

# Dare. Create. Succeed.

The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs' Magazine

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a day of December in the third year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Charles the Third a Petition  
of Entrepreneurs was read in the Magistracy and Livery Sub-Committee of the Court of Aldermen  
an and Sheriff PRAYING that the Lord Mayor and Aldermen might constitute their Company a  
don in such manner as to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen might seem fitting AND THAT the said  
the counsel of certain of its Officers the objects, constitution, and ordinances of the said Company and  
ple of the said Company did approve a constitution and ordinances for the future regulation of their  
conformity with the Law and Custom of the City of London. Which constitution & ordinances were con-  
y the Worshipful the Committee of the Whole Court of Aldermen for General Purposes on the fourth day  
e Reign of our said Sovereign Lord King Charles the Third the said Committee on the same day of February  
ord Mayor and Aldermen and did recommend that the Prayer of the Petition be complied with on condition  
y should be

## The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs

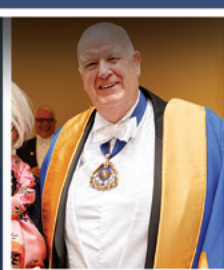
should not exceed 250 THAT the Fine for admission to the Livery should be not less than 400 pounds Sterling  
be admitted to the Livery unless he or she first produce the copy of his or her Freedom of the City of London.  
liked and approved by the said Court of Mayor and Aldermen.  
y and Aldermen on the said fourth day of February in the said year did GRANT CONFIRM & RATIFY  
mpany of Entrepreneurs that they be a Livery Company of the City of London and that they be subject to  
l ordinances and did ORDER that the constitution and ordinances of the said Company be enrolled among  
ayor and Aldermen and that the Grant of Livery be embodied in Letters Patent under the Mayoralty Seal

Office of Mayoralty of the City aforesaid on the fourteenth day  
ird year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King Charles the Third

*Thoms*  
*C. Jack* Clerk of the Seal



TENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION





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## Foreword

By Alderman Alastair King DL, The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of the City of London

**It is a great pleasure to write this foreword for Dare Create Succeed at such a significant moment in the history of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs, and indeed in my own year as Lord Mayor. This year's Mayoral theme – Growth Unleashed – is about harnessing the energy, creativity and ambition that drive our City's success, and ensuring that these qualities are matched with the skills, networks and confidence to translate ideas into action. Nowhere is that more powerfully expressed than in the entrepreneurial spirit.**

Entrepreneurship is the lifeblood of the City of London. Our great City is rightly renowned as a global hub for financial and professional services – but these sectors are not static institutions; they are vibrant, evolving communities constantly shaped by those with the imagination to see opportunities and the courage to pursue them. Entrepreneurs bring new energy, new markets, and new ways of doing business. They create jobs, drive innovation, and inspire the next generation to aim higher. In short, they embody the very growth we seek to unleash.

The City of London's strength has always rested on its ability to connect people, ideas, and capital – a meeting place where ambition meets opportunity. From medieval merchants to fintech pioneers, from global insurers to cutting-edge start-ups, it is the spirit of enterprise that has underpinned our prosperity for centuries. Today, as we adapt to rapid technological change, shifting global markets, and the pressing need for sustainable growth, that same spirit is more important than ever. This year we have used the convening power of the City to make sure our start-up firms can access more of the finance and investment which they need to grow – including bringing together the UK's biggest pension funds to sign the Mansion House Accord, a commitment to invest more of their money in UK assets, providing an important new source of funding.

It is therefore a matter of real pride that, during my year of office, the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs has achieved Livery status. This milestone marks the culmination of years of vision, hard work, and dedication by many within the Company, and it secures our place among the ancient and honourable fellowship of the Livery. It is also a mark of recognition for the vital contribution that entrepreneurs make to the City and to society more widely – through enterprise, philanthropy, and service. I warmly congratulate the Master, Wardens, Court, and all members on this richly deserved achievement.

For me personally, it is a double honour to be both your Lord Mayor and to have been elected to serve as your Master from this November. I am deeply conscious of the trust that you have placed in me, and I accept the Mastership with humility

and with a determination to serve the Company faithfully. The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs is young by Livery standards, but it is distinguished already by its energy, its inclusivity, and its commitment to education and outreach. I look forward to building on these strengths in the year ahead.

As a Livery Company, our responsibilities and opportunities both increase.

to broaden our educational reach, and to expand our influence within the City and beyond. We can also use our platform to champion the values that matter most to us: creativity, ambition, and resilience. In doing so, we will not only serve our members but also contribute to the wider life of the City, supporting the conditions in which entrepreneurship can truly flourish.

Our year ahead will be busy, purposeful, and, I hope, joyful. One of the first opportunities to come together will be the Installation Dinner at Painters' Hall on 24th November, where I hope as many of you as possible will join me to celebrate the beginning of a new Company year – and our first as a fully-fledged Livery Company. It will be an evening to reflect on how far we have come, to look forward to what we can achieve together, and, above all, to enjoy the fellowship that is at the heart of Livery life.

The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs has a special role to play in the City's future. We are here not just to celebrate success, but to foster it; not just to network among ourselves, but to reach outward – to schools, to start-ups, to communities – and to share the entrepreneurial spark. That is how we will keep the City of London a place where growth is not only possible but inevitable.

Let us therefore seize the moment in this city of entrepreneurs. Let us make the most of our new Livery status, of the networks and goodwill we have built, and of the extraordinary talents within our ranks. Let us work together to ensure that growth, in every sense of the word, is truly unleashed.

I look forward to serving you as Master, as much as I have in representing you as Lord Mayor, and to working alongside you in the service of the City, of enterprise, and of the ideals we share. Thank you all for your support.





## Master's Welcome

*A Year of Three Halves by James Talbot*

**W**elcome to what I can only describe as a year of three halves. It is a year so full of milestones that one could fill several volumes, let alone a single magazine. Most Companies are fortunate to have one landmark moment in a year – we have had three. It has been the greatest privilege to serve as Master during such an extraordinary period in our Company's history.

First, we celebrated our **tenth anniversary**. It feels like only yesterday that our Founder, Dan Doherty, and our Foundation Master, Sir Paul Judge, were laying the groundwork. We would not be here today without their foresight and dedication. I'm certain they've been cheering us on from above. It's also a special double anniversary for our Clerk, who has been with us since February 2015. Our anniversary was a time to reflect on how far we've come and to look ahead to the next decade of success.

Second, we were honoured that one of our own, **Alderman Alastair King**, became Lord Mayor. Supporting him has brought some opportunities. The first was our inaugural float in the Lord Mayor's Show, led by Immediate Past Master Mark Huxley. Others include signing the Armed Forces Covenant, hosting the Lady Mayoress at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham, and now collaborating on the Lord Mayor's Growth Unleashed theme through the Mansion House Scale-Up Capital events.

The third and perhaps most historic achievement is our **promotion to full Livery**. After ten years of hard work, we were recommended by the Magistracy & Livery Subcommittee in December last year. The Court of Aldermen granted us Livery status on 4th February. This was a goal we had been striving for since our founding. It is a huge testament to the hard work of so many, Particularly our Clerk, Duncan Simms, Immediate Past Master Mark Huxley and Honorary Treasurer and Past Master Gary Dixon, who were instrumental in the application process. I will never forget the mix of relief and joy as we got the news. We have since received our Letters Patent, our governing document, part of our largest event ever at Mansion House. Two hundred and fifty people at our Summer Banquet, it was a fabulous way to celebrate this goal! We are now in a prime position to build on our success, and we've already begun reviewing our strategy for the next decade.

This year's successes are a direct result of your support and willingness to volunteer. Whether you've served on a committee, helped organise events, or stepped up in so many other ways, your contributions have been outstanding. Your dedication is what drives this Company forward.

I hope this magazine reminds you of the good times, inspires you to volunteer. I hope also that it serves as an invitation to new members who may wish to join us at this exciting moment in our journey.

As we set sail into our first year as a Livery, we do so with confidence, purpose, and the knowledge that the more we give to this Company, the more it gives back to us.

Dare, Create, Succeed  
James Talbot  
Master Entrepreneur 2024-25 & First Livery Master 2025



The Master Entrepreneur, Mr James Talbot, and his Consort, Mrs Helen Potts © Jonathan Cherry



# An Extract from the Master's Diary

*A Week that Defined Our Year by James Talbot*

**W**hen invited to write "An Extract from the Master's Diary", one week immediately sprang to mind. It was the week when, on Tuesday 4 February, the Court of Aldermen granted us Livery. It has been the focus of ten years' work and perfectly captured the variety, pace, and privilege of serving as Master.

## Saturday-Sunday: Preparing for the Master's Weekend

Helen, my Consort, and I spent the weekend in Bristol finalising plans for the Master's Weekend Away. We have been organising this for almost a year. We returned to London excited (and a little nervous). Only the Clerk, the Immediate Past Master (IPM) and the Honorary Treasurer knew the Court's decision in advance. Although the Magistracy & Livery Sub-Committee had recommended our application back in December, nothing was guaranteed.

## Monday 3 February: Conversations and Learning

Three Livery-related engagements filled the day. First, an insightful meeting with the Master of the Merchant Taylors, in his second term. We explored shared challenges and the advantages of being a young Company. A scheduled meeting with a senior member had to be cancelled due to illness. We reshuffled the responsibilities and made sure the Almoner was aware of the situation.

The evening brought the Founders' annual Whitechapel Lecture, "Transforming the Materials Agenda for a Sustainable Planet". It was delivered online by the very knowledgeable Professor Mark Jolly. With the important day ahead, I had an early night.

## Tuesday 4 February: Livery Promotion

It started with an early call with PM Judy Hadden about the following day's EASI Showcase. I was bursting to share what was about to happen!

By mid-morning, every detail for the announcement was ready and double-checked. There was a lot including an updated logo, press release, website refresh, and a short video. Our Comms Committee were in fine form.

At 12:30 the IPM, Clerk, Junior and Middle Wardens and myself were herded into the Guildhall's Public Gallery. We had to wait until Item 8 and then it was official. We were granted Livery. A cheer, photographs - including one with the Senior Warden (Lord Mayor). There were congratulations all round. Lunch in the Private Members' Dining Room followed, hosted by Adèle Thorpe, our Foundation Clerk. Honorary Freeman (and late Lord Mayor) Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli, joined us. The messages of congratulations flowed all afternoon.

## Wednesday 5 February: Showcasing Entrepreneurial Spirit

The morning began with my weekly planning call with the Clerk. It was short, as I had to dash to Alton for Treloar's annual visit. This inspirational charity educates and supports young people with physical disabilities. It is one of the biggest charitable days bringing together most of the Masters from across the Livery.

By mid-afternoon, I was back in London for the EASI Showcase at Drapers' Hall. The team including Judy Hadden, John Burton, and the Clerk, delivered an exceptional event for 150 City and Livery guests. The room buzzed with news of our Livery promotion. One wag remarking that this showcase was the bigger story of the week. It is certainly one of the reasons we can be so proud of what we do.

## Thursday 6 February: Planning the Future

Thursday began with an early meeting for the Raleigh Lecture planning committee. Later in the morning we had the Master & Wardens meeting to finalise the next Court agenda. The afternoon was spent at The Lord Mayor's Scale-Up Showcase at Mansion House, part of his Growth Unleashed theme. We look forward to supporting this next year with Alastair King as Master.

## Friday 7 February: A Quiet Ending

Thankfully, Friday was a quieter day. I spent it clearing emails (118 that week), catching up on City news, and reviewing the week's events. I was so looking forward to sharing it all with Helen over dinner. Appropriately, it was at the Gardeners' Mansion House Banquet and a lovely reminder that the fellowship that extends across Companies, traditions, and centuries.

Writing this now, it reminds me what I value most about the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs. It is the hard work you do, the shared purpose helping others and some deep friendships. Thank you.



Top Row - 2025 Raleigh Lecture © Zula Rabikowska  
Bottom Row © Tee Dobinson



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A Year of Three Halves has been an extraordinary chapter for the Company, full of milestones, momentum, and memories. This publication reflects that same energy, the people, the projects, and the purpose that defined our first year as a Livery Company. Each section follows the rhythm of the year.

Gold celebrates milestones and leadership. Red captures moments of ceremony, fellowship, and tradition. And blue records the forward steps we continue to make as Entrepreneurs in the City.

It's a story told by many voices but built on shared purpose, captured here as a record of achievement and an invitation to what comes next.

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## Trust Update

### *A Record Year for the Trust by Duncan Simms*



Member of the Trustee Board, Stephen Roach (left) and the Chief Executive (Duncan Simms, centre right), visit Dame Alice Owen's School

**I am pleased to report that 2025 has been a record year for the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust. Your generosity has enabled us to support more individuals and initiatives than ever before, reaffirming our commitment to education, enterprise, and opportunity.**

#### Business Education at the Core

As a business education charity, the Trust has focused on directly supporting schools. Three schools received grants this year, enabling meaningful enhancements to their business and economics provision.

At Dame Alice Owen's School in Potters Bar, our funding is bridging a gap in Business Studies and Economics. New textbooks and resources are now in use, and we were delighted to see their impact first-hand.

In Waltham Forest, Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College is using our grant to fund exam preparation, study materials, and support sessions. This is particularly important for students who face social or economic disadvantage.

At Prendergast School in Lewisham, the Trust is enabling pupils to take part in the Young Enterprise Company Programme. Our grant covers both entry fees and teaching materials, helping students bring their business ideas to life.

#### Extending Our Reach

This year, the Trust also partnered with Enterprise Skills Ltd, co-founded by Liverymen Entrepreneurs Paddy Willis and Chris Simmance. Typically offered to independent schools, their immersive business workshops are now reaching students in state education through cross-Livery partnerships.

#### Enterprise as a Pathway

In the community, the Trust has supported Ultra Education CIC, founded by Liveryman Entrepreneur Julian Hall. Ultra Education empowers young people from African, Caribbean, refugee, and migrant backgrounds. With our funding, children from low-income families joined the Spring Bootcamp and presented their ideas at a local market, gaining hands-on experience of entrepreneurship.

#### Support for Rehabilitation

The Trust continued its valued support of No Going Back (NGB), a programme helping prison leavers gain skills and find employment. Now in its fifth year, NGB has reached over 2,000 individuals. Our grant has helped expand the Catapult Programme, which supports self-employment as a means of rehabilitation. In 2024, over 400 people took part and 8 percent went on to start businesses.

#### Backing Underrepresented Founders

We have also renewed our partnership with Hatch Enterprise. This year's grant supported the Start-up Essentials series, offering early-stage founders skills training and access to mentors. Our members contribute directly to these sessions, sharing their expertise to help others grow.

#### Celebrating Innovation

The 2025 Entrepreneurs' Award in Social Innovation (EASI) was awarded to Carbon Cell, a business developing compostable foam made from biochar. Alongside the £10,000 prize, the business receives a year of mentoring and support. EASI also provided the framework for collaboration with the Needlemakers' Award, a welcome step towards future cross-Livery initiatives.

#### Looking Ahead

In 2025, over £20,000 was distributed to support these initiatives. The Trust has also welcomed new Trustees, including Liverymen Rakitha Dias and Lord Bilimoria CBE DL. Gary Dixon stepped down from the Board after three excellent years as Chair, succeeded by Mark Huxley.

Thanks to prudent investment, the Trust's endowment is positioned to support even more causes in 2026. Should you wish to discuss how to give or leave a legacy, I invite you to contact me or Liveryman Hani Armstrong at [hani@haniarmstrong.com](mailto:hani@haniarmstrong.com).



# Dates

## The Company Calendar for the Forthcoming Year

Installation Court & Dinner	<b>24/11/2025</b> Speaker	Painters' Hall Martin Gilbert Founder of Aberdeen Asset Management, now Chair of Revolut
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>10/12/2025</b>	Tower Suites
December Court & Carol Service	<b>11/12/2025</b>	Court Meeting SBREC, Carol Service St Lawrence Jewry, followed by reception at Temple Bar
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>14/01/2026</b>	Tower Suites
EASI Showcase	<b>19/01/2026</b>	Trampery Old Street
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>11/02/2026</b>	Tower Suites
February Court & Supper	<b>19/02/2026</b> Speaker	Cutlers' Hall Visting Master
Raleigh Lecture 2026	<b>06/03/26</b>	Drapers' Hall
Spring Lunch	<b>10/03/2026</b> Speaker	The Walbrook Club Dame Julia Hoggett - CEO London Stock Exchange
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>11/03/2026</b>	Tower Suites
Dinner to the Masters &c.	<b>19/03/2026</b>	Mansion House
United Guilds Service & Lunch	<b>20/03/2026</b>	Service St Paul's & Lunch at Carpenters' Hall
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>08/04/2026</b>	Tower Suites
Patrons' Lunch & Trustee Board Meeting	<b>09/04/2026</b>	With Mark Huxley (chair)
April Court [& Drinks Reception]	<b>16/04/2026</b> Speaker	Venue TBC Sir Nicholas Lyons
Masters' Weekend	<b>May - TBC</b>	Cambridge, including CJBS
Clergy Support Trust Festival	<b>12/05/2026</b>	St Paul's, dinner TBC
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>13/05/2026</b>	Tower Suites

# Dates

## The Company Calendar for the Forthcoming Year

Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>10/06/2026</b>	Tower Suites
Midsummer Common Hall & Lunch	<b>24/06/2026</b>	Guildhall, followed by Lunch at Founders' Hall n.b. Liverymen Entrepreneurs who were clothed 25th March 2024 can vote for the first time
Election Court	<b>25/06/2026</b>	Guildhall followed by drinks (Court only)
Election Court Banquet	<b>01/07/2026</b> Speaker	Tallow Chandlers' Hall Blondel Cluff CBE
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>08/07/2026</b>	Tower Suites
Summer BBQ	<b>12/08/2026</b>	Byward Kitchen (replaces Second Wednesday Drinks this month)
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>09/09/2026</b>	Tower Suites
September Court & Jazz Dinner	<b>17/09/2026</b> Speaker	Guildhall School of Music & Drama The Master Musician, Alun Hughes
Admission of Sheriffs	<b>28/09/2026</b>	Guildhall
Michaelmas Common Hall & Lunch	<b>29/09/2026</b>	Guildhall, followed by Lunch at Painters' Hall
St Ethelburga's Day	<b>11/10/2026</b>	All Hallows by the Tower
Feast of St Ethelburga	<b>14/10/2026</b>	All Hallows by the Tower
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>14/10/2026</b>	Tower Suites
Inter-Livery Crazy Golf & Cartwright Cup	<b>21/10/26</b>	
Opening of Garden of Remembrance	<b>02/11/2026</b>	St Paul's
Thanksgiving Service for the outgoing Lady Mayor	<b>02/11/2026</b>	St Stephen's Walbrook
Second Wednesday Drinks	<b>11/11/2026</b>	Tower Suites
Silent Ceremony	<b>13/11/2026</b>	Guildhall

See all bookable  
events here





# A Decade of Entrepreneurial Excellence

The 10th Anniversary Installation Dinner by James Talbot



**The New Master Entrepreneur - On 25 November 2024, the Company of Entrepreneurs celebrated its tenth anniversary at Ironmongers' Hall, exactly ten years and one day after the original Installation and Launch Event held at the same venue. The installation of James Talbot as the 11th Master Entrepreneur was not just a ceremonial occasion.**

It was a tribute to the vision of founder Dan Doherty. The room fell silent as the new Master rang the 'Dan Doherty Bell' in his memory. Dan understood that entrepreneurship needed both a voice and a place within the City's livery movement. Alongside Sir Paul Judge, our first Master, and Judith Donovan CBE, he laid the foundations for what we have built together. From 16 Founding Freemen, we have grown into a diverse and thriving Company of more than 200 professionals.

