and Helles fronts. Fighting had been in progress for several days when the 1/4th Northants arrived, and reports note that they “received a few shells” as they landed. The Battalion was sent into the front line on Aug 17th, 1915 & they remained with the 163 Brigade until the end of the Gallipoli Operation. The Battalion then moved on to Egypt, improving the Canal defences and in May 1916 the promoted Major Brown took command of the Battalion. In 1917 they were moved to Gaza where they fought the Turks on and off into 1918. Lieutenant Colonel Brown was awarded the DSO for his actions. In March 1918 he was evacuated sick to hospital. He was one of the few officers remaining who had been with the 1/4th since 1914. He did not resume command of the Battalion until after it had returned to England.

Past Master Brown remained fully involved with the Territorial Army after the War, being in command of the 162nd (East Midland) Infantry Brigade from 1924 to 1928. He was also kept busy in the interwar years both professionally and voluntarily. Locally in Northampton, he supported hospitals, the Church Lads Brigade, the Y.M.C.A., Toc H, the Repertory Theatre, and many other organisations, with his architectural practice designing many buildings and also the Northampton Borough War Memorial, which he unveiled on 1st January 1937. Nationally, he was Chairman of The British Legion between 1930 and 1934. He was knighted for his service to the Legion and to the Territorial Army in 1934. In 1936 he was Admitted to the Pattenmakers on the 9th July. At the rank of Colonel then, his address was given as 83 St Giles Street, Northampton.

As another War loomed, Sir John joined the War Office in 1937 as Deputy Director General of the Territorial Army and was in 1939 promoted to Lieutenant General and Deputy Adjutant General, subsequently becoming Director General the following year. Amongst his achievements in the tasks he was set was the raising up of the TA to full strength and then doubling it, as well as the tricky task of persuading units to transfer from

their old roles to Anti-Aircraft. He additionally undertook considerable amounts of welfare work and is also credited with laying the organisational foundations of the Home Guard. He finally retired from the Army under the age limit regulations on 24th August 1941 (he was 61 at the time,) with the official Press communique noting how this “deprives the War Office of a Senior Officer of Great ability.” As we know, the Army’s loss was the Pattenmaker’s gain as Sir John was able to take the helm of the Company as Master during those difficult wartime years.

Sir John’s son, Major Kenneth Charles Brown also joined the Company on 18th March 1948, which suggests he received the History Book, signed and dated by him on the 26th February of that year, slightly ahead of being Admitted.

Past Master Brown died at home in his beloved Northampton on 4th April 1958, at the age of 78. Obituaries of the time spoke of “his sterling character, modest and unassuming demeanour, his singularly gentle and persuasive manner, and his quiet sense of fun (which) enabled him to exert great influence in all the many and varied causes for which he worked.” The most intriguing contemporary note from the time was however a line by one of his friends which appeared in The Times shortly after his death:

“There never was a more unorthodox general or a more beloved figure among his men.”

(Credit for the group photo to Northampton Museums Service, and for the signed photo to Spink, who auctioned some of Sir John’s medal collection in 2017.)

Members’ News



Freeman Stuart Paver was interviewed recently on BBC Look North about his work with Lepira and his recent trip to India to hand over the charity’s third mobile shoe van, which was funded through the Pavers Foundation. The mobile

shoe-van delivers custom-made shoes to help those affected by leprosy and lymphatic filariasis. The shoe-van allows specialist shoemakers to travel to communities to design, make and fit the custom-made shoes. The van includes a sewing machine, a generator, a grinder for pressing soles and materials to make bespoke footwear. It also includes beds and cooling fans so the technician and driver can live in the van whilst covering the long distances between each stop.

He was also contacted by the BBC for an interview to go alongside the Chancellor's announcement of the state of the economy last Thursday. Stuart reports that "we had it in one of the shops to try and reinforce the message it's safe to be in shops and they did a brilliant job interviewing some of our happy people in their PPE. Business is slowly recovering but it needs people to feel secure in the stores as footfall is still down 45% across the business and up to 70% in some London locations."

