



# COMPANY COMMENT

Honourable Company of Freemen of the  
City of London of North America  
[www.freemenlondon.org](http://www.freemenlondon.org)

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## From the Masters

### IMMEDIATE PAST MASTER DAVID MOORCROFT

It has been an honour to serve as your Master for the past year, and I would like to thank all of the members of the Honourable Company and my Court for their support and hard work.

While we have made much progress over the past 12 months in implementing our strategy, I would like to comment on a few of our most meaningful accomplishments, as well as on a few areas where we have fallen short.

Let's begin with our goal of renewing our membership, where we had set a goal of recruiting 10 quality people to the Company from diverse backgrounds.

While I am pleased to report that we exceeded our target in terms of recruiting quality people thanks to the hard work of our Membership chair Neil Purcell, I am disappointed to report that we were not successful in recruiting more women to the Company. We continue to be a male-dominated membership, and our recruitment efforts this year did little to affect that balance. In my view, more work needs to be done here in future.

The second area I would like to address is our communications with members. We set out to improve our ability to engage our members in inter-active communication by revitalizing and improving our Company website. I believe being able to communicate and engage our membership in electronic communication is critical to the ongoing viability of our Company, and is particularly important to our ability to attract younger members and involve more people in our events. We made good progress towards this end by engaging a web design company to redesign our web site and improve its relevance and appeal to the membership. However, we are still a

long way from completing this project, and we must continue to push it forward.

The third area we made good progress with this year is the quality and relevance of our events. In particular, we held two signature events with our wine dinner and evening with the Financial Times of London where we were able to draw guests from beyond our own Company and deliver a unique experience. These prestigious events are not only effective ways to promote social and business networking at a very high level, but they are also good ways to raise funds for our charity.

Finally, I am most proud of our progress this year in developing a signature charity cause. Our philanthropic raison-d'être is an area where we have struggled for years, and yet in my view it should be one of the key reasons people join our Company and participate in our fund-raising events. As a result, I am very proud of the great work done this year by our charity committee to develop a scholarship program with the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario. This scholarship program will provide \$5,000 a year to a worthy student to pursue post-graduate studies at a university in the Greater London Area in England. While in London, the student will attend a guild event, and upon their return to Canada, will attend a future AGM to share their experience. I feel this scholarship will help us recruit new members to our Company, and will assist Canadian students in getting a broader international education. I want to thank Martin Walmsley, Geoff Mayo and John Smith, all Past Masters, for their great work on our Charity Committee for advancing this scholarship concept.

It is traditional for the Master to make a gift to the Company upon the termination of his or her term. We have had many wonderful treasures bestowed upon us by Past Masters, including chalices, decanters, chains of office, etc.

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However, I have decided to break with tradition this year by donating \$500 to our charity as my way of showing appreciation to the Charity Committee, and my enthusiasm for the scholarship.

Finally, I would like to thank Peter Leach for his great work over the years in producing our wonderful Company Comment newsletter, a role which he has unfortunately decided to relinquish this year. I have agreed to take over stewardship of Company Comment for the immediate future, but will be looking for someone to assume this responsibility for the longer term.

In closing, I would like to wish Michael Charles the best of success in his new role as our Master. Michael has served me and the Company well as our Deputy Master and Treasurer, and I know we will all be able to count on him for outstanding leadership of our Company over the next year.

**David Moorcroft**

### **MASTER MICHAEL E. CHARLES**

It is a privilege to serve as Master for the upcoming year and I will do my best to maintain and enhance the traditions of our Honourable Company. In so doing, I believe it is important for us all to recognize our roots, both as a Company and as individuals, in the City of London and find ways to strengthen such links. One way of achieving this goal is to attend events organized by the Guild of Freemen. Their program of events for the remainder of 2007 is listed later in this newsletter. I had the opportunity to attend a recent dinner in the House of Commons and found it thoroughly enjoyable. I am going to open a discussion with the new Court with the objective of identifying additional mechanisms for enhancing our relationship with the City.

My own personal roots in the City go back to being an undergraduate student in the City and Guilds College, which at the time was the name of the engineering school of the Imperial College of Science and Technology founded shortly after the Great Exhibition of 1851. Revisiting South Kensington is always a pleasure.

On behalf of all members, I thank David Moorcroft for his inspiring leadership as Master over the past year and Gail Moorcroft for her dedicated service as Honorary Clerk for several years. While Gail is stepping down from the Court, David will continue as immediate Past Master, take up his pen as Editor of "Company Comment", and serve as one of the three Trustees of our Charity, along with Past Masters Martin Walmsley and John Smith. I also thank Agnes Chaitas for her service of many years on the Court.

In the context of the new Court, I also welcome back continuing members Robin Braithwaite as Deputy Master and Honorary Treasurer, John Bishop as coordinator of events, Neil Purcell as membership secretary, John Smith and Karim Kanji. New members of the Court are Paul Wilson who will serve as Honorary Clerk and Nigel Napier-Andrews who did such a fine job of the detailed planning for

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our recent Annual General Meeting and Dinner. Ray Gibson, as Founding Master, is a continuing member ex-officio.

A special "thank you" must go to Peter Leach, who is stepping down as Editor of our newsletter "Company Comment" after almost a decade. He has helped us keep in touch with each other and provided us with fascinating glimpses of the history of the Guilds and Livery Companies. I am grateful that he will continue to provide a historical perspective as David Moorcroft assumes his role as the new Editor.

