

Wardens, Past Masters and Fellow liverymen

I have often heard it said that there is no easing in to one's year as Master and my first 21 days in office has proved to me the truth of that comment. I have attended three dinners, one reception, three prizegivings, the Company's summer reception at The Oriental Club and the meeting of the Court today.

At Court today we have dealt with business in what I regard as a business-like manner but more importantly we have sworn in two new liverymen, would they stand please, so we can all recognise them? Mr Charles Horne and Mr Mark Peachey and a new freeman, Mrs Anne Paranjoti.

In addition to the newly revised swearing ceremony, today saw the attendance of a spouse or partner and Mr Paranjoti, who is lunching with us today, was in attendance to see his wife become a member of the Company. Also attending Mrs Paranjoti's swearing in was her proposer, Richard Martin, a freeman of the Company who is also lunching with us today.

I was privileged recently to attend prizegivings at both the Building Crafts College and at the City & Guilds of London Art School. At the former, a prize was awarded to the most improved student and it was won (to great acclaim by his peers) by a young man who comes from an underprivileged background and has had no formal education, having been home schooled. His experience at the college is setting him up for a productive career and it is due to contributions made to our Craft Fund that is enabling this student and others like him to embark on a useful and successful career. I hope more

members of our Company will see the benefit of supporting our charities so that this work can continue and develop.

Today Court agreed to raise the ceiling on our membership from 200 to 250 liverymen and at lunch following Common Hall, I asked all our members both new and experienced to seek out and encourage suitable candidates to join the Company. I reiterate that encouragement today and ask all of you to keep this in the forefront of your minds.

Before we break for the summer recess, we have the first of our fellowship evenings for this year at The Guinea pub in Bruton Street, Mayfair on Monday 15th July, where I look forward to meeting many of our members.

It is a pleasure to welcome our guests today:

From King Edward's School we have Eligius Cerniauskas and Gavin Lynch -Farhill, both guests of the Charitable Trust. Eligius is our bursary student

We welcome Ms Josephine Crossland, a stonemason and guest of the Charitable Trust

We also have a number of liverymen of the Company including our two new liverymen and our new freeman and her husband.

Our principal guest is Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Pattie. Geoffrey was MP for Chertsey and Walton from 1974 until he retired from the House of Commons in 1997. He served in Margaret Thatcher's government as parliamentary under-secretary of state for the RAF from 1979 to 1981 moving to be Minister of State for Defence Procurement from 1981 until 1983 when he moved again to be Minister of State for Industry and Information Technology. He served with the Queens

Royal Rifles from 1959 to 1966 retiring in the rank of Captain and is currently Honorary Colonel of 4th Battalion, Royal Greenjackets.

In welcoming all our guests, it is now my pleasure to invite members of the Court to join me in drinking to the health and happiness of our guests.