Pattenmaker Stewards

Snippets from the Past Chief Steward and musings on FM in the Pattenmakers Liveryman Richard Muir



Having enjoyed 34 years working in various sections of the wonderful facilities management industry, on both the client and supplier side across the private and public sectors, including the NHS,

it is so encouraging to have seen the number of Pattenmakers within FM slowly increasing over the years since PM Ian Scarr-Hall (who Proposed me in 2003) effectively started the ball rolling as it were.

I was honoured to have been asked by PM Stuart Lamb, on the day PM Nick Andrews was Installed as Master in 2015, to work with Court

Assistant Jane Wilson on developing the Young Manager of the Year (FM Sector) Award scheme. The first task was to 'recruit' a team of what would become the judging panel and I was delighted that both Martin Pickard and David Sharp (who I Proposed and Seconded respectively) took up the challenge, supported very soon afterwards by Kath Fontana; all three provided such excellent professional support and we set about building up a database of other notable FMs to contact in the quest to encourage Young Managers to apply for the Award scheme through their employers. Two years ago, we asked Deborah Longstaff (then a Freeman but now a Liveryman) to join the team, initially as the specialist FM Trainer, to arrange bespoke training for the Award Winner following a handover by Trade Warden Annette Cove. As Kath was so busy heading for very impressive positions of high office within RICS (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors) and wasn't therefore able to continue making a full contribution to the team, Deborah was invited to become a Judge too, which she accepted; the team/panel was complete again and has worked very hard collectively to promote FM in the Pattenmakers and gain new Members and increased interest in our Profession.

After four years leading the team, I decided to relinquish my responsibilities and David Sharp kindly took over and with the wonderful continued support of Martin and Deborah, have very successfully developed the FM scheme so the entire application process is now electronic and therefore easier to manage. I think it is fantastic to have Martin Pickard as the Trade Warden Elect, who has done an incredible amount already to develop the FM sector within the Company and further great things will follow as a result.

Prior to my own FM career starting in 1986, when I was working for M&W Mack Ltd., a very successful family owned (at the time) fresh produce marketing company as a Procurement Executive, with a Site Services opportunity lending itself (almost by default) when a green field site was acquired and a state of the art complex was built, managed by BOC Transhield, which needed maintenance contracts set up for all the modern depot equipment and refrigerated cold rooms etc., I had been in the agricultural

industry, commencing with achieving a degree from the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester in 1976. I was a Crops Manager for a couple of years with Lonrho plc., on their massive farming operation in Zambia which was probably the most memorable period in my life as an overall experience.

Whilst on contract very recently with Barts Health Trust, mainly working on projects at Barts and Royal London Hospitals, I was involved with the London Nightingale Hospital project alongside one of the specialist contractors on the medical gasses' installation. My dear Father would have been proud as he had worked in the team led by Aneurin Bevan, setting up the NHS in 1948; my own Sister has kept up the family medical tradition and continues to be the Principal of her own GP Practice in Pimlico, where I am the retained FM Consultant.

It was in 2003, whilst Head of Facilities at Carpetright plc., that I was introduced to Ian Scarr-Hall, then Chairman of GSH (George S Hall Ltd), during a feasibility study to outsource a number of service contracts across the business. Ian kindly invited me (in a similar way he invited Martin Pickard to a Livery Dinner in the mid-90s) to the Pattenmakers' Annual Banquet that year and having shown great interest in the Company, he offered to be my Proposer (Liveryman Tony Denne was my Secunder). I really enjoyed meeting various other Members of the Livery Company and it wasn't long before PM Mike Kemsley invited me to join the Events Sub-Committee, particularly as I had suggested organising a Whisky Tasting and Supper Event at the Scotch Malt Whisky Society (SMWS), where I had been a Member since 1990 (it was founded in 1983 by an ex HMRC Inspector!).

Over the last 15 years of being a Pattenmaker, I have had the great pleasure of organising a number of whisky and gin tastings, a couple of sheep drives, involvement in the Young Manager of the Year (FM Sector) Award scheme and for the last 6 years I had the great honour and privilege of being Chief Steward.

The absolute highlight of my time with the Pattenmakers was being presented with the

Master's Award at the Annual Banquet in the Mansion House by PM Chris Hayward (now one of the Sheriffs of the City of London) in 2015 for services rendered; it was a huge honour and something I will be proud of forever.



I was also presented with another Award at this year's Banquet by the Master Pattenmaker, Dr David Best, for services to the Company as Chief Steward and other diverse services during the last 6 years.



