

THE MASTER'S BLOG 33

APHC PRESIDENT'S DINNER- SATURDAY 30 JUNE 2018



Graham Beevers has been elected as President of the Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors for a second time (his first term of office was in 2008/09) and he has invited me to be the principal speaker at the Dinner which takes place at the Rookery Hall Spa and Hotel in Nantwich, Cheshire.

I have been asked to speak about apprenticeships and this gives me the opportunity to link the Livery Company's long history of involvement with apprentices to today's developments, including the introduction of Trailblazer apprenticeships for plumbing in England and Wales (with Level 3 NVQ having been chosen as the end qualification). I liken this to the situation which has existed in Scotland for many years, after the employers decided to remove the level 2 qualification from the system which operates there.

It is a lovely evening and a great opportunity to catch up with many people (including some Liverymen) whom I have known for many years.

BEE KEEPING IN THE CITY OF LONDON- TUESDAY 3 JULY 2018

The Mistress heads to Wax Chandlers' Hall this afternoon for a talk about the fascinating life of bees and the beneficial contribution they bring to the City. This talk includes a visit to some hives just a few minutes walk away from the Hall which are under the care of the afternoon's speaker, Deputy Master, Peter Tompkins.

PLUMBERS' COURT AND SUMMER FESTIVAL- TUESDAY 3 JULY 2018



While this afternoon sees me chairing the third of the four Court meetings which I am due to chair in my year as Master, it is followed by what is effectively my final Plumbers' Company function as Master.

We are at the lovely Salters' Hall for the meeting which includes the election of Alderman Dame Fiona Woolf as Master-Elect, Dr Peter Rumley as Upper Warden-Elect and Nick Jones as Renter Warden-Elect. After the meeting (at which new Liveryman, Charles van Oppen, is clothed as of the Livery) we have a lovely drinks reception in the garden of the Hall (which includes part of the Roman Wall). Dinner follows and the speeches include a Toast to the Guest by the Renter Warden, a response by Master Parish Clerk, Stephen Plumb and an address, partly in verse, by the Mistress Plumber. Entertainment is provided by baritone Sam Carl and his accompanist Collin Shay, both students at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and I am delighted when their



repertoire includes Ae Fond Kiss, A Man's a Man for A' That and My Love is Like a Red Red Rose (all Scottish songs).

We return home pleased with what seems to have been a very enjoyable and relaxing evening.

JAILED AND BAILED- FRIDAY 6 JULY 2018

Summoned to appear at The Old Bailey this morning, I arrive along with over 20 other Livery Company Masters to appear in Court and hear the charges which have been made against me. I am intrigued to be accused of various crimes including the possession of absolutely no technical skills (in spite of having worked for 40 years in the plumbing industry). The citation (which the Mistress had a large hand in) goes on to state that "after spending 40 years as an organist for your local church, you've left them in the lurch! While you've been enjoying Malbec and rock concerts in London, the church has had to use an electronic box to provide the music."

After being sentenced by the "Judge" (who looked awfully like Sheriff Neil Redcliffe), the convicted felons are fitted with balls and chains and transported in a vintage Routemaster



Bus to the Tower of London where we are escorted under armed guard for our final meal before being locked up. Thankfully, we have all raised the requisite bail money in aid of the British Red Cross and are released after lunch. My contribution was around £1850 and my sincere thanks go to Liverymen, friends and family for their kind donations. We are advised that the total raised today was £38, 873-

an excellent outcome.

LIGHTMONGERS' SUMMER BANQUET- FRIDAY 6 JULY 2018

The second "Summer" Dinner of the week tonight as we travel to Mansion House at the

invitation of the Worshipful Company of Lightmongers. We are pleased to be hosted at the reception by Honorary Liveryman of the Plumbers' Company, Martin Gratte (a Past Master Lightmonger) and his wife, Frankie. We meet a number of other Masters and their Consorts (including the Master Tax Adviser who, like me, was successfully released on bail from The Tower of London). After a delicious dinner, we are then entertained in the speeches by the Master and Junior Warden Lightmonger, Sheriff Tim Hailes and Lord Holmes of Richmond who tells his moving story about going blind overnight at the age of 14 to becoming a multiple Paralympic swimming champion.