My own priorities for the Honourable Company in the coming year are to have an interesting series of events for members and their guests, to increase the membership base, to seek enhanced support of our Charity which is now committed to scholarships for Canadian students studying in London, and (to echo my opening comments) to seek ways of enhancing our links to the City.

I look forward to another fine year for the Honourable Company and welcome suggestions at any time.

**Michael E. Charles**



### **The History of the Worshipful Company of Grocers**

#### **Part 1 - The Guild of Pepperers**

One of the most important of the early City Guilds was that of the Pepperers; the Gilda Pipariorum is listed in the Pipe Rolls in 1180. Between 1231 and 1345, nine Pepperers served the office of Mayor, beginning with Andrew Bokerel, whose residence, Bokerel's Bury, gave its name to Bucklersbury Street. He held the Mayoralty, probably on the nomination of the King, for seven years in succession, 1231-37. Sir John Gizors, John de Grantham and Andrew Aubrey were other distinguished Pepperer Mayors, the last-named notable for the vigor with which he suppressed a riot between the Skinners and Fishmongers.

Following the usual practice of those days for members of the same trade to congregate together, the Pepperers inhabited Soper's Lane (now Queen Street), and probably attended service in the Church of St. Antholin that formerly stood at the junction of that street with Budge Row and Watling Street.

The Pepperers were recognised as general traders rather than only traders in peppers. They bought and sold, all kinds of

foods and other merchandise. They were officially connected with the duty of weighing in the City and, together with the Ropers and Apothecaries, nominated the officer in charge of the King's Beam. This beam weighed by "*aver-de-pois*" weight or "*peso grosso*", the latter being the scale by which all heavy goods were weighed in the Port of London. They also were provided with special powers for "garbling" or cleansing spices, drugs and similar commodities, and had access to shops and warehouses. These powers were exercised by their successors, the Grocers, until the close of the seventeenth century.

In the early part of the reign of Edward III (1327-1377), the Guild of Pepperers disappeared: it seems likely that some of its most prominent members were ruined by the exaction of forced loans to enable the King to carry on his war with France. In 1345, the Italian bankers who had been financing the King failed, and the merchants of London, who had provided liberal supplies, were threatened with further heavy tax and loan demands.



## Part 2 - The Grocers' Company (The first 500 years)

The first entry in the archives of the Grocers' Company records the foundation of a Fraternity, which grew into the Grocers' Company. It is written in Norman French and runs, in translation, as follows: "To the honour of God and of his gentle mother and of St. Anthony and of all the saints, the 9th day of May in the year of grace 1345 and the 19th year of the Third King Edward after the Conquest, a Fraternity was founded of Companions Pepperers of Soper's Lane, for love and unity the better to have, maintain and increase among them. Of which Fraternity the originators, founders and benefactors to establish the said Fraternity are" - then follow twenty-two names, headed by that of William de Grantham.

On the 12th June 1345, twenty of the number dined together at "The Abbot's place of Bury", that is, the town house in St. Mary Axe of the Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds. There they chose two Wardens, Roger Osekyn and Laurence de Halywelle. The record proceeds: "At which dinner each paid 12 pence\* and the whole was expended and 23 pence besides by the Wardens (les gardeyns). At which dinner for our first assembly we had a surcoat to be of one livery for which each paid his proportion; the same day after the dinner ended, it was decreed by common assent to take and hire a priest at the nativity of St. John next to come to chaunt and pray for the members of the said Company and all Christians. And to maintain the said priest each one of the Fraternity granted for the year to come 1 penny a week, which amounts to 4s. 4d. to pay now for the whole year....."

\* The financial equivalent today (1997) would be approximately £41.85 each.

They drew up ordinances or "points", including: "No one shall be of the Fraternity unless he be of good condition and of their mistery, that is to say Pepperer of Soper's Lane, canvass dealer of the Ropery or Spicer of the Chepe or other person of their mistery in whatever part he may live. And at his entry he shall pay at least 13s. 4d. sterling or the value, and in good love and with a loyal heart he shall kiss for his obeisance all those who at the time shall be of the Fraternity.

Any of the Fraternity taking an apprentice had to pay 20 shillings to the common box. An apprentice on leaving his master might join the Fraternity on payment of 40 shillings, "provided that he be found and considered of good condition on account of evil contamination that might arise".

The next entry is as follows: "Memorandum that on the 21st day of May in the year of grace 1346 which was the day of our assembly, Laurence de Halywelle, executor of Geoffry de Halywelle late Pepperer of Soper Lane, gave and delivered to the Fraternity in the presence of all who were there a chalice with the paten of silver which weighs 12 ounces goldsmiths weight and a vestment amice, alb, maniple, stole and chasuble together with the corporal and a small missal to remain and be for the service of the Fraternity for ever. For entering and making the said Geoffry as one of the Fraternity on their Register to have his soul in the prayers of those who shall be maintained and assisted by the said Fraternity for ever. Which thing was granted by all of the company and the gift received and his name entered".

