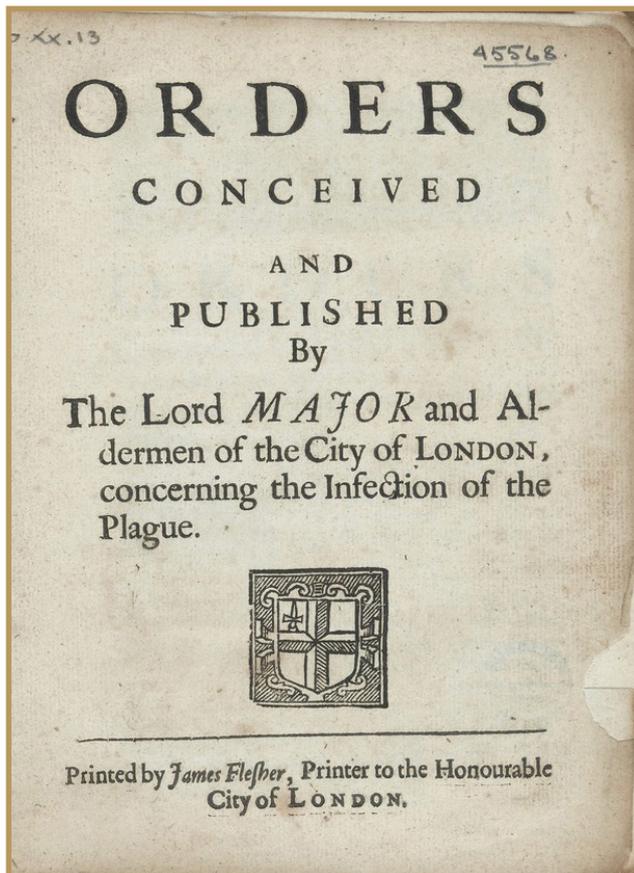




from the

MASTER & WARDENS

The newsletter of The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers



“HOW EMPTY THE STREETS ARE, AND MELANCHOLY...”

(SAMUEL PEPYS, 16 OCTOBER 1665)

Perhaps never before have the Spectacle Makers of the 21st Century felt so close to their 17th Century predecessors. COVID-19 has driven people away from London, closed shops, shut people into their homes and affected so much of our lives. Just like in 1665, we are following the Lord Mayor's instruction that “all public feasting, and particularly by the companies of this city, and dinners...be forbome till further order and allowance”.

We have no records to tell us how the 17th Century Spectacle Makers faced up to the challenges of plague. Other than the Charter of 1629 and the Bye-Laws of 1630, all Company documents dating from before 1666 are presumed to have been lost in the “Great Fire”. “Plague” was used as a general term for a large-scale outbreak of disease but there were 5 or 6 known epidemics in the century leading up to 1665, with a particularly notable episode in London in 1646. Transmission and symptoms may not have followed the same pattern in all cases and certainly the impact varied from area to area.

We know that the 1665 plague took several forms, with not just bubonic but also pneumonic plague, which attacked the lungs and spread through coughing and sneezing. We can tell from the official Plague Orders that the City authorities believed infection

was passed from person to person, and it was possible for people to infect others before, or even without, developing symptoms themselves. Quarantine measures were vital. Gatherings of people, particularly in places of high density and for non-essential purposes, had to be restricted. It's suddenly sounding all too familiar.

The members of the Royal Society in 1665 were informed that “*by reason of the present Contagion in London, which may unhappily cause an interruption as well of Correspondencies as of Publick Meetings, the printing of these Philosophical Transactions may possibly for a while be intermitted, though endeavors shall be used to continue them, if it may be*”. National and international research conferences are interrupted now too but we can at least be very thankful that research can go on and findings can be shared online. We have the huge benefit of technology, with video conferencing and social media allowing us to communicate and reach members scattered even further away, now right across the world and we at least know that vaccines are possible, given time and resource.

What we can tell, from our earliest minutes in the London Metropolitan Archive, is that the Spectacle Makers were realistic and practical people and they came through. In response to crisis, they put their heads together to make pragmatic arrangements for the continuation of Company business and to keep the community together. It's a good lesson for our generation and one we are taking very much to heart.

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A WORD FROM THE MASTER



The Master and Mistress Spectacle Maker

I trust that this finds you and your families coming through the current lockdown in good spirits. The by-line photo lies: we are nowhere near Apothecaries' Hall but safely at home. I suspect we are not the only ones now working our way through The List of Jobs Which Can No Longer Be Postponed. The wonderful weather leading up to and over Easter has made it more bearable, even if being separated from loved ones and friends has been very difficult.

Every part of life has changed. People said I would experience an extraordinary year as Master but no-one could have meant it quite like this. As this edition of the journal reminds us, not since the 17th Century can there have been a year like it. Even during the two World Wars you could go to the pub for a pint! My fellow Masters and I have probably established something of a record in unilaterally giving up Livery lunches and dinners for Lent, albeit unintentionally.

The picture in the optical world is much more serious. Many members are working in the front line of health care, caring for others in a way and on a scale they could not have imagined. We are hugely grateful to all of them. Owners of well-established practices have faced huge financial and moral debates, many having no choice but to close and furlough colleagues. Locums

find themselves without work, those studying to complete the final WCSM qualifications do not know when, or whether, they will be able to move on.

And of course those challenges affecting our members have a real and direct impact on the Company itself. We could not have come through almost four hundred years of history without the continuing contributions of Freeman and Liverymen. We want to do all we can to help support our members through this difficult time. We know that it is their commitment, and the continuing enthusiasm of the next generation, that we all should be bringing into the Company, that will sustain this Livery into its next four hundred years. Thank you to all those who have responded to the email updates, kept in contact with older or vulnerable members and kept the fellowship and spirit of the Company alive.

I am glad to have had some chance to represent the Company in public in the first few months of the year and I can now look back on some very memorable moments including discussing the state of English cricket with Sir Michael Parkinson and football with the Bishop of Norwich over breakfast.

If I had to pick out a couple of highlights, they would be a day in November when in the morning I processed along with other Masters in Westminster Abbey marking the Festival of St Cecilia.



Livery Companies processing in Westminster Abbey

To have watched over the years so many great state occasions taking place in the Abbey and then to be able to walk through the memorials to so many famous people and down the aisle into the heart of the Abbey was indeed a great privilege.

A testimonial given during their service also reminded us that “people may not always remember exactly what you said or did but they will remember how you made them feel”. That’s a very important message for Masters and all of us.

