



Worshipful Company of Constructors

Quarterly Newsletter — October 2020

ISSUE 13

The Newsletter

This issue of the Newsletter is the thirteenth (unlucky for some) in our quarterly series of Newsletters and is again being published at an austere and worrying time for many of us. The current Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed our lives, but the Livery continues to overcome all difficulties and is supporting its membership and looking forward to the light at the end of the tunnel which, thankfully, and despite some setbacks, seems to continue to loom ever closer.

During the pandemic, the Worshipful Company of Constructors has adopted many new processes and has become even more reliant on modern IT – virtual meetings using Zoom.us having become the order of the day. One might 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, and the Clerk has emphasised this. We have also injected (thanks to a number of members) a series of informal social events and "Zoominars" into our programme.

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 their character may well change to reflect the "new normal" of social distancing and infection control (for example it is almost certain that the Loving Cup ceremony will not be with us for some time to come). When we do start up again in a face-to-face mode 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.

The Membership under "Lockdown"

These continue to be strange times for all of us – physical interaction outside one's household has all but ceased in recent months, and only now is slowly returning, albeit with a respectful glance over the shoulder to the demands of COVID-19.

Whilst we have been constrained, many of us have found different things to do, and some of our members have been extremely active in organising our enforced "virtual" informal social programme, particularly **Liveryman Gary Jackson, Junior Court Assistant Stewart Owen** and **Liveryman Craig Harding**. Virtual events have included a series of seminars, given in the main by various members of the Company, Virtual Informal Networking sessions (VINES) and a Virtual Quiz, all of which have been successfully facilitated using Zoom.

All of the essential Company business has continued, again using Zoom, and this has included holding Virtual Courts and Standing Committee meetings. Remote working has meant that many of our members have had to learn new techniques and disciplines, but the general view has been that, whilst the intangible benefits of social interaction at real life meetings have been missed, the corporate governance of the Company has been well served. We have even managed to install new Freemen and clothe new Liverymen virtually.

The one member of the Company whose planned year has been most seriously affected is the Master, Sir Vivian Ramsey. He has seen pretty much all of his events cancelled since the advent of Lockdown, including his Master's Weekends and the Sir Christopher Wren Banquet. Unfortunately his professional commitments mean that, unlike the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs, he will not be able to continue his Mastership next year. He also feels that it would not be right for the Company if the normal course of events were not followed. So, the Master Elect (and perhaps by the time you read this, the Master) Arthur Seymour, will have been proposed and elected at Common Hall 2020 and will have been installed, albeit in a reduced Installation Service, on 8 October 2020. Because of the continuing Lockdown arrangements it has been decided that the Installation Dinner will not follow on from the Installation Service, but will be held (regulations permitting) on 11 February 2021 at Carpenters' Hall, with the Livery and Awards Dinner being deferred until 7 April 2021, at Drapers' Hall. Hopefully, as we move into 2021 we will be more able to be definite, and life will return to some sort of normality – but we shall have to see.

During Lockdown our military affiliates have also had to comply with the ever changing regulations. Even though they are deemed to be essential services they have still to manage their social responsibility to their people, many of whom are volunteers, so their focus during Lockdown has been very much on looking after their people, and the families of those people. In this context it was good to note that one of our affiliates, the South West London Army Cadet Force had used our funding to purchase a licence for some software that allowed them to interact with their cadets, not only for training purposes, but also to connect with them during Lockdown on a more social level with quizzes and the like. To see our funding being put to such good use in what are extremely taxing times is most gratifying.

HMS Lancaster continues to develop and train her crew so that she can return to service in a fully operational state with the crew fully confident with their new facilities. Although the pandemic has caused some interruption to the training process the ship's captain, Cdr Will Blackett RN, has focused on the more personal needs of the crew and their families. Not only has he ensured that they are made to feel part of the ship's family, but he has also instigated a "Kids' Club" so that the children of the crew can feel part of the ship, and be further aware of what the ship is doing. HMS Lancaster has also originated a logo for the club which is based on the ship's shield and is shown on the right.



