



from the

# MASTER & WARDENS

The newsletter of The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers

## IN THE EYE OF A BEHOLDER ...the Lord Mayor's Show 2024



*Spectacle Makers on parade....*



*Dennis the Menace*



*...carrying the message*



*A dancing fish*



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## A City Spectacle

*We hear from a first-time visitor to the The Lord Mayor's Show*

Attending the Lord Mayor's Show for the first time was a fantastic experience. I didn't know what to expect, and I was blown away by the festive mood and atmosphere.

Children smiled and whooped, making sure to high-five the passing military detachments made up of soldiers, cadets and airmen and women, all marching in perfect order to the beat of their bands. There were beautiful horses and an amazing mixture of the bizarre and the fabulous: Dennis the Menace, stunning Indian dancers, Japanese fish, people dressed as daffodils and roses, the Paviers' Company flying pig and even a giant wine bottle from the Vintners' Company. The Lord Mayor's golden coach comes last in the Parade and is always eagerly anticipated but our loudest cheers were for the representatives from the Senior Livery Companies, that is, companies formed between 1130 and 1709. In amongst them were our very own Spectacle Makers. Alongside Mike Harris, the Master, walked Matt Coleman, representing Elios Vision, a bronze supporter of the Company, Thurai Pavanakumar, Finance Director of ABDO and Stella Luo from the supply chain team of Rayner. Both ABDO and Rayner are gold level supporters. Well done to all of them.



*Roses, daffodils & Olympic rings*



*Army Medics*



*The Vintners' Company entry*





*The new Lord Mayor, Alderman Alastair King, waves from the Golden Coach*



*The Paviors' Pig*





# A LOOK BACK AT MY YEAR IN OFFICE (or “What goes up must come down...”)



*Liz Shilling hands over to Mike Harris, the new Master*

Well here we are... my time as Master Spectacle Maker is up and during that year there have been lots of ups, and one big down – a terrifying abseil down the side of St Thomas’ Hospital on a fundraising mission for the Spectacle Makers’ Charity!



*Floor 6 of 13, at St Thomas’ Hospital*

As a past Trustee and past Chair, the Charity is dear to my heart. I was so pleased that, with sponsorship from over 100 people, I was able to raise £8,700 which, with Gift Aid, means over £10,000 to give in grants for people who will really benefit from our help.

I really do think that charity is central to our livery life. An abseil is a one-off whereas regular charity donations and legacies enable all Freemen and Liverymen to make a real difference in supporting the professionals of the future – the students who will help deliver better vision in the years to come. The grants made by the Charity to increase access to information, sport, leisure, culture, arts, fitness and employment align exactly with the Company’s belief that no one should be left behind due to poor vision. I know the Charity Trustees have been working very hard and I encourage you to read more about their work and to read the Impact Report for 2024.



*Charity Impact Report 2023-24*

Just think what more we could do by our 400th Anniversary in 2029 if every single one of our members could spare just a few pounds every month. Please give, if you can; if you already give monthly, take a minute to review your giving.

So, back to what I was doing for the other 360-something days of the Master’s year when I had my feet actually on the ground! Typically, Masters carry out between 150 and 200 engagements on behalf of the Company and those duties have to be fitted around professional and family responsibilities. In my case, I continued working as an orthoptist and Eye Clinic Lead at St Thomas’ Hospital for two days each week and I am grateful to my colleagues for their forbearance, help and support. It has been a great honour for me personally, of course, but being the first Master with an orthoptic background also brought an opportunity to increase awareness of the work done every day by the whole orthoptic profession.

Looking back, it has been quite a scientific year. We started with a Four Liveries Event on the history and development of cataract surgery, from Rameses to Robots. I was invited to seminars and colloquies chaired by the Lord Mayor and by the Sheriffs in which we discussed the importance of health, including eye health, and what could be done to support and maintain London's position in research and innovation.



Dr Yukun Zhou

The REM (Research, Engagement and Medals) Group of professors have worked hard and the medal winners recognised in the last twelve months have really made a great contribution to advancing ocular science. We awarded a Silver Medal to Professor Shahina Pardhan. One of our bronze medal winners, Dr Giovanni Montesano, was able to present some of his research on the Main Stage at 100% Optical last February and we can expect some exciting research findings in future from our 2024 Ruskell medal winner, Dr Yukun Zhou, and the 2024 Master's Medal Dr Bledi Petriti.



Dr Bledi Petriti

I was thrilled to have Prof David Mackey speaking at the second Spectacle Makers' Lecture last December about the epidemic of myopia, the range of treatments, and possible longer term findings of research being carried out in London and in Australia. I'm afraid this relevant topic for today will run and run, not least in the clinics where we are seeing the links between high myopia and retinal detachments, diplopia, retinal degeneration, macular problem, glaucoma and cataracts.

I'm also very excited about the fact that Professor James G Fujimoto of MIT accepted our invitation to give the third annual Spectacle Makers' Lecture at the end of November. Look out for a full report in the next edition of this journal. As the inventor of OCT, Professor Fujimoto has changed diagnostics in ophthalmic examinations globally and there must be few optometry practices in the UK now that don't have an OCT facility. His work has already had an impact on millions of people and with new applications across healthcare as a whole, OCT continues to provide real insight into how the body works, and how to find and tackle disease early.

Liveryman Professor Chris Hammond was able to showcase the importance of eye health, the developments in research and its value to the economy and the City of London in a special "Knowledge Miles" lecture in the Lord Mayor's lecture series in May, presented in association with The

Gresham Society. I am very grateful to Professor Hammond for presenting to this new and wide audience, on behalf of the Spectacle Makers. The lecture is still available to watch on YouTube. Go to: [greshamsociety.org/webinar/12071/](https://greshamsociety.org/webinar/12071/)



*Seeing is Believing lecture, May 2024*

My experience of introducing myself at City events has led me to understand that the Spectacle Makers are becoming well known for two major things. The Masters around me often talked about our "Eye Health for the Livery" event which we have hosted in each of the last 3 years, showcasing how the four "O's" of eye health - optometrists, orthoptists, ophthalmologists and dispensing opticians, all work together as a multidisciplinary team to ensure the best vision for all patients. Also, Masters know that we will be talking constantly about the importance of a regular eye examination - not just for vision but a whole health check which can find, or not find, evidence of diabetes, hypertension, lipid dysfunction, raised intracranial pressure, glaucoma, tumours and more - as well as orthoptic double vision problems!

I've had the chance to represent our Company at some truly wonderful events. I started off feeling a bit daunted but then I realised that the people around me were feeling just the same and that whether it's a formal Court lunch, a dinner, a local gathering or a Society event, or 10 minutes with someone sharing a sandwich and a cup of coffee, it is the conversations that spark the "lightbulb" moments. Talking makes things happen.

Wearing the Master's badge of office literally opens doors. I have been welcomed with open arms into Livery Halls, I've processed into Guildhall and past the monuments to famous names in St Paul's Cathedral and I've had my orthoptic lens scissors confiscated at the doors of the Houses of Parliament. I met the Duchess of Edinburgh in St James's Palace and the King at Mansion House. People have pointed cameras and phones at me and shouted "Smile!". For just a short time, you feel like a star and you'll forgive me if that little bit of stardom stays with me as I follow the example of every Oscar winner and crave just a few more minutes of your time to say my thank-yous.



As I've said in many of my speeches, I couldn't have done this without the whole multidisciplinary team. Thank you to Mike and Fiona, my Wardens, and the whole Court for their combined wisdom and support throughout the whole year. Thank you to the faithful Beadle, Peter, who has constantly kept me on the straight and narrow through all the ceremonial aspects of our formal events. I cannot thank Helen, our Clerk, enough for being the lynch pin of my Master's year. I would like to thank her publicly for her patience, encouragement, and wise counsel.



*The Master, Wardens, Clerk and Beadle at the Livery Dinner, April 2024*

I'd like to thank Gaynor and the Society Committee who have organised some great events during this year, involving members and their friends and family. The Society is so important for providing those opportunities to get to know each other better and visit some really interesting places.

I'd like to thank all of you, without whom there just wouldn't be a Master Spectacle Maker. It's been lovely to meet Freeman and Liverymen and see members enjoying livery fellowship close to home, as well as in London. I was lucky enough to join local gatherings in Stockbridge, Newmarket, Worthing, on the banks of the River Medway and the factory visits to Wrexham and Bristol, and I thoroughly enjoyed them all.

I was also delighted to welcome old friends, and make new ones, at the Master's jaunt to Nutbourne Vineyard in September. We had a very happy, relaxed and (luckily) sunny day at the vineyard. A number of us then stayed overnight at West Dean College, including a "behind the scenes and up the footprint stairs" tour of the house to see artworks by Magritte and Dali, amongst others. Over two days we saw the livery skills of vintners, gardeners, fruiterers, arts scholars, painter-stainers and glaziers, woolmen, cooks and more, topped off with fellowship, laughter and fun!

I must thank the Rev Canon Dr Alison Joyce too. You can read a bit more about some interesting consequences from her serving as Honorary Chaplain on page 11.

And of course my special thanks go to John, the unique, now past, Past Master Mistress Spectacle Maker, who has himself made a wonderful group of friends and has been a great support during my year. It would not have been half as much fun without him!



*As Master and Past Master Mistress, on the way to Buckingham Palace*

One of my last duties as Master was to host the 2024 Presentation Evening at Barber-Surgeons' Hall. This was such an inspirational evening and brought home to me how lucky I am to be a Spectacle Maker. The wealth of skills and experience among our new members is just amazing. I was delighted to admit as a Freeman past Charity bursary winner and Journeyman Katherine Jerome, barely a month after her qualification as a Dispensing Optician. Her commitment made me realise again how important it is for us to continue helping the next generation. I also had honour of being able to sign the Armed Forces Covenant, a reminder to all of us of the gratitude we all owe to those who serve.

Science, City, Company fellowship, charity and service have all combined to give me a splendid and memorable year. I have made friends and built professional connections in a way I could never have imagined. I have been so privileged to represent our wonderful Spectacle Makers' Company. I wish Mike, his Wardens and his Court every success in his year and, once again, thank you all.

*Liz Shilling*



# THE NEW MASTER MICHAEL HARRIS



As I write this article I cannot believe how quickly time passes, especially when I'm enjoying myself so much!

Just weeks ago I was installed as Master at my Installation Service at St Bride's, Fleet Street. I found it a very moving ceremony, which I will remember forever, with a brilliant sermon by The Reverend Canon Dr

Alison Joyce and a heavenly

choir, not to mention a church full of friends.

Since then I've certainly been very busy but first, I should tell you a bit more about myself.

I am an Optometrist through and through. I'm here because an inspirational teacher suggested that when I looked for a career I should consider something with science and people. I was 13 years old at the time.

I started looking, and a pharmacist/optician gave me the time to watch him work, and my interest was caught. He also talked about medicine, which really made me think. I realised that I wanted a career in healthcare.

