



650 Years of Arrows
True and Sure



650 Years of Arrows Celebrating Our 650th Anniversary

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FLETCHERS

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Brief summary of Fletchers History.

The Worshipful Company of Fletchers have been celebrating its 650th Anniversary as a livery company throughout the last year. Whilst the pandemic curtailed a number of events, others were able to go ahead.

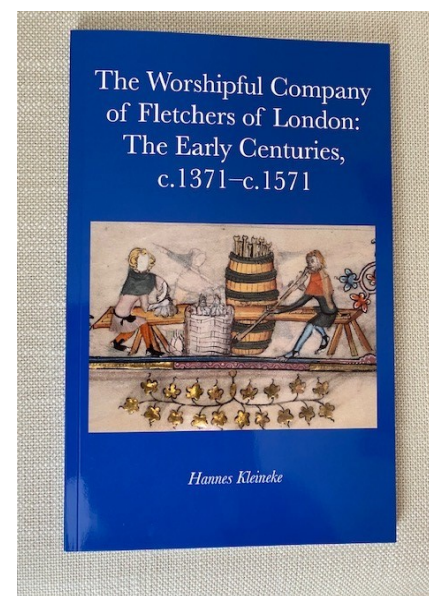
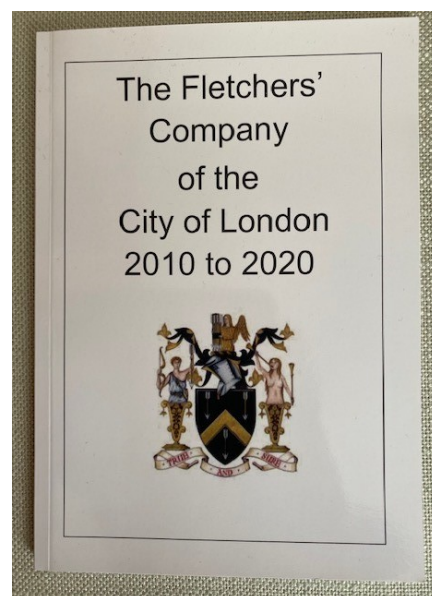
The Company has no exact foundation date but at some point before 7 March 1371 the leading men of the two crafts of Bowyers and Fletchers, who had previously formed one association, agreed that the two crafts should separate completely and henceforth no one individual should be allowed to make and sell both bows and arrows. A majority of the membership of the two crafts agreed with this, and following the fletchers' petition to the mayor and alderman the two trades were formally separated.

The company were granted its distinctive arms in 1467 with a crest being added in 1484 and had its own hall St Mary Axe from 1518. The Motto 'True and Sure' was adopted and by the late 1930s a strong link had been established with the Royal Toxophilite Society.

In 1971 the Fletchers celebrated their 600th anniversary at Mansion House. Thoughts of moving to a new Hall began in 1978 and the Company finally moved to its current location in Cloth street in 1987. The company was honoured by HRH the Princess Royal who opened both this hall and its refurbished successor in 2015.

Our 650th celebrations have included two new publications:

The Fletchers Company of the City of London 2010-2020. written by Past Master John Dumbrell and *The Worshipful Company of the Fletchers of London the early Centuries. 1371-1571* written by Hennes Kleineke.



Reflections of The Master for 2021-22



I have been thinking for a while about what I might say about my year as Master. But how can I express in words what has been a unique and amazing experience, beyond anything I might have expected? It has indeed been 'living history' celebrating our 650th anniversary. Most of all it has helped me to understand the central place of fellowship then and now.

Working together towards a common goal, helping others achieve their dreams, celebrating achievement, meeting, eating and drinking together with laughter and song – these are surely the perennial elements of a livery company. As The Fletchers' Prayer in Roger Ascham's *Toxophilus* of 1545 puts it: 'I pray God that al Fletchers... may live continually in health and merriness, obeying their prince as they should and loving God as they ought'.

We used this prayer at our Anniversary Service in early September 2021 which I found a really moving occasion. Perhaps we were just lucky that it turned out to be one of the first events after the reopening of the city, but it really gave a great start to my 'active' year.

What an honour to meet HRH the Princess Royal at the Anniversary Banquet in March 2022 and to experience at first hand her huge contribution to the Livery Movement. Masters enjoy the support and interest of the Lord Mayor. I would like to pay personal tribute to the two Lord Mayors of my year, and to the four Sheriffs, for their hard work on behalf of the city and us all. It has been fascinating meeting so many other Masters in my year, both at civic events and at their Company events. The Livery Companies are all quite different from each other – it has been a real voyage of discovery for me – but there is absolutely no doubt of a shared purpose.