101 Regiment training has not only seen several senior staff changes but also been quite seriously affected by the pandemic. Within days of lock-down being imposed they had instigated a programme of virtual training, but whilst this was both effective and kept people in touch with the Company, it was no real substitute for the face to face training that is needed to keep qualifications that need regular re-certification, current. Their annual deployment to Germany was cancelled, and they replaced it at short notice with a two-week deployment to the Defence Explosive Munitions School at Bicester. This was generally agreed to have been very successful. With the Company now being designated as an essential service, regular parades and face to face instruction can resume, albeit with Covid-19 measures in place, and one of the first tasks of the Company is to ensure that all members are properly aware of the requirements for Covid-19 safety.

5001 Squadron RAF has also had to adapt to different ways of working, but they were quickly able to implement appropriate controls, including periods of isolation for personnel going to, or returning from deployments. By so doing they were able to continue with their busy maintenance schedules in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Africa and the Middle East, as well as being deployed to Lithuania in support of a NATO mission. They also played a key role in maintaining UK operational readiness when runway works at RAF Lossiemouth demanded the temporary relocation of the RAF Typhoons to Kinloss, something that resulted in a scale of deployment that hadn't been seen since the early days of Operation Herrick in Afghanistan. Even with the pandemic restrictions at their highest, 5001 Squadron has not stood still for a moment, with their Expeditionary Airfield Facilities Flight constantly planning, managing and delivering their operational defence outputs across the UK and the World - thereby helping the UK to achieve its national and international objectives.

The Master Writes ...



Arthur Seymour will be installed as Master Constructor on 8 October in St Lawrence Jewry. Due to the Covid-19 regulations his installation will be much smaller affair than normal, and only invited guests will be present. However, the service will be live streamed on the internet. Whilst the programme for Arthur's year as Master is, of necessity, still somewhat fluid, he writes as follows:

"Dear Fellow Constructors

It is with great pride and humility that I don the Master's Badge and Gown.

I follow an illustrious line of Masters and extend my gratitude to them all, especially the last two who sorted out the finances of the company in a professional and effective manner.

The coming year is not as everyone expected, as indeed the second half of last year was not. Our IPM demonstrated what can be done under these difficult circumstances and I am very pleased to see that he intends to 'go around again' in 2028-9, the first Master Constructor to do so.

We have plans for the coming year which may or may not be fulfilled. We hope and plan for the best but are prepared for the worst. Our industry has been, and will continue to be, sorely affected by the present pandemic.

As a company I am resolved that we focus our efforts on the welfare of our members and of the Industry at large. Our Charitable Trust has set aside a fund to support Covid-19 related charitable endeavours both within and without the company and I urge all members to make contact if they feel we can help in any way.

In anticipation of the restrictions easing soon we have arranged an Installation Dinner in February, a Livery Dinner in April and the Sir Christopher Wren Banquet in June. I also hope to have a Master's weekend in Tunbridge Wells in May, a Charity Dinner at the Reform Club in September and possibly a Charity Bike Ride to Amsterdam in September as well.

We shall also continue our social gatherings where and when allowed.

My sincere best wishes to you all and I look forward to seeing you all in person, eventually.

Stay safe."

*Arthur Seymour
Master Constructor*

The Immediate Past Master Writes ...

Dear Fellow Constructors



As my Master's year comes to a close and I hand over to the Master Elect, I can look back at this unprecedented year. It has been a year in two parts: October to February were life as normal; March to September have been anything but normal.

Life as normal for the Company ended with the last physical Court and Livery and Awards Dinner on 12 February and the Senior Members' Lunch on 13 February 2020. By then I had attended 43 dinners, lunches, concerts, lectures and other events. I was delighted that the Mistress, Barbara, was able to hold her event at Middle Temple on 4 March, raising money for my chosen charity REDR. On 9 March 2020 I and the (now)

Master Elect attended the Modern Livery Companies' Spring Dinner at Vintners' Hall, since when everything has become virtual. There is still a hope that a final informal lunch - in tables of six without mingling - will take place on 5 October so that I can squeeze in one last physical event before the end of my year, but the storm clouds are gathering.

