



# *Dare. Create. Succeed.*



## *A Marvellous Year*

LED BY MASTER MARK HUXLEY



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## *Foreword by the Lord Mayor*

What a year it has been! You have been hugely busy across the City of London and beyond promoting entrepreneurship and business for growth. However, it is your enthusiasm for the wider agenda of the City of London Corporation that has really shone through.

It was my pleasure to address hundreds of students at your Raleigh Lecture this year – especially since the theme of space, enterprise, and exploration are all things about which I am enthusiastic. Meanwhile, your Master has been one of the heroes of the Livery circuit this year, always ready to help, cajole, and encourage the City's many events and areas of interest. A stalwart of my own Lecture series – the Knowledge Miles – Mark has chaired innumerable debates and discussions, and has even delivered one himself! The Entrepreneurs have been at the heart of the City's social and business calendar this year, and I am so grateful.

I am also grateful for the support your Company has given to the City's SME strategy and to its DEI priorities. With small and medium sized enterprises making up so many of the businesses in the Square Mile, knowing that the Company of Entrepreneurs has contributed so fulsomely to the formulation of the City's 5-year strategy gives that document enormous credibility. I know that Councilman Paul Singh shares my appreciation for the time and effort that the Company of Entrepreneurs has put in to that work. In DEI, too, the Company of Entrepreneurs has led from the front – showcasing not only some of the best practice in the City in its results, but also in cogently communicating the business case for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Building on the work of my predecessors, financial literacy, business education and enterprise skills continue to flourish at the heart of the mayoral agenda. This year the added focus of connectivity has been key to the success of the City. The convening power of Mansion House has, I see, been replicated in your own events, and, most especially, please accept my thanks for so generously embracing the Livery Experience scheme. On three occasions, you have hosted guests at your events on my behalf, and every time you have demonstrated unwavering commitment to the finest ideals of the Livery. I am so impressed with your ability to articulate our mayoral theme of "connect to prosper" – the Entrepreneurs' Company has connected Mansion House's guests with good companions, stimulating events, and charitable zeal. Financial and diplomatic prosperity will surely flow, and I am sincerely grateful for your generosity.

With a "Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs" just on the horizon, and my successor, Alderman King, as the first Freeman Entrepreneur to be elected as Lord Mayor, you are assured a very public position from which to espouse innovation and growth into 2025 and beyond!

Elisabeth and I have so enjoyed our year in Mansion House, as I know that Mark has so enjoyed his year as your Master. The historic 10th edition of Dare, Create, Succeed is the perfect testimony to a wonderful year.

**Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli**  
**The Rt Hon. the Lord Mayor of London**





# Welcome from the Master

With three years of rehearsal as a Warden, the moment of being elected as Master brings it all into sharp focus. No more thinking when I'm Master, I'll do this, and I'll change that. It's all too real, and that is exactly how I felt when standing in the magnificent surrounds of Drapers Hall to make my installation speech. Having carefully crafted it over dozens of drafts, the moment had arrived to deliver it. Looking down the room at the hundreds of faces all staring at me was sobering as I shared my ambitions. A moment that will stay in the memory forever. Now in the blink of an eye, I am writing these words reflecting on the actual year I have had.

The fellowship and friendship within the Company have always been important to me. It was important therefore that with Covid firmly behind us that we got back to some of the wonderful social things we used to do before it, and that much defined our culture. I'll speak more about these within the magazine, but it was lovely to bring back our annual BBQ, celebrating the efforts of our Freemen, including John Burton and the magnificent work he's doing with Pollinating London Together with City walks and tours as well as hikes outside of London. We even got to visit the vault of the infamous Hatton Garden Heist. Of course, there were formal events too. I always enjoy these, and it was lovely to bring many new guests to the Company who had not experienced our hospitality too. I hope I brought my own personality to them too, with my speeches never being too serious and with my love of music, having some wonderful talent come to entertain us.

Diversity, Inclusivity and Equity are really important to me. I pledged to make this a key part of my year. We elevated our DEI taskforce to become a full Committee, giving them access across all our activities to ensure we fully embrace it in all parts. I cannot express how proud I am that this was recognised by the Livery Committee when we were asked to share our work with our peers at their inaugural conference, delivering a keynote being described as a "Pocket of Good Practice". My heart burst with pride on the day, witnessing the impact we made and positive feedback and engagement in the room and since times.

For my own part I wanted to use my year to drive some DEI areas that are important to me. Social mobility and minority founders have featured heavily via our charitable trust, where I serve on the board. Female founders face many specific challenges. With the support of Freeman, Tee Dobinson, we have created a podcast series under the title of EXTRA(ordinary) Women. The episodes are live and harnessing Tee's award-winning writing skills, will in time also be published in the written word too.

We have continued to develop our relationships across the rest of the City. For my part, it has been wonderful making so many new friends with my fellow year-group of Masters, friendships that I hope have been made for life. The Lord Mayor has delivered an outstanding year, showing the full diversity of the City, not just the usual financial services public face. He has given so many platforms to so many organisations to share their perspectives and I have been proud to directly support one of them. His year-long series of online Knowledge Miles Lectures have been fantastic. I was delighted to be asked to deliver one at the start of my year, where I explored how the City evolves



to build a true enterprise economy. I was then asked if I would chair some of the sessions. I've lost count of how many I have done. It has been hugely enriching to hear so many different perspectives on life. Some correlate with us Entrepreneurs, but many much wider.

This really is just a flavour of my year, and I hope when reading the magazine, you will witness much else. My list of people to thank is long and hard to capture here. But I must thank our Clerk for his total support throughout the term. My Wardens, to whom I wish every success as they further progress, Alastair King as he takes on the mantle of the 696th Lord Mayor, James Talbot as he steps up from Middle Warden to become our 11th Master, Jat Wasu as he progresses to Middle Warden and Rita Bologna as she begins her own journey as Junior Warden. To the Court and Assistants for helping guide the Company, especially as we reformed its role by creating an operational Finance and General-Purpose Committee. To our other Committees for their fabulous work every day and all those Freemen who have supported the Company along the way. Finally, to my wife and Consort Jo. It has been wonderful to share the year with you.

**Mark Huxley**  
**Master Entrepreneur 2023-24**

**The Master Entrepreneur, Mr Mark Huxley**  
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# Masters Activities

## External Events

### Crisis and Venture Philanthropy.

As you may know we have supported Crisis, the homeless charity for some while though our outreach activities. Principally this has been to support their Venture Studio project where in their words they “invest in, build, and scale ventures that end homelessness for those experiencing it or prevent homelessness from happening in the first place.” I was delighted therefore to be asked as Master to attend an evening gathering where they fully explored to increasing role venture philanthropy is playing in impact investment to help drive social change.

More about our Election Banquet later, but to say that I was honoured to have Matt Downie MBE, CEO of Crisis attend as our Principal Guest on the night. The speech he gave was truly motivating and inspiring.

**Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers Annual Lecture.** As a Livery that is still focused on their craft (pun intended), it was lovely to be invited to St Thomas's to hear their annual lecture which shared all the skills of medical eye care from prevention to cure. We learned of the varying skills of a Dispensing Optician, an Optometrist, an Orthoptist and an Ophthalmologist, and received demonstrations from the Low Vision team at St Thomas'. Utterly fascinating and sobering in equal measure!

**Sheffield Trade Mission.** One of the most prominent Guilds outside London is the Company of Cutlers of Hallamshire in Sheffield. In May they brought a delegation to London for a lunchtime showcase of how the city is transforming itself from being “Steel City” into being part of the Northern Powerhouse of industry and commerce. With representatives from tech, sustainable ventures and next generation forging, it was a fascinating insight. The outcome being an invitation made for myself to accompany the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs to join the Master Cutler on a visit to the City in July.

I have my own working relationship with Sheffield, so it was wonderful to see how the city has invested so much to change. We visited three sites: ITM Power who are on a mission to create green hydrogen via advanced electrolysis, Forgemasters who are using new and innovative techniques to address the most complex engineering challenges and the Sheffield Tech Parks, a really first class tech hub and accelerator. It was an honour to support the Lord Mayor and a pragmatic outcome is a visit I am planning for us Entrepreneurs to visit Sheffield Tech Parks in January next year.

**RNLI Blue Plaque unveiling at Furniture Makers Hall.** As the RNLI celebrate their 200th anniversary, a plaque was unveiled at the Hall commemorating that their site was the charity's first ever address. The Lord Mayor oversaw the unveiling, supported by four lifeboatmen, including our very own Stephen Wheatly. As one would expect, emotions ran high on such a special occasion.

**Livery Climate Action Group/Worshipful Company of Insurers and Worshipful Company of Engineers Workshop.** Through our work, led by Ben Martin, we were invited to be part of a group meeting to explore some specific issues around the City's climate challenges and pragmatic solutions we could help deliver. In a wide-ranging debate there were many areas uncovered and now work can get underway to look at the solutions. I am sure Ben will give a fuller briefing at an appropriate time.

**Glovers Inter-Livery Croquet Competition.** We broke our duck this year and took part in this great day out. I cannot claim that we troubled the leaderboard in any way. It was a delightful day however and something that we should support again next year.

**Livery Weekend.** As happens every year the Lord Mayor brings together his serving Livery Masters, Prime Wardens and Upper Bailiff, Sheriffs and other senior City officers along with their Consorts and Partners for a weekend of fellowship and friendship. This year it was held in the City of London and was filled with a myriad of activities. One of the prime reasons for the weekend is it marks the formation of us all there as an official Past Masters Group. This duly happened and we were officially named as Domini XXIV and I was proud to be asked to be one of its founding Directors.

**Midsummer Common Hall.** Held every year it marks the formal election of the next year's Sheriffs. Alderman Greg Jones and Past Master Draper David Chalk were elected as Aldermanic and Lay Sheriff respectively. The Aldermanic Sheriff will expect to be considered for onward election to Lord Mayor, the Lay Sheriff, serving their term before returning to “normal” life. Several of us joined in Guildhall to observe, we cannot vote until we are a fully formed Livery Company.

**Billesden Dinner.** As I mentioned very briefly last time, this is one of the most historic Livery Dinners in the City, dating back to 1484 when the Merchant Taylors and Skinners Company had their public falling out over who was the more senior company when those in existence were numbered by age. Tempers spilling in the Lord Mayor's Pageant (forerunner to the Lord Mayor's Show and a river pageant). Lord Mayor Sir Robert Billesden stepped in to settle a “variaunce and controversie”, this particularly bloody brawl between members of both guilds. His decision is believed to be the oldest City decree that still operates exactly as it has since it was pronounced. It ordered that the guilds, now Companies, alternate each year in their positions within the Great Twelve order, and that each year both must host each other for a feast. Hence the Billesden Dinner. This was a first for the Company being invited to it and perhaps recognition for our continuing advancement in the city. Whatever the reason, the Clerk and I were therefore on our very best behaviour and enjoyed a truly unique event. \*Apologies if my anecdote needs a bit of fact checking.

**Annual City Churches Walk.** Arranged by the Plumbers we were treated to a day visiting just some of the magnificent Wren churches in the City. Each having its own history and story. The weather played its own part, with the rain at times itself being biblical! Spirits were never dampened though.

## Our Own Events and News

**Spitalfields Walk.** Thanks to Past Master Architect Chris Dyson we were treated to a fascinating themed walk around the area. He has lived and worked there for 35 years. We have a shared passion shared by me, as one of my companies was sited there for nigh on a decade. He showed us the area's history and his own impact upon it, the highlight being a live to work property designed for French artists Philip & Charlotte Colbert. I came across this article about the project in Vogue Magazine. Walk completed, we did what anyone in the area should do and enjoyed a fabulous Brick Lane curry at the Eastern Eye.

**Visit by Haslam Business College, University of Tennessee.** With thanks to Ben Martin, Chair of our Education Committee, we were asked to meet with a student delegation visiting the City, to explore many things entrepreneurship related. Myself and some other Freeman were able to share our experiences and how they are contextualised in the City of London with Livery Companies, the City Corporation, the Lord Mayor's role and how we support them all.

**Knowledge Miles Lectures.** It has been a constant thread of my year to chair many of these online lectures for the Lord Mayor. The topics are diverse, speakers utterly fascinating and questions from the audience deeply insightful. There are too many to share here, but a click here will take you to them all.

**EASI Judging Day.** The third annual award winner was crowned at the EASI24 Final, held at the Skyline London, Tower Suites Hotel on Monday June 3rd. Thanks as always to Tony Matharu for hosting us once again. Also, to our EASI Champions Tribe and Champions UK PLC for their continued support. I was delighted to both judge and help host the evening with Past Master Judy Hadden.

This year Tresacare were crowned as the winner. They are a social enterprise helping care workers develop the skills they need to stay happy and resilient on the job, secured a £10,000 grant alongside a package of business support, including the services of a business mentor and access to a world class network of entrepreneurs.

**Livery Committee Annual Reception.** The Livery Committee does a fabulous job as a connecting forum for communication between the livery and the officers at Guildhall and Mansion House. Each year they host a reception to reflect upon their work over the previous year and look forward to the next. This year had a special connection with us as our Senior Warden and next Lord Mayor (subject to election) Alastair King shared plans for his year and on a more personal note, spoke of our impending application to progress to Livery, becoming the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs. As our Sponsoring Alderman and much more widely, Alastair is a fantastic ambassador for the Company, and the City more widely as our next Lord Mayor.

**Nominations Committee.** We have re-formed the committee and as Master I am now part of it. We met and interviewed prospective candidates for the 2024/25 Junior Warden role, making recommendations for the Court. Rita W Bologna was the preferred candidate, ratified at the subsequent Court Meeting, along with James Talbot being the next Master, Alastair King to serve another year as our Senior Warden as he serves his year as Lord Mayor and Jat Wasu being our next Middle Warden. Congratulations to all, especially Rita as she starts her own journey towards becoming a future Master.

### City of London SME Strategy.

You may be aware that I had been helping the City Corporation in their considerations for the City to produce its first integrated strategy to support the 98% of businesses in the City that are SMEs. I am delighted to report that the strategy was passed and more so that the Company was written in as a delivery partner. I believe that we are the only Livery organisation selected. I was therefore honoured to play a role in the official launch at Guildhall in June.

**Hatton Garden Heist Trip.** Another fun social event this year was a visit to the actual vault in Hatton Garden Heist took place. Seeing the hole drilled in the wall and the vault looking like it happened yesterday was quite surreal. Our friends at Five Talents Charity have exclusive access and we were given the story by Hugh Doyle, who despite still claiming innocence, was convicted of money laundering, allowing his premises to be used to handover the proceeds. He told a great tale, and we all had a great time.

**Defence Academy Prize Giving.** The Clerk, Court Assistant Andrew Pullman and I were hosted by our military affiliate to present this year's prize for entrepreneurship to the winner, Liam Easton. His ingenuity and problem-solving skills have come to the fore, helping the Ukranian defenders be able to use all the various bits of small arms weaponry donated to them. Most of which are not made to be used together. Using his great abilities though, he has overcome much of this and made a significant difference, getting them onto the battlefield. We were also treated to a tour of the Academy site, including a visit to the Chaplaincy Museum, which was moving and humbling.

**Election Court Banquet.** This is our second principal feast where we celebrated our philanthropy, passing over cheques for the charities we are supporting this year, Hatch Enterprises and No Going Back, the EASI winner, Tresacare, Defence Academy Prize Winner, Liam Easton and during the dinner, I had the formal duty of announcing the results of the Election Court, naming the new Master and Wardens for the coming year. We were hosted by Tallow Chandlers with its lovely courtyard, perfect for an al fresco Admission Court and drinks. Then entertained by classical guitarist Will Scott, who played at my Installation and on this occasion playing some of my own personal favourites.

**Summer BBQ.** It was lovely to relaunch an old event in our calendar and host friends and family at the Byward Cafe on the side of All Hallows By The Tower Church. Adding to the evening a number of us joined Freeman John Burton and his colleague Konstantinos Tsiolis of Pollinating London Together as they took us on a short walking tour, showcasing how they are helping replant the City to encourage better pollination. Their efforts are not going unrewarded with many improvements made. If not already you should check out PLT and connect with John.



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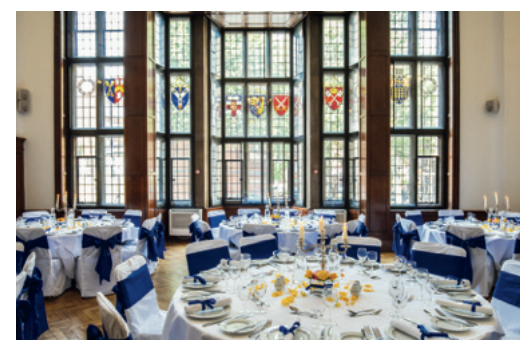
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# The Company of Entrepreneurs' Trust

As a registered charity established in support of business education and enterprise skills, the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust is always looking to maximise the effects of its grant-making. With your continuing help – we're doing exactly that!

Where the Trust makes a financial contribution to an individual, organisation, or other charity, it will often look to the Company of Entrepreneurs for human help. Nowhere was this more evident than with this year's **Raleigh Lecture**, which was jointly funded by the Trust and the Drapers' Company, and was led and staffed by volunteers from the Company of Entrepreneurs. As a result of this clever three-way partnership, the experience for our schools and students was delivered at no cost to them and was a truly exceptional opportunity.

Likewise, the Trust has supported **Hatch Enterprise** for a second consecutive year, and the Trust's grant is once again reinforced by the work of the Outreach Committee. Together, we are leveraging the skills and experience of Freeman Entrepreneurs to boost the efficacy of Hatch's programmes, and again we have seen enormous impact as a result of both human and financial assistance.

Hatch is a charity that looks to reach and equip aspirant entrepreneurs from under-represented backgrounds. Whether their challenge is legal, financial, marketing, building a team, or general strategy, Hatch entrepreneurs are given the opportunity to be matched with an industry expert who can support them over three months and help improve their business.

Building on the success of the 1:1 Consultation Programme, the Trust's grant has allowed Hatch to meet the growing demand for longer-term mentoring support for founders. The mentoring was monitored and evaluated, and Hatch has reported highly impressive results – not only gains in "confidence in business", but material impacts in "successful funding applications" and "revenue generation".

The charity **No Going Back** will be familiar to many readers across the City of London. No Going Back is a prisoner rehabilitation charity (1205792) that was founded in 2020 as a groundbreaking Livery Companies' collaboration to reduce reoffending. No Going Back supports people through their journey in prison, preparing them for release and for the wide range of job opportunities the programme has on offer.

4 years on, the programme has had 40 participating Livery Companies, over 160 volunteers and nearly 2,000 participants that have in some way benefited along their rehabilitation journey. It received a grant from the Trust to develop its self-employment and enterprise education programme.

The Company of Entrepreneurs Trust will shortly be recognised as a NGB partner for 2024, with opportunities to lead on enterprise and self-employment as a route out of reoffending.

2024	£2,500	Hatch Enterprise	A charity supporting underrepresented entrepreneurs from across the UK. The grant supports the delivery of its mentoring programme, and covers a range of administration, infrastructure, and marketing needs to increase the reach and impact of this excellent work.
	£2,400	No Going Back	A prisoner rehabilitation charity. The grant supports business education on its self-employment and enterprise skills programme.

## Financial Stewardship

The Trust has recorded another 12 months of growth. A major milestone was passed at the end of June this year when the value of the Perpetual Fund itself passed £300,000 (you may remember that the total value of the Trust exceeded this figure in July last year). This was the trigger for the Trustee Board (a group of volunteer Freeman Entrepreneurs with significant charitable experience) to begin the Trust's investment programme. The first bond matures in March 2025, and the second (a 2-year fixed bond), yields annually in July 2025 and 2026. The income from these investments goes straight to general funds, which the Trust will use for grant making.

