

This note is one of a series placed in the Almanac for the guidance of livery masters, wardens, and their clerks, especially new ones, seeking advice on a particular topic. They are not prescriptive, and how individual companies choose to conduct their affairs is, of course, entirely up to them. Most are written by a past chairman of the Livery Committee, of whom you may read more at the foot of the Contact page.

Past Masters' Associations (PMAs)

It has long been the custom for the Masters of any one year group to form themselves into an association to continue the friendships that have been made over their year together. Since these PMAs are entirely unofficial, they make their own rules and establish their own customs and practices, as they choose.

But a few guidelines seem to be adhered to:

The PMA will be of a specific calendar year, but the membership will be open to any Master who served at some point during the year of the Lord Mayor whose year it is. So for example Lord Mayor Yarrow (who took office in Nov 14) would be deemed the LM of 2015, and "his PMA" would be that for 2015.

The PMA will invite their LM to be the President and the two Sheriffs (who took office in September 2014 in the above example) to be the Vice Presidents.

It has become the custom to sort out a new PMA on the Sunday morning of the **Ironbridge** weekend in early June. At a meeting, a chairman will be elected, a name decided upon (typically with some reference to the year in question), possibly a secretary volunteered, and a committee formed.

In recent times, a concurrent group of "Mistresses/Consorts" will be making similar arrangements.

Membership. The "rules" (such as they are) usually allow any Master to join who has held office during the LM's year. Clearly this means that most can join two PMAs, and some do. But most will identify with one LM, and a Master who took office in, say, October 2014, would probably (in the above example) join the PMA of 2015.

In practice, many will simply join the PMA of the year they attend Ironbridge. Masters of the provincial guilds (or guilds outwith) are usually invited to join, and some do.

Activities. A PMA can be viewed as similar to another livery in terms of its social programme. Dinners, events, and weekend visits to historic towns in UK or further afield are the norm, with special interest sections also often created. Some have entered floats in subsequent LM shows. It is very much dependent on the energy and leadership of the chairman and committee.

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Contact details for all these PMAs are at the Livery Companies Database, in the Clubs & Guilds section.

Livery Past Masters Association (LPMA) There is a further group of the chairmen and secretaries of all the PMAs who meet annually.

Another group has been formed of all the 'Lady Masters' over the several years (since the first in 1983, Master Chartered Secretary).

Finance. PMAs are self funding, and the committee will set an annual subscription. These vary widely!

Future. As numbers die off (literally), some adjacent year groups merge. Others simply fade away. Events tend to move to lunchtime rather than evening as the membership gets older.

Summary. Most (though not all) past masters will join their PMA and continue the friendships of their year in office, and indeed develop new ones amongst their peers. But it is interesting that the styles and cultures of PMAs be very different, and those who join two often find one more to their taste.

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Was this note helpful? Do you have comment? Email nrpullman@btinternet.com