

**The Worshipful Company of Arbitrators
Master's Speech, 29 October 2009**

**Wardens,
Members of the Court
Liverymen
Freemen
Honoured Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I referred to the membership list recently and realised that during my term as Master I will pass the 20th anniversary of my admission to the Livery of this Company.

I realised too that those admitted at much the same time as me have proved fertile ground as far as this Company is concerned.

I am the sixth Master since the year 2000 who was admitted to the Livery in 1989 or 1990, or the seventh I suppose if you count Michael Stephens who most bravely did the job twice.

I am pleased to say that 4 of them are here tonight. In chronological order of their time as Master, James Mackie, Victoria Russell, Andrew Drysdale and Ann Underwood. I thank them for their continued interest in the affairs of the Company and for their presence here tonight.

I must, I am afraid, single one of them out as she is directly responsible for my standing here. I had successfully kept my head down for 12 years and was looking forward to staying anonymous for many more. Then came the call.

Chris, came a very persuasive voice, what would you say to the possibility of serving as a Court Assistant if asked? Vicky Russell is someone that it is difficult to refuse, a factor of being a litigator in the construction industry I suspect. Only in exceptional circumstances are you likely to be asked more than once, so I said yes, and I must say I have not regretted it – so far at least.

I must mention some other individuals who indirectly got me into this.

In the late seventies I was working in a practice where the Senior Partner was a Fellow of the Institute of Arbitrators, as it then was. I cannot

remember how exactly, but I ended up as an Associate of the Institute. I suspect, had that not happened, that I would not be standing here. That was Trevor Hadland and I am extremely pleased to see him here on what must be, for him, a very rare foray to London.

I subsequently moved to work in a London practice which was very much into professional development and I was expected to resume studying some 12 years after I thought I had finished with all that. Most of them were studying project management but I decided to resurrect my, by then, ACI Arb qualification and work towards Fellowship. Ultimately I ended up as pupil of Maurice Pleasance who unfortunately cannot be here tonight, he tells me that he and Margaret are waiting for one new knee and two, coming up for three, new hips between them. Maurice it was who suggested that I should join this Company.

I mentioned a telephone call from Victoria. Well, what do you know. I got another one. This time from Donald Valentine, who also had a question for me, if you were to be selected, would you be prepared to take on Junior Warden in Waiting. Again, you don't get asked twice.

So there we are, three of the four people you can blame for my standing before you as your new Master are in this room tonight. I am however very pleased to see them here and I thank them for the assistance that they have given in their various ways.

From Victoria and Donald I have learnt that one should take soundings. Whether it is best advice or not I cannot say, but a Past Master of another Company, albeit a bon viveur of some standing, tells me that I should just enjoy it and have a great time.

So now I am here. You have confirmed me as your Master for the next year. 12 whole months, it seems an age. I think of the 8 weeks of summer holidays when I was a boy. They lasted for ever. Those who have already done the job tell me however that it will go like a flash.

As Senior Warden one is clearly watching the incumbent Master and seeing how he does things and preparing seriously for one's own year in the Chair. I must say that John has had a tremendous year, there have been lots of things going on and I thank him for his excellent stewardship. I find myself taking the helm of a Company that is in good shape. I look forward to my year as Master and will do my very best to leave it in as least as good a state as I find it.

I think now is the time that we should show our appreciation to John for all his hard work and to his wife Jenny who has so ably supported him.

In addition to it being some 20 years since I was admitted to the Freedom of the Company, it is exactly 7 years ago this month that I joined the Court of Assistants. Two others joined the Court at the same time. They were Barry Duggan and Ian Wilson. Unfortunately neither can be here tonight. It has been a pleasure to know them and I hope that we will see them at future events.

Next a brief word about the coming year.

I am pleased to have two such able people with me as my Wardens. Kay Linnell as Senior Warden and Hew Dundas as Junior Warden. I look forward to working with them.

The members of the Court of Assistants are too many to mention individually but I also look forward to their support and assistance over the coming year.

It would be remiss if me not to mention the Clerk who, has been serving two masters (one with a small m until today) over the past month as the changeover approached. She has carried that burden uncomplainingly.

Turning for a moment to the Charitable Trust which Assistant Michael Goodridge will continue to chair. There are eight Objects in the Constitution of the Company and the third of these relates to charitable activities.

The charitable giving of the Trust therefore has a very important role in the overall activities of the Company. Over the years the funds of the Trust have continued to increase and with that the amount that the Trust has been able to donate to good causes, particularly those to do with the City and dispute resolution.

I look forward to seeing a continued increase in the Trust's funds even in the current difficult financial circumstances. The Immediate Past Master's wife Jenny raised a large sum for the Trust by means of a sponsored 10k run and I would urge members to think about undertaking similar activities in aid of the Trust. Don't be put off from doing so just because you are not a Trustee or a member of the Court. Charitable activities are one of the principal functions of the Livery movement. Don't wait to be asked, go do it.

