



# Newsletter

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FARMERS



4

## Meet the new Master - Guy Brogden

Installed on October 10, the new Master has a long history with the Worshipful Company of Farmers, and has high hopes of building stronger links with the wider industry.

The newly installed Master, Guy Brogden, with (L to R), Ted Prior the Beadle, Junior Warden Jeremy Finnis, the Master's Chaplain, The Revd Canon William Gulliford, Senior Warden Richard Crane and our Clerk, Graham Bamford

8

## The Summer Visit - and life as a Master's Consort

Immediate Past Master - Richard Davies - hosted a jam-packed summer visit in Gloucestershire, while the Mistress Farmer offers an insight into her year, from abseiling to military visits.

14

## An update on our educational courses

Our two flagship courses - the Advanced Course in Agricultural Business Management and the Challenge of Rural Leadership continue to be heavily oversubscribed due to strong demand.



The congregation await the Installation service in magnificent St Bartholomew the Great

# Master's Musings

I can hardly believe that my year as Master is finished. What a year it has been for me, for the Mistress Farmer (you will read more of her exploits elsewhere) and indeed for the Company.

For me, the personal highlights have been the Lord Mayor's Show - it was such a thrill to lead our entry; supported by the NFU team, the youngsters from Surrey Docks Farm and the presence of the mighty Massey Ferguson tractor, through the streets of the City, applauded all the way by huge crowds.

Then there was the Livery Banquet at Goldsmiths Hall, perhaps the most sumptuous of all the Livery halls in the City, supported by friends and family, as well as a full-house turnout from the Company.

Then finally, I have to mention the Summer Visit - it was great to host such a convivial group of Liverymen and their partners and guests in my adopted home county of Gloucestershire. The weather was kind to us, we had some really interesting visits and the food and drink was really special.

For the Company it has been a year of very real progress. Led by Deputy Master Philip Wynn we have developed a new 'Five Year Plan', which will, I am sure, provide direction and context for incoming Masters and the Court as they plan activities and investments in coming years.

We have also provided every Liveryman and Freeman with a copy of our new Structure, Governance and



The Master and his family

Responsibilities booklet, and every new Liveryman will receive a copy of this on joining - making the way we operate and the way that everybody can contribute to the life of the Company so much clearer.

Only 40 of the 111 Livery Companies have their own hall. Our own hall, shared with the Fletchers, hasn't always felt like a benefit, but over the past couple of years, as the City begins to recover its vitality and spirit - and with fewer and fewer people working from home - it has definitely started to turn around.

Graysons, our new hall managers and caterers, have been working hard to increase bookings and billings and this does seem to be beginning to bear fruit.

It is now at last reasonable, I think, to be cautiously optimistic about hall finances going forward.

One final area I want to highlight is the Alumni Association, wonderfully well administered by its Chairman Christopher Day and Secretary Duncan Couper. We now have in excess of 300 members.



At the Master's meeting in Glasgow



The Master and Mistress Farmer on the City Halls Walk

Joint regional farm and estate visits organised by the WCFA, where Liveryman and alumni inter-mingle, have been outstanding, and provide an important pointer as to how we might build this relationship going forward, as does the annual WCFA Learning Extension Day, which just seems to go from strength to strength. If you haven't yet attended an LED, I can thoroughly recommend it.

All-in-all a great year, an honour and privilege to be the Master and very satisfying to feel I am handing over to Guy with the Company in good heart and spirit.

# Installation Day

Installation Day - October 10 - dawned bright and clear, and the sun streamed into the magnificent church of St Bartholomew to illuminate proceedings.

We are so lucky to have such a magnificent building to celebrate our Harvest Festival and to witness the Installation of the new 'top team'.

The service went off without a hitch, with the juggling of robes and badges seamlessly orchestrated between Beadle, Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

All ended up wearing the correct attire, and lunch followed in Haberdashers' Hall.

New liverymen were welcomed with wine, and in Sophie Dwerryhouse's case, a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday' (see picture right).



Sophie Dwerryhouse (not clapping) receives birthday wishes from the Master and guests



Left: The Master's Badge passes to the Master for 2023-4

Below: The Clerk enjoying his excellent choice of red wine!



# Meet the new Master - Guy Brogden

Like so many before me it is a privilege to become your new Master. October 10 was a very exciting day - there is quite a build up during your time as a Junior and Senior Warden - and it was great to be surrounded by so many family and friends.

I was born in Lincolnshire, a county which has produced many Past Masters, at a time when the main access was a rather congested A46, and few people came to visit unless invited.