I have enjoyed a very interesting career in FM, met and worked with some fascinating characters and proud to have helped develop the sector within the Pattenmakers, which grows steadily year on year. Let's all hope the Covid-19 pandemic allows us to resume life in some sort of normality and enjoy meeting properly again soon.

Quick Fire Interview with the Pattenmaker Stewards - Liveryman Dr Zhen Ye



Where were you born and one interesting fact about your 'hometown'

Chongqing City of China.

Chongqing has a long history and historical evidence shows that the region was originally a state belonging to the Ba People and that it was established in the 11th century B.C.E. In 1189 C.E. Chongqing got its current name. In 1891 Chongqing became an important economic centre in China as it became the first inland city open to trade from outside China.



The city is nicknamed the 'Fog Capital' of China and the 'Oven' of China. Summers are very hot and humid while winters are short and mild. It is also the largest area for the manufacture of motorcycles in China.

Where do you live now and the one word you would use to best describe it?

London. Well, I would say London means different things to different people. The capital and largest city of UK to the country, a home to some, a tourist destination to others, and to others still, a business spot. London is just like any other city in many ways, but in other ways, it is so

much more. If I have to choose a word to describe it, I would say 'diverse'.

First job and what it taught you:

My first full-time job was working as a paralegal in a city law firm. It was a great preparation for my pupillage, and I learnt so much, e.g. prioritising, thinking ahead, communication skills, teamwork, etc

Current or last job:

I am currently working as a self-employed barrister at 3PB Barristers in London, my areas of practice include civil, commercial, chancery and construction law as well as arbitration.

3PB (3 Paper Buildings) is one of the longest established sets in England with 209 members and 14 silks



Who or what has been the biggest influence in your life?

I have had so many great mentors and role models who have guided and inspired me through my life.

To just name one person who has been the biggest influence in my life if I had to, I would say it is my late grandfather. He told me that I should never try to become the smartest person in the room but the most hard-working one, and the harder I worked the luckier I would be.

Your biggest passion:

Reading, it is always good to get lost in a story and I love to read a good story.

The one piece of advice you would pass on to others:

There is no substitute for hard work.

The object you couldn't live without

My glasses or contact lenses

Where would you like to visit once all the current restrictions are lifted:

Chongqing. My grandmother will be 90 this Christmas, I would love to be there celebrate her birthday with her and the rest of my family.

How would you describe 'the Pattenmakers' and being a Pattenmaker to someone from another planet?

I would say the Pattenmakers are a group of fantastic people with big hearts and passions. Being a Pattenmaker is an honour and an amazing experience.

Postcard from Abroad

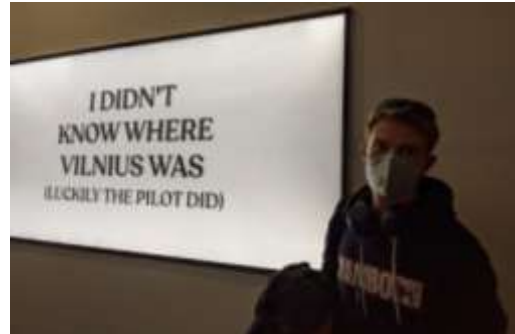
Lithuania – Freeman Ingrida Kerausaskaite

Up to Covid-19 living in central London was great. Mansion house and many Livery Company halls were within a 10 minute walk. My morning commute consisted of a stroll through the city, coffee and croissant in hand. London's theatres (with their last-minute deals) and restaurants were all accessible without much forward planning required.



The pandemic, however, radically changed what it meant to live in central London. The very compact nature of a one bed central London flat is not fully adapted to two people working from home. Without a car, we took the advantage to fully explore the city and all its inconspicuous courtyards, alleys and passages. It was even emptier than on a regular weekend, with hardly anyone around in the entire city (though great for buying hand sanitizer in the 1 of 10 or so boots that remained open).

Prospects of returning to the office or London's theatres the way we enjoyed them before the pandemic any time soon being low, Dan and I decided to temporarily relocate to Lithuania in early June and have so far really enjoyed it. It was refreshing to be greeted with some typical Lithuanian humour.



