

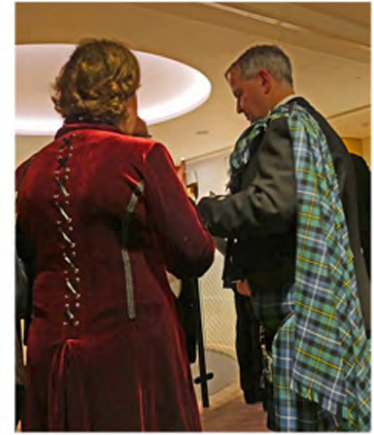
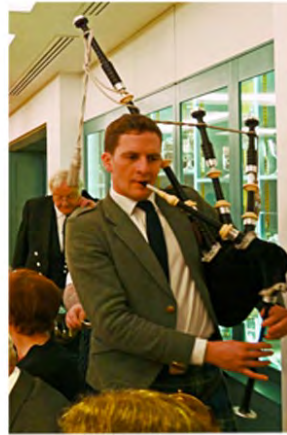


La Flèche email edition

February 2022



Burn's Night 25 January 2022



As I ironed my tartan trews in preparation for the Fletchers Burns night, I reflected on the current state of the Union post Brexit and that once a year as we come together to celebrate the great Poet, we are reminded of the English love of all things Scottish - the scenery, the whisky, haggis and neaps, bagpipes, tartan, Sean Connery and of course the great poet himself. It was partly Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's affection for Scotland, its scenery, culture and fashion which helped elevate the status and reputation of Scotland south of the border just over 100 years after the Union of 1707. They made popular the fashion for wearing tartan, evident at our Burns night with a number of members resplendent in highland dress - a finer collection of knees could not be had south of the Watford Gap.

Company, conversation and fellowship was, as always, superb at this years Burns night, my first with the Fletchers, and as ever, it was hard to drag everyone away from the reception down to the dinner when the time came. In fine Scots style the Master and Distinguished

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guests (Mr Robert Bell the Master Solicitor, the Right Rev Graeme Knowles Master Musician, Major Graham Hill Master Gunmaker) were piped into the Hall on the announcement of the Beadle Mr Ernest Brocklehurst. After the traditional Selkirk Grace from the Padre, Rev Paul Kennedy, we settled down to our first course of Cock-a-Leekie Broth complimented with a fine French white Côteaux Bourguignons Blanc and pleasant company long overdue after lockdown.

Past Master Bob Upton gave a wonderful address to the Haggis after the beast had been piped in and the caterers did a grand job on the "Master of the Pudding Race" which was paired with a fine Spanish Rioja. Liveryman Gordon Sharp gave the Toast to the Immortal Memory and an overview of

Burns and his life and we toasted Burns with Whisky and Port according to preference. Although the Toast to the Lassies and Reply to the Laddies was not a feature of the Fletchers Burns Night this year, the superiority of the fairer sex was clearly demonstrated by our Master Professor Anne Curry with her rendition of traditional Scottish Songs set to contemporary lyrics, ably accompanied on the piano by Rebecca Cohen from GSMD. The bar has been set for future Masters at Burns Night. As guest speaker the Master Musician gave a fascinating insight into his life and work.

A most enjoyable evening was had by all members of the Company and their guests and I realised how much I had missed the fellowship of the Fletchers over the last few years. As I left the Hall to dash for my train home I could not help but wonder what the Fletchers back in 1415 would have made of our Scottish frolics. Perhaps if the Battle of Agincourt had not been fought that year history might instead have celebrated the feat of English Archers at the Battle of Yeaveering, when a small English force consisting of mainly archers defeated a much larger Scots force. I quickly moved my thoughts back to the Union and reflected that despite recent trials and tribulations the English still have a great love of Scotland and its culture even if some North of the Border are not so keen on us Sassenachs. Thus it always was.

