

Worshipful Company of Plumbers

July Court Dinner

28th July 2015

The July Court Dinner was held this year at the wonderful Apothecaries Hall, the oldest Livery Hall in the City of London dating back to 1668 - it was rebuilt just after the great fire.

The dinner held just before the summer recess gave us a chance to enjoy the warm evening with a Champagne reception in the courtyard before processing to the Great Hall for dinner.

All the eight new Liverymen were welcomed and toasted by the Master.

The Mistress had asked the Master if she may say a few words to the Livery. With so much happening in this anniversary year this was her last opportunity to thank the Livery for the privilege of being Mistress Plumber. Her speech included the following review of her highlights:

*Mansion House and Guildhall I don't like to boast But
these are the things that I have enjoyed the most
Whatever the weather, the meetings and greetings
I've visited barracks and dockyards, for beating retreating's*

*Cathedrals, Temples, Churches, Charities and Consorts
Barbican, Bridges, Boats, Breakfasts, Buffets, Banquets and Balls!
Ladies Lunches, Lectures and Livery Halls,
Exhibitions, Installations and Institutions,*

*Fashion Shows, Family Days and Weekends Away,
Palaces, Princes, Paintings, Plumbers, Planters and Pumping Stations!
Racings and Tastings
Mayors, Masters, Charters and Magna Carta's
Clerics and Clerks and Sheriffs and Sharon!*

The Mistress also left the diners with this anagram for you to solve

"Wash off pipes - truly no problem, Chum"

No prizes for guessing the answer!

After a superb meal the evening continued with musical entertainment from three musicians from RADA, including an adaptation of the classic Flanders and Swann song - The Plumber Cometh!

The Master's speech focused on our charitable work announcing the three year partnership with 'village by village' and recognizing the amount received from the sale of the anniversary planters manufactured by the volunteers at Singleton.

Our work in proving bursaries and awards was highlighted with the attendance of the Navy award winners and two this year's bursary recipients. Our 2014 award winner Petty Officer Martin Hext and our 2015 award winner Petty Officer Michael Laycock together with their escorting officer Lt Cdr Chris Jones. Its very appropriate that Lt Cd Jones is here because he won the very same Award from our Company in 1994 (21 years ago) following his training at HMS Sultan!

Each year we award bursaries to support Plumbing students who are progressing to complete NVQ Level 3 or the SNVQ qualification in Scotland.

It's not very often that the Livery get the opportunity to meet these apprentices so was a real pleasure for me this evening to introduce two of this year's Bursary Recipients - Russell Chessman and Freddie

Newbery together with their girlfriends Vedna and Poppy.

Russell has just completed a Level 3 City and Guilds course in Lead work and Freddie a level 3 NVQ in plumbing at Croydon College and he tells me he has just set up his business and bought his van. Both are well on their way to a great career in Plumbing and we wish them well.

Today we elected our first women Master of the Company and this does make Master Elect Erica Stary a 'Women in Engineering' so we were really pleased that the President of The Women's Engineering Society - Dawn Bonfield was able to join us. This society was formed in 1919 just after the First World War and these days does great and much needed work in inspiring and supporting women in science, engineering and technology. It boasts Amy Johnson, the great British aviator, as its President in 1935. Dawn is here this evening with her husband Dr Peter Bonfield who just happens to be the Chief Executive of the Building Research Establishment.

The following visiting Masters were warmly welcomed:

Master Chartered Architect - Cannon Dr Geoffrey Purves and Ann Master

Lightmonger - Rod Bennion and Liz

Master Founder - Paddy Draycott and Jacquie

Our principal guest was Sheriff Fiona Adler and her husband David Moss who responded on behalf of the guests with an enlightening insight into the responsibilities of the Sheriffs.

Both Fiona and David are well known to many of us and are good friends of the Plumbers and is having a brilliant year representing the City of London.

An enjoyable, entertaining and relaxing evening was had by all in one of my favorite Livery halls.

Steve Hodkinson