

**WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF ARBITRATORS**

**INSTALLATION DINNER 2018**

**TOAST TO THE GUESTS**

**THE MASTER: THE RT HON SIR GARY HICKINBOTTOM**

Wardens, Liverymen and Freemen, Distinguished and Honoured Guests

As I walk with my clerk each morning from my room at the RCJ to the court in which I am sitting, I am usually still reading the submissions or authorities on the case, or even jotting notes for a judgment I am due to deliver that morning – and my clerk says, “It’s too late, sir”; to which I always respond, “It’s never too late”. Well – this evening, if he were here, he would be right. It is too late. There is nothing you or I or anyone can do about it – I am the Company’s Master for the next year. And I am delighted and proud to have been elected to serve. It will be challenging, but I promise that I will do my best. And I do so supported by my Consort and secret weapon, the Mistress Arbitrator, Caroline. I would not have attempted any of this without her.

We have a wonderful Company, that does so much so well. We should be proud of the education in dispute resolution that we provide and support – the symposium, the annual lecture, the arbitration and mediation competition for students, the awards we give that enable young people to go abroad to see how others arbitrate. We should be proud of the charitable arm of the Company, our Trust, which gives money in support of the same goals, but also to charitable causes generally. I thank Assistant Phil Fidler, now stepping down, for his years of work as chair of the Trustees; and welcome Assistant Eamonn Malone as the new chair. We should be proud of our associations with the armed services, including now 622 Squadron, an association forged in the last year; and I certainly add my welcome to that of the Senior Warden to all the representatives of the three services here this evening. You are all sincerely welcome.

But there is still much to be done. In the next year, I hope to pursue three particular themes.

First, as part of the Company strategy adopted earlier this year, we are committed to developing the membership of the Company. It is important that we attract new members, and members with a broad range of dispute resolution interests; and I am delighted that today, in addition to our three Honorary Freemen, Lt Cmdr Power of HMS Mersey, Sqn Ldr O’Brien of 622 Squadron and Captain Oweh of 13 Company, we have admitted two new Liverymen Lucy Keane and Douglas Ward; and no less than eleven Freeman: Sir Bernard Eder, David Mendes Da Costa, Gill Ekins, Ben Giaretta, John Hamilton, David Nelson, Caroline Sheppard, Michael Smith, Michael Spencer, Victoria Tyson and Christopher Wray. All are here this evening, except Sir Bernard, whom we can readily forgive as he is at the memorial service of Sir Antony Colman, a luminary of commercial law and arbitration. In

time honoured manner, I ask all of the new Liverymen, Freeman and hon Freeman to stand and be recognised.

This is not the end, but only the beginning of our efforts to draw into the Company the brightest and the best of those committed to the resolution of disputes in London, whilst diversifying the membership, by being attractive to all across the whole gamut of dispute resolution. For all of these new Freeman, today is their first experience of the Company; but, for none, is it their last. We must look after them all. They are the future of the Company. The development of the membership of the Company, including the re-engagement with members whom we do not see often enough, will be a top priority over the next year and more.

For my second theme, I have to refer to the “B” word. At a recent swearing in of a judge, the Lord Chief Justice reminded us of how easy it is to use the wrong word whilst under pressure; telling the story of how the judge then being sworn in, whilst still an advocate, for a whole afternoon in court referred to Mr Justice McFarlane, whom he was before, as “My Lady”. But the Lord Chief went on to tell the story of how he had heard an entire interview on the radio in which a politician referred to Brexit as “breakfast”. Well – breakfast is on my watch. During this year, the Company will be making it clear that, whatever Brexit might hold, London will remain the world centre for legal services and dispute resolution. Next May, we will be supporting the London International Dispute Resolution Week; and, on 20 May 2018, at our Charter Banquet at the Mansion House, the speaker will be the Lord Chancellor – whoever that might be at the time – who, I am sure, will reinforce that message; and, amongst others, the Lord Chief will be there to ensure that he does. It will be an important event, at which the Company will be on show. I hope to see everyone who is here tonight at that Banquet – to show our support for the work we are pledged to support in London.

May I pause there briefly to say this. We expect all Freeman and Liverymen to be committed to the Company. That commitment is evidenced in a wide variety of ways – but almost all of them require some support or at least forbearance on the part of our family and friends. That is why it is right that, this evening, we have so many as our personal guests. I would like to welcome and thank you all; but, if I may, especially our own family and friends who comprise this rabble down here.

We are supported by two other groups of important people, who are also represented here this evening.