This careful investment is a significant step, and is the realisation of the early and generous support of the Trust's Principal Benefactors and Patrons. Indeed, the Trust's seven most significant supporters, will shortly be recognised with dedicated silverware. It was always a commitment of the Trust to invest in heritage-quality silver in perpetual recognition of their generosity, and, at the end of this year, seven early-stage silversmiths will present beautiful hand-crafted goblets to the Trust for engraving. I am looking forward very much to showcasing their craftsmanship in my report next year.

## Even More Support for Good Causes in 2025

The extra boost to income from these investments means that **£20,000** will be available for beneficiaries in the current grants cycle, in addition to the Trust's pledge to support EASI25. Applications for 2025 funding are now closed, but if you know of good causes that would benefit from funding in 2026, please go to [entrepreneurscompany.org/beneficiary-applications](https://entrepreneurscompany.org/beneficiary-applications) for a simple online form.



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# Company of Entrepreneurs Dates 2024-2025

<b>November 2024</b>	
Installation Court	25 Nov
Installation Dinner	25 Nov
<b>December</b>	
December Court	5 Dec
Carol Service	5 Dec
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	11 Dec
<b>January 2025</b>	
Quarterly Zoom Update & Q&A	13 Jan
CoE Monthly Drinks (3rd Wed)	15 Jan
Snow Dragons Interlivery Skiing	18 - 25 Jan
<b>February</b>	
EASI Showcase	5 Feb
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	12 Feb
February Court	20 Feb
February Supper	20 Feb
Raleigh Lecture	25 Feb
<b>March</b>	
Make an Impact Volunteer Showcase	3 Mar
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	12 Mar
Spring Lunch	25 Mar
United Guilds Service & Lunch	28 Mar
<b>April</b>	
Quarterly Zoom Update & Q&A	7 Apr
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	9 Apr
Big Curry Lunch	10 Apr
April Court	10 Apr
April Appreciation Supper	10 Apr
<b>May</b>	
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	14 May
Master's Weekend Bristol	16 - 18 May
EASI Final	27 May
<b>June</b>	
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	11 June
Election Court	26 June
<b>July</b>	
Quarterly Zoom Update & Q&A	7 July
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	9 July
Summer Banquet	15 July
<b>August</b>	
CoE Annual BBQ (No monthly drinks)	13 Aug
<b>September</b>	
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	10 Sep
September Court	18 Sep
September Jazz Dinner	18 Sep
Woolmen's Sheep Drive	28 Sep

<b>October</b>	
Quarterly Zoom Update & Q&A	6 Oct
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	8 Oct
St Ethelburga's Day	11 Oct
Cartwright Crazy Golf Cup	16 Oct
<b>November</b>	
Lord Mayor's Show	8 Nov
CoE Monthly Drinks (2nd Wed)	12 Nov
Installation Dinner	24 Nov

For more details and to book go to the website events page:  
[www.entrepreneurscompany.org/events](http://www.entrepreneurscompany.org/events)



# Bavarian Ball



As is traditional, I am asked to provide a photograph from my year that captures a moment or its spirit. Not that I had to think too much about what I might like it to be. As soon as the snap of myself and Consort Jo at the Ball appeared, so I was told what it would be.

I've had many special evenings, but none can be more unique, nor likely to be repeated than being invited by the Lord Mayor to attend a Bavarian Bierfest themed evening, in honour of his wife and Lady Mayoress Elisabeth's German roots.

Amongst my fellow Masters there had been much chatter about us going the whole hog and dressing up in lederhosen or dirndls. A thought a couple of us thought we should run past the Lady Mayoress. We sensed that this may not have been considered, but with them both being the sports they are, the orders were soon given on expected dress code. Never one to disobey the Lord Mayor, we duly found our outfits and on a (thankfully) warm evening in June, we wandered over to Mansion House, dressed

as you can witness. Luckily we managed to park miles away, so it was a long walk there. Many a head turned...

To see Mansion House transformed into a bierkeller straight from Munich was a sight to behold. To see the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress fully dressed, another. To see the odd male Master wandering about in a Helga wig, another sight altogether. One I am trying to forget, unsuccessfully so far...

With a fabulous compere and oompah band to transport us to Bavaria, we all got in the swing very quickly. In the spirit of what happens in the Mansion House Bierkeller stays in the Bierkeller, I won't share too many of the details. Suffice to say it was a truly unique experience, slightly surreal but above all, so much fun. One of the true honours of being a Master is that you become a lifelong alumni group with your serving Lord Mayor and serving Sheriffs. I think it is fair to say that for those of us in the room that evening, a true bond was made and who knows, perhaps as a Past Masters Group, we may have an annual re-run!





# Master's Installation

When discussing this year's edition of the magazine, Rita Bologna, Chair of Communications and magazine editor suggested that I write some reflections upon my installation as the 10th Master. At first I struggled to think about what to write, after all it was nearly a year ago... tempus fugit, but then I started to reflect upon as I look back to the day and realised how special it was, lingering in my memory and how that one evening has defined my entire year, much shared elsewhere in the magazine.

My overarching memory of the days and weeks leading up to it, were of a steady raising of the stress stakes as we looked to bring together the seemingly million moving parts of the installation ceremony and evening's banquet. Never fear however, our Learned Clerk, who has done this so many times, had it all in hand. He was very kind, but am sure rued every time my number popped up on his phone with yet another question!

The evening falls into three key parts; the new Freeman Admission Court overseen by the incumbent Master and mine as Senior Warden, both our final acts in those roles. The installation service itself and then the ensuing celebratory banquet. I'm bound to say, the Admission Court really is a blur, my only memory being the people we installed and as I look back, how lovely it has been to share this year together, seeing them take on their own lives as Freeman.

The installation service at St Laurence Jewry, is indelibly held in my memory. It is to me, a lovely mix of formality, but with the warmth of a family service. I remember Gary Dixon's valedictory speech as his final act, remembering what a great he'd had. The solemnity of him installing me, then me him as our Immediate Past Master and my own first act, installing our new Wardens. I remember the sermon given on my behalf by Sophia Acland, our Honorary Chaplain and the lovely things she said in it. Not for the only time that evening, her words brought a tear to my eye. My overarching memory of the service is looking out into the church and seeing a room full of smiling faces looking back at me.

Having completed the short walk back to Drapers Hall, fully resplendent on gown and badge, it was time to welcome the even bigger room-full of guests. I think my memory is right when I say there were somewhere around 170 to 180 people dining with us. We had the formal line, up the staircase. Many hugs given and received, in particular for the then Master Marketor, Glyn Cartwright, father of our own Chiles, who I heard walking away saying, how this was an absolute first for him, to be hugged in a formal line up. If you're reading this Glyn, you are a good friend and it was entirely merited.



Pre-dinner drinks over, it was time for the formalities. Firstly there were the photographs with all our Principal Guests, including Lord Michael Hastings, who had done me the honour of speaking on behalf of the guests and toasting the Company. Then we were formed into the right order and processed into the main dining room. What a moment that was! To see the banquetting room in Drapers full, the rapturous procession clapping and the moment looking back down the room as I arrived at the Master's chair was another of the tear in the eye moments. Dinner chatter was lovely, especially having Tom Harris the Master Draper with us. As I look back on my year and friends made, that first time meeting with Tom and the friendship we have forged since times, is a testament to why Livery is so wonderful. Equally, so with Clive Grimley, the Master Glover and his Consort Catherine.

One of my duties was to recognise the year Gary Dixon had and I had a trick up my sleeve. Having presented a certificate from the Company, I had a "small" gift for him. Being of a similar age, he and I have a shared love of the music of the 1970s onwards. In his case, a deep passion for the Stranglers. As a personal thank you, I decided to by him a photograph print from one of their first gigs. In the planning though, I got a bit carried away with the size of the print and somehow what was intended to be something 10"x8" size, turned into more like 4'x3'! The look on his face was worth it though, somewhere between wow and OMG how on earth am I going to get this home flashed across his face.

Now it was time for speeches, my own and Lord Hastings'. I won't replay the whole of mine but having my wife and Consort Jo nearby, Alistair, one of my sons and my sister Gill directly in front of me, really did bring out more than a tear. Having their proud faces looking back at me was almost overwhelming. Not made easy by having a room filled with our lovely Freeman, other personal friends and family, looking back at me as I spoke. Truly, this moment will stay with me forever. Lord Hastings in his usual magnificent way, spoke so eloquently along the themes of stamping out inequity that I wanted my year to be defined by. He was so moving.

Formalities over, it was Stirrup Cup time and in true Entrepreneurs style, we were politely walked off the premises and relocated in the NED, where the evening really did become a tad blurry!



## THE UK'S HOME OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Home Grown is the only members' club that has been entirely designed for entrepreneurs, scale-ups and investors to socialise, connect, build ideas and relationships. A genuinely useful space where innovation thrives and entrepreneurship flourishes.

Sister club to the legendary Home House, renowned as an oasis of old school decadence, however with its traditional luxury and emphasis on having a good time, it's not the best place for making a business deal, where Home Grown is. The London private members' club scene has evolved over the years and Home Grown, as part of the Home House Collection, has been a pioneer in the private members' club sphere and is at the forefront of business clubs. Home Grown's charmingly flamboyant and striking interiors within the Grade II listed townhouses encourage both creativity and productivity. With access to business lounges, bedrooms from £170, meeting and event spaces, a contemporary restaurant and an elaborate Unicorn Bar, the club readily facilitates the daytime to evening transition. A unique one-stop shop to work, stay and play in the heart of London.

Home Grown's goal is simple. It is not only to help your business grow, but yourself. An extensive calendar of monthly events, including their flagship Business Rockstar series, F\*CK Up Club, Meet the Investor dinners and Masters of Scale series has been curated to help members grow both their knowledge and network. Members have access over £10k's worth of business benefits and a portfolio of global reciprocal clubs.

With connection at their heart and an ongoing support for the UK's entrepreneurial ecosystem since their launch five years ago, Home Grown has deservedly earned the title of 'London's leading business club'.

Freeman of The Company Of Entrepreneurs enjoy an exclusive rate of £1650 (normally £2k) per annum with a one off £399 joining.

To find out more about membership scan the QR code below.



"Home Grown is the only club in London that is dedicated to the art of entrepreneurship. Others pay lip service to it but do not feature it as their main purpose"

Stephen Page - Freeman  
CEO & Founder,  
SFC Capital



"Since it's opening, Home Grown had been my go-to club. It's perfectly formed for entrepreneurs, counting many of our Freeman amongst its members. I've had the privilege of meeting many others from the club, sharing our passions for business, and being able to talk about all the great things we do at the Company of Entrepreneurs."

Mark Huxley, Former  
Master, Company of  
Entrepreneurs



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homegrownclub.co.uk





# Legacy Giving



*One of the central tenets of the Livery world is charitable giving. The Livery movement is the second biggest donor of charitable money in the UK, behind only the National Lottery on an annual basis.*

The Company of Entrepreneurs plays its own part in this charitable giving by raising money for the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust, which in turn grants money to worthy beneficiaries in line with the objects of the charity. Through our EASI initiative, funded by the Trust, we provide invaluable support to early-stage entrepreneurs who are tackling crucial, global issues and trying to change the world for the better.

The Company is grateful to all Freeman who contribute to our charitable trust on a regular basis. As you may expect, we also look to other ways whereby Freeman may help support us. Not many are aware that we encourage Freeman to consider leaving a legacy gift to us in their will.

**How does this work?**

Nobody particularly likes to think about dying. It's not something that we actively contemplate. That's a shame, really, as it's the one thing in life that is absolutely certain. It is therefore sensible

for everyone to prepare a will to ensure that your assets, whatever they are, are inherited by people in the way that you want. We would like to ask that, when considering your legacy wishes, you consider a bequest to the Company of Entrepreneurs. It should be a relatively simple thing to amend an existing will to bequeath a fixed amount, or a percentage, to our trust. Any such bequest would be gratefully received at a (hopefully far) future date when, inevitably, your time comes to pass on. If you do not have a will, now would be a good time to make sure that your wishes are properly recorded. Dying without having a will in place can complicate your inheritance and certainly lengthen the time it takes to settle your assets amongst your loved ones. Even if you don't wish to leave a legacy to the Company of Entrepreneurs, getting an up to date will in place is a very sensible thing to do. Take that step now and enjoy the peace of mind (and if you consider benefitting us, that would be most appreciated).

# Climate Action Team – 2024

Following the Company of Entrepreneurs joining the Livery Climate Action Group (LCAG) in 2023, the Company has become actively involved in several initiatives aimed at reducing its carbon footprint by minimizing emissions. With the invaluable support of Veronica Heaven and Master Entrepreneur Mark Huxley, a Climate Action Team has been formed to tackle the carbon emissions challenges facing both the Company and the broader London ecosystem.

A key initiative currently underway is the preparation of the Company's Climate Action Plan. Based on a template provided by LCAG, this plan outlines the Company's approach to supporting the Corporation of London's mission to achieve net zero emissions by 2040.

The LCAG now includes more than 100 livery companies and is becoming a significant force in advancing London's ambitious carbon reduction goals. Although the Company of Entrepreneurs does not own a hall or operate any transport, which limits its direct impact, it is actively pursuing several objectives to support collective efforts:

- Minimizing the environmental impact of the Company's activities, such as selecting catering facilities committed to using locally sourced seasonal ingredients for dining events.
- Encouraging all members to be conscious of their carbon emissions in both their personal and professional lives, and to make reductions whenever possible.

The Company has also established a relationship with London GreenCity, an organization created by leading members of Greentown Labs in Boston, USA. A key objective of London GreenCity is to set up a campus for green technology start-up businesses. Premises have been secured at Fulham Reach in London, and these will be developed to provide a collaborative environment for start-ups, including wet labs for physical product testing. This project has the active support of the Lord Mayor of London and originated from a visit to Boston by the Prince and Princess of Wales in 2022.

Additionally, the Lord Mayor of London has introduced the Company to C2Zero, an Australian organization that facilitates the purchase of carbon cancellation credits. Through the Emissions Trading Scheme managed by the UK Department of the Environment, UK businesses can procure certified carbon



Representatives of the Company of Entrepreneurs, Livery Climate Action Group, and London GreenCity at the offices of DLA Piper in November 2023

cancellation credits, effectively removing specified quantities of carbon from the country's allowed total, currently set at 69 million tons per annum. The Entrepreneurs' Climate Action Plan will reference the option of purchasing some of these cancellation credits.

One challenge faced by the UK insurance sector has been providing affordable cover to developers and providers of innovative green-technology products and services, which can present unknown risks. The Worshipful Company of Insurers held a gathering in London in May 2024 to offer the insurance community an opportunity to debate and creatively consider how insurance, a cornerstone of the modern economy, can support emerging technologies without imposing undue costs on businesses that create or utilize innovative climate-friendly products. A summary report has been produced, which will form the basis for the future direction of the insurance sector, a critical business element within the City of London.

The Company of Entrepreneurs was represented at this event by Master Mark Huxley, PM Judy Hadden, Veronica Heaven, Paul Eveleigh and Ben Martin. The Company has strong links with the London insurance world, and will be active in supporting the work of this important initiative in the future.



# Education Activities

The Education Committee has taken on new challenges in 2024 and continues to expand its scope by bringing new schools into the programme and adding different types of activity. New Freeman have added experience to the Committee – we are delighted to welcome Rakhitha Dias, Ken Valledy, Tee Dobinson and Chris Simmance to the team this year, each of whom will increase the range of support that we are able to offer to the range of schools, colleges and universities we engage with.

A key development this year is the “productisation” of the services that the Committee can provide. This is an initiative led by Paul Cleaver and Chris Simmance and is intended to clarify exactly what will be involved when the Committee supports educational establishments, covering mentoring, speaking at events, judging pitching competitions, or running business simulations. It will clarify what will be delivered, and what is expected of participating schools to make the events effective. Ken Valledy, University of East London

Ken Valledy has taken on the responsibility of collaborating with the University of East London (UEL) and is currently in planning discussions with Andrew Okell from UEL to provide support from the Company of Entrepreneurs for the 2023/24 academic year. In addition, Ken Valledy, a Freeman, has agreed to serve as a panel member at the UEL Dragons Den event in August. This event features a cohort of university sports students who are aspiring entrepreneurs.

The Company has supported UEL for several years. In 2023, it mentored one of their entrepreneurial projects, with James Talbot mentoring Ashlea Cromby, who won the award for the best presentation at a pitching competition for her Mansimble Tea and Estate venture.

## Chris Simmance, Christ's Hospital

The Company of Entrepreneurs has a long-standing relationship with Christ's Hospital School, which itself has deep ties to the livery movement. At a recent careers conference, Hugo Middlemas played an indispensable role in its success. The event aimed to equip students with valuable career insights, featuring diverse speakers, workshops on essential skills, and panel discussions covering fields such as law, medicine, engineering, and the arts. Students engaged with topics like adaptability, lifelong learning, and digital transformation, and had the opportunity to connect with professionals during a networking session.

Chris Simmance and Ben Martin participated in panel discussions, sharing their knowledge on entrepreneurship and business. We extend heartfelt thanks to Hugo for his leadership and vision, which ensured the event was both educational and enjoyable. The conference exemplified our commitment to fostering the educational and professional growth of students, preparing them for future challenges with confidence.

## Ben Martin, RAF Air Cadets

The Lord Mayor of London, the Honourable Michael Mainelli, has arranged a series of Coffee Colloquies at the Mansion House, where organizations supporting his initiatives present their contributions to the City of London. In April 2024, Master

Entrepreneur Mark Huxley and Ben Martin attended a colloquy featuring the RAF Air Cadets. Group Captain Sally Bridgeland, alongside several senior colleagues, emphasised the importance of education in the Air Cadets programs, with a notable focus on entrepreneurship.

Among the supporting presentations was Dot Dot Fire, a young organisation that has developed a financial education program for schoolchildren called Moneywise. This program, described as Ethical Gaming, aims to teach young people good money habits through theatrical and entertaining presentations. Dot Dot Fire has been awarded Educational Game of the Year by the Institute of Financial Literacy in the USA and has received the East London Community Heroes Award in the UK. Freeman Paddy Willis and Ben Martin attended an event at the Excel Exhibition Centre in London in June 2024, which highlighted the dynamic and engaging methods adopted by Dot Dot Fire. The Company of Entrepreneurs will continue to develop a closer relationship with both Dot Dot Fire and the RAF Air Cadets. The event at Excel was attended by over 800 students, mainly from disadvantaged areas of London, involving children in the age range from under 10 to the final year of senior school.

## Ben Martin, International Connections

In May and June 2024, the Company of Entrepreneurs hosted several visits by US universities at the Guildhall in the City of London. In May, students from Haslam Business School, University of Tennessee, and in June, a team from Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University, attended presentations by Freeman of the Company. Presenters included Master Entrepreneur Mark Huxley, Rakhitha Dias, Adam Morallee, Jeff Skinner, Jon Spree, Chris Simmance, and Ben Martin. Feedback from the visitors was excellent, and the organizers, Southbridge Access, plan to bring more groups from US educational institutions to London in the future.

## Paddy Willis, Haberdashers and Harris Federation

In 2024, the Education Committee supported two school initiatives with Year 12 students, combining talks by entrepreneurs with realistic business simulations. In February, we were hosted by the Haberdashers' Company at their magnificent Hall in West Smithfield, where 24 students from across their colleges participated. Joined by two young founders from Paddy Willis' foodie network, PM Rick Lowe shared stories of start-up life, supported by Ben Martin.