I left at a young age, to schools in Norfolk and then to Rutland - and when I came back, Lincoln hadn't really changed (It has now!) so off I went again, to Reading University to read Estate Management. I now live in north Buckinghamshire with my wife Catriona, with our three children all in London.

So how did I come to the join the Livery? My father Tony Brogden (a qualified agricultural surveyor) was a Liveryman, so I was apprenticed to him, and was clothed in 1981 at the young age of 23. My godfather Leslie Barker, a miller trading under the name Barker and Lee Smith, was Master Liveryman in 1974-5, the year I was apprenticed, so you could say I was indoctrinated early on.

In my career, I have spent nearly 50 years in property, largely involved with investment and development, spending time with institutions, developers, charities and landowners, acting as an agent, but more recently as an investment manager and adviser.

## Education involvement

Throughout this time, I made many friends just doing my job. I enjoy many sports (or games as some call them), although I can't claim to be good at any one of them. I enjoy being involved in a broad range of educational organisations and am an amateur wine collector.

One of the great things about the property industry is it relies on personal connections - property still isn't traded on computer screens - and it brings you into contact with a very broad range of people. When I joined my first Livery committee back in 2010 - finance - I was immediately involved in preparing the latest strategy review paper for the Livery, and so my real Livery journey began.



Guy Brogden, the Livery's new Master, hopes to broaden connections with the wider industry

Our Livery is run by volunteers, all of whom give their time freely for our common cause. I have made many friends at our events and through serving on committees, through the highs and lows of financial restructurings, to closing and reopening our hall and setting up our new catering contract.

Over the years I have begun to learn a lot more about farming - and equally as much about fellowship and having fun. After all, we are known as the friendly Livery!

During my year in office, I hope to broaden our outlook connecting the agricultural sector with the wider community, both here in the City of London and further afield, to further promote our educational courses and our chosen charities. My speakers at our lunches, agricultural dinner and banquet will be addressing this theme, from academ-

ia to the media, the industry and the environment, enabling us to better understand the views of others.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Immediate Past Master, Richard Davies, for all he has done during his year of office and his particular focus on our educational courses, the core of our charitable purpose. In anticipation, I would also like to thank my wife Catriona for her understanding and support during the next 12 months and to our two clerks Graham and Duncan for everything they do for us.

2024 will undoubtedly be another year of change. Our Livery is strong and is well placed to face up to the challenges that will undoubtedly arise. I look forward to spending time with many of you this year, at our functions, on our trip to Sicily in May and at the summer outing in Oxford in September.

# City Food and Drink Lecture

Along with some 600 others, the Master attended the 22nd City Food and Drink Lecture at the Guildhall on 15 May, where the guest of honour was the Princess Royal.

The Lecture is organised by a consortium of food-related Livery Companies - the Bakers, Butchers, Cooks, Distillers, Farmers, Fishmongers, Fruiterers and Poulterers - and presided over by the Lord Mayor. Next year's Chairman will be our own Allan Wilkinson.

Professor Charles Godfray of the Oxford Martin School gave the main speech and echoed some of the sentiments he expressed during our own 'Question Time', addressing the issue of a secure, healthy food supply in a crowded world, where 120 million people still go to bed hungry.



We will need to produce at least 30% more food to keep pace with future demand. It was striking that he too (like Henry Dimbleby at our Banquet) singled

out obesity as one of the most serious threats 'which could bankrupt the NHS'.

Read more about the Lecture here: <https://cityfooddrinklecture2023.com>

## Call My Wine Bluff



James Peck and family enjoying the proceedings at Call My Wine Bluff

The Lansdowne Club in Mayfair was the venue for the second Livery 'Call My Wine Bluff' on May 9.

Some 115 guests enjoyed a fabulous three-course dinner under the splendid barrel-vaulted ceiling of the Club's Ballroom.

Four mystery wines were introduced during the meal by the three wine experts, Jeremy Hill, Andy Cole and David Almeida of Vinotopia wine merchants, each giving an entirely plausible account

of grape varieties and origins. Of course, two of these were bluffs and the audience were urged to make a choice. All great fun.

The auction; amusingly conducted by Chris Mills, and raffle were hotly contested and raised over £8,500 for our Charitable Fund. Credit must go to The Mistress Farmer, Terri Davies, who was instrumental in organising proceedings, ably assisted by the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Senior Warden.