It has been a significant year for us in historical terms, with a Royal Charter as well as a new grant of arms. But reflection and celebration of the past has, I think, also helped us set a path for the future. I am so pleased that we have drawn in new members during the year and positive that this initiative will continue. The Hall has also been revived as our 'home' and visitors have all spoken warmly of their experiences in joining us there. We are definitely a Company worth joining!

I take great pride in our affiliates, both educational and military, and have had some great experiences with them. The National Disability Championships at Lilleshall were a truly uplifting experience. The skill of those archers is amazing and it is a privilege to support them. I am not a natural archer myself, and think it must have been rigged for the Master to win the Chocolate Orange at Noak Hill! The Trust goes from strength to strength, especially in its close relationship with Archery GB. I was pleased that my historical interest in the Peasants Revolt could be turned into a fundraising opportunity. And, given my musical interests, it was marvellous that the last in-person event in my year was a fascinating and beautifully performed concert for the Trust in St Vedast.

I have had great fun in my year, and I hope that feeling is shared. My list of thanks could run the risk of being the worst kind of Oscar acceptance speech. So I shall keep it short and simply thank you ALL for your support and commitment, but I must make special mention of John, my consort, for his unfailing encouragement and indulgence. My very best wishes to Philip, and to the Worshipful Company of Fletchers, may it flourish forever root and branch, combined with the name of the Master.

Anne Curry

Bows, Strings and Arrows. Surprising Fletchers' Connections in Music



The last formal event of the 650th celebrations was a marvellous concert held at St Vedast on 7 April 2022 in aid of The Fletchers' Trust.

Members of the Dei Gratia Baroque Ensemble, led by Dr Anne Marie Christensen, provided us not only with delightful sounds but also with intellectual stimulation, since they had carefully crafted a concert which reflected themes with Fletcher connections.

Their programme was opened by music by Francesco Geminiani, one of the most prominent violinists active in the London in the 18th century. But in between, London and Fletcher connections were explored through traditional tunes, including a song which regaled the story of an Archery Competition in York, so good it was worth reporting in London! We then were treated to Cupid, in John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, and Myra, in Purcell's song-setting, using arrows and darts to reign over men's hearts and actions. In Blow's music for the entrance of Cupid, soprano Dr April Frederik deployed an arrow and violin bow to striking effect. The final part of the programme included three Handel arias exploring various aspects of love, as well as a violin sonata by Pietro Castrucci.

We learned that this music had a further link specifically to the Fletchers. Instrument making was an important trade in London but not big enough to have a guild of its own. 'In 1604', Anne Marie's excellent programme notes told us, 'we have the first instance of instrument makers becoming freemen of the Fletchers by redemption. One of the instrument makers to become a freeman was Richard Mears, who traded in St Paul's Church Yard. Like all good instrument makers and sellers, Mears was also a publisher. People needed music to play on their newly-bought instruments. The three opera arias and the sonatas by Castrucci and Geminiani, were all published by Mears, and some of us will be using reproductions of these original publications in the performance tonight'.

We were truly transported back to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by Anne Marie, April and their fellow players, Rebecca Dinning, Jenny Bullock and Anna Tetsuya. And what more fitting location for this than St Vedast, which was rebuilt by Christopher Wren in 1670, and which is only a stone's throw from the site of the Mears' endeavours.

Anne Curry



The Worshipful Company of Fletchers 650th Anniversary Service

On 7th September 2021 65 Livery companies assembled at the church of St Vedast-alias-Foster to celebrate the 650th anniversary of the Worshipful Company of Fletchers. Rarely have so many Masters, Wardens and Clerks congregated together other than at Guildhall. The chosen date was close to the feast of the Decollation (beheading) of John the Baptist on 29 August, for whom the Fletchers were accustomed to maintain a perpetual light.



The chance to raise the profile of the Company and explain its activities has not been missed. 39th in precedence, we are about to acquire a Royal Charter, delayed by lockdown, to replace our dependence on historical usage or prescription. When the Company was formed during the Hundred Years War the military role of archery was at its peak and the guilds of arrow makers would have been among the most prestigious and prosperous in the country. Although hand-made arrows are still lovingly produced, the craft has long ceased to provide gainful employment. Instead, the Fletchers' Charitable Trust helps to fund disabled archers from grassroots to Paralympic level.

Our liverymen have always played their part in Governance of the city with Aldermen, Common Councillors and four former Lord Mayors.

The café across the street proved a popular muster point for Fletchers arriving early while the dignitaries enrobed in preparation for the short procession on to Foster Lane and back into the church.

