

Chairman's Report to the Livery Committee
Wednesday 11th February 2015

2015 promises to be the year of big anniversaries, with Magna Carta 800 maybe dominating. But Agincourt, Waterloo, and more recent 20th century conflicts will also be marked by many livery companies and the Nation. I write this as the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz is remembered, as also the 50th anniversary of the death of Churchill.

In January I attended an event at the Speakers' House to mark the 750th anniversary of the Montfort Parliament, which also marked the start of a series of events to commemorate the Magna Carta and freedoms that followed. Looking further ahead, 2016 will be the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire – very much a City of London milestone, and plans are in hand for the livery companies to play their part in this anniversary.

Last year marked the 150th anniversary of the first publication of the Blue Book, and the latest 2015 edition has just been published. Our Committee considered this Directory last year. We reached the conclusion that it merited the support of the livery companies, hoping that they would supply address data of liverymen, unless there was an over-powering reason not to. Separately, there is a new commercial initiative to publish in 2015 a "White Book" – another directory covering similar ground, but with added *sponsored editorial*, as I understand it.

The Committee has also considered in recent times the matter of the Freedom of the City, and the impact of an increase in the present modest charge (£25 if applying through a livery company). This matter is not within our remit, other than to be consulted. However, before our next meeting (but after writing this report), I am to have a meeting with the Chamberlain, and hope to be able to report on proposals being considered by the Finance Committee.

The so-called Fishmongers' database of livery companies has now been in its largely unchanged present form for many years (c15). It is maintained and moderated by the Clerk to the Carmen's Company (Walter Gill), and both he, and the Clerk of the Fishmongers' agree that the time has come to move its hosting to a more logical home, and take the opportunity to update its design and content, whilst retaining the contact information presently available. To that end, with Walter Gill, I have initiated discussion with the Information Technologists' and others,

prior to creating a steering group to take this proposal forward over the coming months. It will report to the Livery Committee.

Possibly the Livery Committee's highest profile activity amongst the livery at large is the programme of Briefings & Courses arranged by the Communications Working Group. Since our last Committee meeting, these have included the annual course for future masters (last September), the briefing for clerks (in January), two City Briefings, and the after dinner speaking course will be on 10th February. More on all this at my Working Group report.

The programme of inter livery events and sporting contests continues and expands, along with the steady stream of charitable activities, often arranged with liverymen in mind. Examples include the new Brigantes Breakfast, a lunch for northern based liverymen, in Manchester on Friday 29th May; and the annual Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch (in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity) at Guildhall on 16th April. Details of all such events may be found at <http://www.liverycompanies.info>

This Livery committee website continues to expand and provide much information of interest to all liverymen. It complements the bi-monthly *Livery Briefing* (an email newsletter) which in turn is to be merged with the monthly *Livery Live* published by the PRO. I ask you to promote and encourage distribution of these on-line initiatives.

Two members of the Committee have stood down, having relinquished the appointments that were the reason for them being members of the Committee. Neil Redcliffe has stepped down from his role as an alderman, and Tony Morrow has retired as clerk of the Butchers'. I thank them both for their contributions and support, and look forward to welcoming their successors.

Nigel R Pullman
Chairman

1st February 2014