Like all of you I have had to adapt to a new world of lockdown, social distancing, masks, quarantine, testing and tracing. In all of this, thanks to the versatility of the Gallant Clerk, the Company has continued to perform almost as normal, with Zoom or Teams being the means of communication. This has meant that committee meetings have continued as have court meetings but the three Master's weekends all had to be cancelled, as did the Court lunches and the Sir Christopher Wren Banquet. All these and other informal events, which are an important part of Company life have, for the time being, disappeared.

We have been fortunate to have Gary Jackson, new JCA Stewart Owen and Craig Harding who have made sure that members of the Company have been able to meet on Thursday evenings by Zoom. The VINE event organised by Gary and hosted by Stewart has now seen a large proportion of the active Company taking part, together with people who are interested in joining the Company. We have also, thanks to Craig, had an interesting series of lectures by distinguished speakers (present company excepted). We started with rebuilding London after the Great Fire of 1666 by Stephen Cornish, now a Freeman, I spoke about Construction Contracts for the 21st Century, Kevin Hydes spoke about Net Zero Carbon Buildings, Caroline Gumble spoke about Mental Health in Construction, Deborah Pullen spoke about Innovation in Construction and Femi Santos spoke about the workings of an architect's mind. These were excellently presented and well received and are available to be listened to at your leisure.

Some of you might have seen, that as I become the Immediate Past Master, I shall move back to the bottom of the ladder and currently intend to seek election, God willing, to reappear in 2028/2029 by which time we all hope that Covid - and Brexit - are long gone and the country and the people have returned to good health.

It only remains for me to thank everyone for the support they have given me during the year. Nothing would have been possible without the tireless work of the Gallant Clerk and the hard work of the Wardens and Committees. I am very grateful to them all. With my congratulations to the Master Elect for the coming year and my best wishes to you all,

Very best wishes

*Sir Vivian Ramsey
Master 2019-20*

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.

The latest message from the Clerk is:

"As the virus restrictions roll on it is necessary to accentuate the real positives which have characterised an otherwise disappointing few months. We cannot escape the loss of the Master's Weekends and the Sir Christopher Wren Banquet. In the same vein the popular and regular events of the new Livery year, the City Remembrance Service and the Lord Mayor's Show have both been sadly, but not unexpectedly cancelled.

However, the Company has taken action to preserve as much of the Master Elect's programme as possible with the move of the Installation Dinner to 11 February 2021 and the Livery and Awards Dinner to 7 April 2021.

Through the use of a mini outside broadcast set up (rather than lash up!) the intention is to provide a live feed from the Installation Service to Members via "Zoom". The Service is to be held in St Lawrence Jewry at 1730 on 8 October. Because of the very restricted numbers allowed the attendance will be limited to the Master, Master Elect and a few of their guests. The Wardens will take part via "Zoom". Prior to the event I will have promulgated a Flyer asking those who wish to view the

installation to let me know. I can then send them an invitation.

Thanks to the continued work of Gary Jackson and Stewart Owen we have restarted the VINE every other week and Craig Harding continues to line up more members for the Zoominars.

Henry Lamb gets the prize for the first "live, actual physical event" with the Inter-Livery Clay Pigeon Shoot on 9 September, closely followed by what we hope will be a regular informal lunch for a restricted number of participants on 5 October at Ironmongers' Hall.

With the on-going restrictions on singing Canon David Parrot, the Honorary Chaplain is looking to produce a virtual Carol Service in December, and details will be forthcoming when known.

It is worth noting that since lockdown in March, and largely due to the Membership's quick grasp of "Zoom", the Company has conducted all Executive, Management and Charity committees. Court has met three times for full meetings and 6 members have taken Livery, and 14 new Freeman and 1 Yeoman have joined. Common Hall was conducted with the largest ever audience for several years.

Whilst the current situation is a pain for all and a worry for many the Worshipful Company of Constructors is continuing to push ahead and remains fully committed to 'Flourish Root and Branch'."

