

Dinner to the Masters, Prime Wardens, and Upper Bailiff
Mansion House
Thursday 14th March 2024
The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London
Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli

Masters. Prime Wardens. Upper Bailiff. Fellow Aldermen. Mr Recorder. Mr Dean. Sheriffs. Chief Commoner. Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome to Mansion House everybody!

I always try make people feel at ease when I'm dressed in state.

I'm here to act pompous so you don't have to!

But as I look out, I see that we're all dressed to the nines, so we can all act pompous!

With that wonderful pompous fanfare still ringing in our ears, I am reminded of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*:

"Lots of trumpeting and drumming?

Ain't the Livery becoming!"

As a member of no less than 14 liveries and a Gilbert and Sullivan fan:

I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral,

I am the very model of a modern livery mayoral.

In the past 18 weeks the Lady Mayoress and I have enjoyed your warm hospitality at no less than 21 Company Banquets.

The Roman writer, Publilius Syrus, advised:

"the person who receives the most favours is the one who knows how to return them."

Rugby players say, "get your retaliation in first", and with at least 36 livery dinners still to come, I am trying to get my appreciation in first!

It is our great pleasure to be able to return the favours you have shown us night after night by hosting you, the Livery, this evening.

Recognising that our City community extends well beyond the 1.12 square miles of our City's limits, I am delighted that we are joined by members of our sister organisations from further afield.

Our global coffee house has already been visited by several royals, three prime ministers, and one Korean president.

And I got my retaliation in first at our Burns Night Supper by playing my bagpipes for the First Minister of Scotland.

Tonight, we have assembled the leaders of the City of London, the world's oldest democratic workers' and residents' cooperative.

Over the last four months many of you have heard about this year's mayoral theme, *Connect to Prosper*.

We're celebrating the many Knowledge Miles of our Square Mile, that world's coffee house, and reviving London's proud coffee house traditions.

Jonathan's, opened in 1680, grew into the London Stock Exchange...Lloyd's, 1686, Lloyd's of London...the Virginia & Baltick Coffee House, 1744, the Baltic Exchange.

The Anglo-Irish satirist, Jonathan Swift, asserted that "*coffee makes us severe, and grave, and philosophical...*"

...but I like to think that it makes us open, welcoming, and collaborative.

A centre that trades in goods, and ideas, in equal measure...one where people convene, from across the globe, to find solutions to our planet's biggest challenges – from space junk to mental health and climate change.

On every overseas visit, the feedback I have received has been overwhelmingly positive.

When the world looks at London, it likes what it sees.

A place with incredible talent and skills and unparalleled global connections that treats allcomers fairly.

Within 2 miles of Guildhall, 615,000 workers, 8,000 residents, 40 learned societies, 70 higher education institutions, 130 research institutes, and over 24,000 businesses, with more than 300 languages spoken.

On this, the 125th day of my mayoralty, not that I'm counting, you might have noticed that I have a predilection for numbers.

Strangely, I can't help but notice that the Mansion House staff like numbers as well.

Their number is 240.

For some reason, Mansion House staff seem to count backwards...

There's a Japanese proverb:

"A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle."

Each livery company is incredible, but when the Livery works together, it is phenomenal.

I strongly identify with 14 Pan Livery Initiatives:

The Mansion House Scholarship Scheme, supported by 30 liveries...

...City and Guilds, 32...

...Livery Companies Skills Council, 40...

...No Going Back, 40...

...The Livery Companies Apprenticeship Scheme, 40...

... Pan-Livery Pro-Bono Interest Group, 40...

...Treloar's School, 43...

...Pollinating London Together, 52...

...The Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch, 64...

...Livery Schools Link, 65...

...The Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund, 70 liveries...

...the Livery Charity Chairs Group and Livery Food Initiative, 87...

...The Lord Mayor's Appeal, 93 liveries...

...Livery Climate Action Group, 100 liveries...

The Mayoral diary for the past fortnight alone shows how active the Livery is.

The Livery Climate Action Group helped launch our new City Carbon Credit Cancellation Service, and the Livery Food Initiative handed over the keys to a second truck to City Harvest.

We've had the Master Certificate Awards Ceremony, the City Food Lecture, the Ezra Energy Lecture, and just yesterday we were at Treloar's in Hampshire – a truly inspirational school that supports young people with some of the most profound and complex disabilities.

And none of that fantastic work the Livery does would be possible without the unsung heroes of our companies – our clerks.

We'd be at sixes and sevens without them, but the Merchant Taylors and Skinners might tell us it's sevens and sixes!

It's much like the famous military mix-up:

"Send reinforcements, we are going to advance..." said one radio operator.

"Send three and fourpence, we are going to a dance..." heard his comrade on the other end of the line.

But don't go getting any ideas, you Musicians!

Working together, our Livery is a 50,000 strong movement inspired by the trinity of commerce, community, and charity.

I know the Master Mercer will comment on community, and the Master Grocer on charity.

I want to say a bit more about commerce, which brings to mind the words of Nick Bence-Trower, a past Master of the Drapers:

He says: As you get older in commerce, you get more into commodities: hair silver; teeth gold; ears wax; kidneys stones; and of course, our bellies, natural gas...

55 livery companies are providing online lectures as part of our 100 strong Knowledge Miles lecture series, and virtually every one of our 25 Coffee Colloquies on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and other globally important issues has livery support.

Many of you have got behind the new "Livery Experience" by hosting business and diplomatic guests at livery dinners, creating stronger commercial connections.

When Mansion House needs briefings, your expertise - from the Investment Managers to the Paviers and Tax Advisors - has helped me promote the City at home and abroad.

Henry Ford once said:

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."

And in return for all the help you have shown me, I am eager to support the Livery be as successful as it can be.

We launched a LinkedIn group - the “City of London Livery Community” - allowing livery members to connect online, with over 1,400 members - and I’m counting on you to add more!

When abroad, we’re holding “Livery Coffee Connect-Teas”, where I meet local liverymen for a drink and a chat.

We’ve already done Dubai, New York, Boston, Seattle, India, and Ireland.

The City of London Corporation is hosting its very first London Livery Away weekend – taking place between 21st and 23rd June.

And we’re holding a “Proud to be a Freeman” day on Midsummer’s Day Common Hall on 24th June.

I don’t want to sound like a pushy Lord Mayor.

Out on the streets, that might make me a mayor of substances...

But being the ambitious bunch that we are, there’s always room to do more.

I am delighted to have my five aides-de-camp here this evening:

Richard Salter representing St John Ambulance;

Jake Orros of the Scouts;

Sub Lieutenant Matt Reid of the Sea Cadets;

RSMI Sharkey Afshar of the Army Cadets;

Squadron Leader Mark Bird of the RAF Air Cadets.

By the end of this year, I hope that every single livery company has signed the Armed Forces Covenant as a public and enduring commitment to those who have served our country.

We build new legacies by working together.

Grace Slick of Jefferson Starship claimed San Francisco was built on Rock n Roll.

Friends, speaking on the 390th year of his birth, I’m reminded of fellow Gresham Professor Christopher Wren and the wonderful dedication on his tomb in St Paul’s:

“si monumentum requiris, circumspice...”

...If it’s a monument you require, look around you.

We are more privileged than Christopher Wren.

Our legacy can be even bigger.

If it's a monument to the Livery you require, look around you: our fantastic City of London.