At 16 I took a summer job with Dollond and Aitchison. If you'd told me then that the Chairman of the Company, Past Master Clive Stone, would become a friend, I would not have believed it! The links between the Company and D&A, as it is still affectionately known to many, run deep. The names of several Dollonds appear on the Masters' nameboards in the WCSM office and although it would be wonderful to emulate their long-lasting reputation, I could not possibly match the stamina of Peter Dollond, who is listed as having served as Master from 1774-1781!

After graduating from Aston University I joined Lancaster & Thorpe, a small family-owned group of practices in the Midlands. Again, there was a strong connection with the Company through Past Master Richard Thorpe, sadly no longer with us. The Lancaster & Thorpe

pre-registration training programme included working in their optical factory in Derby for two weeks, and one day a week shadowing a Consultant Ophthalmologist in hospital clinics. I know there are several Freemen and Liverymen whose careers started with Lancaster & Thorpe and I know how much they value the training they received, as well as the friendships made there.

The Dispensing Opticians I worked with at that time really taught me their craft. Ever since then I have

appreciated the mix of skills among eye health professionals and I am keen to take forward the theme of multi-disciplinary working which was such a feature of last year, under Liz Shilling's leadership.

I took the Company's exams in the last cohort of candidates, just before the establishment of the College of Optometrists, and I am proud to have gained my FSMC qualification, now converted into the FCOptom designation which appears after my name.

I left Lancaster and Thorpe to join a small Coventry group, who sold out to a large pharmaceutical group, who in turn were purchased by Dollond & Aitchison, so my career came full circle!



*Michael Harris Opticians, 1982*



*Michael Harris Opticians, 2024*



*Past Master  
Richard Thorpe*



In 1982 I set up my own independent high street practice from scratch – during a recession.

I enhanced my clinical skills by spending half day a week in hospital practice, which I did for the next 18 years, always improving my skill set, and ensuring that I had professional colleagues to bounce ideas off. At that time I was also elected to my LOC, with which I am still very much involved.

Through colleagues, contacts and friends, I was encouraged to move up from Freedom of the Company to the Livery and in December I will celebrate my 40th year as a Liveryman, something of which I am hugely proud.

The Livery was more formal back then and the optical world was very different - for a start there were no multiples, no Specsavers, and we had no idea of the difference that 21st century technology and diagnostics would make to our working lives. I remain fascinated by the application of science and medicine in optometry, and have seen enormous developments in contact lens practice and ocular imaging, from the arrival of the Volk lens years ago ("you must try this, Mike, you can see everything!") to modern OCT imaging and analysis, where we can see much more, enabling earlier detection and treatment for conditions such as my own glaucoma.

Surgery and medical interventions have also changed out of all recognition, with the ability to treat macular and diabetic eye disease with laser surgery and intraocular injections and with modern cataract surgery.

Modern lathe and material technology has changed spectacle frame and contact lens manufacture enormously too, enabling much better visual solutions, and has allowed for the development of spectacle lenses and contact lenses for myopia control. Together with that multi-disciplinary working and respect for each others' skills that I mentioned earlier, these all help us to deliver the Company's goal of better vision for all.

At heart I am a clinically driven, patient-focused optometrist embedded in my local community. My clinical skills are in making people see, especially when they're struggling, in detecting pathology, managing dry eye and minor ocular conditions and in contact lens practice. My clinical style has been to engage in conversation with my patients, whilst examining their eyes and meeting their optical and health needs.

That meant that I could build strong relationships with those patients and see them through their own careers and family changes. I was trusted by four generations of some families, one patient having travelled all the way from Auckland in New Zealand to see me, and also regular attenders from the United States.

After more than 40 years, Carole, my wife, and I sold our practice in June to Valli Opticians, a group of 16 practices in the North of England. My retirement means I have more time to give to Spectacle Maker business and it has allowed me not to worry quite as much about spending so much time on trains to and from London!

Carole and I met in late 1982, when she came in for an eye test, returning a few hours later to drop in a carefully created A4 Letraset test chart in a sealed envelope addressed to me suggesting that I might get in touch and we could meet up for a bite of food! The rest is history, she took me up on my unique special offer of a free Optometrist with a



*For the family album  
Robin, Carole, Mike, Jeremy and his fiancée Jenny.*

lifetime warranty! We have just celebrated our 40th Wedding Anniversary, and we have 2 sons, Jeremy and Robin.

I am a great believer in seizing opportunities as they cross our paths and we have benefited so much from joining in, getting involved and making friends both in Round Table and in the Livery.

As Master I have already had opportunities to visit the Houses of Parliament, to speak to MPs and to stand alongside leaders in the fields of both eye health and sight loss.

In the City I am representing the Company by promoting our messages of the importance of regular eye examinations and the need for greater support for eye health as a whole, as an ageing population and social changes increase the demand for eye healthcare. The opportunities to meet other Masters



*Remembering the fallen, at the City Garden  
of Remembrance service, November 2024*





*The Master at RNIB launch of Eyeware*

and City officials provide opportunities to pass on those messages and to ensure that the Spectacle Makers' Company retains its reputation as an active, thriving and friendly Livery Company with an enduring purpose of better vision for all. Carole is equally enjoying being Mistress Spectacle Maker, networking across the wider Livery and amplifying those messages in a different circle of people.

I would like to end with a challenge for everyone. It is the task of every Master to look forward and to ensure that the Company prospers and looks forward to its next 400 years – but I need your help.

Thanks to the efforts and openness of the Masters and Courts over the last few years, and our Company's reputation for friendliness, we can attract new members – and we must. The wide range of skills and experience amongst members is our biggest strength but everyone has a part to play in maintaining that strength. Everyone can invite a guest to a Society event or lecture – joining in a walk or a local gathering does not cost a lot of money and is a great way for friends and contacts to see what we're all about. Please do not keep us a secret, tell your friends, invite them to our events and drive our membership forwards.

Get involved yourself – join one of our Committees, offer your time to help at the Livery schools showcase, as an event steward or helper or presenting prizes on our behalf at the universities and colleges around the country, reach out to fellow members via the members' directory on the website, our LinkedIn community or setup a local gathering.

I have enjoyed every moment of the magic art of optometry, combining art and science with an engagement with people, I have enjoyed every moment of my time as a member of the Company and I've enjoyed every moment of my first few weeks as Master. With your help, we can build membership towards our 400th year, plan for the future and enjoy everything that the anniversary might bring.

I look forward to working with you all.

*Mike Harris, Master*

## THE HONORARY CHAPLAIN 2024-25



After a forty year career in publishing, Christine Smith (also known as The Reverend Christine Smith) has very recently retired as Publishing Director of Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd where she was responsible not only for hymn book publishing but its four other book imprints. Now, in a part time capacity, she oversees the publishing of the Church of England and continues to be involved in planning Hymns Ancient & Modern's programme of events, online and in person. Aware of the relatively poor provision of training in preaching in the UK, she founded its popular biannual Festival of Preaching in 2017 in conjunction with Christ Church, Oxford and most recently with St John's College and the University Church, Cambridge, attracting over 3,000 delegates in total.

Christine is a priest in Winchester and is already thinking 'What retirement?' as she has recently been appointed as a trustee of a Sarum College, a theological study centre in Salisbury, and as a non-executive director of the Royal School of Church Music.

Christine is delighted to be returning to the WCSM and is especially pleased to be invited by Mike Harris to become his chaplain. On her very first visit to the Company as Felicity Harding's chaplain, the first person she met was Carole Harris and a friendship began in the queue to climb the stairs in Apothecaries' Hall - a friendship that has blossomed into a continuing relationship with the Company.



# THE ANNUAL SERVICE

We are most grateful to the Rector, Verger, Director of Music and Choir and the administrative team at St Bride's, Fleet Street who again hosted a most memorable Annual Service of Remembrance, Thanksgiving and Rededication for us in October. While most livery companies hold an annual service, we believe we may be the only one to include the Declarations of the new Master and Wardens and their ceremonial clothing in a service which is completely open to the public. It was Past Master The Venerable John Morrison who suggested this change and set the template for the service which is now so loved by members, guests and visitors.

There was an opportunity for family and friends of Spectacle Makers who died during the last year to join us for reflection, as the Choir sang the poignant "Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory", by Peter Skellern. The mood then changed as the outgoing Master, Liz Shilling, read from St Paul's letter urging the Philippians to rejoice and be glad. Liz chose music that called to mind important elements of her life including "All things bright and beautiful" from her childhood, "Deep peace of the running wave to you" as a nod to her love of the outdoors and sailing and "God be with us", a choral setting of an ancient Scottish incantation by contemporary female composer, Cecilia McDowall.



*The Beadle organises the Court into processional order*



*St Bride's Choir*

The Rector, The Reverend Canon Dr Alison Joyce, reflected on the many connections with people and vision she had discovered as Honorary Chaplain to the Company. You can read her full text on the next page.



*The outgoing Master and Wardens take their leave*



*The new Master's badge and chain are secured by the Beadle*



*The Rector's Connections with Vision*



St Bride's Church, Fleet Street  
11.30 am Thanksgiving Service

2nd October 2024

### Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers

I am going to do something unprecedented for me this morning, because, unusually, this address is going to be Part Two of the sermon I gave to you here last time I preached for you back in 2022. So, I shall begin with a reprise of Part One:

*Previously....* (as they say on American TV), I spoke to you about my experience as a small child who had been born with a lazy eye, of being taken to see a wonderful young Orthoptist at Moorfields called Miss Crawshaw, and my subsequent eye surgery – and I talked about the immense debt of gratitude that I felt I owed her – and all of you, in your various and related disciplines, for rescuing my sight, and in no small way, changing the course of my life. So far so good.

As some of you may know, much my astonishment, at the end of that service, your outgoing Master and Liveryman Rowena McNamara came up to me and said: 'We know your Miss Crawshaw. She trained us at Moorfields. She is now 82, but she is alive and well, and living in London.' So, remarkably, sixty years after I last saw my lovely Orthoptist, when I was four years old, we were reunited. And my Miss Crawshaw (she has another name now) is one of my best mates: I had dinner at her home over the summer.

But we were to discover another extraordinary connection, too. My Miss Crawshaw's late father-in-law had been an RAF pilot who had been killed during WWII, flying over Norway. But prior to that, interestingly enough, he had been a Fleet Street journalist. And because he was killed and buried in Norway, there had never been any kind of memorial to him in this country.

So it was our privilege here at St Bride's to host a special service for the whole of my Miss Crawshaw's family – loads of them turned out for it – during which we dedicated a memorial page to Kit Kidd in our Journalists' Book of Commemoration. And all of that came out of a chance reference I made in a sermon here.

There are so many things that connect us with one another, some of which may lie hidden for years, only to surface completely unexpectedly and in the most surprising of ways.

And these strange things do keep happening to me. Last month I went back to my previous parish in Birmingham to take the Memorial Service of one of my former parishioners, who had died at the age of 100, whom I used to know really well. It is just possible that his name may be familiar to some of you, because in his day he was a pioneering eye-surgeon: Michael Roper-Hall. And thanks to the combined researches of his daughter and your Learned Clerk, we discovered that back in 1972 he was admitted to the Livery of this company. It would seem that my own life and the life of the Spectacle Makers are destined to become ever more intricately bound.