Common Hall 2020



Common Hall 2020 was not the usual event - it was held virtually, using Zoom. One of the key subjects that was debated was our Charitable Trust. Liveryman Dr Paul Shepherd, the incoming Chair of the Charitable Trust addressed those members who were on the “Zoom” platform at the virtual Common Hall Meeting on September 17th.

He thanked the Court for electing him as an Honorary Court Assistant; he had been a Liveryman for twenty years and he was grateful for this opportunity to serve the Company.

He paid tribute to Ken Kent the outgoing Chair, who had given committed and dedicated service as a Trustee for 20 years and Chair for 17 years. This had ensured that the Trust had a strong platform for the future.

The Trust was first formed in 1988 when funds reached the required level of £100,000 for London Livery Companies. Since then funds have grown to over £900,000 with annual donations of £20,000.

The funds available for donation come from interest and dividends held by the Trust, individual donations and the extremely welcome and important fund-raising events run by the Company.

Dr Shepherd said that there was room to improve communications and reach through to the wider membership. This would strengthen the relationship with the Company and he would be working with his fellow Trustees to achieve this.

He hoped that this would lead to an increased number of Company members making a contribution as during the last year donations were received from only 17% of the membership. This is disappointing as charity is the foundation of the Livery.

The trustees had to ensure that donations are in accordance with the remit of the Trust Deed, which is:

“To advance education, training and research in the construction industry

The relief of persons in need

Other charitable purposes as the trustees may from time to time decide.”

It was particularly important that any donations were through the Trust as this maximised the benefit to the beneficiary because of the availability of tax relief.

The Trust was anxious to ‘make a difference’ and this meant fewer targeted contributions rather than many small donations.

Where possible the Trust wished to donate directly to the beneficiary rather than through other charities. However identifying worthy causes can be difficult and the Trust is always willing to consider suggestions from the Company.

The Company and Covid-19

The Charitable Trust normally disburses funds to construction related causes, but these are extraordinary times and the Trustees have recognised that there are several organisations that have played a leading role in providing support during the pandemic. As such, the Worshipful Company of Constructors, through its Charitable Trust, have made donations to:

- COVID-19 Pan Livery NHS Kitchen Initiative
- COVID-19 Livery Schools iPad initiative
- London First Responders

The COVID-19 Pan-Livery NHS Kitchen initiative started in mid-April 2020 and seeks to prepare and deliver some 4,000 meals to NHS staff each week. The meals are important for more than just their nutritional value. A meal that is delicious as well as good for you can boost morale as much as immune systems.

The COVID-19 Livery Schools Link initiative seeks to help buy devices and connections for the most disadvantaged students in schools who are suffering device poverty. It aims to help schools and students by making grants for the purchase of IT while long-term permanent solutions are identified and implemented.

The role of the First Responder is most important in a time of pandemic as it can mean the difference between life and death, so our contribution supports the First Responders and is a way of helping everyone in these difficult times.

The Charitable Trust is keen to support other similar organisations from the funds that it has identified and the Trustees are looking to make further disbursements in the future.

City Briefings

These are aimed particularly at new Liverymen and Freemen; partners are also welcome. Court Assistants and Liverymen of longer standing, who have not previously been to a Briefing 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 normally 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 each year and the last Briefing for this year will (subject to the then current regulations) be held on Monday 9 November. There will also be briefings on 16 February 2021, 19 May 2021, 21 September 2021 and 21 October 2021. 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 (normally 120, but may be fewer to meet current regulations) 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:** Greg Moore, 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

Lockdown and the City

The City of London has not been immune to the effects of Covid-19. It, too, has virtually "shut-down", and it has been decided that both the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs will serve a further year, until Autumn 2021, so that their planned international mission and programme of international events can be completed.

Therefore the normal routine of elections will not take place this year and, despite the best efforts of all, it has been decided that his year's Lord Mayor's Show will be cancelled for the first time since 1852, when the Country was in a period of national mourning for the Duke of Wellington.