Following a networking lunch, students were organised into mixed teams to compete in a digital simulation. They managed an underperforming mobile phone store, trading through four “quarters” and aiming to achieve the highest balanced scorecard result. The experience helped students learn the value of responsibility and teamwork. One student noted, “We had to use our strengths as a team and observe feedback to learn and improve from past mistakes. This helps us learn the value of responsibilities and working together.”

The event was rated 4.82 out of 5 for learning and enjoyment. The Haberdashers' Central Education Team expressed keen interest in further engagement. The format was repeated in July with Harris Sixth Forms at their Westminster College, where teams

from four academies participated. Freeman Shernaz Engineer, Rakhitha Dias, Ben Martin, and Paddy Willis shared their journeys, followed by excellent questions from the students. The retail simulation challenge once again demonstrated the engaging nature of the platform. The principal of Harris Sixth Forms was deeply impressed and expressed a desire to provide more students with these learning opportunities.

A similar event took place in July 2024, with Mulberry UTC in Bow, East London. The college principal, Daniel Seed, was delighted with the level of engagement and enjoyment expressed by the students, in this case primarily Year 12. Paddy Willis intends to develop the concept of business simulations to cover more scenarios and to address students in different age ranges.

# Christ's Hospital School

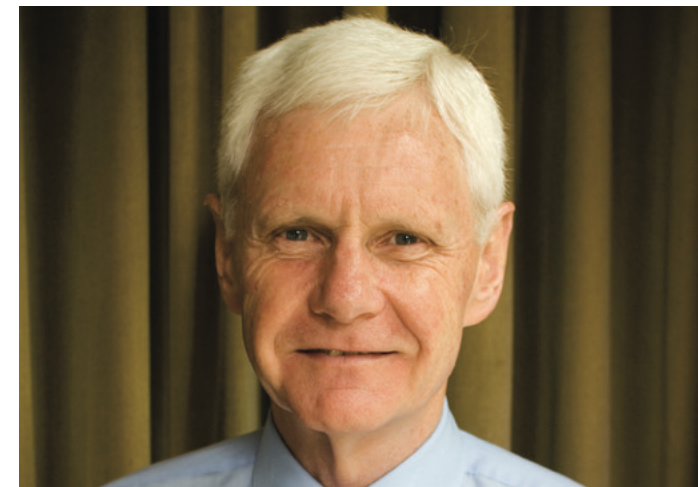
The Company of Entrepreneurs has a long history with Christ's Hospital School, a relationship rooted in the school's even longer connection with the livery movement. Reflecting on the recent careers conference held at Christ's Hospital School, it is my pleasure to extend a heartfelt thank you to Hugo Middlemas for his indispensable role in its success. The event, designed to equip students with valuable insights into future career paths, was a testament to our commitment to fostering the next generation of professionals.

The conference brought together a diverse array of speakers from various industries, offering students a glimpse into the myriad opportunities that await them beyond the school gates. These sessions were not only informative but also inspiring, as professionals shared their personal journeys, challenges, and triumphs. This blend of practical advice and motivational stories provided a well-rounded perspective on what it takes to succeed in today's competitive job market.

Both Ben and I had the honour of participating in panel discussions with the students, providing insights into entrepreneurship and business. Our aim was to answer their questions and support them as they embark on their own business journeys.

A key highlight of the event was the series of workshops designed to develop essential skills. These sessions covered a range of topics, from effective communication and networking to the intricacies of digital literacy and financial planning. The hands-on approach allowed students to engage directly with the material, fostering a deeper understanding and practical application of the skills discussed.

In addition to the workshops, the panel discussions were a major draw. Featuring esteemed professionals from fields such as law, medicine, engineering, and the arts, these panels offered students the chance to ask questions and engage in meaningful dialogue. The insights gained from these interactions were invaluable, providing students with a clearer sense of direction and purpose as they consider their future career paths. The careers conference also emphasised the importance of adaptability and lifelong learning. In an ever-changing job



market, the ability to pivot and continuously acquire new skills is paramount. This theme was echoed by many speakers who shared their experiences of navigating career changes and embracing new opportunities. Their stories underscored the importance of resilience and a proactive approach to personal and professional development.

A notable addition to this year's conference was the inclusion of technology and innovation as central themes. Recognising the increasing role of technology in all sectors, sessions were dedicated to exploring the impact of digital transformation on traditional industries. Students learned about emerging trends such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and digital marketing, equipping them with knowledge that is critical in the modern workplace.

The event was rounded off with a networking session, providing students with the opportunity to connect with professionals and peers. This informal setting fostered an environment of open communication and exchange of ideas, further enhancing the overall learning experience. Students left the conference not only with new knowledge but also with valuable contacts that could assist them in their future endeavours.

It is important to acknowledge the tremendous effort that went into organising this event. The seamless execution of the conference is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of the planning committee, volunteers, and of course, Hugo Middlemas. His leadership and vision were instrumental in bringing this event to life, ensuring that it was both educational and enjoyable for all participants.

In conclusion, the Christ's Hospital School Careers Conference was a resounding success, thanks in no small part to Hugo Middlemas. His contribution helped create a platform where students could gain valuable insights, develop new skills, and feel inspired about their future careers. The event exemplified our commitment to supporting the educational and professional growth of our students, preparing them to meet the challenges of tomorrow with confidence and enthusiasm.

As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to providing similar opportunities that will continue to inspire and empower our students. Once again, a sincere thank you to Hugo and everyone involved in making this event such a memorable and impactful experience.



# Outreach

## The Company of Entrepreneurs: Pioneering the Future of Business

In the nurturing grounds of the City of London, the Outreach Committee remains steadfast in its dedication to fostering the nuanced craft and discipline of entrepreneurship among the city's burgeoning business talent. With a myriad of projects presently under the stewardship of Freeman volunteers, the Company continues to exemplify the venerable path of mentorship and support.

A notable milestone was achieved recently when the City of London unveiled its inaugural SME Strategy, coinciding with the grand opening of the newly minted Small Business Research and Enterprise Centre (SBREC), previously known as the City of London Business Library. Combining these pivotal events created an auspicious commencement, underscoring the City's commitment to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Master, Mark Huxley, expressed his commendation, stating,

***"We are proud to have contributed to this fundamentally crucial strategy, supporting the 98% of businesses in the City defined as SMEs. Moreover, it is gratifying to be one of the delivery partners, bringing our extensive expertise to aid these businesses and the City of London Corporation."***

This initiative has significantly elevated the Company's profile, positioning it as an active force in driving the SME Strategy. It has further solidified a lasting partnership with the SBREC, establishing a cornerstone for future outreach endeavours. Such collaborations underscore the enduring impact of our historical associations, including our liaison with the Samuel Wilson Loan Trust.

Here is a glimpse into three noteworthy projects within our outreach portfolio:

### Dr. Glynis Wright and Hatch Enterprise UK

Celebrating her Freedom of the City of London this year, Dr. Glynis Wright has been a pivotal supporter of the Hatch Enterprise UK project. For those uninitiated, Hatch fosters inclusive entrepreneurship by assisting founders from underrepresented communities. The statistics speak volumes: despite challenges ranging from the cost-of-living crisis to the reverberations of Brexit, new business creation maintained a steady rate of approximately 350,000, mirroring the previous year's figures. Hatch proudly supports an impressive array of enterprises, boasting 84% female founders and 64% minority ethnic founders. This diversity mirrors the Freeman of the Company of Entrepreneurs, demonstrating the profound impact of their volunteer efforts.



### Sustained Excellence in Collaboration with London Business School

Our longstanding affiliation with the London Business School continues to flourish, even after the retirement of the esteemed Jeff Skinner, now recognised as an Honorary Freeman. The highly acclaimed "Ask an entrepreneur" series remains a beacon of knowledge and guidance. The series' reputation has garnered interest from other outreach partners, signalling further expansion of these insightful sessions. We encourage you to stay attuned to upcoming announcements.

### Empowerment at the Asian Women's Resource Centre

In another praiseworthy initiative, women Freeman have been ardent supporters of the Asian Women's Resource Centre – Changing Women's Lives (AWRC). Junior Warden Elect Rita W Bologna's project has taken off with herself, Jenny Garrett OBE and Veronica Heaven having made significant contributions. All their invitations to speak as inspirational figures profoundly influenced attendees. They imparted wisdom on resilience, advocating that obstacles should be perceived as 'stepping stones,' a principle they have lived by and shared with the AWRC, uplifting numerous ethnic women across the UK.

In conclusion, the Company of Entrepreneurs continues to advance its noble mission, shaping the future of business in the city through dedicated outreach and deep-rooted partnerships. As we look to the future, we remain committed to supporting diverse, resilient, and innovative entrepreneurial efforts.



Johnny Manning - Chair Outreach



Freeman Elect Dr Jeff Skinner with students from LBS



# Social Drinks



# My year as Junior Warden

Being involved with the Finance and General-Purpose Committee at formation has been an eye opener for me. Set up by our master, Mark Huxley. Co-chaired by our middle warden, James Talbot, and myself, it has been a pleasure to get to engage and learn the extensive activities being carried out by all members in so many ways. I am beginning to understand why our company is so well respected. What we see on a day-to-day basis is just the tip of the iceberg. I thank and congratulate all Committee Chairs and members for their commitment, endless hours and hard work.

I have enjoyed getting to meet members at many fun things in addition to formal dinners. One that comes to mind is the Company was invited to spend a full day at RAF Brize Norton. We were invited on their latest plane and took a flight over the North Sea. NATO were carrying out an exercise that day and it was an incredible sight to see refuelling take place from the window. The first crazy gold challenge against the Marketors was fun. We won of course! It was so successful that this year many other companies are also participating. Well done Charles Cartwright.

It's been great to see fellowship between members and guests for the informal curry night after our monthly drinks at Tower Suites. For those who do not like Indian food, I think we need to consider similar quick alternative options. Watch this space! Charitable work is very important me; I launched the FoodDrop project in partnership with Fare Share and the Felix Project in January 2023. Surplus food from supermarkets and wholesalers is collected and, the Worshipful Company of Apothecaries, redistributed to those who need - free. We have managed to achieve incredible volumes and scale ... we will have delivered over 2 million free meals in London by the time this magazine is published.

In addition to FoodDrop, Simon Fordham and I have been engaged with setting up Prostate Cancer Screening Day – the first in the City for many years. Thank to our Master and Clerk, the Company of Apothecaries and supporters including the 2024/25 Lord Mayor Alastair King (also our senior warden), current Sheriffs Gregory Jones and David Chalk and many distinguished individuals. This has helped raise the profile of our Company within the City circle.

I should also mention the Entrepreneurs Trust, our charity. It plays a leading role in giving with the EASI Award being one of the most respected events in the City. Thank you, Judy Hadden, for leading this charge. As freemen, it's important for everyone to give generously as much as they can, so that we can start building up our reserves and enable us to do greater good in the longer term.

In short, I have thoroughly enjoyed my year as Junior Warden. My sincerest thanks to the Master, Wardens, Officers, supporters and members of the Entrepreneurs. I am looking forward to the year ahead.





# Top Tips for Maximising Being a Freeman Entrepreneur



Andrew Pullman is Almoner for the Company of Entrepreneurs, as well as being an active member of the Membership Committee and Court Assistant; he gives an insight into what a year as a Freeman Entrepreneur looks and feels like, as well as offering some Top Tips to get the most out of membership.

As Almoner and also a member of the Membership Committee for the Company of Entrepreneurs I spend time speaking to lots of different members across the organisation – often as they start their journey during the membership interview. A key question is “What’s it like as a Freeman, and what do I have to do?” So, I thought that I would put pen to paper / finger to keyboard and take a stab at answering that, as well as offering a few Top Tips.

First of all, it is important to stress that there is no one way to approach things; like most things in life you get out what you put in, and everyone has a different level of ability to take part. Also, the level of engagement will change over time. However, I always tell people that there are two key elements:

1. The fellowship of being a Freeman – and soon the option to become a Liveryman, hopefully. This means plenty of opportunities to meet other entrepreneurs and share experiences.

TOP TIP: We regularly hold a drinks event at Tower Suites at The Blue Orchid Hotel near Tower Hill – this is every second Wednesday each month. It is open house, and we welcome potential new members to meet other Freeman. So do come along as often as you are able.

2. The opportunity to give back, either directly to our Charitable Trust or also via various outreach and educational activities. We regularly speak and mentor at events to encourage and support young potential entrepreneurs.

TOP TIP: Join one of the committees and start to support some of the many activities. You don’t have to do everything, take advantage of the great opportunities that are open. Also make sure you join the WhatsApp group – it is very active and full of requests and offers for support.

Throughout the year there are several formal events, which are emblematic of being in the livery movement. We have various black-tie dinners, but also two main White Tie events – our annual Summer Banquet and the Annual Installation Dinner. In addition, there are cross livery events like the Petanque Evening, the Inter-Livery Tennis competition or the annual Sheep Drive for those who are Freeman of the City of London. At Christmas there is a Carol concert the church of St Lawrence Jewry in 2024.

TOP TIP: Try to attend at least one of the white tie events, as well as some of the smaller ones – maybe something every couple of months, subject to your diary and commitments.

Charitable giving is the cornerstone of our activities, and for many the main reason they joined the Company. We have connections with numerous schools of all types, and one event that attracts many of them is our annual Raleigh lecture. One of our past Masters, Peter Hewitt, is a relative of Sir Walter Raleigh and set this up a few years ago. We also have the annual Entrepreneur Award for Social Enterprise (EASI); this is where we offer a grant of £10,000 plus mentoring support to the winning applicant. EASI gives an opportunity to mentor startup businesses as the top five or six finalists all get a mentor from the Company for a year.

TOP TIP: Offer yourself as a mentor, either to the EASI cadre or to one of the numerous other events and connections that we have. I was lucky enough to end up being the mentor for this year’s winner, Elizabeth Beh and her exciting venture Tresacare aimed at helping support care workers.

Finally, being a Freeman offers unique opportunities to visit parts of the City, London and elsewhere that you would not normally be able to do. Some examples for me recently have been a private visit, after hours, to the Old Bailey, watching the 770 year old Keys Ceremony at the Tower of London and a behind the scenes visit to the Curve Theatre in Leicester followed by a performance of 42nd Street!

TOP TIP: Make full use of the new online booking system that we now have on our Company Website. You can see everything that is coming up and then can book online. Not everything costs money, some events are expensive, but there is a good mix for everyone.

I hope this very short whistlestop tour of the things you can do as Freeman has whetted your appetite ... but do not be restricted to what is on offer now; please feel free to dive in and make suggestions for other events and link up with the 111 other livery companies to try out some of their equally fascinating activities.

# My second full year as the Entrepreneurs’ Chaplain

My second full year as the Entrepreneurs’ Chaplain has been a privilege and a pleasure. At each event I have got to know some of the Freeman better and am continually impressed by their range of talents and energy, and their experience in widely diverse fields. Entrepreneurs are also diverse in terms of religious background yet I have found in conversations how much we all share, whether we are of faith or of none: a wish to give the warmest of welcomes to guests and newcomers; to create and sustain community; to help others - particularly the young and the disadvantaged; and to share individual gifts and expertise for the common good. It is lovely to see Freeman’s talents being harnessed so generously to help others, through mentoring and the sharing of experience and ideas and as part of the Company’s charitable work. There is also a definite feeling of ‘family’ when the Company gathers together and I greatly appreciate the mutual support members give each other through the ups and downs of work and life. As a family, it is good to remember those who have gone before us – witness the ceremonial ringing of the bell for our Founder and Master Dan Doherty who sadly died in office in March 2016 – while at the same time welcoming and nurturing the next generation of Entrepreneurs. This was demonstrated for instance at the EASI showcase event in January, where the young winners and finalists of EASI 2023 described their innovative plans to improve society and the environment, and the difference that a helping hand from the Company had made.

Highlights of the past year for me have included the Installation of our 10th Master, Mark Huxley, at the church of St Lawrence Jewry last November and our joint carol service there the following month. We are very grateful to Fr James Titley, Guild Vicar of St Lawrence, for his warm welcome and hospitality at both, and also for kindly attending the Spring Lunch to say Grace. I have also much enjoyed attending the various Company dinners including the very special Election Court Banquet at Tallow Chandlers’ Hall this July, which included a speech by Matt Downie, Chief Executive of Crisis, the homelessness charity. Saying Grace at these events – a moment just to pause and give thanks for our food and each other – is an honour. The Appreciation Supper in April was great fun too, and the relaxed atmosphere gave me the impetus to attempt another rhyming Grace as one of the many arcane City customs we were describing to new Freeman! At the time of writing, meanwhile, I am looking forward to celebrating the saint’s day of Ethelburga, our patron, at a special Taize service at All Hallows by the Tower in October. It has been a full and interesting year, and my thanks go in particular to the Immediate Past Master, the Master and the Clerk for all their kindness and support.

Rev’d Sophia Acland, Hon. Chaplain





# James Talbot Middle Warden

*My year as Middle Warden has been at 'Sixes and Sevens' to use a Livery pun!*



January, we had a meeting of Court and Past Masters to discuss this, how it might work and who was going to run it. Long and short of it, it was decided that it was a very good committee for the Middle and Junior Wardens to cut their teeth on and learn about the machinations of the Company.

This has been fascinating setting it all up, explaining to everyone that it was not there to double the workload and that they only have to do one report. This will then be discussed in detail at F&GPC before being passed on to Court. Much of the hard work, and thanks, must go to The Clerk and Junior Warden have been very instrumental in making this happen. It is early stages and I am sure I will see it all very differently when I am in the Master's Chair.

One of the things that I have been involved with is planning for Livery. The vast bulk of this work has been done by the Master, The Clerk and Past Masters. My small part has been to look at how this will change things internally as we move from only having Freeman to being able to have other levels, principally Livery and Apprentice. We have discussed Fines, responsibilities, qualification and how this will be different for our First 'Robing' as opposed to those who qualify in later years. Again, thank you for all those who have inputted to this.

The joys of being Middle Warden include being invited to Livery Lectures such as these given by the Worshipful Companies of World Traders, Horners and Fuellers. All of which were interesting, well presented and very informative. They are really useful to get to meet others in the treasure trove that is the Livery Movement. And they are were quite jolly, too!

As alluded to, when the Master and Senior Warden have been unavailable, I have stood in as the CoE representative at some sister Livery Companies. It's great to find out about them, what they get up to and how we all differ yet have many similarities. Also, I have met many interesting, and fun, people.

As an anomaly jumping a year, one of the big pluses for me has been joining our year group of 'presumptive Masters'. This has been put together by CoE Past Master Lars Andersen as he will be Worshipful Master of the World Traders at the same time. We had a fascinating lunch followed by a visit to Common Council in the Guildhall where we saw all that was going on there and our very own Senior Warden, Alderman Alastair King performing. Their bundle of preparation notes was an impressive 141 pages, a lot to get thorough in an after-lunch session!

Lars has also organised a number of dinners and drinks which have been a lovely way to get to know some of my peers.

The Master very kindly asked me to join him at the Modern Livery Dinner which is for Masters or other senior wardens. It was very helpful in being able to talk with those already in the Chair to find out more about their experiences and to get some very useful tips.

Why so, I hear you ask? Well, simply put, I am now Master Elect, something that is normally the domain of the Senior Warden. As he is Alastair King, the next Lord Mayor, I have been promoted to take his place as he will be somewhat busy! In addition to learning the job and being promoted a year earlier, the setting up of the Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GPC) was also thrown into the mix. So, if you are thinking of going further with this very fine Company, please do not think my year is typical!