First, the Livery. The Livery is the largest association of like-minded individuals in the world. Its charitable giving is not reflected simply in the £50m per year given in money, because the number of hours given to charitable causes by the Livery Companies as a whole is incalculable. In doing what we do, the Livery stands together – and, in the next year, I look forward to engaging with as many other Livery Companies as possible.

In the meantime, I would like to welcome some Livery friends. May I welcome captain Rob Booth, the Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, and his wife Carol, guest

this evening of Past Master Chris Dancaster. May I welcome Geoff Hughes and his wife Sue. Geoff is the Master of the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales, a position he has held for as long as 48 hours. He is a former Governor of HMP Belmarsh, the highest security prison in the country. The Livery Company of Wales pursues the same objects as the City's Companies – and its charitable support in Wales – to the arts, education, science and technology – is imaginative and incredibly impressive. I hope that, over the next year, our two Companies will get to know each other much better. May I also welcome the Master Baker, His Honour Stephen Kramer QC, and his wife, Miriam. Stephen is retired, but he worked just a little way down the production line from Geoff. He was a judge at the Old Bailey. As well as being Master of this Company, I have the privilege of being a Liveryman in the Bakers, bread being in my blood. Stephen and Miriam – welcome.

The second group whom we must thank are even closer at home. The Company is well-served by our clerk, Biagio Fraulo, and Assistant Clerk, John White. We say it every year, but only because it is true: we could not function without your work, and we are as ever grateful. May I also thank George Bush for his good grace, and our worthy beadle Jimmy James for his work throughout the year, but particularly for his choreographic work on the Installation Court – the rehearsal for which resembled a Sergeant Major giving orders to independently-minded and rather slow-witted cats.

May I also personally thank my Wardens, Margaret Bickford-Smith QC and Martyn Bradish, for their support in the last months and today; and for the support that they have offered, and which I will need, throughout the next year. I must of course add to those officers, Immediate Past Master David Wilson and his consort Kate. David has been a real friend over the last two years, whilst we have been officers together, and he has kindly agreed to continue to bear some of the burden over the next 12 months. He has been a diligent – indeed, an excellent – Master, who has been responsible for so much: amongst other things the new website and the Company strategy. The Company is in his debt. David – thank you.

The third and final theme, but of no less importance, is this. Whilst we continue to do what we are committed and eager to do – to support dispute resolution in all its forms, and to support the Lord Mayor and the Corporation in all ways we can – I am determined that we shall have the joy of companionship and fun. That is also a vital part of the Livery, that we must carefully foster. This evening – thanks to you all for coming – we have made a grand start.

All of our guests are special – but talk of companionability and fun brings me easily to our particular guest. Rob Rinder was brought up north of London, and attended the same school as our Junior Warden – although it seems that that experience did Rob no harm. He acted with the National Youth Theatre – but, insofar as the two can be distinguished, he left acting for the Bar. Gordon Slynn QC – before he became a judge of the High Court, European Court and then the House of Lords – was one of the greatest (and certainly one of the most elegant) advocates of his day. He said that the essence of good advocacy is charm. So, we can be certain that Rob was a good barrister. I know he was involved in heavy and challenging criminal cases, particularly in international fraud.

But TV called. He had done some script-writing, and arising out of that he was offered the job and alter ego of Judge Rinder. This programme has been described as a British version of Judge Judy – but I like to think of Judge Judy as an American version of Judge Rinder. Why it is particularly appropriate for him to be our guest this evening is that Judge Rinder’s cases are in fact arbitrations – albeit arbitrations with the benefit, not of privacy, but of exposure on national television. He has gone on to be involved in a variety of programmes, including discussion programmes and those involving the reconstruction of crimes. He writes columns in two newspapers. In 2016, he competed in Strictly Come Dancing. He said that he was doing so to make his grandmother proud. Ah – the expectations of grandmothers today. Mine was proud of me if I finished my sprouts. In any event, dancing was something else at which Rob excelled. It is a mark of that success that, for those of you who watch Gogglebox, during the introductory sequence, the two individuals who go “Ooooo”, are doing so spontaneously as a result of watching a particular dance move by Rob. Modesty prevents my describing that move in any detail.

Rob has with him this evening his friend Katie Glass, a writer and journalist with the Sunday Times, who I have been charmed to sit by at dinner. The Company is very fortunate to have Rob and Katie as its guests this evening. We offer them the best of welcomes.

Indeed, we offer such a welcome to all our guests.

Wardens, Liverymen and Freemen of the Company, I offer you a toast to: Our guests.

**23 October 2018**