## Diversity in Leadership and Fellowship

The ceremony reflected our commitment to inclusive leadership. James Talbot was joined by Jat Wasu and Rita W. Bologna, installed as Wardens. Retiring Master Mark Huxley welcomed new Freemen Sasho Kamburov, Jonathan Newell, Keith Butten and Roy Swain. He also presented certificates of appreciation to retiring Court Assistants Simon Fordham, Avi Lasarow and Colin Spiller for their dedicated service.

## A Message for Our Times

The evening's principal guest, The Rt Hon. The Lord Fellowes DL, delivered a compelling and memorable address. He shared his own journey and declared to the room that entrepreneurs are the key to the country's recovery and to our shared future. His message resonated with everyone present. Entrepreneurs do more than build businesses. They build nations.

## Celebrating Progress and Looking Forward

The new Master outlined his vision for the coming year and introduced our first Almanac, featuring more than 40 events. Each guest received a personal copy. The evening also featured the debut of the Patrons' Goblets. These beautifully designed pieces were crafted by emerging silversmiths and inspired by the backgrounds of the donors. They represent both artistic achievement and the strength of our charitable foundation, which now exceeds £300,000 in assets and has awarded annual grants since 2018.

## The Energy of Achievement

The room was alive with purposeful conversation and celebration. Members from a wide range of industries and backgrounds came together, including seasoned veterans and first-time Freemen. There was a strong sense of community and achievement. The presence of Group Captain Delia Chadwick and Squadron Leader Neil Thomas MBE, representing our RAF affiliates, added further meaning and emphasised our growing partnerships in education and innovation.

## A Living Legacy

As we marked our first decade, the spirit of our founders was present in every detail. From the ringing of the bell to the forward-looking plans shared throughout the evening, the Company has fulfilled Dan Doherty's vision. This is a place where those who dare to create and succeed find fellowship and purpose. Entrepreneurship is not just surviving in the City of London. It is thriving. As Lord Mayor and Senior Warden Alastair King champions the theme of Growth Unleashed, we stand ready to support it in both word and deed. Our motto, Dare, Create, Succeed, has never been more relevant.

# Tower Suites Drinks

by Jon Spree

**In the middle of busy diaries and even busier inboxes, finding a spare evening for unhurried conversation can feel like wishful thinking. That is why completing another twelve-month round of our informal drinks at Tower Suites deserves a quiet celebration. Month after month our camaraderie has grown, and the year ahead promises even richer moments together.**

With the Tower of London just a short walk away, the lounge at Tower Suites by Blue Orchid has become a familiar meeting point for members of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs. You will not find a lectern or printed agenda in sight. Soft lighting, comfortable chairs and an easy flow of conversation create a space where stories come first, and titles come second.

The faces are delightfully mixed. One evening you might compare first-year hurdles with a start-up founder; the next you could learn about patient capital from an investor who has weathered several economic cycles. Stage, sector and job title soon fade once a conversation begins. What remains is a shared belief in innovation, integrity and positive impact, the values that shape our Livery Company and bind us to one another.

For newcomers, these drinks offer the gentlest of introductions to our culture. A relaxed glass in hand, a warm greeting and genuine curiosity about your work quickly replace any initial formality. For long-standing members, the gathering serves as a monthly checkpoint. It is a chance to renew acquaintances, exchange fresh insights and perhaps pass on a piece of hard-won advice.

Over the past year we have seen casual remarks turn into mentoring relationships, collaborative ventures and close friendships. More than once a chance comment beginning with "Have you considered?" has grown into an idea now taking root in classrooms, charities and high-growth firms alike. These moments remind us that enterprise relies not only on spreadsheets but on people who listen and respond with generosity.

Looking ahead, we are eager to begin the next cycle of twelve gatherings and many more beyond. Each month will keep the same welcoming atmosphere, yet we plan to add occasional themes, from short showcases of philanthropic projects to informal chats with members who have lessons to share. Attendance remains optional, the mood stays relaxed, and the possibilities for fresh connection continue to stretch as far as our collective imagination.

If you have not visited before, consider this a personal invitation. There is no need to register; simply turn up, bring your curiosity and let the conversations unfold. If you are already a regular, we look forward to raising a glass with you again and welcoming new faces to the circle.

Thank you for turning a simple idea, a monthly drink among friends, into a cornerstone of our community. Together we prove that when entrepreneurs meet in a spirit of openness and respect, good ideas follow naturally and the bonds of fellowship grow stronger every single month.





# Worshipful Company Status

What it Means to be a Livery Company by Chris Simmance

In February 2025, the Entrepreneurs' Company marked a defining moment in its history: the approval by the City of London's Court of Aldermen of its full Livery status. This formal recognition elevated this "Company without Livery" to become The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs, a distinction that brings with it both privilege and responsibility. But what does this change truly mean for the Company and for its members?

## Recognition and Responsibility

The path to becoming a Livery Company is rigorous. An aspirant Livery Company begins life as a Guild, progresses to a Company without Livery, and after demonstrating financial stability, active membership, charitable purpose and sound governance is granted full Livery status. In doing so, the City acknowledges the Company's maturity and readiness to contribute fully to civic life.

The newly acquired Livery status entitles the Company to its place in the order of precedence among the City's Livery Companies (112th for us), aligning it with centuries of tradition while celebrating modern enterprise. It may now formally style itself as "The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs" and participate completely in the Livery's civic, ceremonial and philanthropic life.

Recognising a Livery Company for entrepreneurship has been an ambition of successive Lord Mayors and the City of London Corporation. A place alongside 111 other trades, crafts and professions is an important platform from which to champion the unique professional and academic discipline of entrepreneurship.

The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs can now clothe Liverymen Entrepreneurs – individuals who have shown not just their success as entrepreneurs but also their commitment to supporting the unique philanthropic traditions of the City of London's Guilds & Livery Companies.

## A Civic Role in the City

Livery status is more than a ceremonial milestone, it confers real civic duty. Liverymen Entrepreneurs will shortly have the right to vote at Common Hall, the ancient electoral assembly that chooses the City of London's two Sheriffs in June and the Lord Mayor each September.

For the Entrepreneurs' Company, 2026 will mark its first year of enfranchisement as, to be eligible to vote, members must have been clothed with the Livery before the end of May the previous year.

41 Liverymen were clothed in March 2025 and so they will be able to cast their ballot as Liverymen Entrepreneurs at Common



Hall on 24 June 2026 ("Midsummer" to elect the Sheriffs) and again on 29 September ("Michaelmas" to elect a Lord Mayor).

These dates should now hold firm places in members' diaries. Voting at Common Hall is both a right and a civic contribution ensuring that the Company has a voice in the City's governance and traditions.

## A Personal Journey

For individual members, the journey towards becoming a Liveryman is marked by three key steps:

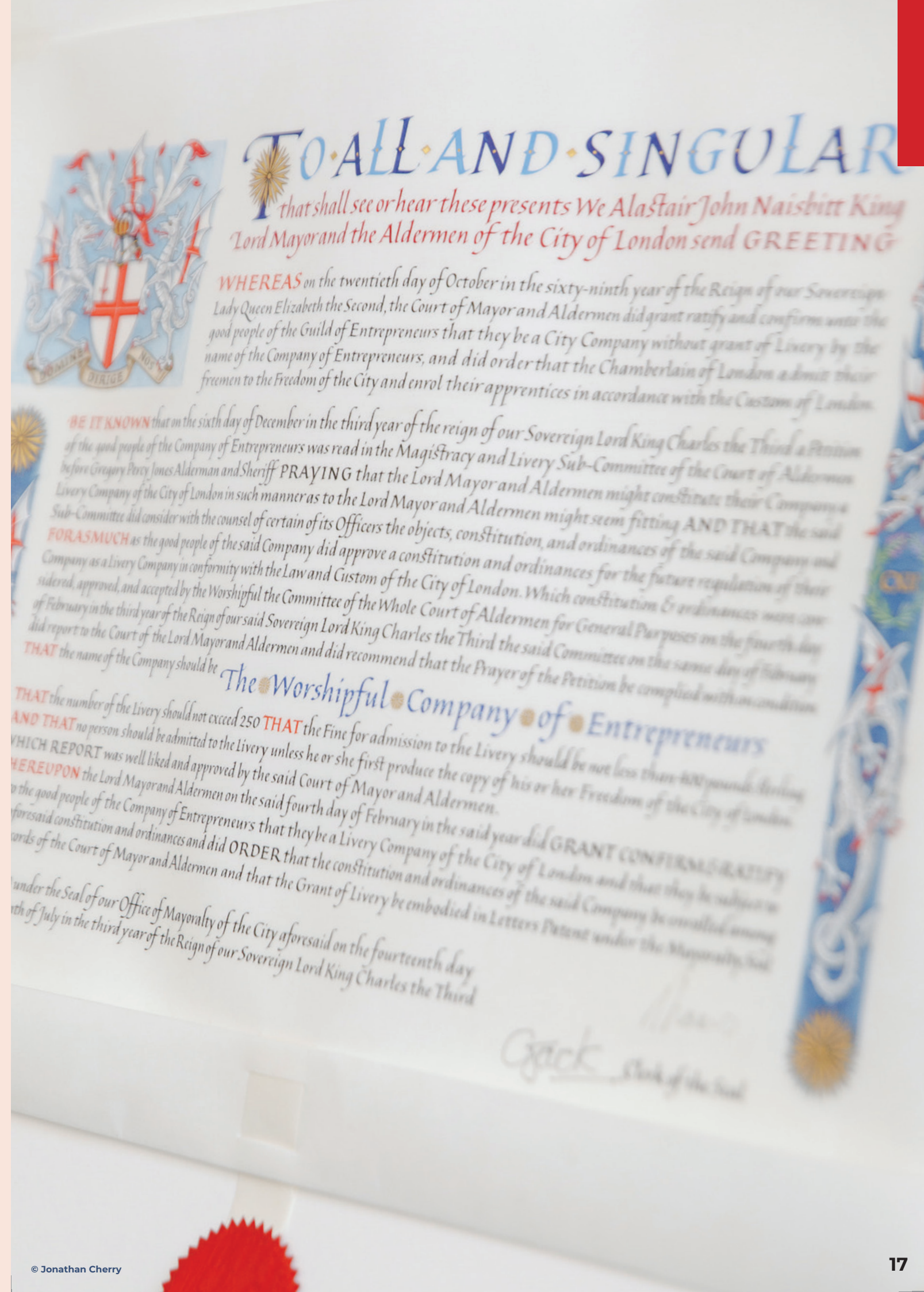
- Admission as a Freeman of the Company,
- Gaining the Freedom of the City of London
- Being clothed with the Livery.

Once clothed, Liverymen may don the Company's livery at formal occasions, vote in Common Hall and in time become eligible for leadership roles within the Company, such as service on the Court, which may lead to roles as Warden or Master. There is a one-time Livery Fine, in addition to the annual quarterage which supports the Company's ongoing activities.

## Tradition Meets Opportunity

Attaining Livery status is a hallmark of stability, of community and of civic readiness. For the Entrepreneurs, it underscores a long-standing commitment to supporting enterprise, philanthropy, education and innovation within the enduring traditions of the City of London.

It is, most of all, an invitation to contribute, to participate and to belong more fully to the life of the City. A status truly worth celebrating.





# First Clothing of Liverymen

*Reflections on Fellowship and Forward Purpose by Sheyi Lisk-Carew*

**V**enue: Drapers' Hall, Throgmorton Avenue, London EC2N 2AN, 25 March 2025 I arrived at Drapers' Hall just after 9 am, greeted by liveried hall porters and the soft echo of footsteps in a corridor polished by centuries. As robing commenced and we fastened our gowns in the Court Room, the weight of history felt both literal and symbolic. It marked a moment that bound us to a long-standing tradition of enterprise and civic responsibility.

## A fellowship rooted in enterprise

The Company of Entrepreneurs is a living network of vision shapers, founders who turn ideas into industries. It reflects the diversity and depth of modern entrepreneurship, uniting visionaries from varied paths through shared values. For many of us with portfolio careers, the Company is a natural home. It is a space where creativity, resilience, and impact converge. That spirit was evident throughout the day, among members who bring innovation across sectors, from infrastructure and the arts to hospitality, technology and sustainable living.

## Tradition that fuels modern ambition

The clothing ceremony, the first for the Company, blended pageantry with purpose and was deeply meaningful. Each new Liveryman was formally invested by the Master, this being witnessed by the Court and by the Liveryman's peers. The ritual may be centuries old, yet its charge is unmistakably current: in a rite that links our generation of entrepreneurs to a lineage of championing enterprise, mentoring rising founders and channeling commercial success into civic good.

## Champagne, conversation and sparks

The post-ceremony reception was electric. With minutes the air was full of stimulating conversation and unexpected synergies. Whether discussing renewable energy with a fellow guest, art with a fellow photographic entrepreneur or exploring sustainability in luxury hospitality, for me the event demonstrated the value of diverse dialogue within a united community. These exchanges reminded me of why the Company remains a crucible of innovation: diversity of expertise meets a shared commitment to progress.

## Purpose in practice

The day offered a moment to reflect on how professional endeavours align with the wider goals of the Livery. My own



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ventures are underpinned by purpose with performance and in the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs I see that, across sectors and ventures, this principle can foster both innovation and inclusion. The opportunity to contribute through mentoring, education or charitable engagement, particularly those that create pathways for aspiring entrepreneurs from underrepresented communities, is one I approach with personal gratitude and resolve.

## Gratitude and next steps

It is a privilege to join the ranks of Liverymen, and I am grateful to my sponsors and to the Master and Court for their warm welcome. The clothing of a Liveryman is both an accolade and a reminder – the real work begins after the robes are returned at noon. In the year ahead, I look forward to supporting the Company's initiatives, contributing to the Company's charitable fund and opening doors for the next wave of entrepreneurs.

## A call to fellow innovators

If you believe, as I do, that entrepreneurship thrives on community and shared opportunity, I encourage you to engage with the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs. Whether through mentorship, collaboration or applying for Livery membership yourself. Together we can honour tradition while forging new paths for inclusive, sustainable growth. We can shape a future rooted in excellence, inclusion and civic good.



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# The Company's Committees Driving Us Forward in The City

by Chris Simmance

**A**t the heart of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs lies a network of specialised committees — the engine rooms of its strategy, outreach, and governance. Together, they help translate the Company's purpose into real-world impact: supporting enterprise, education, and community across the City of London and beyond.

## Education Committee

Entrepreneurial excellence begins with strong foundations. The Education Committee leads the Company's relationships with schools, colleges and universities, designing programmes, mentoring schemes, and business-skills tuition. It delivers initiatives that bridge academia and enterprise, nurturing the next generation of founders. It also advises on curriculum design to ensure commercial relevance and practical readiness. Through these efforts the Company deepens its commitment to education as a core pillar of civic service.

## Finance Committee

Sound finances are the bedrock of any stable organisation. Chaired by the Treasurer, the Finance Committee reviews annual budgets, audits financial performance, and evaluates projections and liabilities. It serves as a critical checkpoint for the Court, offering recommendations on spending, reserves, and future strategy. Its oversight ensures that the Company can confidently scale its programmes without compromising fiscal prudence.

## Outreach Committee

To bring entrepreneurship into communities, the Outreach Committee crafts and executes programmes that connect grassroots initiatives with the Company's resources. It supports affiliated professional bodies, incubators, social enterprises, and start-ups. The scope is wide: from structured multi-year interventions to shorter, hands-on assignments in which Freemen may volunteer. This is where entrepreneurial advice meets hands-on delivery.

## Fundraising Committee

No organisation thrives without resource mobilisation. The Fundraising Committee curates sponsorship, organises signature events (often in partnership with Communications & Events), and secures donations to fuel the Company's charitable ambitions. It ensures the financial lifeblood is sustained — enabling more scholarships, grants, and public programmes.

## Nominations Committee

Constituted in the Ordinances of the Company, the Nominations Committee is made up of Past Masters whose job it is to scrutinise members for internal progression. Whether that's moving

from the Freedom to the Livery, from the Livery to the Court, or from the Court to the Wardens and Master, the Nominations Committee is there to help and advise the Court to make the best possible decisions. The Nominations Committee also helps review the Company's staff and recommends the appointment of ad hoc and honorary roles.

## Membership Committee

Membership is the lifeblood of the Company. This Committee handles applications for Freedom, recruitment, interviews, and recommendations to the Court. By vetting new candidates, the Committee ensures that incoming Freemen share the values of innovation, integrity and civic purpose. It also works on retention, engagement, and ensuring that membership continues to be vibrant and growing.

