



The Worshipful Company of Arbitrators
Installation Dinner 25th October 2012
Speech by the Master (Karl Davies)

Wardens, Liverymen, Ladies and Gentlemen.

In October nineteen-seventy-two I arrived on the door step of a branch of Barclays Bank near the centre of Birkenhead to begin a career in retail banking, shoes polished, suit pressed and hair brushed – in those days there was something to brush. I could never have imagined that forty years later to the month I would be in this splendid hall having received the very great honour and privilege of being installed to serve this Company as Master. I am delighted that during the year I will be working with two very able Wardens, Derek Ross and John Uff. It has been great fun working with Derek over the last twelve months as a fellow Warden and I hope the next year with him and John will be just as enjoyable.

Before I say more about the year ahead I would like to place on record my particular thanks to Past Masters Michael Stephens and John Rushton. Both have been especially supportive and encouraging and I am sorry that neither can be here this evening, particularly John Rushton who, as some will know, is not very well and with a prognosis that is not entirely encouraging.

I would also like to thank the Late Master, my immediate predecessor Hew Dundas: for his leadership over the last twelve months; for the encouragement and example he has given me during the year; and for getting me into all this in the first place – he was one of my sponsors when I joined the Company.

This has been an historic year for us with the receipt of our Royal Charter, a project which Hew has seen through almost single handedly since its inception some three years ago. To put this achievement into perspective consider the many other contributions that he makes to dispute resolution globally. Hew's email signature block is ten lines long (which frankly is longer than my CV) and that's only a small number of the organisations he is involved with.

May I also pay tribute to Vân. She has been a gracious and charming companion to Hew and in addition anyone who was in Guildhall Yard for the Pancake Races this year knows that she is a tenacious competitor. Hew and Vân on behalf of us all, thank you both for everything you have done this year.

I want to express my thanks publicly to Joy who has agreed to act as my consort during the year ahead and who is gradually coming to terms with the title 'Mistress Arbitrator'? Joy and I have been friends for over twenty years but there are still some who are confused that we have the same surname but are not related. It may be helpful to appreciate that somewhere around the fifteenth century when the English decided that

the Welsh should adopt surnames, they didn't give us many to chose from and so, as you may have noticed, the same ones keep cropping up! Joy is a solicitor and her experience first in practice and now as an academic at Nottingham Law School has made a significant contribution to the Company's Mediation Skills Competition in recognition of which, earlier this evening, she was admitted as an Honorary Freeman. In what was a happy confluence for the Company we also admitted as Honorary Freeman Lieutenant Commander Sarah Oakley of HMS Mersey and Major Paul Harrison of 13 Company, South West Sector of the Greater London Army Cadet Force. We are delighted that you are both able to join us this evening.

The Company's support of HMS Mersey and of the Army Cadet Force are tangible examples of the altruism which is at the heart of the Livery movement. Our Charter has brought into clear focus how we need to develop that spirit of service to others and the need for us all to offer our time, our talents and, indeed, our money in support of our philanthropic work and the Company's Charity.

On the theme of charity I'm pleased to announce that as the Master's charity for this year I have chosen Concordis International. Concordis work alongside those caught up in or affected by armed conflict in areas such as the Sudan. They have pioneered a method of intervention using mediation and low profile discussion, out of the media spotlight, to build on shared purposes and open new possibilities for peaceful co-existence.

Our programme for the coming year reflects our aspiration to be a collegiate forum for all practitioners and proponents of private dispute

resolution. It also reflects the need for us to make some changes as we implement the Charter. If some of those changes don't work quite as well as we hope then we will revisit them – so please be patient!

Also at the centre of our *raison d'être* is support for the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs and the Aldermen as they promote UK business overseas. One way we as a Company do this is through our membership of the Financial Services Group of Livery Companies. I am therefore very pleased that our guests this evening include the Masters of two other Companies within the Group. The Master World Trader, John Burbidge-King, can always expect a warm welcome from us; not least because we share the services of our excellent Clerk. Equally welcome is the Master Management Consultant, Geoff Llewellyn. Geoff doesn't share a Clerk with us and so he brought his own, who is of course also most welcome! John was installed on Wednesday last week, and Geoff on Thursday and so we hope this evening has been an enjoyable start to your respective years.

Our principal guest is His Honour Judge William Birtles, the senior judge at the Mayor's and City of London Court; making him the latest in a line that can be traced back to at least the twelfth century and probably earlier. Like many of his predecessors he has both a practical and a distinguished academic involvement with the law. This includes as a Kennedy Scholar at Harvard Law School, a Robert Marshall Fellow at New York University Law School and as a Visiting Fellow at St Anthony's College, Oxford.

When the coalition government's spending review included the Mayor's and City Court as one of the fifty-four listed for closure, Bill orchestrated a

masterly and successful campaign to keep it open. The supporting submissions made it clear that this was an exceptional court – in the words of one “effective, efficient and forward looking in its provision for mediation”. Bill is accompanied this evening by his wife Patricia and we are delighted to welcome you both.

Whilst I have singled out the Company’s guests for special mention I hope it goes without saying that all our guests are most welcome this evening.

I now ask the Members of the Company to charge their glasses, rise and join me in the toast to our guests.