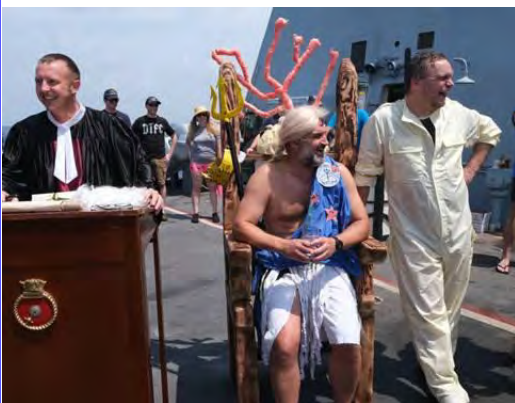


John Chappell

HMS DEFENDER

October saw HMS DEFENDER depart from the Far East to arrive in Duqm, Oman. This included crossing the equator where the traditional Neptune's Court was held for the 160 tadpoles who had never crossed the line.

The port visit to Oman allowed personnel from DEFENDER, as well as QUEEN ELIZABETH, DIAMOND and TIDE SPRING to relax and enjoy a few days alongside whilst we took on vital stores. This included an Adventurous Training trip to the 'Sugar Dunes' beach, with stand up paddle boarding, cricket and a chance to cool off in the sea. There was also a touch rugby match and a CSE show in the container village set up on the jetty specifically for the sailors to enjoy. Acts included comedians Maff Brown and Andy Askins and music from Kevin Davy White and The Dominos – as well as QUEEN ELIZABETH's Ship's band, which was obviously not as good as DEFENDER's...



On sailing from Duqm we were straight back into a busy period at sea in Defence Watches for the high threat transit of the Bab Al-Mandab, known as the 'BAM'. This allowed us access into the Red Sea, where we managed to find time for the traditional naval activity of 'hands to bathe'. As we neared the top of the Red Sea, we instead

stopped off for a few days in the port of Aqaba, in Jordan. Whilst there we hosted senior members of the Royal Jordanian Armed Forces and Government, as well as giving personnel a chance to explore a historic country. There were organised trips to the UNESCO world heritage site of Petra, an ancient city carved into the rock that has history pre-dating the Roman Empire which is considered to be one of the twelve wonders of the ancient world.

As our time in Jordan drew to a close DEFENDER's Affiliate Officer Hon Commodore Stephen Watson RNR joined us for the passage through the Suez Canal. Whilst onboard he witnessed sailing from Aqaba with Her Majesty's Ambassador to Jordan, delivered some lessons in leadership to the wardroom and got a full walk round of the Ship and her systems. During this time there was a crash on deck exercise, simulating an emergency landing of the ship's helicopter.

Commodore Watson assisted me in presenting the Commanding Officer's awards (listed bottom right), as well as The Silver Arrow award from the Worshipful Company of Fletchers for best Junior Rate went to LS(AWT) Bothamley, for not only a top professional performance over a busy deployment for the warfare department, but also for his coaching and mentoring of the more junior members of the Ops Room team to ensure they reach their potential.



After sailing from Aqaba, we transited the Suez Canal and returned to the Mediterranean Sea, much to the joy of the Ship's Company, as we are now truly homeward bound. As we cross the Mediterranean towards Barcelona we are conducting NATO Operation SEA GUARDIAN, ensuring maritime security in a vital region for global trade.

Notes borrowed from HMS DEFENDER'S newsletter

Fletcher Ladies Lunch November 2021

The Master was kind enough to invite the Fletcher ladies to her Club, the Athenaeum, for their annual lunch this year, where we were also able to host the Lady Mayoress, Amanda Keaveny, herself a Fletcher.

Twenty six ladies managed to find their way there to be entertained in the lovely Picture Room. A glass or two of fizz got the event off to a good start before we sat down to a delicious lunch. Seated on two tables we were able to change places after the main course to enable new conversations and meet new friends. At 3.30, when we had to vacate the room, the 3 hours seemed to have gone in a flash of chat!

This annual event is a great success and long may it continue!