But I can't help feeling that there is also something deeper and of more general and lasting significance in all of this, which is to do with 'seeing': not in the physical sense, but 'seeing' as in 'recognition'. Because isn't it revealing how readily we reach for the language of sight, when describing connectedness. And once you can 'see' a connection, the world can suddenly and unexpectedly become a different kind of place. Things fall into place; previously disconnected bits of life join up, or become that bit more comprehensible, or manageable. And we are, of course, designed to be social beings: the very things that connect us – to one another; to the fabric of Creation – and, in a spiritual sense, to God – are the things that enable us to flourish, and bring us fullness of life.

Many of you will know that our patron saint, St Bride, is in fact Brigid of Kildare. That is her statue up there, looking down on us. And this is a very significant year in her history, because Ireland is currently marking the 1500th anniversary of her death.

Like most of the Celtic saints, Brigid is a bit of a shadowy figure, and history, legend and mythology have all been woven together in the stories that are told about her. I am particularly delighted that one of her miraculous gifts was allegedly an ability to turn bathwater into beer. (If you are going to have a patron saint, it's always good to have one that can do something useful!)

But very recently I came across another story about St Brigid that I had never heard before, and it involves the gift of sight. The story goes that St Brigid met an elderly woman who had been blind since birth – so she had never known what it was to be able to see. Brigid laid her hands on the woman and miraculously she received the amazing gift of sight – except – it lasted for only a fleeting moment, enabling her to glimpse the fields around her full of grazing cattle – after which her blindness returned.

St Brigid was perplexed and apologetic saying, I am so sorry, I don't understand why it didn't last. To which the blind woman replied: 'No, it's fine – it really is. Because now I know what it is like to be sighted. I have seen the wonder and colour and beauty of the earth. And that's enough. I shall have that always. I don't mind being blind, because that was all that I had ever known – but now I have this gift beyond measure. I know what it is to see. And that is enough'. In the process she had acquired a new kind of connectedness with the world around her; which was something she would never lose.

And I think that this theme of connectedness has in fact been woven through the whole fabric of the life of the livery companies since their mediaeval inception. A livery company is so very much more than simply the sum of its members and their common trades or professional interests. Properly understood its vision (note that word, O Spectacle Makers!) is much deeper and broader than that. In origin, of course, the mediaeval trade guilds were all religious organisations. From the secular perspective (note that word) of today's world that might seem very odd and antiquated – but it needs to be properly understood.

Because seen through mediaeval eyes (another sight metaphor!), it made perfect sense: combining the spiritual and the practical was of benefit to both, because each was believed to enhance and promote the success of the other. By exercising your craft with integrity and to the highest of standards, you were honouring God and serving your fellow human beings; and God, in turn, would bless your professional endeavours. And in a way, this sense of connectedness lives on – in a commitment shared by livery companies of all kinds, to 'Give Something Back'.

So may God bless you and all your endeavours; may God bless our connectedness, one with another, in ways hidden and overt. And however challenging a day you may be having, never forget the importance of what you do, and of what you stand for. And never lose sight of the fact that you, and the industries and professions that you represent, really do transform the lives of people like me.

And thanks be to God for that. Amen.



# PRIZES AND MEDALS

The Company increased its focus on recognising educational achievement this year by instituting new WCSM prizes in every undergraduate school of optometry in the UK, as well as continuing the annual ABDO prize and prizes for the best orthoptic student at each of Glasgow Caledonian, Liverpool and Sheffield Universities.

The criteria for the prizes vary, at the discretion of leadership team of each university, but we are particularly keen to recognise students who have overcome difficulty to achieve their degrees or those who have taken advantage of every opportunity to learn off campus, as well as in lectures and practical sessions. Here is a selection of photos from prize winners at Glasgow Caledonian, Hertfordshire, Huddersfield, Manchester, the University of the West of England in Bristol and the first cohort of graduates at the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). The UHI winner, Kiera Logan, had the additional honour of proposing the vote of thanks to the University's Chancellor, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal.

All prize winners are offered a 3-year association with the Company as Journeymen, at no cost to them.



*Peter Reeve presents the Manchester prize to Arsallan Kargar*



*Nyasha Moula, University of Hertfordshire  
with Renter Warden David Baker*



*Katie Martin, prizewinner, Glasgow Caledonian*



*Graduation at the University of Manchester*

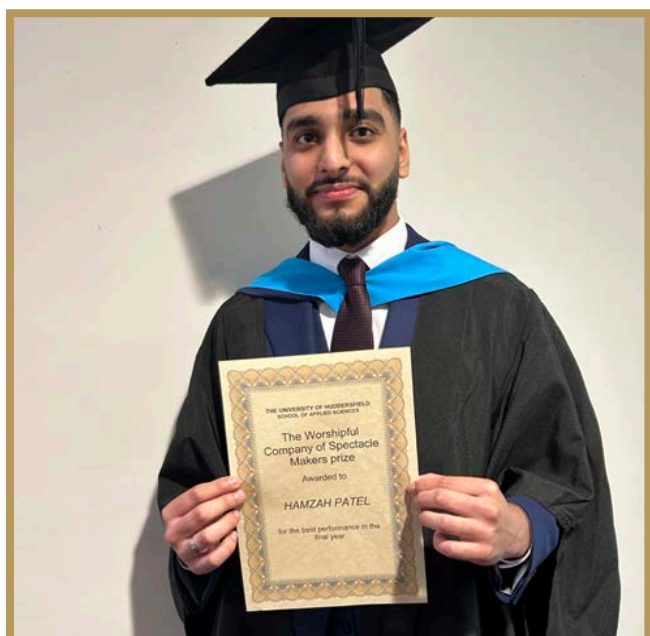




*Mohamed Abed, UWE prizewinner*



*Felicity Carson, Ulster University prizewinner*



*Hamza Patel, University of Huddersfield winner*

The Company also sponsored an award at the British Congress of Vision Science in October. BCOVS provides a forum for eye and vision researchers from across many disciplines and professions to meet and discuss their work, whilst promoting inclusion and accessibility. This year's WCSM award was won by Preeti Singal of RNIB for her work on the low vision framework, and was presented by REM Group Vice Chair Professor Chris Hull to Louise Gow, on behalf of Preeti.



*UHI prizewinner Kiera Logan with Fiona Anderson*

As mentioned on page 5, the Company's bronze medals were presented at the Court Luncheon in October. Both the winning submissions demonstrated models for earlier diagnosis of significant eye disease.

The 2024 Master's Medal was awarded to Dr Bledi Petriti, who achieved his PhD from the Institute of Ophthalmology/University College London, in April 2024. Dr Petriti is now continuing his work as a post-doctoral Fellow at Yale University. He was awarded the medal for his contribution to the paper "Peripheral blood mononuclear cell respiratory function is associated with progressive glaucomatous vision loss" which was published in *Nature Medicine* in June 2024. The work showed an association between lower mitochondrial function and faster visual field loss, even when intraocular pressure has been treated. This opens up the possibility that mitochondrial activity, assessed with a blood test, could be used as a new biomarker leading to more personalised treatments and future new therapies for glaucoma, one of the leading causes of blindness in the world.

The Company's prestigious Ruskell Medal, named after the late ocular anatomist and Liveryman of WCSM, Professor Gordon Ruskell, recognises research likely to have a significant impact on our understanding of vision. Applicants for this medal are usually 5-7 years post-doctorate. However, this year's Medal was awarded to another very early-career researcher, Dr Yukun Zhou.

Dr Zhou's paper "A foundation model for generalizable disease detection from retinal images" developed and demonstrated a large AI model trained on over 1.6 million OCT and colour fundus images that, when adapted, successfully outperformed other AI systems in the diagnosis and prognosis of sight threatening eye disease, as well as cardiovascular and neurodegenerative conditions. This research is different in its claim to be able to use techniques to identify a range of sight-threatening and complex systemic disorders rather than linking AI analysis of images to specific diseases. The paper was published in *Nature* in September 2023 and has already achieved almost 200 citations.

Dr Zhou achieved his PhD in January 2024 and is working in the laboratory led by Professor Pearse Keane, Professor of Artificial Medical Intelligence at UCL/Institute of Ophthalmology.



# THE PRESENTATION EVENING 2024

## Introducing new Liverymen, Freeman and Prize Winners

The Presentation Evening has developed over recent years from being a graduation ceremony for people achieving SMC's own qualifications to an evening of welcome and celebration, where members and potential members of the Company can come together and enjoy an evening of information, friendship and fellowship.

On 19th September, six Spectacle Makers were clothed of the Livery, seventeen Freemen were welcomed and we presented the very special Charity Anne Macintosh Award and WCSM Military Award.

As always, the cohort of new Liverymen represented a group of people with different backgrounds and lives, yet all united in their support for the Company's work.

As CEO of National Vision Inc. and an active supporter of global charities, Reade Fahs has made it his life's goal to make affordable eye care and eyewear available across the US. Vinni Virdee trained at City & Islington College and is now Director of Pop Specs, aiming to bring a fashionable difference to eye wear and vision aids in major shopping centres

Professor Christopher Bentley is a consultant ophthalmic surgeon and proud to be following in the footsteps of his late father Peter, an optometrist and member of the Company.

As the first Orthoptist Master of WCSM, Liz Shilling was delighted that her last clothing of new Liverymen included three orthoptists. Vijay Tailor-Hamblin, Guy Richardson and Sue Kevan.

Among the new Freemen, there was a special welcome for Professor Russell Foster CBE, who was granted Honorary Freedom by the Master and Wardens, in recognition of his outstanding contribution of vision science and our understanding of the relationship between sleep and vision. Professor Foster delivered the inaugural Spectacle Makers' Lecture on this topic in 2022. Devon Masarati, whose MA thesis focused on Spectacle Makers of the early eighteenth century, was pleased to receive her Freedom of that same Company. You can read an article by Devon on page 30.



*New Liverymen, September 2024*

The Master was also particularly delighted to see Katherine Jerome again. Katherine was awarded a Charity bursary in 2021 to help her complete her training as a dispensing optician, having retrained from teaching music and juggling all the responsibilities of a single parent. She was awarded the Anne Macintosh bursary prize in 2022 for the best report received from a bursary winner and the Charity Trustees and Court alike were so proud to see her achieving her FBDO qualification last month and now returning as a fully-fledged Freeman of the Company.

*If you would like to find out about, or say hello to, any of the new Freemen or Liverymen, you can visit the Directory in the Members' Area and search by 'recently joined'.*

### How can I introduce a new member?

WCSM is an open Livery Company and the application form for Freedom is available on the website, which means anyone who fulfils the criteria and can demonstrate a commitment to better eye health and inclusivity, can complete an application within minutes. Remember: anyone who holds a recognised eye health qualification is eligible to apply By Right. There is no need to wait to be invited and no formal proposer or seconder is needed for this sort of Freedom application. Anyone whose mother or father was a Freeman at the time of their birth can also apply without a proposer or seconder, through the right of Patrimony. For individuals connected by family links, guests who have been to an event and believe this is a Company for them, or anyone else who wants to support the work and life of the Company, the route is By Recommendation of two existing Liverymen. Contact the Clerk or the Membership Committee and they can make introductions as needed.