The easy bit is the promenading in the blue robes at dinners and Court meeting. In my year as Junior Warden I always felt very self-conscious but now I am getting used to it. I will be fully ready for my role as Master.

There is more to the role than eating fine food and going to events that the Master and Senior Warden cannot attend. There is quite a lot of hard work with committees, preparing for Court and running the Company.

This year got doubly so with the formation of the F&GPC. The reason that this was set up is to manage the various committees and allow Court to concentrate on the more strategic issues. The Committee covers the normal quarterly reporting and any other issues that it will be helpful to discuss in a general setting. Typically, this includes supporting other groups with resourcing such as finding volunteers with the right skills for different projects.

At the beginning of the year, the F&GPC was merely a concept that Court has agreed to being set up. So at the beginning of

# Alderman Alastair King

*Senior Wardens in Livery Companies – My Thoughts*

Alderman Alastair King, an experienced professional in finance and asset management, is set to assume the position of the 696th Lord Mayor of the City of London in November 2024. His path to this prestigious role has been marked by significant involvement in civic activities and initiatives aligned with his vision for the year of "Growth Unleashed" - an agenda focused on fostering resilience and innovation within London's financial services. His election took place during the historic Common Hall on 30th September 2024.

The role is sometimes (wrongly) described as "largely ceremonial". Although there are some ceremonial aspects, it is a full-time role to be the Global Ambassador for the UK's financial and professional services. Essentially, he is there to encourage the world to think of London and the UK first if they want to insure against catastrophe, raise debt in the international markets or to sue errant counterparties.

In the year preparing to assume this role, King has engaged with various sectors in the City to promote a growth-oriented and innovation-friendly regulatory environment. This engagement includes connecting with young leaders and key stakeholders in finance and professional services, aiming to gather insights on ways to empower the next generation of financial leaders. King has outlined plans to introduce initiatives like the Lord Mayor's Award to celebrate and foster excellence across diverse business and community sectors.

In succeeding Professor Michael Mainelli to become the 696th Lord Mayor, he envisions harnessing the City's strengths to navigate contemporary challenges while promoting the resilience needed to support sustainable growth. His agenda underscores the importance of the City of London's historical role as a financial powerhouse while addressing the modern demands of technology and regulatory adaptation. He will seek to balance innovation with responsibility, particularly through supporting pro-innovation regulations that can sustain the City's competitive edge on the global stage. He will also seek to change the mindsets of those involved in the financial and professional services sector – asking them to be more willing to seek out new markets around the world and to adopt the extraordinary new technologies that are now available.

One highlight of the early part of his tenure will be the Lord Mayor's Show - a centuries-old tradition that welcomes the new Lord Mayor with a vibrant procession through London, celebrating the City's culture and multi-faceted heritage.

In the City of London's Livery Companies, the Senior Warden plays an essential leadership role, typically the second-in-command to the Master. A Senior Warden's duties often include supporting the Master in managing the company's affairs, presiding over meetings in the Master's absence, and preparing to step into the role of Master in the following year. This position is pivotal for continuity and mentorship, as the Senior Warden often assists in coordinating the company's ceremonial, charitable, and social events, fostering a cohesive and active membership.

Senior Wardens are also involved in various administrative responsibilities, such as overseeing committees, supporting financial decisions, and participating in discussions about the Livery Company's strategic direction. In many companies, the position requires an in-depth understanding of traditions, governance, and the values of the Livery, as its a key preparatory role before asking the company to elect that person to take on the responsibilities of being Master.

**Alderman Alastair King DL**





# My Year as Senior Warden

The Company of Entrepreneurs is known for its commitment to inspiring, supporting, and developing entrepreneurs. It has a renowned expertise on these matters that is well regarded throughout the City. The Senior Warden acts as a source of support for the Master and plays an instrumental role in decision-making processes that impact the direction of the Company's initiatives and seeks to fulfil these commitments.

One of the Senior Warden's primary roles is to foster mentorship among members, imbuing the values of guidance, education, and support. Senior Wardens bring their own experience, wisdom, and business acumen to the Company, offering invaluable insights for budding entrepreneurs. They engage with younger members, sharing not only business strategies but also the resilience, adaptability, and ethical considerations necessary to thrive in entrepreneurship. This mentoring aspect extends beyond the traditional - the Senior Warden can spearhead workshops, panel discussions, and one-on-one guidance sessions, fostering an environment where knowledge flows freely among members.

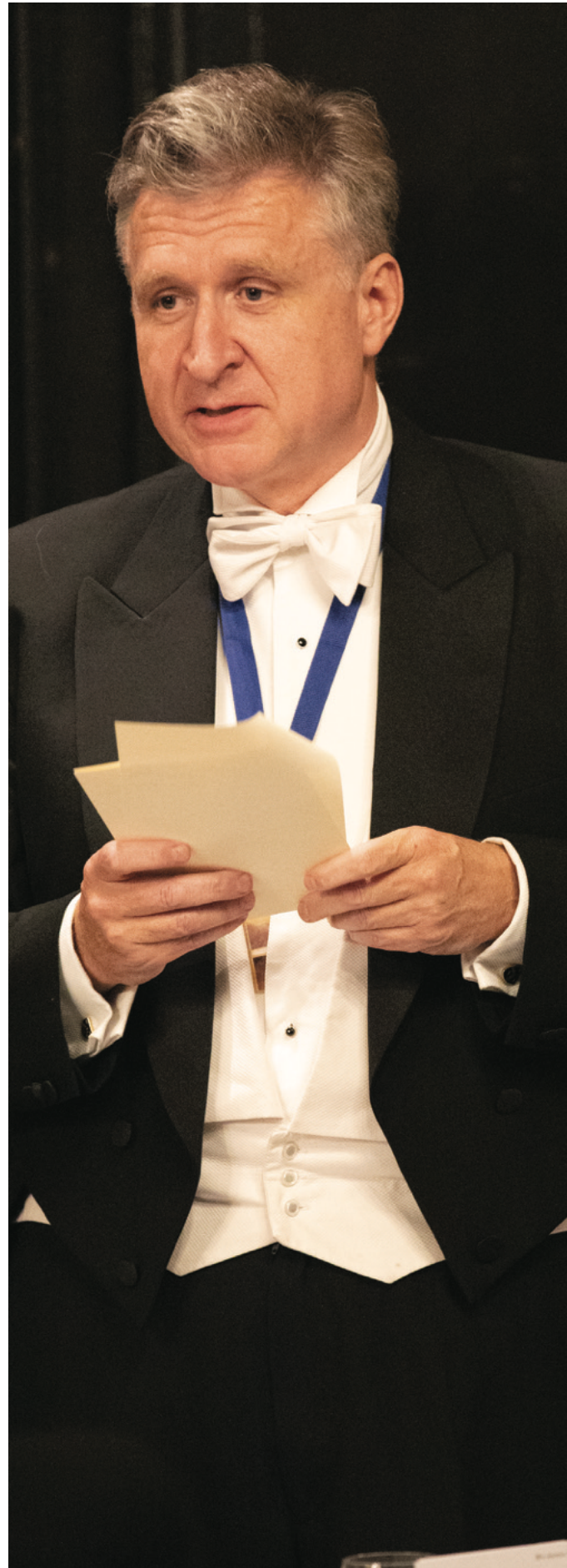
While the Company of Entrepreneurs has great respect for tradition, it is also forward-looking. The Senior Warden plays a key role in balancing respect for the Company's heritage with a willingness to embrace modern practices. As the Company's second-highest official, the Senior Warden is actively involved in ceremonial duties, representing the Company at formal events, including ceremonial dinners, City events, and charitable functions. These gatherings provide an opportunity to reinforce the Company's identity, preserving the ethos of London's ancient guilds while connecting with today's business leaders.

As the Senior Warden I like to think that I have assisted in the Company's philanthropic efforts, actively supporting initiatives that benefit the entrepreneurial community and society at large. From assistance for aspiring business owners to partnerships with charities focused on economic development, the Senior Warden advocates for initiatives that reflect the Company's mission. By channelling resources and support to projects with lasting impact, the Senior Warden helps the Company fulfil its commitment to social responsibility and community upliftment.

While each Senior Warden brings their unique personality and goals to the role, the overarching aim is to provide seamless continuity as they prepare to assume the Master's position. This period serves as an essential training ground, allowing them to deepen their understanding of the Company's internal workings, its objectives, and the challenges that lie ahead.

Being the Senior Warden at the Company of Entrepreneurs is a role that requires a blend of reverence for tradition, entrepreneurial insight, and a genuine commitment to mentorship. Through this role, the Senior Warden shapes the future of entrepreneurship within the Company, inspiring both experienced and aspiring entrepreneurs to pursue success with integrity, resilience, and a dedication to service.

**Alderman Alastair King DL**



# A Day at RAF Brize Norton for Freeman Entrepreneurs



Imagine soaring through the skies alongside the Royal Air Force, witnessing the awe-inspiring power and precision of refuelling exercise with 5 Typhoon jet fighters. Another group of Freeman were on an Atlas as it flew to the Lake District for some low-level drills only to re-join the Voyager tanker later for some formation flying practice in the run up to the King's birthday flyby demonstration. This was the dream experience for several Entrepreneur Freeman and groups of other Livery companies.

The adventure began at 6am when all gathered just a mile outside RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire to be picked up from the car park in coaches and driven into the heart of the airbase to the terminal for check in. After obtaining our boarding passed, we made it through security and to the gate for a briefing by RAF personnel providing insights into the crucial role of air-to-air refuelling in extending the range and reach of fighter jets.

There was a little delay due to wind related weather, but once all clear was given we all boarded our respective aircraft to begin the climb up and out to the Lake District and the North Sea just north of Norfolk.

Witnessing a live refuelling exercise is an adrenaline-pumping spectacle. A colossal Voyager tanker extends its refuelling apparatus, while a nimble Typhoon fighter manoeuvres into position with laser-like focus. 2.5 tons of fuel was transferred through a narrow pipe for a 4-minute pit stop at 15000ft travelling around 400kph, and sometimes going into a gentle bank manoeuvre to maintain the oval flight path designated to the Tanker in the sky.

The entire operation unfolds with breath-taking efficiency, a true testament to the skills and expertise of the RAF crews and pilots.



After witnessing 5 Typhoon jets refuel and fly away, the pilots prepared us to welcome 2 Atlas planes, the workhorses of the RAF, one of which had Freeman Entrepreneurs on it in from the Lake District, to practice the thrill of formation flying with the Voyager. These pair of propellers powered majestic planes soared just behind the wings of the Tanker in full view of all on board to enjoy the spectacle and know that in 2 weeks' time the same Atlas planes will take part in the King's birthday flyby.

This extraordinary day at RAF Brize Norton isn't just about the exhilaration of flight; it's about gaining an appreciation for the dedication and skill of the RAF personnel who safeguard the skies. It was a chance to witness cutting-edge technology and military prowess first-hand, all while experiencing the unparalleled service from the onboard crew who provided refreshments and great conversation to all passengers. It just made us all proud to be British.

Sharing in this astonishing day has given Freeman Entrepreneurs a glimpse into the role and capabilities of the Air Mobility Force, and done much to strengthen our relationship with our military affiliates.

**By Rishi Gohil**



# The Raleigh Lecture 2024: A Confluence of Vision and Opportunity



On March 22, 2024, Drapers' Hall in the City of London played host to the Company of Entrepreneurs' fifth annual Raleigh Lecture, a cornerstone event designed to inspire and engage students from Years 12 and 13 from affiliated schools. This year, nine schools participated, bringing a dynamic group of 102 students, alongside a cohort from Future Leaders, representing various London schools.

The theme for 2024, "Space – An Entrepreneur's Paradise," might initially seem unconventional for secondary school students, yet it elegantly intertwined with a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. The exploration of space, far from being an isolated endeavour, touches on numerous fields integral to the students' curricula, including law, geography, science, engineering, mathematics, and the humanities.

## The Relevance of Space to Earthly Endeavours

The lecture underscored the multifaceted ways space exploration contributes to terrestrial applications, such as:

- Agriculture
- Environmental Monitoring and Conservation
- Urban Planning and Development
- Natural Resource Management
- Disaster Management and Response
- Maritime and Coastal Management
- Infrastructure Monitoring
- Weather Forecasting and Climate Research
- Insurance and Risk Management
- Telecommunications and Connectivity
- Endangered Species Habitat Protection

The UK's significant role in space technology was highlighted, emphasizing the country's leadership in designing and manufacturing near-earth orbiting satellites. These satellites are pivotal in capturing and processing data that drive myriad everyday activities on Earth, from navigation systems to telecommunications.

## Engaging Minds: A Thought-Provoking Start

The event commenced with a series of short presentations by distinguished speakers, setting the stage for stimulating group discussions. Each discussion group consisted of approximately ten students, moderated by a Freeman of the Company of Entrepreneurs and supported by school staff. The goal was to maximize the educational impact and foster an environment of lively, insightful debate.

## Esteemed Speakers

1. Professor Martin Barstow: His presentation, "The UK Space Programme and the Space Ecosystem," delved into the UK's pivotal role in space science and technology. As a leading specialist with over three decades of experience, Professor Barstow's insights, particularly his work on Space Park Leicester, provided a comprehensive overview of the UK's space initiatives.
2. Dr. Andy Wells: In his talk, "Space is not Just for Astronauts," Dr. Wells, Head of Civilian Space at Universal Defence and Security Solutions, presented space from a geographer's perspective. He highlighted critical applications such as greenhouse gas emission monitoring, carbon offset verification, renewable energy planning, and net-zero strategies.
3. Steve Wallace: Discussing "The Vital Role of Space in Monitoring the Earth," Wallace, with his extensive experience advising the UK Government, NATO, and the European Space Agency, shared insights on how space technology is integral to Earth observation and environmental monitoring.



## The Raleigh Lecture: A Visionary Address

Following the discussions and a brief interlude, the attendees gathered for the Raleigh Lecture, delivered by Air Marshal (Retired) Phil Osborn CBE. His lecture, titled "Prosperity, National Security and Space: A Critical Relationship," explored the intricate link between space data and national security. Drawing on his distinguished career in the Royal Air Force and his expertise in defence intelligence and cyber technology, Phil Osborn provided a compelling narrative on how space-based data enhances cyber defence mechanisms.

## Interactive Engagement: Panel Discussion and Networking

The event concluded with a panel session, facilitated by Veronica Heaven, a renowned expert in moderating such discussions. This session allowed students to engage directly with the speakers, posing questions that spanned a wide range of topics covered during the presentations. The high level of student interest and engagement necessitated extending the discussion beyond the allotted time.

After the formal sessions, a networking period enabled students, educators, and Livery Company representatives to continue their discussions in an informal setting. This interaction not only reinforced the day's learnings but also fostered connections that might inspire future collaborations.

## A Day of Inspiration and Insight

The 2024 Raleigh Lecture successfully demonstrated the profound impact that space exploration can have on various sectors and everyday life on Earth. The event showcased the importance of integrating space studies into educational curricula, inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs to explore and innovate in this frontier. The enthusiasm and engagement of the students were palpable, reflecting the success of the day's proceedings.

By linking space exploration to pressing global issues and everyday applications, the Raleigh Lecture left a lasting impression on all attendees, highlighting the boundless opportunities that lie ahead in this entrepreneurial paradise.





# Appreciation Supper



The Company of Entrepreneurs' Appreciation Supper is one of the standout events of our social calendar and is fast becoming a "must attend" event to the envy of many other Companies. The 2024 event under Master Mark Huxley was no exception. Held in the modern-day splendour of Bakers Hall, on the evening of Thursday April 18th, the dining hall was filled almost to capacity with attendees keen to hear about the intricacies of the formal dining in the Livery world. The Appreciation Supper was inceptioned soon after the formation of the then Guild of Entrepreneurs as a fun and engaging way of explaining, over the course of an evening's informal dining, all about what was happening and why.

As guests enjoyed a welcome drink in the Bakers Hall reception area, Master Mark Huxley called their attention to the idea behind the reception drinks being a way to introduce yourself to fellow guests and engage them in conversation. Naturally, he also used a few anecdotes about how to make it easier to create conversations with people who you may not necessarily have met before. He also explained the etiquette behind a receiving line, how to introduce yourself to the Master and Officers, while not taking too much time passing down the line and entering the hall.

Once seated, we were treated to a delicious meal and further explanations of Livery rituals. Our Company Chaplain, Reverend Sophia Acland, explained her role within the Company and the essence of how she creates a unique grace before each of our dinners, often rhyming and always relevant to both the evening's event and current affairs.

Our Clerk Emerita, Adèle Thorpe, spoke eloquently about the history of dining and the customs utilised, such as the processing in by the Master, Officers, and guests as well as how they are addressed. It was fascinating to hear about the intricacies of the dining experience at a normal white tie event.

The end of the dining was signalled by the Master as he conducted the several toasts to the King, the Royal Family and the Lord Mayor and the City of London Corporation.

Past Sheriff Andrew Marsden then entertained us all with his speech.... about making speeches. Admitting that this was a first for him, having given scores of speeches during his Shrieval year, that he was somewhat more challenged in trying to describe the process of how you write, structure and ensure your words are pertinent when asked to be the principal speaker. This he managed with aplomb, as one would expect from such an experienced speaker, and gregarious Yorkshireman.

The custom of the Loving Cup was practiced with great enthusiasm by all, following the Master's demonstration, but not until after an explanation of the Sung Grace, which was naturally delivered in the normal, hearty Entrepreneur's way. The evening concluded with the Master inviting everyone to join him for a Stirrup Cup, in the form of a final social drink outside the entrance to the main dining hall, where friendships were consolidated. Overall, a wonderful evening's dining was combined with instruction and demonstration, often with some hilarity and certainly in the spirit of friendship and tradition that lies at the very heart of all Entrepreneurs' formal dinners. It is easy to see why even those well versed, or even expert themselves, in City of London customs return every year to such a lovely and distinguished event.

# Celebrating the Female Freeman Group: Empowering Women in the Company of Entrepreneurs



In the heart of the Company of Entrepreneurs, a remarkable initiative has quietly grown into a vibrant and supportive network: the Female Freeman Group. Launched by Junior Warden Rita Bologna, this group stands as a testament to the Company's dedication to promoting women in business, a core theme of Master Mark Huxley's tenure.

The Female Freeman Group was founded with a clear and inspiring purpose—to create a space where women can find community, mentorship, and encouragement within the Livery. While the Company is welcoming to all, Rita recognized that for many women, particularly younger members, the experience of entering such a prestigious and historically male-dominated institution might feel daunting. Her vision was to ensure that women joining the Livery would have a place to connect, share their unique experiences, and grow together.

Guided by the principles of kinship and empowerment, the Female Freeman Group has quickly become a pillar of support for its members. It encourages collaboration and confidence, fostering an environment where female entrepreneurs can thrive, share successes, and navigate the challenges of being a woman in business. However, it's important to emphasise that this initiative isn't about exclusion or division. Instead, it celebrates the power of community—demonstrating how the unique bonds of shared experiences can enhance the overall strength of the Livery.

Since its founding by Rita W Bologna, the Female Freeman Group has hosted three inspiring events, each embodying the values of camaraderie, leadership, and giving back. The inaugural event was a dinner kindly hosted by Rita at her home, where members gathered to connect in a relaxed and open setting. This was followed by a coastal hike, organised by Amy Hopper, which encouraged physical well-being and deeper personal conversation as members trekked together in the great outdoors from Sandwich to Deal.

The third event, a delightful cream tea arranged by Consort Jo Huxley, had an additional layer of meaning as it raised funds for Breast Cancer Care. This charity event not only brought members closer but also underscored the group's commitment to contributing positively to society.

