

Speech by John Rushton, Master of the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators, to those attending the Installation Dinner at Apothecaries Hall on Thursday 30 October 2008

**Senior Warden
Members of the Court
Ladies and Gentlemen
- Friends**

Next May marks the centenary of the birth of the fifth of five boys to a working class family in Accrington. He grew up to become a pharmaceutical chemist. He went on to marry and have two children of his own. The older one became a solicitor and spent his practising life in the City and for the last twenty-three years at the firm which has been operating within fifty yards of where I am standing. You may well wonder why I am telling you this. However, as some of you will have surmised, next May's centurion is my father. There seemed to me no more appropriate venue in all the circumstances for tonight's dinner, to mark my installation as your Master, than the Apothecaries Hall, the oldest extant livery hall in the City of London. Indeed, this very room remains in much the same state in which it has been since its reconstruction following the Great Fire of London.

I am delighted that the Master Apothecary, who is also a pharmaceutical chemist, can be with us this evening to enable me to take this opportunity to thank him publicly for making this Hall available to us on this special occasion for me.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Immediate Past Master for his introduction. As he spoke I began to wonder who he was talking about, so generous were his sentiments. I then remembered that he was a barrister who has had years of experience of making the best of his case, however difficult the evidence.

I also thank Michael for the service which he has given to this Company in the last year. As some of you will recall, he stepped into the breach when Harold Crowter indicated that he was unable to serve as our Master for 2007-8. Indeed, Harold died a few days after the date on which he would otherwise in all probability have taken office. Michael became our first Master to serve a second term. Whilst it is a tremendous honour to be

your Master, no one should underrate the time and commitment it requires. For someone such as Michael, living and working in Birmingham and with a young family of three boys, it is a particularly heavy burden. But we have had a very successful year under his stewardship, culminating in a most interesting Livery weekend in Birmingham in August. For those of you who were not there, you missed a treat. May I therefore thank Michael for serving this Company so well and Catherine, for the support which she has given him?

As I mentioned earlier, it is a great honour to have been elected as Master. I look forward to the year ahead with relish and to working with Chris Dancaster as my Senior Warden and Kay Linnell as my Junior Warden and to having the Court of Assistants and our Clerk, Gaye Duffy, to guide me. Gaye deserves special thanks tonight for organising this Dinner so effortlessly.

I was asked by one of the Court assistants some while ago what I hoped to achieve out of my year in office. I have two immediate answers to the question, bearing in mind that Rome was not built in a day.

The first is that I look to build on our existing relationships with other Livery institutions and, in particular, the Financial Services Group of the Modern Livery Companies, of which this Company is a member. It is the role of each Company in that Group to brief the Lord Mayor on matters relating to its very being. We are the City's only dispute resolution Company and, as such, we have an increasingly important role in these troubled times, as the number of disputes grows and the cost of resolving them does not diminish. I hope that in the next twelve months more leaders of the dispute resolution business in the City understand what we do and will help us, in turn, to discharge our obligations to the Lord Mayor.

The second is that I should like to see participation by a wider number of members of the Company in its activities. If I may say so, we have made an encouraging start tonight

since I have not seen a number of you in the recent past at one of our dinners. It is heartening to see you here; thank you for coming.

With a view to attracting more members of the Company to join in I have been working with the Events Committee, under the chairmanship of Assistant Karl Davies, to put together a wide-ranging social programme of events.

We shall have traditional events such as our Livery Banquet at the Mansion House, which is to take place on 5 February 2009, but we are looking at less conventional ones too. Indeed, we kick off with a visit which any prudent arbitrator would only wish to make socially – a trip to Wood Street Police Station (on Tuesday 25 November) to learn about policing in the City of London. If you are interested in coming to this, apply soon because there are very few places left.

Looking into 2009 we are trying to line up a private visit to Downing Street in the early part of the New Year; we have arranged a family day at the Royal Dockyard in Chatham on Sunday 19 April (at the end of the Easter holidays); and visits to the Tower of London and an evening at the House of Commons also beckon. I am also planning a Livery weekend in Berlin in the autumn. So, if you were intending a holiday trip to Germany next year (or any summer holiday) please bear this in mind.

Member participation is not merely about attendance at the Company's social events. It is also about contributing to their organisation. I hope that those of you who want to lend a hand come and say so! Don't be shy! Your active contribution would be most welcome; and it will, I would suggest, enhance your enjoyment of your association with the Company.

Another aspect of member participation is to try and help others less fortunate than ourselves, through our charitable activities.

It was my privilege to be the Chairman of the Trustees of the First Charitable Trust of the Company for more than five years and to take on a similar responsibility with

the Second Charitable Trust from 2004. These two Trusts have since been merged into one, with the consent of the Charity Commission.

The criteria adopted by the Trustees in determining whether to support a cause in the Company's name is simply whether the recipient has any involvement with the City of London and/or with dispute resolution in its widest sense. In my time we have had an appeal for books to help the overseas branches of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators; we have set up a bursary for a needy pupil at King Edward's School, which has deep City roots; and we are looking to set up a further bursary for a student on a dispute resolution course at a London-based university, besides rewarding pupils, both at schools and universities, for their academic efforts or their contribution to the life of the institution of which they are part.

Many of you have been generous in your contributions, but please do not let up. You can participate not merely by making filling in a direct debit form but by doing as several members of the Company have done – running a triathlon for charity and donating a share of the sum raised to the Trust or donating money gifts received for your birthday or wedding anniversary.

At this point I should mention that my wife, Jenny, has indicated that she is going to spend less time running after me in the next twelve months as she is going to spend time training for running in the BUPA London 10000 Run in May instead, with a view to raising funds for our Trust. More about that anon.