*The Master greets Katherine Jerome as a Freeman*



## Recognition from WCSM

Signaller Ryan Dodson was nominated by 31st (Middlesex Yeomanry & Princess Louise's Kensington) Signal Squadron for the WCSM Military Award for personal development. As well as being a reliable team player and demonstrating excellence in fieldcraft, shown impressive personal commitment to learning about cyber operations and security, which will be used to good effect in the work of the Squadron.

The Spectacle Makers' Charity awarded the Anne Macintosh Prize to Jemini Katechia for the best report submission from this year's round of bursary winners. Jemini previously completed a degree in ophthalmic dispensing and, with the help of the bursary, graduated from Anglia Ruskin University with a 2:1 in Optometry this summer.



*Signaller Ryan Dodson received the WCSM Military Award*



*Successful apprentices with Freeman Craig Hastilow and Specsavers Apprenticeship Programme Designer Nicholas Trivino*

We also welcomed successful Specsavers employees who had completed their apprenticeships in Spectacle Making to receive their certificates from the Master. Thank you to Freeman Craig Hastilow who continues to organise this recognition for apprentices at the beginning of their career in eye care.



*Honorary Freeman  
Professor Russell Foster CBE*



*Freeman Devon Masarati*



*Jemini Katechia, Anne Macintosh award winner*





## WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF SPECTACLE MAKERS SIGNS THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Presentation Evening provided the perfect opportunity for the Court to reaffirm its commitment to its affiliated service units by signing the Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant is a promise that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, will be treated fairly.

Almost every livery company has a link with at least one unit of the Royal Navy, the Army or the Royal Air Force, as well as supporting cadet units. WCSM has been proud to be affiliated with 16 Medical Regiment since 2001 and subsequently established affiliations with Bexleyheath and, most recently, the RAF Centre for Aerospace Medicine. WCSM has been proud to be affiliated with 11th 16 Medical Regiment since 2001 and subsequently established affiliations with 31st (Middlesex Yeomanry & Princess Louise's. Kensington) Signal Squadron, 358 (Welling) ATC Squadron and, most recently, the RAF Centre for Aerospace Medicine.

Around 30 livery companies have now signed the Covenant. It has been customary for livery companies to use a template format, the front page of which can be signed by the Master, together with a very senior officer nominated in discussion with the Ministry of Defence. In our case, the senior officer signing the Covenant with the Master was Air Commodore Sonia Phythian OBE, Head of RAF Medical

Services and a Freeman of what WCSM is pleased to call its "Sister" Company, The Worshipful Company of Nurses. We ensured that the promises within the template were drafted to refer directly to our affiliates and we invited representatives from each affiliated unit to sign the last page of the Covenant as witnesses.

It was important that the formal signature of the document could be witnessed by a large audience of new members, employers and influencers to demonstrate the Company's ongoing support for military personnel, veterans and their families. As employers in their own right, members might be interested in finding out more about the Covenant and the Employers' Recognition Scheme, which offers formal recognition at bronze, silver and gold levels for initiatives to promote employment for reservists, cadet leaders, veterans, serving personnel and their families. The Covenant commits WCSM to maintaining strong connections with each of our affiliated service units in whatever way we can, to provide professional introductions where relevant, and to try to increase awareness of the debt of gratitude everyone in the country owes to those who serve.

These photos show the signing of the Covenant at Barber-Surgeons' Hall.



*The Covenant is signed by the Master and Air Commodore Sonia Phythian OBE*



*Signatures on behalf of our affiliated regular and reserve Army units*



*Signatures on behalf of RAF CAM and our affiliated ATC squadron*





# THE 2024 SHEEP DRIVE

The annual sheep drive was a fascinating day and I now have a very impressive certificate to show my participation.

It was amazing to take part in such an ancient historical event and to see all of the dignitaries in their splendid robes of office. The day was extremely well organised by the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, so we knew where to go, when and what to do. Everyone was very friendly — including the sheep!

It was also most interesting to look around the various Worshipful Company stalls and to watch demonstrations of their traditional skills.

*Brenda Berg*



*The Master herds half of the flock*



*The Master Woolman with Damian Lewis*



*Spectacle Makers herding their sheep*



*Moawia, Bill and Sharon enjoying the day*

*"This was an extremely enjoyable and well organised event. I have been meaning to do this for many years and as we are relocating to the West Country next year it was the incentive to participate while we are still in Essex. The adjoining fair was lovely and the weather kind. We loved it"*

*Lyn Price, Liveryman*



# MEMBERSHIP JUST ADD ONE....



*Senior Court Assistant Keith Valentine*

I'm Keith Valentine and I'm the new Chair of the WCSM Membership Committee. (In my day job, I'm CEO of the charity Fight for Sight and yes, I know you probably don't recognise me in my fabulous new SmartSpecs! I'll be talking about them in a future "Eye-to-Eye" session.)

I'm proud of everything WCSM stands for and everything the Membership Committee does to engage with non-members, to talk about the Company and interest people in joining. We are working hard – but we can't do it alone. As those old posters said, "Your Company needs YOU!" We need help from every single Freeman, Liveryman and Journeyman to make sure we have an active, engaged and thriving Company for the future.

The community we are building within the Spectacle Makers' Company is grown from the connections we all make with each other. The most effective way for us to succeed as a Livery in growing our membership is to reach out to those around us in everyday life who have a common interest.

I'd like to ask everyone connected with the Livery to have a think about who they might invite to find out more and join us. If we are successful in bringing more people into our work the greater our work will be. So here's a challenge, as we enter the festive season, if everyone could ask at least one new person to connect with the Livery we can enjoy Christmas in the knowledge that we will have a successful year ahead.

Here are just some of the things you could do:

- Invite friends to a local gathering or Society event, or get involved in a free walk around the City...there are lots of ways for Freeman to bring friends along.
- Host a local gathering – you just need to offer an hour or two of your time and suggest a place that's easy for people to get to, where you can have a chat and a cup of coffee or a drink. Let the office know where you'll be and when, and we can send out the details to anyone who lives within 45 minutes' drive. You might only get 4 people or you might get 20 – it doesn't matter, it's the spirit of friendship and fellowship that's important.
- If you use social media, add Journeyman, Freeman or Liveryman of The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers to your social media profiles.
- It only takes a second to like or comment on one of our posts – every "like" brings the work of the Company to a wider audience through your connections. Social media is now our "shop window". It tells the world what we are and what we stand for. People want to join us because they see pictures of people they know or admire who are members of the Company.
- Share your own ideas with the Membership Committee and the Society Committee – we'd love to hear what you enjoy, what more you'd like to do and fun and interesting places we could visit together.
- For Liverymen – don't under-estimate the "magic" of inviting someone to a Court Lunch or the Livery Dinner. We know it's expensive, so it's a treat but sometimes we forget how fabulous it is to step behind the doors of a Livery Hall and have an amazing meal with amazing people and discover connections we never imagined, just from one event.

Why not make it a New Year's Resolution to book for yourself and one new potential member for at least one of those events in 2025?



*Liveryman Sally and her guest at the June Court Lunch*



# WHAT, ME? YES, YOU!



*Keith Valentine with Steward Wendy Allen*

Two heads are definitely better than one – and six or seven heads are even better! Most people don't realise that much of the work that goes into bringing members into the Company, making sure there are friendly local and social events and running the PR and financial management that every business needs is done by volunteers. Our staff need the help of all of our Committees to keep WCSM in touch with best business practice outside the world of the Livery.

We always want to hear from people keen to be involved or business owners who could spare a bit of their own team's time to help us. We're not asking for hours of your time and we know everyone is so busy. It could be just an occasional thing, a meeting once a quarter or you might be willing to organise a Society event once a year, or set up a local gathering where all you have to do is tell the office where you'll be and when – and they'll invite people in your area to join you.

**Are you an organiser? Join the Society Committee!**

**Do you have a way with words or you're a whizz with Google Analytics? Join the Comms Group!**

**If numbers are your thing, ask about the Finance Committee!**

**People skills? PR? Skilled in sales? Use your skills with the Membership Committee!**

To offer your time or to find out more, contact [masterwardens@spectaclemakers.com](mailto:masterwardens@spectaclemakers.com) or speak to the Master, Wardens, the Clerk or one of the members of the Court when you next see them. This is YOUR company and we'd love YOU to be involved.

*You can tear off this slip and keep it next to your device or computer to remind you of how to connect to the members' area.*

## THE MEMBERS' AREA

- Go to [www.spectaclemakers.com](http://www.spectaclemakers.com)
- Log in – enter your usual email address
- Password – if you can't remember it, don't worry. Click "Reset password". It will send a link to your email.
- A good password has letters and numbers and an extra symbol. One good way is to think of a short phrase that relates to you, like "Iusedtoliveatnumber43!" or "Qualifiedin1991!"
- Bad passwords are "password", "Password123", "WCSMpassword1" or your name and date of birth.
- Once logged in, you'll see your name in the top right of the screen and the page you see in front of you is your Profile.
- Click on "EDIT PROFILE" to change your address, phone number, email address, your job, photo or your dietary requirements. Click in the Hobbies and Interests box and then click on each sport, music or activity that you like, and we can keep you updated.
- Save, then go back to My Profile. You'll then see a box called MY PAYMENTS. Here you can see anything that you owe and you can download invoices and receipts for any payments.
- Above your photo you'll see a line of options:

Dashboard What's New Directory **Journeyman Directory**

**What's New** gives you news like births, marriages, deaths plus useful documents and links to recordings of past Eye-to-Eye sessions and lectures. **Directory** gives you a list of all the members of the Company, with their contact details. Look here first if you need someone's address or phone number. If the details are not showing, it means that person does not want their information to be available. The office will not be able to give the details to you either but they may be able to ask that person to contact you.

**The Journeyman Directory** lists details for prize winners and other people in their first 5 years of a career in eye health who have a 3-year association with us. Please do have a look if you have a job to fill or can offer specific advice, work experience or mentoring.

**To book for Events, you must be logged in to the members' area first.** The system knows if you are a Journeyman, Freeman or Liveryman and will show you the events for which you can book. If you are not logged in and go to Events from the main website, you may receive an error message that says the event is not open to you or you may not be able to see any tickets for that event.

**REMEMBER: if you can't see your name on the top right of the screen, you are not logged in!**

**If you get stuck, please just call us & we will help: 020 7236 2932.**

**Email: [administrator@spectaclemakers.com](mailto:administrator@spectaclemakers.com)**



## MEET A COMMITTEE MEMBER: PRETTY JETWANI

*Liveryman Pretty Jetwani has recently stepped down from the Membership Committee at the end of her 3 year term. Here she tells us about what's involved and what she learned from joining one of the Company's most important working committees.*



Pretty Jetwani

### **Q. Pretty, what made you want to join the Membership Committee?**

**A.** I was honoured and delighted to become a Freeman at a Presentation Ceremony in 2016. It was a pleasure to be with a whole mix of people from a variety of professional backgrounds, all becoming Freeman on the same day. I'm a chatty person and enjoyed talking to many different people throughout the evening.

