



Worshipful Company of Constructors

Quarterly Newsletter — APRIL 2020

ISSUE 11

The Newsletter

This issue of the Newsletter is the eleventh in our quarterly series of Newsletters and is being published at an austere and worrying time for many of us. The current Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed our Lives. We are in a State of Emergency and Lockdown. But the Livery must overcome all difficulties to continue to support its membership and look forward to the light at the end of the tunnel.

To maintain, as much as we can, business as usual whilst being mindful of both legislation and advice, the Worshipful Company of Constructors, has adopted many new processes and is becoming even more reliant on modern IT - virtual meetings using Zoom.us and Microsoft Teams are becoming the order of the day. One must perhaps ask, if it works now, why don't we do it all the time? But we must remember that the Livery is founded on social interaction, so it is perhaps right and proper that we revert to the age-old traditional format of the regular Court Meeting, although this will probably be the subject of much debate going forward. Whilst the virtual meetings work when members are locked down at home, once they return to the hustle and bustle of normal office life will they be able to be as focused remotely in a virtual meeting as they are when in a real meeting? Perhaps only time will tell!

Not surprisingly, our intended programme of events has, at least in the short term, been drastically curtailed. Many events have been cancelled, some deferred to later in the year when we hope that the Covid-19 pandemic will have passed. The Master has already cancelled the proposed weekend in Singapore and has deferred his weekend in France. Both the Networking Event and the Sir Christopher Wren Banquet have been deferred, and our regular informal lunches at Ironmongers' Hall have been cancelled as the Hall has been required to close and is unable to offer lunches until the pandemic is over.

The upside of all of this doom and gloom is, however, that once the pandemic is over we hope quickly to return to our normal vibrant programme of events, but we will need members to support as many of those events as they can, otherwise we may be forced to cancel events because they are not financially viable - we cannot run events at a loss.

Company News

The current Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic has, of course, impacted the day-to-day operation of the Company to a significant extent and, because many of our events have been cancelled, this issue of the Newsletter is somewhat short of event reports and photographs, but there was an important event held on 2nd March at which Yeoman Anjali Pindoria was presented with her Master's Certificate 2020.



The ceremony took place at the Mansion House where the Awards were presented by the Lord Mayor, Alderman William Russell and the Senior Warden (Arthur Seymour), standing in for the Master, who was hearing a case and thus unable to attend.



Anjali is pictured on the left receiving her certificate from the Lord Mayor and Senior Warden, Arthur Seymour.

The Worshipful Company of Constructors is very pleased to participate in the Master's Certificate Scheme as it allows us to recognise the immense achievements of young people within the construction industry and of our younger members.

It was a busy day for the Senior Warden because immediately after the ceremony at the Mansion House he attended an informal lunch at the City University Club. As many readers who are also members of the City Livery Club will know, their lease at the Little Ship Club is coming to an end, and they have decided to move to the same building as the City University Club, sharing their dining and bar facilities. So, with the help of Steward and Liveryman Jason Farnell, we organised an informal lunch at the City University Club, to try out their dining and bar facilities. The Club was very welcoming and the general opinion of those who attended was that the food and wine were excellent, but there were differing opinions about the location and general ambience of the building. There is no doubt that it is not as convenient as the Little Ship Club for many of the locations that the Company uses in the City.

Court was held on 12th February, and we were pleased to welcome 3 new Freemen. We would normally have published their names, but the Editor has been advised that this may be in contravention of their rights under GDPR, so whilst that issue is resolved, we warmly welcome all our newer members and hope that they find membership of the Company not only an essential part of their career, but also enjoyable and exciting. At Court on 12th February all present stood in a minute's silence out of respect for our Almoner, Honorary Member Michèle Burrell, who had sadly passed away in February having fought a long battle with cancer. Michèle had effectively been our Almoner for many years, although it was only in July 2019 that she was made an Honorary Member of the Company. She had always approached this difficult task with compassion, understanding and honesty. We will miss her, and everything that she did for the Company. Her Memorial service on 6th March was attended by 28 members of the Company, a fitting tribute to the respect in which she was held. Our thoughts are with her husband, PM John Burrell and their two daughters, who are themselves Freemen of the Company.

Pancake Races 2020



The Worshipful Company of Constructors were again represented at the annual Inter-Livery pancake races. These were held on Shrove Tuesday, by kind permission of the Chief Commoner, and for the 16th time in the Courtyard of Guildhall. The weather was fine and dry, if a little chilly, and the members of the Constructors' team, whilst not actually winning anything this year, acquitted themselves very well.

Our team comprised of the Junior Warden (Derek Farrow), who was standing in for the Master; Liveryman Dragan Krstevski; our novelty runner, Livery man Ben

DeSanges, who used the power of modern graphics to run as "Big Ben"; and one of our newest Freemen, Georgina Walker, who ran as our "Lady".

Anjali Pindoria had won the Ladies race for us last year and as the picture on the right shows, Georgina came exceedingly close to winning it again this year.



Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

The current pandemic is something that none of us can ignore, much as we might like to. The current emergency situation affects us all, and Livery Companies are not in any way excepted. Members will have received the Master's recent letter, and also the communication from the Lord Mayor. Both of these are also available on the website which we are trying to ensure is always updated with the latest information in this rapidly changing situation.

All members are affected in one way or another by the current pandemic, but if you need any help at all do please let the [Clerk](#) know. The Company can then work with you to find the best way in which it can help you.

Much of the City has now closed down, and the public face of the Company may also seem to have done the same, but rest assured that behind the scenes there are many members and officers working very hard to keep some form of "business as usual" going and to prepare for the times when life will return to normal.

As mentioned in the message from the Clerk, we have effectively cancelled ALL events up to the end of May, so if you've booked in for an event and haven't been contacted about its cancellation then please let the [Senior Steward](#) know. We are looking at events in June and July, with some still waiting for a view to be finalised, and others, like the Sir Christopher Wren Banquet and the Networking Event, being deferred until September, when we sincerely hope that things will have returned to normal.

Message from the Clerk



Our Gallant Clerk is Kim Tyrell, and it is he who manages the majority of our workings, administration of the Court, payment of our dues and all our communications with Members. Whilst this newsletter replaces the "Clerk's Notes" the Clerk will still provide information to members as needed.

The latest message from the Clerk is:

COVID –19 & IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON COMPANY PROGRAMME

You will all have seen the message from the Master and the alterations the viral pandemic have forced upon the Company's programme. The informal networking events are now taking place virtually and the bi-monthly informal lunch in April has been cancelled. The Master's Weekend to Singapore and the May Companions Lunch have also been cancelled. We will take a view on the June informal lunch (1 June) and the Master's Garden Party (21 June) by 30 April to decide whether they can go ahead, although this seems unlikely at present. The June networking event will be rescheduled for September. The Sir Christopher Wren Banquet and the Master's Weekend in France have been postponed until dates in September (see below). Otherwise, it is intended to hold the May and July Courts remotely and all Company Committees will continue to function, again remotely.

COURT, LIVERY, COMPANIONS & COURT LUNCH 2 JULY 2020

The Court scheduled for 2 July at Skinners' Hall remains in the programme and the lunch usually restricted to the Court & Livery will be opened to the whole Company. Obviously the

Company's ability to conduct this function will depend upon the overall situation and the event will remain under review. We have set the date of 30 May to decide whether the lunch will go ahead.

MASTER'S WEEKEND – DURHAM 17 – 19 JULY

The Master's Weekend in Durham remains in the programme and whilst it is currently full I will be asking people to confirm their attendance as we get a better feel for the developments in the Country at large. Again, we have set the date of 30 May to decide whether the weekend takes place.

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN BANQUET 8 SEPT 2020

This has been re booked to take place in Middle Temple Hall on Tuesday 8 Sept 2020 and a flyer will be sent out nearer the time

MASTER'S WEEKEND MIMIZAN – 11-13 SEPT 2020

Again the weekend has been re booked for Sept and the Clerk will email all those who have expressed an interest to confirm their attendance as the overall situation becomes clearer.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

GP and the executive committees will run via Microsoft Teams (or other networking software if Chairs of committees prefer), The Master, Wardens, Tres, Hon Treasurer & Clerk are all in contact as necessary with the aim of continuing the work of the Company during this hiatus and it is still the intention that the new "Junior Court Assistants" will be elected at Common Hall on 17 Sept. So if you wish to apply and have not yet done so please forward your nomination to the Clerk as soon as possible.

The Master Writes ...

Dear Fellow Constructors



At the beginning of March I did not think I would now be writing to you in early April from my home in Kent.

Tomorrow, those of you who had signed up to the Singapore Weekend, would have been listening to a seminar given by me, Deborah Pullen and Kevin Hydes at the British High Commission. You would not only have been listening to talks on "Construction Contracts for the 21st Century", "How Innovation can stimulate a more competitive Construction Sector" and "How to deliver net zero buildings" but, in case that prospect does not sound attractive, you would then have been sipping drinks and canapés in colonial splendour, before dinner on the roof of the Marina Bay Sands Hotel (which looks like a boat on stilts). Instead, like most of you, Barbara and I will be in splendid isolation.

When will this end? That is the question we are all asking. It will certainly be weeks if not months. When the lockdown is released, it is likely that people will gradually be allowed to return to normal. As one commentator said the release of restrictions will be "a dripping tap rather than opening the floodgates". Dinners and other social functions are probably only going to be possible at the very end of the restrictions. As you will see from the Clerk's Notes, we are estimating that things may be back to normal by September so that we can hold events, including the Sir Christopher Wren Banquet in the splendid medieval hall at Middle Temple. Whether the events in late June and July will take place remains to be seen but we will be in contact this month and in May to update you with the position.