## Communications Committee

In a modern world, narrative and visibility matter. The Communications Committee stewards the Company's external voice — managing its website, producing the annual magazine, driving social media, and creating branded collateral. It also handles public relations, ensuring that the Company's heritage, values and events are clearly communicated to internal and external audiences.

## DEI Committee

Diversity, equity and inclusion are not optional — they are integral. The DEI Committee supports the Company's inclusive culture by developing policies, tools, and "good practice" guidance. It helps embed cultural awareness, equitable recruitment, and inclusive practice across committees, programmes, and membership. In doing so, it ensures the Company remains representative and forward-looking.

Together, these committees form a coordinated ecosystem. Each plays a unique role, but all contribute to advancing the Company's mission: to promote excellence in entrepreneurship, support education, and confer influence within the City of London. Their collective work ensures that the Company is more than a fellowship — it is a force for social impact, connecting City institutions with the entrepreneurial sector, enabling growth, enabling access and ensuring a dynamic, responsible future.

**INTERESTED IN JOINING A COMMITTEE?**

Visit the company website for more information  
[www.entrepreneurscompany.org/committees](http://www.entrepreneurscompany.org/committees)

# Celebrating a Decade of Profound Impact

The Outreach Committee's Journey by Christine Nicholson



**I**n the heart of the City, beneath the vaulted arches of Guildhall, an inspiring gathering marked a milestone: ten years of Outreach activity by the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs. Hosted by the Small Business Research & Enterprise Centre, the evening celebrated a decade of community-centred enterprise and set a purposeful agenda for the years ahead.

## Fellowship in Action

True to the Livery spirit, the reception buzzed with conversation as Liverymen, Freemen and partners swapped stories and explored fresh avenues for collaboration. Seasoned volunteers stood shoulder-to-shoulder with newcomers, each person encouraged to contribute ideas that would broaden the Company's educational and philanthropic reach.

## Showcasing Achievement

Over the past decade, the Outreach and Education Committees have left an indelible mark on schools, start-ups and community organisations across London. Highlights on the night included:

London Business School partnership – honorary Freeman Jeff Skinner welcomed guests and reflected on ten productive years of joint programmes.

Innovation & Enterprise Programme Committee (IEPC) – members shared practical examples of how entrepreneurial thinking is fostered in the classroom.

Enterprise Skills Project – champion Paddy Willis revealed encouraging early outcomes from this new venture.

Education Committee – Chair Ben Martin drew well-deserved applause for the team's sustained impact on learners.

Pulling it all together was Liveryman Veronica Heaven, who chaired a thoughtful panel discussion that explored not only what is achieved, but how real impact is created and measured across our Outreach and Education projects.

## A Call to Action

This anniversary is both a celebration and a springboard. Every Freeman and Liveryman is invited to help extend our reach and deepen our influence: an hour of mentoring or a morning in the classroom can illuminate an aspiring entrepreneur's path for life. Speak with existing volunteers, discover the modest time commitment, and witness the difference you can make.

The Company's ethos is rooted in tradition yet oriented towards progress. In honour of the past, and with confidence in a vibrant future, we renew our pledge:

Get involved, enjoy the fellowship, and make an impact.





# The Livery Entrepreneurs' Challenge

by Paddy Willis

**T**wenty schools sent teams of Year 12 pupils to take part in the inaugural Livery Entrepreneurs' Challenge on 7th March. Representing their respective Livery Companies, students gathered at the magnificent Haberdashers' Hall in West Smithfield to compete for the honour of lifting the first-ever Challenge silverware.

The event was created by Liveryman Paddy Willis and marked a unique collaboration between the Entrepreneurs' and the Haberdashers, building on a successful pilot held the previous year. Teams of four, representing their school, competed in a high-stakes business simulation. They were tasked with running the most successful retail business against several key indicators, using a platform widely adopted by both industry and business schools. The students rose to the challenge and performed brilliantly, with the overall winners coming from a Haberdashers team. Other participating Livery Companies included the Leathersellers, Grocers, Mercers, Skinners and the Merchant Taylors, all of whom have expressed interest in expanding their involvement next year.

The day began with inspiring talks from PM Rick Lowe and Liveryman Rakhitha Dias, who shared their entrepreneurial journey, an experience thoroughly enjoyed by all the students. The top three teams each received a copy of Liveryman Ken Vallady's excellent book, *The Startup Lexicon*. The winning team earned a coveted invitation from entrepreneur Tony Matharu, Integrity International and Blue Orchid Hospitality, to spend a day at his head office, gaining first-hand insight into his successful businesses.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Students gave the event a Net Promoter Score of 69 (well above the benchmark of 30) and individual elements averaged an impressive 4.74 out of 5. One student remarked: "I really enjoyed the talks in the morning and the business simulation – it was invaluable in teaching me the necessary skills for real-world success! Thank you!"

Livery and school representatives were equally enthusiastic. The Grocers' Education Lead shared: "A big thank you on behalf of the Grocers and our schools, Oundle, Mossbourne Community Academy, Kingsley Academy and Chelsea Academy, for the most brilliant educational day last Friday. The students were buzzing. They told me they would never have imagined having access to something like this. They learnt so much. The two entrepreneurial speakers were excellent and engaging, and the simulated business game was incredible."

Following the success of the day, several schools have already requested follow-up simulation events, with more expected to join.







# Our Journey to Full Livery What does this mean?

by Andrew Pullman, Almoner, Court Assistant & Membership Committee Member

**W**hen I joined the Guild of Entrepreneurs in 2016, the idea of becoming the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs felt distant. Yet in February 2025, we proudly reached this significant milestone and became Livery Company 112!

What was the journey like, especially over the past year? And what does it mean now that we are a fully fledged Livery Company? As Almoner, I would like to reflect on this from a people and cultural perspective.

My role as Almoner is to support the Master, Wardens, Court and our members through personal difficulties. This can mean assisting Freemen and Liverymen who are facing financial or medical challenges. We try to tailor solutions so that all members feel part of the Entrepreneur family, even if full participation is not possible.

Having successfully transitioned from Guild to Company Without Livery, recent years have centred around achieving full Livery status. In 2024, our focus intensified as we worked to meet the formal requirements.

We needed to demonstrate several key attributes:

**Membership:** A strong and growing membership base. The Membership Committee has been busy interviewing and welcoming prospective members.

**Financial Stability:** Sufficient resources to support our operations, events and charitable activities. A major goal was to build a charitable fund of at least £300,000. Thanks to the efforts of our fundraisers, this was achieved.

**Charitable Activities:** A history of giving and community support. Our Outreach and Education work, along with the success of the EASI Awards, provided clear evidence of this.

**Governance:** Structured governance aligned with City standards. Significant work has gone into ensuring our structures are sound and sustainable.



**Professional or Trade Relevance:** A credible link to a recognised sector. As entrepreneurs are vital to the UK economy, we comfortably met this criterion.

**Civic Engagement:** Active involvement in the life of the City of London. Our Masters and Wardens have consistently taken part in City events and activities, earning us strong recognition across the Livery movement.

We were fortunate to receive support from many established Livery Companies, several of whom assumed we already held full Livery status. Much credit for steering this effort goes to our Clerk, Duncan Simms, who helped guide us through centuries of tradition and protocol.

Crossing the threshold into full Livery gives us a moment to reflect and celebrate. But it also marks the beginning of the next stage in our evolution. A key moment was the clothing of our first 41 Liverymen, held at Drapers' Hall on 25 March. More will follow in the coming months.

Becoming a Liveryman is a significant step, representing recognition by peers for one's contribution to the Company. It also opens up new opportunities to engage with the wider City, including the right to vote in the elections for Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and to participate more fully in Livery events and traditions.

Culturally, we are now a fully integrated member of the Livery community. At the same time, we are setting out on a new chapter. A review of the Company's structure and future direction is currently under way. The results of this project will be shared later this year and will help define the next phase of our development.

Success will depend on the continued engagement of our members. Everyone has a role to play, whether large or small. I look forward to supporting the Company as we embark on this new journey together.



Live Events

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# The Installation Service

Thoughts from The Hon. Chaplain the Reverend Sophia Acland



**A**t the Installation Service on 25th November the selected reading focussed on the importance of the Company's charitable activities.

Looking back over the ten years since the official launch of the Guild of Entrepreneurs, together we gave thanks for all that had already been achieved through our charitable and educational work and our encouragement of young entrepreneurs. It was important to note that, in the first decade, many Freemen have given their time and talents to mentor and educate new entrepreneurs – including via the very successful EASI programme. They have also served others through the charities and organisations the Company has supported: coming alongside newly released prisoners or the homeless, helping care workers and joining the fight against climate change and pollution.

Looking forward to the coming year under the new Master, James Talbot, a reading from chapter 2 of the Acts of the Apostles was an appropriate text. This describes the life of the very earliest members of the Christian Church as, led by the Apostles, they met together in Jerusalem. We hear that they were charitable – selling property and possessions to give more to anyone in need – and that they pursued fellowship – eating together and praying together. It was obviously a very

attractive model of organisation as, in spite of the danger of Roman persecution, the Church grew rapidly. This is a reading with much to encourage us as Entrepreneurs, where there is a real sense of community: of friendship and mutual support, encouragement and of welcome to newcomers from all sorts of different sectors and backgrounds. Our community is also strengthened by having a common purpose beyond ourselves: to help others, especially new entrepreneurs who can then in turn contribute to the prosperity of our country and the common good. We're good at getting together to share food too!

The second reading at the service came from a letter written by St Paul to the Christians in Rome, where again the writer is looking at community and what makes it strong. He stresses that we're all different, each given gifts so that we can contribute in our own way to the good of the whole. The members of the Company have a wonderfully wide range of experience in many different fields, so I encourage us all that we all have things to give. John F Kennedy's famous inaugural address as American president, 'Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country' ended the reading, alongside the hope that membership of our Company would help us all to consider how we could use our own particular gifts in the service of others.

# From Strength to Strength

A Year of Historic Firsts as the Entrepreneurs become a Livery Company  
by James Talbot, First Livery Master

**A** year of Auspicious Events: My installation marked the tenth anniversary of our Company's formal founding as a Guild on 24th November 2014 - An anniversary so important that our Clerk had pre-booked Ironmongers' Hall years in advance to commemorate the occasion. Adding to the excitement, our Senior Warden, Alastair King, became the 696th Lord Mayor. This set the stage for a special year of celebrations, featuring many historic firsts.

On 6th December, the IPM Mark Huxley, the Clerk Duncan Simms, and I attended a meeting of the Magistracy & Livery Sub-Committee, joined online by our Hon. Treasurer Gary Dixon. We were rather subdued, expecting yet more paperwork in our journey towards Livery status but received fabulous news – we were being put forward to the Court of Aldermen with a recommendation to be granted Livery! All the hard work that Duncan, Mark, and Gary had done on our application had paid off. All that we, as a company, have achieved was officially recognised – we were going to be, in order of precedence, the One Hundred and Twelfth Livery Company. While sworn to secrecy outside of our group, we were much in need of a celebratory drink and retired to the City of London Club to toast the moment.

With this news, another half-dozen extra events were added to our already busy calendar. There were Letters Patent, Clothings, and speeches to be organised. As the news was allowed to be shared, the Drapers were wonderful in their support and we received many gifts and congratulations from our new peers. Thanks also to Tony Matharu, for our members and guests that raised over £3,000 for our charities.

## Our New Beginning: The Path Ahead

This pivotal year is a tribute to the dedication of our membership. Massive thanks to everyone involved – whether as part of the Court, being active on committees, instigating and/or participating in fund-raising events or coming along to enjoy Company occasions. It is your experience, leadership, and dedication that has helped make this milestone possible and now we have successfully transitioned from a Guild to a Livery Company. Rather than crossing a finish line, it's the start of the next decade. To meet the demands and embrace the opportunities that come with our new status, we can build on our success together.

Already things are moving forward. We've built on the fabulous year of the IPM, Mark Huxley. We've introduced quarterly Zoom meetings to enable more of us to engage easily and we've had two of our biggest events ever. Our Spring Lunch at the Reform Club had 80 guests and the Summer Banquet at Mansion House was enjoyed by 250 diners. Nearly 50 different events have been hosted and, by the time you read this, we will have welcomed almost 30 new members this year.

We want to do more and we're asking you to consider how you can help shape the next ten years. While our strategy is being polished to reflect the wants and needs of our growing company and incoming Master Alastair King has plans to take us even further, it is our members energy and ideas that will connect us with the next generation of entrepreneurs.

We would love more of us to be involved. What would you like to do? There are lots of opportunities. Could it be working with students in Education? Getting involved with some of the exciting Outreach projects? Supporting the DE&I initiatives? Or maybe helping building membership? Let us know, you can do as much or as little as suits you – we welcome all involvement. Our journey, continuing going from strength to strength, will be ensured with the active participation of us all.





# A Year in the Life of the Sheriffs of London

Through My Eyes as Middle Warden by Jat Wasu

**T**here are always two Sheriffs, with their modern-day responsibilities including supporting the Lord Mayor of the City of London in his or her civic duties. They serve, both at home and abroad, as ambassadors for the UK-based financial and professional services industry by promoting the UK as a place in which to do business. The Sheriffs are based at the Old Bailey, the Central Criminal Court of England and Wales – and the office is an integral part of the City's support for the rule of law.

The Sheriff's journey begins well before the grand 'Common Hall' occasion of the election at Guildhall. A few months prior to the election, candidates put their names forward for nomination. There is usually healthy discussion amongst Liverymen, but by the time Common Hall comes around at the end of June, the nominations are settled. Two Sheriffs are always appointed every year. Tradition usually dictates that one comes from the pool of 25 Aldermen and the other from the Livery movement, though occasionally both are Aldermen.

Common Hall itself brings around 800 Liverymen together at Guildhall to formally elect the Sheriffs. The atmosphere is more measured ceremony than heated contest. We vote, we applaud, and then naturally we celebrate the occasion in great fellowship with Liverymen from across the City. In my case this year, I joined fellow Entrepreneurs at Founders' Hall, and the camaraderie over lunch was as much a part of the occasion as the election itself.

By September, the Sheriffs prepare for one of the quaintest of City traditions: the Chain Appeal. Friends and supporters of each Sheriff conduct their own fundraising appeal to cover the cost of a unique chain, which the Sheriff will wear throughout the year and retain afterwards. It is customary for the Sheriff not to pay for his or her own chain – a practice that underlines the collective support and goodwill surrounding the office.

The formal admission follows at the end of September, again at Guildhall, with the full ceremony giving way to the event somewhat confusingly called the 'Sheriffs' Breakfast'. In truth it is neither early in the day nor light in substance. Instead, it is a reception with speeches, ceremony, and celebration – the true starting gun for the Sheriffs' year. From that point on, the Sheriffs step fully into their duties.

A particularly important part of the role is ensuring the welfare of the judges of the Old Bailey. This does not mean lavish entertainment or grand banquets but rather providing opportunities for collegiality and connection. The Sheriffs regularly host what are fondly referred to as the Judges' Lunches. These are simple, two-course meals, usually over within an hour, where judges can briefly relax and meet invited guests from the



Livery and wider City. It is not the food that matters so much as the opportunity for dialogue in a secure and unique setting.

During their year both Sheriffs are also provided with residence, (more in the spirit of a compact studio flat rather than a grand suite in case anyone was wondering), within the Old Bailey itself. Most Sheriffs make use of it during the working week before heading home at weekends.

Reflecting on these traditions, I am struck by how the Sheriff's year blends in many ways with the life of an entrepreneur. There is the same rhythm of planning and preparation, of building networks and relying on the support of friends, of adapting to duties that are both ceremonial and practical. Above all, like entrepreneurship itself, the role of Sheriff is about service – service to the Lord Mayor, to the judiciary, and to the wider City community. It is a reminder that while the trappings may be ancient, the spirit is as relevant today as ever.

# My Year as Junior Warden

by Rita W Bologna

**I** was delighted to be elected as Junior Warden in November 2025. With the robe and badge comes great responsibilities that I have fully embraced.

From that first nerve-wrecking speech at the Installation Dinner welcoming our guests, through to meetings with the Lord Mayor at Mansion House - what a surreal year it has been. I have been extremely lucky to have had the support of such a brilliant Master, fellow Wardens and the Clerk, in what has undoubtedly been the most important year of our journey thus far, as we were formally announced as The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs. That moment in Guildhall watching the announcement from the public gallery was a time I will always treasure.

I thoroughly enjoyed wearing the robe for the first time and my shiny badge. Walking into the Installation Dinner and being clapped in was a special moment. As well as all the formalities that have been wonderful, there has been plenty of work through the year, to include co-chairing the F and GP, Summer Banquet, and attending the Finance and Master and Warden Meetings. Sometimes there can be up to four meetings in a day. These have given me a real insight into the workings of our Modern Livery Company.

Last year, I took pride in setting up the inaugural all female entrepreneurs' group. I am very pleased that the ladies have embraced this idea. It was great to host the first event at my home, a champagne and Indian dinner party, which I believe was well received by all. Since then, the ladies have engaged in the spirit of fellowship and gone on to organise various events including, coastal walks, exhibitions, lunches and afternoon teas.

Being a Court Assistant and Junior Warden has been thoroughly interesting. One of my favourite evenings was having the opportunity to dine with the Master and Wardens of The Worshipful Company of Drapers in their beautiful Hall to celebrate our livery status. We were hosted particularly well on a summers evening.

I was kindly invited to the Lady Master Association's annual event in Guildhall. This is an interesting evening of fellowship and engagement, whereby you get to meet Wardens and future female Masters over drinks and canapés. We were able to share views and ideas as we progress together.

One of my highlights of last year was being part of the Lord Mayors show. I was proud to have been able to secure a sponsor for the Company which enabled us to have our own float. Many of us enjoyed the procession and celebrating with the crowds as we twirled our branded umbrellas. What a joy!

This year seven silversmiths were commissioned to produce the Trust's seven Patrons' Goblets. As a Patron, I have had the pleasure of sipping wine from the award-winning Bologna Goblet at several of our formal events. The wine always tastes better out of the goblet. I wonder why...