Five hours later I was processing again, this time in Canterbury Cathedral as part of ABDO’s annual Graduation Ceremony. ABDO is my professional body so to address the graduands and the assembled throng from the pulpit, in my role as WCSM Master was, as they say, living the dream.



The Master presents the WCSM prize to Natalie Skulskij



ABDO Graduands

January saw Gaynor and I, along with some sixty other Livery Masters, join the Lord Mayor, Alderman William Russell, to travel down to Alton in Hampshire for the annual visit to Treloar’s School and College for disabled young people. Founded in 1907 by the then Lord Mayor, Sir William Treloar, it relies heavily on charitable donations, a large part of which come from the City of London Corporation and the Livery. 98% of the students are in wheel chairs and 50% have a serious disability, but with a staff to student ratio of 8 to 1 the overwhelming feeling you get in the school is one of happiness. Students and staff all have smiles on their faces.

Our group was taken round by our very own Liveryman Pretty Jetwani, Head of Orthoptics at Treloars. She showed us the photography lab with ten

students on different projects. Some of these students when first entering the school could not communicate at all, yet now here they were, happy to discuss their work with a group of total strangers. Then we went on to the Research and Development area to see some of the staggering inventions they come up with, putting engineering skills, technology and sheer ingenuity together to produce practical solutions to help students. It was a truly uplifting day.

Even in lockdown the work of the Company goes on. We continue to welcome new Freemen and the wonders of modern technology mean that Committees and our Charity work can still continue. The Wardens, the Clerk and I “meet” by Zoom as much as is needed. This has proved very useful, if only for our sanity!

It’s also given us a chance to think about what more we can do to bring together members not just around this country but further away in different countries of the world. Our Membership Committee already includes 2 Liverymen who live and work in the US and we will be looking at setting up more opportunities to share experience and use the huge range of talent available within our membership.

By the time you read this we will have had a historic (but, let us hope, never again required) “virtual Livery Dinner” with toasts and speeches. Whilst it could never be the same as a full formal occasion, it was good to see and hear each other and enjoy some of the fellowship which is at the very heart of our Livery. You can read more about it on page 6.

Gaynor and I do hope that the real Livery Dinner, along with the Masters’ Weekend, can still take place but we can only wait and see what happens. Here in Newmarket we are quite used to furlongs but not furloughs! When this does end, that first glass we share will be very special. Whatever “the new normal” turns out to be, getting together again will make it one helluva party!

In the meantime please stay well and I look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

Huntly Taylor FBDO, Master



The Lord Mayor’s Visit to Treloar’s



WHAT A DIFFERENCE 3 MONTHS MAKES...

Photographs from the Court Lunches in December 2019 and March 2020 show the start of the journey towards social distancing, culminating in April's "virtual Livery Dinner".



On 10 December 2019, Apothecaries' Hall was full to capacity and the Court gathered for a group photo without a qualm.



Even if the brandy on the pudding refused to light, hearts were warmed by an appropriately timed gift from the Society to the WCSM Education Trust and news of the wedding of Court Assistants Marc Bennett and Hayley Wainer.



The Society Chairman presents a cheque to the Chairman of the WCSM Education Trust



Confetti for Hayley and Marc

Just 3 months later, fears really began to escalate, just a few days before the spring Court Luncheon. The seating plan changed at least 11 times between Saturday evening and Tuesday morning as guests who felt vulnerable quite understandably decided to stay at home.

We followed public health advice at the time, tried out greetings other than the usual handshakes and hugs of the receiving line and encouraged everyone to wash hands thoroughly with hot water and soap, backed up with additional high-alcohol strength hand sanitiser between the admissions of new Liverymen in the Court Room. Gloved staff with tongs served bread and sugar cubes to avoid dishes being passed along the tables. We took sensible precautions.



Namaste

Just two weeks later, the office and Apothecaries' Hall had been closed, the Livery Dinner postponed and all Society events cancelled for the foreseeable future.

With many Livery Halls closed and catering staff furloughed, City hospitality will take a while to recover. The June Court luncheon will not go ahead, regardless of whether there is more positive news before then. We will take advice before resuming plans for any major events. Updates are going out regularly by email and we will keep the website updated on the home and Society pages at www.spectaclemakers.com.

On 16 April, it was announced that Alderman William Russell will remain as Lord Mayor of the City of London for a further year to provide continuity. The Sheriffs, Alderman Michael Mainelli and Christopher Hayward, will also continue in office. There will be no election of Sheriffs in Common Hall on Midsummer's Day in 2020. Subject to election at the appropriate time, we now expect our Liveryman, Alderman Vincent Keaveny, to become Lord Mayor in November 2021 and we will make every effort to support him as originally planned, just one year later.

The Court meeting in June is the time when we elect officers for the ensuing year. The Court will have in mind what is best for the Company in terms of continuity and succession planning and it seems very likely that the current Master's term of office will also be extended. We will let you know as soon as a formal decision has been so please look out for updates by email.



Elbow bumps instead of handshakes

The Master takes wine with all his guests





VIDEO DIARY OF A VIRTUAL LIVERY DINNER

BY LIVERYMAN NEIL HANDLEY

A Virtual Livery Dinner? That will be one for the history books, the Clerk said. Strange measures for strange times indeed and I was very much up for being present at a “first” for the Company. But how to capture for the archives a record of something virtual, not real?

Well here it is, my video diary. It was distributed immediately after the event in a very modern way, on Twitter, and is now recorded for posterity and for the entertainment of the many who could not join us but were with us in spirit.

1. 56 Spectacle Makers gathered not at Plaisterers’ Hall but in our own homes. With the benefit of some instructions, we all learned how to do a Zoom meeting. We turned our computers and devices on, tried to work out our best profile for the camera and clicked the link to join the virtual Receiving Line. “Please wait” it said. “The Beadle will announce you shortly”.



