



The Master's Installation Day Speech

Wednesday 21st October 2015

Wardens, Visiting Masters, Past Masters, Assistants, Fellow Liverymen, ladies and gentlemen, a very warm welcome once more to this Installation Lunch.

Thanks to IPM

I would like to begin by saying a big thank you on behalf of us all, to our Immediate Past Master and Mistress for representing the Livery during this past year with such commitment and professionalism.

Steve, I know we will formally thank you at the Ladle dinner but we should recognise that you and Jane have between you attended countless functions on behalf of the Livery and in addition put in many, many hours of work at home, at the office, at the Plumbers' offices. Quite how you have fitted it all round a job of work is difficult to see, it has to have been a combination of excellent organisation and little sleep.

In your year you have challenged us with good strategic thinking and with strong leadership. We've made good progress in several important key areas. You have also worked so hard in ensuring that we have had a glorious 650th anniversary year. The HAC ball, the service at the Temple and the sight of our guest speaker extolling a glass of water at our banquet are events which will linger long in all our memories. Congratulations on a job really well done.

I would also add on a personal note how much I've enjoyed working with you and being a part of the team during this last year and for all the help you have given me in my preparations for the coming year.

Jane, I know you have diligently and lovingly supported Steve. You have attended many engagements in your own right to represent the Livery and we thank you hugely for this and as a small token of our thanks, Jane, would you please accept these flowers...

...but this has also been a family affair and it's been marvellous for us all to have seen the help and support you've received from your four beautiful daughters: Emily, Sally, Molly and Lucy – I hope we'll continue to see you and the rest of the family at future events.

Proud to be Master

It is a huge honour to become the Master Plumber and I feel truly privileged to do this. We are entering our 651st year since our Grant of Ordinances though it is fair to say we would have existed as a craft unit for many years, if not centuries before that – people with plumbing skills have been needed ever

since we began to want running water and leak-proof houses, if not before, and the availability of lead with its low melting temperature and malleability made it and the experts who used it extremely useful. Even the word plumber is of ancient origin and must have arrived with the Romans.

The Company records indicate that there has been no woman Master of this Ancient and Worshipful Company and, for me, that makes this occasion even more special. However, it is good to see that the Craft and the Company now have a number of women who are plumbers by training and profession.

You will be fascinated to know that there are historical records of many widows running their husband's businesses in the City but, though I have found none relating to plumbing as such, I feel sure that, in the past, women would have helped their husbands and sons with their leadwork. I accept that roofing would probably have been too heavy a task for most, but decorative leadwork would have been well within their grasp and strength. Also, whilst not as such in the city, Peter Rumley has found that a Georgian plumber, one Hannah Putnam has her name and the date of 1823 in the lead on Harrow Church steeple. So to that extent, I am definitely not the first.

Approaching the role of Master can be quite daunting – even though I have been a Master before. Despite being a non-practising or trained plumber, I can tell the difference between a gas and a water pipe! In the lead-up to this appointment, I have had whole new challenges to learn about the plumbing trade and the support which we, as a Company and via our Charity, give to education and to encouragement to strive for excellence to the young joining our Craft. And I have been, and expect to continue to be, wonderfully supported by the Court.

Strategy

People ask 'what's your theme going to be'? My answer to that question is '**continuity**' with an emphasis on Charity. Even the Installation service was carefully arranged with that in mind.

We will continue our strategies;

- ∞ To raise still further the profile of the Plumbers,
- ∞ To continue the good technical work we do in our industry and I would like to see us engaging even better with the manufacturing sector where we see a great deal of innovation in the areas of energy and sustainability which we will continue do with more transparency, inclusiveness and affordability wherever we can whilst maintaining our high standards – and we hope soon to have a set of corporate members; .

- ∞ we have to continue to ensure that the Plumbers are a Livery fit for the 21st century.
- ∞ We will remain true to our Aims and Objectives, which focus on our Craft, Our Charity and the City, whilst enjoying each other's Friendship.

.....and of course we will achieve all this at the same time celebrating and cementing our friendships within the Company and the livery at large and having some fun!!

The company is in fine health with solid finances, an active membership and a high profile in the city. And, our lease at Wax Chandlers coming to an end shortly before Christmas, you should know that we will be moving to Carpenters, who are welcoming us with open arms. You will be sent full details about this once the timings are all in place.

Events

With the help of the Stewards, we have a good social programme with some great events.

On 14th November the IPM, UW and I will take part the Lord Mayor's show supporting the Ward of Cheap Club's entry. It has strong Plumbing design features and it would be wonderful to have as many of you as possible cheering us along the route. It is the 800th LMS and should be a magnificent event.

Our very successful Annual Lecture for this special year will be held on June 14th and given by Andy Mitchell, the CEO of Thames Tideway Tunnel. He will be masterminding the Tideway project which will have the great benefit of contributing hugely to the cleanup of the Thames which is good for both people and wildlife. He says the project will reconnect London and Londoners with the Thames making the river central to the capital's wider social and economic well-being. It should be a great evening. Do come.

We have many other social events planned, including the regular and popular lunches at Ironmongers, and I hope to see as many of you as possible at the various functions.

The Master's weekend next year will be 8-11 July and we will travel to the pearl of the Irish Sea – the Isle of Man. The underlying theme is lead mining. Perhaps we might even race at over 200mph around the TT track – or perhaps only in our dreams or nightmares. The leaflet will be sent to you later this week so that if you are able to join us you have the best chance of finding economical flights. It will also be on our website.

It's going to be a very busy but enjoyable year!!

Charity

For our size our charitable work is significant;

- ∞ the time and effort our people give freely for the support and development of our industry is considerable,
- ∞ the awards and cash bursaries support young people starting off in their careers
- ∞ our lead craft demonstration facility at Singleton is a wonderful example of how we support the history and traditions of our craft. The lead planters made there which many of us bought to celebrate our 650th raised £9600. Many congratulations to Peter Cheesman , Phil Mead and their team, all of whom worked well beyond the call to duty to fulfil the orders, even making an extra one as a gift for the Company's offices. Congratulations to them all.
- ∞ We also support other charities – including in particular the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

This last year we distributed some £23350 in grants and awards. But if we had more funds we could do much more. We could also do with more assistance and items for exhibition at the Blist Hill Industrial Museum Plumbers and Tinsmiths shop where, as you know, volunteers work in period costume.

The Charity Trustees will shortly be sending out a brochure showing in graphic detail the sort of work we support and have supported over the last year – prizes to young plumbers and servicemen, and more information on our new venture in Ghana with Village by Village.

We'd also like to encourage all liverymen to make regular monthly donations to our Charity and I and/or the IPM will be writing to you soon about this.

Thanks

I would like to conclude with a few more thanks. First, I would like to thank on behalf of us all, Father Phillip Warner for conducting our installation service earlier and second to Paul and Sharon for all their hard work today. And finally to the Worshipful Company of Vintners and its staff for providing us with such a good venue, food and drink.

And to finish, a toast, if you could all be upstanding, to the Worshipful Company of Plumbers, may it flourish root and branch forever... The WCP