

**Master's Address to Private Dispute Resolution Lunch
at Mansion House on 14 March 2014**

Junior Warden, my Lord Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a very great pleasure to welcome you to lunch at The Mansion House, in the presence of The Lord Mayor, and to thank you, Lord Mayor, most sincerely, for agreeing to attend in person, and to address us.

It is often said that there is no such thing as a free lunch, and this is possibly no exception. I imagine many of you will be wondering what this lunch is all about, and why you have been invited to attend. You have been invited because you are amongst the leaders and policy makers of the private dispute resolution community in London, and what it is about is to initiate discuss amongst ourselves about what, if anything, we ought to be doing collectively to maintain London's preeminent position as an international private dispute resolution centre, and to explore the

extent to which we, and The Lord Mayor, and her support network, can cooperate to that end.

The Arbitrators' Company is obliged by its Royal Charter to exercise the role of a Livery Company within the traditions of the City of London, which in practice means promoting our profession like a Trade Guild of old. Specifically, we seek to foster the profession of arbitration and other forms of private dispute resolution, and to afford a means of professional and social intercourse, and the exchange of information, principally amongst the members of your organisations, which organisations are specifically mentioned in our Royal Charter, and from which our own membership is largely drawn.

Thus the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators seeks to serve our common interest of promoting London as a centre of excellence for the resolution of commercial and other disputes by private means. Here today, in the second such lunch, we wish to initiate and facilitate a discussion about what action we might take collectively to

promote our common interests, and to do so in convivial surrounding, which these certainly are.

It is also a unique opportunity to canvas the views, and enlist the support, of The Lord Mayor and her team. A significant proportion of The Lord Mayor's time is spent promoting the interests of UK plc, and of London in particular. By facilitating this lunch, and by making time to attend in person, I believe The Lord Mayor is demonstrating very clearly her interest in advancing the interests of the private dispute resolution community of London, for which I in particular am extremely grateful.

This is an opportunity not to be wasted. Thus I am hoping, my Lord Mayor, that you will tell us about your plans for the remained of your year, and the sort of assistance you would welcome from the private disputes resolution community of London to further your own objectives. It seems possible we could offer to provide briefings on specialist topics associated with private disputes resolution, and perhaps even

supplement your overseas delegations, if you think that might be helpful, which is of course for you alone to say.

In making these suggestions, I have no wish to cut across any support you already receive from others, and from the Financial Services Group of Livery Companies in particular, of which the Arbitrators' Company is a member, represented by our current Senior Warden, Professor John Uff CBC QC, who sadly for us is engaged in an international arbitration in Albania today, and thus cannot be present. Nevertheless, I have it in mind to volunteer John to be the conduit through which the variety of ideas and suggestions generated during this lunch will be collated and conveyed to all present and to the FSG. To this end, the Company members in your vicinity have been tasked with making notes of any views and suggestions you may wish to put forward during lunch. However, please bear in mind that we are also here to enjoy yourselves. If we can come up with some useful ideas of mutual benefit via collectively cooperation, that would be wonderful, but please don't let it be at the expense of having a jolly good time here together as well.

And with that thought, I should like to invite The Lord Mayor, Alderman Fiona Woolf CBE, to address us.

Derek Ross

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Words: 704 / 120 = 5.9 minutes approx.