Spectaclemakers gather for the first ever virtual Livery Dinner

2. Some of us dressed up for the occasion in full white tie (well, the top half, at least).



Neil Handley looking positively Edwardian

3. The Beadle introduced everyone on arrival, as Beadles do.



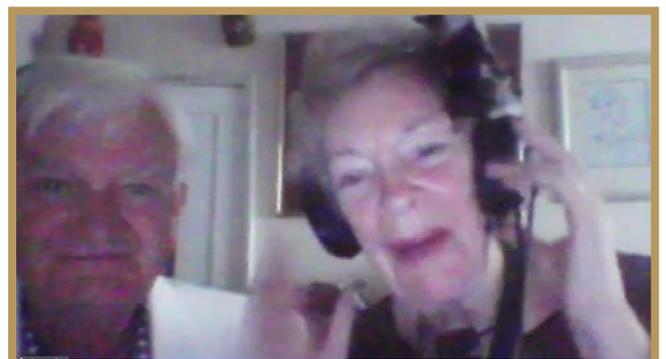
The Beadle, as serene as ever

4. Instead of Grace, the Chaplain gave a blessing, his words gently drawn out by low bandwidth in Suffolk



The Chaplain says a few words

5. Some people showed off their high-tech equipment



Past Master Felicity Harding takes to the airwaves

6. Some people selected their backgrounds very carefully. Past Master Don Grocott and Sheila Hope had managed to magic themselves (or at least their images) into Plaisterers' Hall itself while Paul Ursell chose his own cabinet of delights.



Paul Ursell puts on a show of his family certificates

7. The Master made a short speech, welcoming everyone to the Mistress's birthday party – yes, the Livery Dinner had been timed to take place on a very special day. We were joined by special guests Alderman Vincent Keaveny and Freeman Amy Thanawalla, who had won tickets for the real Livery Dinner in the Freemen's Draw. Across the Atlantic, Liveryman Bobby Braunstein and his wife Joan joked about being fully dressed in evening wear at 3pm on a New York afternoon.



The Master speaks

8. With so many people on the call, a short conversation turned into a general melee but we came back into order for the first ever virtual Loving Cup. The Clerk told each set of callers when to raise their glasses whilst an allotted protector turned their back in defence, even though they were many miles away.



Raising a glass in the Loving Cup Ceremony

9. And finally, until such time as we can meet again, the end was as traditional as ever. The Clerk's Toast rang into our front rooms, kitchens and studies, echoed by all participants and in many more Spectacle Maker homes across the land, into Europe, America and beyond.

"The Master, Wardens and Fellowship of Spectacle Makers of London, may they flourish, root and branch, for ever".



The Clerk's Toast

Note: The real Livery Dinner was postponed initially from 20 April to 13 July and will move to September or even later in the year if necessary.



FREEDOM AND LIVERY NEWS

THE COMPANY WELCOMES AS NEW FREEMEN:

Renata Sofia Mota Gomes, Alexander Lydney Harbord and Trevor Michael Timms

NEW LIVERYMEN CLOTHED IN DECEMBER 2019



Professor Robin Ali



Mr Matthew Broom



Professor Susie Downes



Mr Robert Dufton



Mr Alan King



Mrs Linda Penny

NEW LIVERYMEN CLOTHED IN MARCH 2020



Ms Laura Devine



Mrs Julie Ellis



Miss Lisa Hopkins



Dr Julie-Anne Little



Mr Marcus Weaver and Mrs Kay Weaver



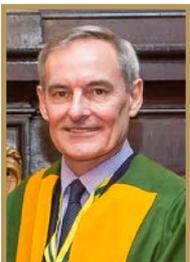
Dr Peter Morgan-Warren



Dr Joy Myint



Mrs Ruchi Pankhania



Mr James Sheldrick

IN MEMORIAM

Anthony Ernest Burden
John Frederick Cope
John Philip Gardiner
Robert Alfred Ingham (Past Master)
Kenneth Kennell
Linda Ann Pope

LONG SERVICE

The following members are congratulated on achieving significant anniversaries of their admission to the Freedom and receive our thanks for their continuing support:

40 YEARS

Mark Cameron Adams
Leslie Frederick Allen
Harold Lambert Atkinson
Helen Jayne Aylward
Guy Roderick Barnes
Marian Louise Blake
Lesley Patricia Boyd
Geoffrey David Brace

Michael Noel Charlton
Efrosyni Christodoulou
Paul Chandler Clarke
Robert Neil Common
Jane de Courcy
Annette Inge Dobbs
Claire Elizabeth Fontaine
Ngairé Jane Franklin

60 YEARS

Joyce Sylvia Cordell
Michael John Stenning
Maurice Norman Zack

John Stephen Lewis Horsfall
Jonathan Quinton Kerr
Janet Clare Jackson
Peter Norman Mitchell
James Reginald Osborne
Stephen Pierre Priem
Anne Richardson
Dawn Patricia Robinson

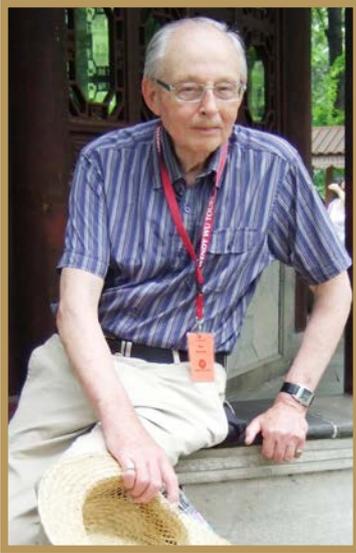
50 YEARS

Michael Carey Wheeler

Susan Elizabeth Rollinson
Finlay John Rosenburgh
Stephen David Ross
Christopher Leopold Wilkinson
Christine Anne Wood
Kevin Brian York



OBITUARIES



KENNETH KENNELL

Kenneth Henry Kennell, a longstanding Freeman of the Company, passed away on 5th January 2020 at the age of 90. He was born in Ealing, the only son of Henry and Dorothy Kennell and was often known as Tim, his enduring childhood nickname being borrowed from the cartoon character 'Tiger Tim'.

He elected to do his National Service with the RAF while his father, who had been running Oliver Goldsmith's optical laboratory, set up his own glazing house in Clerkenwell. After his time with the RAF, Ken was keen to join the optical business and attended the Northampton Polytechnic to study Optics and Ophthalmology. He faithfully attended "Class of 49" reunions throughout his life.

He opened up his own practice at Norbreck Parade, Ealing, as well running the business in Clerkenwell for some years. He retired only in 2016, latterly immensely enjoying running clinics at Wormwood Scrubs where at least, he said, the clientele were guaranteed to turn up.

Ken joined The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers in 1952 and remained an active supporter. In 2010 he was proud to witness the admission to Freedom of the City of London of his three children, Clive, Clare and Anne, two of whom have continued in the family footsteps working in eye care.



LINDA POPE

Linda Pope, the vibrant practice owner who was well known to many in optics, died in December 2019, quite unexpectedly, following routine heart surgery.