Nicky Scott Knight

Playing Cards

The Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards hosted an evening of card games for Renter and Junior Wardens and their consorts in the grand surroundings of Drapers Hall. While your Renter Warden failed miserably to make an impression, Melanie Trapnell upheld the traditions of the Fletchers' by taking second place amongst the guests. She is pictured receiving her prize, a beautiful set of playing cards, from the Master of the Makers of Playing Cards.



Melanie Trapnell receives her prize

Andrew Trapnell

Catching up with the Past



Covid caused all sorts of delays but eventually we were able to catch up with some of the awards to our affiliates. Here you can see two presentations made at the October Court Meeting by Upper Warden Phillip Shears first to Flight Sergeant Steve Heggie of RAF Northolt with the Deputy Station Commander, Wing Commander Vicki Fulton looking on.

The second presentation was to Flight Ser-

Flight Sergeant Steve Heggie receives his

award from Upper Warden Phillip Shears. Flight Sergeant Emilia John-Baptiste of 1921 Lewisham Sqn ATC accompanied by Flight Lieutenant Wesley Pollard.

Both worthy recipients of our awards.



Flight Sergeant Emilia John-Baptiste of 1921 Lewisham Sqn ATC

A Man of Many Talents



In our July issue, you will have seen the pictures of Past Master Stuart Robbens by Dr Bob Spain. Bob has been busy during lockdown creating this masterpiece in his garden.

As can be clearly seen the Company has been remembered in the central window.

Fletchers Lisbon Weekend 2021

This was the weekend arranged by Stuart Robbens as Master but was postponed twice due to Covid

The group comprising some 29 Fletchers and their guests gathered in Lisbon on Wednesday 6 October for a welcome drink reception followed by a splendid dinner in the Espelhos (Room of Mirrors) Ballroom at the very well-appointed The One Palacio da Anunciada Hotel in which we were all staying.

Thursday 7 October – Lisbon – Tim Sanders Hewett

Following breakfast we were introduced to Gloria and Angela who were to be our guides for a walking tour of Old Lisbon. The guides explained that in 1755 the city had been devastated by an earthquake and a subsequent tsunami and, as this occurred on a Saints Day, serious fires broke out due to the number of lighted candles in the many Churches. As a consequence much of the city had to be rebuilt. Having been advised that we were to visit the Castle of St George



built by the Moors in 1147 AD high on one of the eleven hills we were concerned by the prospect of the daunting climb. Our fears were soon dispelled when we were shown the tuk-tuks arranged by our guides – in spite of being spared having to make it on foot the journey was quite nerve-wracking through the steep, winding, narrow cobbled streets. We arrived at the Castle and had time to take in the superb views of the city, the impressive 25th April Bridge (longer than the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco) and the Sanctuary of Christ the King across the River Tagus in Almada. Gloria and Angela had arranged the supply of some codfish cakes which we enjoyed on the battlements of the castle. Following a second visit to the throne room to collect her hat the Master joined us on a precarious walk

back down the streets and paths back to river level. On the way we noticed a number of statues to St Anthony of Padua who is the patron saint, inter alia, of lost items, lost souls, lost people and particularly finding one's spouse. The King had moved his palace from the Castle to the commercial area of the city and it is understood that this was so that he could keep a close eye on the large volumes of expensive items being imported and exported by sea. Having toured the area on foot a number of us attended a local restaurant for a lunch of cuttlefish, sardines or paella.

That evening we boarded the minibuses to travel to the Louros Palace the home of the Gremio Literario for a special private dinner on the veranda.

Friday 8 October – Sintra – Philip Shears

Setting off from our Hotel on a delightful sunny morning, our coach made its way out of Lisbon towards Sintra. Having negotiated quite heavy traffic, the helpful guide was able to draw our attention to distant hills on top of which was our eventual destination ...the former Royal Palace of Pena. The approach road to the Palace was long, winding and steep. It allowed many views of the sea as well as the palaces and grand houses of the nobility. Towards the end of the ascent a fine view of an ancient Moorish Castle was enjoyed.

