

# THE CITY OF LONDON SOLICITORS' COMPANY



**ROBERT S.K. BELL**  
**MASTER**

30<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Members,

As we go into August, which is traditionally a quiet month for Livery events, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you as to what has been happening within the Company and what we have to look forward to this Autumn. Although lockdown restrictions have eased we still have to live our lives online. It looks like this situation is going to continue for at least the next couple of months. However, I am committed to resuming physical events as soon as we are permitted to do so by Government Guidelines.

Since I took over as Master in June we have continued to hold our virtual drinks allowing members of the Company to network with others and discuss topical issues. Many new members have welcomed participating in these events as it has afforded them a good introduction to the Company in these strange times. These events have proved very popular and will continue in the Autumn.

We also held the Inaugural Solicitors' Company Master's Lecture on 14th July. This was again an online event. The Company welcomed Sa'ad Hossain QC of One Essex Court as speaker. Sa'ad gave an excellent insight into the challenges of conducting remote Court hearings during the COVID pandemic and what lessons for the future this experience might hold. The lecture drew an attentive audience from the Company but also the wider Livery including representatives of the Insurers, Arbitrators, Accountants, Chartered Secretaries and Tax Advisers Companies. All in all it proved to be an enjoyable and thought provoking event. I would like to thank the Junior Warden Sarah de Gay for her help in organising this event.

On a lighter note a new edition to the Company's social calendar was a Virtual Quiz event which took place on 23rd July. Held in aid of the Haringey Law Centre participants pitted their wits against each other over seven rounds of general knowledge questions. Aply harnessing online technology the Quiz also featured a picture round and a series of music questions based on a number of musical compositions wonderfully performed by Mistress Solicitor, Rebecca Bell, and Richard Salter QC. Hearty congratulations to the winning team, the Mangoes, who claim the much coveted Quiz Winners Certificate to be presented in the Autumn. Many thanks to Stewards Ed Parker and Virginia Cannon and Quiz Master and Assistant Lee McLernon for their excellent organisation and conduct of the proceedings as well as to our performers, Rebecca and Richard, for what was a truly entertaining evening.

It is a long time since the Company has been able to hold physical events and it looks like this bar to holding such events is likely to continue into the early Autumn. However we are informed that Livery Halls are likely to be opening from the beginning of October. Therefore we anticipate that the Company's first physical event is likely to be the Court Meeting and Court and Partners Dinner on 1st October at Cutler's Hall. Shortly after this, on Monday 12th October, we are planning a dinner for Freeman and Liverymen at Trinity House. More details are to follow.

The Company's second Ethics Seminar will take place in late October (date and venue to be confirmed) at which Professor Steven Vaughan of UCL & Emily Carroll of Birmingham University will discuss "The Ethics of Onshoring" with Senior Warden Tony King. We will circulate more details in late August so watch this space.

Looking further ahead to late Autumn we are holding our Livery Dinner at the magnificent Goldsmith's Hall on 1st December. We are honoured to have as our speaker for the evening His Honour Judge Mark Lucraft, Q.C, the recently appointed Recorder of London and the Chief Coroner for England & Wales. Please do put this date in your diary for what promises to be a glittering evening.

We continue to modernise and update the Company to make it more reflective of a changing profession. As a Company we have adopted a Values Statement which will be put on our website which reflects our commitment to be a truly inclusive Company welcoming to new members from all backgrounds. We aim to preserve the best of the past and respect our traditions while moving with the times. We will be circulating to all members a Membership and Diversity Survey in the Autumn which we would very much like your assistance in completing. The conclusions of this survey will help us increase the quality and range of our events to meet members' expectations. It will also inform us more about our membership and what steps we need to take to remain relevant in an ever changing world. May I thank Senior Warden, Tony King, and Junior Warden, Sarah de Gay and Rafique Khan together with other members of the ED&I Advisory Committee for all their hard work on this initiative.

College Hill is currently closed at the moment with the Clerk, Linzi James, Liz Thomas and Denise Llewellyn working from home. We hope to start to reopen the office on a partial basis from early September. Despite the difficulties of lockdown they have continued to deliver a high level of service to the Company and its Members including helping to organise our numerous events and keep our Committees functioning.

The Wardens and I have valued and continue to value their dedication, professionalism and good humour in keeping the Company affairs running smoothly. They have been absolutely tremendous. Thank you.

May I close by wishing you and your families a happy and safe Summer and I look forward to seeing you again in September.

**Robert Bell**  
**Master**