Linda trained as a dispensing optician at City and East London College where she met her soulmate, Roger, who was attracted by her "bright personality, beauty and her collection of mini-skirts". They qualified in 1970 and married the following year.

Whilst Roger's work led to a Royal Warrant for his practice in the heart of London, Linda combined motherhood with her own practice at Hawkhurst, Kent, near to the family home. Established in 1979, Linda's respected business is now owned by Liz and Hannah who first joined as 15 year old work experience trainees. Many patients recall Linda taking her Cocker Spaniel, Gruber, to work with her every day – a poignant reminder of her love of nature and animals. She will be much missed. *(Obituary by Freeman Janice English)*



PAST MASTER ROBERT INGHAM

Past Master Bob Ingham died at the end of November at the age of 91. Having lived out his retirement very peacefully in the family home he renovated in Haslemere, his wishes were that there should be no fanfare of trumpets or elaborate funeral rites following his passing. He was a quiet and thoughtful man, to the last.

Bob was not an optical professional but a retailer, first a buyer and then Director of Sainsbury's dairy business, later also taking responsibility for the bakery and off licence departments. At the time of his appointment to the Sainsbury's Board, he spoke about his enthusiasm for maintaining quality and style in areas where the organisation had always led, whilst looking for new opportunities. A similar commitment to tradition and quality characterised his time as a Spectacle Maker and his contributions to Court were much valued.

Dartnall family connections effected his introduction to the Company, his proposer being his brother-in-law, Professor Herbert Dartnall. Edgar Fincham (one of the brothers for whom the Company's silver research medal is named) seconded his application. He was admitted to the Freedom in 1961, to the Livery in 1962 and became Master in 1995, Professor Herbert Dartnall having preceded him in 1987/88. Bob's daughter Judith, a City solicitor, maintained the family tradition by joining the Company in 1991 and being clothed as of the Livery the following year. Bob is remembered as a quiet but effective Master and as an opera lover, taking great delight in driving to performances at La Scala in Milan with his wife Kathleen.

We send our condolences to the Kennell family, to Roger Pope, Kathleen Ingham, their families and all those who have lost loved ones in the last few months.



MEET A MEMBER

LIVERYMAN BOB RANGER



Bob Ranger and family

'Look into my eyes' was the start of my journey into optics, the reinforcement of the involvement of my family in the City of London and the fellowship and traditions of the WCSM.

I can attest that true love abides in the practice of optometry! Visiting an independent optician to buy a pair of glasses I was dispensed by a vision of beauty in a pink suit, named Claire. A subsequent phone call from the practice to explain a problem with my glazing gave me the opportunity to respond with "Well, you'd better come out to dinner with me!" That was twenty-three years ago, and we have lived happily ever after.

My ancestors have enjoyed significant connections with the City of London. My maternal grandfather joined the Royal Fusiliers at the Tower of London in 1914 and survived the whole conflict. After demobilisation he worked, until retirement, in Smithfield Market. My father's family lived in Gray's Inn Road and after marriage my grandparents moved to Fish Street Hill, living above the chandlery that supplied Billingsgate.

Dad was born in 1909 and attended Sir John Cass School, which still operates as the only maintained primary school in the City of London, governed by the Trustees of Sir John

Cass's Foundation. He worked at de Zoete stockbrokers until he joined the City of London Police and then the RAF in Fighter Command.

Bombed out of their home in the City, my parents moved to the calm of Buckinghamshire but my father would relate stories of his life in the City at any opportunity. He carried with pride the famous red envelope containing his Freedom everywhere he went, encouraging me to gain my Freedom as soon as I reached the age twenty-one. Sadly, he never joined a livery company.

We mortgaged everything we had to buy Hammond & Dummer in 2004. With the emphasis on quality, we built upon its founding idea of 'going upmarket', introducing business rigour and a sincere aim to care for our patients. It is now a well-known practice some eight times bigger than it was sixteen years ago.

It was a while after that, in fact only a couple of years ago, while on a walk around the City of London, that the guide mentioned livery companies and I became aware there was a Company which would bring together so many parts of my life: The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers. In trepidation, I sent off a letter, not really knowing whether one could just ask to be part of a Livery Company.

In fact, joining the Company proved to be straightforward. The Court approved my application but, while we were so busy, finding a day to come to London was going to take a while. I couldn't quite believe it when the Clerk offered to administer my preliminary Declaration in a quiet corner at Optrafair. It was quite a surreal moment. I was standing in the NEC. The old English language was a joy and the moment profound. I was the newest member and you cannot help but think of all those in optical care who have gone before.

Claire's own freedom of the Company followed a little later in London and we were hugely privileged and excited to have our names drawn out of the hat to take part in the Lord Mayor's Show in November 2018. My Dad would have been so proud, but there was still more to come. Sometime later a very special email arrived from our Clerk confirming an invitation from the Master and Wardens for me to be clothed as of the Livery. After 100 years of family history, finally a Ranger had the opportunity to be recognised as a Liveryman. What emotion! What pride! And how fantastic to be joining a Company combining that family history with our practice, fraternising with others committed to 'spectacle making'!

So, it was on with the new suit and onto the train to London. Accompanied by Claire and my actor son, Samuel, I ventured into the ancient Apothecaries' Hall surrounded by fabulous panelling and the immense friendliness of all those present.

Being ushered into the room by the Beadle with the whole of the Court waiting there could have been intimidating but no, everybody was smiling. The Clerk administered the formal declaration and then held my hand whilst I thanked all for the honour I felt. I remember so well that hand – I just hope I didn't squeeze too hard.



The Beadle knocks for entry to the Court Room

Amidst the formality, I was put at ease and shaking the hands of all the Court members was a genuine welcome to the WCSM. I now felt I was part of something much bigger and part of the living history of the Company. To all those who have yet to experience this ceremony, it is a fabulous experience and something to last in the memory for the whole of your life.

It should be obvious to all who deal with our practice the pride we have in continuing the family connections with the City whilst supporting Claire in her passion of optometry. WCSM is the culmination of my father's dream in always wanting to become a Liveryman.

It's also a heritage for all who follow, especially our children, who were then able to become Freeman themselves by patrimony. They are immensely supportive of Dad and Mum (a Freeman but not yet clothed). They recognise how special the WCSM and the City are in our lives and want the tradition to continue.

The "Rules for Life" given to us at the Freedom of the City ceremony have become inculcated in our business and the way we try to live our life. I know these values are also fundamental to our livery company and added to that is the fellowship, friendship and support the Company offers to all who join.