Vilnius Airport greeting in arrivals lounge

Coming to Lithuania, the first two weeks with a 'recommended' but not compulsory quarantine we were the only two wearing a mask in closed places with people around – as my cousin who picked us up from the airport said, people in Lithuania had already forgotten masks. Cases were at around 2 infections per day in the country, with the nature of the infections ('a teacher in Panevezys region' or 'a driver that had arrived from Ukraine and was self-isolating in a facility in the Kaunas region provided by his employer'). It soon became very refreshing where you don't immediately reach for hand sanitiser after touching door handles and felt the freedom of being in public events without a mask.

Granted, one month after our arrival this changed. Just last week masks became mandatory again in closed public spaces (apart from restaurants, cafes and bars or sports facilities). The country, from the very start of the pandemic, implemented strict measures before they were absolutely necessary and managed to keep the overall caseload very low (overall there have been fewer than 2200 cases identified in Lithuania).

We spent some time in Birzai, where I went to kindergarten and 1.5 years of primary school. It's a city of 10,000 inhabitants with an annual city fair. There's a different community feeling where, in addition to a fair, local dance and music collectives got slots to show off their skills. The festivities included book presentations, an antique

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car parade, parachute jumping options, a concert by Lithuanian celebrities and a laser show with fireworks.



Birzai lake



Bird's eye view of Birzai – the local airport (i.e. clear stretch of grass on even ground) offers 10-minute flights in a two seater plane. You even get to try out your piloting skills!

Top tip: Navigate gently. While shooting up or down is an experience, I wouldn't try that again...



Birzai amateur dancers show off their skills



Evening laser show in the castle courtyard

We also explored the broader region. The Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) have always been tightly knit. As we travelled through Latvia and Estonia, we encountered large numbers of Lithuanians, Finns, Latvians and Estonians exploring what their own and neighbouring countries have to offer.



Riga



Tallinn old town restaurant



Tallinn old town in the evening – we were told that the city had not seen such low numbers of tourists since the early 1990s.

In addition to the architecture and cuisine of Riga, Tallinn and Tartu, as well as the seaside of Paarnu, one of the highlights was spending an evening in a small family-run deer farm hotel, fully fitted with a sauna, a pond to cool in and a ginger cat that chooses its friends by whether you're likely to use a fishing rod



Deer farm and hotel in More, Latvia – view from the hotel and restaurant in the evening You can make very deer friends here, as long as you bring the food



We've also been enjoying activities that we did not have access to over the past months – from paddle boarding on a lake, concerts, a burger festival and various installations.



Gravity games are popular here

Next, we're looking forward to mushroom picking – a very popular activity in the region; enjoying Nida (the Curonian spit – a unique UNESCO world heritage site), taking friends from London that are visiting to various sites such as the hill of crosses, Gruto parkas and others – perhaps sites I'll share with you in a subsequent post card.

Probably one of the biggest selling points a tourist destination can now have is a low coronavirus infection rate. Indeed, since we've been here Lithuania has oscillated between 1-2 and 10 new infections on a bad day. I would invite all Pattenmakers that are not in high risk categories and willing to get on a two-hour flight to come and explore – it's a beautiful region and mushroom picking season is here!

Events

Reminder Forthcoming Pattenmakers' Events

Monday 7th September: 6.00pm - PatTEDmakers Talk : [PatTEDmakers Talk Registration](#)

Guildhall School of Music and Drama Announcing our Autumn Season of events



We are delighted to announce Guildhall School's Autumn Season of events, which will all be delivered digitally and free of charge.

From late-September 2020, online audiences will be able to enjoy a mixture of live broadcast and pre-recorded content from across all School departments, created, performed and filmed at Guildhall School with the required social distancing. Alongside a host of exciting musical performances, productions include: a triple bill of Italian operas; a reimagining of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; a three-day festival celebrating work by our PACE students; and a new devised piece of theatre entitled *Pod*.

Head to [our website to read more about the season highlights](#), and stay subscribed to this e-zine for event dates and further details, which will be announced at the end of this month.