What a fantastic year it has been. I have had the true privilege of supporting the Master and the Company. As we move forward, I am very much looking forward to more fellowship and engagement with our members, as we continue to Dare, Create and Succeed together.



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# Business Asset Disposal Relief

7 Reasons it's the Lifeblood of the UK Entrepreneur by Mark Huxley

**W**hy is it that the UK's Business Asset Disposal Relief (BADR), formerly known as Entrepreneurs' Relief, stands as a critical incentive for entrepreneurial activity? Its potential dilution or removal poses a significant threat to the UK's economic dynamism. This is why entrepreneurs must continue to lobby Rachel Reeves to get her to close off any thoughts to changes to taxation affecting them, thereby safeguarding the future of innovation and growth.

## 1. Incentivising Risk and Rewarding Effort:

BADR's core function is to reduce the Capital Gains Tax (CGT) rate on the disposal of qualifying business assets. This lower tax rate directly encourages entrepreneurs to take the substantial risks associated with starting and scaling a business. Entrepreneurship is inherently uncertain, the promise of a reduced tax burden upon a successful exit helps mitigate this uncertainty. Without BADR, the risk-reward balance shifts negatively, potentially deterring individuals from pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. It also rewards the years of hard work and dedication it takes to build a business.

## 2. Fuelling Reinvestment and Economic Growth:

Entrepreneurs who benefit from BADR are more likely to reinvest their profits into new or existing businesses. This reinvestment is a powerful engine of economic growth, driving innovation, creating jobs, and generating wealth. Scrapping BADR disrupts this cycle, leading to a decrease in investment and hindering economic expansion.

## 3. Maintaining UK Competitiveness:

In a globalised economy, the UK must compete with other nations to attract entrepreneurial talent and investment. Many countries offer tax incentives to encourage business activity. Abolishing BADR would put the UK at a disadvantage, potentially leading to a "brain drain" of entrepreneurs seeking out those more favourable tax environments.

## 4. Supporting SMEs, the Economy's Backbone:

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the lifeblood of the UK economy. 99.8% of the UK businesses defined as such by number. BADR provides crucial support to these businesses, often built through immense personal sacrifice and risk. For many SME owners, BADR represents a vital component of their long-term financial planning, including retirement. Removing this relief disproportionately harms SMEs and the individuals behind them.

## 5. Facilitating Business Succession:

BADR plays a role in facilitating the smooth transfer of businesses, whether to the next generation or through a sale to employees. This ensures business continuity, preserves jobs,



and safeguards the knowledge and expertise embedded within these enterprises. Without BADR, the increased tax burden could hinder these transitions, potentially leading to closures and job losses.

## 6. Long-Term Vision vs. Short-Term Gains:

Governments may be tempted to view the revenue generated from abolishing BADR as a quick fix for fiscal challenges. However, this short-term gain would come at the cost of long-term economic damage. Discouraging entrepreneurship today will lead to reduced economic activity, lower tax revenues, and fewer job opportunities tomorrow.

## 7. Complexity and Uncertainty:

Replacing BADR with alternative measures would likely create complexity and uncertainty for entrepreneurs. The existing relief, while subject to changes, provides a degree of clarity that allows business owners to plan for the future. Introducing new, untested policies could disrupt this stability and create confusion.

Entrepreneurs must make their voices heard. Policymakers need to understand that BADR is not a tax loophole for the wealthy, but a vital mechanism that underpins the UK's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Its retention is essential for fostering innovation, driving economic growth, and ensuring the UK remains a competitive place to do business.



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# The Raleigh Lecture 2025

*Using Space Data to Protect Society and Business by Ben Martin*

## **C**atastrophe! Using Data from Space to Predict Catastrophic Events: How Does This Help Business and Society?

On 25 February 2025, the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust held the sixth annual Raleigh Lecture at Drapers' Hall. As ever, the event was generously supported by the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs, the Drapers' Company, and PDA Group.

Nine schools each sent a cohort of Year 12 and 13 students to attend. The audience, comprising a diverse and enthusiastic group of young people, brought energy and insight to a thought-provoking day centred on the role of space-based data in preventing catastrophe and supporting society.

Building on the 2024 theme, Space – An Entrepreneur's Paradise, this year's focus explored how satellite data contributes to sectors such as defence, energy, disaster prevention and risk management. The UK continues to be a leader in designing and deploying the satellites that make this possible.

The day opened with a welcome from Master Entrepreneur James Talbot and was compered by Past Master Peter Hewitt.

### Expert Presentations

Air Vice Marshal Steve Thornber (Ret'd), former Director of Operations for Defence Intelligence, opened the session. Drawing on a distinguished 35-year RAF career, he outlined how satellite data strengthens national security and supports intelligence-led responses to modern threats, including cyber-crime.

Martin Soltau, Co-CEO of Space Solar, presented next. His company is pioneering space-based solar power, aiming to deliver renewable energy to Earth using high-efficiency solar panels in orbit. With panels in space yielding up to 13 times the energy of those on Earth, this ambitious project could become a reality within five years.

Itamar Zabari, co-founder of Astrateq, was represented by Past Master Mark Huxley, who explained how the firm is using AI and satellite data to predict earthquakes up to 14 days in advance. This is a dramatic improvement on current capabilities. The implications for humanitarian relief, infrastructure protection and insurance are profound.

### Student Discussions

Students participated in moderated discussion groups led by Freeman Entrepreneurs and teachers. Each group explored how the themes applied to sectors such as:

Agriculture and forestry  
Climate change and environmental monitoring  
Urban planning and infrastructure  
Telecommunications and connectivity  
Risk management and insurance  
Government and policy  
These discussions also informed the questions later posed to the expert panel.

### The Keynote Lecture

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Paul Davies, Chief Meteorologist and Head of Climate Extremes at the Met Office. Professor Davies shared how global satellite networks and aircraft data are helping to forecast extreme weather and avert disaster. Despite the scale and sophistication of this system, he highlighted that human response is often the weakest link in disaster mitigation.

His message to the students was clear. Careers in data science, meteorology and climate research are vital. Far from reducing opportunities, the rise of AI and data analytics is creating new paths for young people to make meaningful contributions to society.

### Panel Discussion and Closing

A panel session, chaired by Freeman Veronica Heaven, featured all speakers and Past Master Peter Hewitt. Students asked well-considered questions, demonstrating their deep engagement with the themes of the day.

Senior representatives from other Livery Companies also attended, underscoring the significance of the Lecture within the wider Livery movement.

The event concluded with informal networking over drinks and refreshments. This offered an opportunity for students to connect with professionals and gain insight into the practical application of innovation in business and public service.

### A Lasting Impact

The Lecture served as a reminder of the power of entrepreneurship, innovation and collaboration in addressing real-world challenges. One student summed it up best, describing the experience as "inspiring".

This is precisely the outcome the Lecture seeks to achieve: to ignite curiosity, foster ambition and show young people the positive impact they can make on Earth and beyond.



## Inside the Raleigh Panel

*Collaboration, Risk and Why Space Data Needs Joined-up Thinking by Veronica Heaven*

**The Chief Meteorologist at the UK Met Office, Professor Paul Davies; Martin Soltau, co-CEO at Space Solar; Air Commodore (Ret'd) Steve Thornber CBE at UDSS; and Past Master of the Worshipful of Entrepreneurs, Peter Hewitt FRSA, who is the architect of the Raleigh Lecture, were the panel members of an education event held at the prestigious and beautiful Drapers Hall on 25th of February 2025.**

The annual Raleigh Lecture event has become a must-attend diary date for Year 12 students of Business Studies, Economics, Geography and Physics selected from more than 10 schools from across London. It is also an important fixture for Masters past and present spanning the Livery movement, who attended in full force due to the calibre of topic and the pedigree of the speakers involved.

The theme for the Raleigh Lecture 2025 was focused on: "Using Space Data to Predict Catastrophic Events", with the panel facilitated by Freeman Entrepreneur, Court Assistant and Chair of DEI, Veronica Heaven FRSA.

Veronica chaired the panel, inviting questions from the audience, as well as having questions of her own to pose to the panel.

Collaboration and Systems Thinking were highlighted as key themes by the panel, due to the global purpose and strategic importance of some of the space-based activities and because of the co-dependencies that prevail in some areas.

For example, partner organisations are relied upon to get satellites into space to generate space-based solar power, but also the ability to interpret the publicly available data through algorithms often requires the assistance of specialist organisations.

The big win coming from the technology was highlighted as being able to use space data in a predictive way, to accurately predict extreme weather events, rather than simply looking at historical occurrences.

Issues such as addressing commercial benefit versus societal benefit, using space-based data in the response to climate change, concerns over responsible practices that address space debris and the clean-up in space were weighty subjects put to the panel.

Students were particularly concerned to know about issues such as the role of insurance and how insurers assess the cost of capital equipment versus human involvement. Students also introduced questions around using microwave technology in space. One answer from the panel included the revelation that the Late Lord Mayor Michael Minnelli has initiated a Space Debris Removal Bond (SDRB) – a space bond to guarantee funding of deorbiting or retired satellites, with the aim to remove space debris and keep space clutter free.

Space is in its infancy. What was clear from the panel discussion is the need for next-generation thinking and a transdisciplinary approach to address space as an emerging, enterprising opportunity with a deep-seated need to take the best lessons learned around regulation, responsible business and sustainable practices.

Space data and the related sectors around it represent a golden business opportunity and have career potential for a wide range of people across sectors and industries. A key challenge is finding ways to 'zoom out' and to see the bigger picture in its truest sense – taking a longer-term perspective to view space as an opportunity that supports the many rather than the few, whilst applying the lessons learned from earth-based activities, including the dangers of over-consumption that push planetary boundaries to the limit.

The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs is grateful to all the teachers, moderators and students together with the many guests that attended. The recording of the panel session has been made available to all the attending schools.

If you would like to find out more about the Raleigh Lectures, or be invited to attend the 2026 event, please register your interest with the Clerk: email: [clerk@entrepreneurscompany.org](mailto:clerk@entrepreneurscompany.org)



# Ten Years a Clerk

*A Decade of Duncan*

**A** decade of Duncan, in pictures. Appointed in January 2015, on the payroll by February, sworn in by April, he stepped into the Clerk's role after Adèle Thorpe and promptly set about shaping the Guild of Entrepreneurs. This timeline is a simple thank you, a visual diary of calm at Mansion House, admissions and ceremonies, Global Entrepreneurship Week graft, the occasional organ loft cameo, and the running joke of standing next to the loudly musical A S H Smyth. There is travel, temporary offices, skiing, pétanque, rowing with the Founders' Company, and the now famous lockdown Installation from the director's chair. It all finishes, neatly, with a well earned gift at Mansion House in 2025. Ten years well spent, captured as they happened.



# The Female Entrepreneurs Group

*Camaraderie, Achievements & Support by Amy Hopper*



inspiration along with lots of laughter in glorious weather. We also had cause for celebration on the publishing front. Sandra's *The Weight's Over - Take Back Control* stormed the charts to become a Sunday Times bestseller, and Tee's *Confidence by Numbers*, was launched with a gorgeous party that took over Soho's Greek Street! Add in a string of business and personal awards won by members across the group and the sense of momentum has been unmistakable.

Looking forward: The calendar ahead is equally promising. Many of us will walk in Dame Susan Langley's Lady Mayor's Show, which this year salutes 697 remarkable women. It's a privilege for us to be counted among them. October brings Consort Helen's Tiffers and Tipples hat party, an event to showcase bold millinery and even bolder spirits. Finally in December, Adèle has invited us to round off the year at the Guildhall Christmas Fair and to raise a glass together over a festive lunch.

Why it matters: The joy of these occasions is obvious, but their significance runs deeper. As one member put it, "We all receive so much love from the group without judgement and so I find it an incredibly inspiring and supportive space to be." Entrepreneurship can feel solitary; female entrepreneurs often face additional challenges around visibility and expectations. Finding a circle of women who understand both the triumphs and the strains makes all the difference. As we reflect on a year of shared successes and look ahead to the events still to come, we are proud this group is about more than gatherings. It's about kinship, confidence and collective strength. It's not simply networking, it's belonging.

**T**his year has been a vibrant one for the WCoFE's Female Entrepreneurs Group. What started as a simple gathering of like-minded women last year has grown into one of the Company's most spirited corners. A community where ideas are shared, milestones applauded and friendships strengthened across industries and generations. It's been a year of lunches, launches, awards and anticipation - with plenty still to come.

Moments to remember: In spring, Tee brought us together at Ham Yard for a beautiful lunch and tour that reminded us how restorative good food and conversation can be. In the summer, Shernaz organised lunch at Dishoom before an outing to the Vogue exhibition. We enjoyed equal parts of glamour and

An open invitation: The Company warmly encourages more women to join our fellowship, to share in the opportunities, friendships and celebrations that membership brings. This is your space to connect, grow, and be recognised as part of our community.





# A Memorable Master's Weekend

by Rakhitha Dias



© Tee Dobinson

In May '25, my second Master's Weekend offered the perfect opportunity to spend time with fellow Liverymen and Freemen who have played an important part in my Livery journey so far.

## Friday

After an easy journey to Bristol, we gathered at the University of Bristol Business School. The short but steep walk up the hill made us reflect on the perseverance required of students. It may well be an unofficial test for aspiring entrepreneurs.

We were warmly welcomed with lunch before being introduced to the University's remarkable work fostering entrepreneurship across faculties. We heard from students and staff who had launched their own ventures through this supportive ecosystem. The session concluded with informal discussions, providing further insight into the vibrant entrepreneurial culture being cultivated there.

After returning to the hotel, we took a moment to admire the city views before gathering for a wine tasting at Avery's historic vaulted cellars. The venue provided a cool retreat from the day's warmth. Champagne opened the evening, followed by a guided tasting of six wines from both New and Old Worlds. In customary fashion, Master James led a seating shuffle. It was an excellent way to mix company and spark new conversations.

Supper was informal and relaxed, and the evening was convivial with shared stories and much laughter. For me, this was the highlight of the weekend. And ice cream on the way back to the hotel cemented that 'being back at uni' feel the City gave me.

## Saturday

After breakfast, we visited Brunel's SS Great Britain, once the most advanced ship of its time. Our guide framed the tour through an entrepreneurial lens, highlighting the financial ingenuity behind the ship's construction and its many uses over time. We were reminded how challenging transatlantic journeys once were. Economy flights today are beyond luxury in comparison!

Following lunch, we continued with a guided walk along the docks. Our learned guide, a judge, added intrigue by sprinkling in a few fabricated facts along with the true ones, leaving us to decipher which was which. With spirits high, we returned to the hotel for refreshments before preparing for our black-tie dinner. The evening was intimate and marked by good food and meaningful conversation. True to tradition, we lingered well beyond our allotted time. We continued the evening at the hotel bar, and some of us extended the evening by joining the Bristol nightlife.

## Sunday

For a fittingly inspiring end to our weekend, we made our way to Aerospace Bristol, home to the iconic Concorde. We all enjoyed exploring the engineering marvels of supersonic flight and Bristol's role in aviation history.

Before departing, we had a delicious lunch at a traditional Bristolian pub, giving us the opportunity to introduce Chris to some Polish cuisine.

I really enjoyed this weekend and bonding further with my fellow entrepreneurs, as we shared experiences and celebrated our joint values. A sincere thank you to all who took part.



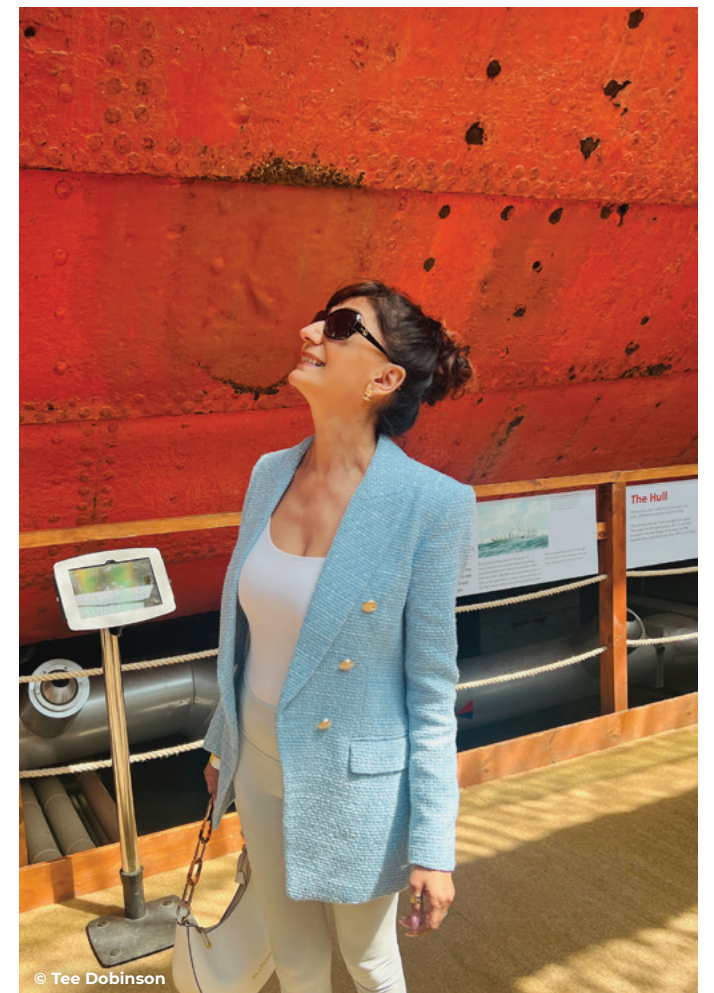
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# The EASI25 Final

Entrepreneurs' Award in Social Innovation  
by Past Master & EASI Lead Judy Hadden



**E**ASI, a collaboration between our Company and charitable trust, provides essential support to early-stage entrepreneurs developing innovative solutions to global challenges. Through a combination of financial and practical support, plus access to our members' powerful network, we help supported ventures survive, thrive, and maximise their impact.