The service of thanksgiving led us masterfully through the centuries. Jerusalem was followed by 'The Fletchers Prayer' in *The Toxophilus of Roger Ascham A.D 1545*:

And thus I pray God that al Fletchers getting their lyvyng trully and al archers usynge shootynge honestly, and al manner of men that favour artillery, may lyve continuallye in healthe and meriness, obeying theyr prince as they shude and loving God as they ought, to whom for al things be al honour and glorye for ever. Amen

The choir of St Vedast filled the church with the Agincourt Carol written not long after the Battle:

*Deo gratias Anglia redde pro victoria! [Give thanks, England, to God for victory!]
Owre Kyng went forth to Normandy In Agincourt feld he faught manly*



The congregation looked resplendent in their robes and chains of office and tolerated the rather crushed seating that provided a defiant celebration of the end of lockdown. The Rector, Paul Kennedy, must have been well pleased to see his church packed with some having to stand. Because of the limited capacity only 41 proud Fletchers were able to comewe few, we happy few, we band of brothers.... Henry V would have been pretty pleased with the turnout too.

As the service came to an end, Alderman Vincent Keaveny, Lord Mayor elect, congratulated the Company and wished them well for the future. We were all invited to move to the reception in the side chapel and in the courtyard surrounding a magnificent Acer, where lavish canapés and wine were dispensed. St Vedast or St Foster, who was appointed Bishop of Arras in 499, is said to have conjured up a whole cask of wine when his host's cellar was dry. On this occasion it was left to Kate and Roy to make up the shortfall in the supermarket delivery, due no doubt to the shortage of drivers.

Our hospitality was much appreciated and despite the fading light many of the guests were in no hurry to leave. The service of thanksgiving and celebration of our first 650 years will long be remembered by all who participated.



John Leatherdale

The trumpeters performing the traditional 'Post Horn Gallop' ended a wonderful evening. The audience clapped and laughed as the music got faster and faster, but alas the evening was coming to an end and it was soon time to leave. As the dignitaries processed from the ballroom to clapping from the guests there was a feeling of sadness that the evening had come to an end. I felt privileged to have participated in what was probably a once in a lifetime event. It had been a wonderful evening and it will stay with me forever.



Carol Kisby



The food as ever was delicious. My favourite dish was the dessert of Mansion House raspberry, elderflower and champagne trifle cake with pistachio and elderflower macaron. Throughout the meal we were entertained by the London Banqueting Ensemble, tenor Mark Wilde accompanied by David Owen Norris on the piano performed two of our Fletcherer Songs.



Towards the end of the evening there were speeches from The Master, The Lord Mayor of London and HRH The Princess Royal who also presented the Royal Charter to the Worshipful Company of Fletcherers.



History of the Fletcherers in 65 Objects

Back in early 2019, I was delighted to volunteer to prepare a history of the Fletcherers in 65 objects ready for the Company's 650th anniversary celebrations. After reading through various source documents including Oxley and the Green Book, I realised that my biggest challenge would be keeping it to just 65 objects! I aimed for a range of items, to cover archery, the Company's history, social activities, military and educational affiliations and charitable works, in order to present as broad a picture as possible. In all, I wrote 70 items to offer the Court plenty of choice in whittling it down to 65 items.

I am extremely grateful for the help and advice of fellow Fletcherers. At the height of the first lockdown, some keen souls came back with pictures of items such as golfing trophies within an hour! Marianne Anton, photographer, made a special trip to Farmers & Fletcherers' Hall in summer 2020 with her equipment to take professional photos of the objects stored there, along with our clerk, Kate Pink, who also filled in many useful details on items ranging from the Clerk's gown to the rose bowls. Contacting various colleges, museums and other organisation for images was enjoyable, especially as I managed to source all images free-of-charge. Hannes Kleineke and Anne Curry showed legendary patience with my numerous historical queries, and Rob Slatem made my write-ups look fabulous on the website.

The oldest object was the 1371 petition to separate the two trades of Bowyer and Fletcher, and the most recent was the photograph of the Fletcherers' holiday to Sicily in 2019. The first five objects were placed on the website in March 2021 with five objects added in each of the following 12 months, ending very aptly with the Royal Charter that was presented to the Fletcherers at the Mansion House at the 650th anniversary banquet on 7 March 2022.