Photo of the Week

Liveryman Ian Balcombe – seen in St John's Wood Park

Goes with the tropical type weather we are experiencing:



Bird Watch

Following on from the news of its first successful breeding in Wales for 200 years, bird of the week this week is the Bittern - Freeman Richard Parlour



The bittern is a stocky, short version of a heron with amazingly well camouflaged plumage to enable it to blend into reedbeds. It has broader, rounded wings than the heron and is ungainly in flight, not a good recruit for the RAF! It is highly secretive and very difficult to see so. If you are lucky enough to see one, watch it until it disappears into the reeds as it is likely to be a long time until you see one again. It sneaks slowly around the reeds as if on a secret operation. In spring, bittern males make a remarkable booming sound for which they are most famous. This sound is to establish their territory and to attract mates. It eats fish, amphibians and insects. The bittern is on the conservation Amber List.

In the UK there are thought to be 80 males breeding, just 600 birds in all, though there are probably 21,000 - 29,000 pairs across Europe. Some males are polygamous, and occasionally several nests, each built by a different female, are found within the territory of one male. There is no real bond between sexes, and the male normally takes no part in nest building or raising young. Nests are shallow platforms of reed stems within the reedbed, close to water level. If the water level rises during the nesting period, the female will add to the nest to keep it above water. Bitterns normally have one brood a year, a clutch of 5-6 olive-brown eggs. By 8 days of age the young are able to adopt the typical bittern stance when alarmed (basically bolt upright, statuesque, waiting for danger to pass, a sort of similar response to an ostrich, but with its head extended directly upwards). When two weeks old they will leave the nest at times. The young fledge at 7-8 weeks and become independent soon afterwards.

There have been significant declines over much of its range between 1970 and 1990, even in many of

its strongholds in eastern Europe. In the UK, widespread declines caused by drainage and persecution, led to extirpation of the bittern around 1885. The species returned to Norfolk in 1900 and bred in 1911. Since then the breeding population has slowly built up. However, today, only a handful of birds survive, mainly in Norfolk, Suffolk and Lancashire.

The environment still presents challenges for the increase and maintenance of Bittern populations: Historically, traditional management of reedbeds for cut reed maintained the reedbeds in good condition for bitterns. As the need for reed declined, many reedbeds were lost as they dried out through neglect or were drained for other agricultural uses.

In Europe too, extensive reed cutting severely reduced the area of reedbed suitable for bitterns. For example, 90% of Dutch reedbeds are harvested every year, removing the winter cover essential for bitterns. Excessive water abstraction is also still a potential hazard. Reedbeds represent an early successional stage from open water to woodland, and without careful management and control of water levels they will naturally dry out as leaf litter and silt accumulate, eventually allowing the establishment of shrubs and trees. Water pollution too has reduced reedbed viability and food availability. Saltwater intrusion caused by sea level rise and breakdown of sea defences can be very damaging due to resultant tidal fluctuations and reduced food availability. In recent decades bitterns have been exposed to several potentially damaging pesticides, PCBs and mercury. This threat has now receded, however.

As a result, currently, 85% of the British bittern population is within reserves.

Hard winters can increase mortality particularly if freezing weather continues for a month or more. Declines of up to 40% per cent have been seen. Good luck with seeing the secretive bittern! Keep a watch on where bitterns may have been seen close to you (put the name of your county plus "recent bird sightings" and your local club should have any news). Another good source of sightings is local fishermen!

In other bird news, Defra has announced that from 2021 farmers in England will be able to cease complying with EU greening measures but will still receive their full Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) money. Under current arrangements, farmers claiming BPS need to maintain at least 5% of their land as an ecological focus area (such as buffer strips and cover crops) if they have more than 15 ha of arable land, and follow strict management rules on permanent grassland. Normally they would also have to grow at least three different arable crops if they have more than 30 ha of arable land. In Nidderdale in N Yorkshire a pet dog died after eating poisoned meat intended for raptors. Good news, however, is that the temporary French ban on shooting curlew (a red list species in the UK), has been extended until next year, and that the pallid harrier has bred for the first time in France (we occasionally get sightings of this rare but beautiful raptor in the UK).