I would urge all in our profession and those associated with optics to consider membership of our Company. There is huge change and volatility in our profession, yet we strive for continuity and consistency. Friendship is here, understanding and knowledge. One thing is steadfast, and has been for centuries - the commitment to vision, eye health and care for those around us - and I am so proud to subscribe to that.



NEW ASSISTANT TO THE CLERK

On 3 February, we welcomed Michael Bray as the new Assistant to the Clerk. It is Michael's voice that you will now hear first on the telephone and he has settled quickly into the world of Livery, getting to grips with the differences between fines, fees and quarterage.

"Hello, my name is Michael and I am delighted to be joining the office of The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers. I am a 30-something Cornishman but now live in London's outskirts with my fiancé and 2 dogs. With a love of nature and walking I can be found outside at weekends and when taking breaks during the lockdown.

I come from a background in jewellery and watch sales. Having moved into more administrative roles in the last few years I hope to put my skills to good use. If I haven't met or spoken to you yet, I will be pleased to get to know you and the Company better. You will soon learn I love a good natter!"





BACK TO THE FUTURE:

echoes of the past still resonating today



THE COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS

On 1 March 1980, the British Optical Association, the Scottish Association of Opticians and the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers joined forces to form a single examining and qualifying body, the British College of Ophthalmic Opticians (Optometrists), now The College of Optometrists.

The process was not easy and had involved detailed discussions for several years. The first formal proposal was for a 'College of Optical Practitioners', an idea put forward in early 1977. Subsequent discussions in the optical journals referred variously to 'The Optical College' or 'College of Optics', prompting Lord Crook to declare that he had discussed the matter when chairing the Inter-Departmental Committee discussions as far back as 1949-1951.

A provisional College Council was appointed in 1977 with WCSM representation and, at its third meeting, decided to promote the establishment of a 'College of Ophthalmic Opticians', including a faculty of dispensing opticians, to open on 1 January 1978. Three referendums were required of the qualified profession until the proposal was eventually approved by a majority of 95.29%. The idea of a dispensing faculty of the College was eventually dropped in 1986 when the Company helped to establish ABDO. A leading figure in the negotiations was the late Dr Philip Cole OBE, a Liveryman and member of the Court who became the first President of the College. The Company's Clerk, Colin Eldridge, who had also held the role of Director of Examinations, was appointed as Executive Secretary of the new College, working alongside the Secretary

of the former British Optical Association, Peter Smith, until a single new appointment could be made. Until organisational restructuring in 2005 there was always a WCSM nominee on the College Council.

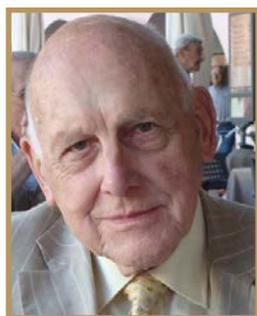
In 1987 came a name change, to The British College of Optometrists and on 18 September 1995, as The College of Optometrists, the institution received its own Royal Charter.

Much has happened in optometry in the intervening 40 years. The anniversary will be recognised in a range of ways including blogs, podcasts and an Instagram campaign. The College is also producing a booklet highlighting 40 Years of Research. Coronavirus has meant that many of the celebrations planned have had to be cancelled or postponed but perhaps the greatest measure of the success of the College is to look at its everyday work. The College can be proud of all that it has achieved and continues to do in promoting and uphold professional excellence in eye health, not least in providing important guidance to members during the current crisis.



The Company is pleased to have a continuing strong relationship with the College and with many of its members, who now choose to become Freemen and Liverymen of the Company in their own right.

Chief Executive Ian Humphreys is pictured here at the March Court Luncheon, receiving the Master's congratulations on behalf of the College.



Gerald Mee MBE

STORIES OF A PHARMACIST SPECTACLE MAKER

Thank you to everyone who has responded to the lockdown email updates with stories of their activities, hobbies and careers. Freeman Gerald Mee MBE was one of the first to respond and his email is repeated here for the benefit of all. Mr Mee is coming up to his 95th birthday.

"During this difficult time I have had plenty of opportunity to think about the past years. Nothing has ever happened in all those years like the present situation. Even during WW2 we were never completely 'confined to barracks'!!

I took my examinations in London in November 1947 and qualified as an FSMC at the age of 22, before my pharmaceutical qualification. I was called up in January 1948 for National Service in the RAF Medical Service and was almost immediately posted out to Egypt to the HQ Middle East Air Force in Abu Suer.

While there I was in charge of the Middle East Medical Stores with another pharmacist, Donald Witz, who was interested in optics so I sent home for some of my optical notes and used them to teach him the basics. Sadly, not long after our demob Donald died at an early age, and so was never able to pursue his optical interest. Before the war it was not unusual to either practice pharmacy and optics jointly in a retail establishment but, not long after we returned to civilian life, the National Health Service came into existence and following both professions at the same time proved unmanageable. In my case pharmacy took over and despite being an FSMC, I have never practiced ophthalmic optics, though I purchased a trial set of lenses, ophthalmoscope, retinoscope and numerous other optical testing items. I used these at home and only recently disposed of them on Ebay!

I became a Fellow of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society but I have always maintained my connection with the Spectacle Makers' Company and on many occasions attended national functions. Having, in those early days, learned about contact lenses, variable focus lenses, and plastic lenses - all in their infancy - I still always look forward to reports of new developments and events, which I read about in the journal.

Best wishes to you all for a speedy return to a normal way of life. - Gerald Mee FSMC. FRPharmS. ARPS [Sent from his iPad]

FREEMEN OF THE PAST

 by Ian Davies,
with thanks to retired Clerk Colin Eldridge


It could almost be a pub quiz question:

What do tennis balls, padlocks, Belgravia and The Daily Telegraph all have in common?

Going back to the years of the 1st World War, Sir Charles Wakefield (later the 1st Viscount Wakefield), founder of the Wakefield Oil company, was also a Spectacle Maker. Name unfamiliar? Well it didn't really stick 100 years ago either, and so he re-named it Castrol, named after the castor oil used in its production. He served 2 terms as Master in 1920 and 1924.

Keeping with the energy theme, at the turn of the 19th century Sir Marcus Samuel (1st Viscount Bearsted) was both Master and Lord Mayor of The City. Once again, his name might not be familiar, but the company he founded, Shell, is a name that lives on. Today's Spectacle Makers owe a debt of gratitude to Sir Marcus for the legacy of shares which, for many years, formed the basis of the Company's investment portfolio.