It had originally been hoped that a scaled-down version of the parade could be held in Guildhall Yard without spectators, who would have been able to watch on television from the comfort of their own homes, but after much consideration it was decided that such arrangements would be impracticable, leading to the inevitable decision to cancel the event entirely.

As the Lord Mayor, William Russell, said:

"The Lord Mayor's Show is a unique event but, because of serious and increasing concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic over the coming months, we believe that cancelling it is the right decision.

"Safety must remain our ultimate priority. "I would like to thank everyone who has worked on this Show. "Our gratitude to them will remain undiminished, as will my hopes that we will be able to hold the Lord Mayor's Show next year."

Also in recognition of the current situation, and at a very much "scaled down" version of Common Hall on 29 September, the Lord Mayor (William Russell) and the Sheriffs (Michael Mainelli and Christopher Hayward) were re-elected for a further term of office to allow their intended programme of outreach to continue through 2021.

Virtual Public Consultation

The Worshipful Company of Constructors is one of the leading organisations that support the Construction Industry and so it was that on Tuesday 14th July 2020, Diana Chrouch, Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee, and Paul Singh, Chair of the Young Members sub-committee, held an urgent virtual public consultation entitled 'The impact of COVID-19 on Young People in Construction: Rebuilding the Construction Industry'.

The event, kindly supported by construction lawyers Silver Shemmings Ash, was organised by the Worshipful Company of Constructors due to concerns that young people were being underserved and had only received government support after months of being effectively overlooked by their COVID-19 measures. This was despite the fact that young people were amongst the hardest hit by the pandemic, being up to three times more likely to work in sectors where their jobs are at greatest risk.

Over 150 people signed up to the consultation to hear a number of accounts and experiences from a mixed panel of experts and diverse young leaders in the construction industry. The event clearly hit a nerve because panel members shared a range of heartfelt important issues including the impact on their mental health and wellbeing as well as the obvious financial impacts on them and their families.

The discussion was facilitated by Caroline Gumble, the Chief Executive Officer of the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) and a number of leading industry experts were also included in the panel. They included Ann Bentley (Construction Leadership Council), Martin Gettings (Group Director of Canary Wharf Group) and Jay Parmar (CEO of the Joint Industry Board).

The event was held as a virtual consultation as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions and members of the public were also invited to take part via a number of virtual polls administered at different times during the event. They also shared their views via online chat. This helped us to understand more about the efficiency and success of government's measures.

The consultation also looked at different sectors and regions and its findings are currently forming the basis of a report for policy makers which will be published during the autumn. The report will, amongst other things, outline recommendations about how to reboot the skills and careers of young people and those from diverse backgrounds in an effort to rebuild the construction industry.

If you would like to provide a case study or to be interviewed for the report or for further information please contact us at youngmembers@constructorscompany.org.uk

*Junior Court Assistant Paul Singh
Freeman Diana Chrouch*

Forthcoming Events

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, almost all physical events up to the end of September 2020 have been cancelled, being replaced by various virtual on-line events, and the list of events from the beginning of October is subject to change. For the latest information it would be wise to check the Company [website](#).

2020

8 October [Installation Service \(live stream on internet\)](#)
22 October [Virtual Quiz Night](#)
9 November Informal Lunch at City University Club
7 December Informal Festive Lunch at Ironmongers' Hall
10 December Carol Service (details TBD)

2021

20 January Sir Ian Dixon Awards Evening (TBC)
1 February Informal lunch at Ironmongers' Hall
11 February Installation Dinner at Carpenters' Hall
5 April Informal lunch at Ironmongers' Hall
7 April Livery & Awards Dinner at Drapers' Hall
6 May Companions' Lunch at Barber Surgeons' Hall

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, and perhaps virtual, 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. The instructions for booking will be contained in the flyer for the event, and it would be greatly appreciated if members would book their place on the event as requested in the flyer.

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:iainsmeek@gmail.com) (iainsmeek@gmail.com) who is the Chair of the Events committee.