## Your views on our activities

Many thanks to all who gave us their views on our Livery activities in the online survey of all Liverymen in September. More than 100 of you responded. Some of the initial findings from respondents were:

- Half of you thought education our most important activity
- A quarter thought supporting young people just as important
- 65% thought the blend of our activities was about right
- 58% attended at least one lunch a year, and nearly half attended the Installation
- Cost was a concern to many, though most recognised the realities
- You have given us lots of ideas for events, especially less formal ones outside London.

We will report in more detail on the survey in due course and we shall be taking your comments into account in the planning of our future Livery activities.

By Jeremy Finnis.

# Inter-Livery clay pigeon day



Back row left to right: Stuart Philpot, Tony Alston, John Hardman, Geoff Wright, David Leverton, Peter Craven  
Front Row left to right - John Davie-Thornhill, Richard Whitlock  
The Livery Team came 19th out of 126 with a respectable score of 291

The Inter Livery Shoot was held at West London Shooting School 17 May, 2023. This was a new venue, which added to the interest, and we were blessed with good weather, the sun being blamed for the odd poor performance.

Our A team was lead by Peter Craven and Stuart Philpot with an equal score, with John Hardman and Geoff Wright in close support, so that at the end

of the day we were sitting in about 5th position. However, as it is a two day event our final position was a little lower.

Our Court team was lead by Past Masters Tony Alston and Richard Whitlock, supported by John Davie-Thornhill and David Leverton, who top scored our team. Somehow we all managed a zero on one stand or

another, so we ended about 5th of the Court teams.

It was encouraging that four new Liviermen joined our ranks.

The meeting continued into the evening when we were joined by two or three other Liviermen, and Peter Craven was democratically elected to lead us next year as Tony Alston had called time on a 10-year stint.

## Livery Golf Day

We held our inaugural charity golf day at Denham Golf Club on 28 September. Fortunately, the weather was ideal, so no excuses from any of the golfers.

There were nine teams of four players, including our senior warden, Guy Brogden, who was sadly not quite in the prizes, having left the north Norfolk coast at 5am that morning. From all accounts, everybody had an enjoyable



The charity golf day raised nearly £10,000

day, followed by a particularly good Denham lunch. I would like to thank Guy, Vincent Hedley-Lewis and William Fleming for entering Livery teams. The day and silent auction raised nearly £10,000, which was a pretty respectable sum in the circumstances.

A repeat performance is planned for next year, so please note the date - 26 September.

By Robert Sears.

## The annual Livery Halls walk

The annual Livery Halls walk, wonderfully well organised each year by the Worshipful Company of Environmental Cleaners, took place on Monday September 4.

It saw 20 Masters and their Consorts crocodile the square mile, visiting 40 of the 41 Livery Halls in the City – the exception being the Gunmakers' Hall which is located, apparently for historical safety reasons, just outside Aldgate and the old City Walls.

The walk, which lasted all day, was expertly led by Environmental Cleaners Liveryman, Sean Canty, and shepherded by the Company's Wardens and Clerk.

The Mistress Farmer and I managed to survive the nine and a half miles but, with temperatures on the day close to 30 degrees and the Masters all suited and booted, wearing Livery gowns, chains, badges and hats, frequent stops for water and other refreshments proved essential, and of course highly enjoyable.

The morning stop for Madeira Wine was at Ironmongers' Hall, lunch was taken at Pewterers' Hall, with afternoon



A brief stop at Haberdashers' Hall

refreshments at the Furniture Makers' Hall. There was a final stop, for a very welcome beer, at Southwark Cathedral.

With representation from across the Livery, from the Great Twelve to the very newest Company; the Nurses, this was a really wonderful opportunity to

spread the word about the Farmers and to talk and listen to how other Companies go about the business of combining fellowship with charitable good works and all their other activities.

A fascinating and very enjoyable, if rather warm, day. By Richard Davies.

## Inaugural Inter-Livery cycle ride



The inaugural WCF Inter-Livery Gravel bike event took place at Kelvedon Hatch, South Essex, in perfect weather, on Saturday September 2, hosted by Gravel event organisers "Glorious Gravel".

Thirteen riders, from our own Livery, the Engineers', Turners' and Horners' Liveries, plus friends and family, took to the course, with riders opting for either the short (35 miles), medium (45 miles) or long (65 miles) routes.

We ran our own 'event within an event', benefiting from Glorious Gravel's expertise in designing and route marking the three routes whilst having our own location to meet and enjoy post-ride food.

Myself, my wife Penny, Richard Whitlock and two friends; all of whom also took part in 'Sleepless in The Saddle' in 2019, resplendent in our 'Sleepless' cycling Jerseys, took on the long route. It was a mixture of off-road, from farm tracks to bridleways, byways, the superb Flich Way ex-railway track and quiet country lanes.