Earlier Grocers' Company records describe St. Anthony of Coma, with his pig, bell, staff and book to be Patron Saint of the Fraternity of Pepperers and subsequently of the Grocers' Company. But they do not explain why the feast day celebrated by the Grocers did not fall on the feast day of St Anthony. However, recent research has established a more certain attribution to that of St. Anthony of Anthonin, adopted in 1345 by the Pepperers as Patron Saint and patron of their parish church in Watling Street. This was St Antonin of Pamiers, whose Saint's day in Spain falls on the 18th May, the feast day celebrated by the Grocers up to the time it was merged with the Restoration Feast in the 17th century.

There is a break in the records from 1358 to 1373 in which year the Fraternity is for the first time referred to as the Company of "Grossers".

In the interval two notable men had become members of the Fraternity: John Philipot and Nicholas Brembre served as Wardens in 1369; in 1372 they were Sheriffs; in 1381 they were both knighted by King Richard II, with William Walworth, for services rendered at the Wat Tyler riot. At the accession of Richard II, the grant of a subsidy to the King was made conditional on the appointment of two treasurers to superintend the application of the money; the King appointed Philipot and Walworth. Philipot was Mayor in 1378 and died in 1384. During his year of office he

rendered eminent service to the growing trade of the country by fitting out a fleet at his own expense, which swept the Channel and North Sea clear of pirates. Philpot Lane off Fenchurch Street is named after him. Brembre, who had been Mayor in 1377, was again elected in 1383. Brembre continued to hold office for two more years, but in 1387 he was involved in the 'ruin' of the King's friends when the Duke of Gloucester seized the reins of government. In the following year, he was one of the victims of the Merciless Parliament, and was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn.

At the request of the Company, regulations were made in the City for "garbling" merchandise, such as spices and drugs sold by weight, to check fraud by compulsory cleansing such goods. The Company was given the right to nominating candidates for the office of City Garbler who was then appointed by the Court of Aldermen. The duties of the garbler were evidently well performed, as a petition presented to the House of Commons required that, in every port of the realm where spices were imported or sold, they should be garbled in like-manner as in the City of London. In 1447, the Company was appointed by the King to be the official "garblers" for the whole Kingdom outside the City. These privileges were exercised for more than two centuries, up to the time when the Great Fire paralysed the energies of the Company.

In 1426 they purchased, from Lord Fitz-Walter, the hereditary standard-bearer of the City, his family mansion and garden in Old Jewry for £213 6s. 8d.\*. The property extended from near the present Old Jewry to the bank of the Wall brook, which then ran through the middle of the site now occupied by the Bank of England. The approach was by Conehope Lane which is now Grocers' Hall Court. The foundation stone of the Hall itself was laid on the 8th May, 1427, and by 5th February in the following year the building was sufficiently advanced to allow the members to dine together in the parlour. The building consisted of a Great Hall for the meetings of the Company, a parlour for the use, presumably, of the Wardens, a buttery and a pantry.

The garden was extensive and was laid out and maintained at considerable cost; it contained vines, fig trees and a bowling green. Only members of the Company and certain "honest neighbours in the Poultry" were allowed to use the bowling green. The Company continued to enjoy their garden until the end of the eighteenth century, when the creation of Princes Street and the enlargement of the Bank of England consumed much of it.

The year 1428 was notable for the grant of the Company's first Charter. By this Charter, the Company became a legal corporate body, with power to hold land within the City and the suburbs, to provide charity to the value of 20 marks, "towards the support of the poor of the Company, and of a chaplain to pray for the King while living, and for his soul

while dead, likewise for all persons of the said mystery and commonalty, and their souls and the souls of all faithful deceased".

The management of the Company's affairs rested at first with two Wardens or "Gardeyns". The ordinances made in 1376 provided for the election by the whole company of six other members "to be for assistance and advice to the two Masters for the ensuing year". They afterwards became known as the "Court of Assistants", and this is believed to be the first instance in the records of any of the Guilds of the use of that term. As the Company grew in numbers and importance more Assistants were added. In 1413 Robert Chicheley, who had been Mayor the previous year, was elected "Warden and Governor over the two Masters". This seems to have been a special compliment to him, and was not repeated until 1426, when it became the custom to elect an Alderman as Governor or Upper Master. The charter of 1607 vested the government of the Company in three Wardens and thirty-three Assistants; that of 1640 increased the number of Wardens to four and of Assistants to fifty-one. (The number of Wardens remains the same to the present day, but now about thirty Assistants are considered sufficient to manage the affairs of the Company).

In the year 1558 Queen Mary demanded a loan from the City, the Company's share being £7,555 – or £6.6M in equivalent 1997 money. This was the first of many similar compulsory loans, or "Benevolences" as they were somewhat ironically called. Queen Elizabeth more than once demanded money, which she borrowed free of interest, and then was graciously pleased to lend at 8 per cent! But it remained for the Stuart family to make this burden really onerous; large sums were required on loan and were seldom repaid. The Company supplied the money first from their common stock, and then by assessment on individual members, at first voluntary but subsequently compulsory. In 1642 it was the turn of the Parliament, and the Company was called upon for £9,000. Quoting the Company records: "To such straits were they reduced by these exactions that they had to sell their plate, which realised some £2,000 to make up the money".

Under pressure from James I in 1609, the City of London undertook the colonisation of the lands in Ulster and called upon the Companies to co-operate. The Grocers' Company paid £5,000 and were allotted lands in the Barony of Tirkeerin on the south side of Lough Foyle. At first, the estate was managed by resident agents, but returns were minimal.