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Pena Palace, Sintra

The Palace itself required the visiting Fletchers to put their best feet forward up a steep incline leading eventually to the Palace. All reached the top without the need for ropes and oxygen! The Royal Palace of Pena is extraordinary. It's official description is 'a 19th Century Romanticist Palace'. It is imposing, colourful, eclectic and some speak of it as having a touch of Disney about it. It was built on the site of a monastery destroyed in the devastating earthquake of 1755. Inside one finds many portraits, furniture and personal objects of the Portuguese Royal Family.

After our visit, a snack (and a little liquid refreshment) was taken in the town below the Palace. Our coach then took us to a seaside restaurant near Cascais where we consumed a delicious lunch. The principal dish involved Grouper baked in a crust of salt which was excellent. Given that the Grouper is one of the ugliest fish in the sea, it's looks belie its taste. After lunch, our coach took us along the coast passing popular Portuguese resorts including Estoril where a number of adventurous Fletchers (including the Master) braved quite substantial waves (while the Wardens looked on admiringly ...?!) ... and then back to base .. all in all a splendid trip followed by a regional specialities dinner in a local restaurant



Saturday 9 October – Belem – Chris Scott

After the usual battle with waiters to have everything ordered for breakfast delivered, we went by coach to the western suburbs of Lisbon;

the 'upmarket' area of Belem. We began our tour at the ornately-decorated Belem Tower, a 16th century gun-fort defending the entry to the Tagus River and Lisbon Harbour. It stood on a small island before the great earthquake of 1755, but now adjoins parkland, once home to British wounded during the Peninsular War, and

whilst some Fletchers marveled at a full-scale replica of the first seaplane to fly the South Atlantic to Brazil, others took coffee beneath the trees! We travelled by coach a few hundred yards to the spectacular monument to Henry the Navigator and the Voyages of Discovery, which we were told were a Portuguese initiative to teach the world to trade, and that Henry often relied on 'Mumsbank' to fund them. This impressive array of statues of the great and good of his realm marks the embarkation point for Portuguese explorers after their blessing in the nearby Monastery of St. Jerome. Disdaining the

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Be careful what you wish for

More Catching Up

Jon Averns attended Lydd camp on behalf of the Master in December. And the Officer Commanding, 13 Company SW London ACF, Major Kaz Lorimer (left) was able to present Cadet Sergeant William Boulanger with a certificate from the Fletchers. William was meant to be attending the October Court with the other attendees mentioned earlier, but tested + for COVID that day, so didn't make it.



Lisbon Trip continued

coach, several people nipped across the road to this famous building and missed out on the three mile 'Glasses-case Trip' and the chance to play 'Spot the Flag' on numerous foreign embassies. Returned and reparked, we filed into this remarkable ecclesiastic edifice, and were treated to a magnificent display of Baroque overt-decoration in both the intricately-carved stonework cloisters and the sombre and torture-focussed, yet artistically awe-inspiring, interiors with their contrasting, classically simplistic royal tombs. Outside again we had yet another treat. The guides produced boxes of the delicious Pasteis De Nata from the Belem bakery that claims to have 'invented' them! Still warm and sprinkled with cinnamon they were wonderful. Some Fletchers stayed in Belem to visit its numerous museums and hostelries, whilst others returned to



Jeronimos Monastery



the hotel to recuperate with

a snack, a beer and a siesta by the pool before having another memorable dinner in the Espelhos Ballroom at the hotel – another excellent day.

Sunday 10 October – Return

After breakfast a number of the party had time to enjoy the excellent facilities at the hotel before we all reluctantly made our way back to the airport for our flights home.

Compiled by Tim Sanders-Hewitt

Oxford University Officer Training Corps (OUOTC)

The OUOTC is one of the oldest units in the British Army having been formed by students during the English Civil War in 1642. It has had an illustrious history in fighting for the UK since then, for example, during World War One it saw losses of almost 2000 men.

Today the OUOTC serves the counties of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire and recruits its cadets with a wide range of backgrounds from the Universities of Oxford, Oxford Brookes, Reading, Gloucester, Buckingham, Royal Agricultural University and Cranfield.

