

Chairman's Report to the Livery Committee
Wednesday 9th September 2015

I welcome Alderman William Russell (Haberdasher), and the two clerks representing the Association companies, Chris Twyman (Painter-Stainer) and Russell Vaizey (Dyer), now formally elected members of the Livery Committee. They replace respectively Neil Redcliffe, Tony Morrow, and Peter Durrant, to whom our thanks for their service and contribution.

Our routine of three regular annual meetings in February, June, and September means that this report covers the relatively short time since I last wrote. Nevertheless the pace of activity continues unabated.

Formal Committee activities have included our annual dinner, this year held at Trinity House. This proved a popular choice, many guests commenting it was the first time they had been to this venue. The (then) Master Mercer, Ms Debbie Ounsted, also proved a very popular speaker.

Midsummer Day brought the election of Sheriffs at Common Hall, again uncontested this year. There was some confusion as to the seating arrangements in the Minstrel's Gallery for livery clerks who are not themselves liverymen, and I have asked the Town Clerk to look into this. Otherwise all went smoothly. The Court of Aldermen have requested the Livery to allow a clear run for two aldermanic shrieval candidates next June, and at our last Committee meeting we agreed we would support this request.

Two government departments (BIS and HMRC) are investigating apprenticeships and livery company VAT liability respectively, and I shall report on these less than straightforward matters at our meeting.

The Mercers' Company are currently working on the new edition of the Livery Profile leaflet, and again, I hope to update you on this on 9th September.

A key role of our Committee is *communication*, and few institutions nowadays would consider communicating with their stake-holders or constituents without the active use of a website. Two years ago, our Committee did not have a website (and there was no other website for the livery in general), and the Livery Companies Database was creaking badly, having had no investment since its creation 15 years earlier. Now www.liverycompanies.info seeks to be the central source of livery

information, and whenever I am asked a livery related question (virtually daily), I ensure that the answer is then posted at the website. Many of these answers (not always definitive!) are now to be found within the Clerks' Almanac, and I commend it to you for your comment or feedback.

Meanwhile, the Livery Companies Database has moved to a new server/host, and work is currently progressing well on enhancements to the existing site (previously hosted by the Fishmongers' Company). The aim is to provide more comprehensive information about each livery company. The result, which is scheduled to go live at the end of September, will be different from what we have become used to. However, all the same information will still be there, hopefully rather more clearly displayed, and allowing greater flexibility to clerks in its presentation, and helpful to masters, liverymen, and visitors to the site.

A steady downward trend of attendance at the City Briefings continues to cause concern, and the most recent Communications Working Group meeting devoted itself entirely to this subject. I report on this elsewhere, and as always seek your active support in promoting these Briefings.

Aside from this, interest and activity in the livery world, and our Committee, appears to remain as strong and vibrant as ever. As always I thank you for your support and encouragement, especially as we head into the busy autumn season of the Livery year.

Nigel R Pullman
Chairman

1st September 2015