



The Master's Blogs 2017 - 18

WEEK 1

INSTALLATION: 24 OCTOBER

It was in early 2009 that I received a Sunday evening phone call from the then Master, Professor Rodney Cartwright, asking if I would consider going onto the Court of the Plumbers' Company. Although at that time, becoming Master of the Company lay in the distant future, it is amazing how quickly the time has passed.

My Installation in the Company church, St Magnus the Martyr on Tuesday 24 October 2017 was an occasion that I will never forget. In the absence of the Company Chaplain, Father Philip Warner, who is unwell, the service was led by my local Minister from Scotland, Rev Dr David J Graham. The church was packed and the singing could have lifted the roof. After processing back (in lovely, dry, autumnal weather) to Vintners' Hall, a large group of Liverymen and their guests enjoyed the Master's Reception and the luncheon which followed. It was great to see so many people that I have come to know over my years as a Liverymen and to meet some others for the first time. In recent years, the Company has invited family of any Liverymen who have died during the year to come to our Installation Service and Lunch and this year we welcomed family of late Past Master Jack Jeffrey (who was Master in 1995) and of late Liveryman, Harold Glover (who had been a Liveryman for an amazing 52 years). Lunch was a time for welcoming new Liverymen, new Court Assistants and Stewards and for honouring one of our longstanding Liverymen, Phil Mead, who was presented with the Company's new Heritage Award. Details of all of these are contained in my Installation speech which appears on the Plumbers Company website.

In the 652-year history of the Plumbers' Company there have been relatively few Scottish Masters. One, George Shaw, originally from Dalkeith, served on no fewer than 4 occasions in the late 19th century and another, my own proposer Bob Clephane, was Master in 1972. It is an enormous honour to be following in the footsteps of such people.

Although I don't have a theme as such for my year in office, I plan to encourage as many Liverymen as possible to engage in the life and work of our organisation. Like many membership organisations, we would also like to have new members and I am

pleased that our Membership Committee is about to initiate a recruitment campaign which I hope will lead to an increase in the size of the Livery.

TALLOW CHANDLERS' CONSORTS LUNCH: 26 OCTOBER

Interestingly, our first official engagement was for Sheila, as Mistress Plumber. She attended a lovely luncheon in Tallow Chandlers' Hall hosted by the Mistress Tallow Chandler, Kate Long.

CLARINET SERENADE: 27 OCTOBER

The Lord Mayor of the City of London, Alderman Dr Andrew Parmley is a talented musician and has demonstrated that skill on several occasions during his year in office. Tonight was the last of eleven concerts in St Stephen Walbrook (the church which is adjacent to Mansion House, the Lord Mayor's residence). Lance Corporal David Wong is Principal Clarinetist in the Band of the Grenadier Guards and he really demonstrated the beauty of the instrument in tonight's recital (including a lovely piece by Edward Gregson in which the Lord Mayor provided the piano accompaniment). Canon Roger Royle introduced the items in an informative and witty manner.



WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF BUILDERS' MERCHANTS INSTALLATION DINNER: 27 OCTOBER

After crossing the pavement from St Stephen Walbrook, we enjoyed the Builders' Merchants' Installation Dinner in Mansion House at which the Lord Mayor replied to the Toast to the City. Newly installed Master of the Company, Brian Blanchard, hosted a lovely dinner and it provided us with a good opportunity to meet other construction industry-related Masters, their Consorts and City officers.

WEEK 2

This seems to have been a quiet week by City and Livery standards (which is probably just as well when I look at next week's jam-packed diary).

MEETING AT THE PLUMBERS' OFFICES: 31 OCTOBER

Although many people on the Tube and in the streets of London seemed to have taken Hallowe'en seriously (with some rather interesting outfits and make-up in evidence), fancy dress was not required for my visit to the Company's offices in Carpenters' Hall today. The office is generally manned between Monday and Wednesday and I spend a useful time with Pieter the Clerk and Sharon, his Assistant in reviewing my diary for the next month or so, discussing issues arising out of last week's Court meeting and planning future events.

MEETING THE SENIOR STEWARD: 1 NOVEMBER

Liverymen appointed as Stewards of our Company generally serve for 7 years, during the last of which they have the title "Senior Steward". This year's Senior Steward is Ian Smith (yes- his Christian name does suggest that he has Scottish ancestors). Today the Mistress and I (I am getting into the habit of describing Sheila in this way) travel to leafy Surrey to meet Ian and his wife Patience to discuss upcoming events, notably the Plumbers' Carol Service which will take place on Tuesday 12 December in St Magnus the Martyr Church. We meet at RHS Wisley (which I had often seen on Gardeners' World, but never visited). The weather is so good that we were able to have our snack lunch outside. We were impressed by Wisley and plan a return visit.

SoPHE ANNUAL DINNER: 2 NOVEMBER

The last time I was able to attend the Annual Celebration Dinner of the Society of Public Health Engineers was in 2011 when I was surprised and pleased to receive the Society's Honorary Fellowship. Although I have been invited back each year since then, the date has always clashed with business commitments in Scotland. I am therefore delighted to be able to accept the invitation which was issued to me in my capacity as Master of the Plumbers' Company. Over 300 people attend this dinner- most with an involvement in some aspect of public health engineering- and it is good to see the Society continuing to award its "Young Engineer of the Year" Award, this year in conjunction with Engineers Without Borders. The evening offered the opportunity to meet some people for the first time and others- including several Plumbers' Liverymen- whom I have known for some years.

