



The Company of Cutlers' Archivist's Report, 2017-18

The main focus of work this year has been an audit of the Company's silver collection. The displays of silver around the Hall continue to astonish visitors and every effort is made to maintain the collection in good condition. There are over a thousand individual pieces of silver in a number of locations and all were checked and tallied with the collection's database. In this audit process, the location and condition were recorded and the database updated. The condition of the vast majority is very good, with only very minor scratches consistent with their age and use. The worst problems were with some candlesticks which have lost plaster or pitch infill, their wooden base or the baize covering. Replacing the baize can be done in-house, while arrangements will be made to repair the infill.

Redecoration of the Old Banqueting Hall revealed a number of 'finds' behind the skirting boards and in the gallery, which included empty cigarette packets, a small tub for Davy's ice cream and an 1892 concert program. The OBH was decorated with three pairs of stainless steel crossed daggers and the framed Company's Grant of Arms of 1875 now hangs beneath.

Work continues to mount more knives from the Company's collection, with two new displays by the rear stairs showing hunting knives, trade and food preparation knives. The displays have been made by Mrs Penny Kilburn and it is proposed that further displays will be made for the wall behind the OBH Minstrels' Gallery.

The website continues to attract about 600-800 hits each month, the majority from the UK and the US, but with occasional ones from the Far East, South America and Africa. The key searches are for the Master Cutler and generic terms such as 'Cutlers' Company'. The website generates about a dozen enquiries each month, mainly wanting identification of a knife, valuing pieces of silver or for family history information. The website is currently being re-vamped.

The annual Open Day of the Hall took place on Sunday, 16 September. This was a change from a Saturday in previous years, but did not seem to affect the number of visitors. About 500 people came through the door, most of whom went on one of the six tours of the Hall, which were led throughout the day by the Archivist and the Deputy Beadle.

Dr Joan Unwin, Archivist.