While the business world may sometimes feel overwhelming, having a community of like-minded individuals makes all the difference. The support, solidarity, and shared experiences within this group help its members face challenges head-on and inspire one another to reach new heights.

Looking to the future, the Female Freeman Group is excited to continue growing its membership and impact, inviting more women to join the Livery with the assurance that they will be welcomed into a thriving, supportive network. Under the guidance of the Company's continued commitment to inclusion, this initiative will no doubt serve as an ongoing source of empowerment for all of the Company of Entrepreneurs.



# The Master's Weekend 2024

What a fabulous weekend we had at the Company of Entrepreneurs Master's Weekend in the City of London! From Friday the 27th to Sunday the 29th, we pulled out all the stops to celebrate the one and only Mark Huxley's year as Master Entrepreneur. The mastermind organiser behind the curtain, Neil Fullbrook, (ably assisted by his husband Ryan) deserves a standing ovation for planning a weekend that was equal parts friendship, fellowship, laughter, history, and unforgettable moments.

Friday? Well, Friday was a triumph. We kicked things off with a delightful lunch at The Lamb Tavern, where you could practically hear the echoes of centuries past as we tucked into some seriously good food. Then, as if we weren't already spoiled enough, we headed to the iconic Richard Rogers Lloyd's of London building for an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour. Who spotted the gold 'spork' made for Admiral Lord Nelson after losing his arm, valued at a cool £1million, and the beautiful chandelier donated by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother... specialist insurance, you say? Yes, but with a side of cutting-edge innovation as we were introduced to the Lloyd's Innovation Lab by the Master himself. Who knew insurance could be this thrilling?



From there we took a short walk to tour Mansion House. Stepping through its grand entrance, we were instantly immersed in a world of elegance and history. The rich architecture and stunning interiors were more than just beautiful—they told stories of centuries past. A few surprising facts emerged including the painting that is actually a photocopy as the original was damaged by an overflowing bath! As we stepped through an open vault door, we were subject to the wonders of the Plate Room, full of ceremonial splendour and gifts from visiting royalty and VIPs adorned. As we wandered through the opulent state rooms, marvelled at the sparkling chandeliers, and admired the intricate details in every corner, we couldn't help but feel a sense of awe. It was the perfect addition to our weekend, full of City tradition and culture that left a lasting impression on all of us. The day ended with a high—literally! We zoomed up to the 40th

floor of the Salesforce Tower to the Duck & Waffle for dinner, where the food was just as spectacular as the nighttime views. Nothing quite beats dining above London's twinkling skyline, especially with such great company. Let's be honest, the Duck & Waffle combo was a winner—crispy, juicy, and complemented by the perfect backdrop for those “accidental” selfies.

Saturday was just as action-packed. First stop? The iconic Westminster Abbey. In the hands of our expert guide, we took a deep dive into British history, brushing shoulders (almost) with monarchs and poets alike. Taking the express lift (no one attempted the 101 steps) we ventured aloft to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries, the space it occupies having been previously hidden from public view or access for over 700 years. It's where the BBC offer the most iconic and spectacular view of coronations and events. No photos allowed! As we viewed the wonderful artefacts including a mediaeval frieze once adorning the alter and later used as a box lid, we progressed in the wake of our guide witnessing the copy of the crown jewels used to practice the coronation. To lunch we headed, where we dined in a conveniently located Gastro pub in Farringdon, The Wilmington, (think succulent venison burgers), then, it was time for something a little different—off to the subterranean world of The Postal Museum and its quirky Mail Rail. Squeezing in was no mean feat (for some) as we trundled along under the streets of London. Who knew the underground post was London's best-kept secret?

As evening fell, we ditched the tunnels for the Thames and made our way aboard HMS Belfast for a black-tie dinner. But this wasn't just any old shipboard soirée; it was an extra special one for Master Mark Huxley and his consort, Jo. Fifteen years ago, they tied the knot aboard this very vessel, and to mark the anniversary, we all got suited and booted in style for a black-tie champagne reception. A ship, a love story, good food and a lot of champagne—what more could you ask for? With speeches from Jennifer Midgley-Adam, Priest at All Hallows By The Tower and Chaplain to the City of London Sea Cadets, David Pugsley Master Carmen, and a very well received offering from Michael Davis-Marks Managing Editor of TheVeteran.UK who ended with ‘an appropriate poem’



*On HMS Belfast, beneath the moonlit skies,  
The Company of Entrepreneurs gathers, spirits rise.  
With Mark Huxley, Master, at the helm tonight,  
And Consort Jo getting ready to Drive Sheep all right.  
Tonight, we dine where history meets the sea,  
A special place for both of you, a union meant to be.  
Hail the Entrepreneurs from every path unite,  
To foster growth, ignite ambition's light.  
We welcome those from fields both near and far,  
United by a common enterprising star.  
To spread entrepreneurship throughout the City's heart,  
And much wider still, in every realm and part.  
Beyond the fellowship that we hold so dear,  
Your mission echoes far, both wide and clear.  
Supporting charities and schools, with a helping hand,  
Empowering young entrepreneurs across the land.  
Especially those whose dreams might struggle to be,  
You give them hope, a chance to truly see,  
That from under-served communities they may rise,  
With your support, they'll achieve the big prize.  
So here we dine, beneath the stars so bright,  
On HMS Belfast, celebrating tonight.  
Your Livery status, hopefully soon to arrive  
Will bring a great cheer, and many a high five.*

Sunday began with a serene start as we strolled around the Tower of London, meeting our 'very own' Beadle/Yeoman Emma for a private tour, before pondering the ghostly tales of its past (while desperately hoping we wouldn't run into a Beefeater with a grudge). After our morning of historical wonder, we made our way to the Little Ship Club overlooking the Thames for a buffet lunch, where the warm conversation and camaraderie made for the perfect send-off. But wait, the weekend wasn't over yet!



In true Entrepreneur style, we ended the weekend with a quirky tradition—the annual Sheep Drive across Southwark Bridge! We joined forces with the Worshipful Company of Woolman enabling the City's 'youngest' recipients of the Freedom of the City of London, to parade sheep across the bridge, led by their Master, Emmanuel Cohen (a proud Freeman Entrepreneur). Oh, and did we mention actor and Hollywood legend Damian Lewis was there? Because nothing says “end of an epic weekend” quite like a bit of celebrity spotting amongst a flock of sheep.

A huge thank you to everyone who made this weekend one for the history books. Here's to many more adventures, full of tradition, laughter, fellowship and of course, a dash of entrepreneurial flair!

**Simon Fordham**  
Court Assistant

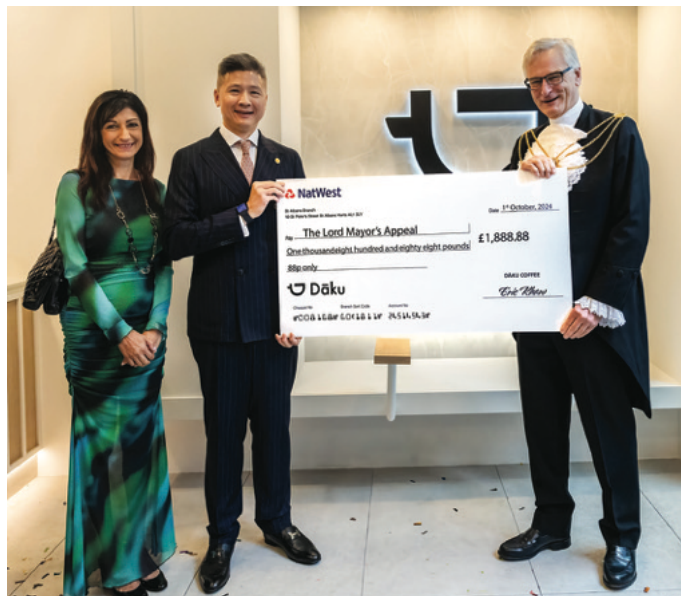




# Freeman Eric Khaw - Daku

A wonderful Grand Opening was held at Daku Monument on the 1st of October. Freeman Eric Khaw's entrepreneurial skills go from strength to strength as he opened its second door in the heart of the city. The new store filled with excitement, impressive performance, great conversation, and of course, the aroma of delicious coffee. We were so proud to be part of this vibrant celebration with dragon dances and distinguished guests. Rita W Bologna invited Sheriff of the City, David Chalk to join her and the Master to cut the ribbon and wish Eric and his staff the very best of luck in his new business venture.

Daku Monument is looking forward to serving the City with the finest coffee. Do pop in!



# The Inter-Livery Kent Coastal Hike

This September saw the introduction of what an annual tradition will now be: The Inter-Livery Kent Coastal Hike. Freeman Amy Hopper guided ramblers from her hometown in Sandwich to Deal. Starting at Sandwich Train Station, the group met the mayor of Sandwich Councillor Paul Carter and were treated to a private tour of the Elizabethan Courthouse and Guildhall Museum. Master Mark Huxley presented the Mayor with a signed copy of Jennifer Andersen's 'An Introduction to The City of London,' which will sit proudly in the Guildhall archive for all to access.

Sandwich is one of the original cinque port towns and the landing site of the Roman invasion in 43AD. Many of the sites Freeman Amy Hopper's ancestors had a hand in building! It is somewhat of a time capsule, still boasting several original Norman, Saxon and Tudor buildings.

Through Sandwich Bay and the start of the coastal section of their walk, the group passed through Royal St George's Golf course. As the keen golfers amongst you will know the Golf Open is held here every 10 years and Sandwich was the first course to host The Open outside of Scotland in 1894.

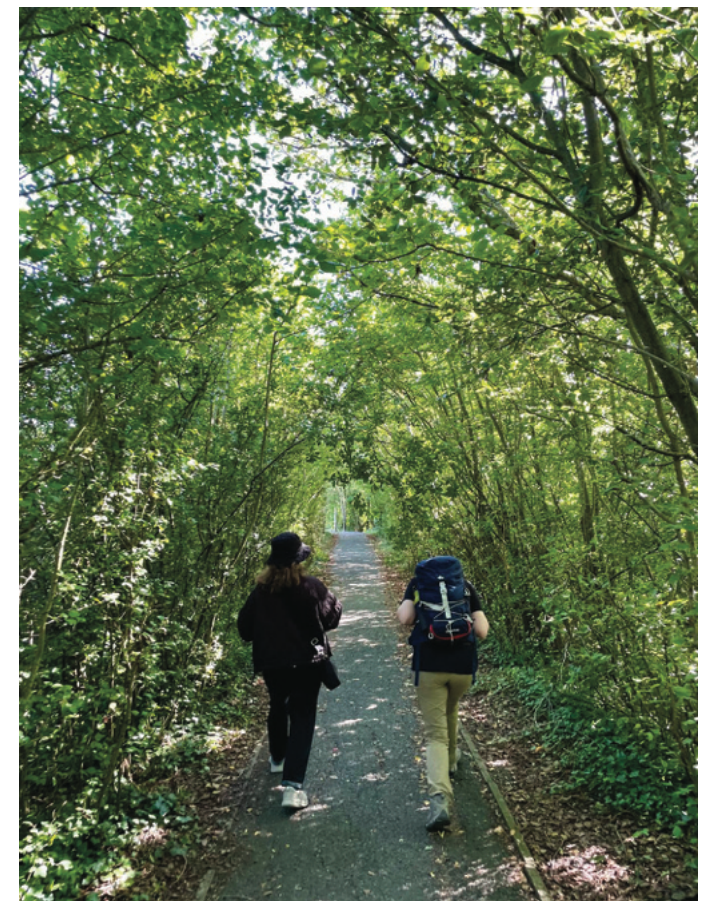
The Company of Entrepreneurs, The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, The Worshipful Company Of Carmen Hall, WC of Makers of Playing Cards, and The Worshipful Company of Marketors were represented on the day, with the most glorious weather!

With clear views across the sea to the isle of Thanet, France, and a few cheeky seals popping their heads up! Sandwich Bay is home to a wildlife reserve, bird observatory, and large seal colony.

After a lovely walk full of conversation, they reached their destination: Deal Ice Cream Parlour, Deal Beach and Deal Pier. A beautiful day brushing off the cobwebs, great conversation, bi-lateral stimulation, sea air, camaraderie, and a nice bit of money raised for the Company Trust charity. Ice creams with fish & chips were a well-deserved end to a great event. Master Mark Huxley could only conclude that the event should be an annual occurrence!

Many thanks to Right Worshipful Mayor Paul Carter for hosting at Sandwich Guildhall, the Guildhall team for the tour of Sandwich museum, and freeman Amy Hopper for organising the event. Date for your diary:

Next year's Inter-Livery Kent Coastal hike will take place on Saturday 13th September 2025.





# Off to Lahore with 14 Entrepreneurs

Following the drinks on 8th May, Junior Ward Jat Wasu organised, with Hon Treasurer Harvinder Rattan, a trip to the Lahore Kebab House. This is a restaurant that Jat has been going to since the Eighty's. He marshalled us out promptly at 8pm and Harvinder ferried some of us the short distance to the restaurant in Commercial Road.

With two accountants in charge, we were expertly organised with kebabs and curries ordered for the table. The conversation flowed uninterrupted from the drinks earlier. The off-licence opposite provided a selection of suitable drinks as Lahore does not have a licence.

The service was very efficient with the food appearing quickly and with the minimum of fuss. It was quickly eaten and, before you knew it, we were all on the way home by ten. After all it was a school night!

All in all, an enjoyable addition to the always interesting second Wednesday drinks. One we should do again! Not only coming back to Lahore but also exploring some of the other restaurants in and around Tower Hill. Also, it is very easy to organise using the drinks as a starting point. Perhaps one for the budding special interest groups such as the Military or Women Entrepreneurs? Well done Jat and Harvinder for starting what I hope will become a trend!



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# New Members

## Ms Jenni Dunman

Jenni left home in her teens and often worked 3 jobs over 100 hours a week to make ends meet. It was, by her own admission, a difficult time. Her mother married a flying squad detective, which inspired her to become a police officer. She joined the police, rising to the rank of detective sergeant in a specialist unit.



By chance, she had to use her first-aid training to save the life of a child who was choking. On realising that no-one around her knew what to do, she followed up with research, and Jenni saw a gap in the market for training specifically aimed at giving first-aid to children.

Jenni started training young mothers off her own bat, buying equipment on her credit cards. The idea was a success, and the business grew. She took a 5-year career break from the police in 2013, but after just one year, she resigned from the police and began franchising her business. Daisy First Aid had arrived.

She took on two people and now has 108 franchises, and is looking at international expansion.. Through a monthly management fee and 10% on monthly profits, Jenni's business is now highly successful. She has been a mentor to businesses exploring franchising and regularly speaks in schools and colleges.

Jenni is a 2024 Principal Benefactor of the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust.



## Mr John Burton

John is the founder, Chairman and major shareholder of World Wise Foods Ltd.

Its principal business is the supply of sustainably caught pole and line tuna (caught one by one) to leading retailers in the UK and around the world. John has been involved in these global supply chains for more than 40 years.

He co-founded the International Pole & Line Foundation in 2011, a UK registered charity, where he was Chairman for 8 years to 2020.

In 2020 he founded the Sustainable Fisheries and Communities Trust, with the prime interest of protecting and developing livelihoods of coastal fishing communities in the Indian Ocean. John is also Chairman and a shareholder of E-Cargo bikes providers of cost effective zero emission last mile delivery services to retailers in the UK. He is a Liveryman in the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers and has chaired the pan-livery initiative Pollenating London Together for the past 3 years.

He is an Honorary Fellow in the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society at Heriot-Watt University in connection with his work on ocean conservation.

John is a 2024 Principal Benefactor of the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust



## Mr Andrew Fishwick

Andrew is currently leading Hestia Hospitality plc – a new investment vehicle in the Hospitality sector, acquiring and building premium restaurant groups.

Andrew has over 20 years' experience in leading hospitality and culture

organisations. He has produced over two dozen West End and Broadway shows, winning Tony Awards, Olivier Awards, Evening Standard Theatre Awards and many more.

Andrew returned to the hospitality sector as interim CEO for several organisations which included multi award-winning gastro pub, restaurant groups and hotels.

Andrew founded and is Executive Chair for SALT, a leading marketing consultancy specialising in food and drink. He is also a Trustee for Home Kitchen, a charity working to training and employ people from the homeless community into the Hospitality sector. Home Kitchen will open its first, flagship site in London in May 2024.

Andrew has previously been a board member of the British Institute of Innkeepers as well as a mentor for the Prince's Trust.

Already a Freeman of the City of London, Andrew was elected as a Fellow of The Royal Society of Arts and has just completed his MBA from Warwick Business School.



## Mr Maurice Abboudi

Maurice started his career as a Money Market Dealer in the City, but caught the entrepreneurial bug in the 1990's when he joined his brother's medical supplies business which was eventually sold in 2000.

# New Members

He started a pizza delivery business during the 1990's and built it up to 12 sites before selling. He then joined Domino's Pizza in charge of development, but realised that he preferred working for himself and left after 3 years.

Maurice became Chair of OrderTalk, an online ordering system for restaurants which was sold to UberEats just before COVID. After consulting for a couple of years he bought, Firezza, another pizza business which grew to 17 sites and sold it to Pizza Express

He was appointed a Board advisor to Just Eat in 2016.

Maurice bought into K10 Japanese restaurants which grew into 9 sites in the City.

The business closed down due to COVID – however, Maurice was able to rebuild again by linking up with another of his businesses, Beer and Buns; so today K10 is once again thriving with 5 new sites open with a new one opening soon opposite Monument tube station

Maurice, keeps very busy with various entrepreneurial activities including several non-executive director positions in fast growing businesses and advising various start-up and early stage businesses.



## Mr Chris Simmance

Chris Simmance is a distinguished figure in the realm of digital marketing and a vibrant part of our entrepreneurial community. As the founder of Optus Digital, Under2 and The

OMG Centre, Chris has built and delivered digital strategies for high-profile clients, fostering a culture of critical thinking and accountability in his teams that has consistently driven them to exceptional success.

Beyond his professional accolades, Chris is a passionate advocate for continuous learning and leadership development, having shared his insights at numerous industry events and through his expertise to cultivate highly effective teams and innovative business practices. His work includes the leadership book, 'CTRL, ALT, LEAD', which offers insights into effective management and team leadership.

Chris's journey is not just defined by his professional achievements but also by his personal commitments. An avid snowboarder, he brings the same energy and drive to the slopes as he does to the business sphere. Recently, he also purchased his parents' motor mechanics business, ensuring their well-deserved retirement. A business which is once again thriving and providing more for the local community.

## Mr Wayne Whitford

Wayne was born into to an East End family, and he forged a career in the debt collection industry. Wayne has spent his 30-year career finding solutions for all manner of businesses, solving issues with late or non-paying customers - improving cashflow and business viability. He has always been at the forefront of this space, leading two of the most important and successful enterprises in debt recovery in the UK. Now on his third venture, he is looking at the delivery of essential services to support private business, local councils, and central government. Wayne has been recognised for the last 6 years as an influential figure in the world of credit in the UK and is included in the Credit 500.



Committed to professional development for the Credit sector he is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Credit Management.

Married with two daughters and six Grandchildren a keen sailor and football fan.

Wayne is a 2024 Principal Benefactor of the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust.



## Mrs Belinda Back

After an initial brief career working in the City in banking and for the Corporation of London, Belinda has been at the helm of several startup technology businesses - the first of which she and her husband successfully sold in 2005 to a FTSE 250 company. Over the course of her 30-year career, she has made venture capital investments in the environmental sector. She set-up a technology Innovation centre, and she is back at the helm of their latest venture that focuses on developing "technology for good" around the areas of flood management, rail safety, plus most topically the reduction of spills of plastics and sewage into waterways and oceans.

