

Master's Installation Day Speech 2011

Wardens, Aldermen, Fellow Liverymen and very welcome guests.

May I firstly welcome my own guests – Jim and Angela who have come from Rome to be with me today, Alderman Jeffrey Evans who is the Alderman for the Ward of Cheap in which we have our office suite. I would say to all Liverymen that you should be a member of a Ward Club and I know that the Ward Club of Cheap would welcome you in their usual friendly way. Last and certainly not least after hosting us so warmly at his church, our Chaplain and Rector, Liveryman Philip Warner.

I want to start properly, however, by paying tribute to Chris Sneath, the Immediate Past Master. During his year as Master he devoted himself entirely to the Company, working non-stop for both the Company and the Plumbing Industry. He also took on board our 400th Anniversary celebrations of the granting of our Royal Charter, our contribution to World Skills, support for the World Plumbing Conference in Edinburgh and, of course, the manufacture and emplacement of our Plumbers' Apprentice statue in the concourse of Cannon Street Station. All these events have been highly successful and the Company owes him an exceptional debt of gratitude. Chris, on behalf of the Company, thank you very much indeed. Of course, no Master can do all that on his own and he was ably supported throughout the year, apart from a short sojourn in hospital, by Liz and, as a token of our appreciation, may I present you with this bouquet.

Now to 2011/12. There are two national events that merit our attention. Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee which will occur on the first weekend in June 2012 and of course the Olympics. The Company has proposed to Her Majesty a further gift of planters for one of the Royal gardens and this has been graciously accepted. Many of you will remember the occasion of the Golden Jubilee when the Company presented two lead planters to Her Majesty for the gardens at Buckingham Palace. // Because I believe most of you will want to do your own thing during the weekend, I am proposing that we should celebrate the Jubilee on the Wednesday before (the 30th May) by chartering a cruise boat on the Thames and "having a party". I hope that as many of you as possible will join Diana and me.

Now, I ask forbearance from our guests as I want to address my thoughts only to Liverymen for a few minutes.

This, I hope, will be a "Company" year where we concentrate on our own exceptional Company. Two particular areas which need the attention of all of us are the numbers of Liverymen and the charity.

A few year's ago, the Finance Committee, advised by Past Master John Mayfield, determined that the Company needed to grow from around 350 to 390 if it was to remain financially viable. Well, we have still some way to go and I urge each and every one of you to take it upon yourselves as part of being a Liveryman to introduce at least one new member to the Livery in the next 12 months. We have to recruit about 20 new Liverymen each year just to account for normal turnover. Renter Warden Nick Gale is currently very kindly conducting a study on how to improve the

Company's attractiveness to different age groups and Past Master David Hamilton and Steward Michael Cooper are forging a very strong relationship with the Society of Young Freemen. But that is not enough! So, I ask you all to "go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither your friends, and the captains of our industry, and your business associates, and the wealthy. Go out into the highways and the hedges, and compel them to come in, that our Company may be filled".(with apologies to St Luke's Gospel Chapter 14)

The Company's relatively small Charity benefits young people who wish to take up apprenticeships in plumbing, supports disadvantaged children in the east end of London through a primary school in Tower Hamlets, part-sponsors a student at the City's own Guildhall School of Music and Drama, a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral and sponsors a Sea Cadet unit in Richmond. It also gives bursaries and awards to a variety of trainees including those from all three Armed Services. The Company organises and runs the Annual Company Lecture, any surplus from which goes to the Charity. With the recession, it has become much more difficult to attract sponsorship from industry for the lecture and for our other functions and so I have asked Assistant John Smith to form a working group to look at both sponsorship and increasing revenue for the charity. However, so much more could be achieved if there was more support on a regular basis from Liverymen. Today I am asking each one of you to make a pledge to support our charity and to contribute annually by Direct Debit a small sum of, say, £30. Obviously, the wealthier among you will wish to pledge a higher amount but please pick up the form which the Clerk's Assistant will hand to you when you leave. If all 300 of us give only £30 a year, we shall grow the charity finances by about £9,000 a year.

Enough of the harangue!

I should just like to finish by thanking the Vintners' Company for hosting us once again in their beautiful Hall, Steve Marcham the Vintners' General Manager, Andrew Watt the Banqueting Manager from Searcys, our patient and hardworking Clerk, Paul, and his assistant, Sharon, our Beadle Peter and all the Stewards who work so hard at all our functions. Diana and I look forward to working with you during the coming year.