

Speech by The Master, Dr Derek Ross, at the Installation Dinner on 29 October 2013

Wardens, Liverymen, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you all here this evening, particularly our guests, to whom I will return a little later. Meanwhile, I would like to share a few thoughts about this wonderful Livery Company of ours, and the exciting year that lies ahead.

I am very much looking forward to teaming up with John Uff as Senior Warden and Mike Goodridge as Junior Warden, and the Court of Assistants. Also with Gaye Duffy, our highly experienced Learned Clerk, and her most obliging Assistant, John White, not to mention Jimmy, our Beadle, just behind me. I see that Mike Goodridge has got himself into the swing of things already by growing a beard. That's the spirit Mike. They do say that imitation is the greatest form of flattery.

Like all Livery Companies we have a serious side and a fun side. I am really hopeful we can bring our fun side very much to the fore this year.

Our Company has steadily grown in stature and prestige under the guidance of the Past Masters, and it is a testament to their ongoing interest and commitment that so many are here this evening. For those who sadly cannot be here, I should like us to pause for a moment, to wish my predecessor Karl's Consort, Honorary Freeman Joy Davies, a speedy recovery from her surgery yesterday, and to remember Past Masters Bill Armstrong, Michael Hinton and John Rushton, who sadly passed away during the past twelve months. I would however like to give a very special welcome to Jenny Rushton, who is here with us this evening.

The marvellous thing about our Company is that we represent a living profession. We are envied by other Livery Companies whose trades have disappeared. Thus we are particularly well placed to do some good within our private disputes resolution profession, within the City, and within society.

Individually and collectively as dispute resolvers, we have the capacity to bring about reconciliations within society, within families, within communities, in commerce, nationally, and internationally. I should therefore very much like us to adopt Reconciliation within Society as our theme for the coming year. 'Achieving

Reconciliation within Society' will be the topic of the Master's Lecture in the Spring of next year of which you will be receiving further details in due course.

Through the vision of Past Master Chris Dancaster, and the skill and diligence of Past Master Hew Dundas who brought it to fruition, our Royal Charter gives us credibility within the City, nationally and internationally. We need however to live up to the responsibilities that a Royal Charter brings. In that regard, we are particularly indebted to Immediate Past Master Karl Davies for the organisational structures and procedures he has introduced, the better to enable us as a Company to delivery our objectives. Such delivery is of course through the dedication of you, the members. I would therefore encourage those of you who would like to get more deeply involved to do so. There is much more we can do in relation to the Livery Schools Link, for instance. That work of helping to improve numeracy and literacy of primary school children in deprived areas is particularly rewarding for those who volunteer, and I am sure David Steward and Simon Underwood would be delighted to hear from you if you would like to take part.

The capacity of our Charitable Trust to be of assistance to those less fortunate than ourselves, is also almost wholly dependant upon your generosity. The ability of the Trust to expand the range of its funding into new projects like, for instance, the proposed 'Peacemaker Programme within Primary Schools', which is designed to equip young people to be able to resist the enormous peer pressure in some parts of London to join violent gangs when they become teenagers, will make greater calls on our time and our generosity, which I feel sure we will be willing to answer with new, and increased, regular direct debit donations to the Trust, which is now an expected commitment of all members of our Company, and I sincerely thank those of you who already contribute in that way.

Of course the Trustees welcome one off donations as well. Some of you will remember the sponsored slim we ran a few years ago, although sadly, little sign of it now remains. Some of you may also have thought it cost you rather more than you thought it would. I am therefore proposing to offer you all a chance to get your own back on me, by taking me up on my open bet with each of you that I can end my year as Master ten kilos lighter, yes, ten kilograms lighter than I am today. The Wardens and the Trust Chairman weighted me earlier today. Embarrassment prevents me from revealing the result, but they will keep me honest, I can assure you.

The maximum bet you may place with the Chairman of the Trust is twenty five pounds, as there are lots of you and only one of me. Entries close at the end of December, and if I fail to lose ten kilos by twenty eighth October next year, I'll give each of you your money back, or make an equivalent donation to the Trust, if you prefer. Details of how to take part will be issued to each of you shortly by post, as will our proposed Programme of Events for the coming year.