With the various extortions of Kings and Parliaments (and the reduction of their numbers by the granting by James I of a separate charter to the Apothecaries, hitherto members of the Company), the Grocers were in a poor financial position at the time of the Restoration, and still financially weak in 1666.

\*Modern equivalent would now be approximately £186,000 (1997 equivalency).

The Great Fire burnt out the Company's Hall and destroyed the greater part of their property in the City from which the Company derived its income. By good fortune, a turret standing in the garden, escaped the flames. This was where the archives and title deeds of the Company were stored and here the Court met on the 9th November following the fire. The Company was already heavily in debt and their main income sources now failed them. In the general ruin caused by the fire, the value of building sites fell to nothing; and the rents obtainable were not sufficient to meet the obligations for charitable activities. For almost a century the Company struggled to survive.

The rebuilding of the Hall was considered vital to the Company, and an attempt was made to raise money by a personal appeal to the members. The amount collected by this means was £700 and was wholly insufficient for any building project. In fact, nothing could be done beyond re-roofing the old walls. However, the loyalty of Sir John Cutler, a Grocer, proved invaluable to the Company at this time; besides contributing considerable sums from time to time to the common fund, he rebuilt, at his own expense, the dining room and parlour, and thus provided a home and meeting place for the members. In addition, Gresham College, the Royal Society, and the Royal College of Physicians were all endowed by his generosity.

In spite of Cutler's munificence, it was still found to be impossible to raise sufficient funds to complete the rebuilding. A climax came in February, 1672 when the Governors of Christ's Hospital, to whom the Company were liable for annual payments charged on properties bequeathed to them by Lady Conway and Lady Middleton, took possession of the Hall as security for arrears. For seven years the Company were excluded from their own premises, and the Court held their meetings at various places including the Crown Tavern behind the Exchange, the Old Council Chamber at Guildhall, and the Halls of the Skinners' and Salters' Companies.

Once recovered, a great effort was made to complete and enlarge the Hall, in the hope that it might become a source of revenue. Sir John Moore led the way to augment it "so as to make it the most commodious seat for the chief magistrate of the City, or a Mansion House". This was successfully accomplished and in 1682 Sir John Moore was the first to undertake his mayoralty in the new hall. He paid the Company a net rent of £200 for it. It continued to be let for the same purpose until 1735, when the Company's circumstances had much improved.

The year 1689 is a memorable one in the annals of the Company, for His Majesty King William III conferred upon it the unique honour of accepting the office of Sovereign Master, as a special mark of his royal favour.

Tranquility and confidence returned with the accession of William and Mary and the rights and privileges of the Company were restored and its affairs gradually began to

improve. The Wardens were empowered to levy on the members a small sum paid four times in the year and termed "Quarterage". The collection of these levies had been suspended after the fire of London because of the distress of the members.

In 1694, an Act was passed establishing the Bank of England. This event proved to be the real turning point in the Company's fortunes. The Bank commenced business in June of that year in the premises of the Mercers' Company led by Sir John Houblon, who had been Master of the Grocers' Company in 1690. The business was soon transferred to Grocers' Hall, under an agreement which provided for a tenancy of the Hall for eleven years on payment of a fine of £500 and the granting of a loan of £5,000. The agreement was renewed in 1705 and again for fourteen years from 1719. The Bank continued to be the Company's tenants until 1734, when the property of Sir John Houblon in Threadneedle Street was bought and a new building erected on this new site.



### Part 3 - Involvement with Oundle School.

While the interests of the Company were almost exclusively bound up with the City, it is also connected with the town of Oundle in Northamptonshire through Sir William Laxton. This resulted in the Court becoming the Governing Body of Oundle School, which went on to secure a prominent position among the Public Schools of England. Sir William, who was Lord Mayor in 1544 and was eight times Master of the Company, left substantial property in the City to the Company. This property was charged with payments amounting to £38 a year for the maintenance of a Grammar School and Almshouses in his native town of Oundle. Laxton had not founded the school but he created the obligation for the Grocers' involvement.

There were difficulties and delays in executing the will and the School was maintained by Lady Laxton. At length on the 3rd June 1573, the Wardens visited Oundle and took formal possession "in the presence of a great number of the Town of Oundle, both old and young, and there was given to 48 scholars a penny apiece to the intent they should better remember the Wardens being at Oundle about the said possession". For nearly a century, the School flourished under the constant care and supervision of the Company and regular visits were paid by the Wardens until their interruption by the troubles of the Civil War. Many of its students went on to Universities in England and Europe.

The disaster of the Great Fire reduced the Company to poverty; the school struggled on, although payments fell into arrears and supervision was neglected. During the eighteenth century the school declined like so many others, but after 1796 when the Company had again become solvent, it began to prosper, providing education of the

ordinary grammar school type until 1876, when the Company brought out an entirely new scheme dividing the School into two branches, a first grade classical school and a modern school suitable for the sons of farmers and tradesmen of Oundle and the neighbourhood, but appointing the same Headmaster for both schools.

The new venture achieved, at first, only a moderate success, but the appointment of F.W. Sanderson as Headmaster in 1892, put fresh life into the School. So successful was he that the numbers rose from 92 on his appointment to 532 at the time of his death in 1922. A pioneer in new methods of education, he enlarged the curriculum to provide the opportunity of studying every subject that might help a boy to make full use of his faculties, making a special feature of the teaching of modern subjects, the sciences, engineering and engineering production. It was his conception of the principles of education which laid the groundwork for Oundle School establishing itself in the forefront of Independent Boarding Schools.

