



THE CITY OF LONDON SOLICITORS' COMPANY

The following statements were made by the Out-Going and In-Coming Masters at our AGM on Wednesday 21st June 2023

Statement from the Out-Going Master, Tony King:

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be Master of the Company for the last year. I can hardly believe my year as Master is now over.

To do some violence to a line from Andrew Marvell's poem "To his coy Mistress" – It certainly feels like "Times winged Chariot has hurried by" to get me to this point.

No doubt many of you know that poem but don't worry, this is not the time nor place for me to quote any more lines from that particular poem!

You had a quote from Terry Pratchett in my first speech as Master. You're getting quotes from the metaphysical poets in my last.

So moving on, I am delighted that after the torrid pandemic-related period of Robert's time as Master (which he managed so well), the Company's life returned to normal.

We have enjoyed our traditional events albeit that some we have "flexed":

- the Livery Dinner on 29 November last year at Haberdashers Hall when we enjoyed the speech by Maggie Semple on respecting people from different backgrounds
- the Mansion House Banquet on 21 February at which Professor Ann Limb gave us her views on the importance of education for business, social mobility and social justice
- the Annual Service on 16 May at St Paul ad Vincula (led as always by Canon Roger Hall) followed by the dinner at Bakers' Hall rather than the normal venue – Trinity House. I for one liked the new venue, not least as I still hanker after the splendid chair I sat in.
- our usual carol service, Court Dinners and Common Hall lunches.

We have had a number of other events :

- Guided tours round Westminster & the Guildhall Art Gallery
- The Recital by Rebecca Bell, accompanied by Anthea Fry at St Mary-le-Bow.
- Our latest Food for Thought event - focussing on the regulation of in-house lawyers on 20 April (with more of those events to come)
- Our very successful Master's Lecture presented by Dan Neidle on 5 June. You will have seen the extensive media coverage of the Lecture with the Company getting full credit.

All of the Committees have been active over the last 12 months:

- The Wine Committee has ensured we will continue to enjoy excellent wine at our events over the coming years
- The Livery Committee has worked hard to maintain our external links particularly but not only with our cadets (including visits to the cadets' "home" and supporting them with a career's evening as well as supporting them when they took part in the "Sheriff's Challenge" (a mooting competition) in February
- The Membership Committee has continued to make sure the Company attracts would-be Freeman and encourages Freeman to take the Livery.

- The Investment Committee is protecting our investments so they are secure or as secure as they can be in the current environment
- The Charities Committee advises on requests for our charitable assistance and maintains connections with ongoing beneficiaries such as Haringey Law centre and SWSQF
- The Communications Committee through its new strategy is helping us build an ever more powerful brand as well as building our social media presence
- The Whittington Committee is ably looking after the interests of our younger members in addition to ensuring our “float” in the Lord Mayor's Show continues to be (in my view) the “best in show”.
- The Social & Events Committee has been launched and is developing its role as a co-ordinating Committee so we can be certain we are collectively meeting the needs and expectations of our members

I have aimed to attend at least one meeting of all of the Company's Committees and I have succeeded in that aim save with the Investment Committee. I have seen the commitment of the Chairs and members of the Committees. Rest assured (if you need any reassurance) we have many very energetic people on those Committees who will continue to push the Company forward.

On the Company moving forward, growing the members is a key part of that and I am pleased 28 new Freemen have joined us over the last 12 months with 8 existing Freemen taking the livery. The latter number will jump when we arrange our planned “mass admission” ceremony with Guildhall.

Aside attending Committee meetings, what have I done over the year?

Well, I have selflessly dedicated my time, energy and waistline to the Company.

I have gone through my diary over the past year and found that I have been to nearly 100 external events as Master.

These have ranged from the usual run of dinners, lunches and lectures arranged by other Livery Companies to meetings with colleagues in other Livery Companies (mostly with other Financial Services Group Masters) and events arranged by/for Lord Mayors and last weekend's London Livery Weekend in Glasgow. The last was very memorable for a range of reasons.

What are the highlights?

- The valedictory speech (to some 1,000 people) for Vincent Keaveny at the Silent Ceremony last November
- The Coronation Palace Garden Party after an excellent lunch at the Goring with a number of FSG Masters
- The World Traders' Tacitus Lecture delivered by Rory Stewart. A tour de force of public speaking.

