

Burgon Society Visit To Ede & Ravenscroft At Waterbeach

‘Children in a sweet-shop’ was a phrase heard more than once during the course of the Burgon Society visit to Ede & Ravenscroft’s warehouse at Waterbeach, which took place on Saturday 15th June. Some 20 members and Fellows attended. (Some had travelled a good way: Canon Ambrose Southward had come from Cumbria, and Kerstin Froberg had felt the call all the way from Sweden!)

We were welcomed by Nick Shipp and Ron Brooks, who told us about the logistics of organizing an ever-increasing number of awards ceremonies each year: getting the robes back, repacked and in many cases sent out again. There were some amusing stories, such as having to set all the robes out ready for the graduands at 2 o’clock in the morning, as they had been held up in transit! (Well, it was amusing to us; perhaps not to a weary E & R worker at the time!) By far the majority of robes are hired these days, though there is still a significant proportion being bought; there was a tale here of a young man who wanted a bespoke hood to his own design to match his degree-day outfit! They were in the middle of packing robes during our visit: extra hours have to be worked to keep up with it all; Nick said he might almost bring his bed to the warehouse for the duration!

One interesting point is that, despite increasing disuse of academic dress on a day-to-day basis, more and more institutions – many of which have been in existence for many years without the least desire for robes – are asking for schemes to be designed for their awards: we were told that a new scheme comes ‘on-line’ about once a fortnight. The latest one was the Institute of Road Safety Officers – yes, we did ask if the hoods have a reflective yellow binding!! (and no, they don’t).

Then the tour of the warehouse. We saw the dry cleaning machines and the ironing machines. But of course, what we really wanted to see was ... the robes. These are kept in huge stacks which run on rails. Many of them were folded ready for dispatch to ceremonies, but there were sufficient doctors’ robes and boxes of hoods to repay inspection. Children in a sweet-shop, indeed. Cries of ‘Oh gosh, *that’s* what it looks like!’ and ‘Whoever designed this must have been...’ resounded. Many questions about shades of colour and shapes were cleared up. Eventually we were moved on (not too forcibly!), and we finished by looking at a display of robes that I am sure could form the basis of another e-group and Society – those of peers and orders of chivalry.

Back to where we started; wine and food was provided. An excellent day, and I am sure not the last time we shall visit. Thanks are specially due to Phil Goff, for arranging it, and Nick and Ron for being such excellent hosts.

Burgon Society Annual Lecture & Dinner, Friday, September 20th 2002

The first Annual Dinner of the Burgon Society was held at the Café du Marché, Charterhouse Square, on Friday, September 20th 2002. The Dinner was preceded by a fascinating Lecture in the Great Hall of Charterhouse given by the Reverend Colin Lawlor, of the University of Brighton, on Dean Burgon. Before dinner those present were entertained to sherry by Hilary Haydon, Society member and Charterhouse Brother, standing in for the Master of Charterhouse who was unable to be present.

Present were:

John Birch, Philip Goff, Michael Powell, Ian Johnson, Bruce Christianson, Robin Rees, Stephen James, Peter Durant, accompanied by Ellen McGrath, Colin Lawlor, John Cullen, Andrew Hogg, Donald Buttress, Hilary Haydon, accompanied by Katharine Haydon, Clifford Dunkley, Andrew Linley, accompanied by Stephanie Lane, Gordon Nevill.

Members who would like a full copy of Father Lawlor's talk should apply to the Editor at brmichael@st-georges-college.co.uk or by phone 01932 839457.

“Manchester Academical Dress ”

by Philip Lowe

“The Origins and Development of Academical Dress at the Victoria University of Manchester”. Philip Lowe's history traces the development of Academic Dress at one of the first great civic Universities. Copiously illustrated, it contains full colour photographic details of all the hoods awarded at Manchester University, together with details of officers' robes and a large amount of newly researched material. Produced with the support of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester and the Burgon Society. Cost £6.75 inc.p&p.

Orders details via the Burgon Society website “Shop” or from Philip Lowe at Philmus22@aol.com

Future Events

Fixed Dates:

Congregation: Saturday, October 18th 2003 at the Charterhouse.

Dates to be announced:

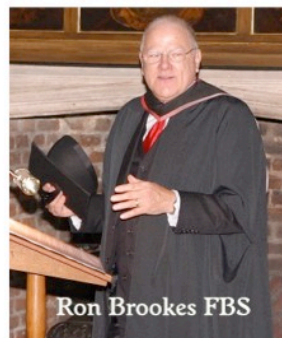
Council are planning the following events but no dates are fixed as yet. Announcements will be made in the Newsletter.

Annual Lecture & Dinner: It is Council's feeling that this event should be scheduled further away from Congregation.

An afternoon with Ron Brookes and Len Brown. This will probably take place in Cambridge.

Study Day. This will take place at St George's College, Weybridge (home of the Society's Archive Collection) and will take the form of seminars / talks, question and answer sessions, and a look at the Archives.

Possible other events are: a visit to E&R Waterbeach for the benefit of members who were unable to make the last visit and / or a visit to the AD collection at the Museum of London.



Photographs
courtesy of
Geoff Espin,
staff photographer,
Ede & Ravenscroft

