

THE MASTER'S BLOG 18

Travelling in London during the rush hour can be quite challenging and one gets up close and personal to fellow passengers both on buses and the Tube. Our first visit to view a Livery Hall for a future event is scheduled for 0900am today which means that we must endure the cosiness of being rush hour travellers.

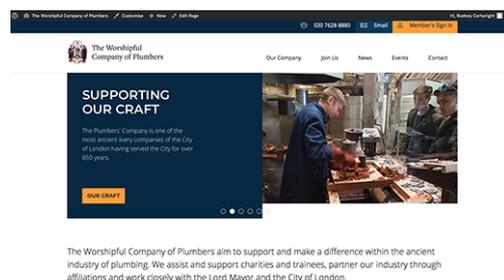
We make two visits this morning and both Halls impress us. One, a very modern Hall, has been beautifully decorated and the other, much more traditional Hall, is reminiscent of a rather nice stately home, situated in the heart of the City of London. Although we like both venues and would be happy with either for our forthcoming event, we do have a preference and now need to see whether the financial aspects can work.

VISIT TO ST OLAVE'S CHURCH AND TRINITY HOUSE: MONDAY 12 MARCH 2018

This afternoon, the Mistress Plumber attends an event organised for consorts by the Mistress Shipwright. The first part of the visit was a guided tour of St Olave's Church, first created in the 11th century in memory of Olav, Patron Saint of Norway, who is credited with saving London from the Danes in 1013. Samuel Pepys and his family are buried in the church. The tour then continued to Trinity House on Tower Hill, originally built in 1794-96 and now home to things maritime, including paintings, model ships and one of the bells from the Royal Yacht Britannia.

COMPANY MEETINGS: TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2018

The Company's senior Committee, Freedom and Livery, meets today and discusses a range of issues about the Company's strategy and policy. This is followed, later in the day, by a meeting to consider the progress of the implementation of the Plumbers' new website and computer system (which will include an easy-to-use facility for booking events). The system looks good and we look forward to it being launched to the Livery soon.



WORLD PLUMBING DAY EVENT: TUESDAY 13 MARCH 2018

I launched World Plumbing Day in Beijing on 11 March 2010 and it has been celebrated throughout the world on that day each year since. It had always been my hope that we would be able to do something to mark the day in my year as Master and today is that opportunity. A good number of Liverymen and guests gather at the Plumber's Apprentice Statue in Cannon Street Station (where the Plumbers' Hall was situated until 1863 to allow the Station to be built). In a short speech, I explain about the link between the Company and this site and the relevance of World Plumbing Day. We also take the opportunity to present bursaries to three plumbing apprentices who each receive vouchers to enable them to buy £1000 worth of tools from Monument Tools (which is a generous supporter of this programme). City and Guilds had also provided financial assistance for these bursaries. Alderman Alison Gowman (in whose Dowgate Ward, the Station is located) joins us and speaks in support of the

Plumbers' Company activity in her ward and her admiration for our statue which not only depicts a young person but someone who is clearly working.

After the presentations, we go to a local restaurant where we enjoy lunch and excellent discussions with the three apprentices, Rebecca, Luke and Theo, each one of whom is a real credit to the industry for which they are training (as well as to their employers and their training providers).

LORD MAYOR'S BANQUET: THURSDAY 15 MARCH 2018

The Lord Mayor of the City of London hosts several Dinners in his year in office in his (or her) official residence at Mansion House. Tonight, it is the Dinner to the Masters, Prime Wardens and Upper Bailiff of the Livery Companies of the City of London. It is an excellent occasion and we meet many people from the City and Livery (including Alderman Gowman whom we meet for the second time in a couple of days). In accordance with tradition, the speeches are given by the Lord Mayor and the Masters of the two Companies at the top of the order of precedence (Master Mercer and Master Grocer). All speeches are excellent and bring a lovely evening to an end.

UNITED GUILDS' SERVICE: FRIDAY 16 MARCH 2018



Having been at Mansion House last night, as we arrive in bright sunshine at St Paul's Cathedral this morning, we see many familiar faces gathering for the 76th United Guilds Service. There is something very special about worshipping in a place like St Paul's with so many people involved in the City of London Corporation and the 110 Livery Companies. The Mistress has been allocated a seat at the front along with other Consorts and I sit with the group of Liverymen from our own Company (including

three Past Masters).

The procession at the beginning of the service is heralded by the Trumpeters of the Band of the Household Cavalry, the sermon is preached by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and the choir perform some lovely anthems.

LUNCH AT PLAISTERERS' HALL: FRIDAY 16 MARCH 2018

After the service, a group of 12 representatives from the Plumbers' Company make their way to Plaisterers' Hall on London Wall where we join other Livery Companies for lunch. I have always admired Plaisterers' Hall. Although the current Hall (the fourth in the Company's history) only dates back to 1972, the plasterwork on show (especially on the ceiling) is superb and a real credit to the plastering industry today.

As Master of the most senior of the visiting Livery Companies attending the lunch, I have been asked to respond to the Toast to the Guests proposed by the Master Plaisterer. Although there is some good-natured heckling when I mention the Plumbers' seniority in the Order of Precedence, the response seems to go down well in most quarters.