Talking about charitable funds for a moment Liveryman Michael Gifkins will again take the lead at our third concert at St Mary-le-Bow church next June. I look forward to a bumper attendance at what is becoming a pretty special event.

As far as social activity is concerned I have, with the able help of Assistant Karl Davies and the members of his committee, devised a programme which gives us about one activity a month.

The first of these is next month and is a Chinese evening at the Royal Dragon restaurant in Gerrard Street. Tickets are limited and I am told that they are going fast.

The Carol service will take place as in previous years in December at St Mary-le-Bow with wine and mince pies to follow and I look forward to a similarly large attendance as in previous years.

We have our customary banquet at the Mansion House in January which is always a splendid occasion. We will have the trumpeters again and I am pleased to say that Lord Hoffman, the recently retired Law Lord, will respond to the toast to the guests.

That's enough trailers, there will be plenty more activities in the coming year. I just hope that you will recognise the hard work that goes into organising these events and continue to give them your full support.

Before I welcome our guests this evening I will follow the pleasant custom of recent years of introducing to you the new Liverymen and Freemen who were admitted at the Court Meeting this afternoon.

The first is Lieutenant Commander Carl Wiseman RN of HMS Mersey who has been admitted to the Honorary Freedom of the Company for his term as CO.

Admitted as Liverymen today are

Alistair Brown

Thomas Halket – all the way from New York

Grant Jones

Brian Williamson

Admitted as a Freeman

David Stredwick

I look forward to seeing you at many Company events over the coming years.

Unfortunately actuarial statistics mean that an organisation such as this suffers a regular loss of membership. I am looking forward to working with my Junior Warden who chairs the membership committee to ensure a regular flow of new members.

It is good to see so many familiar faces and quite a few new ones here tonight and I welcome all.

I have already mentioned Lieutenant Commander Wiseman who as an Honorary Freeman is no longer a guest. But I do thank him for taking a break from his onerous duties in the North Sea and the English Channel and welcome him and his charming partner Carolin to our gathering tonight.

Leading Logistician Parfitt you already know all about. I welcome him and Emma-Jayne.

I also welcome the President of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, John Campbell QC. His efforts in guiding that Institute are appreciated. John specialises in planning matters and thus makes up a triumvirate of property men with the Master Architect and the Master Surveyor. I understand that not so long ago John was involved in rather adventurous step in setting up his own advocates' chambers, a first for Scotland. I also gather that he very recently got married. So slightly belated congratulations to John.

I also welcome two visiting Masters this evening.

The Master of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects Roger France and his Clerk David Cole-Adams. One thing that I noted from Roger's biographical notes is that he mentions that he designed system built housing for the Greater London Council and makes a point of saying that none collapsed. Roger took part in the recent Livery Halls walk, 40 halls, 8 ½ miles and 8 hours. It did include a splendid lunch at Bakers Hall which the Immediate Past Master and I also enjoyed. During that walk Roger invited us into the Church of St Mary-at-Hill for a bit of a rest and to view the entries submitted for the Inhabited Bridge for London

Competition. If Roger's houses did not fall down you can rest assured that poor old London Bridge would have sunk deep into the Thames mud with all the weight that some of the designs imposed upon it.

I am also pleased to welcome Laurence Johnstone, the very recently installed, all of 10 days ago, Master of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Surveyors. Part of Laurence's schooling was at the Nautical College Pangbourne. As distinct from myself who went to the School of Navigation at Southampton and then went to sea for 3 ½ years before starting my career as a Chartered Surveyor, I understand Laurence went straight into surveying. That if I may say so was his loss albeit it was clearly the surveying profession's gain.

Last but by no means least The Honorable Mr Justice Hickinbottom. I first met the Judge some 15 years ago when he was a fellow student on the course leading to the Diploma in International Commercial Arbitration. My clear memory of him is that he always seemed to know the answer when the rest of us were fumbling around trying to get our thoughts together. I did not know it at the time but he had already set his sights on high Judicial office. From 1994 he sat as a Recorder for a couple of weeks at a time having as I understand it worked a 13 day fortnight in his firm to allow him to do it. He was also sitting in the evenings as a Parking Adjudicator. Clearly he worked immensely hard and thoroughly deserved his appointment as full time Circuit Judge in the year 2000.

He was Designated Civil Judge for Wales before being elevated to the High Court Bench earlier this year. He is only the fourth solicitor to achieve that eminence.

He has already been enormously successful and I am sure has a glittering future ahead of him on the Bench. Once that is drawing to a close I have absolutely no doubt that he will aspire to a third career, the position that seems to be the ultimate goal of most Judges - the Arbitrator's chair.

Sir Gary, Masters, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, we are delighted that you have been able to join us this evening.

Now would the members of the Company please stand and join me in drinking a toast to our guests