I could go on.

I have also devoted what with hindsight is a surprising amount of time (over and above our “traditional” events as I've called them) to “internal” activities for both the Company and with or for the CLLS.

These are the obvious Court, GPC & committee meetings but also other management meetings and calls.

I am amazed that that I clocked up nearly 150 of those. I'll not know what to do with all the free time I will have from tomorrow onwards

I am in awe of previous Masters who have combined busy practices with the role.

What do I feel I have achieved during my year?

In one sense, I don't think I have achieved anything. Before you riot demanding to know what is the point of me in that case, let me explain.

This time to quote John Donne – “No man is an island”.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to work with truly excellent colleagues. At the risk of causing offence to anyone I don't single out, I want to say a heart-felt “thank you” to Sarah, Ed, Rupert, Linzi and Liz.

My year began with the launch of my theme “Planned, Networked, Growth”.

Through the joint efforts of many Company members that theme has gained traction and it is now embedded in our PiNG strategy. I couldn't have achieved anything without the efforts of, in particular, Sarah and Ed.

The three of us (ably supported by Linzi) have worked together as, in effect, a management team sharing workload, pushing initiatives and the like, all to ensure the Company continues to flourish. That pattern was put in place some years ago and it has proved its worth. I know it will continue under Sarah.

I also want to thank Rupert for the outstanding work he does as our Treasurer and he has been invaluable to me in our dealings with the CLLS over the future of 4CH.

I am confident I am leaving the Company in good health and I know it is in very safe hands with Sarah as Master, Ed as Senior Warden, Ginny as Junior Warden and Simon & Gareth as Stewards. Finally, I have greatly enjoyed my year and so many thanks to you all for giving me the opportunity.

Statement from the In-Coming Master, Sarah de Gay:

Fellow City Solicitors,

It is genuinely an honour and a privilege to have been elected by the Court to serve as Master of our livery company for the coming year. I would like to thank the Court for its confidence in me.

Outgoing Master

I do, of course, follow a long line of talented and committed Masters, not least our outgoing Master Tony King.

As you will know, Tony's full name is “Antony” and so he has literally been the Ant to my Dec over the last few years. We have worked on many initiatives together and formed a very productive partnership - particularly when we doubled down to support Past Master Robert Bell during the pandemic.

Tony's stepping down as Master therefore comes as a double blow to me – not only does the Company lose an excellent Master, but Tony and I are now each exploring “solo opportunities”. I will miss his day-to-day involvement immensely.

I am, however, consoled by the fact that I know Tony will approach the Company's tried and tested position of “Immediate Past Master” with his customary dedication.

Indeed, one of our Company's great strengths is the continued involvement of all of its Past Masters on its Court, and I draw great comfort from this as I step up to take on the mantle.

New Wardens

In terms of our new "management team of three", the Company also today welcomes elevated and new Wardens, in Ed Parker as Senior Warden and Ginny Cannon as Junior Warden. I am grateful for everything I know they will do to help me and our talented Clerk, Linzi James, to promote the Company - and all the important things it does and offers – in the year ahead.

Company Events

So what does the year ahead have in store for the Company in terms of events, and how will those deliver value to you as the Company's members?

In the time available this afternoon, I can give you just a few edited highlights. These highlights are in addition to our programme of more casual/cost-effective social events which we know, from our recent Members Survey, that you enjoy so much.

First off, our Livery Dinner will take place on Thursday 2 November 2023 at Stationers' Hall. Our speaker will be Lord Eric Pickles (former chair of the Conservative Party, and current Chair of ACOBA - the Cabinet Office committee which is often in the news). He will, I hope, be sharing with us some unique insights on the topic of integrity – integrity being, of course, one of our three stated values, alongside collegiality and charity.

Our Annual Banquet will take place on Thursday 1 February 2024 at Mansion House, just as Dry January comes to a close. Our speaker will be Lord Edward Faulks (former Minister of State for Justice, and current Chair of IPSO, the press regulator). He will be sharing thoughts on freedom of the press, the rule of law and the role of lawyers – again playing to our integrity value.