Oundle School was granted a Royal Charter by King George V, incorporating the Court of the Grocers' Company as the Governing Body. Under this Charter, revised in 1977, the Court of the Grocers' Company was formally appointed to be the Governing Body of the School. The direct responsibility for the governance of the School was invested in an Executive Committee made up of members of the Court with six additional Governors invited for their particular expertise. Under an Amendment to the Charter approved by the Queen in Council in 1999, the Court ceased to be the Governing Body of the School. However it retained responsibility for the appointment of the majority of Governors on the new free standing Governing Body.

The Grocers' Company awards annual scholarships to outstanding candidates sitting the School Scholarship Examinations and, in addition, provides a number of bursaries at Oundle and at its sister school, the Laxton Grammar School.



#### Part 4 - The Grocers' Company (The next 125 years) Health and Education

The Company continues to the present day to promote national health and prosperity through the advancement of education and of scientific discovery. It gave practical effect to this policy by the establishment of schools, the provision of scholarships at Universities, and the endowment of scientific research. The City and Guilds of London Institute, to which the Company has made generous grants since its foundation in 1878, is an outstanding instance of their interest in the promotion of technical education.

On the passing of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869, the Company arranged to appropriate some of its obsolete

charities for educational purposes. By this means the sum of £30,000 was raised and applied to the establishment of a school at Hackney Downs, which was opened in September, 1876. The fees charged were below the cost of the education given, and a large subsidy was voted every year by the Court to make up the financial deficit; but the quality of the teaching was excellent and thoroughly justified the expenditure. It brought a sound commercial education within the reach of a large section of the population of London for the first time. However, when the Education Act of 1902 imposed the responsibility for secondary education on local authorities, the Company came to an arrangement with the London County Council, under which the school was transferred to that body and merged with their system.

With the object of encouraging original medical research the Company in 1883 founded scholarships to assist the investigation of matters connected with the causation of disease and the means of prevention of premature death. Discoveries of great value resulted from the work of Grocers' Company's scholars. The names of Woolridge, Woodhead, MacFadyen, Bradford, Starling, Almroth, Wright and Bullock show that the Company was well advised in its selection of scholars. When the scheme for founding an Institute of Preventive Medicine was delayed for want of funds, the Grocers' Company relieved the promoters of their difficulties, and facilitated the establishment of a foundation. This became known as the Lister Institute.

In 1968 the Court decided to bring together its charitable activities into one grant giving trust, The Grocers' Charity. The Charity is administered by the Grocers' Trust Company Limited. In addition to its investments, the Charity receives a significant part of its income from an annual grant from the Grocers' Company and the covenants and donations made by members of the Company. The Charity has wide charitable aims covering the relief of poverty, assistance to youth and the disabled, medicine, the Arts, heritage, the Church and help for the elderly.

During the Great War of 1914-1918, all traditional entertainment was curtailed in London but the Company continued to provide its usual grants to charities and for education purposes. In addition, large sums were given to the various war charities and invested in War Loans. The Hall was lent to the Bank of England, payment being made with 1915 and 1917 War Loans.

During the 1939-1945 war, disaster struck as it did for so many of the London Livery Companies. The Hall survived the Blitz, but on 19th July, 1944, it was hit by a flying bomb which destroyed the Library, one of the drawing rooms and the Clerk's and Beadles' offices. The Company had also lost much revenue owing to the destruction of many of its City properties. After the war, the damaged Hall was repaired, but this is not the end of this story. On the night of 22nd September 1965, the Fourth Hall, originally built in

1890, was almost completely destroyed by fire. The fire, described as the largest in the City since the Blitz was traced to an electrical fault under the grand staircase. The Company archives, plate, library, glass collection and wine cellar survived but most of the Company's fine furniture, chandeliers, pictures and other artifacts perished, as did the intricate plasterwork and elaborate chimney pieces in the public rooms. The Court decided to build a new Hall on the same site incorporating part of the surviving facade. It was opened in 1970.

Today, visitors to the Hall will see what is possibly the oldest bell in the City from the Church of All Hallows, Staining Lane, dated 1458. Badly cracked in the 1965 fire, it was re-welded and restored at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. The Entrance Hall contains a fine portrait of Queen Charlotte by Allan Ramsay, and the Queen Anne mirror was purchased in 1968. The Reception Room is dominated by three tapestries designed by John Piper and produced by Pinton Frères in Fellitin, near Aubusson in France. The tapestries depict in brilliant colours the many spices and foreign food in which the wholesale traders and early members of the Company dealt 'en gros'. The "Piper Room" was refurbished in the summer of 2001, the main purpose being to re-hang his tapestries as a triptych as originally intended. At the same time the period pieces and the busts of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, Earl Alexander of Tunis, Sir Winston Churchill and F.W. Sanderson (former Headmaster of Oundle School) were located elsewhere in the Hall.



### Honourable Company association

The late Arthur Stevens, PM, was a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Grocers and he was a regular attendee at events of the Company when he had the opportunity to visit the UK on business and pleasure.