Later in 2019, I looked forward to attending an event for Freeman at the 'Old Bailey'. Unfortunately, my plans were unexpectedly altered due to a fall, resulting in a fracture of my fibula, en route to the train station. Whilst receiving 'gas and air' for pain relief, the A&E doctor asked me where I was going as I was all dressed up and didn't believe me when I told her that I was on my way to the 'Old Bailey'!!

Thankfully my friends who had attended shared about their wonderful evening and how they were made to feel welcome by the Company.

Another time, I volunteered to be part of a team talking to students at a 'Livery Schools Careers Showcase' event at Guildhall. I was proud to talk about career options and the work of the Spectacle Makers' Company.

The Company had advertised for new Committee members early in 2021. I arranged to discuss the role with the Clerk and the Chair of the Committee prior to expressing interest. I was given the opportunity to attend one meeting as an observer prior to committing to the role. The meetings were held by 'Zoom' which gave the option for members to attend from locations of their choice. Whilst each meeting had a formal agenda to work to, the Chair led the discussions in a friendly manner and we were all encouraged to talk and give our opinions. Being on the membership committee has enabled me to meet fellow Company Liverymen and Court members and further given me the insight of the work of the Company.

### **Q. How many members are there are on the Committee?**

**A.** In my time on the Committee, there have usually been around 9 people at each meeting, including the Clerk and/or her Assistant. The range of jobs of committee members is quite wide. I am an orthoptist and have worked in hospitals, charities and education.

Other members are: two people from the US; one working in vision science, the other very well connected with retail eye wear in the US, a dispensing optician, one or two optometrists, the Chair of the Society Committee, one of our younger Liverymen and a Court Assistant or Senior Court Assistant chairs the meeting.

Upper Warden Fiona Anderson was the first Chair I met, then now Renter Warden David Baker, then Keith Valentine. Fiona and David were exceptional committee Chairs and I am sure that Keith will do an equally wonderful job as he's already introduced several new members himself and is keen for the Committee to use their own connections and work more closely with the members of other Committees, such as the REM Group of professors and the Charity Trustees.

### **Q. So, tell us how a Committee meeting works.**

**A.** Virtual meetings usually start at 4pm to include the members in the US and it's a better time for people who are in clinic. Like most committees, we review the last set of minutes and see if actions have been followed up. We receive reports at each meeting on the numbers of new membership leads, new Journeymen and, most importantly, new applications for Freedom.

Compared with most livery companies, we've been doing really well in attracting new members but it's something we have to keep on top of to make sure there are members ready to provide support for our mission of better vision for all for many years to come.



The Committee is quite small but we endeavour to have quite a wide reach. It would be amazing if every Liveryman and Freeman could encourage just one person each year to try us out, by coming to a Society event or joining us online for one of the Eye-to-Eye sessions.

Social media now has a big impact. By telling the world about what we do and who we are, more people want to join us. I believe around 25% of new applicants in the last 6 months or so said they had seen us on social media and that had been a factor in encouraging them to apply, but personal recommendation is, and always has been, the most important influence in bringing in new members. As I have found, I hope that others joining will enjoy being a member of the Company and the benefits that it brings.

**Q. How hard is it to fit this into your working day?**

**A.** Attendance is not onerous as meetings only take place four times a year, start at 4pm and only last an hour and a half. The dates of the next meetings are booked in advance. The Clerk helps to find another date if the majority of people are committed elsewhere.

**Q. What are you most proud of, from your time on the Committee?**

**A.** I hosted one of the first local gatherings and I'm really pleased that there are more of these happening around the country. I booked a table in the bar of a hotel in my home town of Guildford and the office sent emails inviting anyone in the local area to come along and join me if they were free. There were 6 of us in the end and we had a really lovely evening, chatting and getting to know one another. We had no idea that we lived so close to each other. I'm hoping we might get together again at some point in the next year, if my life calms down a bit!

**Q. What are the biggest changes you've seen in your time on the Committee?**

We're definitely getting a much wider range of people being interested in joining the Company. When I first went on to the Committee, I was keen to see if we could bring in more young people – maybe go out to the universities, that sort of thing. But we're not trying to compete with professional bodies like the College of Optometrists, ABDO or BIOS and we know that it takes time for eye health professionals to get to a stage when they have any spare time or money to be able to give back. The Journeyman scheme now gives people in their first 5 years of a career in eye health an opportunity to get to know us. It is wonderful too that there are prizes and Charity bursary awards to help students when they need it most. We hope they will join us when they are ready.

The corporate supporter scheme has also been a big change. It's a great help to the Company financially but it has brought in new members who have quite quickly become really passionate about the Company!

**Q. What do you hope the Company will look like in 5 years' time?**

**A.** Smiling, friendly faces who have the ambition, passion and drive to improve services for those with visual impairment and support one another as a community... much as it is now!

**Let's finish with a quick-fire round.**

**Q. How would you describe yourself in 6 words?**

**A.** Lively, tenacious, friendly, hard-working, thoughtful, caring

**Q. What did you want to be when you were a child?**

**A.** I couldn't decide on a career until I was in secondary school. I needed to wear glasses for myopia at the age of 14 years and realised, during my eye test, that I wanted to work in optics. Orthoptics and working with children and young people has been wonderful for me.

**Q. What's been your favourite ever experience in eye health or with the Company?**

**A.** My admission to the livery of course! It was a special day and one I will always remember.

**Q. What are you going to do next Wednesday at 4pm instead of going to a Membership Committee meeting?**

**A.** Most likely, working!

**Something that people may not know about me.**

I was Head Judge at the Guildford Beer Festival this year – what a task that was!

Thanks Pretty – and thank you very much for your time and contribution to the Membership Committee.

*Remember: if you're interested in serving on one of our Committees, on the Trustee Board of The Spectacle Makers' Charity or on the Spectacle Makers' Society Committee which organises fun events, or if you're a Liveryman and would like to help meet and greet people at events, please tell the Master or the Clerk, send an email to [masterwardens@spectaclemakers.com](mailto:masterwardens@spectaclemakers.com) or look out for adverts when vacancies arise. We'd love you to be involved.*



# FREEDOM AND LIVERY NEWS

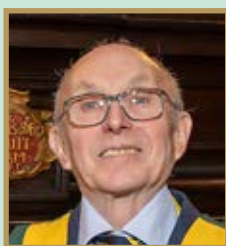
## WELCOME TO OUR NEW FREEMEN, ADMITTED SINCE 1 DECEMBER 2024:

Evgenia Anikina  
Susan Sheila Attwood  
Christopher John Beal  
Jeffrey Boyce  
Andrew David Britton  
Eluned Creighton-Sims  
Seema Kumari Flower  
Luis Alberto Oliveira Fonseca  
Russell Grant Foster

Dustgeer Garda  
Heather Giles  
Sarah Jane Gilbert  
Erica Louise Hopwood  
Katherine Mary Jerome  
Priti Kotecha  
Deepali Modha  
Paul Morris  
Lorna Jean Robinson

Parth Shah  
Amit Sharma  
Sachiv Sodha  
Barbary James Streeting  
Gillian May Thompson  
Peter David Thompson  
Siobhan Mairead Elizabeth Wren

## NEW LIVERYMEN CLOTHED ON 12 JUNE 2024



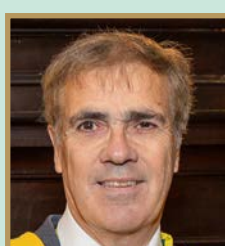
*Robert Andrew Bailey*



*Victoria Ruth Barrett*



*Anne Caroline  
Berridge-Sharp*



*Keith Dakin-White*



*Caroline Mary Emerton*



*Kevin Andrew Gutsell*



*William David Newman*

## NEW LIVERYMEN CLOTHED ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2024



*Christopher Richard  
Bentley*



*Leonard Reade Fahs*



*Vijay Kimal Tailor-  
Hamblin*



*Susan Elizabeth Kevan*

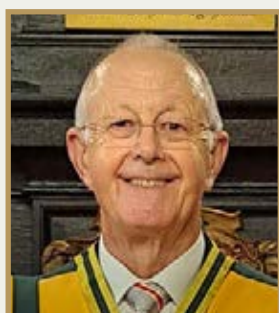


*Greg Alexander  
Richardson*



*Verinder Kaur Virdee*

## NEW LIVERYMAN CLOTHED ON 2 OCTOBER 2024



*Peter David Thompson*

**Marking the 10th anniversary of his admission as  
Beadle to the Company**



## LONG SERVICE

Congratulations to the following members who have reached significant anniversaries of their admission to the Freedom in the period 1 June - 1 December 2024. The Master and Wardens thank them for their continuing support.

### 60 YEARS+

Andrew Peter Gasson  
Gerald Peters

### 50 YEARS

Elizabeth Frances Batchelor

### 40 YEARS

Jane Bunker  
Alan Honeybone  
David Simon Howarth  
Nigel Robert Desmond Le Mare  
Ian Charles Loveday  
Robert Henry Sessions

### 25 YEARS

Heather Jane Adlam  
Wendy Allen  
Margaret Mary Arnold  
Annabel Margaret Barton  
William Thomas Barton  
Nicholas Andrew Carvallo  
Gaynor Ann Margaret Foulkes-Taylor  
Anthony Peter Garrett  
Peter Theo Alfred Gumpelmayer  
Andrew Scott Heron  
Glenn Andrew Tomison  
Frances Mary Ann Watson



*The Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America* is an open and inclusive organisation, founded in Toronto in 1979, that exists to maintain and strengthen the commercial, social and personal links with the City of London through active and engaged membership.

Whilst honouring and appreciating the traditional aspects of our connection to the City of London, we acknowledge our presence in North America, and seek to serve all our members equally.

We welcome members from all walks of life who have an interest in the City of London, whether already Freemen, or those who would like to join the ranks of this cherished institution.

Joining the Company provides members with opportunities to network and to socialise, to contribute to charitable causes and to engage in civic activities, fostering a sense of social responsibility and thereby having a positive impact on society.

Our members commit to observing the highest code of personal and professional ethics, and we extend to them the support and fellowship that comes from belonging to a community of like-minded individuals.

Our members commit to observing the highest code of personal and professional ethics, and we extend to them the support and fellowship that comes from belonging to a community of like-minded individuals.

Although we are a young Company, relative to the City of London, we embrace many of its rich historical traditions and customs. Membership offers the opportunity to participate in the preservation of these traditions, ensuring they last for future generations, whilst at the same time, we look to the future and aim to attract talent from the widest possible audience.

For further information, please contact the Clerk at  
[clerk@freemenlondon.org](mailto:clerk@freemenlondon.org)

## IN MEMORIAM

Andrew Lawrence Blakesley  
Maurice Norman Zack  
Christopher Lawson Clarke

## NEWS FROM NORTH AMERICA

Freeman Krista Woods, who lives a couple of hours away from Toronto, was delighted to have the opportunity to attend a meeting of The Honourable Company of Freemen of the City of London of North America in September, where the then Lord Mayor, Alderman Michael Mainelli, had a "fireside chat" with the Canadian Director of Trade and Investment and leaders of several major financial institutions. It was also a pleasure for her to meet the Honourable Company's Warden and Deputy Master, Helen Field, who for many years was the heart and soul of organisation of the Lord Mayor's Show, assisting the Pageant Master, Dominic Reid OBE. Helen helped to run 12 Lord Mayor's Shows before retiring and emigrating to Canada in 2020.