The programme's popularity continues to grow - this year we reviewed 88 exceptional applications to select five EASI25 Finalists: Air Aware Labs, Carbon Cell, CarbonTrac, Enstic, and Tynkerbyte. At the EASI25 Final, attended by both City of London Sheriffs, judges and audience voted Carbon Cell our winner, earning a £10,000 grant from the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs Trust.

### Expanding Impact Through Partnership

To scale EASI and broaden its impact, we're partnering with like-minded livery companies to support innovative social enterprise in their communities. Our first partnership with the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers was announced at February's EASI Showcase. At the EASI25 Final, we heard from Emily Mills, co-founder of Cascade Medtech, the inaugural winner of the Needlemakers' Award for Advanced Needle Technology.

Our EASI25 cohort and Cascade Medtech receive ongoing support from EASI Mentors and experts through carefully curated masterclasses. 2025 sessions have covered R&D tax relief, grant funding, branding, finance, and networking, with corporate governance and negotiation classes planned. We're grateful to our EASI Experts for generously sharing their time and expertise.

### Celebrating Success and Progress

Our annual EASI Showcase highlights the impactful work we support and enables our current cohort to present their ventures and progress to invited guests. This year, we welcomed back Tamzin Lent, co-founder of EASI22 Finalist Where You At, who shared their remarkable three-year progress and inspiring mission.

Our next EASI Showcase will be held on 19th January 2026 at the Trampery, Old Street - please save the date!

### Gratitude and Recognition

Sincere thanks to everyone supporting EASI, your generosity and kindness make our success possible. Particular appreciation goes to: Tony Matharu (Integrity International and Blue Orchid Hospitality), Patrick Smith and Nick Stretton (Tribe Advisory), Charles Armstrong (the Trampery), and Matthew Hayes (Champions PLC) - all have supported EASI from the beginning, raising vital funds and providing crucial services.

Also, to EASI Team colleagues and mentors - we really couldn't do it without you!

Our main fundraiser, the Tribe Charity Golf Day, raised over £12,000 this year through Nick Stretton's innovative new format and the generous event sponsorship from Qover S.A./N.V.

EASI continues empowering entrepreneurs to tackle society's biggest challenges, creating lasting positive change through innovation and collaboration.

# Supporting the City's Biodiversity Action plan

Helping All Pollinators Thrive by John Burton

In the fast-paced world of London business, Pollinating London Together (PLT) is making a significant impact by enhancing creating spaces for pollinators and people to thrive. Founded in 2020 by the Worshipful Companies of Wax Chandlers and Gardeners, PLT began as a collaboration within the City of London's livery companies and has since grown into an independent charity. It's supported by a city-wide network of businesses, schools, and local groups dedicated to protecting pollinators and promoting biodiversity.

The Pollinating London Together (PLT) charity is led by a team of experienced individuals who bring a unique mix of science, business, and civic leadership to their work. At the heart of the charity is John Burton, PLT's Chairman. John, a Liveryman of the Wax Chandlers and a Liveryman in the Company of Entrepreneurs, brings years of experience in sustainable food systems to the role, with a strong focus on practical impact. He works alongside Dr. Heather Barrett-Mold OBE, who serves as the Vice Chair. As a chartered scientist and environmentalist, Heather provides deep knowledge of ecology and horticulture and is a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners. The team also includes trustee Mark Huxley, who is the Immediate Past Master at the Entrepreneurs. With support from their Patron, the Past Lord Mayor Michael Mainelli, who is also an Honorary Freeman Entrepreneur and taking into account the role of the strategy board which includes Alderman Alison Gowman CBE and esteemed academics in the pollinator field, including professors, Simon Potts(Reading), Alistair Griffiths (RHS) Mark Brown (Royal Holloway), the charity therefore benefits from the rare blend of civic leadership, science, and business know-how.



them.

PLT uses science to ensure its efforts are effective, conducting field surveys, biodiversity assessments, and long-term monitoring of green spaces. One of their projects is the Annual Pollinator Count, which invites Londoners to participate in biodiversity monitoring using the Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT counts) APP, developed by CEH, the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, a citizen science method for tracking pollinator populations, which feeds into the national pollinator database. The charity also works to map biodiversity networks and corridors - connected green spaces that help pollinators move between the city's abundant floral resources.

The entrepreneurial spirit of its supporters is a key source of energy for PLT. The 2023 Entrepreneurs Walk is a great example of this, raising money and awareness while connecting people who care about biodiversity. PLT welcomes anyone with a genuine love for nature to join their community, which includes scientists, Livery members, entrepreneurs, and volunteers. If you have access to land or an interest in sustainability, they would love to hear from you. The goal is to make London greener, more connected, and better for wildlife and citizens of London.





# Boots, Bells and Fish & Chips

*The Second Annual Inter-Livery Kent Coast Hike by Amy Hopper*

**T**his September saw the return of the Inter-Livery Kent Coast Hike, my highlight of the Livery calendar. After last year's sunshine-soaked debut, IPM Mark Huxley encouraged me to make it an annual tradition. And so, on Saturday 13th September, members from several Livery Companies gathered in Sandwich for the second hike. The weather had other ideas, but in true entrepreneurial fashion we adapted and found that sometimes a storm delivers much more in terms of adventure than blue skies.

Rain, heritage and unexpected doors: Torrential rain greeted us at the Guildhall, where the Deputy Mayor of Sandwich, Councillor Colin Wiles, extended a warmer welcome than the skies above. Fortune, however, was on our side. It was Heritage Weekend where many of Sandwich's medieval buildings, usually closed to the public, opened their doors. We wandered through the Elizabethan Court House and the panelled chambers of the Guildhall, guided by the Deputy Mayor himself and a number of dedicated volunteer historians.

The church, the curfew, and the climb: Next stop was St Peter's Church, whose foundations date to the 13th century. Its curfew bell (affectionately known as the "pig bell") still tolls each

evening at 8pm, a ritual that once signalled households to cover their fires and allow pigs to roam. My mother is one of the 30 volunteer curfew bell ringers. With special access, we climbed the tower, enjoyed panoramic views and even attempted bell ringing ourselves. Most avoided rope burn and left with arms intact, thanks to the expert tuition. After this, the café inside St Peter's was the perfect spot for tea and cake.

Sunshine, seafront and salt on the breeze: While enjoying our well-earned tea, the blue skies and sunshine appeared, allowing us to set out on a shortened loop through the Kent countryside past the Royal St George's Golf Club. A swift train then carried us to Deal, where the rain continued to hold off obligingly and we ended the day with fish and chips on the beach, waves rolling and spirits high.

What the day gave us: Itineraries may bend and weather may shift, but laughter, conversation and companionship carry the day. The rain didn't dampen the day; it elevated it. By pivoting, we discovered stories, spaces and laughter we'd have missed in the sunshine. Plans are already underway for next year's hike. If you missed this one, watch for the date and come ready for rain, shine, and everything in between. The Kent coast, its history and its hospitality, will be waiting.



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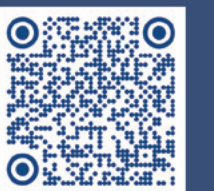


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# New Freeman



25/11/2024

**Keith Butten**

A longstanding member of the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investments, Keith won the 2022 Golden Egg award for mentoring. He built his business, Advice for Life, after a successful employed career. With his son Josh, he grew boost to a multi-award-winning financial planning firm, which is now employee-owned. Keith is committed to giving back through mentoring and his work in sports, having served as chairman of Luton Rugby Club for nine years.

**Sasho Kamburov**

Sasho Kamburov is a British-Bulgarian entrepreneur focused on road construction. As CEO of Spray Tanker Services, he has made it Britain's largest provider of bondcoat application services. With a passion for mergers and acquisitions, he is continuously expanding his business portfolio. Sasho is also a philanthropist, donating to numerous causes. His interests include

clay pigeon shooting, golf, skiing, and flying, having recently taken his first flying lesson.

**Jonathan Newell**

With nearly three decades of experience, Jonathan Newell is an entrepreneur in the commercial insurance sector. As Founder and CEO of BareRock, he focuses on collaborative innovation and customer experience, particularly in Specialty Lines. His vision has led BareRock to develop industry-recognized solutions, earning the 'Innovator of the Year' award. Jonathan fosters a culture of creative thinking and excellence in his teams, empowering them to achieve outstanding results.

**Roy Swain**

In 2010, Roy Swain founded the award-winning firm, Tacit Investment Management, a provider of investment services to individuals, particularly entrepreneurs. He previously worked for financial institutions like Legal and General, Societe Generale, and Deutsche

Bank. Originally from Suffolk, Roy now calls London home. He enjoys traveling with his wife, as well as golf, skiing, cricket, and is a passionate Arsenal football club fan. He also plays the piano and listens to classical music.

20/02/2025

**Jacqueline O'Donovan**

Jacqueline O'Donovan OBE is a serial entrepreneur and philanthropist who led her family's waste management business for 37 years, transforming it into an industry leader. She pioneered innovations in recycling and safety, earning an OBE in 2023 for her contributions. A trailblazer in a male-dominated industry, Jacqueline has received numerous accolades, including being named Director of the Year twice by the Institute of Directors. Her legacy is one of innovation and positive change.

**Gillian Palmer**

Following a successful career with Xerox, Gillian Palmer co-founded and grew Digidox to a £7m turnover business

# New Freeman

before exiting in 2010. She then bought and successfully ran a pub and B&B. In 2017, she founded Lending Made Simple and The Finance Hub, a business center in Tunbridge Wells. Her current businesses have a combined turnover of £400k, and she is already planning further expansion, including a London office.

**Harold Shaw**

Harry Shaw began his career as a van driver and is now a successful entrepreneur. He founded Aitch Freight Services, a transport company with a £3m turnover, and has other businesses in facilities management and investments. A classic entrepreneur, Harry is always seeking new opportunities. He is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Carmen and a Freeman of the City, and has also been a foster parent. He looks forward to getting involved in the Company's Outreach programmes.

10/04/2025

**Luke Richards**

Luke Richards' career began in Explosive Ordnance Disposal and the London Fire Brigade, teaching him precision and risk assessment. He then built a successful landscaping firm and acquired a Japanese knotweed removal company. Luke is an active fundraiser for children's and animal charities. He now coaches entrepreneurs on scaling their businesses through smart acquisitions, process optimization, and growth-focused strategies, helping them build resilient companies that thrive in competitive markets.

14/07/2025

**Nigel Apperley**

Nigel Apperley is a seasoned entrepreneur who has led the online reviews platform, Trustist Ltd, for eight years. The company has grown to include 20 franchisees and serves major brands like Timpsons. He also developed the open banking solution, Trustist Payments. Previously, he founded and sold one of the UK's first online camera retailers. Nigel actively supports charities and not-for-profit organisations, and hopes to contribute to the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs.

**Peter Graves**

Peter Graves had a 15-year motorcycle racing career, winning championships and creating teams for major brands. He then founded a digital marketing



© Zula Rabikowska



## New Freeman

agency. After sailing the world with his family, he returned to the corporate world before acquiring a large motorcycle and e-commerce business in 2025, becoming its CEO. He continues to acquire and build businesses, splitting his time between his home in Twickenham and his business in Wales.

### Jack Hayes

Jack Hayes is the Managing Director of Champions Speakers Agency, a global leader in speaker consultancy. Under his leadership, the agency has grown to over 100 agents, delivering 5,000+ events annually across 66 countries. A founding member of the European Association of Speakers Bureaux, he is committed to raising industry standards. His dedication to diversity has earned Champions recognition as one of JP Morgan's Top 200 Female-Powered Businesses.

### David Johnson

David Johnson is an engineer and entrepreneur in the engineering technology sector. He founded Laser Rail Ltd in 1989, growing it to 85 employees before selling it in 2008. He then co-founded D/Gauge Ltd with his son, which they sold in 2023. A Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, David is active in many industry activities, including mentoring and developing AI for engineering simulations. He is also a Visiting Professor at the University of Southampton.

### Robert Kilgour

Robert Kilgour is a serial entrepreneur and philanthropist. He founded Four Seasons Health Care, growing it into the UK's fifth-largest care home operator. He has since founded other businesses, including Renaissance Care.

Robert is a dedicated philanthropist, having chaired a Macmillan Cancer appeal and funded the first Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre. He also supports other entrepreneurs through mentoring and advisory roles,



© Laura Lewis

## New Freeman



© Jonathan Cherry

and co-founded The Museum of Prime Minister.

### Khalid Muhmood

Khalid Muhmood is an entrepreneur with a passion for education. He and his wife co-founded and grew several successful education businesses in Asia, including Apollo English and British University Vietnam, which are now part of their Dragonfly Education Group. Khalid has also taken on advisory roles, including for the British Council and the Vietnamese government. He is a trustee of the UK-ASEAN Business Council and chairs the charity Friends of Vietnam.

### Ben Winch

Ben Winch began his career in politics before moving into financial services. In 2010, he founded CPL Global Sourcing Ltd. in Hong Kong, which he successfully exited in 2024. He now leads Candlelight Products Ltd., a family-owned home fragrance and décor business. His latest venture is an olive oil enterprise in Spain. Ben is married with two sons and his interests include history, backgammon, horse racing, and wine.

## LIVERYMEN

### 25/11/2024

Past Master Lars Andersen  
 Hanafiah Armstrong  
 Belinda Back  
 Junior Warden Rita W Bologna  
 John Burton  
 Chiles Cartwright  
 Kevin Cutler  
 Rakitha Dias  
 Tee Dobinson  
 David Dumeresque  
 Shernaz Engineer  
 Andrew Fishwick  
 Howard Freeman  
 Past Master Judy Hadden  
 Julian Hall  
 Elizabeth Hunt  
 Past Master & First Liveryman Mark Huxley  
 Past Master Peter Hewitt  
 Past Master Kate Jolly  
 Senior Warden the Rt Hon. the Lord Mayor, Alderman Alastair King  
 Avi Lasarow  
 Nicholas Levens  
 Oluwasheyi (Sheyi) Lisk-Carew  
 Past Master Rick Lowe  
 Brian Marcel  
 Ben Martin  
 Christine Nicholson

Mark O'Neil  
 William Polston  
 Andrew Pullman  
 Harvinder Rattan  
 Stephen Roach  
 Christopher Simmance  
 Talan Skeels-Piggins  
 Colin Spiller  
 The Master, James Talbot  
 Khalid Talukder  
 Middle Warden Jat Wasu  
 Stephen Wheatley  
 Paddy Willis  
 Barnaby Wynter

### 14/07/25

Karan, Lord Bilimoria  
 Dinesh Dhamija  
 Past Master Gary Dixon  
 Jenni Dunman  
 Paul Eveleigh  
 Kieron Garlic  
 Jenny Garrett  
 Tomas Halgas  
 Matthew Hayes  
 Amy Hopper  
 Rowan Jackson  
 Chuan Hong Khaw  
 Antoun Massaad  
 Tony Matharu  
 Edmund May  
 Simon West



# Election Court 2025

*Tradition & Renewal – Looking Ahead to a New Company Year by Jon Spree*

**T**he Election Court of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs is a cornerstone in the Company's governance and a celebration of tradition, contribution and leadership. It traditionally sits on the last Thursday of June each year and, while it continues to handle the regular business of the Court, its primary constitutional duty is the election of the incoming Master and three Wardens, who assume office in late November.

Any voting member of Court is eligible to stand for election to these offices, and the process reflects both the democratic spirit and collaborative ethos of the Livery movement. It is a moment that honours continuity, while welcoming fresh stewardship.

Duly, on Thursday 26th June 2025, the Court of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs elected the officers who will lead the Company through the forthcoming year, commencing 24th November 2025.

## Officers Elected for the 2025, 26 Company Year

- Master, The Rt Hon. the Lord Mayor, Alderman Alastair John Naisbitt KING, DL
- Senior Warden, Mrs Rita William BOLOGNA
- Middle Warden, Mr Jatinder Singh WASU
- Junior Warden, Mrs Veronica Pastora HEAVEN

Each officer brings with them a wealth of experience, dedication to the entrepreneurial spirit, and a strong commitment to the values of the Company, community, integrity, excellence and progress.



## Leadership Rooted in Fellowship and Service

Leadership within the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs is both an honour and a responsibility. The elected officers uphold not only the governance of the Company but also its public, facing mission: to support enterprise, encourage education, and contribute meaningfully to the civic life of the City of London.

As we look ahead to the 2025, 26 Company Year, the newly elected team stands ready to lead with distinction, upholding our heritage while continuing to champion the innovative spirit that defines the modern entrepreneur.

## Warm Congratulations and Good Wishes

The Master Entrepreneur, Mr James Talbot, offered his sincere congratulations to those elected, expressing his confidence in their ability to guide the Company through another successful year.

**“We are grateful to all who serve and step forward into leadership. The newly elected Master and Wardens embody the energy, vision, and values that have defined our Company from the start. I wish them every success in the year to come.”**

# Election Court Banquet 2025

*Fellowship, Firsts and Forward Momentum by Chris Simmance*

**F**orward Momentum - Monday 14 July 2025 witnessed a defining moment for the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs. We celebrated our formal constitution as a Livery Company and presentation of Letters Patent, and our place as the 112th Livery in the City's order of precedence.

The evening saw members and guests gathered at Mansion House for an Election Court Banquet, one that wove time-honoured City tradition with the energy of modern enterprise. After a welcoming reception in the Salon, it was into the Egyptian Hall where the Master Entrepreneur, James Talbot, opened the evening with words that set a tone of shared purpose and optimism.

## The Lord Mayor's Congratulations

Representing the Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Sir William Russell offered heartfelt congratulations on the Company's elevation. He spoke of the City's deep relationship with commerce and innovation, linking the Mansion House's eighteenth-century origins to today's entrepreneurial ambitions and raising a smile with a light remark about the oft-quoted French “word for entrepreneur”.

The magnificent banquet allowed guests to savour the best of City ceremony while enjoying the vibrant spirit that defines our community. The evening was both enjoyed and deemed a resounding success by all.

## Philanthropy at the Heart

Sir William also acknowledged the Company's generous support of the Lord Mayor's Appeal, which this year champions MQ Mental Health Research and the Homewards initiative. In addition, he commended our steadfast commitment to affiliated Armed Forces units and to the Armed Forces Covenant, a living example of enterprise allied with service.