Many thanks go to the Clerk of the Grocers' Company, Brigadier Robert Pridham, for the provision of a copy of the September 2005 history of the Worshipful Company upon which this article is based. Information about the Grocers' Company can be found at [www.grocershall.co.uk](http://www.grocershall.co.uk).



### Events Report

#### Annual Dinner

The Company assembled for its 28th Annual Dinner on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2007 in the splendid environment of the National Club on Bay Street in Toronto. There were 80 members, their spouses and friends present to enjoy a superb evening. The attendees enjoyed cocktails before being invited by the Master of Ceremonies, Past Master, Hugh Oddie to proceed to the Banquet Hall for dinner. The head table of the Master, David Moorcroft; the Honorary Clerk, Gail Moorcroft; the dinner speaker, William Thorsell; the Deputy Master, Professor Michael Charles; his wife, Barbara; the

Editor of the Company Comment, Past Master Peter Leach; his wife, Kay Leach; and the MC Past Master Hugh Oddie were piped in to take their places.

The Company's Grace was said by its author, Past Master Neil Purcell. This was followed immediately by the Loyal Toast to Her Majesty the Queen proposed by Past Master Geoffrey Mayo, the Toast to the Office of the President of the United States of America proposed by Member, Kingsley Hawes II and finally the Toast to the Guests proposed by the Master, David Moorcroft.

The dinner was excellent, starting with Boston Bibb Salad and followed by traditional Roast Beef Rib – which was cooked to perfection – and accompanied by Yorkshire Pudding au Jus. Orange Crème caramel with Berries made a delightful dessert.

The wines for the meal were the 2005 Domaine La Croix Chaptal Blanc "Vieilles Vignes" and the 2005 Côtes du Rhône from Roger Sabon. Both were selected by Jim Walker (Member) and imported by Arthur Sellers & Company.

After port and coffee, the Master proposed the Toast to the Honourable Company and then initiated the Ceremony of the Loving Cup. As there has been some confusion amongst guests on prior occasions in their participation in this ceremony, the cups were "escorted" by Past Masters to ensure that the ritual was properly enjoyed by all present.

The Dinner speaker, William Thorsell, Director and CEO of the Royal Ontario Museum talked passionately about the construction of the new building of the ROM. Highlighting the masterful craftsmanship which was necessary to create this unique building, he connected his enthusiasm for this project with the historic craftsmanship of the guilds of the City of London. He also emoted the enthusiasm of all the craftsmen involved in this most complex project who were being pushed to the very limits of their capabilities to create an architectural masterpiece. He invited everyone to attend the open-house week when the spectacular architecture could be seen before any exhibits are mounted.

William Thorsell was introduced by Warden Robin Braithwaite and thanked by Past Master John Smith



### Upcoming Events

#### Last Night of the Proms

Location: Roy Thompson Hall, Toronto  
Date and Time: Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007, 20:00  
Dress: Informal  
Cost: \$27.00 pp  
Booking: Contact Geoffrey Mayo at [geoffrey@gadflyworld.com](mailto:geoffrey@gadflyworld.com)  
Booking date: ASAP but must be before 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007

*Other events are being planned. Please visit the Hon. Co's website at [www.freemenlondon.org](http://www.freemenlondon.org) regularly for up-to-date information on all events.*



### **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting was held immediately after the speech by William Thorsell and was the concluding part of the Annual Dinner.

The Master, David Moorcroft, gave his report on the activities of the Honourable Company over the year and took the opportunity to thank for the great support he had received throughout the year from the Court and the members. He noted particularly the work that the Honorary Clerk, Gail Moorcroft, had undertaken and in her support for him, and thanked her as she stepped down from the position after 3 years. The Master went on to thank the efforts of the Trustees of the Charity of the Honourable Company who have almost completed arrangements to establish a graduate scholarship to assist a student to study in London, to learn about the activities of the Livery Companies and to better understand their roll in the continuing success of the City. With the intent of the Court to support the Charity more strongly, the Master announced that, for the first time since quarterage was levied, there would be an increase of \$5 in the annual cost to \$55.

He also commented on the gifts that prior Masters had given to the Company. In his case, he has decided to provide a substantial donation to the Charity of the Honourable Company in anticipation that Masters will, in the future, continue this practice.

The Honorary Treasurer, Michael Charles, presented a brief report on the finances of the Honourable Company, and confirmed that its finances continue to adequately cover costs. He also confirmed that the Charity has now accumulated \$20,000.

The Annual General Meeting part of the evening was concluded with the investiture of the new Master, Deputy Master, and Wardens, who took their respective oaths of office.