*Freeman Krista Woods meets a Lord Mayor*



*Krista meets Rob Andrews and Helen Field*



# CORPORATE SUPPORTERS' UPDATE

## **SPECSAVERS** are proud to be a Silver corporate supporter of the Company.

In a strange way, the roots of connection to WCSM go back to 1950 when the Co-Founder of Specsavers, Dame Mary Perkins' father, George Leslie Bebbington, qualified as an Ophthalmic Optician. He was registered as an FSMC on 16th January 1951, number 9667 on the Company's list of Fellows. He had attended night school several evenings a week after work in a chemist's shop each day and then took the exams in London.

Dame Mary grew up helping her father in his independent practice (2 rooms on a first floor in Bristol – sharing a waiting room with a doctor!) and she naturally decided to follow in his footsteps by attending Cardiff College of Advanced Technology in 1962. This was later incorporated into Cardiff University but some Livery members might remember Mr Tuck?! This was an era when girls did not do science at school, so in 1962 Dame Mary was one of just 5 females studying Visual Optics. The rest, as they say, is history! Dame Mary and husband Doug Perkins were clothed as of the Livery together, in December 2002 and have extended their support for the Company by encouraging many of their 2,000 plus optical partners in the Specsavers Group in the UK to join the livery, as well as others closely linked to the profession.

Specsavers endorses apprentices to be nominated for recognition under The City of London Corporation's "Master Certificate Scheme". This celebrates excellence and encourages career progression. It is always a difficult selection, as the Specsavers Group currently have nearly 700 apprentices across its stores (over 1,000 in the UK) and large manufacturing plants in the UK. The apprentices who have received awards in the past have been technicians, optical assistants and clinical assistants and all have been fantastic ambassadors.

2024 marks the 40 year anniversary of Specsavers and the purpose has remained powerful throughout that time: to change lives through better sight and hearing. An important element of the values of the company is to nurture its people helping everyone to feel valued, cared for and supported in achieving their full potential, at the same time supporting local communities, protecting the planet and sourcing responsibly to ensure the Group can sustainably make a difference. And it's something that's not carried forward by one person or one management team. It involves 5,500 partners – their outstanding leadership skills and the joint venture partnership model underpin the success of the Specsavers Group. We are pleased to be able to help the Company as a corporate supporter.



*The Diploma Certificate for Dame Mary's father, George*



## STEPPER, Silver Supporter

Over the last year, STEPPER EYEWEAR has been actively expanding its range to meet the diverse needs of global spectacle wearers, introducing new models in European Fit, Asian Fit, and African Fit. This year, we launched the new STEPPER Start paediatric frames, featuring the Alpha Fit, designed with precise measurements by Liveryman Dr Alicia Thompson to support children's facial development as they grow.

At SILMO Paris, we were especially honoured to see Hans Stepper, the founder and visionary behind STEPPER EYEWEAR, recognised with the esteemed SILMO IOA certificate by the International Opticians Association, celebrating his lasting contributions to eyewear design and comfort.

We value our connection with WCSM as the oldest optical organisation in the world and are pleased that members of associated companies in Germany, Italy and Brazil are also now Freeman and Liverymen of the Company, increasing its international membership and reach.

Stepper has just agreed to become a Gold Supporter from Spring 2025.

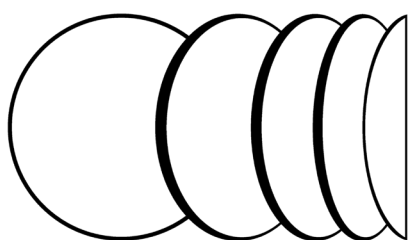


*Stepper World Fit campaign*



*Hans Stepper receives his award from the IOA (International Opticians Association)*

## CANTOR & NISSEL, our first Bronze Supporter, has recently rebranded to CANTOR BARNARD.

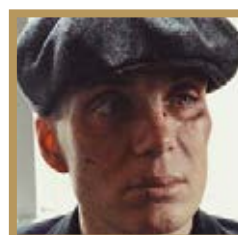


[www.cantorbarnard.co.uk](http://www.cantorbarnard.co.uk)

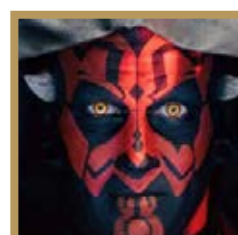
"The time has come for an update of company name to reflect the advances and change of management of our business. Garth Barnard has been with the company for 37 years and will be taking the business forward with steady expansion planned and some exciting new products to be announced in 2025. The name change reflects his overall responsibility for the company. I am not retiring and will continue as chairman with overall charge of financial control, company direction and new products. The company will stay in our private ownership, we have been an independent laboratory for sixty years and that will not change.

*David Cantor, Chair*

Advances in manufacturing techniques, product development, changes in regulatory affairs in the UK, Europe and worldwide and media relations are all handled by our specialist team at our Brackley laboratory. You can see some of the specialist projects in the attached photos – just marvel at the skill involved in colour matching and hand painting lenses to this level of detail."



*Peaky Blinders*



*Darth Maul Makeup*

## MYERS LA ROCHE, Bronze Supporter

2025 is set to be a celebration year for Myers La Roche as we mark our 40th anniversary. Started back in 1985 by Liveryman Patrick Myers and his late wife Christina, the business is still very much a family concern with their daughter, Liveryman Georgina Myers and business partner Dominic Watson (pictured) now at the helm.

Although perhaps primarily known for our successful practice sales work, we started as business consultants and have built on this expertise over the past 40 years. Today we continue to help independent optical business owners to improve their own skills whilst growing their businesses.

We have particular expertise in exit planning and succession planning, and we have been trusted by hundreds of practice owners at all stages of their business ownership journey. We continue to treat all our clients as long-term partners to ensure that they can trust our impartial advice rather than ever feeling pressured into a course of action. This philosophy has guided us over the past 40 years and will continue to do so for years to come and our corporate support for WSCM builds on those same principles - an enduring relationship built on mutual trust and respect, listening to practice owners and always looking for "better vision for all".



*Dominic Watson and Georgie Myers*

## ELIOS VISION INC. Bronze Supporter

Cataract surgery is the most routinely performed surgery in the world with approximately 32 million procedures performed each year. Up to 20% of patients who need cataract surgery also have glaucoma. However, even though cataract surgery provides an optimal window for glaucoma treatment, it is yet to become a routine consideration for cataract patients.

At Elios Vision, we see an opportunity to address one of the most common causes of blindness in the world – glaucoma, during the most commonly performed surgical procedure in the world – cataract surgery.

Our goal is to make combining both cataract and glaucoma treatment the new standard of care with a procedure which uses an innovative excimer laser to create microscopic openings in the trabecular meshwork, and hence facilitate aqueous outflow.

At Elios Vision, we are honoured to be able to support the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers – after all, we share the same ethos; that of 'better vision for all'.



*Liveryman Matt Coleman,  
Head of Marketing; Elios Vision Inc*





# THIRTY YEARS OF ECLOS

An Eye Clinic Liaison Officer is an essential person for any patient who has just been told by their ophthalmologist that they have sight loss, or are likely to face sight loss at some point in the future.

The role of the ECLO is to offer a point of contact for anyone seeking emotional support, further help, advice or assistance for themselves or their carers.

The ECLO can:

- provide emotional and practical support
- discuss how to lessen the impact eye conditions may have on a person's life
- help patients to come to terms with their sight loss
- discuss practical adjustments that could enable someone to keep being the person they are, or be the person they want to be and live life to the full
- make referrals to other agencies that can help, including local charities, social services, organisations offering sport and cultural activities and government departments
- provide a link to clinical staff
- complete CVIs (Certificates of Vision Impairment) and ensure that patients are registered in a timely manner
- ensure that patients understand the benefits of registration
- be an advocate generally for patients and help to explain the physical and emotional effects of diagnosis to family members, friends and other health professionals with whom a patient will come into contact.

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists considers ECLOs as integral to meeting the needs of patients in hospital eye units.

A study published in 2019, with support and funding from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), highlighted the importance of ECLOs. It showed that ECLOs were critical in enabling more patients to move through the system, and to do so in an atmosphere of sensitivity and care.

5 years later, there is increased pressure on all eye clinic staff and that includes ECLOs

ECLOs are a core patient service within ophthalmology. Where ECLOs are part of the clinic, they have a dramatic impact on patients' quality of life.

RNIB is the single largest employer of ECLOs. ECLOs are also employed by local sight loss charities, Local Authorities and the NHS but all are trained and working in accordance with RNIB training and standards, and there is a documented quality framework. ECLOs generally need to have a qualification in rehabilitation, nursing, health & social care, occupational therapy, or optometry before undertaking the RNIB's recognised "Eye Clinic Support Studies" training course, which is accredited by City St George's University in London.

Liveryman Anna Tylor, Chair of RNIB is a passionate advocate for the work of ECLOs.

"Sometimes, a job title cannot convey the real impact of the human beings who undertake that vital role. The importance and contribution of ECLOs cannot be overstated. Experiencing a sight loss diagnosis can upend a person's world and shatter their confidence. Simply having a listening, expert ear during this difficult time can be life changing.

Almost 75,000 individuals affected by sight loss were supported by an RNIB ECLO in the last year, including over 13,500 relatives and carers. If you or someone you know would like to contact your nearest ECLO, visit the RNIB website and search 'ECLO', or call the RNIB helpline on 0303 123 9999.

.



*Freeman Marek Karas and ECLO Areez Jivraj speaking to Marsha de Cordova MP*



## THE TALE OF THE LORGNETTES – a gift fit for a Lady Mayoress

In July 2024, thanks to the generosity of Past Master Christine Tomkins, the Company received a significant treasure, in the form of a beautiful pair of lorgnette spectacles presented to Dame Laura R. Marshall, Lady Mayoress and “The First Lady Admitted On The Livery Of The Company”, on 25th September 1919.



*A gift fit for a Lady Mayoress*



*The lorgnettes presented to Dame Laura Marshall,  
1st female Liveryman*



*The lorgnette's handle*

Dame Laura was the wife of Sir Horace Brooks Marshall, later Viscount Marshall of Chipstead KCVO, PC, Master of the Company and Lord Mayor of the City of London from 1918-19. Dame Laura and her daughter Gwendoline were noted for their charity and benevolent work during the war and the The London Metropolitan Archive has images of her making a speech and presenting service awards at a Victory celebration fete in Poplar in 1919.



*Dame Laura Marshall*

The Master and Wardens are very grateful to Past Master Christine Tomkins for her gift, secured by bidding in an online auction, after being tipped off by a Past Master Apothecary from her Past Masters' Association. Christine says it was her first ever online bid and she was “rather thrilled” to have won. The lorgnettes, while in very good condition, were obviously much loved and used by Dame Laura and had been in the Marshall family “vault” untouched for at least 50 years, according to the auction house. It was a very fitting treasure presented to the 4th Female Master of the Company by the 2nd female Master, and was displayed with pride to the current Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress in the presence of the 3rd female Master, Felicity Harding, while visiting Mansion House in September to present the traditional craft of spectacles. graciously supplied and fitted by Hawkes and Wainer of Leadenhall Market.