All of us agreed that it was a fabulous route and that we will take part next

year. I spoke to the Glorious Gravel CEO at the event and discussed an early bird discounted offer to attract entrants for 2024, with a provisional date of Saturday August 17.

With 13 riders this has not delivered any significant fundraising for us, which was always a possibility. The key thing is that this fellowship event happened, and we have a foundation upon which to build.

We have planted a small acorn and hope to nurture and spread the word to attract more riders next year. If you are reading this, and are undecided, I can tell you that the route is rated as easy, so it is not an arduous ride, simply a fabulous event in glorious countryside, close to the City of London.

See photo of WCF riders Penny and Richard Anscombe and friend on the Essex Way, just outside High Easter. By Richard Anscombe.

# The Master's Summer visit



The group next to the wicker elephants at Highgrove

On May 31 some 60 Liverymen and guests congregated in the Master's home county of Gloucestershire for the annual Summer Visit.

We were treated to a private tour of the King's private 17 acre garden at Highgrove and after lunch to a visit to Duchy Home Farm, courtesy of the Duchy of Cornwall, now under the stewardship of William, the new Prince of Wales.

The gardens were started 40 years ago from simple parkland and have achieved remarkable diversity and harmony over that time. The range of planting and attention to detail were astonishing. The farm visit in the afternoon covered the centre of the 1,250 acre Home Farm business, managed under organic and agro-ecological principles by a dedicated young team led by new tenant Henry-James Gay.

The long term approach of the landlord – granting tenancies of 25 years – was very much appreciated by the Duchy's tenants, but Mathew Morris, the agent for the Duchy, was realistic about the ability of some tenants to survive the withdrawal of state support.

The Ayrshire dairy cattle certainly looked very well, with a good crop of youngstock following on. The day was

conventional system. It was impressive that soil organic matter had increased by 0.5% and the number of bird species observed up from some 40 to over 80 in just five years.

After lunch in the cafe 'FarmEat' – based on produce from the farm – PM Whitlock thanked the Master and his wife Terri for arranging such a stimulating and enjoyable couple of days.



Examining some 40 species of heritage wheat at FarmEd

rounded off nicely with a delicious formal dinner at the hotel, accompanied by a very skilful and amusing magician.

The second day saw the group at FarmEd, an educational centre promoting regenerative and agroecological farming systems near Burford in Oxfordshire.

We were shown round the crops, especially the herbal ley system, and compared the soils there with those under a



Astonishing magic tricks at the formal dinner



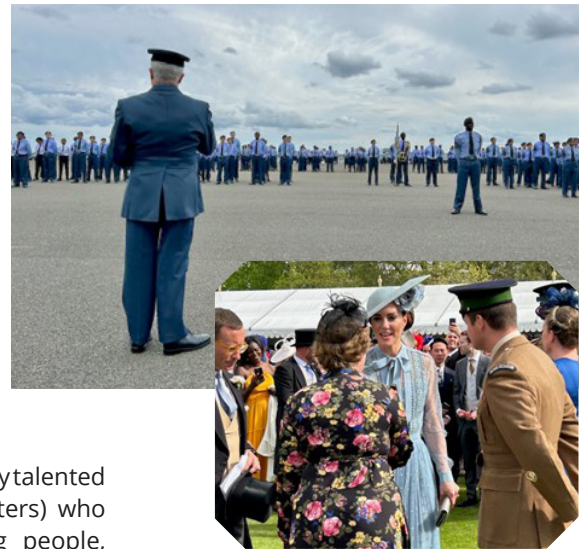
Duchy of Cornwall Agent Mathew Morris explains the philosophy behind Duchy Home Farm



# A year in the life of a Consort

Jeremy Finnis recently asked me “what it is like to be the Consort?” Let’s start with my definition of the role. That is, to help my husband fulfil his duties as Master and be an active advocate for the Farmers Company and its charitable work.

To put that into context, here are some takeaways from a life-enhancing year. Having freed myself up to share the year fully with Richard, I said yes to everything I could.



It has been a joy to meet a truly talented bunch of Consorts (and Masters) who are engaged and interesting people, who give so much to society and each other. The most memorable aspects of my year have come from the unexpected experiences. It wasn't on my bucket list to photograph a clutch of gowned Masters racing, whilst flipping

pancakes in Guildhall Yard, nor to abseil the Lloyds Building with the Lord Mayor and 70 others. Yet these are some of the experiences I shall never forget.