Top of the programme is our Float in the Lord Mayor's Show on Saturday ninth November, in just eleven days time. We are extremely privileged that a Liveryman of ours will be Lord Mayor this coming year, thanks to Past Master Kay Linnell, who during her year in office persuaded Alderman Fiona Woolf to join our Company. Organising the Float has been a wonderful team effort, which I look forward to acknowledging in full in our next Newsletter. We will be handing out loads of little flags like this one for the crowd to wave. So please come along on Saturday week to watch the parade and give our Float and the Lord Mayor a cheer. It will be a fun day out, with a massive firework display to round it all off in the evening.

Time does not permit me to go into detail about all of the events we have planned for the coming year. I would however like to mention a few:

On the serious side, we are holding a Seminar in Keating Chambers on Tuesday third December, on 'Developing a Dispute Resolution Practice.

On the fun side, our Carol Service will be on Wednesday eleventh December, a date of some significance for Sylvia and me, as it will be our forty second wedding anniversary. This year we are teaming up with the Furniture Makers' Company, who will be providing some well earned refreshments back at Furniture Makers' Hall after the service, when our Christmas Raffle will be drawn, with bottles of Past Master Linnell's famous Master's Malt as prizes. As all proceeds of the raffle will go directly to our Charitable Trust, through Kay's generosity, please don't hold back when you see the raffle tickets go on sale.

I will be holding information evenings in the bar of the Little Ship Club between 6pm and 8pm on the second Monday of each of the next 12 months, except August, if

any of you would like to bring along a friend who might like to know more about what we do. No member need wait until the second Monday of course. Please contact me at any time, if there is anything about the Company you would like to discuss, especially if it is about getting more deeply involved.

During the coming year, we are hoping to visit the Magic Circle and London Fire Brigade, attend Beating the Retreat and a play at Shakespeare's Globe. I am also keen we revive our Charity Concert in aid of the Trust.

Our Mansion House Banquet will be held on Thursday 22 May 2014, and Mansion House assures us that the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs will attend. Sounds like a very good way to kick off the late May Bank Holiday weekend.

Finally, to round the year off, I would like to invite you all to a Weekend in Dublin, from the fifth to the seventh of September two thousand and fourteen. I cannot image what we might get up to over there, but I feel sure we will think of something between now and then.

Turning now to our official guests, I welcome the Master Pavior, Mr John Dance, and the Paviers' Company Clerk, Mr John Freestone. Master Pavior and Clerk, you are most welcome.

Likewise I welcome the Master Constructor, Mr Alan Longhurst, and the Constructors' Company Clerk, Mr Kim Tyrrell. Master Constructor and Clerk, you too are most welcome.

I welcome and thank our Chaplain, the Reverend George Bush, for saying Grace in his own inimitable fashion. Reverend George, as ever, it is lovely to see you.

I welcome Lieutenant Commander Sarah Oakley, Royal Navy, Commanding Officer of our affiliate ship HMS Mersey, and our Sailor of the Year, Sarah Green, whom we have already met. I should like to thank both Sarahs for the hospitality extended to us in Liverpool in July on our visit to celebrate the ship's tenth Birthday. I am also grateful for the promise of an enormous number of flag carriers for the Lord Mayors Show. Sarahs both, you are most welcome.

I welcome our guests from our affiliate 13 Company Army Cadet Force, comprising Major Paul Harrison, Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Karen Lorimer and our Adult Instructor of the Year, Sergeant Instructor Richard Bradbury. I thank them for the honour guard and ushers here tonight, and for agreeing to send Cadets to had out flags during the Lord Mayor's Show. Paul, Karen and Richard, You are all most welcome.

Finally I come to our Guest of Honour, Professor Dr Nael Bunni, who is accompanied here this evening by his charming wife Anne. Nael is a Chartered Civil Engineer, and an international arbitrator and mediator of considerable renowned. Just the sort of person we should entice into the Company.

My first recollection of Nael is in connection with a seminar that he organised in Trinity College Dublin in the early nineteen eighties on the topic of Space Frames. It sticks in my mind because one of the speakers, a Frenchman, quite unexpectedly, delivered his address entirely in French, much to Nael's consternation.

Nael has been Chairman and President of numerous prestigious Institutions in the fields of Engineering and Disputes Resolution, including the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. In that role he had the vision to instigate the Diploma Course in International Commercial Arbitration, taught mainly by Professors Phillip Capper and Doug Jones, whom he cleverly talked into it, but also by numerous other eminent professors and international arbitrators, including himself. Professor Dr Nael, I am very much looking forward to your response to the Toast to the Guests in a few moments time. You and Anne are most welcome.

It only remains for me to ask the Members of the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators to rise, and drink the health of 'Our Guests'

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