## Recognising Impact and Excellence

True to our values of education and opportunity, the banquet stage became a platform for impact:

Presentations were made to the 2025 beneficiaries of the Company of Entrepreneurs Trust.

The winners of EASI 25 and the Defence Academy Entrepreneurs' Prize received well-deserved acclaim.

These awards highlighted the creativity and purpose that run through every aspect of our fellowship.

## Welcoming New Freemen and Liverymen

The Master warmly welcomed 9 new Freemen and 16 new Liverymen, before concluding his remarks with the results of the



Election Court (held just a couple of weeks earlier). Celebrating new membership and looking ahead to new leadership - both clear signs of vitality and progress.

## Looking Ahead

The 2025 Election Court Banquet demonstrated how tradition can sit comfortably alongside progress. United by fellowship and driven by purpose, we have secured our place within the ancient framework of the City while championing the entrepreneurial ideas that will shape tomorrow. As we look forward, one truth remains clear: entrepreneurship, grounded in service, will continue to enrich both the Company and the wider community we proudly serve.



# The Founding Clerk's Reflections

My Part in Founding the Guild of Entrepreneurs by Adèle Thorpe

Looking back over these ten years, I marvel at how the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs has grown from an idea and a handful of lively meetings into one of the City's most vibrant Livery Companies. My first real involvement started with a meeting with Dan Doherty in February 2014.

Dan's vision was to create a Livery company for entrepreneurs. It was a group he felt while large in the City, was underrepresented within the Liveries. I agreed to help, free of charge at first and only started charging in 2015 when it became clear there was little rush to replace me as Clerk. As a former entrepreneur, I was delighted to become a Freeman myself.

Dan and Neil (Dan's husband) had already gathered a group of entrepreneurial contacts, forming the core of what became our fifteen founder members. Sir Paul Judge, our key advocate within the Aldermanic Court, helped us navigate the complexities of City governance. The work behind the scenes was immense. There were ordinances, five-year plans, budgets, ceremonial protocols and endless practical decisions from dress codes to new member recruitment all to be drawn up. This included carefully defining entrepreneurship as distinct from established professions. The Court of Aldermen finally approved our Guild in July 2014, and our first official Court took place soon after.

The launch event at Ironmongers' Hall in November that year stands out as a highlight. Done on a shoestring budget, I called in favours and negotiated discounts – I even persuaded the Pikemen to appear for just their bus fares and a couple of pints. Dan paid for his own band and I sourced large badges for Court members for £12 each. The event was a triumph! The ceremony was choreographed to the minute. It had to be with representation from eighty Livery companies – including the Lord Mayor and both Sheriffs. The warmth was palpable, especially when the representatives of the Great Twelve and others rose to greet us. Out of the blue, Sir Paul announced I was to be made Clerk Emeritus. It was quite a moment, though not in my carefully plotted script.

Dan's vision always included doing things to the highest standards – even insisting on white tie rather than the now-common black tie for our dinners. He wanted us to "Out-Livery the Livery," a tradition I'm proud the Company maintains. I remember holding pre-dinner sessions for our younger Freemen, introducing them to the mysteries of the Loving Cup and sung grace.

The Company has always been about friendship, diversity and supporting entrepreneurs. I'm especially proud of how we continue to welcome new faces, nurture young talent and create a spirit of unity. Initiatives like EASI would have astonished us at the start. I love that I still get involved – organising



© Andy Sillett

events, answering questions and helping celebrate women's achievements. Ten years on, members still seek my advice, which is truly flattering.

What did I enjoy most? Being part of something new, seeing it flourish and knowing I helped lay the foundation for a Company that will keep making its mark for many decades to come.

# Inter Livery Regatta 2025

By Paul Theile

The highlight of the City Livery Yacht Club's calendar is the Annual Inter-Livery Regatta, where crews compete for the Lord Mayor's Cup. The 56th Regatta took place from 16 to 18 May in Cowes, with a record 23 boats and 15 Livery Companies represented.

The Company of Entrepreneurs was represented by Liverymen Talan Skeels-Piggins (Skipper), Paddy Willis, and myself, joined by guest Dave Roberts and a local teenager, Jack. We crewed 'MIURA', a 34-foot Colvic UFO.

The day began with an early race briefing at the Yacht Haven. Conditions included a light breeze and cloud cover, with a forecast predicting clearing skies and a significant drop in wind. Unfortunately, the forecast proved accurate. To ensure racing could proceed, the course was shortened for Class 1 and 2.

After some practice, Skipper Talan assigned roles: Paddy on the mainsheet, Dave and I on the headsail, and Jack at the bow. We timed our approach well, crossing the start line off the Island Sailing Club within seconds of the starting gun.

The race route involved a run west of Cowes, a turn back past the town, then a beat to a second mark, and finally a return to the start. Conditions were extremely light, and crews were tested by the combination of minimal wind and strong Solent tides.



© Talan Skeels-Piggins



© Talan Skeels-Piggins

Skipper Talan demonstrated patience and precision, guiding us through the first mark despite trailing the fleet. Recognising the need for a tactical change, we deployed our secret weapon – a 'Roberts Solent Tide Slide', a clever tidal navigation tool. By calculating the optimal course based on tidal flow, we veered 60 degrees off the main fleet's line, aiming to harness stronger currents.

The move paid off. We gained ground and approached the next mark closer to the leading boats, though positioned further out in the channel. As we neared the final turn, the wind dropped and the tide shifted against us. Two additional tacks were needed to make the mark, which cost us valuable time. We ultimately finished 11th out of 13 boats that completed the course. Two yachts in our class were unable to finish, highlighting the difficulty of the conditions.

With the wind continuing to fall, organisers confirmed no second race would take place, and crews returned ashore. Despite the challenges, the race was widely considered a rewarding test of strategy and seamanship.

That evening, the Presentation Dinner was held at the Royal Yacht Squadron. We were warmly welcomed by the Commodore, The Hon. Sir James Holman. After a fine meal, guest speaker Sharon Lee shared her experiences volunteering as a medic with the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust. The event concluded with trophy presentations and a rousing speech from the Aldermanic Sheriff on the importance of the sea to Britain and global trade.





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# Walking the City Streets

The Lord Mayor's Show 2025 by Mark Huxley



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**E**ach November, the City of London marks a centuries-old tradition of transition. It begins with the Silent Ceremony on the Friday, when the newly elected Lord Mayor officially takes office. Believed to date from the 13th century, the occasion is known as the "Silent Ceremony" because, apart from a few words spoken by the Common Cryer and Town Clerk, no speeches are made. The incoming Lord Mayor and their predecessor meet at Guildhall to exchange the symbols of office, including the City's seal, crystal sceptre, pearl sword and ceremonial mace.

One curious tradition follows during the return to Mansion House. The outgoing Lord Mayor passes the key to the Christ's Hospital seal to their successor, who then returns it to the Swordbearer. He keeps it "under his hat" for safekeeping, hence the origin of the phrase.

On Saturday 9 November, the City hosted the 2025 Lord Mayor's Show. This ancient pageant celebrated the inauguration of the 696th Lord Mayor, Alderman Alastair King. A special moment for the Entrepreneurs, The Lord Mayor is not only our sponsoring Alderman but also our Senior Warden.

The Show's route stretched from Mansion House to the Royal Courts of Justice and back again. Thousands lined the streets to enjoy the mix of heritage, music and civic pride. Around 7,000 participants took part, including military units, Livery Companies, community groups and industry bodies, along with 200 horses and some 150 floats.

The centrepiece was, as always, the golden State Coach of 1757, carrying the Lord Mayor. The journey, culminating in a swearing of allegiance at the Royal Courts, is a striking expression of the City's historic independence and constitutional symbolism. Other highlights included the Doggett's Coat and Badge men, military bands, Pikemen and Musketeers, and whimsical entries such as a giant pig float from the Worshipful Company of Paviers.

The 2025 Show reflected the Lord Mayor's theme of Growth Unleashed, highlighting innovation and inclusion while honouring tradition. We at the Company of Entrepreneurs were proud to take part with our own formal presence in the procession for the first time.

This year offered a perfect alignment. With Alderman King taking office as Lord Mayor and our Company on the verge of full Livery status, we wished to show our full support for both him and the theme he represents. Members walked behind an electric van playing a looping video about the Company, kindly produced by our own Kieran Garlic. We carried branded City umbrellas for visual impact, and thanks to the generosity of Eric Khaw, we also highlighted his new Daku coffee house near the Monument.

To conclude a memorable day, I was honoured to be interviewed live on BBC television by Radzi Chinyanganya, sharing our message with a global audience. It was a proud moment for the Company and one I will always treasure.

This joyous civic tradition once again proved its lasting power to inspire, engage and bring the City together.

# Sheriffs' Ball 2025

by Tee Dobinson

**O**n a sunny September evening, Sheriffs Gregory Jones KC and David Chalk welcomed their guests to a fabulous Great Gatsby themed evening at The Guildhall for the 2025 Sheriffs' Ball. As soon as one entered the atmospheric Crypts it was evident that the Roaring Twenties had returned. Fizz, Gatsby Spritz cocktails and Golden Age mocktails were being served and the beautiful guests were draped in jewel-colour dresses and silky suits. Shimmering beads, glittering sequins and fabulous fringes were everywhere.

Entering the Guildhall itself was a delight, with the beautiful table settings transporting us straight into one of Jay Gatsby's famous parties. The welcome speeches from the departing Sheriffs were heartfelt and entertaining, the food was exquisite and the company brilliant, a sure-fire recipe to create smiles. Dancers performed exhilarating routines to entertain us after dinner, before inviting everyone to learn The Charleston. It was quite amazing to witness the dance floor packed to bursting with everyone laughing and dancing joyfully in sequence – so many of us that not a single extra sequin could have squeezed in! Lesson over, the dancing continued and on it went. Dancers mixing their moves between the Charleston, the Shimmy, the Monkey Glide and the Bunny Hop until the lights were finally turned on as, in the face of such fun, requests that time was up had been resolutely ignored!

The evening, of course, has a serious side too – its focus on fundraising. The game of Heads and Tails raises money for the Sheriffs' & Records Fund and, as always, was a great success. Starting with the whole room participating in deciding whether the statements the Sheriffs made in turn were indeed true or false and counting down to a final two. The eventual winner was our own Amy Hopper who, when asked her table number, proudly replied "The Entrepreneurs!" Cue loud cheers from all of us.

The Lord Mayor's Appeal continued its support of two charities: Homewards and MQ Mental Health Research, through ticket sales and the Silent Auction which was held throughout the evening. IPM Mark Huxley had donated a prize this year of a guitar recital from Will Scott. Some people will remember Will from the Jazz Supper in Mark's year – I successfully bid on this and am pleased to say that my son and his friends are now excitedly planning an evening with Will as the star. I've already suggested Great Gatsby as the theme.

As ever, tickets for next year will be on the 'hot ticket list' for 2026 – you heard it here first.



Top Row - Left & Right. Bottom Row Left, Centre Left © Tee Dobinson



# My First Year as a Freeman Entrepreneur

by Sasho Kamburov



**A** Year of Discovery: Becoming a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs was more than simply joining and being part of the City of London. It was a chance to step into a tradition where history, enterprise and fellowship come together. What I did not fully anticipate was the depth of connection, collaboration and shared endeavour that would define my first year.

Entrepreneurship is often called a solitary journey, one filled with decisions, risks and responsibilities that rest on one person's shoulders and that is true. Here though, I discovered something quite different: a community. A place to meet like-minded people, to share experiences openly, to learn from the generosity of others and to be reminded that every conversation can spark fresh ideas and that every problem is simply an unasked question.

**Fellowship in Action:** From day one, there are countless opportunities to connect in the fantastic calendar of events. The Company brings together entrepreneurs from across a multitude of industries and that diversity is one of its greatest strengths – with each event, dinner and discussion being enriched by the breadth of perspective in the room. In these moments, I have been reminded that entrepreneurship is not just about building businesses – it is about building relationships, inspiring others and contributing to something larger than ourselves. What has struck me is the spirit of humility. Success is shared as a process, not a trophy and setbacks are spoken of honestly. This creates a space where learning takes root, resilience is honoured and collaboration thrives.

**Service and Legacy:** A defining part of my first year has been seeing the Company's values come alive through. Through mentorship programmes, outreach efforts and charitable initiatives, members give their time, insight and resources to support future generations of entrepreneurs. It has been inspiring to see entrepreneurs at the very start of their journey winning grants from the Company and receiving invaluable guidance from some of the country's most experienced business leaders. For me, this is one of the most meaningful aspects of belonging. It is not only about recognition, it is about responsibility and within this fellowship that responsibility is channelled into service. To then have the honour of becoming a Liveryman Entrepreneur is something truly special, a deeper commitment to entrepreneurial purpose.

**Closing Thoughts:** I would like to thank all who have supported and encouraged me throughout my first year as a Freeman Entrepreneur, helping to make it such a meaningful and memorable experience. The journey has been one of discovery, connection and inspiration. It has reaffirmed that entrepreneurship does not need to be walked alone, it can be experienced in fellowship.

For those considering membership, the value lies both in what you may gain and in what you will contribute. This is a place where tradition and innovation meet, where entrepreneurs support one another and where together we shape a legacy for the future.

# Leading with Empathy and Trust in a Hybrid World

Insights from the “Hybrid Hustle” Panel at Elite Business Live  
by Harvinder Rattan

**T**his March, business leaders gathered at Elite Business Live in St Paul's to explore how leadership is evolving in a post-pandemic world. One of the event's most thought-provoking sessions, “The Hybrid Hustle: Rethinking Leadership, Trust & Culture”, brought together voices from across the entrepreneurial landscape, including digital entrepreneur Amy Hopper.

Hopper, founder of TOA Group and affectionately known in some circles as the “Digital Wolverine”, shared insights drawn from personal experience and professional leadership. Her reflections offered a compelling reminder of how empathy, trust, and resilience can shape a healthy business culture, particularly in hybrid and remote environments.

## Trust as a Strategic Foundation

A central theme from the panel was the essential role of trust in enabling teams to thrive. Hopper emphasised that trust cannot be reserved for convenience, it must be an intentional and foundational element of leadership. In hybrid settings especially, micromanagement can stifle creativity and reduce autonomy. As one panellist noted, “You hire adults and treat them like adults.”

This approach mirrors contemporary thinking in business leadership, where a coaching mindset and outcome-based culture are increasingly replacing traditional oversight. The panel underscored that human potential is best realised in environments of psychological safety and mutual respect.

## Empathy and Wellbeing in Practice

Leadership today extends beyond performance metrics. Drawing on recent research, the panel highlighted how presenteeism, being physically present while mentally unwell, is affecting productivity and morale across the UK workforce. Hopper advocated for a leadership style that prioritises wellbeing: “Empathy over endless hours” was a recurring sentiment, reminding attendees that resilient teams are also the most productive.

One message that resonated strongly was the encouragement for leaders to invest in emotional wellbeing, both personally and across their organisations. The panel's advice was clear, leaders do not need all the answers, but they must create space for open dialogue, professional growth, and emotional support.

## Why This Matters to Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs often lead diverse teams across locations and time zones. As such, fostering a culture of trust and empathy



is not only beneficial, it is essential. The panel's reflections reinforced how building relationships based on openness, integrity, and shared values can enhance innovation, loyalty, and long-term resilience.

These insights speak directly to the ethos of the Company of Entrepreneurs, whose values, integrity, excellence, community, and innovation, are brought to life through leadership that elevates others. By embracing a people-centred approach, entrepreneurs can help cultivate workplaces that are not only more productive but also more human.

## A Call to Purpose-Driven Leadership

The “Hybrid Hustle” session offered a timely reflection on what it means to lead with purpose. As our professional environments continue to evolve, so too must our leadership. The message was clear: to build lasting enterprises, we must put people first.

In doing so, we echo the Livery's longstanding commitment to fostering ethical, inclusive, and forward-looking enterprise. Leadership grounded in trust and empathy is not only good business, it is a reaffirmation of the values we uphold together.



# Founding Freeman Judith Donovan CBE talks about the Company's Journey

by Master James Talbot



Photo provided by Judith Donovan

**M**aster James Talbot recently sat down with Judith Donovan CBE to talk about how the Guild of Entrepreneurs was set up. Judith was one of the key original founders.

#### The Arduous Beginning:

The journey to establish the Guild of Entrepreneurs was anything but straightforward – it was five years before the official launch would happen. Dan Doherty and Judith did a lot of the groundwork – including Dan spending years persuading the Court of Aldermen to listen to their petition. The Livery companies opposed the initiative as they felt it “Disrespected the self-employed craftsman nature of the traditional historic liveries.” To address these concerns, the founders carefully defined membership criteria around ‘profit-making businesses’. They deliberately excluded one-person operations. Judith and Dan also maintained a firm philosophy: the company “can’t be different until we do equally the same.” Members needed to be ‘Liveryman first’ and ‘entrepreneur second’ knowing and abiding by the rules before breaking them. This approach was essential to convince the City that the new company was not a mistake.

#### An Unlikely Friendship:

The bond of the founding trio – Judith, Dan and his husband Neil Fullbrook – began serendipitously around 2009 at a Marketors dinner hosted by John Fisher in Yorkshire. Judith, a Marketor and Chair of Yorkshire Tourist Board, was seated between Dan and Neil. The three quickly ‘fell in love’ with each other and became great friends.

#### Launch and Early Challenges:

The Guild was launched on 24th November 2014, with Sir Paul Judge as the inaugural Master. Dan, though very ill, made it to his installation as Second Master a year later, achieving his wish that his nephews could witness his role in founding the company. The early years presented unique challenges. Many members had no previous Livery experience and so struggled with protocol. To help with this, Judith introduced the Appreciation Supper to teach essential rules around seating, toasting, dress and the ceremony of the Loving Cup. Judith was also tasked with finding a Chaplain and, in her usual efficient manner, contacted all 50 City churches. We have enjoyed an excellent relationship with our successive churches (All Hallows’ and St Lawrence’s) and chaplains (Bertrand, David, and Sophia) – all thanks to Judith’s thoroughness and foresight.