The business already has customers ranging from Network Rail, Utilities, the Environment Agency, to Local Government and the governments of Belgium and the Channel Islands.

A committed philanthropist, her hobbies include charity fundraising, gardening, and attending City Livery events.



# New Members & Honorary Freemen



**Mr James Sinclair**  
Generating more than £40 million annual revenue, James Sinclair's 17-business portfolio spans leisure, hospitality, e-commerce and property investments. His family attractions will welcome more than 1 million people this year.

In addition to his financial success, James has penned four books, appeared in hundreds of YouTube videos and podcast episodes, and founded a charity for disadvantaged children. Magic Makers is a charity which helps children living with serious and life-limiting illnesses. It provides families with specialist equipment, support, and enriching experiences, and, since launching in 2015, the charity has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds and helped many families.

James is hugely passionate about helping to drive the UK economy forward, hosting regular business seminars and coaching entrepreneurs through their challenges throughout more than 400 podcast episodes.

James is married to Natalie, and they have two wonderful children, Harvey and Darcey.



An honourable mention to Freeman John Charles, who was made Free of the Company by virtual presence at the Election Court (via Zoom) in 2021, during the Mastership of Lars Andersen. We were delighted that Past Master Andersen could be there to present him in person with his Freedom certificate and witness his signing of the Freedom Register at the Election Court Banquet this year!

John left school with no qualifications, but, at 19 returned for GSEs, A Levels and a degree. Despite beginning to lose his sight, he managed to talk his way into becoming a trainee chef. He looked for funding for 9 years, before just setting up his own firm and starting to bid for work. He grew it to employ 15 staff, many disabled & visually impaired and 4 more after winning the catering for the Tideway Tunnel, in a deal reportedly worth over £1m.

He won part of the catering for the Olympics and has RBS and PWC as clients, as well as catering for construction project. He has a focus on hiring marginalised people and especially ex-offenders.

Is active in several charities and social action groups, often as trustee as well as advising the government on these issues and disability engagement and inclusion.



On 5th November in the Lord Mayor's Private Office at Mansion House, the Lord Mayor, Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli, was admitted by the Master as an Honorary Freeman.

A qualified accountant, securities professional, computer specialist and management consultant, educated at Harvard University and Trinity College Dublin, Michael gained his PhD at London School of Economics where he was also a Visiting Professor. He was elected Alderman for the Entrepreneurs' Ward of Broad Street in 2013. Alderman Mainelli was elected Sheriff in 2019 (serving a historic 2-year term during the pandemic), and, as Sheriff, Michael was the Principal Guest and Speaker at Master Andersen's online Installation Dinner in November 2020.

In 2023, Alderman Mainelli was elected to serve as the 695th Lord Mayor of the City of London. His mayoral theme of 'Connect To Prosper' highlights the City of London's ability to solve global challenges through convening and cooperation.

Principally, he comes to the Company of Entrepreneurs as a true entrepreneur. He has founded companies in seismology, cartography, and energy information, and he co-founded Z/Yen in 1994. Z/Yen remains the City of London's leading think-tank, to promote societal advance through better finance and technology.

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# Honouring Heritage: The RNLI and the Furniture Makers’ Hall



In a momentous acknowledgement of maritime legacy and selfless service, we are pleased to share the unveiling of a blue plaque marking the historic site of the founding of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Established in 1824, the RNLI began its noble mission within a building located on the site where the Furniture Makers’ Hall now stands. This occasion was possible due to the benevolence of both the City of London and the Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers, who graciously agreed to this commemorative gesture.

The solemn ceremony was officiated by none other than the Lord Mayor, Professor Michael Minelli, underscoring the event’s significance. This blue plaque offers a poignant reminder of the RNLI’s enduring commitment to saving lives at sea, an endeavour that has spanned almost two centuries.

My connection with both the entrepreneurial and maritime worlds lends a deeply personal resonance to this tribute. As a Freeman of the Company of Entrepreneurs and a longstanding volunteer crew member at Tower Lifeboat Station since October 2005, I am privileged to serve a dual purpose. At 69 years of age, I stand among the oldest seagoing volunteers in the RNLI, a testament to the limitless spirit of service that transcends age. The rigours of lifeboat duty demand not only physical endurance but also an unwavering dedication to the cause—qualities that I believe bring out the best in all of us who serve.

In attendance at the ceremony was the honourable Master Entrepreneur, whose presence further enriched the event. The Master Entrepreneur has always been a staunch advocate for initiatives that embody resilience and community spirit, making his participation particularly meaningful. The subsequent reception allowed for reflection and fellowship amongst attendees, a much-valued opportunity in our bustling lives. Photographs capturing the essence of the ceremony and the warm interactions that followed will soon be available for those interested in this touchstone event.

It is worth noting the Silent Heroes of our maritime history—the countless volunteers and supporters who have enabled the RNLI to thrive and evolve. This blue plaque not only honours the founders but also those unsung men and women who have contributed in myriad ways, often away from the public eye. The plaque hence serves as both an emblem of honour and a beacon of inspiration for future generations.

The Furniture Makers’ Hall, with its dignified aura, stands as a fitting location for this tribute. Its history and purpose align harmoniously with the values upheld by the RNLI—commitment, craftsmanship, and community. We are grateful to the Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers for their cooperation and kindness in permitting the installation of the plaque.

For those seeking more information about this event or the continuing efforts of the RNLI, please feel free to reach out. Shared stories like these bind us closer, reinforcing our collective commitment to service and heritage.



# Election Court

At the Election Court, held at Guildhall on Thursday 27th June 2024, the following were elected to serve as Officers of the Company of Entrepreneurs from 25th November 2024:

**As Master : James John Sherrington Talbot**  
**As Senior Warden : Alderman Alastair John Naisbitt King**  
**DLAs Middle Warden : Jatinder Singh Wasu**  
**As Junior Warden : Rita William Bologna**

The Master, Mr Mark Huxley, warmly congratulated the Master and Wardens Elect – speaking for the whole Court in wishing them every success in their new roles when the time comes.

Owing to his anticipated service (subject to election) as Lord Mayor, Alderman King serves a second term as the Company’s Senior Warden.

The Election Court (conventionally the last Thursday in June) is one of Company’s statutory meetings, at which the Court elects those members of the Court who will serve as Master and Wardens from the following November. Although it is customary that each of the serving Wardens is promoted to the next most senior office, any full member of the Court may be elected to serve. A Nominations sits ahead of the Court meeting to review candidates for the role of Junior Warden, and it makes a recommendation to the Court as to who to elect.

The Court consists of the Master, three Wardens, the five most recent Past Masters, and between six and twenty Freemen Entrepreneurs who sit as Assistants. Assistants are elected to serve for a term of three years each. The Treasurer is a voting member of Court and is appointed for a two-year term.

A formal announcement of those elected was made at the Election Court Banquet, which takes place later in the Summer.

At our Summer Election Court Banquet, held on July 10th this year, we celebrated those elected to serve for 2024/5 as Master and Wardens. The actual Election Court was held on June 27th. During this meeting, the Court considers candidates for Junior Warden, upon the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, who have been exceptional in their conduct as Court Assistants. Court was pleased to elect Rita W Bologna, unopposed, as Junior Warden in recognition of her contribution to the Company over several years, Rita is Chair of the Comms Committee, Editor of the annual Entrepreneurs’ magazine, and has contributed significant amounts of her time to education and outreach events amongst other activities. The Court congratulated her on her election.

Jatinder Wasu was elected, unopposed, as Middle Warden. Jat has been a staunch supporter of the Company since his election the previous year as Junior Warden and was congratulated on his progression.

Alderman Alastair King was retained as Senior Warden for 2024/5, a role which he has held since November last year. Alastair, as Senior Alderman Below The Chair, is expected, subject to election, to become Lord Mayor of the City of London in November this year and is therefore unable to progress to Master of the Entrepreneurs Company until after his Mayoral year concludes.

James Talbot was elected, unopposed, as Master of the Company for 2024/5 and congratulated by Court on his progression to this key role. Court expressed its thanks to James for taking on the position a year earlier than planned and pledged to support him in his endeavours as the Company celebrates its 10th anniversary and expects to progress to become the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs.

The Installation Banquet will be held on Monday November 25th, in Ironmongers Hall. All Freemen are actively encouraged to attend this most important event.



Master Elect James Talbot (centre), with Junior Warden Elect Rita W. Bologna (left) and Middle Warden Elect Jat Wasu.





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## DEI Committee

On 12th September 2024, three members of the DEI Committee presented at the first Livery Committee Equity Diversity and Inclusion Course. The course was intended for any member or officer of a Livery Company or Guild, with particular relevance to those who are on a committee, or those that have responsibility for, EDI within their respective Company.

The objectives were two-fold:

- to promote, champion and encourage EDI throughout the Livery Companies, and
- to help embed the principles of EDI through the Livery movement.

The course was held in the Guildhall, which provided sufficient room for the 100+ attendees, as well as a stage and appropriate AV system. The day was introduced by Philip Woodhouse who quickly handed over to Julia Sibley as his successor as Chair of the Livery Committee (Julia had taken over the role the day before). She gave a warm welcome, outlined the objectives and then introduced the Company of Entrepreneurs who were first up to present.

Veronica Heaven, the Chair of the CoE DEI Committee led the team onto the stage in order to present the "Case study and examples of good practice from a Company". Supported by Debbie Hatchwell and Talan Skeels-Piggins, the trio began with introductions followed by a very snappy 90 second video that would whet the appetite of the audience highlighting the work we had done (thanks to Amy Hopper for the great video).

From defining DEI according to the United Nations, to providing numbers to support the business case for DEI, the team worked to give the reasons why the topic should be important to all Livery Companies. Following on, Veronica, Debbie and Talan went through the journey they had been on; from first suggestion by Kate Jolly, to think tank, to task force and eventually becoming a full committee. Expanding on certain points like the questionnaire and training, the 20minutes allocated suddenly appeared to be far too short to get everything across. Debbie then headed out into the audience with a roving microphone in order to receive questions for the panel. It was stunning to see the number of hands raised and there were still hands raised when the team finally stepped down from the stage, so it was immediately apparent that there was a great deal of interest in what the Company of Entrepreneurs had achieved and how others could access the learning points.



The next presentation was from Dionne Corradine (Chief Strategy Officer for the City of London Corporation). Dionne informed the attendees that engaging diverse communities is one of the six City of London Corporate Plan Outcomes, and she showed how DEI featured within the main plans and objectives for 2024-2029. Whilst it was admitted that the City of London was ahead of similar corporations in some areas, it also fell behind in others, especially in metrics and measures of its own data base.

The course then took a more legal turn, with Emma Bartlett (Partner at CM Murray LLP) delivering on Bystander Training. This presentation was concerned more with Livery Committees expectations/policies and the legal issues that can arise from an individual's actions. These included Equality Act 2010 along with the new legislation coming into force in October 2024, concerned with Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Victimisation, and Discrimination. It was informative and eye-opening regarding the legal definition of harassment and the nine protected characteristics of an individual.

To conclude the course, Sandi Wassmer (Chief Executive of Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion) took part in a fireside chat with Gemma Wood asking a wide range of questions before opening up to the floor.

After closing remarks from Julia Sibley, who stressed that this was hopefully the first of many such courses, lunch was served and there was an opportunity to create links with other Livery Companies.

Due to the CoE already forming its own committee, providing training material and having DEI as an integral part of its plans and policies moving forwards, there was a great deal of interest from other Livery Companies in sharing of knowledge. A booklet had also been created by Veronica Heaven titled 'Belonging – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - a deeper dive', these had been put onto the tables prior to attendees arriving, and the team were happy to see that all had been taken away. It showed that the topic is of importance to the Livery Companies and that the CoE is one company that has significantly moved forward with DEI.



# The Sheriffs' Ball London Calling!



The 2024 Sheriff's Ball was magnificent! We arrived at Guildhall Yard for this event celebrating the best of London and Britain to be greeted by a red double-decker London bus, a gold Aston Martin and six splendid Pikemen. After this perfect welcome, we moved on to greet fellow Entrepreneurs and invited guests in the champagne reception, held in the historic Crypt. The atmosphere at this early stage of the event was one of tangible anticipation and excitement, both for the fundraising element of the evening and for whatever surprises awaited in the Great Hall. There were splashes of red, white and blue everywhere – from ornate jewellery and cleverly-painted nails through Union Jack bow ties and splendid waistcoats on to decorated top hats and dazzling dresses.

The evening proper started in the beautifully decorated Great Hall which was dressed with flag bunting and echoing with laughter as guests found their tables, each named after a London location and with London landmarks at their centre as table lights. The Ball was packed to capacity, with the Entrepreneurs filling two tables this year and spilling out across several others. Lift off was the two sheriffs, Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley DBE and Alderman Bronek Masojada, entering the hall flanked by their splendid guards of honour from the Company of Pikemen and Musketeers with The Clash's 'London Calling' as their accompanying soundtrack. Short speeches and starters followed and then dancing! No waiting until the end of the evening at this event, after the welcome from the Sheriffs, a live band entered the stage and the guests filled the dance floor – it was so surprising, and so totally marvellous!

This glorious Sheriff's Ball continued in the same way all evening, food being delicious but subservient to fun and a feeling of work-being-done and hair-being-let-down. A game of Heads and Tails entertained the whole room (and raised money for the



Sheriff and Recorders Fund), a magician entertained the guests table by table and, as the band returned for a second session of dancing, the Entrepreneurs entertained each other and the surrounding tables with their infectious enthusiasm for singing and dancing.

During this well-planned and joyous event, a Silent Auction had been happening all evening and we all cheered when the final countdown revealed the Master had put in the highest bid for the City of London Walking Tour. After farewell speeches from the Sheriffs, the band was replaced by a DJ and he wasn't alone, a violinist and a saxophonist joined him on stage adding their magic to each of the classic dance-floor filling songs he played. The glamorous and accomplished musicians made a very special difference and encouraged, yes, you've got it – more dancing! At the last count the Sheriff's Ball 2024 Ball was on track to raise over £72,000 for three inspirational charities MQ Mental Health Research, Homewards – a Royal Foundation programme and National Numeracy.

Tickets for next year? There's already a queue!



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# The 2024 Inter Livery Regatta



The 55th running of the Lord Mayors Inter Livery Regatta saw myself along with Paddy Willis, Mark Layzell, Paul Thiele and Neil (1st mate on the boat, not a Freeman) flying the flag for the Company of Entrepreneurs. We met at midday on Friday, slipped our lines from Wicormarine Yacht Haven and began our ten mile sail to Cowes. That evening was an informal buffet at the Royal London Yacht Club.

At 0830 on Saturday during the race brief, we were informed that the weather was not conducive to racing (due to a total absence of wind). There were two race postponements before the race officer announced wind was coming in from the West and we could head out to the start line.

Due to the wind and tide off Cowes, Race 1 was a fairly short loop: Start line of the Island Sailing Club, beat initially to the west of Cowes, turn 180 degrees, sail back past Cowes to a second mark on a run, then another 180 degree turn to a beat back to the finish line of the Island Sailing Club. I messed up our start by thinking we arriving too early and so did a full turn. We actually crossed the line 90seconds after the start, so I should have carried on going and we would have had a great start. We made progress from last place to fifth by the first mark and remained in that place all the way half way up the final beat when we overhauled another yacht and were fourth across the line (just). This would not be the placings as the yachts are all on handicap and so some boats give others time due to their rating.

Race 2 was the same course, but the tide had drastically increased. No problems arriving to the start late this time, and we were right at the front. Deciding to follow a faster Sigma 33, we went in towards the shore. We had been sailing for about five minutes and I suddenly noticed that we hadn't even crossed the start line. The tide was so strong that we had been pushed backwards. The rest of the fleet had headed away from the

shore and into the stronger breeze out in the channel. A tactic we should have done as MIURA is NOT a light winds boat! By the time we finally made it half way to the first mark we were dead last. A decision was made to head out into stronger tides but stronger winds. This meant we got to the first mark with three boats now behind us. The crew worked hard to trim the sails, keep us moving and we slowly began to reel in some of those ahead of us. Gradually we improved but gradually the tidal flow strength increased. We got within 100yds of the finish line and had made it to fourth place. However the tide was just too strong and winds too light. The time allowed for us to complete the course was approaching and the boats all around us knew it. A number began to retire, knowing they weren't going to make it. We stuck at it and finally got the word from the race officer that they would allow us an extra amount of time to cross the line. We had made it, by sticking it out and not giving in, we had made it.

The Awards Dinner reception was held at the Royal Yacht Squadron. A beautiful setting in the gardens, overlooking the Solent, the sunsetting and clear skies looking splendid. Our guest of honour for the evening was the Lord Mayor of London, the Rt Hon Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli. During the awards we found out the results.....we had come fifth overall, so no cups or trophies for the Entrepreneurs in 2024. In the first race we had placed fifth, but had missed coming 2nd by only 70seconds. If I had only trusted the start approach..... However, our evening was enjoyable, the speeches were entertaining and it was wonderful to meet so many other Livierymen and Freeman.

A great regatta, apologies for not bringing back any silverware, we will learn from our mistakes and try harder next year - as any entrepreneur would! Anyone interested to attend should please get in touch with me, Talan Skeels-Piggins.

# Paris 2024 Paralympic Flame Relay



Late August Bank Holiday Sunday for many began after sunrise, however I was up at 5am and on the road shortly after for a drive down to the Channel Tunnel. Whilst I was going into the tunnel I wasn't travelling to France, but rather the half way point in the service tunnel.....I was part of the Paris 2024 Paralympic Flame Relay, and we were delivering the flame lit at Stoke Mandeville to our French counterparts.

Once signed on at the security office I was escorted towards the service tunnel entrance. A large marquee had been erected and the other members of the 'Collective' were already milling about inside, having coffee and croissants. I recognized one person dressed in the white Paris 2024 tracksuit, triple jump legend Jonathon Edwards. There were obviously other 'names' there but I didn't know who they were! I squeezed into my uniform, regretting the fact I had not been to the gym for two months and had feasted on Pasty, Ice Cream and Currywurst during the past holidays in Cornwall and then Germany.

We were then given our briefing about how/where to hold the Torch and how the Flame Relay would be conducted and filmed. It wasn't the same as a normal relay, but a choreographed sequence of events to show the arrival of the flame at the tunnel entrance, going into the tunnel, arriving at the mid point and then heading off down the French side. Strict instructions about 'Do NOT touch anything' whilst in the tunnel, were repeated on numerous occasions by the tunnel staff and specialist fire brigade. Then we were ushered outside and once in our designated positions the filming commenced.



The original two Paralympian who had been present at the lighting of the flame began by wheeling the first 50yds towards the tunnel. Each had a Torch and approached a second pairing of Paralympian. After the Torch Kiss which ignited a second set of Torches, all four made the 50yd traverse to a lone Paralympian (Andy - a wheelchair racer). He lit his torch from the four and then approached the Collective. I was part of this section, which consisted of 12 people who had been chosen by the British Paralympic Association, the Paris 2024 Organising Committee and the Paris 2024 Sponsors. It was a mixture of those involved in sport, promoting inclusive sport, extolling the values of the 2024 Games and helping others to get involved in sport. We were lined up in two rows facing each other and the Torch was passed from person to person. Each one of us getting a short moment to hold the Paralympic Flame, a truly special moment.