Famous freemen came from all over the country. This year celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Spode pottery company, founded in Stoke on Trent.

Josiah Spode II, son of the founder, established the business in London and went on to develop a recipe for fine bone china. Josiah became a freeman of our Company in the 1770's. Equally well-known businesses had Spectacle Maker freemen at their helm. Scotsman James Christie established Christie's auction house in 1766. He was a freeman and his son, also James, went on to become Master in 1818. Freeman Charles Chubb was apprenticed as a blacksmith in Winchester before establishing the Chubb Lock Company with his brother in Wolverhampton and at Cowcross Street, near Smithfield Market.

In 1885 a certain Ralph Slazenger moved from Manchester to set up a business in Cannon Street and soon became a leading manufacturer of sporting goods. His timing was impeccable and in 1902 the firm became the official supplier of tennis balls to The Wimbledon Championships. It remains the longest unbroken sporting sponsorship in history. Ralph became a Freeman of the Company in July 1907 and went on to be Aldermanic Sheriff in 1909.

It's sometimes hard to imagine what our predecessors looked like, or how the world in which they lived differed from today. Anyone who has just watched Julian Fellowes' "Belgravia" will be now be familiar with the building company of W Cubitt and Co. Well, while lead protagonist James Trenchard was meeting Thomas Cubitt in The Athenaeum Club, maybe his partner and brother William was enjoying a Court Luncheon with the Spectacle Makers. William joined the Livery in 1847 while being sole owner of the business which translated architects' designs into solid edifices. Amongst his constructions were Fishmongers' Hall, Covent Garden and the original Euston station buildings. William went on to become a Member of Parliament and served as Lord Mayor for a 2-year term starting in 1860.

The answer, found in Colin Eldridge's recently-published book, "The Spectacle Makers", is, as you might have guessed, that they all have very direct links with our Company through Freemen or Liverymen who founded businesses that became household names. Our Company has always been proud of its diverse membership. For over 250 years we have welcomed members from outside the optical professions. Many of these members had either achieved, or went on to achieve, great success in multiple fields.

Much has been written about the 32 Spectacle Makers who became Lord Mayor of The City of London, but behind every number is a name and a story.

Sir Fredrick Hoare was our last mayor, taking office in 1961.

He had followed in the family footsteps as Managing Director of C Hoare & Co, the oldest private bank in the United Kingdom and, for many years, bankers to the Company. He was the third in his family to become Lord Mayor, the 1st being in 1712. Of note during his mayoralty was his wife's establishment of the Lady Hoare Thalidomide Appeal to support those born with the devastating deformities from the drug.



Sir Frederick Hoare leads The Queen into St Paul's Cathedral, 1962



Fishmongers' Hall, built by W Cubitt and Co.

Another Past Master engaged in the building business and leaving a lasting legacy within The City and beyond was Sir William Tite, Master in 1861. Another active parliamentarian, probably his greatest claim to fame was the construction of The Royal Exchange in Mansion House Square. He was also involved in the construction of a number of railway stations in the UK and France as well as Norwood and Brookwood cemeteries. His name lives on today on Tite Street, running off the Chelsea Embankment. Sir William Tite bequeathed the Company a gift of £1,000 in 1862 (around £60,000 in today's money) to provide "pensions for 4 poor widows of deceased Liverymen of £10 per annum for each."

These insights came as a result of our past Clerk and Honorary Archivist, Colin Eldridge, trawling through minutes which until the 20th century were hand written in ink. The brand of ink used is not noted, but who knows, it too could have had a connection to the company. Dr Henry Stephens invented his famous "Blue-Black Writing Fluid" in 1832 and it was under his son, Liveryman Henry Stephens that the family firm flourished, ultimately dominating the American market. The name lives on at his mansion in Finchley which is open to the public – perhaps in future the Society may arrange a visit to Stephens House and Gardens.

Other names, maybe less known today, were giants of their time. We may think of self-help books as being a modern phenomenon, but no, one of the first, entitled with minimum imagination, "Self Help" was written in 1859 by Spectacle Maker Samuel Smiles. Smiles' career followed a somewhat circuitous route, starting as a doctor before moving on to his writing having been a railway administrator in between. "A place for everything, and everything in its place" is one of his phrases, still quoted in the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.

And then we had our publishers, Liveryman Edward Lloyd, who started selling plagiarised copies of Dickens' short stories and went on to launch "The Daily Chronicle" and "Lloyd's Illustrated London News", Lloyd is remembered today with a Blue Plaque on Water House in Walthamstow.

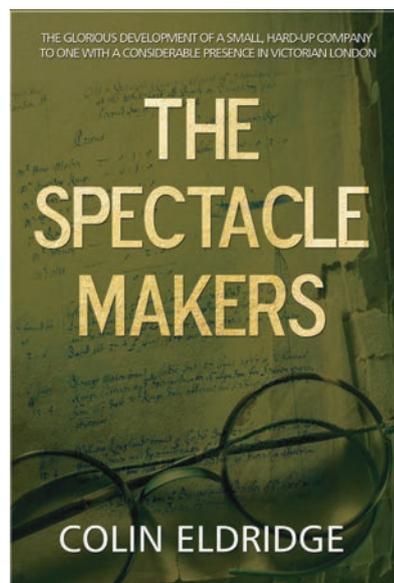
At the end of the 19th century Edward Levy was the first of his family to join our Livery. His father had founded The Daily Telegraph and he took over its running. Edward Levy was elevated to the peerage and became Baron Burnham in 1903. He was Master of the Company in 1905, a position also held by his son, Viscount Burnham, in 1909. The paper remained in family (and Spectacle Maker) hands until it was taken over by James Berry in the 1930's. The Berry family's link with the Company was maintained until 1989 when his grandson, Sir Nigel Mobbs, became Master.

And so, as we approach the "Clerk's Toast" of this look at some of our predecessors, it is maybe worth finishing with our 1897 Master, Colonel and Alderman Sir Horatio Davies. Sir Horatio had the foresight to start bottling and selling a gin-based drink containing a secret mixture of herbs and liqueurs, developed originally to aid in the digestion of oysters. Starting to sell it in his own restaurants, he went on to franchise a chain named after it and develop an export business. The drink? Pimms No. 1 cup. One of Sir Horatio's Sheriffs was another Liveryman of the company, one Thomas Dewar. Thomas took over his father's business of John Dewar and Son and, through his excellent salesmanship, created the Dewar blended whisky brand world-wide.