Let’s begin with the invitations to a variety of lunches, dinners, concerts, museums, church services and banquets from other Livery companies – from the great 12 to the moderns - in grand settings and humble abodes such as historic City pubs.



It is so inspiring to see the impact of training and discipline on young people, and a privilege to look privately behind the scenes at places such as RAF Waddington and Hyde Park Barracks, where I fell in love with Hercules (horse not guardsman).

By Terri Davies.



Finally, I loved learning more about our military affiliations and cadets.



## The Lord Mayor’s Abseil Challenge 2023

The Lord Mayor Nicholas Lyons’ Abseil Challenge at the Lloyds building in London was a fantastic success, with over 70 people joining the Lord Mayor descending this iconic, 289ft high City landmark.

The rainy weather didn’t hold us back as we raised funds for charity and brought in crowds of spectators both inside and outside the Lloyds Building. Currently the total amount raised is over £100k for The Lord Mayor’s Appeal, with more than



£2,000 coming from my very generous supporters, many from the Livery.

I owe you a huge thank you for your donations which came in thick and fast, and spurred me on to step over the edge when the moment came.

Together, we made an excellent contribution to three amazing organisations - National Numeracy, MQ Mental Health Research and The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

By Terri Davies.

# Research report: Fresh thinking

Farming is changing, and the industry needs new people with a more open mindset to lead it forward, according to a challenging new report commissioned by the Worshipful Company of Farmers.

The report, entitled 'Future business leaders in agriculture: Who will lead the industry forward?' investigates the challenges and opportunities facing the current and future generations in farming and food production, and addresses some of the serious barriers to progression.

Undertaken by Matt Lobley and Caroline Nye at the Centre for Rural Policy Research at the University of Exeter, the report challenges the status quo. It identifies several practical routes to bring in new entrants with fresh mindsets, while also making the most of collaboration, networking and upskilling across the industry to create a shared vision for farming leadership.

It is a detailed and practical piece of research that will trigger industry discussion and, hopefully, action.

"Fundamentally, the changing farming environment means the industry needs different types of leaders, and a change in attitude to address the problematic lack of diversity and engrained ways of thinking," says Richard Davies, Immediate Past Master at the WCF.

***"The changing farming environment means the industry needs different types of leaders."***

"Every industry needs great leaders. The agricultural industry is no different. It faces an unparalleled level of change and challenge, which means that now, more than ever before, it needs to act," he adds.

"It needs to recruit, develop, train, empower, and encourage a new generation of managers with the ability and willingness to see the world differently, to apply learnings from every walk of life, and to lead and manage with real skill, passion and commitment.

"The industry already has some great leaders, but to have the greatest talent pool to choose from, agriculture needs to make itself attractive to as

***A report for the  
Worshipful  
Company of  
Farmers***

**By Caroline Nye and  
Matt Lobley**



wide a range of potential leaders, from as a broad a spectrum of society, as possible."

The lack of new entrants is a serious threat to the industry, as is the traditional pattern of succession from father to son, with many successors studying agriculture and rarely leaving the home farm.

Instead, they should be more outward-looking, learning business and leadership skills and bringing experiences from other industries, says the report.

It suggests that educational facilities become more inclusive and attractive to non-farming people, with mentorship to help mould new leaders and closer relationships with the Ministry of Defence to bring in new talent.

***"Diversity must be addressed. Gender, ethnic and cultural diversity is associated with improved business performance."***

The industry should also work with job centres and on social media, promoting elements that would be attractive to younger, diverse people – like sustainability, technology and agro-ecology.

Networking is key to fostering entrepreneurial thinking and leadership skills, and helps to bring joint ventures together – but a culture shift is needed towards accepting continuing professional development in the sector, notes the report.

***"The lack of new entrants is a serious threat to the industry, as is the traditional pattern of succession."***

"The industry does not simply need new leaders, but new strategies, new understandings, and a change in attitudes. Diversity must be addressed. Gender, ethnic and cultural diversity is associated with improved business performance and is an essential part of moral justice," it adds.

"Leadership skills required in contemporary agriculture are very different to those required for past generations of managers and leaders. Therefore, strategies to promote and develop new leaders need to be adjusted to meet the challenges faced by the industry and the individuals needed to drive it forward."

The full report can be downloaded from the news section of the WCF website.

# Company and alumni visit to Euston Estate



Andrew Blenkiron welcomed 40 visitors to the Estate

On a sunny October 2, Liveryman and Estate Director Andrew Blenkiron welcomed some 40 Liverymen and alumni to the 10,500 acre Euston Estate, courtesy of the Duke of Grafton.