Once our Captain Andy had got the Torch back, he moved between the two lines to the tunnel side, and we fell in behind him in four rows. As I was the shortest I ended up on the first row behind him, so had a great view of the torch and the tunnel ahead. We moved forwards to cheers from a small number of gathered onlookers (as only organising staff and tunnel staff were allowed in the restricted area). It was a very surreal moment to head into the service tunnel and make our way towards the air lock. After a short distance the filming was stopped, we were loaded into the special service tunnel vehicles, pressurised in the airlock and then driven to the mid point of the tunnel.

At the mid point we reassembled in the same order as before, the vehicles were driven out the way, filming recommenced and we continued our march towards the centre point. At the mid point we stopped opposite our French counterparts and Andy completed the Torch Kiss with their own Captain. Cheers and clapping and photographs abounded. Our mission complete we waved goodbye, turned around and began walking back to the distant service vehicles, making sure not to touch anything!

For our services we were allowed to keep the Paris 2024 Relay tracksuits and were presented with the central ring of a torch. It was a very special event to be part of and one that brought back memories of my own Paralympic journey to the winter games in Vancouver 2010. It also brought out thoughts of all the athletes preparing to compete, and all those they will inspire through their own sacrifices, determination and excellence.



# The Timeless Ceremony: Witnessing the Trial of the Pyx



In an era where tradition and modernity occasionally collide, it is a privilege to experience an event that transcends time, weaving the past into the present with undiminished reverence and exactitude. Such was the experience afforded to the Company of Entrepreneurs, marking a significant first as we were invited to attend the historic Trial of the Pyx at Goldsmiths' Hall.

The Trial of the Pyx, a name derived from the Latin word 'pyxis' meaning small box, traces its origins to the 12th century and stands as one of the oldest judicial procedures in England. The Pyx chests, initially housed in the Pyx Chamber within Westminster Abbey, were entrusted with holding coins and other items of great importance. By 1248, public interest necessitated a formal trial, bringing together twelve citizens of London and twelve esteemed goldsmiths from the City to examine the currency.

Our journey reflects an even older tale where the juries, once a mixture of goldsmiths and other London citizens, became exclusively composed of Goldsmiths' Company members during Elizabeth I's reign. This vested the Company with complete responsibility for the trial from 1580 onwards. The discovery found practical application in 1870 when the Coinage Act designated Goldsmiths' Hall as the trial's new venue, a decision coinciding with the relocation of the Assay Office to the hall.

Goldsmiths' Hall itself, an architectural gem, provides a fitting stage for this venerable ceremony, refined yet unpretentious. It is here that the Goldsmiths' Company Assay Office collaborates with the Royal Mint to maintain the integrity of our coinage. Under the watchful eye of the King's Remembrancer, the oldest judicial office in the UK, the Trial of the Pyx adheres rigorously to the procedures established since Edward I's reign.

Annually, coins are randomly selected from every minted batch, sealed in bags of fifty, and secured within the Pyx boxes. On the day, officials from The Royal Mint present these

chests at Goldsmiths' Hall, meticulously ensuring that no coin goes unexamined. This year, over 50,000 coins were reviewed, each representing the epitome of our national currency's trustworthiness. A jury comprising Goldsmiths' Company members oversees the initial count and weigh-in, with the Assay Office undertaking thorough compositional tests over the following two months.

Observing the intricate balance between ceremony and scrutiny, the Trial of the Pyx stands as one of the more singular events in the Livery calendar. The setting was particularly striking; imagine holding a glass of champagne whilst witnessing a legally binding trial unfold. This, indeed, stands in solemn contrast to the formal conduct of judiciary proceedings and epitomizes the blend of decorum and tradition characteristic of the City's historic ceremonies.

Notably, the Trial has not been without its dramatis personae. Famously, in the 1710 trial, Sir Isaac Newton's coins came under scrutiny, revealing an inadequate gold content—a finding both controversial and illustrative of the severe exactitude by which the trial operates.

To partake in the Trial of the Pyx is to engage with history itself—an event hardly altered since its inception, holding the past and present in a seamless continuum. The ceremony's yearly enactment is both a celebration of our heritage and a solemn duty to safeguard future currency integrity. The Trial of the Pyx is not merely a historical footnote but an enduring testament to the principle that precision and honour must underpin the very currency of our realm.

**Master Mark Huxley**

# The Billesden Dinner: An Enduring Tradition



On the evening of 24th June, I had the considerable honour, accompanied by our Clerk, of attending the Billesden Dinner — an event grounded deeply in the annals of City history. This annual tradition, marking the alternation of position between the Merchant Taylors and Skinners among the Livery Companies of the City of London, reflects a history of both rivalry and reconciliation, stretching back centuries. This year's dinner saw the Merchant Taylors Company hold the 6th position, with the Skinners at the 7th. As tradition dictates, it was incumbent on the Master of the 6th Company to invite the Master, Clerk, and Wardens of the 7th.

The origins of this venerable tradition are embedded in the intricate tapestry of the 14th and 15th centuries when precedence disputes between the Skinners and Merchant Taylors were a source of both contention and friction. Both companies were granted their initial royal charters in 1327, and by the time of the late 15th century, their rivalry had escalated dramatically. In 1484, a Lord Mayor's River procession devolved into what can only be described as an intense dispute, treated by both guilds as a fiercely contested private boat race. The disturbance did not lack severity; it resulted in lethal violence necessitating the intervention of the Haberdasher, Robert Billesdon, then Lord Mayor. He mediated an agreement wherein both companies would annually alternate their precedence and host each other's Master and Wardens for a solemn dinner. Thus, the tradition of the Billesden Dinner was born from this moment of diplomatic resolution.

Today, the Billesden Award remains a testament to this historical compromise, celebrated annually with a series of events encompassing dinners and various sporting competitions. The exchange of precedence is symbolically cemented each year through the 'Gavel exchange'. The Lord Mayor, in the presence of the Masters and Wardens from the Skinners and Merchant Taylors, leads this ceremony at Mansion House, ahead of the United Guilds Service at St Paul's Cathedral. Fascinatingly, the two quintessentially English institutions can still not agree on the exact spelling of the Lord Mayor's name. The Skinners acknowledge it as Billesdon, while the Merchant Taylors assert it as Billesden — a minor yet persistent vestige of their historical rivalry.

For our relatively youthful company, being invited by the Master Merchant Taylor, Michael Cole-Fontayn, to such an august occasion was indeed a significant milestone. To be accorded the privilege of witnessing such an enduring tradition offered a profound sense of history in motion. It was particularly inspiring to observe how such gentlemanly practices foster continuity and mutual respect amidst even the most deep-rooted arguments, such as the debate about whether it is Billesden or Billesdon. Nonetheless, as mere observers of this ancient contention, it is not our place to decree a definitive answer.

Attending the dinner allowed us to glimpse the rich heritage of the Livery Companies and become momentary partakers in a tradition that has stood the test of an historical amount of time. Huge thanks are due to the Master for extending the invitation and we hope it proves to be the first of other opportunities to enjoy the Billesden or is it Billesdon Dinner!



# From Startup to Scale-Up: City of London's Bold Support for Entrepreneurs

Attending the City of London's launch of their new growth plan for entrepreneurs was both inspiring and encouraging, especially as the Honorary Treasurer for the Company of Entrepreneurs. The event was a powerful reminder of how essential it is for the City to continue fostering the growth and success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In a time when entrepreneurs need support more than ever, it was fantastic to see the City Corporation step up with a dedicated SME strategy.

One of the highlights of the evening was hearing from Harpreet Kaur, the 2022 Apprentice winner, who gave an inspiring talk on the challenges and rewards of entrepreneurship. Her story of grit and determination was a testament to what's possible when budding entrepreneurs have access to the right support and guidance. It was a real privilege to meet her and the other speakers—learning from those who've been through the ups and downs of entrepreneurship is invaluable.

The City of London's focus on providing resources, mentorship, and opportunities for SMEs is critical to ensuring that entrepreneurs like those in the Company of Entrepreneurs thrive. As entrepreneurs, we often face many unknowns, and having a structured support system through this new growth plan brings hope and optimism for the future. It was an energizing experience to be among fellow innovators and to witness first-hand the City's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship.

It's moments like these that remind me of the importance of community and collaboration in the entrepreneurial journey. The City's initiative shows that it's not just about supporting businesses financially, but about creating an environment where entrepreneurs can grow, learn, and contribute to the economy in meaningful ways. I left the event feeling empowered and excited about the opportunities ahead, both for the Company of Entrepreneurs and the wider entrepreneurial community in the City of London.

By Harvinder Rattan



# Election Court Banquet



The Master addresses Freeman and guests



Matt Downie MBE, CEO of Crisis, responds on behalf of the guests



Guitarist Will Scott serenades the guests



The glittering table



Fran Findlater OBE receives a cheque on behalf of the charity No Going Back



Deryl Thatcher receives a cheque on behalf of the charity Hatch Enterprise



# A Delightful Evening at Café Spice Namaste: Celebrating Entrepreneurship with a Twist



On Friday, April 26th, a group of Freeman and their guests enjoyed a memorable evening at Freeman Cyrus Todiwala's Café Spice Namaste, situated on the picturesque Royal Albert Docks. The setting sun cast a warm glow, with the silhouettes of airplanes taking off from City Airport adding a touch of urban charm.

This gathering held particular significance for the Guild. Back in 2014, during the Guild's formative stages, much of the planning took place at Café Spice's original location near the City. Cyrus and Parvin's delicious meals undoubtedly played a role in fostering the camaraderie and spirit of the early entrepreneurs. It's no surprise then, that both Cyrus and Parvin became Founders of the Guild.

The evening also saw us joined by fellow Founders, Nick Levens and Chris Wollen, along with their wives. This marked the 118th meeting of Cyrus's Khaadraas Dinner Club, a gathering for food enthusiasts with a healthy appetite. The term "Khaadraas" originates from Farsi, and while it literally translates to "greedy pig," a more fitting interpretation in this context would be "gourmand" – someone who appreciates high-quality, delicious food.

The theme for the evening was aptly titled "The Twisted Brits!" Expecting traditional British fare? Think again! This menu offered playful reinterpretations of classic dishes like fish and chips, bangers and mash, and shepherd's pie.

Complementing the theme perfectly were the unique beers from Crumbs Brewing in Reigate. The Naan Lager, a delightful tippie, proved to be the ideal accompaniment for the first course.

Following a welcoming glass of rosé prosecco, Cyrus and Parvin provided a warm introduction and explained the innovative menu. We also had the pleasure of hearing from Morgan Arnell, the founder of Crumbs Brewing. Inspired by the substantial food waste generated by his local bakery, Morgan and his wife embarked on a mission to create delicious beers using leftover bread.

And then came the main event: the food!

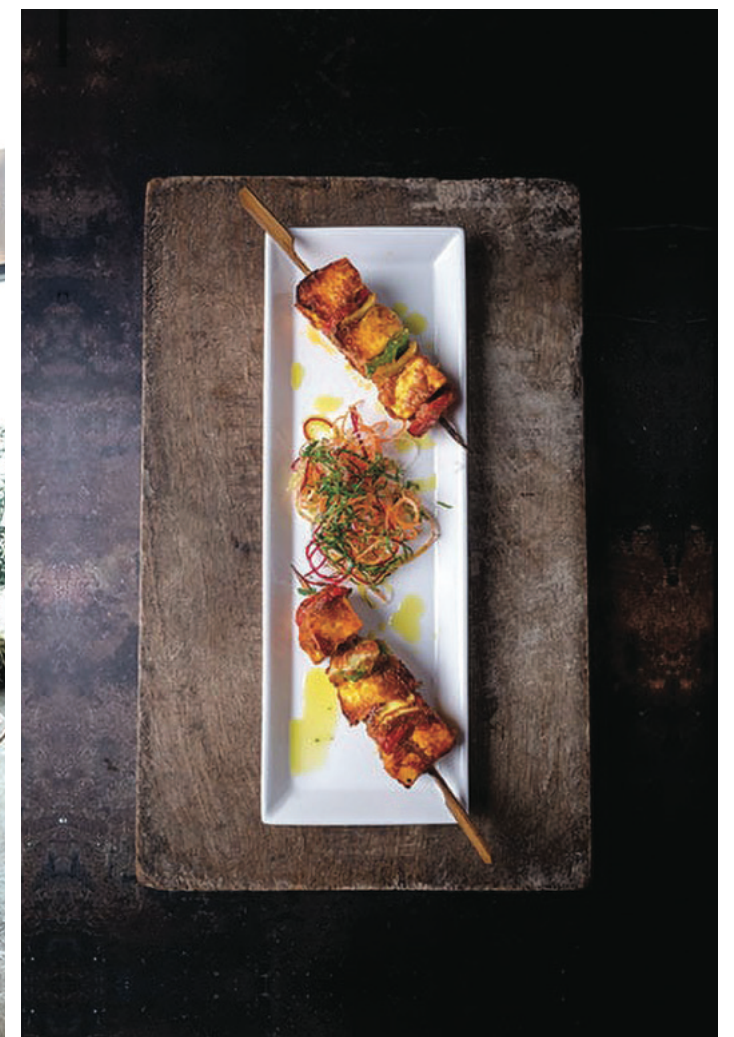
The Twisted Brits Menu:  
Masala Fried Fish on Chips with Devilled Dressed Eggs  
(served with Naan Lager)  
Bangers in Mash on Gravy with Creamed Chicken Livers  
on Toast (Bloomin' Amber Lager)  
Ginger Country Captain with Macaroni Cheese  
(Sourdough Pale Ale)  
Royal Bread and Butter Pudding with Prunes in Slow Gin  
(Ruby Ale)

The menu received rave reviews. The dishes offered exciting and flavourful combinations, all presented within the comforting framework of classic British fare. Each course was a delight, with the opening masala fish and chips earning particular praise.

The Crumbs Brewing beers added another dimension to the experience. While I've always preferred beer over wine with curries, the Amber Lager sparked a playful debate at our table, as it resembled a traditional bitter more than a lager. The Naan Lager, on the other hand, was a source of amusement and proved quite popular. Though the men generally favoured the ales, the ladies at our table hankered after the initial prosecco.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable and delicious evening, with a very reasonable price tag. It served as a fantastic introduction to the Khaadraas tradition. Don't miss out on the next one! Cyrus and Parvin are not only exceptional hosts, but they also provide an unforgettable culinary experience.

**James Talbot**







EASI - the Entrepreneurs Award in Social Innovation, is an annual support programme for early stage social entrepreneurs developing innovative solutions to big world problems. Now in its third year, EASI goes from strength to strength and is a great example of our Company working together with our Trust to support the entrepreneur community and make a real difference.

EASI is a very popular programme and since its formation we have received 364 applications, provided £30,000 in EASI grants, and directly supported sixteen early stage social innovation enterprises.

This year we received a record number of quality applications, from which we selected six founder finalists: Dino Bertolis - CycleSaver, Angus Rogers -Dyvr, Sol Escobar - Give Your Best, Mireille Steinhage -Solar Blanket, Carla Jouavel – TrackCarbon and Liz Beh – Tresacare.

At the EASI24 Final at Skyline London in June, the judges and our audience voted the very worthy Liz Beh of Tresacare our EASI24 Winner.

Thanks to the generosity of Freeman John Burton, all our EASI24 Finalists were invited to attend the Election Banquet at Tallow Chandlers Hall and join in the celebrations, as EASI24 Winner Liz Beh of Tresacare was awarded a £10,000 grant from the Company of Entrepreneurs' Trust.

*'The Banquet was a truly remarkable event, held in the historic Tallow Chandler's Hall. From the moment you stepped inside, the weight of tradition and significance was palpable. The evening embodied the very essence of the Company of Entrepreneurs – a close-knit community united by a shared passion for supporting one another through the journey of entrepreneurship.'*

**EASI24 Finalist: Dino Bertolis-CycleSaver**

Our EASI23 Showcase, held at the beginning of the year, was yet another special occasion. Generously hosted by our good friends the Drapers Company at their splendid Hall, with 150

invited guests, including many senior people from the City and Livery, including our guest speakers, Sheriff Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley DBE and Past Master Draper, David Chalk. This annual event is an important one, both for the EASI community we support, and our Company, by providing the perfect platform to highlight the vital work being carried out by the early stage social innovators we support as well as tangibly demonstrating our support of them. Our next EASI Showcase is being held on the evening of 5th February 2025 at Drapers Hall and you are all welcome, please put the date in your diaries.

In the meantime, each of our EASI24 cohort will continue to be supported by EASI Mentors and Experts, with the opportunity to participate in a series of Masterclasses. The first EASI Masterclass on funding by 'insider expert' Freeman Stephen Page was hosted by the Small Business Research & Enterprise Centre (SBREC); a really informative and well received session, and an opportunity to involve the City of London Corporation in EASI firsthand. Our second EASI Masterclass, on presentation skills, by Freeman Amy Hopper is scheduled for October.

A very big thank you to everyone that is involved in and supports EASI, my word limit precludes me from naming you all, but you know who you are and EASI wouldn't be the success that it is without you.

With a particular mention to four freemen, Matthew Hayes-Champions PLC, Tony Matharu-Integrity international and Blue Orchid Hospitality, Patrick Smith and Nick Stretton- Tribe Advisory; all of whom have supported EASI since the start, raising vital funds and gifting significant and important services to the EASI programme. We are delighted to recognise their contribution to EASI by naming them our EASI24 Champions.

Finally, a warm welcome to four new members of our EASI Team; Hani Armstrong -Fundraising Lead, John Burton - Strategy Group, Pablo Lloyd -Mentor Lead and Chris Simmance-Comms Lead. As EASI grows, so does the importance of a strong team to take it forward, with these additions we are in good hands!

**Judy Hadden**



We have an ever-growing tradition of taking part in this annual race hosted by our friends at the Worshipful Company of Poulters. However, perhaps as a sign of the changing climate, two of the last three years have seen it rained off! This year included, with Guildhall yard marble flagstones slick with rainwater. Rather than re-enacting Bambi on ice, the assembled mass of brightly gowned Masters and even more colourfully dressed people in fancy dress were invited to relocate to the infinitely drier Crypt. A 6' Gherkin, a giant styrofoam coffee cup and someone fully garbed as Elizabeth the First were spotted amongst the melee.

A duel by frying pan then ensued with the number of tosses in a minute being counted. Far be it from me to question the fairness of the event, but having been given a cast iron pan, I was surprised when what I thought was a respectable score was massively overtaken by someone who I believe had a pan made of the finest titanium. It had the weight of a feather! Obviously, it is all about the taking part and not the winning... a hard thing for an Entrepreneur to accept.

The Worshipful Company of Poulters' Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Race is a charity event which supports the Poulters' charities and the Lord Mayor's Appeal. I was delighted to support this year's event despite the wet weather, and even more delighted that a raffle to win a guest lunch ticket had swiftly raised a sum of money for the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust, too. It was lovely to have Freeman Khalid Talukder join me.

According to tradition, in 1445 a woman of Olney (a town in Buckinghamshire) heard the shriving bell (the call to confession) while she was making pancakes and ran to the church in her apron, still clutching her frying pan. This is said to be the origin of Pancake Racing.





# Entrepreneurs Tee Off for Charity: The 6th Tribe Annual Charity Golf Day



Picture this: a crisp, fresh September morning at the beautiful Addington Golf Course, where green fairways lye with the backdrop of our formidable City skyline. The occasion? The Tribe's annual golf competition a highly anticipated event on the entrepreneurial calendar. But this wasn't just any round of golf; it was an opportunity to swing, drive, and putt for a cause that hits close to home: raising vital funds for EASI, a charity supporting early-stage startups.

On this Thursday, the entrepreneurial spirit was on full display, led by team captain Chiles Cartwright, flanked by seasoned players Brian Marcel and Adam Morallee, and joined by guest player Ben Rigg. Together, they were a formidable crew—if not for their golf shots, then certainly for their enthusiasm. As they took on the newly revamped Addington course, one thing was clear: they were here to win for EASI, if not trophies.