A few more bird photography tips. Watching weather forecasts can be a good idea. If winds are blowing from the east consistently for around three days, this will be a great time to see rarities, particularly anywhere along the east coast from North Yorkshire to Kent. High winds mean that smaller birds will have to find cover and will be harder to see. Heavy rain doesn't often go well with birds or photography kit, though most binoculars are waterproof these days. Look for the quality of the light too. Lots of photography earlier or later in the day benefits from generally better lighting conditions, and these are usually times of day when birds are more active. You don't always need bright sunlight, which can often drown out the colours of plumage, and increase contrast when photographing light coloured birds such as egrets, which can be hard to cope with. Direction of the light is important too and may help you decide which way round a route you prefer to go. Contre jour lighting (against the sun) is a major challenge in photographic terms, though can give you brilliant silhouette opportunities at dawn and dusk. On a related point, if you are off to an estuary to see what waders may be around, check the tide times to avoid the frustration of high tide, or be prepared to wait a while. Estuaries and mudflats are usually best on a falling tide. Happy birding!

Letters to the Editor

Freeman Leslie Gallin - Super job on these newsletters.

Liveryman Graham Perry – Congratulations on all your work on the newsletter.

Recipe of the Week

The Master's Chicken and Prawn Risotto – Master Dr David Best

This recipe, which is modified from one of my stock favourites, is easy to cook and delicious. The quantities below serve 4-6 people depending on appetite!

Preparation time: 20 mins

Cooking time: cooking time 20 to 25 minutes depending on quantities.

Ingredients

1 cup of fresh or cooked King prawns (If using frozen, defrost according to instructions)
1 cup fresh diced, or chopped cooked chicken fillet
1 cup of frozen or fresh garden peas
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
1 cup frozen or tinned sweetcorn
½ sweet red pepper diced flesh
½ sweet yellow or green pepper diced flesh
2 cups risotto rice (I use Gallo from Morrisons or Tesco, but own brand or any other good Arborio rice will do)
Garlic to taste
Knorr Aromat to taste
Chicken Stock cube or Stock pot
3 oz butter

Method

Prepare the vegetables in advance removing seeds and pith from the peppers and allowing the frozen vegetables (if used) to thaw and drain.

Melt the butter in a heavy bottomed, or deep frying, or sauté, pan. Add all the vegetables to the melted butter, add garlic to taste (granules or crushed cloves) and sauté gently until the

vegetables are soft but not browned. If using fresh chicken and fresh or uncooked prawns add these too and cook until sealed.

If using cooked chicken and prawns keep them to one side until later in the cooking (See below).

Add the rinsed rice to the vegetables and fry gently until the rice has absorbed the remaining butter, *do not allow to burn, or stick to the pan.*

Add sufficient water to cover the mixture, but not



drown it!
See below

The water should float but not drown the ingredients.

Add the Stock, either cube or stock pot, and Aromat to taste. I like a strong flavour but taste the liquid for balance and adjust the stock and seasoning to your own taste.

Note. *Knorr Aromat is a great general-purpose seasoning and I am indebted to Renter Warden Elect Commodore Tyrrell for introducing me to it!*

Add the chicken and prawns at this stage if you are using cooked ingredients. Stir all ingredients together and simmer the risotto gently until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is cooked but toothsome or al dente. If necessary, add a little water during cooking but do not overdo it.

The cooked dish should resemble the image below with the rice grains cooked but separate and the colours of the ingredients distinct.

Stir regularly in the final stages of cooking to prevent the ingredients sticking and burning on the base of the pan.



Serve on its own or with a dressed green salad and crusty bread. Purists do not use Parmesan on a dish containing seafood, but I love it so usually sprinkle the dish liberally with freshly grated parmesan.

PS If you don't eat seafood, leave out the prawns and add any other protein- if you are vegetarian use tofu or another source of protein in place of prawns and chicken. I am not sufficiently familiar with the criteria for Vegan cuisine to make a suggestion, but I am sure it's possible!

Enjoy!
David

Quiz of the Week

Please see last page for this week's quiz, kindly supplied by Freeman Jo Holloway

All contributions are welcome – please send to the Editor Ian Balcombe : ianbalc@gmail.com

Quiz of the Week

The Answers to last week's Quiz

1. Sweet William
2. Poppy
3. Bluebell
4. Statice
5. Japonica
6. Mesembry Anthemum

The winner was Miss Diana Fieldwick

Freeman Jo Holloway

Identify the flowers pictured below:



Flower Number 1



Flower Number 2



Flower Number 3



Flower Number 4



Flower Number 5



Flower Number 6

Answers please on an email to the Clerk: clerk@pattenmakers.co.uk