The extraordinary history of the estate, the Fitzroy family and their descendents was entertainingly told by the Archivist. Gems included the facts that the Orb

was carried by a Fitzroy at the coronation of William & Mary, and the land for the eponymous station was sold in order to ease the movement to and from London of the Duke's livestock and horses.

A fascinating tour of the farms followed, with the difficulty of farming such light land a particular point of interest – for example, last year's potatoes needed 300mm (a foot!) of irrigation to keep them going.

The 5MW gas-to-grid anaerobic digestion plant and solar farms testified to the forward-looking approach the estate takes. This was further illustrated by the Paulownia plantations (see photo), which have the ability to capture carbon at six times the rate of the fastest-growing UK conifers. A very generous lunch was provided by the estate at the

end of the tour, and all commented on the terrifically interesting morning we had the good fortune to experience.



The Paulownia plantations capture carbon

## News in brief



We welcomed two new members onto Court at the October meeting: Peter Grieg (pictured above with wife Henri), and Dr Graham Birch (pictured above right signing his oath).



Right: Nuffield Scholar Chris Manley addresses the Masters and Clerks at their luncheon. He stressed the crucial importance of leadership in agriculture. This he defined as treating people as individuals, as opposed to Management, where people are treated as a group. He also commended his #walkwithme regime to counter depression.



Above: Our dashing Assistant Clerk Duncan obtains the Freedom of the City via the Innholders Company.



# RAF Northolt Wing Field Day

On Sunday July 9, the Master Richard Davies with Mistress Farmer Terri, Liveryman Anne Courtney and Apprentice Victoria Rayner attended Wing Field Day at RAF Northolt, the first since 2019 due to Covid.

Wing Commander Niall Cumming and Flt Lt Christopher Pocock gave the party a tour of the Air Base and showed some of the activities the Cadets had taken part in during the day including musical and band competitions, aircraft recognition and banner drill.

They met Acting Pilot Officer Krish Patel who, when a Cadet, had been sponsored by the Livery to attend the International Air Cadet Exchange (IACE) in the Netherlands. He hugely benefited from this international experience, and since returning has attained the qualifications to be a volunteer officer in the Middlesex Wing.



The Master presenting the salver for outstanding performance in outdoor pursuits to Squadron 14F

The two recipients of Livery 2023 IACE sponsorships, Sqn CWO Tyson Lee and FS Davila Ajia, gave presentations. The former will be travelling to America, based in New York and Washington DC Air Bases, while FS Davila is off to Sydney, Australia.

Both were extremely appreciative and enthusiastic. FS Davila, as a keen chef and foodie, is looking forward to eating crocodile! The Wing Commander stressed the 'worthiest' are chosen, not the 'wealthiest', thanks to the Livery sponsorship. He and the Cadets thanked the Livery for the support.

You may remember the name: Sqn CWO Tyson Lee. Honoured to be selected from all the Cadets in the country, he carried the Union Flag in Westminster Abbey ahead of the Prime Minister during the King's Coronation in May. He had a conversation with

the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife beforehand, and recognised many personalities and famous people as he processed down the aisle of the Abbey! He was also interviewed on BBC Breakfast TV the day before.

The Master Farmer's party heard from the Cadets about the value of leadership skills. The 'soft' skills of teamwork, communication, and time management they had acquired since joining the Cadet Service will be invaluable when they leave school and go out into the workplace.

After lunch, the Farmers' party attended the Parade, complete with 250 Cadets and the Wing marching band. There were no officers on the parade ground at the Cadets' request as they had expressly asked to do the drill themselves.

This proved quite a challenge as only about 12 Cadets had any previous experience of a Wing Field Day, highlighting the recruitment and retention challenges the Wing has faced over the past four years during Covid.

The Master then presented the two Livery trophies:

- The John Thorpe Salver, for the Squadron which has contributed most to community service throughout the year, was awarded to Squadron 398, Staines and Egham
- The new John Thorpe Salver, for the Squadron or Cadet that had been outstanding in outdoor pursuits was awarded to Squadron 14F Northolt.



The Master presenting the John Thorpe salver to Squadron 398 for the greatest contribution to community service

## An update from Surrey Docks Farm

A delegation from the Company met with Gemma Hooper and Claire Elson at the Farm on August 29 to discuss further help with the development of the Farm.

The Master-Elect chaired the meeting and an initiative to assist Gemma with her heavy administrative burden was suggested, enabling her to concentrate on management and, especially, fund-raising.

This initiative was endorsed at the October Court meeting. We will report on its progress in due course.