#### Pride and Vision:

Today, Judith takes particular pride in the Company’s phenomenal profile – being one of the being one of the youngest, most active, and most diverse Livery Companies. She also celebrates the vast and unexpected spread of businesses among members. Looking forward, Judith hopes the Company will preserve its core principles. She used the analogy of the Ravens staying within the Tower of London (legend has it the kingdom will fall if they leave) to emphasise the importance of sticking with our foundational values. She also challenges the Company to lead innovation in charitable giving, asking pointedly: “If the entrepreneurs can’t do that, who the hell can?”

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# The Spring Lunch 2025

by Belinda Black

**T**his year's Spring Lunch was like no other, one destined for the history books of our Livery as it was our first as a Worshipful Company. The event followed straight after the morning's clothing of the Company's first cohort of 41 Liverymen and Women, of which I was proudly amongst.

The lunch was held in the most splendid surroundings of the Reform Club in Pall Mall and was attended by Master James Talbot, the Learned Clerk, Company Wardens, City Consorts, and the Lady Mayoress Florence King. We were joined by our newly clothed members of the Livery, the company's Freeman, and guests for a joyful and reflective afternoon. The Master opened the lunch with formal introductions and welcomed all present. The Lady Mayoress gave a delightful heartfelt speech, which all found entertaining and inspiring.

At the Master's request, I had the honour of speaking about life as an entrepreneurial married couple in the high-tech engineering sector, where persistence is key and very few succeed. I shared a personal journey, through several chapters of our business and family life, where supporting one another unconditionally was key to our success. Challenges included being a FFE a 'Female, Foreign, Entrepreneur', the level of discrimination faced in the beginning against small family businesses and later the oversight required when working with venture capital. I was happy to share some of the lessons learnt as our story moved from initial business set up, through the sale of it to a FTSE 250 company to our current work today where we pioneer technology for good. Today, our innovation centre focuses on practical solutions such as railway resilience in flood-prone areas and the reduction of sewage and plastic in waterways.

My recommendations are: present yourself with confidence, act big, partner with large brands and always aim high. I closed with gratitude to my husband, who now serves as Middle Warden Elect of the Engineers, for his unwavering support over 30 years, and to the Master and Clerk for the opportunity to share our story. Following the lunch, members were treated to a guided tour of the Reform Club. Founded in the wake of the 1832 Reform Act, the Club became a haven for open political discourse. Its current form, designed by Sir Charles Barry, also the architect of the Palace of Westminster, is a testament to mid-19th century architectural grandeur, with its Italian palazzi style and distinctive central atrium.

Over the years, the Club has welcomed many influential figures, from Sir Winston Churchill to Sir David Attenborough and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. While it has seen its share of colourful moments, its legacy remains one of intellectual openness and cultural contribution. Our sincere thanks to all who made the day such a memorable occasion. May the Company flourish – Root and Branch – forever.



# Sleep Out

by Past Master Gary Dixon



**E**very year, the Lord Mayor's charity raises hundreds of thousands of pounds towards supporting its chosen projects. It does this in a variety of different ways, one of which is the Lady Mayoress's sleep out, which began quite recently in 2023 and is now an annual event.

It was therefore the case that, on March 6th 2025, I headed to Guildhall Yard as the late evening chill started to form, with my sleeping bag in hand to experience "sleeping rough" for the evening. I am pleased to say that I was not the only hardy soul who chose this form of self-punishment on this particular evening. I was one of almost 120 people who chose to do so. We numbered amongst us the Lady Mayoress herself, quite naturally as it was indeed her event, as well as Sheriff David Chalk who swapped the warmth of his Shrieval apartment in the Old Bailey for a night on some cardboard, under the twinkling stars which shone down upon us.

The Lord Mayor, our very own Alastair King, welcomed everybody to the sleep out and thanked them for their endeavours. Almost 120 people were there to support the event. The money raised was to support Homewards and the Pret Foundation, both of which do tremendous work to help rough sleepers get off the streets.

I chose to do the sleep out for a couple of reasons. Firstly, to help, in however small a way, to alleviate the problem of rough sleeping. It really is a crying shame that a first world country like the UK has such a prevalence of people unfortunate enough to have no other option but to sleep in doorways etc. The other reason was because I viewed it as a bit of a challenge. I'm not accustomed to sleeping in a sleeping bag in a tent, never mind actually sleeping out in the open at risk of being rained on in early March. It was a sharp reminder to me of how lucky I am. I can't say that I got much sleep. It was a little uncomfortable to have to sleep on a hard stone floor, but it is easier to do in the knowledge that the following evening I would have the luxury of my own bed, as normal. One of the strangest things was the constant noise of the City. At every single hour of the day, something is going on nearby with accompanying noise.

Awaking from my broken sleep, I was welcomed with a bacon sandwich and a coffee from the Pret volunteers who supported the sleep out. As I sipped the coffee, I contemplated the City at 05:00 in the morning which had turned remarkably still, way before the sun started to rise. I was most grateful to the Entrepreneurs who helped me raise almost £1,000 towards the appeal which I subsequently found out had raised a grand total of £90,000. As a Company, we support many initiatives, with this one being a bit less business-orientated, but having impact nonetheless.



# The Confidence Code Conference 2025

by Veronica Heaven

**O**n 22nd May 2025, more than 100 delegates attended The Confidence Code Conference, held at Guildhall with a superb line up of speakers and panelists. Co-hosted by The Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs, The Livery Committee and The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists, the event aligned with International Women's Day 2025 theme: 'Accelerate Action'.

Dame Susan Langley DBE, Alderwoman and Sheriff of the City of London gave the opening address, talking about resilience and self-assurance and explaining how she constantly reminds herself that anything is possible. She encouraged the audience to keep asking: "How hard can it be."

Jill Pay, Chairman of The Gender Index, delivered a compelling message by video on the importance of supporting female founders in the UK. She highlighted how currently 2% of VC funding goes to female entrepreneurs and as a rousing call to action to encourage UK investment in female entrepreneurs asked: "What would 2030 look like if this was 10%. What policies would need be in place to achieve that?"

Richard Savage delivered an engaging presentation asking why women make better negotiators, with stories from the advertising industry and his work as Chief Negotiation Officer & Conflict Coach at Savage Mabeth. Richard's advice was that when it comes to negotiation, "Ask good questions and really listen to the answers."

Amy Hopper, Founder of the TOA Group, presented on Imposter Syndrome and Neurodiversity during which she invited the attending guests to pair up and tell each other something they felt they had felt imposter syndrome around. Amy's key message was: "Remember that social media is a photoshopped version of someone's life."



© Veronica Heaven

Corporate Governance Specialist, NED, Board Advisor and Past Master of the WCoE Kate Jolly, landed a brilliant keynote on: Entrepreneurial Confidence: Courage, Culture and Change. Kate delivered a powerful message and underlined that "Leadership doesn't always look like the loudest voice in the room" and the crucial need to: "Build a positive culture, especially if you are the Only, the First or the Last".

A panel session followed, chaired by Court Assistant and Chair of the Entrepreneurs DEI Committee, Veronica Heaven, with esteemed speakers: Florence King, Lady Mayoress, Talan Skeels-Piggins, Paralympian and Founder, Sarah Jane Benham, CEO Kru Live Global and Mark Gettleston, Director of The City Belonging Project, City of London Corporation.

Further takeaways for the audience included:

Build resilience; be patient with progression; choose carefully who you work with; reframe nerves into excitement; act 'as if'; build an ecosystem where everyone belongs and is supported and remember people want to be part of the magic of the square mile.

The inspiring messages shared at the Confidence Code Conference has once again led to inter-livery goodwill flowing towards with Entrepreneurs with an appetite to co-host or collaborate on future events and initiatives – or simply to support with a helping hand, whenever it is needed. As an inclusive, co-operative and collaborative livery company, the WCoE is delighted to work with others and welcomes the engagement.

Thanks to the WCoE DEI Committee: Veronica Heaven, Talan Skeels-Piggins, Debbie Hatchwell, Kate Jolly, Amy Hopper and Neil Fullbrook for their valuable support for this event.



© Veronica Heaven

# Presentation of the Letters Patent

A Day of Honour and Tradition by Elizabeth Hunt



© Jonathan Cherry

**W**hat an honour it was to attend the Presentation of the Letters Patent in the historic Old Ballroom of the Mansion House on an exceptionally hot day in July 2025. The occasion was steeped in history, ceremony, and symbolism, marking an important milestone for the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs.

The proceedings began with a grand and dignified procession. Led by the Acting City Marshall, the Sheriffs, and the Sword and Mace bearers, the procession announced the arrival of the Lord Mayor, our own Senior Warden, The Rt Hon. the Lord Mayor Alderman Alastair King DL, together with other Aldermen and High Officers. Following this august company, our Master, Wardens, Clerk, and Beadle of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs entered the Old Ballroom, taking their rightful places in the assembly. The atmosphere was one of solemnity, anticipation, and pride, heightened by the grandeur of the surroundings and the significance of the occasion.

The presentation of Letters Patent is not simply a formality; it is intended to be a public act, read aloud and preserved as part of the historical record. This form of open proclamation is central to the tradition, emphasizing both transparency and the enduring importance of the grant. The Town Clerk read the Order of the Court for the Grant of the Livery to our Company, followed by the Chamberlain, who gave voice to the Letters Patent themselves. Hearing these words spoken aloud brought home the weight of history and responsibility that accompanies the granting of livery status.

The Letters Patent themselves are works of art as well as legal documents. Created by the distinguished heraldic calligrapher Tim Noad MBE, they bear intricate and meaningful decoration. Dragons, starbursts, and subtle references to St Ethelburga are woven into the design, alongside our significant number—112—marking us proudly as the 112th Livery Company of the City of London. The artistry of the Letters Patent not only honours tradition but also embodies the spirit and creativity of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs.

When the formalities concluded, ceremony gave way to celebration. The Freedom and Livery Clothing of Freemen of the Worshipful Company followed, another moment rich in tradition and meaning. The room, which had earlier held the solemnity of official readings, was now filled with warmth, joy, and camaraderie.

For me, as one of the Founders of the Guild of Entrepreneurs, this day represented a deeply personal milestone. To see the Company progress from its earliest beginnings as a Guild to the receipt of its Letters Patent was to witness a vision fulfilled. It has been an honour to be part of this journey, and a privilege to share this occasion with my daughter, connecting generations through a medieval tradition that remains vibrant and relevant today.

As we look ahead to what the future holds for the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs, we carry forward our motto with pride: Dare, Create, Succeed. The Presentation of the Letters Patent reminds us not only of where we have come from but also of the exciting path that lies ahead.



# The Ten-Year Timeline

Timeline of the Guild and Company of Entrepreneurs

## 2014/15

Master: Sir Paul Judge.

Assisted by Adèle Thorpe, 16 entrepreneurs petition the City of London to form a Guild of Entrepreneurs.

### July 8

Court of Aldermen approves the formation of the Guild.

### September 8

First Court Meeting held at the Old Bailey. Alderman Sir Paul Judge elected as Master, Dan Doherty as Senior Warden, with other Wardens and Court Assistants appointed.

### November 17

First Annual Lecture during Global Entrepreneurship Week at the London Capital Club.

### November 24

Official launch and Installation at Ironmongers' Hall in the presence of the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Masters of over half the City's Livery Companies.

## 2015/16

Master: Dan Doherty.

### February 5

Duncan Simms becomes the Guild's first permanent Clerk.

### June 23

First Guild Banquet at Mansion House.

### November 25

Dan Doherty installed as Master at Painters' Hall, shortly before beginning treatment for a brain tumour.

## 2016/17

Master: Kate Jolly.

### March 8

First Spring Lunch is held.

### March 16

Dan Doherty, Founder and Master, dies in office.

The Court commissions the Dan Doherty Memorial Bell, cast at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, to be rung annually at the Installation Dinner.

Sir Paul Judge serves again as Master.

### March 28

First Military Affiliation signed with the Defence Academy of the UK.

### May 21

Sir Paul Judge dies.

## 2017/18

Master: Lee Robertson.

### June 5

Guild of Entrepreneurs Trust makes its first grant.

### September 20

Barbara, Lady Judge, becomes the first Honorary Freeman Entrepreneur.

## 2018/19

Master: Peter Hewitt.

### July 11

Fundraising skydive raises money for the Trust.

### July – December

Judith Donovan CBE, the Drapers' Company, and Adèle Thorpe become the first Patrons of the Trust. Drapers' Hall becomes the Guild's home.

## 2019/20

Master: Rick Lowe.

### April 22

First Freeman admitted "by virtual presence" during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### October 14

Affiliation with RAF Rapid Capabilities Office.

### October 20

The Guild of Entrepreneurs becomes the Company of Entrepreneurs.

### 2019

First Raleigh Lecture held.

# The Ten-Year Timeline

Timeline of the Guild and Company of Entrepreneurs

## 2020/21

Master: Lars Andersen.

### November 24

Historic online Installation Dinner, with guests worldwide joining remotely to watch Lars Andersen installed as Master.

### October 5

Affiliation with RAF Air Mobility Force.

## 2021/22

Master: Judy Hadden.

### November 24

Launch of EASI (Entrepreneurs' Award in Social Innovation).

### March 1

Famous "pyjama" pancake race.

### September 28

Junior Warden Alderman Alastair King admitted as Sheriff.

## 2022/23

Master: Gary Dixon.

Trust commissions seven silver goblets to commemorate its Patrons.

## 2023/24

Master: Mark Huxley.

### October 31

First six Patrons' Goblets received.

### October

Cartwright Cup held.

### November 8

Senior Warden Alderman Alastair King admitted as the 696th Lord Mayor of London.

### November 9

Company of Entrepreneurs' first float processes in the Lord Mayor's Show.

### May 8

Female Entrepreneurs Group created.

## 2024/25

Master: James Talbot.

### 2025

10th Anniversary Year.

### February 5

Company of Entrepreneurs becomes the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs, the 112th Livery Company in the City of London.

### May 14

Seventh Patron's Goblet received completing the set.

### July 7

The Lord Mayor presents the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs with Letters Patent.

### July 14

Letters Patent formally granted, sealing the Company's place as a Livery Company.

**INTERESTED IN BEING A PART OF OUR FUTURE?**

Find out about becoming a Freeman Entrepreneur

[www.entrepreneurscompany.org/join-the-company](http://www.entrepreneurscompany.org/join-the-company)



# Everyone Has A Book In Them

by Neil Fullbrook



**I used to brush off the idea that everyone has a book in them. Surely that was for people with remarkable lives, extraordinary experiences, or the kind of wisdom that could fill shelves. Me? I was just getting on with work, with life. Writing a book felt like something far beyond me.**

But the thought kept coming back. It surfaced most often when I found myself answering the same questions from younger mentees, or from those navigating challenges with neurodiversity or their sexuality in the modern world. Over and over, I'd be asked about leadership, about choices, about what it was like to live as LGBTQ+ in the 80s, and how to transition into today's world—one where, thankfully, we no longer have to mask. Sometimes, I even thought: if I stitched these stories and lessons together, maybe they'd form something. Then I'd laugh at myself, close the drawer in my mind, and move on.

That changed the day I heard Tee Dobinson speak. She was honest in a way that disarmed me. She said, "I literally had my latest book in a drawer. For years. On leadership courses and in coaching sessions I wrote down all the questions people asked me, along with my answers, and kept popping them in the drawer. When I was finally ready, I outlined my sections and wrote all my collected

thoughts on post-its and popped them into the plan. If you have an idea for a book, how about making notes whenever a thought hits you? Then when you do sit down to write your masterpiece a lot of the work will already be done!"

I remember thinking: maybe the drawer I'd kept shut in my head was meant to be opened after all. Tee's method wasn't magic. It was practical, human. Just start with notes. Fragments. Nothing heroic. Just stuff I knew too well.

Around the same time, a conversation with my friend and Liveryman, Rick Lowe—probably one late night at Home House—hit a nerve. I've known Rick since The Entrepreneurs of the City of London was formed, that was before the Guild of Entrepreneurs days, and he told me his own story of wanting to write, of waiting for that push, that validation. His words stuck: "As humans we are all drawn to stories that evoke emotion and experience. I always wanted to write a book but it took a nudge from a publisher who saw me speak at an event to help shape the book I am writing today. My first thought was, 'Why would anyone be interested in my story?' But it's the actual unique events in our lives, and the actions taken and lessons learned that are invaluable nuggets that others can relate to—and hopefully take forward into their own lives to reflect and incorporate. That's why everyone, in theory, has a book inside them."

That line—why would anyone be interested in my story—was one I'd asked myself countless times. Yet hearing him admit it, then counter it, changed my perspective. It wasn't about grandeur. It was about honesty. About putting down the events that shaped me, the mistakes I made, the lessons I learned, and how they shaped my entrepreneurial journey. If those could help someone else navigate their own life, wasn't that reason enough?

So, I've started. Not a masterpiece. Just notes. Just moments. A drawer full of scraps, if you like. But over time, I hope those scraps will form a picture—a story that is uniquely mine, but perhaps, like Rick said, filled with nuggets others can use.

And now, when I hear the phrase everyone has a book in them, I no longer dismiss it. Because I know mine has been there all along, waiting for me to be ready. It may never fully take shape, but it is there—growing quietly, asking me to give it voice.



© Clockwise from Top Left Tee Dobinson, Joe Pimmer, Joe Plimmer

# A Day At The Races

by Shernaz Engineer

**M**onday, 16th June, saw the Entrepreneurs at Windsor Races trying to outwit the course bookies and make a small fortune.

It was a beautiful sunny late afternoon when we met and our esteemed Clerk was dressed in the most appropriate attire, looking very dapper in a checked jacket, tie and a Homburg hat. Very much a gentleman who frequents various racecourses! The rest of us in summery outfits, with Simon West in a fetching Hawaiian shirt.

We travelled en masse to Windsor by train and then took a boat to the racecourse. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon, and the boat ride was as picturesque as the Berkshire end of the Thames can be.

