

# Master Profile *Glenn Beall*

## Editor's Note:

This is the first article on a member of the Honourable Company of Horners who has achieved the status of *Master Collector / Historian*. Featured in this article is Glenn Beall whose profile will also be added to the Guild's Website at [www.hornguild.org](http://www.hornguild.org).

In accordance with the Guild's Standing Rules, two of the major requirements for anyone to become a Master Collector / Historian are that an individual must "Show a superlative collection of horn articles presented in a historical context. (i.e. carved powder horns, folk art powder horns, screw tip powder horns, snuff boxes, combs, etc.) to be reviewed by the Awards Committee for evaluation at the annual meeting." In addition "..... the candidate must give an original presentation to the HCH at an annual meeting on the collection" followed by a written "copy for the study and advancement of current and future Guild members."

This high standard is quite significant in that after 23 years of our Guild's existence, this is the first time that the title of Master Collector / Historian has been awarded.

*Congratulations to Glenn Beall, Master Collector / Historian*



## Introducing Glenn Beall, Master Collector / Historian

March 2, 2019 was a historic landmark for the Honourable Company of Horners as Glenn Beall was the first Guild member to achieve the status of Master Collector / Historian since its inception in 1996. Of further note is the fact that Glenn is the only individual who is a member of both the Worshipful Company of Horners (WCH) in London, England, as well the Honourable Company of Horners. Needless to say, Glenn's story, along with his achievements, is quite interesting.

Glenn has strong ties to Illinois as he is originally from Stark County, graduated in 1957 from Bradley University in Peoria, and now resides in Libertyville, just north of Chicago. Following college, his entire career has been centered on designing and developing plastic products, working for General Electric and Abbott Laboratories before starting Glenn Beall / Engineering in 1968. Although now semi-retired, he does consulting and volunteer work

for plastics-related technical societies and trade associations.

It wasn't until 1988, that Glenn began collecting plastic artifacts and studying the written history of the plastics industry. Those histories explained that horn was a precursor to plastic material, both sharing the characteristics of being softened with heat and capable of being pushed into new, commercially acceptable shapes. This fact caught Glenn's interest.

In 1994, Glenn's interest had evolved to a point where he started collecting horn artifacts. He stated that "I am interested in all of the hornsmithing procedures....and its trade that produced many types of products that provide the incentive for useful and creative expression." He further explained that "My own special interests are horn combs, buttons and cane handles. I am also fascinated by some of the craftsmen's or artists' ability to look at a rough, raw piece of horn and see in it the shape of a graceful bird, or a fish, or an old humpbacked man. I have always put a high value on the work of the craftsmen who can do this and who have the ability to carve three-dimensional, low relief, compression molded horn artifacts."

An interesting aspect of Glenn's story is that although he had started collecting horn items around 1994, how did he happen to become a member of both the WCH and the HCH? Glenn stated that "At that time, I had business in England. I traveled there once or twice a year. I quickly discovered that there were many more vintage horn artifacts in the UK antique markets than in the US. Some of my business friends were members of the WCH. Once they learned I was collecting horn artifacts, they told me about the WCH and asked if I would be interested in joining. I had already considered that and knew that you had to be a British citizen in order to join. With their help, in a little over two years later, I was invited to have lunch with the Master and Upper Warden of the WCH. That was actually an interview for my possible admission to the WCH. In the summer of 2002, I was sworn in as a Freeman (apprentice) of the Company. As of December 2006, I had served my apprenticeship and was admitted as a Liveryman of

the Company. It was my extensive work in teaching plastics technology seminars that qualified me for membership in the WCH."

"During the 2001 Antique Comb Collectors' Convention, Shelby Gallien made a presentation on the Indian Maiden Folding Horn Combs. During his lecture, he mentioned the HCH, which was the first time I had heard of an American horn guild. I tracked down an address and joined the Guild in 2002. The WCH and the HCH are two very different organizations; however, they both do worthwhile work and I greatly enjoy associating with the friendly members of both Companies."

Glenn stated that "It is an honor to be the first person to be named Master Collector / Historian.... My having achieved this status may encourage others to follow my example. Collectors and historians are important to the future of the HCH. It is good that their efforts are acknowledged."

"Collectors collect things and preserve them for future generations. If they share their collections, others learn from them and are inspired to watch for and acquire even more horn artifacts."

"Historians find and share obscure facts about such things as tenure horn, or how to bulk cow horns to reduce their diameter while increasing their thickness. The Master Collector / Historian status requires that applicants share their knowledge. When they share that information, the whole Company benefits."

Glenn has visited many horn collections including "the WCH collection of horn artifacts, stored at the Arts University College at Bournemouth, UK. It is an impressive collection. Unfortunately, there is no permanent, public display of the collection." He has also visited the British Museum in London, the horn comb workshop at York Castle Museum in York, UK, and the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

"The most interesting part of these collections is seeing the wide range of products produced. I also enjoy seeing the displays of very simple tools that they used to produce surprisingly high quality products."

When asked about any special horn related projects that had significant meaning for him, he mentioned that he was involved with the commissioning of the making of a powder horn with a three-dimensional carved representation of the WCH crest. It was presented to the Master of the WCH during their 2006 Christmas party. Other projects include writing articles for *The Horn Book* concerning very old, vintage horn objects such as the Pusey Tenure Horn, the Robert Mindum shoe horns and the St. Hubert's Blowing Horn.

His efforts have not gone unnoticed as he has been the recipient of many awards to include being elected as a member of the Plastics Hall of Fame, a Fellow of the Society of Plastics Engineers, and the British Institute of Materials, Minerals and

Mining. He received the Society of Manufacturing Engineers' Gold Medal award for his work in product design education. He is also a winner of the Capsonic's Lifetime Achievement Award in Plastic Product Design and is a distinguished Member of the Society of Plastics Engineers and the Plastics Pioneers Association. In 2007 Glenn won the Bradley University's Distinguished Alumnus Award.

One project done by the WCH that Glenn would like to see promoted by the HCH, is the use of horn at several universities that teach jewelry design and making. The WCH judges the students' work and awards are presented. He feels this would be an interesting project for the HCH that would expose young people to the beauty of horn. In addition, members could learn to make and sell horn jewelry which would introduce horn to an even wider audience.

When asked how he wanted his contributions to horn work and collecting to be remembered, Glenn's response was brief and to the point: "I would like to be remembered as a good story teller and a serious collector of horn artifacts and history, who always supported the HCH's goals and programs."

As a Guild, we are fortunate indeed to have Glenn Beall as a member who has once again made his mark as the first Master Collector / Historian in the Honourable Company of Horners! ■

## Congratulations

