

Dr Peter T J Rumley
Renter Warden
The Worshipful Company of Plumbers
Summer Festival Speech 2018

Master, Upper Warden, The Livery, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome our guests to our Summer Festival.

We are extremely fortunate to be here this evening in this exquisite refurbished Salters' Hall, mixing ancient tradition with one of the finest pieces of contemporary architecture in the City of London by Sir Basil Spence, a true hero of mine. He was the architect of the University of Sussex where I was incarcerated for a few years, and we now have, I am pleased to say, a lovely Duchess of Sussex.

So it therefore, gives me unquestionable pleasure to welcome our guests in such striking surroundings.

I am particularly pleased to welcome Master Firefighter, John Mansfield and his wife Leslie. John spent his career in banking and finance with Lloyds, focusing on Corporate Finance. Such is his distinguished career that John is one of only 200 people to achieve the Banking Institute's prestigious "Financial Studies Award". Apart from lending to foreign governments for infrastructure projects, I was delighted to learn that John had a side-line in funding gin places for the rich!

We also have David Wilson, Master Arbitrator. When I first quickly scanned the guest list, I read you as Master Abattoir. Where that came from I have no idea, but I was quickly corrected, Master. Of course, you are most welcome, and so too your wife, Kate.

David, as a Chartered Engineer, has had a distinguished career in the world of Mechanical Engineering and Arbitration, being a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

I also take this opportunity of welcoming Master Chartered Surveyor, Tony Joyce and his wife, Polly. As every good professional should do, Tony started at the bottom of the surveying rung.

Tony had an astonishingly early successful career emptying gas and electricity meters of sixpences and shillings – and I don't mean nicking 'em! This led onto establishing his own consultancy advising private clients, including the Government Property Unit at the Cabinet Office. Tony is also a member of the Property Investments Boards of both the City of London Corporation and the Diocese of Rochester, Kent, my adopted county. I wonder if Tony is a Man of Kent or a Kentish Man? But I'll leave you to work out what that old saying means. Tony and Polly, you are, indeed, most welcome.

You have probably identified I have introduced our Livery Masters in reverse order of precedence. But I now come to our final principle guest, Master of The Parish Clerks, which, as you know, is without Livery. I welcome Stephen Plumb accompanied by his wife, Angela.

I am not going to plumb the depths of plumbing jokes; but Stephen, if only you had been christened with the 'er' suffix to your surname I am sure you would now be within the bosom of the lovely Plumbers' Company.

Stephen was born in the East of London. On leaving school Stephen worked at Lloyds Underwriters.

Having held a London cabbies' licence for 25 years he is a Court Assistant and Almoner of the Hackney Carriage Drivers' Company. Stephen is committed to the church and has served as Parish Clerk of St Christopher Le Stocks since 2006.

Stephen became a keen musician and entered the London Jazz scene and it was inevitable he became a Liveryman of the Musicians' Company.

The Plumbers' Company loves to have you and all our guests here tonight.

It is quite appropriate that we have these four Masters present with us. For one needs the Master Firefighter to fight any fires and to mop up floods; the Master Surveyor to report on the damage; the Master Arbitrator to make sure fair play is in-order between all parties and the Master Parish Clerk to seek an act of intercession on behalf of the aggrieved client, that such praying will produce the right beneficial outcome.

You may have noticed that I have let slipped in a couple of Lovely's, and it appears that the Power of Love is the flavour of the year, given Harry's and Megan's magnificent wedding and the uplifting and eyebrow raising speech by Rev. Michael Curry.

Don't worry, I'm not going to make this into a Curry night, but I was fascinated to see how many actors, musicians and actresses - were attending the service - The Luvvies - with hardly a politician in sight. I then thought, what is the collective noun for a group of Luvvies - it could only be one thing - a Livery of Luvvies.

The Plumbers pride themselves on their friendship and hospitality. So finally, I say to our guests that the Plumbers' Company has a lovely Master, and an even more lovely Upper Warden, a Lovely Court, a lovely Livery, a lovely Beadle, a Lovely Clerk and lovely office staff, not to mention the lovely Renter Warden!

Unequivocally, we do love having all our guests with us this evening and it leaves me with little more to say than, we love our guests and I ask the lovely Plumbers' Company to rise..... and to drink the health of our lovely Guests!

To our lovely Guests!