



**The Worshipful Company of Arbitrators**

**Common Hall**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**Address by the Master (Karl Davies)**

Wardens, members of the Livery,

By coincidence this Common Hall marks the halfway point in the current Company year, although it is in the nature of the business of Common Hall that we look backwards to the past year and look forwards to the next year rather than look at the current year. In respect of the year ahead I congratulate those who have been elected to hold office and wish them well. I am already very grateful to Derek Ross for his diligent and constant support as Senior Warden and I have no doubt that with his enthusiasm the Company will be in good hands in the year ahead.

Last year was, by any measure, an exceptional one. The Diamond Jubilee, the Olympic and Paralympic Games and of course our Royal Charter were tremendous events even though their impact on the Company included a financial one. The memory of the first two may fade but the Charter has a lasting effect.

It requires us to be outward looking: to foster, that is to encourage and support, the professions of arbitration, mediation and other forms of private dispute resolution and to support the Lord Mayor and the Civic Team not least in their efforts to promote the UK

overseas. This half way point provides an opportunity to see how well we are achieving these objects and our declared aim, to be a collegiate forum for practitioners and proponents.

In March we made a particular effort to encourage a wide audience for the Master's Lecture and well over half of those who attended were non-members. Several expressed an interest in finding out more about the Company and we will be holding an Information Evening on May 8<sup>th</sup>. Also in March we held a lunch for members of the wider Dispute Resolution Community.

Representatives of nineteen organisations involved in PDR along with people from *TheCityUK* and the Corporation's Economic Development Unit accepted the invitation to begin a dialogue about promoting UK dispute resolution provision in the face of international competition and to explore how best to support and benefit from the Lord Mayor's role as trade ambassador.

Encouraging students is another of our priorities and it was good to see more than thirty students and academics at the Master's Lecture. Next month the Education Committee is having an informal meeting with invited representatives from universities within London and one or two further afield that include arbitration and other types of PDR in their syllabus, to explore how we might best work with them.

The Mediation Skills Competition was run for a third time in January and appears to have become an established event in the calendar. We are now exploring the possibility of introducing an arbitration moot perhaps linked into the Vis moots.

Financially this year will not see the exceptional items of last year and it should be possible to show a small surplus. The coming year will present its own challenges – it is no secret that we can anticipate that

one of our Liverymen may well be elected as Lord Mayor this September. I am pleased to report that the Company is in a good position to provide the additional support that is traditional in these circumstances and absorb the costs of so doing. Finally thanks to all of you who have come along this evening.