In 2018 we provided a mounted arrow trophy to be presented by the Master annually to the platoon who in the opinion of the CO showed outstanding performance. Cuts to Army expenditure have led to the students having to self-fund some activities. At the end of 2021 the OUOTC approached our Company seeking support for their Ultra Marathon Team.

As a result the team were able to participate in the Azores Ultra Marathon, a 125km (77.6 mile) event across the very rugged terrain of San Miguel reaching altitudes of 5495m. Our Charity Committee thought this worthy of support and the article below is one record of the event.

Roger Watson

Capt Guy Carpenter (SJM Training Officer) proposed to enter a team into a 125km ultramarathon that he organises in his day job. Riding on the waves of success OUOTC had in the 2021 cross-country season, a team of 6 was selected. Little did the team know what they had signed up for and how intense the training needed to be! Many late-night runs, extended gym sessions and a couple of boxing matches later and the OUOTC 2021 Ultramarathon team was ready to depart for the island of Sao Miguel in the Azores.



After arrival into Ponta Delgada and a short rest, we started off our trip with a morning run along the coast to loosen off and acclimatise before the race, spotting other competitors doing the same. During the run, OCdt Ballantyne, a geology student at the University of Oxford keenly pointed out lots of interesting information about the rocks used to tile the pavement, which I have somehow now forgotten. Along the way, we discovered the local treat, a Bolo Levedo, which after tasting we decided that it would be best to keep eating throughout the day in order to fuel up for the race ahead.

The following morning, we lined up at the start, where many of the OCdts who had never run an ultramarathon before, were lined up next to a mix of competitors, including Pau Capell, arguably the best ultra-marathon runner in the world. Following a quick brief from Capt Carpenter in his role as Race Director to all the competitors, we were

ready to start! With the sun coming up over the City Gates, 100 bobbing headtorches set off along the coastal promenade.

The peloton stayed relatively condensed as we slowly trundled out of the city and towards the ominous sub-tropical mountains in the distance, which we would try and persuade ourselves were not part of the route. We quickly picked up on some of the tricks of running an ultra-marathon, whilst jogging up a slight incline in the 3rd kilometre it was pointed out to me that everyone else was walking, and that 70km in we might regret our initial runs. After passing the first checkpoint at 10km we found ourselves heading up the first of many steep climbs away from the urban area of Ponta Delgada into the jungle and mountains. For the next few checkpoints, we would stay together, passing and being overtaken by the same groups of people. Following one of the steepest climbs of the day and a quick interview by McMenemy and Lewis, we quickly learnt that running downhill can sometimes be more difficult than running up.

We realised we needed to make the most of any flat terrain as the climbs and descents would keep coming, so we pushed our increasingly fatiguing legs, consistently taking energy gels to keep us going and trudged along as a group with a few yarns from the jokers in the team to keep morale high! The amazing views of jungle, coastline and lush green mountains would never fail to make the experience easier, however what would eventually accentuate the mental fatigue harder was the sun going away, and with it the views as we would use our headtorches to go through the dark towards our last checkpoint. Having been told it was an easy 10km to the finish, we found ourselves extremely disappointed when we were quickly met with one more enormous hill - just for good measure I suppose. The team set off for the dark hidden summit together once again. No-one expected to come across a steep single track road traffic jam caused by an escaped dairy cow, but this is the Azores I suppose! After passing Daisy we eventually completed the hill and headed on to our last descent of the day towards the town of Faial da Terra. Here we could see in the distance, by the coast, the blue Ultra X arch which we had passed under at the start line. From the sight of this, our minds quickly thought of the hours of rest we would be able to gain as we headed down the mountain, through the town towards our well-deserved massages, freeze-dried food, and tents to get as much sleep as possible before embarking on the final 50km the next morning.

The morning walk to get some boiling water in our food was enough of a struggle for the second day, as every part of the body was aching. Somehow our legs managed to carry us once more to the start line alongside others who had also decided that running another ultra-marathon was somehow a good idea. From here we set off again in a very slow shuffle. This quickly turned into a walk as we soon approached the first uphill of the day. We spent the day going up more mountains, through more jungle, each as beautiful as the last, never tiring of the views as our legs were tiring of the hills.