How then are we going to continue to operate the Company? Committee Meetings are being held as normal by telephone or video conference. We are going to hold virtual Courts in May and July, perhaps even admitting people to the Freedom or the Livery, although gowning and signing the book might be a challenge! As you will have seen, Gary Jackson is continuing his informal networking events with everyone having a drink and talking on Zoom. It certainly makes sure that you don't need to buy a round!

As I, like many of you, expect to be at home for a lengthy period, I am starting a process of "Connect the Members". I will be contacting you to see whether we can arrange to speak on the phone, by Whats App, FaceTime, Skype, Zoom or Teams over a coffee, tea or a drink, with the aim that, during my year, I will have spoken to every Member. It might take a month or two but ...

I know that, for some of you, this will have been a particularly difficult time. You may have been laid off, made redundant or put on furlough. You or one of those close to you may have suffered with the virus or need help in other ways. It is important that the Company and the Charitable Trust support you, whatever your position or difficulty. We are there to help, so please do contact me or the Clerk, if we can help.

Whatever the next few months hold, I am sure we will emerge from isolation refocussed on the future. I also hope that I shall have the chance to meet you, in person, at least once before my year ends!

With very best wishes

Sir Vivian Ramsey – Master

City Briefings

These are aimed particularly at new Liverymen and Freemen; partners are also welcome, as are Court Assistants and Liverymen of longer standing, who have not previously been to a Briefing and who are also encouraged to attend.

They give a short introduction to the work of the Corporation, especially the relationship with the livery companies. The presentation is given by an Assistant Town Clerk and a member of the Livery Committee. There is opportunity to ask questions of the speakers and the Briefing is followed by a light finger buffet, which provides the chance to mix with other Liverymen and Freemen.

The Briefings are held at the Livery Hall, 71 Basinghall Street, Guildhall, London EC2V 5DH and there is a non-refundable charge of £20 per person.

There are several Briefings a year and the next Briefings will be held on Tuesday 15 September and Monday 9 November. The briefing originally planned for 26 May has been cancelled. Once you have selected and applied for one of the Briefings, you will be able to change the date and carry your payment forward, providing 10 days notice is given. To change the date of the Briefing which you wish to attend you should contact the [Course Administrator](mailto:liverycourses@cityoflondon.gov.uk) at (liverycourses@cityoflondon.gov.uk) stating your and your guest's (if applicable) name, your livery company, the date of the course you were originally booked on and the new date of the course you wish to attend. Please also note that bookings can only be made up to 10 days before each course and that bookings will close when the maximum number of attendees (120) has been reached.

Programme and timings:

- 5.00pm **Registration**, tea/coffee served
- 5.30pm **Welcome:** Vicky Russell, Chairman of the Livery Committee
- 5.40pm **The Freedom of the City of London:** Murray Craig, Clerk to the Chamberlain's Court
- 5.55pm **The role of the City of London Corporation:** Simon Murrells, Town Clerk's Department
- 6.10pm **Livery companies, their membership, and activities:** Paul Jagger, The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists
- 6.25pm **On being an Alderman, Sheriff and Lord Mayor:** Alderman Alastair King
- 6.40pm **Panel discussion with Q and A**
- 7.00pm **Closing remarks:** Chairman of the Livery Committee
- 7.05pm **Drinks Reception**
- 8.00pm **End**

Membership News

It is with great sadness that we report that our Almoner and Honorary Member Michèle Burrell lost her battle with cancer on 6 February. As PM John Burrell's wife, she had effectively been our Almoner for several years and many members have paid testament to her understanding, sympathy and compassion. She will be sorely missed. As a mark of respect Court stood in silence for a minute at their meeting on 12 February.

The current average age of the Company is now around 55, with well over 60% of our members being over 50 years of age, so we have a long way to go to meet the aspirations of the Membership Committee. 14% of our members are over 70 years of age.

15% of our members have declared as female and we believe that some 5% are from BAME background. Both of these figures compare favourably with the latest figures that we have from both the Industry and the Livery.

Forthcoming Events

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, all events up to the end of May 2020 have been cancelled, and the list of events below is subject to change. For the latest information it would be wise to check the Company [website](#).

2 July	Livery Lunch (may be cancelled)	8 Sep	Sir Christopher Wren Banquet
8 July	Constructors' Golf Day (may be cancelled)	9 Sep	Revised Inter-Livery Clay Pigeon Shoot
16/17 July	Master's Weekend in Durham	11-13 Sep	Revised Master's Weekend in France

Where the above details are in **BLUE** a Flyer or other notification has already been issued, and bookings should be made in accordance with the instructions contained in the Flyer.

We are also hoping to arrange several other informal events as the year progresses, so please look at the Company website (www.constructorscompany.org.uk) for details of these and updates on any of the events listed above.

We are always looking for people to arrange our technical visits and informal events. If you are able to assist in this way, please contact [Iain Meek](mailto:iain@meek.demon.co.uk) (iain@meek.demon.co.uk) who is the Chair of the Events committee.