

A Royal visit to Sheffield

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HRH, Chris Hudson, Harriet Bowes-Lyon (Lady in Waiting), and Anne Hodson, longest-serving member of staff

Chimo Holdings, of Sheffield, is a manufacturer of, amongst other things, the finest quality Sheffield cutlery. It also has a line of pewter and is a member of the ABPC. Recently, it was honoured with a visit by HRH the Princess Royal. The CEO, Chris Hudson, a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, takes up the story:

On a cool clear January morning we lined up outside the factory. Once the police outriders rounded the corner, blue lights

flashing everywhere, as they surrounded two limousines speeding towards us, we knew that our Royal visit was about to begin - it had been some three months in the planning.

The Lord Lieutenant was introducing Princess Anne to the High Sheriff, the Master and Mistress Cutler, certain members of my staff and, finally, yours truly.

I had been advised to relax, and just enjoy it, because the hour-long visit would fly by. I tried, and was helped by the Princess, who was most gracious and instantly interacted with everyone. After giving her a brief introduction to our history and products, the Master Cutler explained that Sheffield was celebrating 100 years since stainless steel had been 'discovered' in the city, in 1913, by Harry Brearley.

Then we were off on the factory tour to meet our team of highly skilled craftsmen and women. At each stop, HRH showed real interest and asked highly informed questions of the employees. One of the many highlights was Master silversmith Bob Lamb meeting the Princess and showing her the sterling silver model of "Super-tram" which he had made - and which had been presented to the Princess in 1994 when she launched the service. The



HRH with, explaining the cutlery, Paul Weatherstone. Back right, George Poulton, apprentice.

model now resides at Cutler's Hall. The tour ended in the offices where the Princess unveiled a commemorative plaque, signed the visitors' book, graciously accepted a sterling silver Armada dish from the employees, and finally a bouquet of flowers presented by my five-year-old grandson, William, followed by the most perfect bow - indeed fit for a Princess!

On reflection, one of the lasting highlights of this memorable day are the many informal photos we have of the staff and Princess smiling, even laughing together! The Princess stayed with us 17 minutes longer than scheduled, which I trust is an indication of her interest and enjoyment of the visit to see traditional skills and expertise as practised today.



Paul Weatherstone, HRH, and the Lord Lieutenant

To see a short video of this Royal occasion please visit the company website at www.chimoholdings.co.uk under "Chimo News"

Chris Hudson
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