

**Master, Junior Warden;**

**My Lord Mayor;**

**My Lords;**

**Mr Sheriff;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Master, on your behalf may I welcome everyone here tonight?

Once again we enjoy the privilege of holding our Annual Banquet in the magnificent setting of the Mansion House – a privilege made all the more enjoyable when it occurs in your presence, My Lord Mayor.

For all of us – Liveryman, Freeman or guest – to dine in such fine surroundings, on such good food and in such pleasant company is simply a pleasure.

We are honoured to have with us tonight many distinguished practitioners and supporters of the art and mystery of arbitration.

Firstly, Master, may I extend thanks on behalf of the Company to our Honorary Chaplin, **George Bush**?

George has been associated with the Company for some years now. Tonight, as always, he brings to the table not only his own personality but also his gift for the telling phrase and the sincere sentiment. The grace offered by him at the start of our meal bore all of those hallmarks.

George, thank you for continuing to be a part of our Company and for being with on this special occasion.

It is also a pleasure to welcome the President of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, **Hew Dundas**, accompanied by Mrs Dundas.

The President is well known to many of us in the room, not least as an active Liveryman in this Company whose talents and energy have been used on numerous occasions to introduce to us many new and outstanding members.

It is also a personal pleasure for me to welcome **Mr Justice Colman**, together with Lady Colman. The judge was very kind to me last year by accepting my invitation to give the Master's Lecture. He delivered a *tour de force* under the banner headline "Arbitration and Judges – how much interference should we tolerate?" Those of you

who were unable to attend may well have seen the published account in the journal of the Chartered Institute.

It was an address that provoked many questions from his audience and much debate thereafter. One of the memories I shall carry with me from the evening is that of the judge, surrounded by his inquisitors, Assyrians coming down like wolves on the fold (although I didn't see anyone in purple questioning this red judge) yet engaged in lively conversation and apparently enjoying himself immensely.

As you will know, Sir Anthony has been a distinguished judge of the Commercial Court and has given many leading judgments on points arising from the 1996 Act. Outside of Court his commitment to alternative dispute resolution is plain and obvious. He is Principal of the Faculty of Mediation of the Academy of Experts as well as an Honorary President of the Italian Society of Mediation and Conciliation.

Sir Anthony and Lady Colman, you are most welcome.

May I also ask the Company to greet with acclaim the Attorney-General, **Lord Goldsmith QC?**

Lord Goldsmith arguably holds the most difficult brief in government. He is a part of the Government and yet independent of it when giving his legal advice. Some of you may think that such acrobatics must give rise to divided loyalties and a risk of muddled thinking.

But Lord Goldsmith could never be guilty of such failings. An outstanding leader at the commercial Bar, he has never been slow to take on the challenge and responsibility of office. He was Chairman of the Bar before moving on to higher things. In that former capacity he instituted, encouraged and – dare I say – inspired the formation and promotion of the Bar Pro Bono Unit.

The aim of the Pro Bono Unit is to ensure that those who wish for an advocate to represent them in their case but cannot afford one are not left without a voice. The Unit has been a great success and that is very much due to the original efforts of Lord Goldsmith.

I am almost tempted to ask “what price the pro bono arbitrator?” and maybe he will have the answer to that conundrum!

Lord Goldsmith is here tonight with Lady Goldsmith and we welcome you both most warmly

Master, in due course you will be proposing a toast to “Arbitration”. We will have the honour and privilege of hearing our guest **Sir Anthony Evans** respond to it.

Sir Anthony is well known to all in the Company: for his judicial work in the Commercial Court and the Court of Appeal; for his Presidency of the Chartered Institute and for his reputation as an international arbitrator. We are delighted that you are able to be with us tonight and look forward to hearing your remarks.

Lady Evans is with you; we welcome you both.

Master, may I turn to the Civic Party?

Present tonight with us as Duty Esquire is the Common Cryer and Serjeant at Arms,  
**Colonel Richard Martin.**

I would also ask the Company to welcome **Sheriff Richard Regan and Mrs Regan.**

My **Lord Mayor:** it seems odd to welcome you and the Lady Mayoress to what is really your home (and your dining room) but welcome you most warmly we do.

It is a pleasure and a privilege for this Company to be able to dine at the Mansion House. We are very grateful to you for allowing us to do so.

All of us here tonight salute you and the Lady Mayoress for the enormous amount of work that you have done, that you do and that you will do in the course of this year for the benefit of the City of London and nationally.

You have already traveled widely and we know that you are soon to visit Qatar, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

We wish you every happiness and success during your term. We are sure that you will have a memorable time.

May I invite the members of the Company to rise and drink to the health of “Our Guests”?