I hope you agree that securing Lord Pickles and Lord Faulks to attend and speak at our two "big" formal dinners not only plays well to our values but helps, within both the livery movement and the wider City, to enhance our standing as a curious, engaged and leading modern livery company.

Less formally, for those of you who are wondering whether you could be a "lucky girl", there will be an event in Spring 2024 aimed principally at younger women solicitors which will explore whether it's possible to manifest a promotion. This will form part of our now well-established "Food for Thought" programme of events which promises to deliver just that.

There will be some new events aimed at swelling our Charitable Fund too. And some of these will be a family affair. My husband and consort (a Corporate/M&A lawyer by day) will be volunteering, with me, at the Haringey Law Centre in November. Howard and I will be asking our friends, colleagues and contacts (which includes everyone here today!) to sponsor one (or more) of our "charitable hours" – which will be spent helping to advise those who cannot afford to pay for legal advice with debt-related issues, not just any debts but "priority debts" – like rent and utility bills - which pose very serious consequences if left unresolved for the individual client and their families.

And in Spring of next year, we are hoping that our eldest son Harry, who is a near-to-elite long-distance runner, will secure a place to run the London Marathon for the Company.

My Theme

As to the year ahead more generally, I have, like my predecessors in role, a pervasive theme for my year as Master.

In finalising the details of that theme over the last few weeks, I have taken some inspiration from the Coronation of our new King and the dawn of the Carolean Age. I suspect that, like me, many of you were glued to your screens on the 6th of May and found the Coronation service mesmerising, with its unique fusion of the traditional with the new. Imaginative compromises were made which welcomed

all faiths into the proceedings in a way which fostered inclusivity. This “looking back whilst looking forward” is of course something that livery companies, as well as the monarchy, must do well – if they are to represent current values and continue to be relevant.

Whilst I watched the Coronation Service on TV, I was lucky enough to be invited to the Coronation Concert at Windsor on the 7th of May in person and particularly enjoyed Katy Perry’s knock-out rendition of one of her signature anthems. I was impressed by the way in which her voice and lyrics reached the crowd like no other performer on the night.

You may be wondering where all this is going and fearing that I may be about to ask you to “find and embrace” your inner monarch. You’ll therefore be relieved to hear I am setting the bar a touch lower. I am shortly going to be asking you to “find and embrace” your inner Katy Perry.

For now, just hold that thought as I reveal that the theme for my year is “Amplify!”.

The dictionary definition of amplify will be familiar to you – it is to: increase the volume; make more detailed; make more marked and intense.

I would like us to do all of those things. In short:

- I want us to say more,
- I want us to say it louder, and
- I want us to celebrate our successes and our contribution to civic life in the City, the charitable causes we support and what it means to be a rounded and engaged City solicitor,
- all of which will make us (even) more relatable to prospective new members (as well as the City more generally) and enhance our standing as the apogee of a modern livery company.

With that apogee ambition in mind, we should continue to work closely not just with our sibling organisation, the City of London Law Society, but with the Financial Services Group of livery companies. We have a lot in common with those companies. But whilst each FSG company strives to keep its individual members connected with each other, with the Civic City, with charitable-giving and, increasingly, with integrity, our Company is unique in that it also strives to keep its individual members connected with the Rule of Law. This is very much our USP in the livery movement and plays an important part in promoting the solicitor brand within the City – we should not feel shy about saying so. Louder.

Amplification is not just a challenge for “us” as the Company, it is also a challenge for “us” as individual members.

So I am calling on each of you here today to “**Go Forth and Amplify!**”.

I recognise that this command may sound too biblical, too backward-looking, too narrow and exclusive for some of you. If so, this is where your inner Katy Perry comes in.

As Katy says, “**I want to hear your voice, hear that sound, like thunder I want you to shake the ground – louder than a lion, I want to hear you roar.**”

You are certainly going to hear me roar over the next twelve months about the great things our Company does. And I’d like you, as individuals, to join me in saying it more and saying it louder. You might wish to get off to a good start, when enjoying champagne in the garden here shortly, by clinking glasses to support my theme of “Amplify!” by proposing a toast of “**Roar!**”.