

Wardens, Fellow Liverymen and honoured guests,

On 17<sup>th</sup> September, Brenda and I attended the graduation ceremony of the Cathedrals' Workshop Fellowship Foundation degree in Applied Historic Building Conservation and Repair in Gloucester Cathedral. This degree has been validated by the University of Gloucestershire and the graduates received their degrees from the Vice-Chancellor, Stephen Marson. 11 students graduated of whom 9 are masons, 1 is a bricklayer in the stone environment and 1 is a carpenter.

Since this 2-year degree course has started, 39 students have graduated in 5 separate cohorts and the latest cohort were inducted the day after the graduation ceremony. There are 13 students in this new cohort of whom 9 are stonemasons, 2 are carpenters and 2 are plumbers.

You may be wondering why I am talking about this engagement in such detail. It is very simple. Through the Craft Fund, the Masons Company provides financial support to the student masons to help them with their tuition fees and other expenses and from some of the conversations I have had, it is quite clear that without our support, some of these students would either be unable to start their course or in some cases complete it once it has started.

This year the Craft Fund has increased its support for Cathedral Workshop Fellowship apprentices and students at the various colleges by 58%. We are supporting 6 apprentices under the Cathedral Workshop Fellowship and the Craft Fund has received applications for training support grants from 29 students at 4 colleges with a possible further 2 to come together with a letter carving apprenticeship. The budgeted expenditure for students and apprentices in the current financial year is £61,000. This is an extremely positive performance but we can only continue and

increase this programme still further if we continue to receive financial support from members of our Company and others.

We are fortunate that we have a modern craft which we can support and I urge all members of the Company to contribute as much as they can to further these very laudable objectives.

Today we have admitted one new liveryman, and a new freeman into the Company. They are lunching with us today and I would ask them to stand so we can all recognise them and welcome them into our Company. Mrs Molly Borthwick was admitted into the freedom and livery of the Company and she is accompanied by her husband, Mr David Borthwick, who was present to see her being sworn in. Mrs Frances Cambrook was admitted into the freedom of the Company. Incidentally, Mrs Cambrook is the Programme Manager for the Cathedral Workshops Fellowship degree course, about which I spoke earlier. Please give them both a hearty welcome.

It is always a pleasure to welcome our guests to lunch and today is no exception. It is a particular pleasure to welcome Staff Sergeant Gary Fagg from 15 Coy, South West London ACF, who has won the prize for Best Instructor in 15 Coy. Gary is accompanied by Captain Bennett, his commanding officer. It is a great pleasure for me to invite Gary to come and receive his prize.

In addition to our guests from the ACF it is a pleasure to welcome Mr Christopher Chivers, the Master Joiner & Ceiler and he is accompanied by his clerk, Mrs Amanda Jackson; a warm welcome to you both. We also have with us the Mistress Painter, Mrs Ruth Briant. The Master Painter was also invited but is needed elsewhere today. Nevertheless to celebrate the signing of a new lease with the Painter Stainers Company I would like to present the Mistress Painter with a scarf as a mark of our appreciation.

Our principal guest today is Murray Craig. Everyone in this room who has sworn the freedom of the City of London since 1997 will have

met Murray at least once. He has been Clerk of the Chamberlain's Court at Guildhall since 2001 and previously to that he was Assistant Clerk from 1997; he has also been a City of London guide since 2004. When he has any spare time away from the City, he enjoys cricket as a member of the MCC, football as a season ticket holder at Luton Town FC and rugby union as a season ticket holder at Saracens. He is also a keen listener to "The Archers" on BBC radio.

I now invite all members of the Worshipful Company of Masons to rise and drink to the health and happiness of our guests.