The Loving Cup

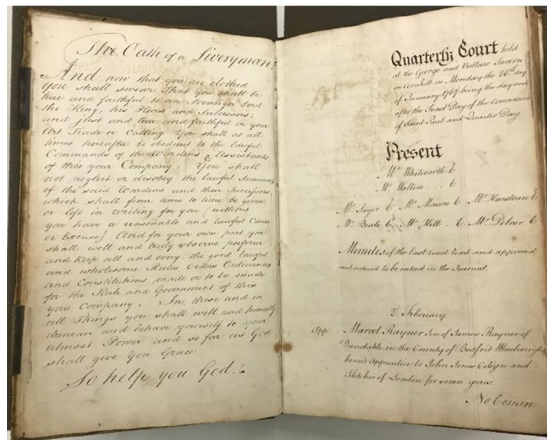


The ceremony of the Loving Cup is an ancient and interesting feature of City Livery Company feasts. The cup is of silver or silver gilt and filled with spiced wine, called 'sack'. The Fletcherers own four loving cups for use in the ceremony; the oldest is engraved with an arrow and was presented to the Fletcherers to mark the Coronation Year of H.M King George VI, and was first used at the Installation Dinner on 9th April 1947. The loving cup shown in the picture is the Victory Cup.

Immediately after dinner, the Master and Wardens drink a hearty welcome to their visitors; the cup is then passed round the table going to the left where possible. The procedure is for the person who pledges with the loving cup (holding it in both hands) to stand and bow to his or her neighbour who, also standing, removes the cover with his or her right hand and holds it while the other drinks. Whilst the neighbour on the right of the person pledging stands behind the person drinking, facing away from them.

The custom giving rise to these actions is said to have originated in the need to keep busy the right or 'dagger' hand of the person removing the cover, while the person standing behind the one who is pledging guards his or her back against any treachery, such as that practised by Elfrida on the unsuspecting King Edward the Martyr at Corfe Castle, who was murdered while drinking.

Minute Book 1767



The Worshipful Company of Fletchers' minute books began in 1767. Minutes of court were hand-written in the minute book from 1767 to 1952. Thereafter the minutes were typed out on sheets of paper and stuck into the minute book. From 1996 they were word processed.

The picture shows the minutes for the Court meeting on 26 January 1767, which was held at the George and Vulture tavern; the oath of a liveryman is on the left-hand side of the page. Later minute books contain some fascinating snippets including the hire of a (horsedrawn) omnibus in 1845 to take the Court to

Richmond and a dinner at Crystal Palace in 1874.

The Fletchers' Disability Cup

The Fletchers' Disability Cup is the prize awarded to the winner of the Fletchers' Disability Championship, an annual competition held at Lilleshall, home to Archery GB, British archery's national governing body. Sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Fletchers, this event is of world record status and the scores gained at the event count towards the selection process for international competitions such as the Olympics.

The picture shows Ken Hargreaves, winner of the September 2018 competition, with Fred the dog in attendance.



Boleyn Box



Also known as the Governor's Trophy, the Boleyn box holds the results of the annual Joint Archery Shoot between the Fletchers and Bowyers and is given as the prize. It is a model of the arrow box which was used as a coffin for Anne Boleyn. Inside it is a painting based on the Luttrell Psalter. The Joint Shoot has been running since 1991 and is held in the moat of the Tower of London. The trophy was presented by Major General C Tyler CB on 27 June 1991.

The worshipful Company of Fletchers 650th Anniversary Banquet at The Mansion House

On 7th March 2022 the largest ever gathering of Fletchers and guests assembled at Mansion House for their 650th anniversary. I was one of those lucky people who attended The Banquet. As I entered the building it was with excitement and some trepidation. After being relieved of our coats, my husband and I mounted the stairs where cadets from our RRF and Air force affiliates provided a carpet guard. On reaching the top of the stairway we found ourselves in a large reception room already filled with the sound of guests chatting excitedly.



We proceeded to follow those in front heading for the receiving line. Once at the front of the queue, we were announced by the master of ceremonies, and proceeded to meet The Master, Upper Warden, Renter Warden and Deputy Master. We then joined the other guests in the room. We were served a glass of Prosecco and spend a pleasant time talking to friends old and new. There was a definite feeling of anticipation in the room as everyone was looking forward to seeing HRH The Princess Royal.



Just as I was thinking it was time for dinner, The Master of ceremonies invited us to take our places in the ballroom. It took a long time for everyone to get to their places as there were 288 of us searching for our seats! On entering the ballroom our new charter and coat of arms were on prominent display, thanks to the efforts of Deputy Master Stuart Robbens. Once the guests were in place, the dignitaries, HRH The Princess Royal, The lord Mayor and the Lady mayoress, the sheriffs and their consorts, the Master and representatives of our military affiliates, processed to their seats in time to the clapping of those attending. Once Grace was said we sat and the meal Commenced.