My time as Chairman concluded at the end of the Trustees' last meeting in September. I am pleased to be able to report to you that they have unanimously elected as my successor Assistant Michael Goodridge. I take this opportunity, on behalf of us all, to wish him well in his new role.

The Company has not just social and charitable purposes but educational ones too. Our Apprentice Scheme is in good shape, under the chairmanship of Assistant Philip Fidler, and is there to help those who are those looking for guidance from well-established arbitrators in promoting their own careers. Here again is another opportunity to participate, as we are always on the look out for members able and willing to provide mentoring services. If you can help here please let Philip know.

We shall continue to hold the Master's Lecture in the Spring. Please put Thursday 12 March in your diaries, when Phillip Capper, a solicitor lecturer and arbitrator will be tackling a topic of arbitration law which is yet to be decided. I have also asked Assistant John Uff, as Chairman of the newly-formed Education Committee, to investigate how we might form stronger links with other educational bodies concerned with arbitration and dispute resolution.

A word, if I may, about some of our members:

1. Charles Ellis. Charles leaves the Court of Assistants today and I thank him for his contribution to the Company's affairs over the years. It is particularly good to see him here with Pat tonight because she and I sat together at one Banquet some years ago and it emerged that the two of us used to live four doors apart from one another in Southport and play together as children. Charles usually bristles at this point but I mention it to highlight the length to which the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators goes to bring old friends back together again. Thank you, Charles, and good to see you, Pat.

2. Iain Christie, a barrister in the Midlands, who became our newest Liveryman today. Iain joined the Company as a Freeman in July and it is good to see him progress to the Livery so speedily. Welcome Iain.

3. Michael O'Maoileion, who became a Freeman of the Company (and its newest member) this afternoon. Michael's brother, Thomas, and father, another Michael, are also members of the Company. I believe that the three of them make a unique trio, as far as this Company is concerned. Good luck, Michael.

I should also make mention of another unique trio. On Saturday, two of our Freeman are to be married in Norwich, and the best man is yet another Freeman of the Company. The bride and groom, John Riches and Helena Brown, are understandably otherwise engaged this evening but it is good to see the best man, Peter Talbot, in our presence, I am sure that you would like Peter on behalf of us all to wish John and Helena well in their future life together when he stands up on Saturday to say his piece.

Let me now turn to welcoming the Company's guests here this evening.

I start with the Rev George Bush, our Chaplain, who said grace with his usual panache at the start of proceedings. Rumour has it that he is planning a name change to reflect and keep up with political developments on the other side of the Atlantic. We hope that you will remain as you are. The Rev Barack Obama is not really you.

I am pleased to be able to report to you all that, with the considerable assistance of Assistant Jonathan Wyatt, we have now formed a Livery link with a fisheries protection vessel H M S Mersey, a name which resonates well with this Lancastrian. It is my hope that I shall be able to visit her during the next twelve months. I am delighted to welcome this evening, as guests of the Company, the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Al Wilson, and his wife, Lucy. May this be the first of many occasions when we see you in our company.

It is also my pleasure to welcome the Masters of four Livery Companies:

1. The Master Apothecary, Nicholas Wood, together with his clerk. As I mentioned earlier, the Master Apothecary is a pharmaceutical chemist although he is only the second one in the last 250 years to hold his office.
2. The Master Actuary, Mr Andrew Benke, In a previous life he was a professional cricketer with Hampshire, the club which Shane Warne used to captain (although I am not sure they were on the staff at the same time).

3. The Master Solicitor, Alexandra Marks, and her clerk, Neil Cameron. Alex is a Partner in real estate at Linklaters but she was once my articulated clerk. I am not sure what Sir Alan Sugar would make of it if his apprentice sat at the same dinner table as he. It all suggests that she is far too young to be Master (although I am sure she fully deserves to be) or I am, well, just past it!

4. Simon Kolesar, who has been Master Surveyor for seventeen days and is a Past President of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Simon tells me that, in a mad moment, he carried out a freefall tandem sky dive last month in conjunction with the Red Devils, raising a not insubstantial amount for charity. Well done, Simon! You certainly now know how to put the pressure on your fellow Masters! I understand that the advice which he gives as Global Head of Contract Advisory Services at EC Harris, a well known firm of cost consultants and project managers, is rather more risk averse.

We also have in our midst a Master of a different kind – Sandra Dawson, Master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, who is accompanied by her husband, Henry.

It is fair to say that Henry, as a project manager and quantity surveyor, has never been slow to let me know what he thinks of lawyers – I can only hope that his rating of at least one of them has gone up tonight. He has given sterling support to Sandra, who has been a truly outstanding leader of Sidney Sussex College in the last nine years. I can say that with authority as one of her charges in her middle years was my son; and it will be no easy task for the College to find a successor at the end of her term of office next summer. She also made her mark as the Director of the Judge Institute of Management between 1995 and 2006. She is a non-executive director of Barclays and Oxfam but I am not sure which of these two organisations is in greater need of funds at present.

Be that as it may I am delighted that Henry and she have found the time in their hectic schedules to be with us tonight. Their presence is much appreciated.

Whilst I have singled out the Company's guests for special mention this evening it goes without saying that all of you – members or guests - are most welcome.

Before I stood up this evening I was fearful of a Freudian slip by the Beadle and that, after he banged down his gavel, he would ask you to pray for the Master's silence. I should have known better. However, I do not intend to push my luck any further and will now bring my remarks to a close by asking members of the Company to rise and drink to the health of our guests here tonight.