Ticking off checkpoint by checkpoint, with doctors and osteopaths enthusiastically seeing to our niggles, we clambered our way up newly formed landslides and even past obstacle course-like segments with fallen trees at different heights to go over and under, a short relief of the movement of running. The second day also presented the largest climb of the race, which was to be rewarded at the top with thick clouds to prevent any views we were hoping for, however at least from here we knew we had completed the worst of it.

A short run of 8km down the hill and around the stunning Furnas Lake, led us to the Blue Arch and the finish line. Capt Carpenter met the team and quickly gave us our finishers medals before allowing us to race to the burger van to recover a portion of the calories lost. Elation, happiness, tiredness, pain, utter amazement at what we had just accomplished, were just some of the rollercoasters of emotions we felt at this time.

A short bus trip to Ponta Delgada would follow, where we ate as much food as we could, reminisced and tried to comprehend the challenge we had just completed. Despite the groans, the immense pain and monumental struggle walking suddenly became, all we could talk about was which ultramarathon we wanted to “run” next.

OCdt William Wheeler

We Welcome New Fletchers

At the January Court Meeting, four new Livermen and a Freeman were admitted to the Company and gave their Oaths of Allegiance in front of the Master.



Ian Burpitt takes the Oath of Allegiance read by the Clerk.



Liveryman Miss Alexandra Burrell



Professor Dr Ken Dark

Liveryman Mrs Sue King



Freeman Dr Andrew Burnett

An-

FLETCHER DIARY DATES February 2022 – 2023

Those events marked with an **F** are open to Freemen, Liverymen may attend all events.

All "in person" events will adhere to any Government guidelines applicable at the time.

15 th February	Tuesday	F	Fletcher General Knowledge quiz on zoom
22 nd February	Tuesday		Master's privileged visit to The Mary Rose
7 th March	Monday		Anniversary Banquet at Mansion House – sold out – wait list only
17 th March	Thursday	F	In the Steps of the Fletchers (City Walk)
1 st April	Friday		United Guilds Service
7 th April	Thursday		The Big Curry lunch in aid of The Soldiers Charity
7 th April	Thursday	F	Bows, Strings and Arrows. Surprising Fletchers Connections in Music - Concert in aid of the Fletchers' Trust, St Vedast church
26 th April	Tuesday		Installation Court Dinner & Thanksgiving Service
4 th May	Wednesday	F	Charity Golf Day
10 th May	Tuesday	F	Clergy Support Trust Service at St Paul's
12 th May	Thursday	F	Noak Hill Archery
14 th May	Saturday	F	Fletchers Day for Archers with Disability
18 th – 20 th May	Wednesday-Friday		Master's visit to the Isle of Wight – sold out – wait list only
7 th June	Tuesday		Falklands 40 th Anniversary lunch at Cutlers' Hall with other <i>Warrior Companies</i>
24 th June	Friday		Shrieval Elections followed by lunch
5 th July	Tuesday		Court lunch
18 th July	Monday	F	Fletchers Golf Day, Hadley Wood
3 rd September	Saturday	F	Fletchers Elite Archers Day at The Royal Toxophilite Society Grounds, Burnham
10 th , 11 th September	Saturday & Sunday	F	Fletchers' Disability Championships
22 nd September	Thursday	F	Noak Hill Archery
25 th September	Sunday	F	Sheep Drive and Livery Fair
27 th September	Tuesday		Court lunch
29 th September	Thursday		Election of the Lord Mayor followed by lunch
10 th – 14 th October	Monday-Friday		Master's Holiday in Venice – sold out – wait list only
25 th October	Tuesday		Past Masters' lunch
12 th November	Saturday	F	Lord Mayor's Show
NB more dates to be added to 2022 & 2023 when known			
24 th January	Tuesday		Court Dinner
24 th March	Friday		United Guilds Service
19 th April	Wednesday		Installation Court
13 th May	Saturday	F	Fletchers Day for Archers with Disability