

**Master, Junior Warden;
My Lord Mayor;
Mr Sheriff;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Master, may I, on your behalf, welcome everyone here tonight. It is great to see you all, despite the weather

Looking around at our guests, and not only those I will welcome individually I see an absolute cornucopia of stars not of arbitration alone but of all the various forms of alternative dispute resolution that are such a necessary long stop to commercial relations in this contentious age and are now an established part of the Ordinances of this Worshipful Company.

Before anything else I must welcome the **Reverend George Bush**, our Chaplain. George is also Chaplain to Sheriff Gillon and got to ride in the Sheriff's coach in the Lord Mayor's Show as a result. At least **he** kept out of the pouring rain!! The Master and I and other stalwarts got absolutely soaked!!! I should however emphasise that it was as always a thoroughly enjoyable occasion.

George has, as on so many previous occasions, set things off to a splendid start with his magnificent and apposite grace.

George we thank you and welcome you as always to our gathering.

Turning now to the Civic Party.

My Lord Mayor, we are delighted that you have taken time out from your busy schedule and that you and the **Lady Mayoress** can be with us tonight.

It is a pleasure and a privilege for this Company to be able to dine at the Mansion House. May I add my thanks to those of the Master.

These are trying times for the City but I am comforted by the comment in your speech tonight that despite the choppy seas and uncharted waters, the world is not flat and we will not fall off.

Also with us tonight is **Sheriff George Gillon**, who, I am pleased to say, is, like myself, a Chartered Surveyor. I see from his cv on the City web site that he helped his then firm to weather the recession of the early 90s.

With your combined wisdom and that of Sheriff Roger Gifford, an investment banker, - who unfortunately cannot be with us tonight, I trust that any light that you may find for us isn't the proverbial train coming in the other direction -- or even the edge of the world!!!

Completing the Civic party is **Colonel Billy King Harman, the City Marshal**, who is the Lord Mayor's peacekeeper. How appropriate that he is with us, - given that one of the initiatives of our Charitable Trust is the Peacemaker prize that we donate each year to King Edward's School Whitley.

Welcome all the Civic Party.

Master, - the eminence of our principal guests this evening means that I cannot do full justice to their considerable talents and achievements without running the risk of the Company overstaying its welcome this evening. I must, however, recognise them all, even if briefly.

One factor links all I have yet to welcome, each of them is a major contributor to the literature of dispute resolution.

Writing a book can be an onerous and lonely task almost as lonely as being sole arbitrator! Writing an arbitration award generally goes in one of two ways either the answer to a disputed issue comes like a flash of light or by a developmental process. In the case of a flash of light the arbitrator has to work backwards to make sure that the initial conclusion actually fits the facts. Without the flash of light it is much more interesting: ----- I can't wait to finish this Award, I want to find out who has won!

Any author setting out on the rocky road of writing a learned tome knows what it is he wants to write about. That means that there can be no flash of light or suspense as to the ending to keep the author going. The quantity and quality of the literary output of our principal guests suggests that this is not something that has troubled them.

I will not even attempt to identify the individual volumes that they have written. Suffice it to say that dispute resolution would be the poorer without their contribution.

Master, I am delighted that **Sir Vivian Ramsay** has accepted your invitation to be with us tonight. Sir Vivian, Construction Silk of the year 2005, was Head of Chambers at a well known construction set in Essex Street until he was elevated to the Bench. I am sure that he would say, it is the construction set. Sir Vivian is Presiding Judge of the Technology and Construction Court and chairs the Users' Committee of that Court with great aplomb.

Sir Vivian, it is a great pleasure that you and Lady Ramsay can be with us tonight.

Karl Mackie and Eileen Carroll, as well as being husband and wife, are respectively the Chief and Deputy Chief Executives of the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution. Between them they have guided CEDR from new kid on the block to what is now a force to be reckoned with.

Welcome Eileen and Karl

Also with us tonight is **David Richbell**. David is one of the lynchpins of mediation - having been one of the original pioneers with CEDR. Last year David was among the first to be awarded Fellowship of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators as an established mediator.

David, I am pleased to welcome you and Chris tonight.

I also welcome **Alan Redfern**. Solicitor turned barrister and renowned international arbitrator. He is Vice- President of the International Court of Arbitration of the ICC in Paris and non-executive director of the London Court of International Arbitration. Alan, it is a pleasure that you can be with us tonight.

Last but by no means least, I welcome **Sir Rupert Jackson**, who has kindly agreed to respond on behalf of the guests. Sir Rupert was, before his elevation to the Court of Appeal, Presiding Judge of the Technology and Construction Court. I had the pleasure, on many occasions of observing Sir Rupert's incisive mind at work when he chaired the User's Committee.

Sir Rupert was President of the Cambridge Union in his time there and is thus well used to the cut and thrust of debate. He can also tell a mean yarn. The novel arbitration procedure that he described a while back when speaking at an Arbrix dinner is a treasured memory.

As many of you will know Sir Rupert's major task in the last months of his tenure in the TCC - was sorting out the Multiplex and Cleveland Bridge litigation on Wembley stadium. This, I know, involved a considerable excursion into the murkier depths of the valuation of construction works. If the intellectual challenge of working in the Court of Appeal is not enough - and as an established author, albeit in the professional negligence field, I find myself wondering when Jackson on Quantity Surveying will arrive on the shelves.

Sir Rupert, I, and I am sure all those present, look forward with keen anticipation to your contribution this evening. You and Lady Jackson are most welcome.

Finally it would be remiss of me not to say what a pleasure it is to welcome my own guests and those of all the other members of the Company here tonight.

Will the members of the Company please stand and join me in drinking the health of Our Guests.

Our Guests