*Dame Laura opening the Victory Fete in Poplar, July 1919*

Further discoveries have since emerged from sources held in the Guildhall Library. The minute book for 1919 sadly does not tell us the name of the manufacturer of the item, nor which optician, if any, was tasked with establishing Dame Laura's prescription. It does confirm that the lorgnettes were made of tortoiseshell and presented in a lizard skin case and that the Lady Mayoress was extremely pleased by the gift both of the lorgnettes and her admission to Livery. "The Lady Mayoress gracefully thanked the Court for the useful gift and the congratulations offered to her, expressing her pride at being the first Lady to be admitted on the Livery".

It also reveals that the campaign for "lady Liverymen" was led by the Senior Past Master of the time, Sir Marcus Samuels, later Viscount Bearsted, the founder of the Shell Transport and Trading Company. He was known to be passionate about the proposed change and, when a business commitment called him elsewhere, the Court agreed that they simply could not discuss the matter without him. When the



*Hayley and Ivan Wainer discuss the lorgnettes with the Lord Mayor and Past Master Christine Tomkins*

meeting was reconvened, allowing him formally to submit the proposal, it was seconded by The Rt Hon The Lord Burnham and unanimously agreed by the Court.

Sir Marcus Samuel was a pioneering and extremely successful businessman. He was responsible for putting the Company's finances on a stronger footing than ever before and when he died he left to the Company a considerable bequest of shares, providing the bedrock for today's more diverse investment portfolio.



*At Mansion House for the presentation of spectacles to the 2024 Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress*

## A brief look at The Sterrops, by Devon Masarati

Browsing through the 'Register of Apprentices bound in the Company of Spectaclemakers', I discovered that a family, the Sterrops, appeared a number of times. The family were particularly interesting since a reasonable number of young people were apprenticed to women in one particular line of Sterrops, the line starting with Thomas Sterrop. Why was I even looking at the Register? Because during a session with my optician, John Fried, I mentioned that I had become interested in Livery companies and he suggested that I look at his company, informing me that the Spectacle Makers had been chartered in 1629.

The first appearance of a Sterrop is in the apprentice records shows that 'Thomas Styrop, son of Ralph Styrop, a clothier of Worcesterr,' was apprenticed to Thomas King on November 20th 1672. Thomas King died and the apprenticeship was probably transferred to his widow (who continued with the business and received a horrific fine of £20 - the equivalent of a year's wages for a maidservant - in 1677/8).

This is an example of the difficulties presented by spelling a name in any way that satisfied the writer at the time. The Court Records of the Spectacle Makers have Sterrop written also as Styrop, Stirrop, and Storrop (and in Ancestry it is transliterated by AI to Starrove!).

Thomas Sterrop and his male descendants tended not to be long lived thus giving their wives a chance at becoming apprentice mistresses. This Thomas Sterrop is shown in Court Records as slowly proceeding from his apprenticeship until he became Master shortly before he died.

Thomas was admitted as a Freeman in 1679, he married Jane, and their son Thomas, was born in 1687. In 1683 Thomas was elected to the Court of Assistants. He was proposed Under Warden three times, finally being elected in 1689. He finally was elected Warden in 1701. He appears in the Court Records until 1708 and probably died in around 1710. Certainly Jane Sterrop appears in the Court Records in May 1710 when Henry Constable was bound to 'Jane Sterrop widow of Thomas Sterrop late Citizen and Spectaclemaker of London'. A total of seven apprentices were bound to Jane, with the last of the records referring to Jane as 'Citizen and Spectaclemaker', indicating her Freedom and standing within the Company and City. One of her apprentices, William Barker, married Mary Sterrop, clearly allowing for the trade to remain within the family. Jane was successful enough as an apprentice mistress that an apprentice, William Cox, was turned over to her from William Johnson three years into his apprenticeship.

In 1711, Thomas (junior) married Mary Phipps and, according to Court Records, began taking apprentices from 1714, including Mary's younger brother in 1718.

Apprentices followed, as did children. There is evidence of at least two children from the marriage of Thomas and Mary -

Thomas, who was apprenticed out of the Spectaclemakers and George, who followed in the family trade. The Sterrops were doing well - they are mentioned as being owners of Chinese porcelain indicating the achievement of a good lifestyle since chinaware was seen as a luxury.

Thomas Ribright, apprentice, was bound to Thomas Sterrop in 1726, but, like his father, Thomas Sterrop died young (probably early 40s) in 1728 and was buried in the churchyard of St Faith under St Paul's. Mary Sterrop, probably with the support of her mother in law, Jane, kept the business going and her younger son George was apprenticed to her in 1730 and was followed by three more apprentices. Again, the pattern of women taking on apprentices and running the business seems to have proved successful.

George himself first appears as an Assistant to the Court in 1741, an indication that the business was doing well, and in 1742 he was married to Avis Jeffries, a minor, by special licence. Five children rapidly followed and the parish register for the baptism of one daughter Mary (1748) is interesting because the address given in the margin is St. Paul's Churchyard, suggesting they were living over the shop. George became Master in 1750. George who wrote his will in April 1756 died less than a month later, like his father, in his early 40s. None of the children carried on the trade and the premises at 59 St. Paul's Churchyard were acquired by Pater Dollond after George's death.

There is a wealth of information to be discovered from the apprentice records of livery companies in the City of London. Sources have never been more available online but nothing can match seeing an original record, ordered from the London Metropolitan Archive or Guildhall Library. I look forward to sharing more of my research about the people who were Spectacle Makers centuries ago with my fellow modern day Spectacle Makers, now that I am a Freeman myself.

*Devon Masarati*



*The Masters' Board in the office, showing several Sterrops or Stirrops*





# THE SPECTACLE MAKERS' CHARITY

Registered Charity No 1186122  
(England & Wales)

## CHARITY UPDATE 2023 – 2024

My first duty as Chair must be to thank the Deputy Master and the 100 people who sponsored her tremendous act of bravery in completing the St Thomas' abseil challenge. With Gift Aid, this has raised over £10,000 which we will put towards the introduction of a new bursary programme providing support for people with visual impairment. We intend to pilot this in 2025 to ensure an accessible application process and commence in 2026, repeating annually as we approach our 400th anniversary.

Our student bursary scheme is live, and we are receiving applications from all over the UK. Twenty students will be selected by the Trustees in February to receive awards of up to £1,000. We also offer travel and professional development awards for young ophthalmologists in training, who may need to present their work, collaborate with research partners and/or take up fellowships outside the UK. The application form and details are on our website and the Trustees will consider each case individually. We have not made very many ophthalmology award applications in the last couple of years and are keen to make the scheme more widely known so please do pass on the information if you know of an ophthalmologist in training who might need a little extra help. Again, awards can be for up to £1,000.

In December, you will be able to access our 2023 - 2024 Impact Report in the Charity section on the WCSM website. <https://www.spectaclemakers.com/charity/our-impact>

The charitable grants we have made since March 2024 can be found in the list below. As you can see, they range across several different categories, within and outside the UK. Every application is reviewed individually and often the Trustees will also see if we can be of more help by providing information or connections, instead of, or as well as a monetary donation. Do have a look at the list of beneficiaries and the interesting projects happening to help vision impaired people and their families and see where all your regular monthly contributions and donations have been put to good use.

For those who do not yet make regular donations, you can set this up by going to the 'Donate by standing order' page. <https://www.spectaclemakers.com/donate-via-standing-order>. You can also give regularly, or on a one-off basis, with a debit or credit card: <https://www.spectaclemakers.com/charity/how-to-give-to-the-spectacle-makers-charity>.

We also have a 100 Club, run very ably by Liveryman Sheila Hope, with the net proceeds going directly to the Charity. You or members of your family over the age of 16 can sign up to pay £100 per year and be entered into the draws in June and December for a chance to win one of the 8 prizes of £250 or even the Star Prize in December of £1,000. We would like to reach full membership next year. Please do support and look out for the announcement when it comes out in the Spring.

On behalf of all the Trustees and all those who will benefit from your generosity, thank you for your support.

*Dr David Parkins, Chair of Trustees  
The Spectacle Makers' Charity*

THE SPECTACLE MAKERS CHARITY - GRANTS APRIL- NOVEMBER 2024				
Date agreed	Organisation and project	General Fund	Education /Research	Category
Jun-24	Bucks Vision - for support for a befriending scheme (non-staff costs).	£1,000		Information and support
Jun-24	VISION 2020 LINKS continuation of the Glaucoma-NET project in Nigeria, funds through the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. (3rd and final tranche)	£9,988		Support for international eye health education & training
Jun-24	Croydon Vision - for an additional handheld magnifier in their "Tech for Good" hub	£1,100		Information and support
Jun-24	National Theatre - for audio description and touch tours of performances	£5,000		Arts & culture (accessibility)
Jun-24	Retina UK- for a research project involving construction of a photoreceptor cell within a retina.		£2,500	Research
Jun-24	Ophthalmology travel /professional development award		£1,000	
Oct-24	See Kenya - funding for a pop-up & longer term permanent clinic in Kenya	£2,000		Support for non-UK eye health care provision
Oct-24	East Sussex Vision Support - specialist IT and online support for 188 VI people	£3,500		Information and support
Oct-24	Fen Tigers Goalball - hosting of a European Club Competition at Oundle School, 21-23 February 2025	£2,000		Sport
Oct-24	Visibility Scotland - pilot project on diet & nutrition for children & families	£3,500		Information and support
Oct-24	Vision Care for Homeless People - Glazing Range Improvement Project	£1,620		Employment & Training
Oct-24	Henshaw's - Winter activities programme for children with sight loss in Merseyside	£1,436		Sport
Oct-24	Jermyn Street Theatre - audio description of a performance of "Eurydice"	£800		Arts & culture (accessibility)
Nov-24	Lincoln & Lindsey Blind Society Trust - funding to train volunteers to help beneficiaries complete and submit benefit claims	£2,055		Information and support
Nov-24	Northern Ballet - live touch tours and audio description of a new children's ballet, Hansel and Gretel	£3,000		Arts & culture (accessibility)
Nov-24	Treloar Trust - light sensory therapy trolley for young vision impaired people	£3,250		Information and support
Nov-24	VocalEyes - training for new audio describers from different ethnic backgrounds	£2,000		Arts & culture (accessibility)
Nov-24	Northampton Association for Blind and Visually Impaired People - funding for two part time volunteers to help support and co-ordinate the ECLO service	£3,000		Information and support
	<b>GRANTS IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR TO DATE</b>	<b>£45,249</b>	<b>£3,500</b>	
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>£48,749</b>		





# THE MASTER'S JAUNT TO SUSSEX

Nutbourne Vineyard and West Dean College near Chichester proved to be an excellent location for Liz Shilling's Master's "Jaunt" in September. It was a Jaunt because some people came just for one day, with minibuses and taxis laid on for those travelling from London and back but we stayed for both Friday and Saturday!