The Farm also needed to re-supply its stock of pigs. To the rescue came Stuart Philpot and Richard Whitlock, each vying for the privilege of supplying the four Middle Whites required.

Richard won the bidding war, and his contact Guy Kiddy manfully braved fines and traffic jams to deliver the animals to Rotherhithe (see picture).

More recently, three commercial farms opened up their doors to over 75 young people from Surrey Docks, Wellgate and Stepney City Farms - a great day out.

# HMS Defender gets a refit

Liverymen might be interested to note that In August HMS Defender entered a planned period of refit including an upgrade to her power and propulsion systems.

Ahead of this refit - which is expected to take between two and three years - HMS Defender's Ship's Company has been dispersed to take on new challenges in other ships and establishments.

The Navy commented: "One of the busiest destroyers in the Royal Navy has returned home to Portsmouth - bringing the curtain down on the first act of her career ahead of a two-year refit.

"Since her maiden voyage from Glasgow more than 10 years ago, Defender has steamed the equivalent of 12 times around the world, covered every major ocean - bar the Antarctic - and most of the world's seas, and was first Type 45 to conduct winter operations deep inside the Arctic Circle."

More importantly... across the past decade, the ship's sailors chomped through 42km of sausages and ate four times the 8,500t destroyer's weight in baked beans.

The ship fired more than 7,000 rounds of its main naval gun, sailed more than 300,000 nautical miles and destroyed three target drones using its Sea Viper missile system.

Defender's refit is scheduled to include the Type 45 Power Improvement Plan - giving her three new efficient engines to



replace two original diesel units, a major upgrade to the Sea Viper anti-air missile system to both deal with the latest threats and increase silo capacity by 50%, plus other major work which cannot be done as part of routine maintenance.

Commanding Officer, Commander Peter Evans, said: "We are marking a happy but solemn bookend on an amazing 10 years of front-line service.

"Defender has delivered the best availability of any Type 45 destroyer and has operated all over the world; this is not solely down to British engineering, but to the elite sailors who operate, maintain and support our efforts."

Defender has been at the heart of joint operations with the UK's allies, having completed four operations and four exercises this past year alone.

She escorted the first UK carrier global task force deployment in 2021, and is

routinely the escort of choice to defend the US aircraft carriers - a privilege that is not normally entrusted to any other nation.

Her final visit before arriving in Portsmouth was to Glasgow - a fitting end, because this is where she was laid down and launched.

During the visit, she handed over her affiliates to HMS Glasgow, one of the Royal Navy's new generation of submarine-hunting frigates.

Engineering Technician Oliver Goodwin, a sailor on his first deployment, said: "It has been really fun but challenging experience. Going to both the Mediterranean and Norway we experienced loads of different places, but the real highlight was experiencing Formidable Shield 23, where we were sailing close with many other ships - it was awesome."

## The Master and family attend the annual Sheep Drive

Sunday 24 October saw three generations of the Master's family exercising the Master's right, as a Freeman of the City of London, to drive sheep, toll free, over Southwark Bridge.

The annual Livery Sheep Drive, organised and run by the Woolmen's Company, seems to get bigger each year and is these days accompanied by a craft fair on the bridge - with most stalls, but not all, sheep/wool related (there was this year, somewhat bizarrely, a motor bike sidecar hearse company promoting its wares).



The event is fun and of course raises funds for the Woolman's and the Lord Mayor's charities. It saw crowds of Liverymen and Masters, many in full Livery regalia, expertly mustered by the Guild of Young Freemen and assisted by Royal Navy personnel. Groups of up to 10 sheep-herders each took their allotted turn to move sheep a short distance along the bridge.

The crowds of bystanders looked suitably amused by the goings on, which were further complicated by a charity Wellness Walk in aid of Diabetes UK.

# An update on our courses

Our two flagship courses, the 72nd Advanced Course in Agricultural Business Management (ACABM) and the 27th Challenge for Rural Leadership (CRL), are continuing to be very oversubscribed, which is making the selection process extremely competitive.

A very important part of the selection process is to create a balanced cohort and this means that both courses have had a number of candidates deferred until the next course.

The ACABM has 22 delegates, with three from overseas - from Australia, South Africa and Switzerland. The course commences with some video calls in early November, with the residential part starting in the middle of the month.

We do notice that we don't get quite so many female candidates applying for this course, despite of a trend for more female managers providing insights to their businesses in the press. We continue to need to persuade all young managers of the huge benefits that can be gained from ACABM.