### **New Court for 2007-2008**

The following appointments were approved and the individuals were invested at the Annual General Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

Master:	Michael E. Charles
Deputy Master and Honorary Treasurer:	Robin Braithwaite
Honorary Clerk	Paul Wilson
Immediate Past Master	David Moorcroft
Wardens:	
John Bishop	Karim Kanji
Nigel Napier-Andrews	Neil F. Purcell (PM)

05/06/2007

John Smith (PM)

January – May 2007  
Ray Gibson (Founding Master  
and Member Emeritus)



### **Guild of Freemen Events**

As readers will be aware, the Guild of Freemen extends to members of the Honourable Company the opportunity to attend particular Guild events when they are in London. Those that are planning a visit to London and wish to attend a Guild event should contact Peter Leach or Neil Purcell as soon as possible and no later than the date given against the listed events below. Payment must be made in sterling (or by special arrangement with Peter Leach) at the time of making the reservation.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Day at the Sandown park Races</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2007</b>
<b>Coach from Guildhall</b>	<b>11:00, return 18:00</b>
<b>Price</b>	<b>£147.00</b>
<b>Booking date</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> April 2007</b>

<b>Event</b>	<b>RNLI and Coast Guard in Selsey</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007</b>
<b>Coach from Guildhall</b>	<b>08:45, return 18:30</b>
<b>Price</b>	<b>£60.00</b>
<b>Booking Date</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> April 2007</b>

<b>Event</b>	<b>Reception and Dinner</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Bakers' Hall</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>18:30, carriages 22:00</b>
<b>Price</b>	<b>£82.00</b>
<b>Booking Date</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> April 2007</b>

<b>Event</b>	<b>Evening Excursion and Dinner</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>The Elizabethan on the Thames</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>18:00 at Tower Pier, return 22:30</b>
<b>Price</b>	<b>£88.00</b>
<b>Booking Date</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> May 2007</b>

<b>Event</b>	<b>College of Arms Visit and Buffet Supper</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2007</b>
	<b>and repeated on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>18:30 to 21:00</b>
<b>Price</b>	<b>£40.00</b>
<b>Booking Date</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> August 2007</b>

<b>Event</b>	<b>Reception and Dinner</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Tallow Chandlers' Hall</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2007</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>18:30, carriages 22:00</b>
<b>Price</b>	<b>£78.00</b>
<b>Booking Date</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> August 2007</b>

<b>Event</b>	<b>Reception and Dinner</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>House of Commons</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2007</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>18:30, carriages 22:00</b>
<b>Price</b>	<b>£79.00</b>
<b>Booking Date</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> August 2007</b>

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Event **Hilton in the Community Foundation Ball**  
Location **London Hilton, Park Lane**  
Date **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2007**  
Time **19:00, carriages 02:00**  
Price **£150.00 pp**  
Booking Date **18<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

Event **Lord Mayor's Show**  
Location **South side stands St. Paul's Cathedral**  
Date **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2007**  
Time **10:30 to 12:00**  
Price **£24.00**  
Booking Date **18<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

Event **Lunch after Lord Mayor's Show**  
Location **City Pipe, Fosters Lane**  
Date **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2007**  
Time **12:00 to 14:00**  
Price **£34.00**  
Booking Date **18<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

Event **Whisky Tasting**  
Location **Tallow Chandlers' Hall**  
Date **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2007**  
Time **18:30, carriages 21:00**  
Price **£25.00**  
Booking Date **27<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

Event **Annual Banquet**  
Location **Guildhall**  
Date **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007**  
Time **18:15, carriages 22:30**  
Price **£99.00**  
Booking Date **15<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

Event **Trad Jazz Evening and Buffet Supper**  
Location **Grange Holborn Hotel, Southampton Row**  
Date **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008**  
Time **18:30, carriages 22:15**  
Price **£82.00**  
Room **£129.25, double inclusive VAT and B'fast**  
Booking Date **30<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

Event **Burns Night Supper**  
Location **Tallow Chandlers' Hall**  
Date **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008**  
Time **18:30, carriages 22:30**  
Price **£82.00**  
Booking Date **28<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

Event **Visit to the Old Bailey and Supper**  
Location **The Old Bailey**  
Date **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008**  
Time **17:45, carriages 21:30**  
Price **£45.00**  
Booking Date **3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007**

Event **Reception and Dinner**  
Location **House of Lords**  
Date **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2008**  
Time **18:30, carriages 22:00**  
Price **£84.00**  
Booking Date **10<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

January – May 2007

Event **Reception and Dinner**  
Location **Clothworkers' Hall**  
Date **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008**  
Time **18:30, carriages 22:30**  
Price **£95.00**  
Booking Date **28<sup>th</sup> December 2007**



## **Goodbye but not “Goodbye” from your Editor**

As the editor of Company Comment for the last 9 years, it has been both a pleasure and a lot of work to produce your newsletter every 3-4 months. As the Honourable Company continues to evolve, I have felt that it is important for those closest to this evolution to link synergistically all of the means of communication between the Company and its diverse and geographically distributed members. Some time ago, I asked the Court to find a new editor that would be “closer to the action”, and I am pleased to advise that the Immediate Past Master, David Moorcroft, has agreed to take on this responsibility. He will be assuming this role for subsequent issues.

I am very grateful for all the help and assistance I have had from so many Members and so many of the Clerks, Beadles, Archivists and Historians of the London and Edinburgh Livery / Guild Companies. Without their suggestions and assistance, Company Comment would certainly not have been the newsletter it is today. I would particularly like to recognize Neil F. Purcell, Past Master, for his unflinching proof reading and suggestions for improvement to my too frequently incorrect use of the English language.

However, we are not going to be saying goodbye completely. David Moorcroft has asked that I continue to be involved in the preparation of the historical reviews of the Livery Companies and the traditions of the City of London. This, I have found to be something that is of great interest and fascination to me, as you have probably gathered over the years. I hope that the writings that I have done has filled some of the holes in your knowledge about how this organization came to be and the immense 900 year heritage it draws on. One of the biggest efforts of my time as Editor was the production of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue in which I updated the history of the Honourable Company. While there was a lot of detail left out in that rendition of our history, it remains the only account of the first 25 years. I believe that the Company still has a few copies of that Issue (and it is also available on the Company's website) so members can still refer to it.