And so, to the next 400 years....

What names will future generations look back on and say: "I never knew they were a Spectacle Maker!?" It's up to all of us to encourage interesting individuals from all walks of life to get involved and join our commitment to better vision for all. May we flourish, Root and Branch for ever.

"The Spectacle Makers: the first 300 years in Minutes" by Colin Eldridge is published by, and available from Amazon, priced at £8.99 for the paperback edition.





THE SPECTACLE MAKERS' CHARITY

Registered Charity No 1186122
(England & Wales)

Our new Charity for 2020 has a brand new logo of its own, the colours of green and yellow echoing those of the Company and the shape being inspired by the head of one of the falcons in our Achievement of Arms, folded around to symbolise care and nurture for the individuals and charities we will be seeking to help. We had hoped to launch the new charity branding at our Showcase Day in Henley but the postponement from 3 May to 6 September means that, instead, you will get the chance to see it first in print here. You will start to see the brand being used on the website and social media as plans for the new Charity come to fruition.

Much of the legal work has now been completed and we hope to have a bank account and HMRC Charity reference for Gift Aid purposes soon. Assets will then be transferred from The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers' Charity and the WCSM Education Trust and a new body of Trustees will be ready to grow and develop our charitable work.

The new Charity has two specific purposes, bringing together and continuing the main aims of both the current charities

- 1) To help those in need by reason of vision impairment and/or sight loss; and
- 2) The advancement of study, knowledge and education in the field of optics for the public benefit, including the promotion of research in the field of optics and the publication of useful results.

"Optics" is very widely drawn and covers all those studying for, working in and researching into the correction, treatment and management of vision.

We will be communicating over the coming months with all those who already make regular donations to make necessary changes to standing orders and answer any questions you might have. We hope that all Freemen and Liverymen will want to support this new venture.

Recent Charity Grants

Until such time as its funds are transferred across, the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers' Charity is continuing to respond



A child with his mother at a local clinic in Kenya

to appeals from charities helping those with vision impairment. Recent grants include £5,000 for "Education to Employment" courses organised by Blind in Business, a charity seeking to help talented vision-impairment individuals into successful careers and £2,000 for a Sense International project in rural Kenya providing spectacles and other aids for children identified as being in need following screening for deafblindness.

The Trustees have also provided funding of £8,000 towards the costs of the World Sight Foundation's International Ophthalmic Teaching Academy project in South Africa in 2019/20.



Blind in Business course

Grants were also made to the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford, to equip new kitchens for use by students preparing for independent living, and to New College Worcester for a vital trial project in student mental health support. The Head of Fundraising from New College Worcester and the Head Girl, Miss Paige Rowe, joined us at the Court Luncheon in March.



All organisations who receive grants are required to provide a full report on the use of funds, the delivery of the project and how many people will have benefited as a result of the grants received.

Current cases of hardship

Sadly, neither the Company nor the Charities have the ability, or substantial funds set aside, to cover individual hardship caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

For any optometrist members who need help urgently at the moment, the Optometrists' Benevolent Fund can be contacted via their website <https://www.opticalbenfund.com/> or by calling the Administrative Secretary, Lynne Brown, on 01787 223800.

ABDO members experiencing severe financial difficulty can apply to the ABDO Benevolent Fund. Email j.burnand@abdolondon.org.uk or write to Jane Burnand, ABDO, 199 Gloucester Terrace, London, W2 6LD.

Finally, lab technicians and other optical workers who are not registrant professionals may be eligible for a grant from the Optical Workers' Benevolent Fund (managed by the Trustees of the Wiseman Memorial Fund). Grants will not cover significant or ongoing living expenses but may be of help in cases of short term need. Applicants should be sent to mmacritchie@fmo.co.uk



EDUCATION TRUST BURSARIES 2020

The Education Trust made 14 bursary awards in February to UK students in dispensing and optometry.

Miss W told us *"I am so thankful to have been awarded one of this year's bursaries. I never felt the joy or exhilaration of learning before, like I do with Optometry. I ordered a new laptop and bag and an ABDO rule. These arrived on my last day at university before it shut due to COVID-19! I am so grateful. The lockdown has been much less stressful with a fully functional laptop to do my work. I cannot put into words how excited I am to go back to University next year and put everything to good use."*

Alisha has also sent us an update:

"I have settled into University life here at Manchester very easily, mainly because I absolutely love my course. Everyone knows everyone and so we all support each other and offer our help. The lecturers were also quick to get to know us all. Working in clinics has been the highlight of the week but I'm enjoying learning the theory too."



Bursary Student Alisha

University campuses and clinics have closed but as much teaching as possible has moved online, allowing the programme for the next generation of optical professionals to continue.



AFFILIATIONS

Representatives from our affiliated services frequently tell us that one of the most important things we can do is to make more people appreciate the work they do.

In the last few weeks, military skills in planning, logistics and delivery, as well as direct medical and nursing assistance, have been essential. We are immensely proud of our connections with 16 Medical Regiment and 31 (Middlesex Yeomanry and Princess Louise's Kensington) Signal Squadron).



The Squadron on parade at Guildhall

The focus changed quickly from ceremonial to crisis and the reservists within our affiliated squadron, 31 (Middlesex Yeomanry and Princess Louise's Kensington) Signal Squadron, have been part of the essential communications chain supporting logistics.



16 Medical Regiment working with the East of England Ambulance Service

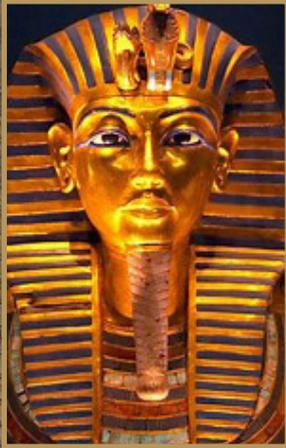
15 paramedics and combat medical technicians from 16 Medical Regiment have joined forces with the East of England Ambulance Service. Working alongside the NHS paramedics, they will release staff for front-line duties in hospitals in Essex and Suffolk. Additional training has covered vehicle and equipment familiarisation, advanced life support and dementia care. All military medics must do clinical placements with the NHS to maintain their qualifications and the partnership generates benefits for both sides, with army personnel relieving some of the pressure on NHS staff whilst widening their own clinical experience.

71st (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment was recognised in January with the award of "preferred regiment" status, an organisational equivalent to Freedom of the City. Celebrations included a special service, dinner and a march through the City to Guildhall.