On arrival we, true to form, went straight to the bar and got fortified with the free drinks included in the price of the entrance ticket. It was then onto the grandstand for the first

race. There was much discussion on who to back but finally the Master's consort Helen, plunged on 'Hello Luna' and won at a very favourable price of 9/1!

We moved down to the parade ring for the second race, to admire the horses and see which one looked like a winner. The next three races had no surprises as all the favourites won, but then the following two races produced 9/1 winners which made some people very happy. The last race was magical, with a 40/1 winner in 'Spuddling'!

After another round of drinks, rather good fish and chips, and lots of merriment it was time to depart after the last race. A gentle glide back down the river before the return train to London rounded off our visit.

It was a day of full of fun, with lots of shared good humour and the sight of beautiful horses galloping down the course. It all made for a wonderful outing, and a perfect day at the races!



© Rakhitha Dias



## Mark Huxley FRSA

*Elected Chair of Financial Services Group of Livery Companies*

**Our Immediate Past Master, Mark Huxley FRSA, a distinguished leader with nearly five decades of experience in the insurance and financial services sector, has been elected as the incoming Chair of the Financial Services Group of Livery Companies (FSG). He will succeed Mark Spofforth, Past Master of the Horners and the Chartered Accountants' Company, who demonstrated exceptional leadership during his tenure.**

Founded in 2006, the FSG is the largest collective of its kind within the Livery movement. It comprises 13 Livery Companies and two Guilds (as observers), and operates as a vital centre of expertise, enterprise and networking in the City. Its primary function is to support the Lord Mayor, the Court of Aldermen and the City of London Corporation in promoting the Square Mile's world, class financial and professional services sector.

Mark Huxley brings a rare combination of technical insight, entrepreneurial leadership and civic commitment to this role. Beginning his career at Lloyd's, he served as a claims specialist and rose rapidly through its ranks. In the late 1990s he pioneered the UK's first dedicated outsourced claims management company, an industry first that grew into a nationally recognised brand. In 2015, he co-founded one of the country's earliest insurtech businesses, Wrisk, earning widespread recognition as an innovator.

After stepping back from executive life in 2017, Mark has applied his skills in non-executive capacities: chairing, advising and mentoring numerous ventures. He has been a long-standing mentor at the Lloyd's Lab start-up accelerator and a regular judge at leading insurance industry awards. His contributions to entrepreneurship and education continue as a visiting lecturer, supporter of SME programmes within the City and Chair of the Trust Board at City Gateway, which advances social mobility.

As a Liveryman and Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Entrepreneurs, he has played a central role in guiding the Company through its transition to full Livery status in February 2025, a milestone reflecting its growing impact.

He also appears regularly at key industry events, including the "Help to Grow" alumni conferences in south-east London, where he shares insights from his entrepreneurial journey spanning more than 40 years.

Mark's philanthropic interests are wide-ranging. He champions charities dedicated to social inclusion, neurodiversity and biodiversity. His long-standing support of City Gateway and other initiatives reflects his belief in fostering opportunity and giving back to the community.



His appointment as Chair of the FSG comes at a pivotal time for London's financial centre. His strategic perspective, rooted in operational experience, innovation and civic engagement, will be invaluable in promoting London's global leadership in financial and business services.

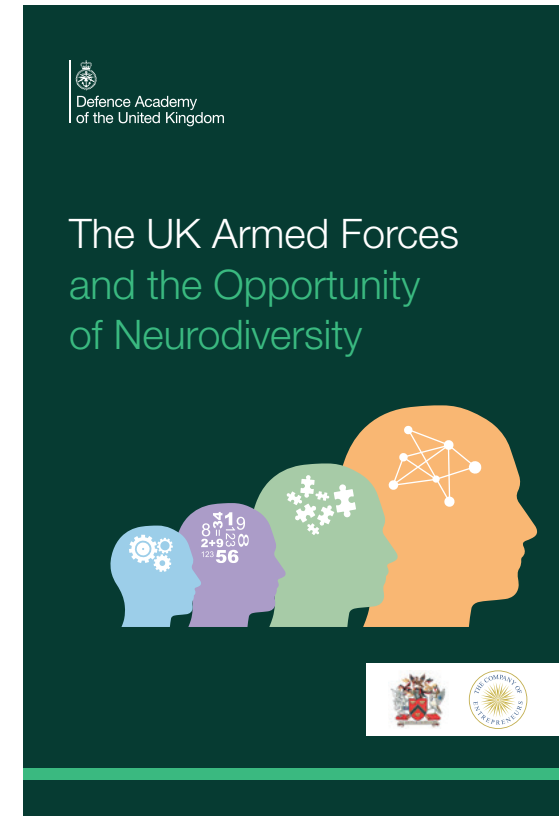
On his election, Mark commented:

"I am honoured to be entrusted with this role and look forward to working with my colleagues across the FSG members. Together, we will continue to showcase the strength of London's financial ecosystem, support the Lord Mayor and the Corporation, and help ensure the Square Mile remains a beacon of excellence."

Mark's deep sector knowledge, entrepreneurial insight and commitment to public service make him uniquely placed to lead the FSG in the next chapter of its journey. We congratulate him on this appointment and look forward to the positive impact of his tenure.

## Different by Design

*Why Neurodiversity is the Untapped Edge of Entrepreneurship by Amy Hopper*



**Walk into any entrepreneurial gathering and you'll find the same buzz: ideas flying, people multitasking, conversations pinging across sectors. It's chaotic. It's thrilling. It's a little overwhelming. And for many of us neurodivergent entrepreneurs, it's also strangely familiar; because our brains are often wired for exactly that kind of energy.**

Neurodiversity, a term coined in the late 1990s, refers to the natural variations in human cognition. It encompasses conditions like ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and others. The neurodiversity paradigm is a framework that considers these differences (in sensory processing, motor abilities, social comfort, cognition, and focus) as part of natural human variation, not necessarily pathological. Positively, these traits are increasingly seen not as flaws, but as alternative operating systems. Ones that, in the right environment, can be powerful assets in business.

The 2024 Deloitte report "The Neurodiversity Advantage" noted that neurodivergent individuals bring enhanced creativity and innovation; key traits in today's business world.

As both a Sociologist and ex-CEO working closely with diverse founders, I've seen how traits linked to neurodivergence (hyperfocus, pattern recognition, unconventional problem-solving, and intuitive thinking) often align with entrepreneurial success. Yet despite many natural advantages, neurodivergent founders are often under-supported, under-capitalised, and underestimated.

Executive dysfunction, sensory overload, or challenges with traditional communication norms can make business basics (like investor emails or daily admin) disproportionately exhausting. Leadership programmes and accelerators still largely assume one 'right' way to pitch, plan, or present and this may unintentionally exclude brilliant minds who work differently. There's also a hidden emotional toll. Many neurodivergent entrepreneurs have spent years masking (suppressing natural behaviours to 'fit in') or internalising the belief that they're chaotic, lazy, or 'too much.' That self-criticism often follows them into business, turning every setback into shame. But in truth, they're operating with a different cognitive toolkit; one that requires tailored strategies, not more pressure.

Thankfully, change is underway. The Harvard Business Review study "Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage" found that neurodiverse teams can be up to 30% more productive when well managed. I am glad to say, it is one study of many, which found the same positive results. We can also look to high-profile examples of neurodivergent leaders who've used their unique perspectives to drive meaningful change. Dr. Temple Grandin, an autistic professor and author, transformed livestock handling worldwide by seeing systems differently: her visual thinking reshaped an entire industry. Barbara Corcoran, who is dyslexic and was told she was 'stupid' as a child, built a real estate empire and became a leading investor on Shark Tank, using storytelling and intuition to spot potential others missed.

These aren't just inspiring stories, they're evidence that neurodivergence can be a lever for large-scale innovation when supported well. Did you know that over 35% of UK entrepreneurs identify as dyslexic, compared to just 10% of the general population?

Entrepreneurship thrives on edge-thinking, audacity, and reimagining the status quo. The 'neuro-spicy' often live at the edge of systems, which uniquely positions them to reinvent them.

If we want truly inclusive, future-ready business ecosystems, we must evolve our understanding of 'talent' to include difference, rather than just tolerate it – instead celebrate and invest in it. In my own work, I encourage founders to reframe neurodivergence not as a challenge, but a lens for redesign. That means building systems around energy, not endurance. It means offering asynchronous communication, flexible structures, and psychological safety as standard: not as perks, but as strategic essentials. The future of entrepreneurship depends on how well we adapt to the full range of human potential, because we all know the best ideas rarely come from thinking the same. Perhaps the minds that struggle to fit in are the ones best suited to change the game.



## A Mellow Note to End the Season

*The Autumn Jazz Dinner 2025 by Chris Simmance*

**F**ounders Hall came alive on a crisp September evening as the Company of Entrepreneurs gathered for one of the most anticipated events in its calendar—the Autumn Jazz Dinner. With a programme defined by warmth, fellowship and exceptional musical talent, the evening marked a fitting finale to the Master Entrepreneur’s domestic engagements for 2025.

Guests were welcomed into the Hall’s serene garden at 6.45pm, where al fresco canapés set the tone for what was to follow. Accompanied by the smooth strains of live jazz drifting through the autumn air, members and guests alike enjoyed a moment of conviviality before stepping into a relaxed, cabaret-style dining experience.

In his remarks, Master James Talbot captured the spirit of the event perfectly:

“What a special evening! Jazz played in the garden, during dinner and then a mini concert at the end. It was so relaxed that the Clerk was wearing a cravat!”

The musical highlight of the evening was a dazzling performance by emerging artists from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, continuing the Company’s proud commitment to supporting educational excellence in the arts. The jazz ensemble, comprising Chris Clayden (saxophone), Edouard Le Feuvre (bass), Thomas Sladden (keyboard), Theo Hayhurst (drums), and Sandy Watkin (trumpet), delivered an unforgettable performance, met with enthusiastic applause and genuine admiration.

Their participation was made possible through the kind involvement of Dr Jo Lawry, recently appointed Head of Jazz at the Guildhall School. Dr Lawry, who addressed the gathering during dinner, is internationally renowned for her work with Sting, Paul Simon and Peter Gabriel, and brought both gravitas and charm to the occasion. Her remarks reflected not only the excellence of the Guildhall School—ranked third globally for performing arts—but also the spirit of collaboration that lies at the heart of the Company’s educational mission.

Senior Warden Rita W Bologna summed up the evening succinctly: “Wonderful Jazz Dinner last night. Thank you Master and all that organised it.”

The Autumn Jazz Dinner is notable for its ease and intimacy, offering an informal atmosphere within the structure of a formal gathering. More than just an evening of entertainment, it provides a valuable opportunity to deepen relationships within the Company and to demonstrate our support for the next generation of creative talent in the City of London.



© Anne Roebuck

With places limited to just 54 guests, this event remains a favourite among members—a celebration of tradition, innovation, and fellowship wrapped in the mellow notes of jazz. As ever, the Company remains grateful to all who made the evening possible, especially the musicians, the team at Founders Hall, and those behind the scenes who ensured a seamless and memorable experience.

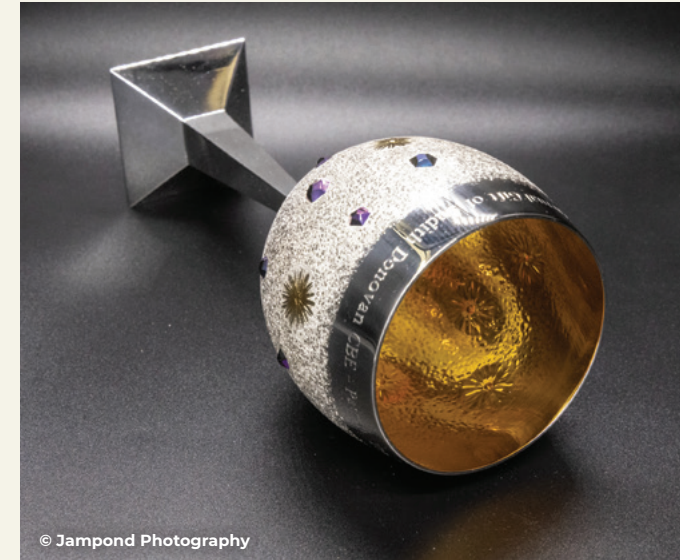
As the music faded and carriages arrived at 10pm, guests departed with smiles and lingering melodies—carrying with them not only the joy of the evening but also the enduring values of the Company: community, excellence, and support for the arts.



© Anne Roebuck

## The Patrons’ Goblets

*A Legacy of Generosity by Duncan Simms*



© Jampond Photography

**D**uring Lee Robertson’s *Mastership, a Court Dinner at Bakers’ Hall* sparked an idea that would lead to a lasting and beautiful tribute to the Trust’s most generous supporters. Inspired by the historic silver on display, including a 17th-century piece commemorating a perpetual benefaction, we began exploring how the Guild might recognise its Patrons through bespoke silverware.

In 2019, Master Peter Hewitt gave his endorsement in the Guild’s fundraising literature, proposing that Patrons – those making major financial gifts to the Trust’s Perpetual Fund – be honoured through specially commissioned silver goblets. The first Patron was Founding Freeman Judith Donovan CBE, followed by the Drapers’ Company (whose Master, Philip Ogden, presented the donation after a sponsored skydive), and former Clerk, Adèle Thorpe.

As interest in the scheme grew, and with seven Patrons confirmed by mid-2023, the Trust surpassed its £300,000 fundraising target. The Trustee Board approved a budget to create our own set of silverware.

Working with the Goldsmiths’ Centre, we adapted their 2018 beaker competition to form the basis of our commission. Designer Jake Davis refined the brief, and silver spinner Stuart Ray joined to provide technical guidance. With support from Cookson Precious Metals, who supplied bullion at cost, the call for entries was issued in summer 2024.

We received 29 expressions of interest. From these, 11 designs were commissioned, and seven final goblets selected. The silversmiths, many early in their careers, rose to the challenge under Stuart Ray’s mentorship. Despite a demanding schedule, six goblets were delivered by the 31 October deadline.

That morning, a special preview was held at Drapers’ Hall, attended by the Trust’s Chairman Gary Dixon, Master Entrepreneur Mark Huxley, five Patrons, and representatives from the Goldsmiths’ Centre, Cookson Precious Metals, and several Livery Companies. It was a celebratory occasion that recognised both creative endeavour and philanthropic spirit.

The finished goblets honour our seven Patrons:

- The Donovan Goblet by Alice Fry**
- The Drapers Goblet by Alewijn Slingerland**
- The Thorpe Goblet by Katie Watson**
- The Bologna Goblet by Dan Bollard**
- The Wasu Goblet by Caius Bearder**
- The Howard Goblet by Oscar Saurin**
- The Lilani Goblet by Scott Smith**

These are not just ceremonial objects. They reflect a new generation of British silversmithing talent. Three pieces were recognised at the 2025 Goldsmiths’ Craft and Design Council Awards, and The Donovan Goblet was featured in the Yorkshire Post.

The goblets are now held at Drapers’ Hall and were first used publicly at the Company’s 10th Anniversary celebration at Ironmongers’ Hall. At the time of writing, their value has more than doubled, reflecting both rising bullion prices and the makers’ growing reputations.

This project honours generosity, fosters talent, and leaves a legacy that will inspire for generations. It embodies the entrepreneurial values at the heart of our Trust.

If you are considering making a major gift and would like to know more about recognition as a Patron, please contact: [clerk@entrepreneurscompany.org](mailto:clerk@entrepreneurscompany.org)



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## A Journey of Service

### Stephen Wheatley's RNLI Story

**A**s he prepares to stand down from operational duty after two decades on the lifeboats, Company member Stephen Wheatley agreed to be interviewed and reflects on service, teamwork and the enduring impact of a 200-year-old charity that saves lives across our waters.

Stephen joined the RNLI at 50, initially told he might only serve five years. A subsequent policy shift from age limits to fitness standards extended that horizon, to the benefit of the communities he served and the crews he has been part of. Now, approaching his 71st birthday, he intends to retire from front-line callouts with grace and gratitude.

His affection for the RNLI's culture of fellowship is unmistakable. He speaks warmly of "the impact" and "the teamwork," recalling the unique bond forged on fast boats in bad weather at unsocial hours. That bond extends ashore: from Tower Lifeboat Station on the Thames where Stephen is based, to towns around our coastline, the lifeboat station is so often at the heart of the community.

Stephen places the RNLI in its historic context. Founded in 1824, the institution has launched on approximately 385,000 "shouts" and saved 146,000 lives, a record built by generations of volunteers – with over 8,000 of them volunteering today. The RNLI operates around 237 stations with a fleet of over 400 lifeboats, from inshore craft to the larger all-weather boats that range far offshore. It is sustained entirely by charitable support, with an operating cost of around £190 million a year.

Yet the statistic that most captures Stephen's imagination is one he helped to illuminate. It started in a conversation with his wife Barbara, talking about how their chance meeting, many years ago now, has led to three children and, to date, seven grandchildren. How many more 'sliding doors' moments had been made possible, they wondered, because of lives saved by the RNLI? Stephen suggested the question to the Worshipful Company of Actuaries and, by modelling family formation and survival over two centuries, an actuarial analysis produced a striking estimate – some four million people are alive today because a RNLI crew once saved one of their ancestors. The figure now features in the RNLI's impact narrative, a reminder that every rescue can ripple across generations.

Stephen's story is, at heart, one of integrity and excellence in action: training hard, launching when the pager sounds and serving with humility alongside neighbours and friends. It is a story of education and prevention too. Like the modern fire service, he observes, today's RNLI places growing emphasis on helping people avoid trouble on the water in the first place, complementing the core mission of saving lives at sea.



Though stepping down from operational duties, Stephen expects to remain involved, welcoming visitors to his beloved Tower Lifeboat Station, sharing lessons learned and championing the next generation of volunteers.

While interviewing Stephen I was struck by his values – prepare diligently, act decisively, and leave things better than we found them – ideals shared across our own community of entrepreneurs. He also spoke about the importance of his family. "It sounds to me as though you consider the RNLI part of your family," I commented. "It is," he replied. "It has been for twenty years – and it always will be".

Stephen Wheatley was interviewed by Tee Dobinson



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