It has been an honour to be your editor and I wish David great success in continuing to evolve the Company Comment as part of the family of new communication tools that bring this still-young North American outpost of the Freemen of London and of the City Livery and Guild Companies.



## Wine Selections

Current selections from Natalie McLean,  
wine writer

- **2004 Stonier Chardonnay** Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia: Lovely and creamy with notes of soft oak, green apple and ripe pear. XD 750 mL \$23.95 Score: 93/100. **Favorite White Wine – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007**
- **2006 Zenato Pinot Grigio** Veneto, Italy: Refreshing and mouth-watering with aromas of pear fruit. Pair with: grilled chicken, poached sole, summer salads. D 750 mL \$15.95 Score: 89/100. **Best Value White Wine – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007**
- **2003 Grant Burge Cameron Vale Cabernet Sauvignon** Barossa, South Australia, Australia: This terrific Cabernet is sourced from the 30+ year-old vines of Grant Burge's Cameron Vale vineyard. The maturity of the vines is evident in this intensely flavored wine. It has complex layers of dark berries, cassis, earth, chocolate and mint notes. Aged in French oak (35% new), it's an excellent value from one of the Barossa's top producers. My note: A delicious, juicy, lip-smacking full-bodied wine. Pair with: roasted lamb, steak. XD 750 mL \$21.95 Score: 91/100. **Favorite Red Wine (Tied) – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007**
- **2003 Zenato Amarone Della Valpolicella Classico** Doc, Veneto, Italy: A long-time favorite of mine. Rich, smooth and full-bodied. Aromas of cherries, dried herbs and leather. XD 750 mL \$48.95 Score: 93/100. **Favorite Red Wine (Tied) – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007**
- **2004 Raimat Tempranillo/Syrah DO Costers Del Segre**, Spain: Spain's reputation for red wines is built on the Tempranillo grape. With its rich, cedary/berry intensity, it can be enjoyed now or aged for several years. When blended with the French Syrah, a grape that brings blackberry and pepper nuances, the result is a vibrant, fruity and balanced wine. My note: Spunky and vibrant wine. Medium to full-bodied and smooth. Aromas of red fruit with blackberry and raspberry. Pair with: gourmet sausages, steaks. D 750 mL \$13.95 Score: 89/100. **Best Value Red Wine – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007**
- **2006 Chateau D'aqueria Tavel Rosé AC**, Rhône France: Hot pink color that speaks of summer. The aromas suggest raspberry, red pepper jelly, maraschino cherry and sweet lemon. Very dry with a touch of tannin, this rosé is medium-bodied with a good combination of acidity and fruit tones. My note: A gorgeous wine for a dry summer day. Aromas of raspberry and maraschino cherry. Pair with: barbecued salmon, chicken caesar salad, pork roast. 319368 XD 750 mL \$19.95 Score: 90/100. **Favorite Rosé – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007**
- **2003 Jackson-Triggs Proprietors' Grand Reserve Shiraz VQA** Okanagan Valley, Canada - British Columbia: Sun-loving Shiraz is thriving in the vineyards of BC and this award-winning wine from Jackson-Triggs' Okanagan Estate is a prime example. Hand-picked from

the Osoyoos Lake Bench vineyards, this wine combines the best of the northern Rhône and New World styles with its spicy bouquet and its lush cherry and black currant fruit flavours. This BC beauty won Gold at Montreal's Sélections Mondiales 2004. My note: An awesome wine, round and full-bodied. Plentiful aromas of chocolate and lush dark fruit. XD 750 mL \$23.95 Score: 92/100.

**Noted Canadian Wine – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

- **2006 Strewn Cabernet Rosé VQA** Niagara Peninsula, Canada - Ontario: VC: Using both Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, winemaker Joe Will has fashioned a brightly hued rosé featuring aromas of cassis, ripe cherries and sweet herbs. It's dry, medium-bodied and very refreshing with sweet cherry flavors and zesty acidity. My Note: Juicy strawberry and raspberry. Pair with: roasted chicken. 467753 XD 750 mL \$11.95 Score: 89/100. **Noted Canadian Rosé – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2007**
- **2005 The Grange Of Prince Edward County Riesling** Trumpour's Mill Ontario Canada: A lovely off-dry, simple and refreshing white. Light-bodied and as free-spirited as the summer breeze. This winery opened in 2002 in what is one of Canada's emerging wine regions with lots of potential. Pair with: salad, seafood, shellfish, pasta, vegetarian, pork, ham. 750 mL \$16.30 Score: 87/100. **Noted Canadian White Wine – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2007**
- **2004 Inniskillin Pinot Noir VQA** Canada: A smooth, medium-bodied red with aromas of vibrant ripe cherries. Lovely balance, plush and supple. Nice mouth-watering acidity for food. Pair with: chicken, pasta, salmon. 750 mL \$14.65 Score: 87/100. **Noted Canadian Red Wine – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2007**

These recommendations are from Natalie MacLean, Wine writer Ottawa, Ontario — [www.nataliemaclean.com](http://www.nataliemaclean.com) and they are reproduced here with permission