The application closing date for the 73rd ACABM is April 30, 2024 with interviews taking place on July 3-4, 2024. Our CRL course has 20 delegates taking up their place in January 2024.

This year we have two from overseas, from America and Ireland. As the course is aimed at guiding and inspiring those



At our June lunch, the Master presented the Livery's award for the best MSc dissertation to Lorna Benton of City University. It is entitled "An antimicrobial resistance sensitive framework for food policy analysis." Lorna analysed food policies relating to antimicrobial resistance to see how they incorporated both animal, environmental and human health priorities. She received a high Distinction for her thesis.



At the June lunch Jenn Stewart gave us a fascinating talk about the effects on her life and career of her attendance at the 70th Advanced Course in Agricultural Business Management

who will be future leaders it attracts some very inspiring young people.

The application closing date for the 28th CRL is July 31, 2024 with interviews taking place on September 4-5, 2024.

The Company also supports those who have been recommended to us for interview from both Cranfield University's MA and Business Growth Programme. These are often a follow-on from our other courses. By Stephen Watkins.



The Chairman of Education Stephen Watkins with applicants to the Challenge of Rural Leadership Course

# The 50th reunion of ACABM alumni

Peter Ward (clothed 2016) writes:  
 We have met every year to refresh our joint friendship and to progress our farming. Half a century ago, 1973 was the year that Britain joined the European Community and we were joined on the course by Phillipe from France and Peter from Germany.

We have been very diligent with our reunions, equally sharing the individual organisation, including four trips on the Continent.

The policy of the Livery that granted scholarships widely across the country, not necessarii where the membership was most frequent (in the Eastern counties), enabled us to hold events from Scotland to Devon and elsewhere.

Our numbers are much less now, with a number having 'been called to greatness' as our bishop would say.

Peter Jennings has just had his book published, where he related his town-based start and his proof that there



really is a career in farm management. We were delighted that Karen, the Past Master, attended our dinner and gave a fine and inspiring speech for the

occasion. It was a happy event for us all, and we are so very grateful to the Livery for the 'life changing benefit' of the courses.

## Student award winners



Jake Caston won the £125 Agricultural Student Award at Reading University, and is pictured here with head of agriculture Dr Gillian Rose.



Above: Henry Etherington received the WCF award for the best agricultural dissertation on Writtle University's graduation day at Chelmsford Cathedral. Here he is pictured receiving the award from Liveryman Jeremy Finnis and Chancellor of the University, Jimmy Doherty.



The WCF Prize for best agricultural dissertation at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, was won by Jasper Merrick for his dissertation entitled: 'An investigation into the dependency of UK agriculture on fossil fuels; motivating change'.



Left: Alex Everett won the 2023 Agricultural Student Award at Moulton College.



Right: Liveryman John Evans presents the Worshipful Company's annual Student Prize to Rhianna Tiller at Plumpton College.

# Announcements

The following were admitted as Freeman at the Court meetings held on 5 June 2023:

**Richard James Smith Means**

Proposed by Will Gemmill  
Seconded by Christopher Monk

**Christopher Arthur Bacon**

Proposed by Jeremy Finnis  
Seconded by George Harris

The following were admitted as Freeman at the Court meetings held on 5 June 2023:

**Jane Ann Gurney MBE**

Proposed by James Peck  
Seconded following interview by  
Richard Davies

**David John Grint**

Proposed following interview by  
Richard Davies  
Seconded following interview by Guy  
Brogden

The following Freeman were Clothed with the Livery at Common Hall on 6 June 2023:

**William Fleming**

**Thomas Charles Townshend,  
Viscount Raynham**

**Ashley Christopher Hodson Behagg**

## Events

### Dates and Times for your Diaries in 2023 - 2024

23 November – Past Masters’ meeting & luncheon at Farmers & Fletchers’ Hall

5 December – Court meeting & Livery lunch at Saddlers’ Hall

12 December – Carol Service at St Bartholomew the Great  
followed by Inter-Livery Christmas Dinner at Butchers’ Hall

16 January 2024 – Annual Banquet at Drapers’ Hall

24-26 January 2024 – Inter-Livery ski championship in Morzine, France

13 February 2024 – Inter-Livery pancake race at Guildhall yard

5 March 2024 – Court meeting & Livery lunch at Farmers & Fletchers’ Hall

11 March 2024 City Food & Drink Lecture at Guildhall

17 April 2024 – Agricultural Lecture & Dinner at Plaisterers’ Hall

8-12 June 2024 – Livery visit to Sicily

10 – 12 September 2024 – Master’s Summer Outing to Oxfordshire.