Friday took us by minibus past the Goodwood Racecourse and through beautiful countryside to the Nutbourne Vineyard near Pulborough, where Peter Gladwin described his family's history of purchasing and developing the vineyard and farm. We were then able to sample the wines before and during a most excellent lunch before heading for our accommodation at West Dean.

Not like any other college we have visited, West Dean is a country house estate, with its origins dating back to 1086. There, guests gathered in the Old Library for an informal buffet supper. It's so good on these occasions to have time to chat to other members and there is almost always a connection that you didn't realise before.

Saturday involved a very interesting exclusive tour of West Dean House, when we learnt more of the history and the life of Edward James and his creative partnerships with surrealist

artists such as Salvador Dali. We were shown the famous Mae West's Lips sofa, and the Lobster Telephone as well as two specially designed tiny staircases, one carpet printed with the footsteps of Edward James' wife and the other, of his dog!). Then we were treated to a guided tour by head gardener, Tom Brown, of the fabulous walled gardens, which form just part of the extensive grounds.

The West Dean estate was inherited by Edward James, who after WW2 felt it should be set up as an educational community, where the techniques of craftsmanship could be preserved and taught. For the whole weekend while we were there, short courses were taking place in all sorts of creative subjects, with fellow guests talking about their practical sessions in Japanese woodblocking, tapestry making, bookbinding, garden design and creative writing.

Some of us might have liked to join in but sadly, the weekend was over in just a blink of an eye...

*Jane de Courcy (Liveryman) and Nigel Primmer (Freeman)*



*The Master and Past Master Mistress at West Dean College*



*Coffee in the sun at Nutbourne Vineyard*



*Footprint stairs at West Dean College*



*Walking through the vineyard*





# SOCIETY TOURS AND LOCAL GATHERINGS

## **Crockham Hill, Kent – 10 June**

(organised by Janet and Martin Davies)

The 15 Liverymen and Freemen who gathered on a hot day on the border of Kent and Surrey quickly discovered that 10 of them live within about 3 miles of each other. That's the joy of a local gathering!



*Liverymen and Freemen at the pub in Crockham Hill, Kent*

## **Birmingham – 19 July**

(organised by Liveryman Brad Parkes)

Conversations flowed at the local gathering in Birmingham, joined by staff members from Aston University. Subjects included awards, modern technological advancements in optics, AI, and clear lens extractions with Intra Ocular Lens implants.



*Hotel du Vin, Birmingham*

## **Liverpool – 19 June**

(organised by the Master, Liz Shilling)

The Master hosted a gathering for members from Merseyside and North Wales. Ophthalmology, dispensing, lens manufacturing and orthoptics (of course) were all represented.



*Hope St Hotel, Liverpool*

## **Medway Yacht Club, Kent – 23 August**

(organised by Liz and John Shilling)

Fish and chips was on the menu for the gathering at the Medway Yacht Club. The Club rather quickly ran out of white wine!



*Medway Yacht Club had to send out for more supplies!*

## Wimbledon July 2024

Society members enjoyed a great afternoon out at All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club. We had a wonderful tour around the grounds. We visited the outer and main courts and learnt how they were looked after and maintained. We saw Henman Hill where all the big screens show the play on the main courts. We also were taken to the Press Box where reporters from around the world gather to comment and analyse the tennis.

The tour was followed by a trip to the museum which includes all the different clothing worn and tennis rackets used since the club was first founded in July 1868 and the Gentlemen's and Ladies singles match trophies.

*Amanda Lees*



*Love all at Wimbledon*

## SiLMO Paris, 23 September

(Liverymen Peter Reeve and Fiona Anderson)

Here is a group of Liverymen from England, Denmark, Germany and Guernsey at SiLMO Paris in September.



*An international line-up at SiLMO, Paris*

## Hellfire Caves, Buckinghamshire – 27 September

(organised by Freeman Andrew Pitman)

On September 27th a small group of Spectacle Makers visited the “Hellfire Caves” in West Wycombe, Bucks. We were treated to a personal guided tour of the caves made famous by the notorious Hellfire Club founded by Sir Francis Dagwood in the 18th Century. Tea afterwards was a much more civilised 21st Century affair and thoroughly enjoyed!



*At the Hellfire Caves Cafe, September 2024  
Les, Barbara, Caroline, Julia, Nicola, Bartha and Andrew  
enjoy a sedate cup of tea.*

## Newmarket, October



*Essex met Suffolk at Newmarket  
thanks to Gaynor Foukes-Taylor*

**Next, we're going North... Upper Warden Fiona Anderson will be in Glasgow for the EyeCare conference in January and would love to see any Company members who are there.**





## INTER-LIVERY PETANQUE



*Victorious Spectacle Makers at the Presentation of the Coopers' Cask trophy*

A humid summer evening under the trees in Vauxhall's Pleasure Gardens in South London saw over 100 people from 24 different Livery Companies arrive to take part in the annual Inter-Livery Pétanque Competition. The Spectacle Makers were entering for the first time and we managed to field 2 teams.

It's officially a friendly competition but the tension mounted as the teams progressed through each round and points became every more tightly contested. Thank goodness for independent judging by London Petanque Club members!



*It was SO close....*



*The Spectacle Makers Teams*

With no established team tactics, a last minute substitution of Samuel Ranger for his pre-registration optometrist brother Henry because of a late-running clinic, and barely 15 minutes of practice, we were really just expecting to have fun - but as the evening progressed the wine flowed, and things suddenly became clear: The WCSM teams (or at least, one of them) were actually winning!

Team B, comprising Past Master Nigel Haig-Brown, Liveryman Lucia Pelosini and the Clerk's Assistant Jenny were sadly eliminated but Team A (David Parkins, Chair of the Charity demonstrating his leadership with Samuel and Bob Ranger), continued their winning streak to end the night victorious and claim the trophy.

The teams were ably supported and cheered on loudly by supporters Sue, Claire, Giuseppe and the Helen the Clerk, who had the task of transporting home the trophy in a paper carrier bag through torrential rain. It survived, and now proudly sits in the Spectacle Makers' office, engraved to recall for years to come this stupendous sporting achievement.

It was a fantastic, fun and fraternal evening. We are determined to defend the title with vigour in 2025 and urge you all to come along and join in.

*Bob Ranger*



*Bob & Samuel Ranger with team captain David Parkins*



# COMPANY AND SOCIETY CALENDAR 2025

Please book for events via the members' area of the website. New events are always announced in the WCSM e-newsletters. Timings and dates are subject to change, and more events will be added throughout the year so please log on regularly to the members' area for the latest information.

Friday 20 December 2024 - Thursday 2 January 2025	Office closed
Tuesday 7 January, 6.30-7.30 pm	Eye-to-Eye: Unseen City – Behind the Livery Halls' doors
Wednesday 8 January, 2.30-5.30 pm	Society Pantomime: Robin Hood at the London Palladium
Sunday 19 January, 4-6pm	Eyecare Glasgow and Spectacle Maker gathering organised by Fiona Anderson (contact details in the members' directory).
January/February – date TBC	Local gathering, Turner Contemporary Gallery, Margate
Tuesday 4 February, 6.30-7.30pm	Eye-to-Eye: Latest news on Glaucoma
Monday 24 February, 7pm	Society Virtual Event: The History of George III (on Zoom)
Saturday 1 March, 5pm	WCSM session on the Main Stage at 100% Optical, Docklands: New discoveries in Glaucoma, by Professor Ted Garway-Heath
Monday 3 March, 5-10.30pm	Inter-Livery Bridge Tournament at Drapers' Hall
Tuesday 4 March, 12-3pm	Shrove Tuesday Inter-Livery Pancake Races, Guildhall
Tuesday 4 March, 6.30-7.30pm	Eye-to-Eye: The Spectacle Makers' Charity – recent grants
Thursday 13 March 2025, 12.30-3.15pm	Court Luncheon at Apothecaries' Hall
Tuesday 18 March, time TBC	Society Tour of Temple Place, London
Monday 24 March, 12.30-2.30	Society Chair's Handover Lunch, Ironmongers' Hall
Friday 28 March, 10.30-3pm	United Guilds Service at St Paul's Cathedral, followed by a buffet lunch at Apothecaries' Hall
Tuesday 1 April, 6.30-7.30pm	Eye-to-Eye: On eagles' wings (affiliated RAF and ATC units) - TBC
Sunday 13 April	Society Tour of Lords' Cricket Ground
Monday 28 April 2025, 6.30-10.30pm	2025 Livery Dinner at Merchant Taylors' Hall
Tuesday 6 May, 6.30-7.30pm	Eye-to-Eye: Helping the World Come Alive - Green Spaces and Smart Specs
May (date TBC)	Society Wine Tasting, Berkshire
Thursday 15 May	Inter-Livery Clay Pigeon Shooting Competition
Monday 19 May, 6.30-7.30pm	Eye Health for the Livery event, educating Masters and members of other livery companies, at St. Thomas' Hospital
Tuesday 3 June	Spectacle Makers' Town Hall Meeting on Zoom – your chance to ask questions about your Company
Thursday 5 June	Society visit to Highgrove House.
Wednesday 11 June, 12.30-3.30	Court Luncheon (booking by Liverymen only), Apothecaries' Hall
Saturday 14 June	Inter-Livery Croquet Competition, Southwick, West Sussex
Tuesday 24 June, 10.30am-3.30pm	Election of Sheriffs, Guildhall (Liverymen only), followed by a buffet lunch at Barber-Surgeons' Hall
Monday 14 July (TBC), 5.30-8pm	Presentation Evening welcoming new Liverymen and Freeman and Charity and military award winners
Thursday 31 July August (TBC)	Distillers' Inter-Livery Petanque Competition, Vauxhall
Tuesday 2 September	Eye-to-Eye: Update on Vision 2020 Glaucoma-NET project in Africa (TBC)
Friday 5 September - Sunday 7 September	The Masters' Weekend in Oxford
Monday 9 September	Society visit to Twickenham, the home of English rugby
Sunday 28 September	Sheep Drive across London Bridge (booking opens in April)
Monday 29 September, 10.30am-3.30pm	Election of the Lord Mayor, Guildhall (Liverymen only), followed by a buffet lunch at Barber-Surgeons' Hall
Wednesday 1 October, 11.30am-3.30pm	Annual Service of Remembrance, Thanksgiving & Rededication at St Bride's, Fleet St (all welcome), followed by the Court Luncheon at Apothecaries' Hall (booking by Liverymen only)
Saturday 8 November	The Lord Mayor's Show
Tuesday 4 November, 6.30-7.30pm	Eye-to-Eye: Meet the new Master
Late November/early December	The 4th Annual Spectacle Makers' Lecture – details to follow
Tuesday 9 December, 12.30-3.45pm	Court Luncheon, venue to be confirmed

**Key:** **bright green** = booking by Liverymen only, **light green** = Society events, **orange** = inter-Livery events, **no shading** – open to all.

Booking for all events will be online and places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. A waiting list will be in operation if an event sells out quickly. If you are having any trouble booking via the website please contact [administrator@spectaclemakers.com](mailto:administrator@spectaclemakers.com), or 020 7236 2932.

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