



Charitable Giving

The Worshipful Company of Bowyers is part of a living tradition of the City of London, going back to the early fourteenth century when the Elders of the City were laying the foundations of the trades into organized Crafts and Guilds, so that the standards and terms of employment of people involved were protected and laid down in constitutions, many of which exist to the present day, and have been the bedrock upon which much of the greatness of our nation is founded.

Further to this the Guilds had the role of supporting members of their trade and their families who had become impoverished.

To this day the Guilds continue this tradition of raising funds to support various charitable activities.



The Bowyers' Company of to-day are very conscious of their history, having fashioned the longbows that led to such as, the famous victories of Agincourt, Crècy and Poitiers that form the motto of our Company and are proudly shown on our Crest and Coat of Arms.

The first recorded ordinances were not drawn up until 1487/8 by which time the longbow was in decline as the major armament of war, and although Henry VIII was a great proponent of the longbow, by 1517 guns were becoming the preferred weapon, and the longbow was beginning to gain its pre-eminent position in sport which is still the case to-day.

The affairs of the Company are presided over by the Master, the Upper Warden and the Renter Warden, who uniquely of all the 107 Livery Companies, hold office for two years. They are supported by a Court of Assistants who meet regularly to manage the governance of the Company.

These days the Bowyers' Company is made up of men from a wide range of occupations who have progressed from gaining the Freedom of the Company, to the Freedom of the City of London, and finally being clothed in the Livery of the Company. It is from the Livery that the Court Assistants are chosen and they in turn elect the Master and Wardens who are Trustees of the Charitable Fund.

To assist the Master there is a Clerk for the administration and a Beadle who assists on ceremonial occasions of which there are many.

'Our charitable pedigree goes right back to Mediaeval times when it was the custom to support members of the trade and their families who had become impoverished.'

Fellowship and Charity are the key elements of the modern Livery movement, one often leading to the other. We have a varied program of events throughout the year with a banquet for St George's Day and another to celebrate Agincourt. These as well as several visits to places such as The College of Arms, Westminster Cathedral, The Houses of Parliament and Company suppers, along with events including golf, shooting and lectures, make for a busy time. There are thirty four Livery Halls in the City and because we lost ours in the Great Fire of 1668 we have the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of many of the other Halls, including Mansion House, Tallow Chandlers, Innholders, Fletchers etc.

All liverymen are encouraged to make donations through 'gift aid' on a monthly or an annual basis. Additionally the Company transfers a proportion of its annual surplus to its Charitable funds.

We are also very proud that senior members of the Bowyers' Company are involved as School Governors in the governance of the Central Foundation School for Girls situated in the East End of London.

As previously suggested, the Bowyers' place great emphasis on charity

Our charitable pedigree goes right back to Mediaeval times when it was the custom to support members of the trade and their families who had become impoverished. An example of the tradition surviving up till 1919 is found in the Company records where a Mrs Brodie Smith, the daughter of a Past Master had fallen on hard times and was given an annuity.

In 1625, James Wood, a Past Master of the Company became the Company's most significant benefactor, so far. For under his will, he provided funds for the poor of the Parish of St Nicholas Cole Abbey. He also established a series of exhibitions for scholars attending Oxford and Cambridge. The source of the funds was the revenue and eventual sale of James Wood's Manor and estate at Isley Walton and over the years the Company has donated funds to the poor of Isley Walton and to support the school teacher. Donations were also made to the church and the organ which continued up till the 1990's

1879 saw the beginning of the Company donating monies to the hospitals of London, with a donation of 10 guineas to Charing Cross Hospital, similar donations over the years to Miss Wardell's Convalescent Home for Scarlet Fever, The Farringdon General Dispensary, East London Hospital for Children and the Home for Confirmed Invalids.

The Company's support for the Lord Mayor's Appeal started in 1877 and continues each year to the present day supporting each Lord Mayor of the City of London.

During the First World War a wide range of donations were made such as The Blind Soldiers & Sailors Fund, Employment of Ex-soldiers Fund, Endell Street Military Hospital and The Church Army. We currently strongly support The British Legion.



Pictures

Font cover: Paralympic Games, Athens 2004.

Inside front cover: John Groom among his 'flower girls' (for a full story see the Autumn 2002 issue of our newsletter at www.bowyers.com).

This page (above and below) and back cover: Various aspects of the work of The Passage, London's largest voluntary sector day centre for homeless people.



Some of the charities we currently support are:

THE BRITISH PARALYMPIC ASSOCIATION

We contribute regularly to this charity and are aiming at the 2012 London Paralympics to make a considerable contribution, particularly in the Archery section where Britain's success in the past has been considerable and shows great promise for the future.

JOHN GROOMS

This is an association working in partnership with disabled people to improve their quality of life - including job training. The John Grooms Housing Association designs, develops and manages buildings to cater for the disabled.

THE REEDHAM TRUST

Founded in 1844 as 'The Asylum for Fatherless Children', to-day they support 150 children in boarding schools throughout the UK. The children have all experienced tragedy in their young lives. The Reed family have been Bowyers for many years.

THE TRELOAR TRUST

Established by Sir William Treloar in 1908 when he was Lord Mayor. The aim is to help children with physical disabilities and sensory impairment by providing each individual with the support that will allow them to gain skills, abilities and build their confidence so that they may achieve their best in life. Emphasis is on enabling the students to become as independent as possible. The Bowyers' Company provides Archery equipment for the use of the students.

THE 3H FUND

The fund organizes subsidized group holidays for physically disabled children with the support of volunteer helpers allowing the family carers to enjoy a separate and much needed period of respite.

REACT

Rapid Effective Assistance for Children with Potentially Terminal Illnesses works to give these children, comfort, dignity and where possible, greater independence. This past year they have supplied a wide range of equipment from specialist wheelchairs to beds, baths, mobility aids, washing machines and tumble dryers.

ROYAL ARMOURIES

This is an educational project organised by the Royal Armouries in the Tower of London, providing support to the teaching of science through the National Curriculum to disadvantaged children from the Borough of Tower Hamlets.

ST DUNSTANS

Provides crucial assistance to ex-servicemen and women with significant loss of sight. The specialist training helps them to regain their independence and optimism. St Dunstons are their partners for life, helping not only their clients but also their families. Teaching new skills, sorting out housing and benefit issues, providing a thriving sports and a social network. The Bowyers provide support to St Dunstons Archery Club which competes all over the country against both visually impaired and sighted archers, five of which are actually due to take part in the All England Championships.

THE PASSAGE

This is London's largest voluntary sector day centre for homeless people. Each day they help over 200 homeless and vulnerable men and women. They have a 49 room hostel in Passage House, Westminster,



which was officially opened on 1st March 2000. They meet the basic immediate needs and offer advice in resettlement and rehabilitation, including help with housing, literacy and numeracy, mental

and physical health. They have recently set up, in partnership with Friends of the Elderly, a special service to help some of the many older homeless people.

This is all apart from the constant 'one off' requests we receive, and we help where we can, but it does cost money and funds are running low, there is an urgent need to top up the Company's Charitable Fund. It is expected that members of the Company give as generously as they are able, by regular donations, one off donations and legacies, but we need more help and we are looking for sponsors to join us in this work. It is extremely worthwhile and rewarding in ways that often you least expect.

*This is a brief look at what we do, if you would like any further details please contact:
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