Whilst they are too young to play a direct part now, members of 358 (Welling) ATC Squadron are equipping themselves for later life by volunteering and developing skills online as part of the requirements for Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Their annual awards evening, held each year in late November, is one of the highlights and this year's ceremony was attended with great pleasure by the Upper Warden, Nigel Haig-Brown.



The Upper Warden presents awards, 29 November 2019



TUTANKHAMUN
TREASURES OF THE GOLDEN PHARAOH

SAATCHI GALLERY

Tutankhamun

Julie Galvin was in charge of the arrangements for a January Jaunt to welcome a new decade and where better to go than to ancient Egypt (actually the Saatchi Gallery in SW3) for a shimmering, mesmerising insight into King Tut's tomb. Here is her report:

“Over sixty Spectacle Makers made their way to the Saatchi Gallery, bang on time as requested, for the Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh exhibition. Several people remembered going to the exhibition at the British Museum back in 1972. I didn't like to point out I could barely toddle at the time. Mr Galvin pointed out that the 5000 artefacts catalogued reminded him of my holiday packing....I can't think why, other than the sparkle factor!

Early evening saw us all enjoy an early dinner at the Bar and Kitchen in the basement of the Royal Court Theatre. Company, sunshine, education, wine and food and not a hint of social distancing. Thank you everyone for attending, stay safe and see you soon.”



Through no fault of its own, the Society has gone from Hero (events fully booked with waiting lists and an accumulated small surplus being donated to the WCSM Education Trust) to Zero, as social distancing restrictions mean our furthest trip for the next few weeks will be only as far as the front door. We are sorry we can't entice you with our usual calendar of dates but once the programme can begin again, you will find all the information on the Society page of the website:

www.spectaclemakers.com/society

Still, we have enjoyed some wonderful occasions in the last couple of months and all the hard working members of the Committee are very much looking forward to getting back into the swing and organising more opportunities for fellowship and friendship just as soon as we can. Huge thanks to all of them and to the office team for dealing with all the necessary cancellation arrangements, planning and rescheduling and delivering refunds back as needed.

White Christmas

It looked as though it would be "Blue Skies smiling at me, nothing but blue skies do I see" for our pre-Christmas theatre trip to the West End. That is, until the end of the second half of the performance when snow flakes drifted down from the gods onto the delighted audience. Huge thanks go to Julie Galvin for making sure all her Spectacle Maker flock managed to reach their seats, sustained by a great pre-theatre supper at Hudson's House restaurant, only a few steps away.



The City of London Police Museum

17 February saw another sell-out event with 40 members gathered together for a visit to the City of London Police Museum hidden within Guildhall. We had a morning guided tour with a retired police officer as our guide. The guide told a very interesting story about the coming together of the City of London police from 1830 and it was surprising how their duties have expanded to include cybercrime and large scale scams and fraud. We enjoyed tales of Jack the Ripper and the Sydney Street siege.

The museum had some very interesting artifacts. There were bombs made by suffragettes, confiscated weapons, photographs of destruction in the Blitz and victims being led to safety after the IRA bombing of the Old Bailey in 1974, a fragment from which many of us had seen during the Freeman's Drinks party last July.

We then went to a nearby restaurant and this gave us the opportunity to catch up with old and new members over a relaxing lunch and refocus on the brighter side of life.

Thank you to Janet Davies for organising this visit and congratulations to Janet and her husband Martin for retaining the Fiitch Trophy for couples at the annual inter-Livery bridge competition at Drapers' Hall on 2 March. If anyone is spending the lockdown improving their Bridge, please let us know and 2 may become 4 for next year's competition!



Visiting the City of London Police Museum



EVENTS CALENDAR

All remaining dates for 2020 will be subject to change, according to public health advice.
You can keep up to date by checking email messages and the website: www.spectaclemakers.com
Please do let us know if your email address or postal address changes so that we do not lose touch.

COMPANY DATES 2020

Sunday 6 September

Charity Showcase at Henley River and Rowing Museum

Friday 18 - Sunday 20 September

Master's Weekend and Gregorie Dinner at the Jockey Club, Newmarket

Monday 21 September

Four Liveries Lecture (hosted by the Scientific Instrument Makers)

Wednesday 30th September, 11am

Annual Service of Thanksgiving, Remembrance & Rededication in St Bride's,
and then the Court Luncheon back at Apothecaries' Hall

Tuesday 8 December

Court & Court Luncheon at Apothecaries' Hall

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editor would like to thank all those who have contributed to this edition, particularly Society Committee Chairman Sue Haig-Brown and Committee members Julie Galvin and Janet Davies, Janice English, Neil Handley and Mark Witter for use of his professional photographs.

LOCKDOWN JUMBO WORDSEARCH

Can you find these terms relating to Livery life? No prizes, just for fun...

S	R	E	K	A	M	E	L	C	A	T	C	E	P	S	S	L	T
C	L	E	R	K	V	T	S	A	O	T	R	A	D	E	S	T	P
H	M	A	B	L	A	C	K	N	O	D	G	N	I	R	R	A	F
A	U	L	P	W	S	L	M	C	O	U	R	T	G	J	R	L	Y
R	D	D	M	O	I	L	A	W	A	R	D	D	S	E	E	L	T
I	R	E	A	H	T	A	S	O	C	I	A	L	D	N	N	S	E
T	O	R	N	S	J	H	T	D	W	B	U	E	X	I	T	D	I
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M	C	T	F	E	Y	E	S	M	I	V	O	L	S	M	R	A	L
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H	S	J	U	N	O	I	S	S	I	M	D	A	F	R	I	A	R
V	I	S	I	O	N	O	I	T	A	R	O	P	R	O	C	A	Z
C	T	R	A	D	I	T	I	O	N	S	N	O	L	A	Y	O	L

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Admission | Court | Lord/Mayor's/Show | Spectacle Makers |
| Alderman | Declaration | Loving Cup | Steward |
| Apothecaries' Hall | Dinner | Loyal Toast | St Paul's |
| Arms | Eyes | Luncheon | Taste |
| Award | Farringdon/Within | Mace | Ties |
| Badge | Free | Mansion/House | Trades |
| Beadle | Freeman | Master | Traditions |
| Black/Friar | Friends | Medals | Upper/Warden |
| Certificate | Gown | Renter Warden | Vision |
| Chain | Guild | Sheep | Wine |
| Charity | Hall | Sheriffs | |
| Clerk | Join | SMC | |
| City of London/
Corporation | Lens | Social | |
| | Livery | Society | |