While they didn't clinch the top spot on the leaderboard, the camaraderie, fellowship, and spirited play more than made up for it. Golf may have been the sport of the day, but charity was the true winner.

## Golf Meets Giving: The Now Infamous EASI Charity Auction

What made this event stand out wasn't just the highly challenging course or the competitive play—it was the incredible sense of purpose behind the day. Organised by Tribe Advisory, the day was designed to be more than just a sporting challenge; thanks to Tribe Advisory's co-founders, Nick Stretton and Patrick Smith's generosity it was a platform to support EASI, a charity championed by past master Judy Hadden. EASI provides resources for early-stage startups, helping entrepreneurs turn dreams into thriving businesses. And what better way to rally support than through a lively day on the course and in the auction room?

The competition was fierce. Both Brian and Adam turned in admirable scores of 35 and 33 points, though the top individual player soared to an impressive 42 points. And whilst not in the Entrepreneurs team Tribe founders and fellow Liverymen Nick and Patrick ranked 5th and 6th respectively out of a field of 90. As a team, the entrepreneurs finished mid-table with a solid 80 points - a little shy of the winning team's stellar 95. While the leaderboard wasn't theirs, the day was far from over.

## Beyond the Fairways: A Charity Auction to Remember

As the sun began to set and golfers swapped stories over dinner, the atmosphere buzzed with anticipation for the next big event: the charity auction. And this was no ordinary auction - this was a masterclass in generosity, led by the inimitable David Selves. A seasoned auctioneer and fellow entrepreneur, David worked the room like a maestro, turning enthusiasm into action as attendees eagerly bid on an array of spectacular items, all donated by generous entrepreneurs.

Thanks to David's expert charm and generosity as a volunteer, he managed to work the room extracting blood out of stones with the auction raising a staggering £7,621 which Nick and Patrick generously topped up to grand total of £8,000. Every penny will go directly to supporting EASI's ongoing efforts to nurture the next wave of entrepreneurial talent. It wasn't just an auction - it was a celebration of support for early-stage enterprise.

## A Toast to Tribe Advisory: Champions of the Cause

Behind the scenes of this remarkable day stood Nick Stretton and Patrick Smith of Tribe Advisory, whose passion for EASI and commitment to making this event a success cannot be overstated. Their meticulous planning and ongoing support made the day not just an unforgettable experience for participants, but also a resounding success for our charity.

This is the 3rd consecutive Year Tribe Advisory have generously named EASI as the Charity for the day, Tribe Advisory are risk and insurance experts who create and manage tailored insurance programmes and group schemes by curating coverage from existing insurers or designing unique insurance, from scratch on behalf of their clients. to learn more about Tribe visit their website: <https://www.tribe-advisory.com>

## Want to Get Involved?

Whether you're an experienced golfer or a newbie with a love for the game, the Entrepreneurs Golf Society welcomes all skill levels. For more information, reach out to Chiles Cartwright. And if you'd like to support the wonderful work of EASI, don't hesitate to contact past master Judy Hadden. Together, we can continue to drive change both on and off the course.

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# The Lord Mayor's Show 2024



**A** Triumph of Tradition and Community. On 9 November, London awakened to a crisp, radiant morning, hosting the annual Lord Mayor's Show—a glorious celebration of history, community, and festivity. Renowned as one of the world's oldest civic processions, the Lord Mayor's Show masterfully intertwines centuries-old tradition with contemporary flourishes, creating a distinctly spectacle that unites people across backgrounds.

This year's parade held special significance for both The Company of Entrepreneurs and Mooboo Group (Mooboo Bubble Tea and Dāku Coffee). Not only did we contribute to a pageant celebrating London's enduring heritage and resilience, but this year's event also commemorated the installation of Alderman Alastair King DL, the Senior Warden of the Company, as the 696th Lord Mayor of London. Our presence in this year's show was both a tribute to this tradition and a show of support for Alastair.

Our CEO and Founder, Eric Khaw, one of the Freeman Entrepreneurs of The Company of Entrepreneurs, led our participation in this historic event. We were honoured to support the Company in a day rich with unforgettable moments. It was a unique occasion for us to celebrate with all of London and a wonderful opportunity to present our brands and beverages to Londoners, tourists, and the world through the parade and the BBC One broadcast.

## A Morning of Unity and Reflection

This year's show featured 141 official floats, each conveying its own message. From jugglers and stilt-walkers to drummers and dancing pandas, the streets sprang to life, reflecting the vibrancy, diversity, and inclusivity that make London extraordinary.

Marching amid such a vivid array of participants, we felt the collective spirit of unity, innovation, and creative energy that define our city.

We embarked from London Wall, winding through historic streets and passing iconic landmarks like the Guildhall, Mansion House, St Paul's Cathedral, and the Royal Courts of Justice. Each turn seemed to echo the stories of London's rich past—a perfect backdrop for where tradition meets modernity.

## Dāku Coffee and Mooboo Bubble Tea: Celebrating Craft and Community

The Company of Entrepreneurs' float embodied the spirit of entrepreneurship and community, celebrating businesses like ours that contribute vibrantly to the City.

Mooboo Bubble Tea, with over 100 shops across the UK—90% of which are franchises—bridges Eastern and Western beverage cultures and creates opportunities for entrepreneurs. For the past 12 years, we have empowered countless families, professionals, women, and graduates to become entrepreneurs as our franchise partners. We support them in learning to manage their businesses, achieving financial independence, and building a legacy. Our franchisees not only find success in their own lives but also create jobs and opportunities for their staff and communities.

Our new brand, Dāku Coffee, launched this year, is dedicated to bringing the Japanese-inspired artistry of specialty coffee to the UK. With the ambition of expanding Dāku through the franchise model, we look forward to nurturing future entrepreneurs and replicating Mooboo's success.

Aligned with the mission of the Lord Mayor and the Company of Entrepreneurs, Mooboo Group is dedicated to contributing to our community. Our brand Dāku Coffee aims to create more than just a cup of coffee. Since opening, the Khaw Gallery at Dāku Kensington has hosted three exhibitions, providing space for talented local artists and raising funds for community charities.

The Khaw Gallery serves as a platform where art, community, and philanthropy intersect. In showcasing diverse artwork, from emerging visual artists to photographers, the gallery has become a cultural space that fosters mutual support among residents, artists and charity.

## A Continued Commitment to Community

The Lord Mayor's Show 2024 concluded beautifully, yet it marks a beginning—a renewed opportunity for the new Lord Mayor, civil servants, livery companies, businesses, Londoners, the Company of Entrepreneurs, and Mooboo Group to join forces and build a brighter, more inclusive community. Our experience in the show has reaffirmed our dedication to this cause.

As we look to the future, Mooboo Group remains committed to making a positive impact on the community, our people, and our city. With every cup of bubble tea and every coffee poured, we aim to leave a lasting impression, not just as a business, but as a contributor to London's cultural and economic landscape.





## The 2024 Sheep Drive

The tradition of Freemen of the City of London having the historic right to drive their sheep over the Thames without paying a toll began in the 1100s. The City of London and the Worshipful Company of Woolmen restored this tradition just over a decade ago, raising funds for The Woolmen's Charity and for the Lord Mayor's Charity. While the original trading route would have traversed London Bridge, it being the only bridge across the Thames until 1750, this year over 1,000 Freemen drove sheep over Southwark Bridge.

This how the day panned out for the Entrepreneurs, from my point of view at least.

I wake early, realising today's the day we actually get to drive sheep across the Thames! I hadn't slept much, the idea of counting sheep being exciting rather than soporific for once. First it was lunch with the Master and Consort Jo, herself a Woolman, fellow entrepreneurs and some of our camera-holding supporters at The Little Ship Club. Then it was onto the Livery Fair on Queen Street, facing the bridge. Here we wandered among specialist wool companies – I was tempted by a beautiful soft wool blanket; saw sheep being sheared – I was amazed and wondered if I could try it on my border terrier at home as he needs a haircut, but on reflection thought maybe not; had my photograph taken with Dr Glynis Wright and Bo Peep – huge smiles from them both, and then more photos with the Master Entrepreneur, Master Woolman and Master Carman alongside some rare breed sheep. I did notice, while I was energised by the crowds and dazzled by the richly decorated gowns of the Masters and Court Officials on this huge day of Livery Fellowship, the sheep remained calm throughout, seemingly unperturbed by all the noise and colour surrounding them and by being featured in endless selfies. We moved onto watch a demonstration of wood turning which was incredible craftsmanship, and to try some sheep's cheese – which my son and I pronounced delicious. There were lamb burgers too – not my thing at all, but the stalls selling them had long queues, so they were popular and proved there really was something for everyone. It was a Livery Fair to remember and then it came to crossing the Thames with the sheep...



The first Drive of the day was in the morning and led by the 695th Lord Mayor of the City of London, Michael Mainelli, and the Master of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, Emmanuel 'Manny' Cohen. They were joined by celebrated actor Damian Lewis who got into the swing of things by wearing a stylish woollen coat, carrying a sheep's crook and leading the sheep with his customary aplomb. We Entrepreneurs had to wait until the afternoon, and were divided into two cohorts, setting off eight minutes apart. I was with Christine Nicolson, Glynis Wright, Howard Freeman, Simon West along with Jasmin Wasu, Priya and Patrick Boyle. The other group included Andrew Fishwick, Hani Armstrong, Josh Thomas, Oluwasheyi 'Sheyi' Lisk-Carew, and Trevor Worth.

Our cohort were joined by the Master Entrepreneur and Master Carman, a member of The Guild of Young Freemen said Go – and we were off! It all went very smoothly, the sun shone, St Paul's sparkled and the beautiful sheep were very well behaved. The flock was beckoned on by young volunteers in front and driven by us from behind – we worked as a unit and passed the challenge of getting our sheep safely across one third of the bridge. I absolutely loved every minute of it. Now where's that application for One Man and His Dog 2025...

## The Livery Experience



Throughout his year of office, the Lord Mayor, Alderman Michael Mainelli, has promoted the "Livery Experience" scheme (the brainchild of Past Master Girdler, Sir Thomas Crawley-Boevey). Through this scheme, Livery Companies are encouraged to support the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs in their hosting of foreign delegations at Livery events and dinners. This is a fantastic way to demonstrate the City's heritage and fellowship to senior international visitors, making them feel welcome and able to experience what the City of London has to offer. It also helps to support Mansion House and spread the ever-increasing diplomatic load of the Civic Team.

The Company of Entrepreneurs is proud to support this scheme by offering a small number of places at its formal events to guests nominated by Mansion House and has so far hosted three visitors under this scheme. The Livery Experience guest at the Autumn Jazz Dinner was Sarah Priesack, a Senior Investment Adviser at the British Embassy UAE.

Ms Priesack works in trade and investment for the British Embassy in the United Arab Emirates and has played a key role in assisting the Lord Mayor with his visits to the UAE. Visiting the UK in September 2024, Ms Priesack attended as a guest of the Company of Entrepreneurs at the suggestion of Mansion House to experience a City of London Livery Company's great hospitality.

Expressing her gratitude for the opportunity, and for the companionship of Sheriff Elect Alderman Gregory Jones KC (who joins the Civic Team in just a week's time), Sarah reflected on a most wonderful welcome and her appreciation for the special attention and insights to the Livery world she had been given.

As part of this truly unique event, Sarah was also able to meet Freeman Entrepreneurs and guests who are engaging with the UAE and described her happiness at being able to connect them to the right stakeholders in the relevant markets. Sarah was especially pleased to discuss with the Secretary to the Mansion House Scholarship Scheme, Mr Nicholas Westgarth, ways of strengthening links in education between the City of London and Abu Dhabi.

The Livery Experience is a key component of the City of London's global diplomatic mission. The Company of Entrepreneurs is committed to supporting the scheme with networks and opportunities that promote the City of London's growth business sector.

NOTES: The Company of Entrepreneurs supports the Lord Mayor and the Livery Experience Scheme by covering the cost of attendance at its Livery events for guests nominated by Mansion House and the City of London's Civic Team. Special care is taken to ensure guests are hosted by Freeman and guests with relevant experience. Although places cannot be overtly sponsored, Freeman Entrepreneurs are encouraged to contribute financially towards the Company's support for the Livery Experience Scheme. For more information, please talk to the Clerk.





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## *Inter Livery Rifle Shoot 2024: A Day of Precision and Camaraderie*

The annual Inter Livery Rifle Shoot, held at the historic Bisley ranges, brought together 16 teams from various Livery Companies for a day of competitive shooting and fellowship. Among the standout performers was Rakhitha, who set the bar high early in the day by achieving the top score on the Bell Ringing stand, impressively kicking off the event for the Company of Entrepreneurs.

### Highlights of the Day

- Bell Ringing Stand: Rakhitha's remarkable performance on the Bell Ringing stand, our first shoot of the day, earned him the best score of the event. Considering we'd just started off, and the score stood unmatched all day was a real highlight.
- 1,000 Yard Rifle Shoot: Josh's calm and composed approach at the 1,000 yard competition rifle shoot led to an impressive score, showcasing his proficiency in the sport. I think he was close to finding inner-peace on this one!
- Moving Target Stand: Drawing from my experience in pheasant and game shooting, I managed to perform well at the moving target stand, navigating the dynamic challenge with ease. I did 'ok' at the other stands, mostly blaming the metal in my shoulder and wind for my scores :-)

### Event Organisation and Atmosphere

The day was meticulously organised by the Bakers' Company and the RAF Target Rifle Club. Participants enjoyed a full schedule, including breakfast, lunch, tea, and an evening at the free bar, all while fostering a spirit of camaraderie and inclusivity. The warm and welcoming environment was a testament to the effort put in by the organisers to ensure a memorable experience for all.

### Overall Performance and Reflection

Although our team did not clinch the top prize, we ranked respectably well overall. The event was less about winning and more about the shared experiences, the joy of the sport, and supporting RAF charities, including those benefiting disadvantaged Air Cadets.

The Inter Livery Rifle Shoot at Bisley was a day filled with precision, sportsmanship, and community spirit. It was a privilege to represent the Company of Entrepreneurs and engage with fellow liverymen in such a prestigious setting. The event not only highlighted our shooting skills but also strengthened the bonds within our community, making it a day to remember.

**Chris Simmance**





# Election Court Banquet



On Wednesday, July 10th, 2024, the historic Tallow Chandlers' Hall was the splendid venue for the Company of Entrepreneurs' Election Court Banquet. This distinguished event, graced by Freemen and honoured guests, began with a reception hosted by the Master Entrepreneur, Mr. Mark Huxley. The Courtyard was filled with lively conversation and the celebration of achievements from across the Company's initiatives, setting a warm and engaging tone.

The Election Court Banquet is one of two key annual celebrations for the Company, marking the anniversary of the 2014 approval to form a Guild of Entrepreneurs. During this summer banquet, the Company elects a new Master and Wardens for the upcoming year, with the 2024-25 leadership announced during the evening's dinner. Mr. Huxley wished his successors the best as they prepare to assume their roles in November.

A key part of the evening was the celebration of the Company's inter-Livery relationships, as leaders from various Livery Companies were warmly welcomed, including representatives from the Carpenters, Founders, Blacksmiths, and Security Professionals, among others. The Junior Warden expressed deep appreciation for their ongoing support and collaboration.

Matt Downie MBE, Chief Executive of Crisis, was the principal guest and speaker. He shared insights into his charity's work in helping people experiencing homelessness in the UK and highlighted the role of entrepreneurship in breaking the cycle of homelessness. His passion for using business education and financial literacy to improve lives resonated strongly with the audience. The Company of Entrepreneurs' Outreach team has been supporting Crisis through its Venture Studio initiative, and the evening provided a broader understanding of the importance of this collaboration.

The evening was enriched by music from classical guitarist Will Scott, enhancing the warm atmosphere of celebration, recognition, and fellowship. As the event drew to a close, the Company of Entrepreneurs reaffirmed its commitment to values of integrity, excellence, and innovation, honouring its heritage while looking forward to new leadership and continued success.



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# The Autumn Jazz Dinner 2024



The dinner following the Company of Entrepreneurs' September Court is noted for its relaxed (nay, rakish) dress code, conviviality, and music. An evening of introspection and optimism, the event is the final formal event hosted by the Master Entrepreneur during his or her year of office, looking back on the successes with pride, and ahead with anticipation.

This year's dinner was held in the beautiful surroundings of Brewers' Hall in the heart of the City of London, by kind permission of the Master Brewer, on Thursday 19th September. The Master Entrepreneur, swathed in royal blue robes over his dinner jacket, welcomed Freemen and special guests to this most stylish of events. Brimming glasses of chilled Prosecco were very welcome on this sultry evening, and the sound of cheerful conversation mingled with mellow jazz music, courtesy of students from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

Under the gentle direction of the Beadle (professional percussionist Stephen "Hendo" Henderson), the diners took their places in the burnished Livery Hall. The Chaplain, the Reverend Sophia Acland led grace before dinner – encouraging thanks for the autumnal abundance of food, and for the gifts of both musical and entrepreneurial talent. Freemen and guests were treated to delectable food and generous wines, and friendships were kindled and renewed throughout the evening. With such a splendid array of musicians at his disposal, Hendo gavelled crisply for attention and, with the indefatigable Paul Knappett on piano, led the assembly (which included the Company's newest Freeman, Mr James Sinclair) in the singing of grace after dinner. Thoroughly warmed-up, the audience directed its attention to the first of the evening's highlights, a beautiful performance by John Alcock (guitar) and Alex Allen (saxophone). Representing some of Guildhall School's Jazz Department's most promising young performers, their melancholic and haunting rendition of Body and Soul (Jonny Green) and was mesmerising, and followed by a lively interpretation of Tea for Two (Vincent Youmans) that had the audience erupt in rapturous applause!

The Master wished them well, and to further applause, spoke to his many guests in welcome. In a speech peppered with self-deprecation and charm, the Master, Mr Mark Huxley, looked back on the enormous successes and significant good of the Company's tenth year. He highlighted the achievements of the Company in its wide diversity of events, activities, and engagement, and praised his Court, staff, Consort, and his successor for their support as an ambassador for entrepreneurship and fellowship in the City of London. He toasted his guests, among them the Master Currier, the Master Constructor, and Ms Sarah Priesack, visiting as one of Mansion House's Livery Experience nominees. In particular he bade hearty and bid a warm welcome to his guest of honour – Sheriff Elect, Alderman Greg Jones KC. Alderman Jones is a huge supporter of enterprise and growth business underpinned by his commitment to the Rule of Law. More especially, Alderman Jones is a friend and supporter of the Company of Entrepreneurs, and it was with enormous warmth that Freemen and guests welcomed his speech in reply.

Underscoring his commitment, as Sheriff, to support Alderman Alastair King in his bid to become the City's 696th Lord Mayor, Alderman Jones spoke with passion about promoting the link between legal services and business. A secure and prosperous City economy drives UK growth and wealth, and the City's billion-pound legal sector is the secure foundation on which business is built. He and his fellow Sheriff Elect, David Chalk, would be doing everything in their power to make the so-called "City side" of the Old Bailey a forum for promoting the relationship of legal services the rule of law as a foundation for City commerce.

Proposing a toast to the Company of Entrepreneurs (may it flourish and branch forever and ever), Alderman Jones was applauded uproariously. A final farewell drink ensued amidst lively chatter, reluctant farewells, and the unmistakable glow of a job well done. The Autumn Jazz Dinner is cemented as one of the most enjoyable events of a busy annual calendar, and anticipation is sky-high for 2025's event!



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